



## City of Perth Amboy, Middlesex County, New Jersey Master Plan Recreation Element

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PREPARED FOR  
THE CITY OF PERTH AMBOY PLANNING BOARD  
November 6, 2013

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State of New Jersey  
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Local Planning Services  
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**Cover Photos**

Top L-R: Waters Stadium, Sadowski Waterfront, Washington Park

Bottom L-R: Washington Park, Sadowski Tennis Courts, Columbus Circle Park

# City of Perth Amboy 2013 Master Plan Recreation Element

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The original document, on file with the City of Perth Amboy, has been appropriately signed and sealed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12 by Thomas J. Stanuikynas PP, AICP – the Local Planning Services team leader for the preparation of this Master Plan Recreation Element.

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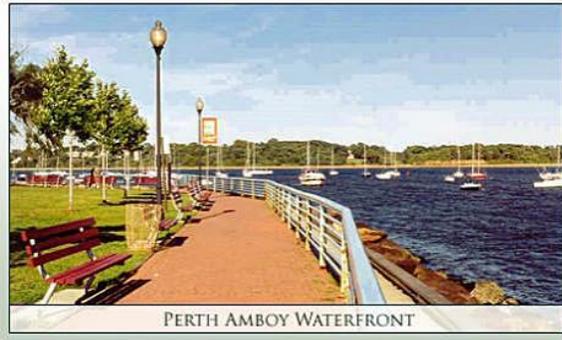
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## Introduction



In August of 2012, the City of Perth Amboy submitted a General Planning Services Request to Local Planning Services (LPS) requesting assistance with the preparation of a new Master Plan Recreation Element.

LPS, which is part of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, develops cost-effective strategies and solutions by partnering with municipalities for the successful achievement of local land use and administrative goals. One of the services offered by LPS is Master Plan and Master Plan Element development.

In September 2012, LPS met with representatives from the City to discuss the goals and objectives of the project. Subsequently, LPS drafted and submitted a Scope of Work to the City of Perth Amboy, which was approved by Mayor Wilda Diaz on October, 2, 2012. Based upon the approved Scope of Work, LPS began development of this Recreation Element.

In creating this Recreation Element, LPS worked cooperatively with the Perth Amboy Department of Human Services Office of Recreation, which operates the City's 21 parks. The City has a wide range of parks, athletic fields and open spaces, which make a substantial contribution to the quality of life in the City and enhance its reputation as a desirable place to live. The Office of Recreation also provides a multitude of organized sports, club and cultural activities year round ranging from team sports to passive recreation to arts and music.

Shortly after starting the Recreation Element Master Plan process, on October 29, 2013, Super-storm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey, near Atlantic City. The storm caused the Arthur Kill and Raritan River to overflow their banks, resulting in flooding of large sections of Perth Amboy's waterfront. Recreational facilities along Perth Amboy's waterfront were damaged along with many other public and private facilities.

The damage to the parks along the waterfront was extensive. The same areas that were damaged by Super-storm Sandy had significant repairs and investments made as a result of Hurricane Irene, which made landfall on August 28, 2011. The devastation of Super-storm Sandy may give Perth Amboy the opportunity to take a holistic approach to prioritizing and addressing funding, maintenance, use and future enhancements and acquisitions. The impacts of past and future storms will be considered in this Master Plan Element.

Perth Amboy is a growing community with ever increasing demands on its existing recreation facilities. Located in the New York City Metropolitan Area, it is strategically situated across the Arthur Kill from Staten Island. The City's population has grown from 38,951 in 1980 to 50,814 in 2010. An increased population has created a greater necessity for recreation facilities. Average family size is larger and median age is lower in Perth Amboy compared to the rest of Middlesex County and the State. The impact of the current demand for recreation facilities will be considered in this Master Plan Element.

The objective of this Recreation Element is to provide an inventory of existing facilities and their condition, consider community input and make recommendations to protect and strengthen the recreation facilities and programs available to the citizens of Perth Amboy.



## Relationship to the Master Plan

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:50D-1 et seq. (M.L.U.L.) grants substantial power to local planning boards to regulate land use and development and to recommend policy to the local governing body. The preparation of a Master Plan Recreation Element, authorized under the M.L.U.L. at N.J.S.A. 40:50D-28, serves as a blueprint for recreation facility maintenance and development in a community. The City of Perth Amboy's Master Plan establishes a clearly defined vision, which includes goals and objectives specific to recreational opportunities.



Perth Amboy's Recreation Element was last updated during its Master Plan Reexamination in 2003. Currently, the City is in the process of another Master Plan Reexamination, which includes this update of the City's Recreation Element.

The 2003 Recreation Element included the following recommendations to the City:

- Continue to review existing park and recreation facilities to ensure that they meet the needs of the City's growing population and the City's role as a regional attraction;
- Review the location of existing athletic fields and recreation facilities and compare these to future needs;
- Consider the siting of neighborhood pocket parks in locations that do not have nearby access to existing active park facilities;
- Continue to develop and promote recreation activities along the waterfront including the extension of the waterfront esplanade;
- Explore the possibility of acquiring a facility near the water that could house a Perth Amboy museum dedicated to the maritime history of Perth Amboy;
- Assess a location near Patten Park and its accessibility to the surrounding neighborhood and consider relocating park to a more densely populated area;
- Coordinate park and recreation plans with existing and planned Board of Education facilities; and
- Coordinate additional bicycle routes within the City, particularly with the Middlesex County Greenways, East Coast Greenway and access to the waterfront esplanade areas.



A comparison of the 2003 Recreation Element with current conditions shows that the City was successful in implementing portions of that Element. Perth Amboy has implemented several of the recommendations and upgraded many of parks throughout the City using a variety of available funding sources. However, other recommendations have not been implemented and will be addressed in this Master Plan Element. Table 1 lists the parks that have received improvements over the past twenty years.

This Recreation Element update will provide the city officials and citizens with a summary of current conditions, resources and needs within the community as well as recommended actions and strategies to address these needs. This update will enhance the existing facilities in Perth Amboy by drawing from the City's rich history, anticipating its bright future and continuing the City's efforts to provide better recreational facilities for residents.

CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

**Table 1: List of Prior Improvements by the City of Perth Amboy**

Name	Size (acres)	Completion	Value of Improvements	Improvement
Columbus Park	1.06	May 2005	\$318,279	New playground with slides and swings, basketball court, sitting area with tables and benches, extensive landscaping.
Truxton Park	0.903	April 2005	\$390,624	Installation of a gazebo, play system for small children, swings, benches, lawn panels, decorative pavement, landscaping.
Caledonia & Roessler Park	1.4	May 2003	\$476,566	Playground for children that is handicapped accessible, interactive fountain, gazebo/sun shelter.
Washington Park	7.36	Mid-June 2005	\$1,800,000	Construction of a skate park, softball field that can also be used for soccer, new pathway system, new restrooms, monument areas, signage.
Hall Avenue/Pulaski Ave Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Connector	2.8	Spring 2004	\$903,870	Construction of a "rails to trails project" that spans ½ mile over an abandoned rail spur.
Marina Expansion	1.5	June 2005	\$4,700,000	New bulk heading, upland walkway and parking lot, north fishing pier, benches, 78 slips.
Shoreline Improvement Project	25.7	Spring 2003	\$2,700,000	Two fishing piers, beach re-nourishment, jetty construction.
Second Street Parking Lot	1	2004	\$259,000	Parking lot provides 55 spaces, new lighting, benches and landscaping.
Rudyk Park	7.64	Spring 2000	\$1,500,000	Regulation size hardball stadium, soccer field, basketball courts, concession facilities, walking path, play area.
Dalton Park	10.16	Spring 2000	\$603,270	Construction of a hardball and softball field that can be used as 2 soccer fields, roller blade hockey rink, playground area.
Willow Pond Area of the Veterans Memorial Recreation Complex	22.29	Spring 2000	\$564,000	Construction of a lighted youth football/soccer, play areas, parking lot, new lighting access to Willow Pond with a viewing platform.
Neal Lucey Park	0.69	Spring 2000	\$195,000	Completed: center building demolished, new playground equipment benches, lighting and landscaping installed, basketball courts renovated.
Arnesen Veteran's Memorial Park	0.16	July 1997	\$67,268	New curbing, new brick pavers, new flagpoles, lighting, landscaping.
Harborwalk Reconstruction	n/a	Spring 1998	\$426,284	Construction of a 2,600 foot long linear walk with new benches, lighting. 10 ft. wide from High St. to 2nd St.
Second Street Park Acquisition	3.0	Acquired 2004	\$1,800,000	Acquisition of Goldberg Property to be remediated and used for recreation.
Washington Park	7.36	1994	\$68,302	Rehabilitate restroom facility, resurface 2 basketball courts, and install lighting.
Seaman Street Park	0.46	1994	\$30,255	Install new basketball court, pave volley ball court, install new playground equipment, water fountain, two swing set.
Francis Street Park	0.375	1994	\$30,000	Install children's playground equipment, new basketball court; replace water fountain, benches and shade trees.
State Street Park	0.402	1994	\$44, 552	Resurface basketball court including new poles and backboards, install playground equipment, water fountain, basketball lighting, trees, benches and fencing.

Source: City of Perth Amboy Office of Recreation

## Relationship to State, County and Local Plans



The 2008-2012 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared every five years by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program. The SCORP outlines the functions of a variety of programs within the State such as the New Jersey Natural Land Trust, the Natural Heritage Program, the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Historic Preservation Office, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Green Acres Program, which provide funding and planning assistance and protection and management of open space and recreation facilities. The SCORP developed policies and actions to address six issues: Land Preservation,

Recreation, Urban Open Space and Recreation, State Resources Areas, Greenways and Stewardship. Recommendations in this Recreation Element are consistent with these policies and actions.

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act was signed into law in 1999 to ensure a dedicated source of funding for open space preservation, farmland and historic preservation and the development of parks and recreation facilities. The Act specifies that a percentage of Green Acres State Acquisition funding be spent in counties with a population of 1,000 people per square mile or more, which includes Middlesex County.

In 1996, Middlesex County established the Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. In 2001, the Trust Fund established a \$.03 per \$100 of total equalized assessed valuation in the County tax rate to support open space preservation, recreation development and historic preservation. The County is in the process of acquiring an additional 7,000 acres of parkland with this funding. The Trust Fund has been used to support municipal acquisition of open space land.

The County adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2003 which outlines its expansion plan. One of the 2003 County Plan's three goals is to "assure that adequate recreational facilities are available to meet the needs of residents of Middlesex County." One of the objectives in the County Plan is to "establish partnership between Middlesex County and its municipalities and to provide funding through the Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland Historic Preservation Trust Fund to municipalities to acquire open space areas and develop needed recreational facilities."

In Appendix C1 of the 2003 County Plan, there is a list of recommended open space acquisitions by the County as requested by municipalities. This list includes a request by Perth Amboy for acquisition or long-term lease of the Runyon Watershed Land in Old Bridge (Appendix C1, page 2) and for the expansion of Washington Park (Appendix C2, page 4). It is important to note that the Runyon Watershed request has been withdrawn. In addition, Table 2 shows a list of recreation improvements requested by Perth Amboy and included in the County Plan on pages 2 and 3 of Appendix C3.



In addition to its place in the Master Plan, the importance of recreation and open space is evident in other City reports. The Perth Amboy Redevelopment Agency (PARA) Performance Report 2000 through 2008 outlines quality of life improvements such as eliminating environmental blight, which can be accomplished by considering open space and recreational uses where there is a low probability of redevelopment. Quality of life metrics are key considerations made by investors. PARA has remediated approximately 125 acres of known contaminated sites and is moving forward on approximately 200 additional acres of brownfield properties. Based on prospective redevelopment and economic analysis, a portion of this land could be used for passive or active recreation.

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The City adopted a redevelopment plan in 1997 known as FOCUS 2000. Almost 1,000 acres of abandoned and underutilized parcels of land were identified in three target areas within the City. FOCUS 2000 includes several goals related to open space and recreation. Among them are:

- Convert abandoned, fallow industrial sites in the southwestern section of the City into retail/office and recreational areas;
- Revitalize the business district by increasing tourism through educational, recreational and entertainment venues;
- Provide new office, retail, residential and recreational uses within the City;
- Convert abandoned, fallow industrial sites along Arthur Kill into commercial/retail/office and recreational areas; and
- Expand public access to waterfront areas, recreational opportunities and marine-oriented activities.

These resources will be further explored relative to Perth Amboy’s parks and recreational facilities later in this document. Table 2 shows requests by the City that were included within the 2003 Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan. Some of these improvements may not have been completed or may need to be redone (e.g., the slope treatment at Bayview Park will need to be redone due to Super-storm Sandy).

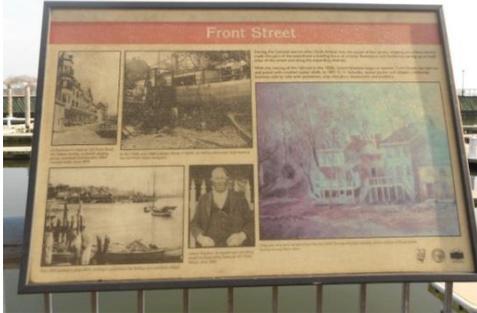
**Table 2: List of Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan Improvement Requests**

Washington Park	Bayview Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of wading pool and shuffle board courts</li> <li>• Development of skateboarding facility</li> <li>• Replacement of softball field with multipurpose field</li> <li>• New playground equipment</li> <li>• Walking/jogging path</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> <li>• Security Office</li> <li>• Parking Lot</li> <li>• Reconstruction of basketball courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate Band Shell Stage</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> <li>• Pathways</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Landscaping</li> <li>• Sculpture Garden</li> <li>• Slope treatment</li> </ul>
Patten Center Improvements	Community Recreation Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Recreational Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pool</li> <li>• Recreation Facilities</li> </ul>
Columbus Park	Truxton Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground Improvements</li> </ul>

Source: Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2003

## History of Recreation in Perth Amboy

The City of Perth Amboy has historically enjoyed a wide range of parks, athletic facilities and open spaces available to its residents. The City has had a tennis program for about seventy years and at one point had as many as 18 courts. Post World War II, the City was viewed as the tennis mecca of New Jersey when it hosted the Annual Perth Amboy Invitational Tennis Tournament, which drew some of the biggest names in tennis throughout the United States, including Arthur Ashe. This ended in 1965 when the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association ruled that no tournament could be held within a ten mile radius of Forest Hills, New York while the national amateur singles championships were in progress. This ruling eliminated the annual Perth Amboy tournament, which had coincided with the Forest Hills championships.



In addition to its impressive tennis history, the City's geographic location on the Raritan Bay has provided its residents with waterfront resources, including municipal beaches with lifeguards and showers. The beaches were closed to swimming due to pollution in 1957 when the three beaches located at High Street, State Street, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street were all rendered unusable due to high coliform counts. Today, while still closed to swimming, water quality has improved and swimming may be permitted again at the City's beaches.

Perth Amboy historically hosted, and to this day still, hosts an impressive summer recreation program for its youth. As early as 1936 (the earliest account available) the City provided a summer program in its parks and recreation centers offering athletic programs and classes to children in the community. Today the summer recreation program includes classes in swimming, baseball, softball, tennis, basketball, football, soccer, fishing, knitting, painting, sailing, kayaking, karate and cheerleading. In 1936, the City used 11 parks for its summer program. The number of parks used increased to 22 in 1970, and today the City uses 17 parks and facilities to run its summer program.

There is evidence that the need for park space in the City has always exceeded the space available. In 1936 there were 12 twilight baseball teams drawing an attendance of 6,000 to the games, and 10,000 tennis players used the City's courts. Beach Number 1 at Sheridan Avenue had an average of 600 users per day in the summer months. The Citizen's Advisory Committee to the Perth Amboy Planning Board in its "Report of Parks and Playgrounds" dated October 1957 found that most of the existing playgrounds and fields at that time were in need of additional playground equipment and that the fields were heavily used. In 1956, the City had a total 52 acres of parks, today there are almost 110 acres.

A rich history and variety of cultural sites has always made Perth Amboy an attraction for residents and visitors of all ages. Perth Amboy was first settled around 1683 by Scottish colonialists. Between 1686 and 1776, Perth Amboy served as a capital of the Province of New Jersey. The City's location, between New York and Philadelphia, made it an important transportation hub. For over 200 years, a ferry carried passengers across the Arthur Kill between Perth Amboy and Tottenville, Staten Island. During the 19th century, industrialization transformed Perth Amboy as railroads crisscrossed the City. Today, the parks in Perth Amboy serve as a link between the City's rich history and its present quality of life. Historic signs, monuments and memorials to the past are found throughout the City parks. Bicycle routes through the downtown and pedestrian trails along the waterfront take users past many historic sites, including:

- Kearny Cottage Museum, a four-room cottage operated by Kearny Cottage Historical Society
- City Hall, built in the early 18th century, which is the oldest City Hall in continuous use in the U.S.
- Proprietary House, the official Royal Governor's Mansion, which was occupied by William Franklin
- Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, the oldest Episcopal parish in New Jersey
- Perth Amboy Ferry Slip, once a vital ferry slip for boats in New York Harbor, which was added to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places in 1978

## Demographic Profile

The City of Perth Amboy is a diverse, young, densely populated city, which is continuing to experience a growth in population due to economic development and new employment opportunities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Perth Amboy’s population in 2010 was 50,814, an increase of over 7% from 2000. As shown in Table 3, the City has been steadily growing since the 1960s when the population of Perth Amboy was 38,007. According to the 2012 estimates, Perth Amboy’s growth continues to outpace the State average. Perth Amboy is the 33<sup>rd</sup> most populous municipality in New Jersey and 6<sup>th</sup> in the County.

**Table 3: City of Perth Amboy Population**

Year	Population	Percent Change
1980	38,951	-
1990	41,967	7.74%
2000	47,303	12.71%
2010	50,814	7.42%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There are 4.7 square miles of land located in the city limits. Based on 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, the number of people per square mile is 10,806, which is similar to other urban cities in New Jersey, such as Trenton and New Brunswick. Perth Amboy has significantly more people per square mile compared to the State of New Jersey, which has a density of 1,195 people per square mile and Middlesex County, which has a density of 2,621 people per square mile.

The 2010 Census found that there are 15,419 households in Perth Amboy and 74.3% (11,454 households) of these are families. The number of households with children under the age of 18 is 7,190 or 46.6% of the total. With a median age of 32.4 and a high portion of residents under 18 years old, Perth Amboy’s population is younger than that of New Jersey and Middlesex County (see Table 4). Additionally, Perth Amboy is home to many young adults. The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data indicate that 15.9% of the population or 8,079 people are between 15 and 24 years old. The average household size (3.25 people) and average family size (3.65 people) in Perth Amboy are greater than the State and County average.

**Table 4: City of Perth Amboy Demographic Comparison**

	New Jersey	Middlesex County	Perth Amboy
Total Population	8,791,894	809,858	50,814
Persons under 5	6.1%	6.1%	7.9%
Persons under 18	23.2%	22.6%	27.3%
Persons 65 and over	13.7%	12.5%	9.3%
Persons per household	2.69	2.80	3.25
Persons per sq. mile	1,195	2,621.6	10,806.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

As shown in Table 5, Perth Amboy is racially and ethnically diverse. The racial makeup of the City in 2010 is 50.3% (25,541) White, 10.5% (5,358) African American, 1.1% (561) Native American, 1.7% (859) Asian, 0.5% (27) Pacific Islander, 30.8% (15,634) from other races, and 5.6% (2,834) from two or more races. According to the data, 78.1% (39,685) of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race. Compared to the State as a whole, where 17.7% of the population identifies themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race, Perth Amboy has a significant Hispanic/Latino population. The City recognizes its large Hispanic and Latino community and will further explore the recreational needs of this demographic (i.e., the popularity of soccer and baseball) later in this document.

CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

In 2000, 27.8% of Perth Amboy residents identified themselves as being of Puerto Rican ancestry, the fifth highest concentration of Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland of those municipalities with 1,000 or more residents. In the same census, 18.8% of Perth Amboy residents identified themselves as being of Dominican ancestry, the third highest concentration of Dominicans in the United States after Haverstraw, New York and Lawrence, Massachusetts. The City is one of many communities in the U.S. with a majority Hispanic population. Approximately 25% speak English only, while 75% speak a language other than English at home.

**Table 5: City of Perth Amboy Race and Ethnicity**

	Perth Amboy	Perth Amboy Percent	New Jersey Percent
White persons	25,541	50.3%	68.6%
Black persons	5,358	10.5%	13.7%
Persons of some other race	17,081	33.6%	15.0%
Persons reporting two or more races	2,834	5.6%	2.7%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	39,685	78.1%	17.7%
White persons, not Hispanic	6,104	12.0%	59.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

To better understand the geographic distribution of residents and parks within the City of Perth Amboy, an analysis of census tract data was conducted. In 2010, there were 11 census tracts in the City of Perth Amboy numbered 40 through 50 (see Map 1 and Tables 6 and 7). The census tracts are basically divided along the NJ TRANSIT rail line, which runs north to south through the middle of the City. Tracts 45, 46, 49 and 50 are in the eastern half of the City (adjacent to the waterfront) and tracts 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47 and 48 are in the western half of the City (adjacent to Woodbridge Township). Census tract 45 has the highest population (6,951), followed by Census Tract 48 (6,028) and Census Tract 46 (5,948).



As indicated in the 2003 Recreation Element, the geographic distribution of parks and open space in the City is uneven. The census tracts located at the northwest and southeast sections of the City are well served by existing recreation facilities. According to the 2003 Plan, 35% percent of all parkland and open space is in the southeast section of the City and 30% percent is within the northwestern section (this is still the case in 2013). The census tracts in the center portion of the City offer no parks (Census Tract 42 and 44) or only one park (Census Tract 47 and 48).

The 11 census tracts within Perth Amboy vary by household size, family size and age cohorts (see Table 6 and 7). For example, Census Tract 45 has the highest population and the lowest median age of the census tracts. Additionally, Census Tracts 44, 46 and 50 have a lower median age and have larger average family sizes than other census tracts (see Map 1). This is due to the large, new, densely populated condominium developments of Harbortown Terrace and the Landings on the Waterfront. Conversely, Census Tracts 40, 41 and 49 have a higher median age and have smaller average family sizes. Perth Amboy may consider locating recreation facilities that cater to an older population in these Census Tracts. It is interesting to note that the majority of the parks that contain athletic fields (Dalton Park, Washington Park and the Youth League Complex) are located in Census Tracts 40 and 41. These two tracts have lower average family sizes and the highest percentage of residents over 65 years of age.

CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

**Table 6: Household Characteristics by Census Tract**

Census Tract	Total households	Family households	Nonfamily households	Households w/ individuals under 18 years	Households w/ individuals 65 years and over	Average household size	Average family size
Census Tract 40	1,418	993	425	505	422	2.68	3.17
Census Tract 41	835	622	213	352	225	3.04	3.51
Census Tract 42	997	784	213	470	233	3.37	3.68
Census Tract 43	1,091	872	219	547	260	3.42	3.69
Census Tract 44	1,259	994	265	647	264	3.50	3.77
Census Tract 45	2,032	1,572	460	1,083	295	3.41	3.74
Census Tract 46	1,704	1,287	417	870	331	3.47	3.79
Census Tract 47	1,084	818	266	503	212	3.21	3.61
Census Tract 48	1,696	1,199	497	779	417	3.39	3.85
Census Tract 49	1,842	1,159	683	695	501	2.70	3.35
Census Tract 50	1,461	1,154	307	739	336	3.61	3.85
Total	15,419	11,454	3,965	7,190	3,496	3.25	3.64

**Table 7: Age Characteristics by Census Tract**

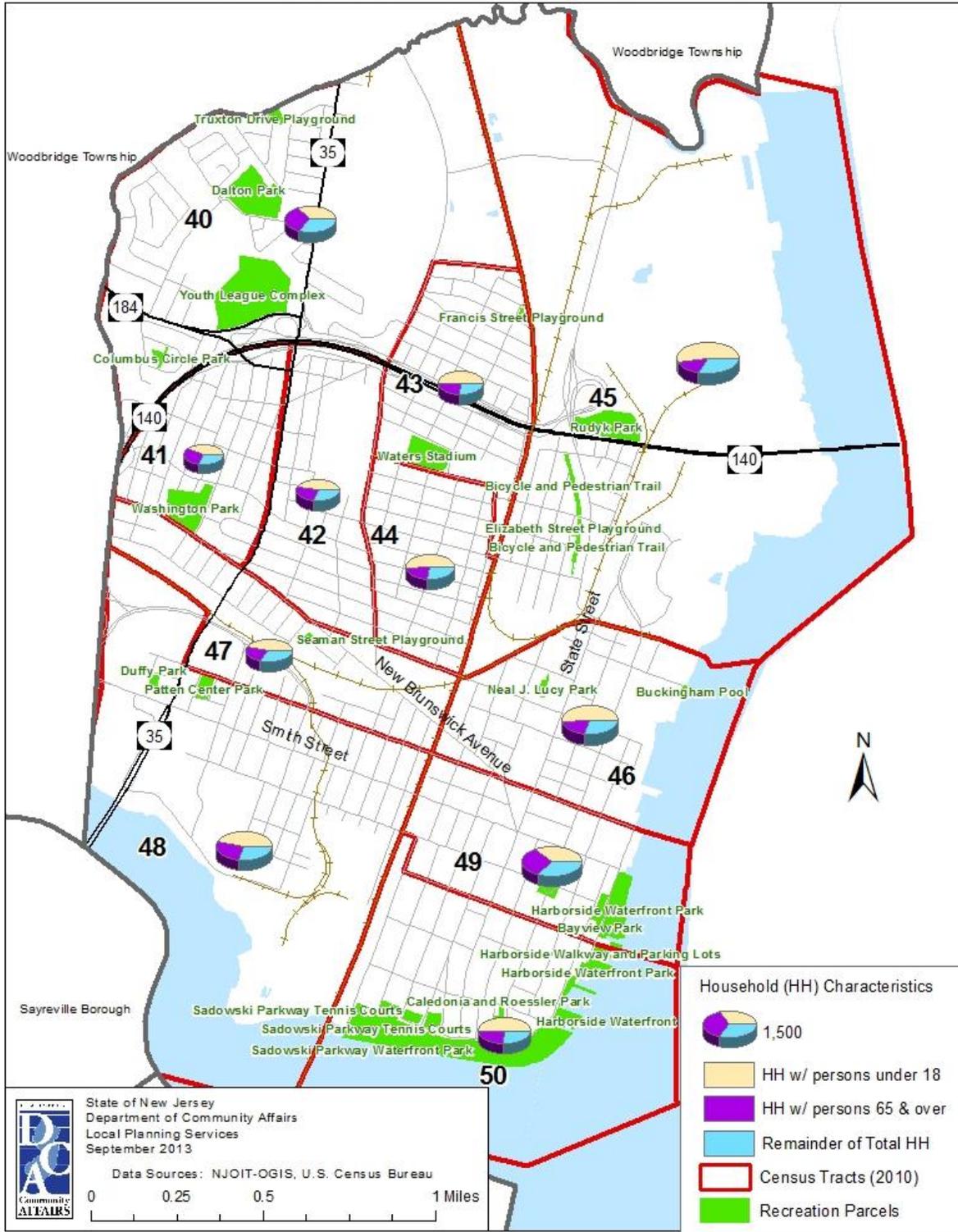
Census Tract	Under 10 years	10 to 19 years	20 to 34 years	35 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 years and over	Total Persons	Median age (years)
Census Tract 40	480	490	763	799	763	677	3,972	40.0
Census Tract 41	337	355	514	588	469	280	2,543	36.8
Census Tract 42	484	531	751	775	520	295	3,356	33.2
Census Tract 43	605	575	894	780	552	326	3,732	31.0
Census Tract 44	645	770	991	995	671	342	4,414	32.1
Census Tract 45	1,231	1,184	1,765	1,506	909	356	6,951	29.4
Census Tract 46	966	978	1,490	1,269	841	404	5,948	30.4
Census Tract 47	548	523	918	650	578	265	3,482	31.2
Census Tract 48	906	878	1,423	1,217	894	710	6,028	32.8
Census Tract 49	627	713	1,246	1,064	845	614	5,109	34.5
Census Tract 50	814	845	1,228	1,125	832	435	5,279	31.5
Total	7,643	7,842	11,983	10,768	7,874	4,704	50,814	32.4

Source for Tables 6-7: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Demographic Profile

CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Map 1

Household Characteristics by Census Tract



## Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory

### City-owned Parks

As of June 16, 2009, 121 Perth Amboy City-owned parcels were listed on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). These parcels represent 21 parks consisting of a combined total of approximately 110 acres of land within Perth Amboy. According to the Green Acres website, municipalities are required to prepare a ROSI as a condition of applying for and receiving Green Acres funding. Lands listed on a ROSI include those controlled by the municipality and may include land owned fee-simple, land leased by the municipality for recreation purposes, land owned by a private entity upon which the municipality holds a conservation easement, or any land in which the municipality holds a specific recreation and/or conservation interest.

On December 3, 2012 LPS visited these 21 City-owned parks (see Table 8). The team observed the characteristics of each park such as type of activities, condition, access, amenities, location, landscaping and number of users. The information collected during this site visit was compiled and was used as the basis for identifying existing recreational facilities. It is important to note that the site visit was conducted during the winter after a full season of fall sports; therefore field conditions were less than optimal. Also, Super-storm Sandy impacted Perth Amboy a month prior to the site visit and damage from the storm was still evident.

**Table 8: Parks and Recreation Facilities listed on ROSI**

Facility	Size (Acres)	Location
Bayview Park	1.57	250 Water Street
Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail	2.66	Between Hall and Pulaski Avenues
Buckingham Waterfront	0.52	Buckingham Avenue
Caledonia and Roessler Park	1.44	65 High Street and Lewis Street
City Hall Square	1.00	Market and High Streets
Columbus Circle Park	1.05	679 Columbus Circle
Dalton Park	9.96	659 Franklin Drive and Chamberlain Avenue
Duffy Park	0.45	Morris Street
Francis Street Playground	0.50	966-972 Francis Street
Harborside Walkway and Parking Lots	2.23	Front Street
Harborside Waterfront Park	10.99	Front Street
Neal J. Lucey Park	0.70	149 William Street
Patten Center Park	1.66	339 Read Street
Rudyk Park	7.87	820 State Street
Sadowski Parkway Tennis Courts	3.54	41 Brighton Avenue
Sadowski Parkway Waterfront Park	29.75	105 Sadowski Parkway
Seaman Street Playground	0.46	454-470 Seaman Avenue
Truxton Drive Playground	0.86	1080 Truxton Drive and Florida Cove Road
Washington Park	7.10	660 New Brunswick Avenue
Waters Stadium	5.55	761 Francis Street
Youth League Complex	20.65	617 Dorothy Avenue & 670 Pfiefer Boulevard

Sources: NJDEP, Division of Taxation MOD IV data

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

### Bayview Park

Bayview Park is a passive recreation park located near the waterfront on a bluff between Front and Water Streets in the southeastern section of the City. A large gazebo, shade trees and several benches can be found at this park. Bayview Park experienced extensive damage from Super-storm Sandy. During the December 3, 2012 field trip, LPS observed that most of the park was fenced off from the public for repairs. Due to its close proximity to the waterfront, the bottom of the slope was severely eroded and at the time of the site visit, was at risk of collapse. On subsequent visits to the park, it is evident that the City is hard at work recovering from Sandy. At the time of this report, Bayview Park has been reopened and the erosion at the bottom of the slope has been reinforced.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail

The City of Perth Amboy Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail is a converted railroad right-of-way that now serves as a multi-use trail between Pulaski and Hall Avenues. There is a marker at the trailhead that documents the history of the former Perth Amboy and Woodbridge Railroad. This linear park, which is approximately a half-mile long, has a divided asphalt trail with benches, lights and trash receptacles in the median. Several small parking lots serve the trail as well as the surrounding businesses. Located in a mixed use portion of the City, near State Street, this park appears to be well used. However, signs of vandalism (graffiti) and debris are present and should be addressed. When the site visit was conducted this park also showed signs of damage from Super-storm Sandy with downed tree limbs and fencing. There appears to be ample vacant land located to the south and to the north to accommodate future extension of the trail to the Edward J. Patten School (to the South) and Rudyk Park (to the North).

### Buckingham Waterfront

Where Buckingham Avenue meets the Arthur Kill, the Waterfront Trail reemerges and heads north towards the Outerbridge Crossing. As of the December 3, 2012 site visit, this park appeared to be under construction and closed to the public. At that time, there was a parking lot and a few trash receptacles at this location. Benches can be found along the trail, looking toward the Arthur Kill and Staten Island, New York. In the 2003 Recreation Element, this property was considered for a proposed community pool; however, the City will explore other locations for a future pool. Industrial and vacant land uses surround this property.

### Caledonia & Roessler Park

This pocket park is located in southeastern Perth Amboy between High and Lewis Streets and is within walking distance of the waterfront and downtown attractions such as the Proprietary House and Saint Peter's Church. There is a sign in the Park that is dedicated to the Scottish colonialists, who first settled to the area in 1683. A popular spray park/water play area is located at Caledonia & Roessler Park. Additionally, two swing sets, a playground and park benches are also located at this site. There appear to be cracks in the foundation that need to be addressed, which will be discussed in more detail later.

### City Hall Square

City Hall Square is located within the intersection of Market and High Streets. It is adjacent to Perth Amboy City Hall Building, which is the oldest city hall in continuous use in the United States. There are several monuments and memorials located at this Park, such as: the Bill of Rights Arch, Fireman's Triangle (forged in 1883), a 9-11 Memorial, a George Washington Memorial Flag, a replica of the Liberty Bell (dedicated to the Gold Mothers of the State of New Jersey) and a statue of George Washington. Similar to Caledonia & Roessler Park, City Hall Square is centrally located



## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

and is close to the downtown commercial district. The Royal Garden Club by the Bay planted and maintains the Market Square Garden.

### Columbus Circle Park

Located in a suburban neighborhood setting, Columbus Circle Park is completely surrounded by houses. This pocket park contains a basketball court, a playground, picnic tables and benches. It serves the residents in the northwest portion of the City. The park appears to be well maintained.

### Dalton Park

Dalton Park is within a suburban neighborhood and is adjacent to the James J. Flynn Elementary School and the Delaney Housing Complex (PAHA). Located one block west of State Highway 35, the park has two baseball fields, two multipurpose fields, a roller hockey rink, swings and a playground, which appear to be heavily utilized. Vacant or under-utilized land in the vicinity may be considered for possible future expansion. Debris, vandalism and graffiti were observed at this park.

### Duffy Park

Duffy Park is located in the southwestern portion of the City. The surrounding land uses are primarily industrial and commercial with a few houses in the vicinity. During the site visit, LPS observed continuous truck traffic on the adjacent roadways. Seemingly not pedestrian accessible, this park is surrounded by fencing and a locked gate. Duffy Park has a shelter, picnic tables, grills, shade trees and a restroom facility, which has an attractive mural on the side). City residents may rent the park for the day, for a fee, and it is very popular on weekends during the spring and summer.

### Elizabeth Street Playground

Although listed on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), this parcel of land sits vacant and undeveloped. Located on Elizabeth Street and adjacent to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail, it is surrounded by houses on both sides. Originally intended to be a pocket park, the City is now considering other alternatives such as converting this parcel into a community garden.

### Francis Street Playground

The Francis Street Playground is a pocket park located in the northern portion of the City. It is located in a residential neighborhood and is adjacent to the NJ TRANSIT rail line. The park contains a basketball court, a playground, swing set and a few benches. Some of the amenities in this park appear to be in need of repair or replacement. The Jewish Renaissance Foundation has been working to rebuild this park.

### Harborside Walkway, Waterfront Park and Parking Lots

The Harborside complex is located along the Arthur Kill waterfront. This linear park contains a brick-paved walkway, shade trees, park benches, two fishing piers, a beach and 137 boat slips. The Perth Amboy Harborside Marina Building, which is operated by the Perth Amboy Port Authority through a lease agreement, is located within the park. A fishing clinic is offered at the Marina through the Office of Recreation. Historical signs along the trail describe Front Street, Ambo Point and the Raritan Yacht Club. The City of Perth Amboy Veterans' War Memorial, dedicated in 2005, can be found along the walkway. The Hummingbird Garden is planted and maintained by the Royal Garden Club by the Bay. As a result of Super-storm Sandy, the trail boat slips and other park amenities were damaged by rising flood waters. However, the City has since made significant repairs and the park is now open to the community.

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

### Neal J. Lucey Park

Situated in a residential neighborhood, between Williams and Washington Streets, Lucey Park is near Anthony V. Ceres School and Saint Stephen's Catholic School. This park contains two basketball courts, two playground sets and a few park benches and tables. During the site visit, LPS observed the park to be in good overall condition, however, the tables and benches need to be repaired or replaced. A basketball league for children ages 11 to 14 years old is offered by the Office of Recreation at Lucey Park.

### Patten Center Park

Patten Center Park is a pocket park located on Fayette Street, between Reade and Dorsey Streets. The park is mostly surrounded by a residential neighborhood. However, industrial uses that generate steady truck traffic exist on the north side of Fayette Street. A basketball court, a swing set, a playground and several park benches and tables can be found at Patten Park. The park is well landscaped and contains a sculpture of children playing. The Perth Amboy Gallery Center for the Arts is located within Patten Center Park, and several programs offered by the Office of Recreation are held at this location. As described in more detail later, there are several large cracks in the asphalt of the basketball court that may have been caused by settling and need to be further investigated.

### Stanley F. Rudyk Park

Located off of State Street, between the interchange with State Highway 440, Rudyk Park is home to a soccer field, a 1,300 seat lighted baseball stadium, two basketball courts, a concession/storage building, restrooms, a trail, tables and chairs and two playgrounds. The Perth Amboy High School uses these fields for games, and a sign indicates that field use is by permit only. The park has ample parking; located under the approach of the Outerbridge Crossing. Heavy automobile traffic along State Street and the highway ramps, make pedestrian access to the park problematic.

### Sadowski Parkway Tennis Courts and Waterfront Park

On the south side of the Sadowski Parkway is the Waterfront Park. Residents and visitors can enjoy amenities such as a public beach, a walking trail and a fishing pier. Along the boardwalk, there is a historic marker describing the Beach and the Boardwalk. During the site visit, damage from Super-storm Sandy was evident throughout the waterfront area but the City has worked hard to repair damages. Three popular festivals in the City are held annually on the waterfront: the Puerto Rican Festival in June, the Dominican Festival at the end of July and the Mexican Festival in mid-August. On the north side of the Sadowski Parkway is the newly-built Brighton Avenue Community Center and eight tennis courts. The City is planning to resurface and rehabilitate the courts. The Office of Recreation offers tennis programs for children and adults at the Sadowski Tennis Courts.



### Seaman Street Playground

The Seaman Street Playground is a pocket park located off of New Brunswick Avenue and State Route 35 (two significant arterial roads that traverse Perth Amboy). The park is surrounded by residential homes and vacant industrial parcels. It is in close proximity of the City of Perth Amboy Municipal Court and YMCA facility. A basketball court, a swing set, a playground and park benches are found at this park. Although the park is litter free, the sidewalks, benches, playground equipment and basketball court show signs of wear and appear to be in need of repair.

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT



### Truxton Drive Playground

Truxton Park is a pocket park located on the northern edge of the City on Truxton and Florida Grove Drive. Located in a residential setting, Truxton Park is in close proximity to William Warren County Park (Woodbridge Township) and Dalton Park. The park contains a gazebo, swing set, playground, several benches and attractive landscaping. A basketball court was located here in 2003, but has been removed and replaced with a grass field.

### Washington Park

Washington Park is located in a primarily residential neighborhood, along New Brunswick Avenue. A baseball field (Billy Urbanski Field), two basketball courts, a skateboard park, a playground, a restroom/storage building, lights (for nighttime games), ample parking and several park benches can be found at this park. A men's softball league is offered by the Office of Recreation at Washington Park. LPS observed drainage issues that should be addressed in order to avoid flooding and future damage. The orientation of the baseball field was recently changed and could be a contributing factor in these drainage issues. Additionally, the skate park shows signs of wear, and graffiti was observed.

### Albert G. Waters Stadium

Waters Stadium is centrally located off Amboy Avenue. The Stadium contains an artificial turf field (used primarily for football and soccer), a track, lights and bleachers. The facility is used by the Perth Amboy High School and by permit only. A concession stand, restrooms and a storage building are also present. The Office of Recreation offers programs such as T-ball, women's walking for fitness, Red Bull Urban Soccer Training, travel soccer and Red Raiders football. In addition to the Stadium, there is a park that contains a playground, a basketball court and several park benches. The property is owned by the City and leased by the Board of Education. Surrounding land uses include the High School, a cemetery, State Route 440 and a residential neighborhood. The basketball court, perimeter fencing and playground equipment appear in need of repair.



### Youth League Complex

The Veterans Memorial Youth League Complex is located in the northwestern portion of the City. It is home to the Perth Amboy Youth Little League Baseball. The park contains four baseball fields, one multipurpose field (for football and soccer), a playground and the Albert P. Muska Memorial Fieldhouse, which contains concessions, storage and restrooms. The Office of Recreation offers softball, little league baseball, mini football camp and rookie ball at the Youth League Complex.

Willow Pond is situated on the west portion of the park and is the only freshwater impound in the City capable of sustaining waterfowl and fish habitat. The pond is a popular destination and is served by a boardwalk, signage and park benches. With assistance from the DEP, wetland areas have recently been restored. There is a fishing pier located on Willow Pond. Drainage and overuse appear to be the main issues at this park. Canadian geese droppings were evident throughout the park and should be addressed.

## **Other Parks and Recreation Facilities**

As indicated above, the parks included in the site visit and in the above inventory were City-owned parks listed on the ROSI. However, there are other parks and facilities within the City that are used by the Office of Recreation and are available to the citizens of Perth Amboy for recreational purposes. The following parks and facilities were not included on the December 3, 2012 site visit.

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

### Alexander F. Jankowski Center

The Jankowski Community Center is located on Olive Street and is in close proximity to the downtown area. The Perth Amboy Department of Human Services, Office of Recreation is located at this facility. Several programs, such as billiards, a fashion show and many senior programs are held at this facility. Parking at the community center appears to be limited but it is easily accessible by foot and public transit.

### Board of Education Facilities

The City of Perth Amboy Board of Education operates three pre-schools, five elementary schools, two middle schools and the High School. Many of the schools have recreational resources such as playgrounds, basketball courts and fields that are used for various programs offered by the Office of Recreation. The schools that are used by the Office of Recreation include:

- James J. Flynn Elementary School
- Edward J. Patten Elementary School
- Dr. Herbert N. Richardson School
- Robert N. Wilentz Elementary School
- William C. McGinnis Middle School
- Samuel E. Shull Middle School
- Perth Amboy High School

### Other Facilities used by the Office of Recreation

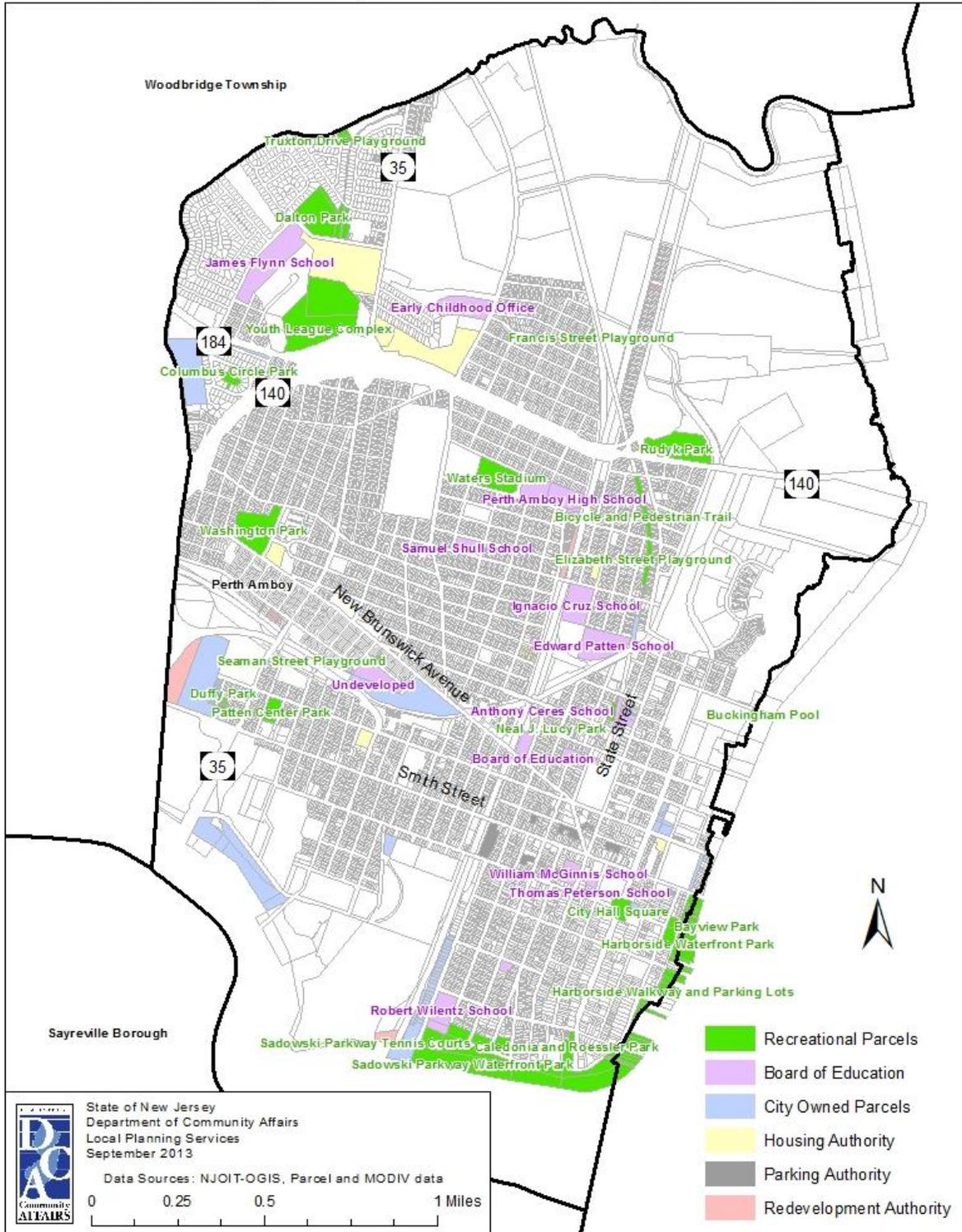
In addition to the Perth Amboy Schools, the Free Public Library is used by the Office of Recreation for its Reading Program. The Perth Amboy Public Safety Community Complex, which is centrally located on New Brunswick Avenue, includes a Health and Wellness Center, family recreation areas and a large aquatics area. The facility houses two indoor sports courts, a track, exercise equipment and two swimming pools. The Raritan Bay YMCA operates the facility and offers swimming programs during the summer. The Perth Amboy Housing Authority owns and maintains some recreation facilities such as a basketball court and playground on Zambory Avenue within its housing complexes. Bowling programs at Majestic Lanes are offered by the City year round. Also, the Office of Recreation sponsors a junior golf camp at the Tamarack County Golf Course in East Brunswick, New Jersey.

### Private Community Parks

The newly built, Harbortown Terrace development has community parks that are used by its residents and contain play areas and basketball courts. These parks are operated and maintained by the Homeowners Associations and are not public property but add to the overall stock of recreation facilities.

Map 2

**Perth Amboy Parks, Schools and other City Owned Parcels**



## State and County Parks

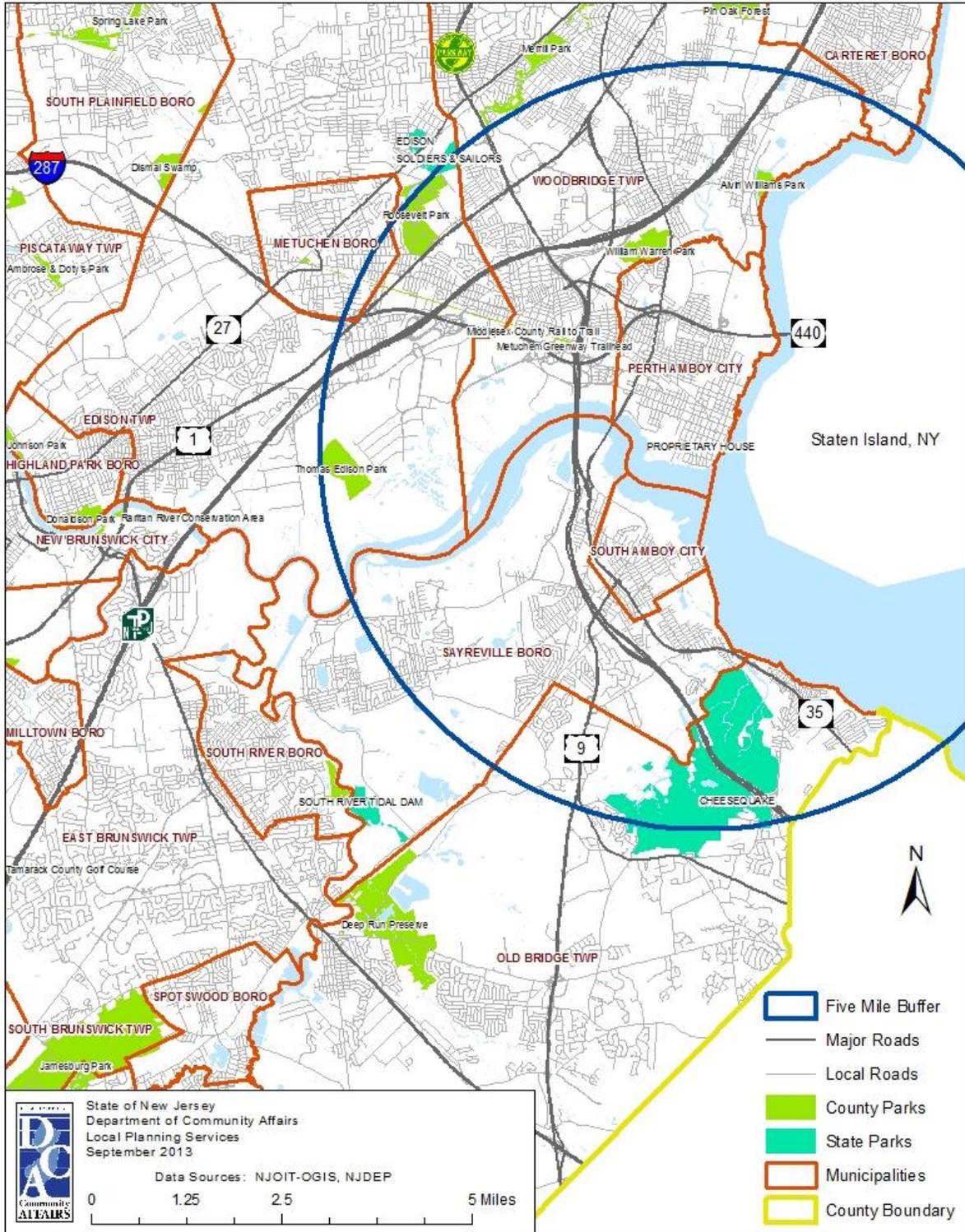
Located in the northeastern portion of Middlesex County, the City of Perth Amboy is part of the New York City Metropolitan Area. The New Jersey Turnpike, Garden State Parkway, Interstate 287 and U.S. Route 9 are nearby and provide convenient linkages to many State and County Parks and recreational attractions in the region. Generally, the recreation facilities within five miles of the center of Perth Amboy can be easily accessed by its residents on a frequent basis (Map 3 shows the State and County recreation facilities within a five mile radius). Parks located in Staten Island, New York, which are within five miles, are not considered as readily available to residents due to the \$13.00 toll on the Outerbridge Crossing and are therefore not listed below.

- Cheesequake State Park, Old Bridge Township, consists of 1,274 acres with an interpretive center, five marked trails and a 6 acre fishing lake. Recreational opportunities at the park consist of camping, swimming, boating, hiking, picnicking, mountain biking, sledding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.
- Thomas Edison State Park, Edison Township, consists of 36 acres and houses the Art Deco Edison Memorial Tower and a museum devoted to Thomas Alva Edison.
- Roosevelt County Park, Edison Township, consists of 217 acres, which includes a fishing lake, an ice skating rink, tennis courts, playing fields, a picnic grove and playgrounds.
- Thomas A. Edison County Park, Edison Township, consists of 161 acres with tennis courts, sports fields, comfort station, track, model airplane field, and running paths.
- William Warren County Park, Woodbridge Township, consists of 126 acres housing playfields, tennis courts, basketball courts, picnic areas and playgrounds. (Located at the Perth Amboy municipal boundary).
- Fords County Park, Woodbridge Township, consists of 18 acres with tennis courts, playing fields, comfort station, pond, picnicking and bicycle and pedestrian trails.
- Merrill County Park, Woodbridge Township, consists of 170 acres with tennis, basketball courts, baseball fields, softball fields, a soccer field, a football field, picnic groves, playgrounds and animal haven.
- Alvin Williams County Park, Woodbridge Township, consists of 39 acres with playfields, amphitheater, picnic groves, playground, pavilion and gardens, bicycle and pedestrian trails and a nature study area.

In addition to the parks listed above, there are several other recreational opportunities available for Perth Amboy residents within the Middlesex County Park system. In total, the County system consists of 36 parks, including three golf courses. The parks encompass 9,018 acres of open space. Of that amount, 4,973 acres are identified as suitable for active and passive recreation, and 4,118 acres are classified as environmentally protected. There are County parks in 21 of the 25 municipalities in Middlesex County. There are no County parks located in Perth Amboy; however, many Middlesex County municipalities use these athletic fields and courts to conduct their summer sports programs. The County provides use of these sites to municipalities in order to extend opportunities to the largest possible number of County's residents.

Map 3

Middlesex County Recreation and Open Space



## Comparison to Recreation Standards

The 2003 Recreation Element compared the amount of parks and open space in Perth Amboy to several recognized planning standards. According to the 2003 Recreation Element, Perth Amboy had 108 acres of parks and open space. When compared to the New Jersey Balanced Land Use standard, which is based on three percent of developable or developed land being available as parkland or open space, Perth Amboy exceeded the amount by 16 acres. However, the City demonstrates a shortage of parkland when compared to other standards. For example, New York City uses a standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons. In Perth Amboy, this results in a deficit of open space and parkland equaling 9.4 acres. The New Jersey Green Acres standard of 8 acres per 1,000 persons also results in the City having a deficit of parkland (269.9 acres). The 2003 Recreation Element notes that the Green Acres standard does not take into consideration Perth Amboy’s fully developed and densely populated character and therefore should not be used as a measure of the adequacy of the City’s parks and open space inventory.

As an alternative to focusing on the amount of land area dedicated to parks and open space, the National Recreation and Park Association publishes guidelines basing the amount of recreational facilities on population. In addition, the Urban Planning Design Criteria 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by DeChiara/Koppelman and the American Planning Association Standards for Outdoor Recreational Areas publish national standards. Using these published sources it is possible to analyze the demand for recreation facilities, versus supply, based on Perth Amboy’s population. The following chart demonstrates the ideal number of recreation facilities for a community with a population of 50,000. Map 4 shows the location and the type of the recreational facilities discussed in the comparison below.

**Table 9: Recreation Guidelines Comparison**

Active Recreation Facilities	Number per 1,000 people	Population of 50,000	Number of facilities Recommended	Facilities within the City		Deficit
				City-owned Parks	Other Parks	
Children’s Play Area (with equipment)	1	1,000	50	12	8	30
Tennis	0.5	2,000	25	8	0	17
Basketball (Outdoor)	0.2	5,000	10	11	1	-
Softball	0.2	5,000	10	8	0	12
Baseball	0.2	5,000	10			
Soccer	0.1	10,000	5	5	0	2
Football	0.05	20,000	2			
Outdoor Pool	0.05	20,000	2	0	0	2
Indoor Rec. Building	0.002	50,000	1	1	1	-
Gazebo	0.002	50,000	1	3	0	-
Senior Center	0.002	50,000	1	1	0	-

Source: Taken From standards published in "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines" National Recreation and Park Association and "Urban Planning and Design Criteria 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition" by DeChiara/Koppelman

This comparison reveals a clear need for more recreation facilities in Perth Amboy. To meet the standard of one per thousand residents, Perth Amboy would need to increase its inventory by an additional 30 playgrounds. Although the amount of land area dedicated to open space and parks is sufficient for a mid-sized City such as Perth Amboy, the geographic distribution of the parks and open space in the City is uneven. According to the guidelines, the City needs 12 more baseball/softball fields and two more football/soccer fields to meet the needs of a city of 50,000 residents. Tennis has a long tradition in Perth Amboy, yet there is a need for 12 more courts to meet a one per 2,000 person standard. With Perth

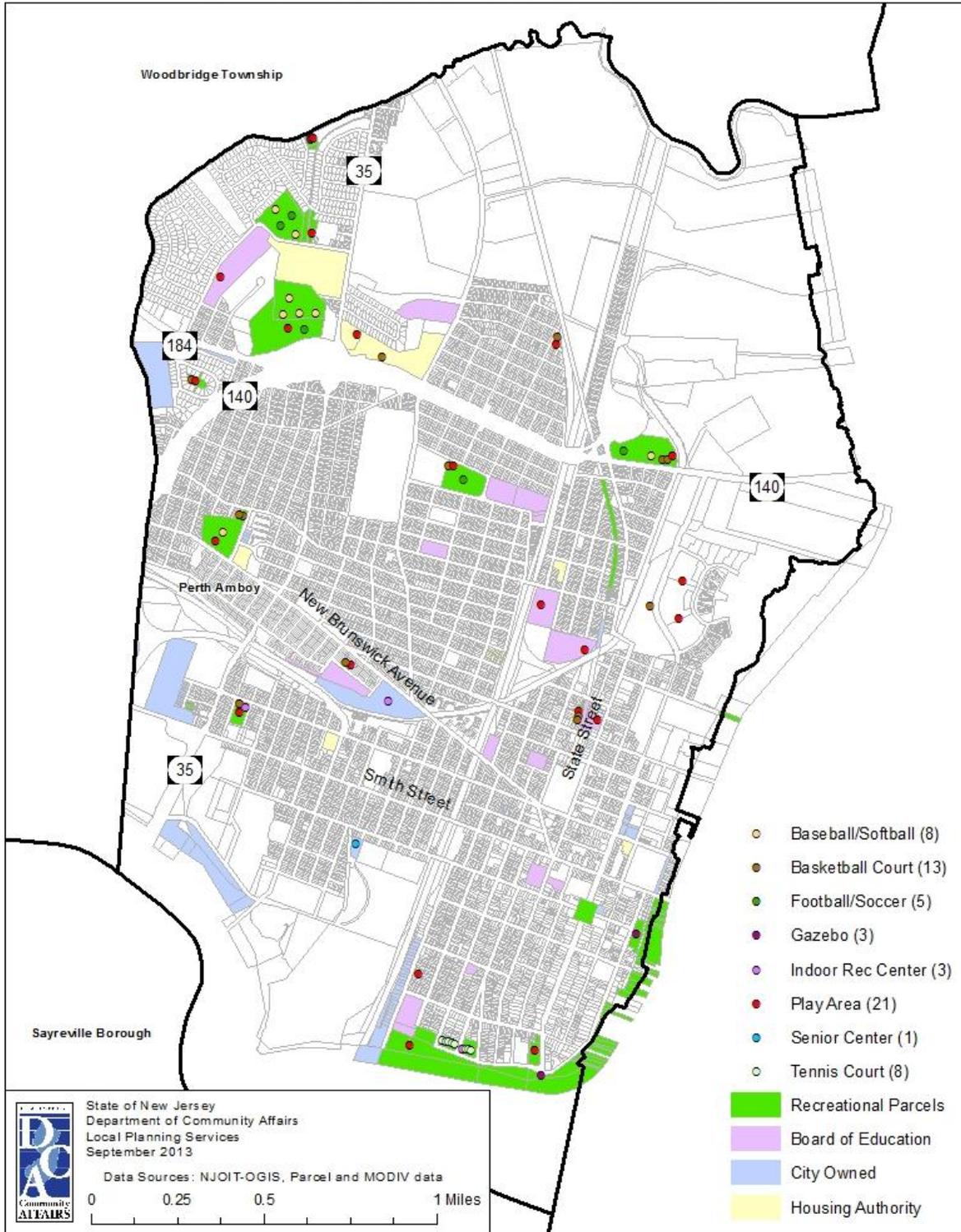
## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

Amboy's large community of people of Latino decent comes a high demand for soccer fields. It is recommended that Perth Amboy provide more than the National Recreation and Park Association's recommended number of fields in order to meet the demand that exists in Perth Amboy.



Map 4

**Perth Amboy Active Recreation Facilities**



## Public Participation

### Focus Group Sessions

To successfully develop strategies and goals for the Recreation Element, the City of Perth Amboy Office of Recreation and LPS requested input from the residents of the community. On Saturday morning, March 9, 2013, the City hosted a day of focus group sessions at the Alexander F. Jankowski Center. Over 35 stakeholders, from a variety of backgrounds were encouraged to generate ideas and develop recommendations to be further explored and incorporated within the Recreation Element. Participants were assigned and asked to contribute to one of the following three focus groups:

1. Active Recreation and Organized Athletics – This focus group had the task of investigating and recommending strategies to improve the quality, availability, accessibility and maintenance of the athletic fields and basketball and tennis courts with a focus on Rudyk, Washington and Dalton parks, the Youth League Complex, Sadowski Tennis Courts and Waters Stadium. Participants involved with the various sports leagues within Perth Amboy tended to join this group.
2. Passive Recreation and Waterfront Activities – This focus group had the task of investigating and recommending strategies to improve the existing conditions, uses and aesthetics of passive recreation facilities with a focus on Harborside and Sadowski Waterfront, Bayview, Buckingham and Duffy parks, the Bike and Pedestrian Trail and City Hall Square. Passive recreation, also called "low intensity recreation" capitalizes on the open-space aspect of a park and allows for the preservation of natural habitat. It usually involves a low level of development, such as picnic areas, benches and trails. Perth Amboy also has the benefit of its placement on the Raritan Bay, which provides a lovely backdrop for the waterfront trail and open space around it, and also offers beaches and fishing opportunities.
3. Community Park Enhancements (Pocket Parks and Tot Lots) – This Focus Group had the task of investigating and recommending strategies to improve the availability and attractiveness of neighborhood parks and playgrounds with a focus on Seaman Street and Francis Street Playgrounds, Patten, Truxton, Columbus Circle, Lucey and Caledonia & Roessler parks. Recreational opportunities for children under seven years old were also a priority for this group.

The event began with welcoming remarks by Mayor Wilda Diaz and Kenneth Ortiz, Director of Human Services. Attendees were provided with background materials and a brief explanation of the day's agenda. Participants then broke into the three focus groups, led by facilitators from LPS, where they had the opportunity to discuss existing conditions within the community (strengths and weaknesses), develop goals and objectives, and propose action steps to achieve the desired future. Each group kept detailed notes, which were shared with the other attendees and can be found in a separate document on file with the Office of Recreation.

During the second half of the meeting, the participants reconvened and a spokesperson from each focus group was selected to present the recommendations to the full audience. After the presentations, the recommendations were displayed on the walls of the Jankowski Center for all the attendees to view. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants had the opportunity to "cast votes" for the recommendations that they felt were the most important to implement. The results of the voting are discussed further in the next section and will be used a point of reference for the recommendations made in this document.

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

### Focus Group Voting Results

During the voting portion of the focus group meeting, participants were given five stickers to post next to the recommendations that they felt were most important to include within the Recreation Element. After the voting concluded, staff tallied a total of 127 votes was cast by approximately 28 participants for 22 recommendations. A detailed summary of the voting results can be found in a separate document provided to the City. Below is a list of the 22 recommendations from the meeting, arranged by the number of votes. It is important to note that although some recommendations received more votes than other, all input from the focus groups was considered and further explored during the preparation of the Recreation Element. In addition, it should be noted that some participants left early and did not vote.

1. Designate and permit more recreational uses on the water (i.e. swimming, volleyball) – 15
2. Replace natural grass field with artificial turf fields – 12
3. Strengthen and/or build partnerships with professional associations in the area – 12
4. Create an outdoor performing arts facility or amphitheater – 12
5. Construct an indoor sports complex – 9
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive Park Safety Program – 9
7. Hire or assign a dedicated staff person for grant writing/resource development – 7
8. Continue outreach to businesses and corporations for sponsorships, donations – 6
9. Make improvement to and extend the Bike Pedestrian Trail (i.e. connect with the Waterfront) – 6
10. Develop more evening recreation programs especially for young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 years old – 5
11. Review current waterfront ordinances and suggest modifications – 5
12. Create informational clinics for coaches, parents and other volunteers – 4
13. Investigate strategies to permit swimming at the beach – 4
14. Encourage bicycling within the City by conducting a study, adding bike lanes and bike racks – 3
15. Create more passive recreational activities for residents such as exercise stations, dominos – 3
16. Assess and improve the maintenance operations and procedures – 2
17. Designate an area as a dog park – 3
18. Encourage more community involvement – 3
19. Exhibit art publically along the Waterfront Esplanade (both temporary and permanent) – 2
20. Collaborate with other municipalities that are reconstructing their waterfront parks – 2
21. Promote Perth Amboy as a “Healthy City” – 2
22. Phase in improvements based on Focus Group Results – 1



## Recreation Survey Results

At the March 9, 2013 Focus Group Meeting, LPS distributed an informal survey to the participants in attendance. The results of the survey were instrumental in drafting the goals, objectives and recommendations in this Recreation Element. Participants were asked a series of questions regarding their age; whether they have children; which park they visit most often; their mode of transportation to the park; what activities they enjoy at the park and what types of activities were missing from the parks. Twenty-two surveys were returned and processed by LPS. A few noteworthy findings are listed below:

- Most respondents live within a mile or less of their favorite park
- Most respondents drive or walk to a park, few ride a bicycle and none take public transit
- Park use was split almost evenly between active and passive recreational activities
- Maintenance issues and more park amenities were important issues to the respondents

## Analysis of Conditions

After reviewing the recommendations made by the focus groups, LPS staff identified several common themes important to the participants. To better address these themes, similar recommendations were organized into broader categories. In addition to the focus group meetings, LPS met with the City's Recreation Office, Planning Board, Recreation Advisory Committee and other key personnel to further identify goals and objectives to be included in this document. With input provided by the City and its citizens, as well as field observations, LPS staff crafted six over-arching goals, which encompass the needs and concerns of the community.

- 1. Improve the Maintenance of Existing Parks**
- 2. Improve Access, Safety and Awareness at Park Facilities**
- 3. Ensure the Current Park System Meets the Needs of the Community**
- 4. Expand Recreational Opportunities beyond the Existing Inventory**
- 5. Pursue Additional Funding Opportunities for Park Improvements**
- 6. Promote the Use of Recreational Programs and Facilities**



LPS worked with the City to develop objectives and recommendations in order to implement each of the goals described above. The following section of the Recreation Element outlines the goals, objectives and recommendations that will enhance and improve the parks and recreational activities within the City of Perth Amboy over the next ten year period. These recommendations are based on 1) discussions with the City of Perth Amboy staff, 2) an analysis of existing conditions, 3) a review of the existing Recreation Element and 4) input from the public through the focus group sessions.

## Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

### GOAL 1: Improve the Maintenance of Existing Parks

Maintenance of the existing parks and recreational facilities was identified as a high priority by both the City staff and the focus groups participants. Maintenance issues vary from day-to-day upkeep to long-term repairs and replacements. Presently, limited funding and staff resources hinder the City's ability to complete the array of maintenance tasks that must be performed in a consistent and timely manner. As a result, instances of vandalism, worn and damaged equipment, litter and poor field conditions are evident

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at some of the parks. To alleviate these conditions and ensure a clean, safe and desirable park system, it is important for the City to develop and implement a coordinated comprehensive maintenance plan.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Improve interdepartmental coordination**

Presently, the City of Perth Amboy Public Works Department (PWD) is responsible for maintenance at all City-owned properties. The PWD consists of 69 employees tasked with a wide range of operations that support the following divisions: engineering, road repair, solid waste, parks, buildings and grounds and vehicle maintenance. The needs of all the City's departments must be considered when the PWD schedules, prioritizes and assigns its staff to handle routine and emergency maintenance tasks. Currently, maintenance issues specific to parks and recreation facilities are handled by either the Parks Division or the Buildings and Grounds Division of the PWD. Neither the PWD nor Office of Recreation has dedicated staff person(s) solely responsible for park maintenance. Therefore, prioritizing, coordinating and scheduling maintenance at the City's park facilities can be challenging and time consuming.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for assigning and prioritizing maintenance tasks among all City departments.*
- *Dedicate a DPW staff person to coordinate maintenance tasks with the Office of Recreation.*
- *Schedule a regular monthly (or bi-monthly, as necessary) meeting between the PWD and the Office of Recreation to discuss ongoing maintenance issues.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure park equipment is repaired and replaced**

Repairs and replacements of recreational equipment need to occur promptly to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the residents who use the City's parks. Currently, playground and athletic equipment and park furniture (i.e., benches and picnic tables) at City parks show evidence of wear, damage and misuse. Additionally, cracks in the rubberized ground surfaces and asphalt surfaces at the tennis courts, basketball courts and walking paths have been observed at several parks, such as Patten Park, the Sadowski Tennis Courts, the Seaman Street Playground and Caledonia & Roessler Park. Drainage and sloping issues at the athletic fields and courts (i.e., Washington Park and the Youth League Complex) have caused flooding, which may lead to the cancellation of sporting events. Some recreational equipment has specialized maintenance needs, such as the skate park at Washington Park, which was constructed with materials unique to the manufacturer. Beach re-nourishment is an on-going, long-term responsibility of the City. Such projects must be planned and budgeted for in advance.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Develop a cost-effective and implementable maintenance plan containing Best Management Practices for repairing and replacing equipment and infrastructure.*
- *Conduct an engineering and/or geotechnical analysis to identify the cause of the cracks in the asphalt at the City's basketball courts. Determine the appropriate course of remediation (i.e., repair or replacement).*
- *Identify the cause(s) of flooding at the City's fields. Investigate strategies, such as redesign, water capture, diversion and storage, in order to avoid game cancellations and further damage.*
- *Investigate ways to improve the City's partnerships with suppliers, contractors, architects and engineers in order to streamline maintenance and operations and reduce expenses.*



### **OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure routine maintenance tasks are done consistently on a scheduled basis**

In addition to the long-term capital improvements that need to be made at the City's parks and recreational facilities, other maintenance tasks must be done routinely, on a scheduled basis. The City may organize tasks by the frequency in which they need to be performed (*daily/weekly, monthly, seasonally, annually and as needed*). For example, littering and overflowing trash receptacles have been identified as an issue at some parks. Therefore, more frequent trash removal should be considered and

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conducted on a daily or weekly basis, as appropriate. Similarly, recreational facilities, restrooms and concession stands also need to be cleaned on a daily or weekly basis. Other tasks, such as landscaping, may be accomplished on a monthly basis. Tasks such as replacing mulch at playgrounds and gravel at parking lots may be scheduled on a seasonal basis. Finally, tasks such as field preparation need to be accomplished on an ad-hoc basis, as determined by athletic league schedules.

*Recommendation:*

- *Assign a dedicated staff person to monitor and inspect parks and recreational facilities on a scheduled basis to identify immediate maintenance concerns, such as graffiti removal or damaged or unsafe equipment.*
- *Develop an easily implementable maintenance schedule which prioritizes tasks in order of frequency (daily/weekly, monthly, seasonally, annually and as needed).*
- *Encourage and support volunteer and citizen organizations to assist with the general upkeep of the City’s parks. This can be achieved through continued support and promotion of the existing “Adopt a Park Program.” Additionally, the City may consider storing maintenance equipment on-site in order to empower volunteers to maintain facilities. Sheds or trailers would need to be purchased or constructed but may be offset by the savings of transporting equipment.*

**Table 10: Sample list of routine maintenance tasks**

Landscaping and Grounds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeding/Planting</li> <li>• Fertilize</li> <li>• Irrigate</li> <li>• Weed Control</li> <li>• Mowing</li> <li>• Pest Control</li> <li>• Tree Trimming</li> <li>• Mulching</li> <li>• Trash/Litter Removal</li> </ul>
Event Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stripe/line fields</li> <li>• Patch/fill holes and divots</li> <li>• Situate equipment such as goals, bleachers, etc.</li> </ul>
Cleaning (debris/graffiti removal, restock supplies) and Safety Inspections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic Fields and Courts</li> <li>• Playground Equipment</li> <li>• Buildings/Concessions/Restrooms</li> <li>• Picnic Areas</li> <li>• Park Furniture</li> <li>• Other Infrastructure such as fencing, sidewalks, lighting and scoreboards</li> </ul>

**GOAL 2: Improve Access, Safety and Awareness at Park Facilities**

Most of the parks in Perth Amboy are easily accessible by automobile due to their close proximity to arterial roadways. All of the parks (with the exception of the parks along the waterfront) are within a quarter mile of at least one of the five arterial thoroughfares in Perth Amboy: Smith Street (County Route 656), State Street (County Route 611), New Brunswick Avenue (County Route 624), Convery Boulevard (State Route 35) and State Highway 440. The parks, which host sporting events, appear to have ample parking lots to accommodate large crowds. Where parking lots are absent, (for example at the pocket parks) on-street parking is available. However, according to 2011 American Community Survey data,

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23.3% of the households in Perth Amboy have no vehicle available and 38.8% have one vehicle available. Therefore, residents need other transportation options that are safe and convenient.

Additionally, the focus group participants identified improved safety and awareness as a top priority at the parks throughout the City. The recommendations outlined below are aimed to reduce the perception that the City's parks are unsafe by increasing the City and its citizen's participation and awareness.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to recreation facilities**

Heavy traffic and high speeds can be a barrier to residents who choose to walk or bicycle to parks within the City. Additionally, a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks and signage can also deter residents from walking or bicycling. Residents in the south-central portion of the City live more than a quarter mile walk to the nearest park, which may discourage walking. These impediments are particularly difficult for parents with young children to overcome. All of the City parks (with the exception of the waterfront parks) are within a quarter mile of NJ TRANSIT bus service. However, an informal survey conducted at the focus group meeting revealed that none of the respondents used public transportation to get to the park that they most frequent. Map 5 shows the proximity of the bus routes and road network to the City's parks.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Identify routes commonly used by residents to access parks that may be unsafe and improve their safety or create viable alternate routes that are safe.*
- *Investigate strategies that could increase the level of comfort of potential walkers (i.e., lower speed limits, better signage, more crosswalks and additional sidewalks).*
- *Continue to improve the accessibility of the City's parks to residents with special needs.*
- *Coordinate with NJ TRANSIT to improve bus service for park users. For example, offer discounts for residents attending recreational programs from underserved areas.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Increase safety at parks by improving design**

Focus group members indicated that few parks in the City of Perth Amboy have lights, which may lead to residents feeling unsafe during evening hours. Improved design, with added security equipment, may deter vandalism and loitering and encourage a greater level of comfort for residents who use the parks.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Investigate the installation of lighting fixtures (motion detecting), signage, emergency phones and security cameras in strategic locations in order to create a higher level of comfort for residents.*

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Increase awareness at parks**

Focus group participants expressed concern regarding loitering and vandalism at parks. They also indicated that when supervision and/or enforcement are not present, park equipment and facilities are not always used properly, which may lead to damage and/or unsafe conditions. When unlawful activity or vandalism is observed, residents may be reluctant to report incidents for fear of retaliation.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Encourage neighborhood groups, park users and homeowners immediately surrounding the City's parks to develop a park watch and/or safety program in each park area.*
- *Reach out to the City of Perth Amboy Police Department to document and coordinate efforts to control park vandalism and enforce existing ordinances such as loitering after hours.*
- *Empower residents to report misuse and vandalism by implementing an anonymous tip-line.*
- *Install signs at the City's parks to ensure proper usage. Example: (NOTICE TO USERS -These Courts shall be used for TENNIS PLAY ONLY in accordance with City Ordinance #...)*

Map 5

Access to Recreational Facilities in Perth Amboy



**GOAL 3: Ensure the Current Park System Meets the Needs of the Community**

The City of Perth Amboy boasts a vibrant and active recreational program and park system for its residents. On any given day there are many activities taking place at the parks and centers across the City. From the focus group information and analysis of the park system, however, there are some deficiencies that should be addressed to ensure that the needs of all residents are met to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, a minor expansion of current activities could appeal to a broader range of users.

As one might expect, residents want to get the best possible experience with the greatest number of activities from their park and recreational system. So the state of the existing parks and fields, in combination with the number and variety of activities provided, is important. Focus group participants expressed a need to increase the capacity at the current parks to accommodate a greater variety of activities. The most popular additions requested were an outdoor swimming pool, more waterfront activities (i.e., volleyball, sailing and kayaking), an outdoor performance space, an indoor sports complex and an exercise circuit. These additional activities and facilities are discussed in more detail below.

**OBJECTIVE 1: Add additional facilities to existing parks to accommodate more activities**

As described earlier, the current number of sports fields in Perth Amboy is below national standards. The City has a very active youth sports program, which includes baseball, softball, soccer, basketball and football. Other organized sports leagues within Perth Amboy compete for the same fields during peak playing seasons and fields are typically booked solid throughout the week. As a result, the fields and court facilities are in high demand, which requires effectively juggling the needs of a variety of different leagues. With a lack of lighted fields, scheduling is very tight and fields are overused. The City, LPS and focus group participants discussed sites that may be further investigated for field use as well as how to better coordinate the various competing users. For example, converting grass fields to artificial turf fields will decrease poor field conditions, which may lessen cancellations. Also, utilizing other City-owned properties (i.e., the Board of Education), re-aligning fields and creating smaller, age-appropriate fields for younger children will allow the City to maximize the full potential of its existing recreational land.

In addition to expanding facilities for the sports programs, the focus group participants expressed an interest in increasing the performing and visual arts facilities and programs. Residents recommended that the City construct or enhance an existing outdoor performing arts stage or amphitheater. Bayview Park was appropriately mentioned as a potential place for an expanded performance space to accommodate different types of music and shows. To improve the existing inventory of parks, the Office of Recreation has proposed several improvements within the latest budget (see below). In future budget requests, the Office of Recreation should consider the recommendations made by the focus group members.

**Table 11: Improvements Requested in Current Capital Program Budget**

Line Item	Year Completed	Cost
Caledonia Park Playground Surface (DPW)	2013	\$115,000
Field Lighting Reconstruction – Youth Memorial Complex	2014	\$363,000
Youth Memorial Complex – Synthetic Turf Field	2015	\$937,000
Skateboard Park – Replace Concrete (DPW)	2015	\$172,500
Veteran Memorial Field Drainage Improvement (DPW)	2015	\$162,000
Tennis Courts Revitalization	2016	\$335,000
Seaman Street Park Replace Playground Equipment (DPW)	2016	\$300,000
Frances Street Park Reconstruction (DPW and Rec)	2017	\$490,000
Duffy Park Replace Shelter Overhang	2018	\$57,500

Source: City of Perth Amboy

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*Recommendation:*

- *Ensure that the recreation projects contained in the current budget and identified in this Recreation Element are completed.*
- *Encourage coordination between the Office of Recreation and the Planning Board to develop an implementable, long-term Recreation Capital Improvement Plan.*
- *Develop the Elizabeth Street Playground site into a tot-lot or community garden.*
- *Expand current facilities to increase opportunities for the visual and performing arts.*
- *Investigate installation of an exercise circuit on or near the walking trail along the waterfront.*
- *Explore the realignment of current fields and the utilization of other current land resources, such as the Board of Education and City-owned property, for multi-purpose uses. In addition, youth fields should be sized appropriately, according to age groups. For example, U.S. Youth Soccer recommends smaller fields for younger leagues (see chart below). Map 6 demonstrates an example of how smaller sized fields may be situated on Board of Education and City-owned property to accommodate younger age groups. A similar analysis could be done for other sports.*

**Table 12: Dimensions for Youth Soccer Fields**

Age Group	Field Width (feet)	Field Length (feet)
U6	45-75	60-90
U8	60-90	75-105
U10	105-135	135-180
U12	135-165	210-270
U14 and up	150-300	300-390

Source: U.S. Youth Soccer

**OBJECTIVE 2: Create new recreational programs for a diverse set of users**



An effective recreational program should provide opportunities for all residents living in Perth Amboy. As discussed previously, focus group participants expressed concern over a lack of activities for children under six years old and teenagers/young adults. When expanding current facilities and designing new recreational programs, the City should consider the needs of all age groups, both in terms of suitable equipment and scheduling needs. For example, programs for teens and young adults are more likely to be well attended if offered in the evening or on weekends. The very young and the elderly, in contrast, may be more available during the day. Basketball courts, skateboard parks, and similar active recreational facilities are appropriate for youth and young adults, whereas seniors may prefer passive recreational activities such as walking trails or community gardens.

The Office of Recreation offers a variety of opportunities to participate in competitive organized sports leagues, instructional leagues and individual programs during all four seasons in the year. In addition to sports, the Office of Recreation offers classes ranging from guitar lessons to arts and crafts to film. Most programs offered are free; others have a nominal registration fee (including Karate, Fitness, and Bowling), which allows these programs to pay for themselves. All programs are advertised to the public.

*Recommendation:*

- *Continue to consider the varying needs of all segments of the City’s population (i.e., age and ethnic diversity) when designing and scheduling the City’s overall recreational program.*
- *Continue to coordinate with other organizations to learn what opportunities for partnering might exist to enhance the offerings of the Office of Recreation.*

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- *Create and promote recreational programs designed especially for teenagers and young adults by conducting outreach to teenagers to learn what kinds of activities will entice them to join a class and by lowering the age for appropriate adult programs to include older teenagers.*
- *Prioritize recreational programs and facilities that accommodate very young children by including a class or activity for young children at classes for older children and adults.*

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Increase recreational activities on and adjacent to the waterfront**

Although Perth Amboy is located near the mouth of the Raritan Bay at the confluence of the Raritan River and the Arthur Kill, the City currently does not have a public beach or outdoor pool available for swimming to its residents. As previously discussed the beaches in the community, once filled with swimmers, were subsequently closed due to contamination in Raritan Bay. However, recently the quality of the water surrounding Perth Amboy was tested by the Department of Environmental Protection and has been deemed safe for swimming. Opening up the water for swimming and the beaches for new activities should continue to be explored and quickly effectuated. Doing so would provide a venue for outdoor



swimming, which the City does not currently have, would increase the availability of outdoor recreational space, and would be a draw for tourists and have a positive impact on the City's economic development. It would certainly be a cause for celebration.

It is important to keep in mind that there is a natural conflict between swimmers, boaters and fishermen that will require careful consideration of timing and space for each activity. The City needs to conduct its due diligence to ensure the safety of its residents. All of the ramifications of permitting swimming and pursuing new activities on the beaches should be considered by the City.

Among the impediments associated with permitting public swimming is supervision. The beaches must have trained/certified lifeguards on-duty. Hiring lifeguards and purchasing equipment will create a cost-generation issue that the City will need to consider. Another issue that must be addressed is the City's combined sewage outflows that are within the vicinity of the public beaches. The effect of the outflows on public swimming must be further investigated as part of an overall plan for public beach usage.

Increased usage of the water and beaches means that more people will be frequenting the waterfront for its various activities. More people using the beaches means more opportunities for public participation in activities in that area. The focus group participants were enthusiastic about visual and performing arts along the waterfront, and the traffic that open beaches would bring would suggest that an open arts festival or on-going artists in residence program would be a welcome addition.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Coordinate with the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee to implement the recommendations made and the investments suggested in their final report.*
- *Develop a comprehensive strategy to permit swimming in the Raritan River that is cost-effective and ensures the safety of the public. Continue to conduct periodic testing of water quality.*
- *Review and consider revisions to municipal ordinances that pertain to waterfront activities to ensure that desirable activities on beaches and in the water are allowed. Change the signage accordingly.*
- *Coordinate with stakeholders (i.e., yacht club) to make decisions on safety issues and boat ramps.*
- *Create new clubs, or expand existing clubs that use the water, such as the Kayak Institute.*
- *Place time and location constraints on fishing to ensure that swimmers and boaters are not endangered.*

Map 6

Examples of Possible Athletic Field Configuration



**GOAL 4: Expand Recreational Opportunities beyond the Existing Inventory**

Expanding the existing inventory of parks through additional acquisitions or expansion of the current park system would promote interconnectedness between Perth Amboy’s parks and may result in the more even distribution of parks throughout the City. Parks should be located so that they are easily accessible to users. For example, children’s playgrounds should be located within walking distance (e.g., one quarter mile) of families with small children. Bicycle paths should be incorporated into a wider system of marked bike lanes.

Currently there are many residential neighborhoods within Perth Amboy without parks or playgrounds within a comfortable walking distance. Locations for small open space areas and pocket parks, which would include playground equipment, benches and landscaping in the neighborhoods surrounding the Central Business District, should be identified. In order to adequately meet national recreation standards and the growing demand from a growing population, Perth Amboy should consider expanding its park system to accommodate more athletic fields, waterfront activities and bicycle paths and designated bicycle routes throughout the City.

**OBJECTIVE 1: Identify vacant or under-utilized parcels for park expansion**

To accommodate the demand for additional recreational activities and facilities, the City will need to look to expand its existing inventory of park space. A review of tax records from the State Treasury Department shows several vacant parcels in the City that should be investigated for future acquisition. In addition, there are other parcels owned by the City of Perth Amboy, the Redevelopment Authority and the Housing Authority that may be suitable for additional recreational facilities. The FOCUS 2000 Report and the 2009 Perth Amboy Redevelopment Agency Performance Report identified several areas within the City that may potentially accommodate a recreational component. Map 7 shows vacant parcels and redevelopment areas that may be further investigated for expansion of Perth Amboy’s recreation facilities.

**Table 13: Areas to investigate for the expansion of the existing park system**

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convery Boulevard/Smith Street (City Landfill) has a history of a lack of financial viability and the Perth Amboy Redevelopment Authority continues to search for a developer. Adjacent to Duffy Park, this parcel may be considered for open space.</li> <li>• Small, infill vacant lots, especially in the central portion of the City, where use as pocket parks may be appropriate.</li> <li>• King and Smith Streets – Streetscape improvements will include a new park (active and passive), a new public space, a pedestrian path, landscaping, lighting and street furniture.</li> <li>• Landings at Harborside – A large residential development on the waterfront, originally proposed to contain additional open space and parks. Currently, the project has stalled, and it seems unlikely that the planned improvements will progress as previously contemplated.</li> <li>• The property on the Northeast Corner of Washington and High Streets to the water should be included as a potential site for a future park or amphitheater. The City may also consider this vacant land for a future boat launch. Riverview Center (88 acres between the Victory Bridge and the CoSteel facility) – the developer will provide a neighborhood park and financial assistance to the City to construct further improvements to the City’s linear park along the Raritan Bay, capitalizing on the waterfront views and pedestrian path.</li> <li>• Second Street Park Acquisition in 2004 – The City acquired the former Goldberg Property with the purpose to remediate and use for recreation improvements/car topper boat launch.</li> </ul> |
|--|

*Recommendation:*

- *Examine the identified vacant, available parcels for expansion of the recreation network.*
- *Prioritize potential land acquisitions serving the greater needs first, such as identifying parcels in the south-central part of the City for pocket parks and large parcels for additional athletic fields.*

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- *Due to the limited availability of uncontaminated large parcels of land, Perth Amboy should coordinate with other public or quasi-public entities that own land suitable for recreational use.*
- *Investigate an alternative site to Buckingham Avenue for a future City-owned outdoor pool, or focus on using the beaches and waterfront as an outdoor swimming venue as set forth above.*
- *Perth Amboy has significant unmet recreation needs as documented in this report particularly recreation fields, neighborhood playgrounds and indoor evening youth activity facilities such as bowling, cinema, theater. All development and redevelopment projects brought before the Board, particularly multi-family or large commercial projects, should be reviewed with these community needs in mind. The Planning Board should seek developer involvement in addressing these needs.*
- *The city can use vacant or underused lots as community gardens either as an interim measure while community and monetary support is being gathered or as a permanent recreation opportunity. The City could partner with the Royal Garden Club and with the local schools to create a program that teaches children and their families about healthy eating and where food comes from while significantly improving the condition of neighborhoods.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance and expand the waterfront esplanade and park facilities**



A significant component of the 2003 Recreation Element was the continued upgrading and development of the Arthur Kill/Raritan Bay waterfront esplanade. The 2003 Recreation Element states that the waterfront esplanade is a linear park proposed to span the entire length of the City's waterfront from Woodbridge Creek at the northern edge of the City to Route 35 along the southwestern edge of the City. It is intended to create uninterrupted access to the waterfront, and provide active and passive recreational

opportunities and links to the waterfront communities of the City. During the next several years, Perth Amboy's waterfront walkway will be significantly expanded as redevelopment along the waterfront accelerates. Planned areas include sections along the Landings at Harborside and Harbortown, which will extend this linear park an additional mile along the Arthur Kill.

In October 2012 Super-storm Sandy seriously damaged Perth Amboy's waterfront area. At the time of drafting this document, the City is hard at work to rebuild and expand its waterfront. In response to the impact of the storm, the City created the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee in January 2013. The Committee's mission is to study and prioritize projects needed to stabilize, replace, enhance and restore facilities and infrastructure destroyed by Sandy. The Advisory Committee issued its first report in March 2013. The report makes numerous recommendations concerning the reconstruction and future use of the waterfront area. The Committee recognizes that the City's coastline along the Raritan Bay and Arthur Kill is an important environmental habitat and valuable marine resource. The report emphasizes that all activities, development and expansion should be planned to maximize sustainability, minimize environmental impacts and aim towards the recovery and growth of natural habitats and improved water quality.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Maintain the area at the Landings Development between Front Street and the seawall as public open space.*
- *Encourage the recommendations made in the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee Report, which include the reconstruction of the Harborside Marina and the restoration of the seawalls and revetments, the municipal marina and Bayview Park as the primary priorities.*
- *Modify the pavilion at Bayview Park to allow for additional uses; currently its construction and style impedes audience view of performances. In addition, a larger enclosed or covered performance area should be added to this area.*
- *Investigate placement of a new boat ramp, possibly located at the end of Buckingham Avenue.*



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- *The 2003 Recreation Element states additional opportunities to increase public access to the waterfront will be provided and the development of the City's planned waterfront esplanade will continue as redevelopment projects are initiated along the waterfront. Pending redevelopment projects offer the opportunity to link existing waterfront parks and provide public waterfront access where none currently exists. Foremost among these is the Landings at Harborside Project, and the future waterfront development at Harbortown, both along the eastern waterfront of the City. The implementation of these projects is encouraged since they will greatly expand the existing waterfront esplanade and form the basis for similar extensions along the southern shore beyond Second Street and to the west.*

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Create a cohesive system of on-road bicycle lanes and bicycle trails**

The 2003 Perth Amboy Master Plan and Recreation Element and the 2003 Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan lay out the foundation for a system of bicycle trails and paths. Additionally, the Waterfront Recovery and Redevelopment Advisory Committee Report includes the construction and designation of a bike path (where a bike path is infeasible) and the designation of a multi-use path where now only pedestrians are permitted. The report also mentions that bike lanes should be expanded to access the Middlesex Greenway and the East Coast Greenway (see below). The vision for the bike path is shared by the Business Improvement District (BID), the Royal Garden Club and Middlesex County. Map 8 shows the location of the Esplanade, proposed bike routes and greenways and railroad rights-of-way.



Perth Amboy took advantage of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association's Community Planning Assistance Program (CPAP) which resulted in a report entitled "Comments on Draft Concept Plan for Response to Sandy Damage," dated March 12, 2013. This report recommends that the waterfront bikeway should connect on both ends to other bikeways throughout the City and should create an interconnected system of bike paths that enable users to safely travel throughout the City

and beyond. The report also recommends that the City consult with a bike/pedestrian expert to evaluate the feasibility of combining bicycle and pedestrian use into one multi-use trail where space is limited.

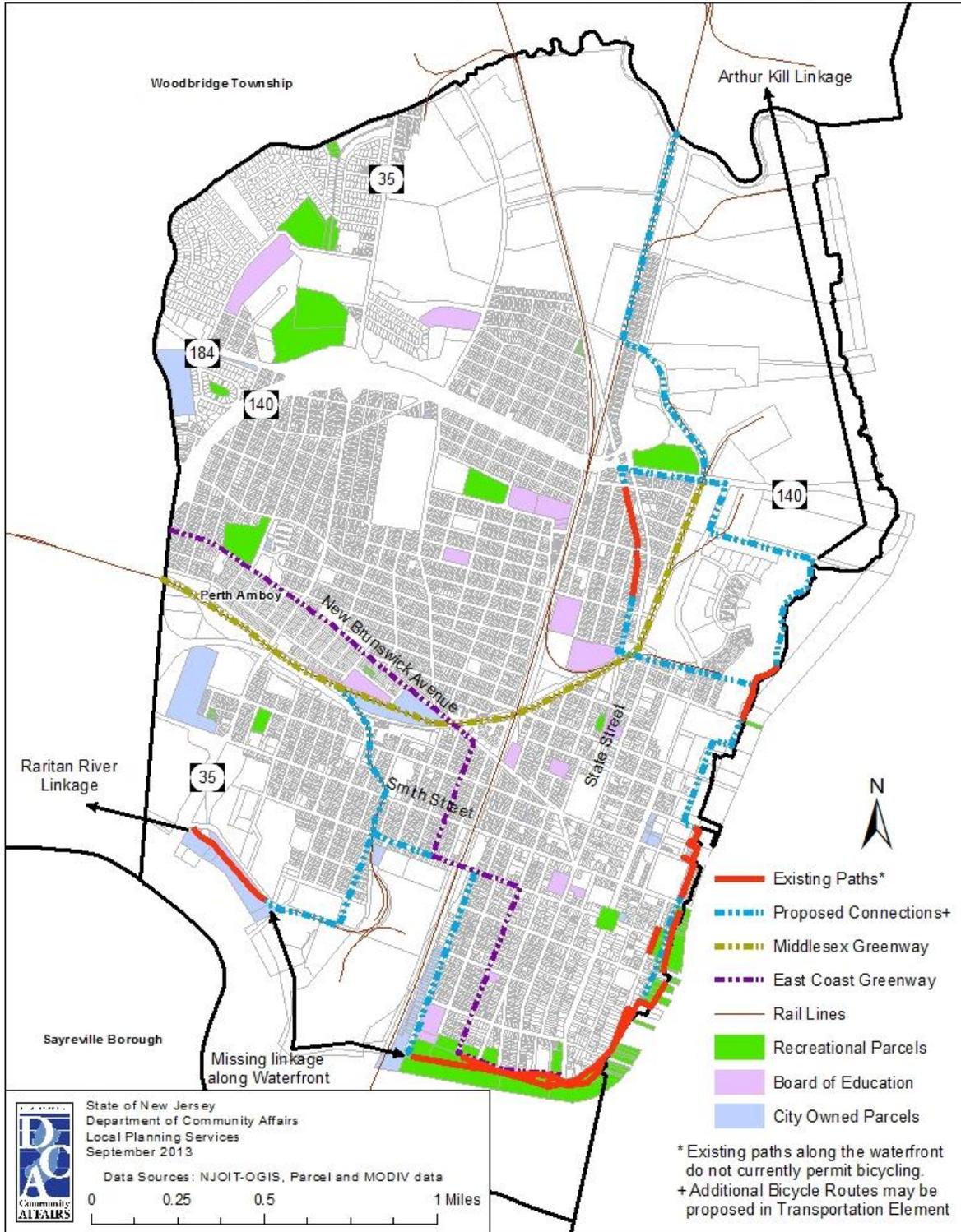
The entire east coast of the United States is being connected by a series of on and off-road bike lanes starting in the Florida Keys and ending in Maine, known as the East Coast Greenway (ECG). The goal of the ECG is to be entirely off-road and open to all non-motorized users, but currently much of the trail is still on road and not appropriate for all users. In New Jersey, the ECG runs north from Trenton through New Brunswick and up to Newark, eventually travelling over the George Washington Bridge into New York City.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Permit bicycling on the Esplanade by widening it to allow multi-uses and constructing an adjacent bike path. Where the path is designated for multi-use due to limited width (i.e. between Water Street and the seawall), there should be appropriate signage giving pedestrians the right of way. Where a separate bike path can be constructed (i.e., between Second Street and the Tottenville Ferry Landing), it should be designed to be 10 feet wide, paved and marked.*
- *Designate a bicycle route along Front Street from the Yacht Club to the Ferry Landing and extend the Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail to the Edward J. Patten School and Rudyk Park.*
- *Coordinate with NJDOT to provide safe routes for bicyclists on the City's streets. Bicycle routes should be designated by "Share the Road" signs and marked with bike lanes or "sharrows". These bike routes should be incorporated into the Transportation Element of the Master Plan.*
- *Provide bike racks at all city parks. Only Caledonia & Roessler, Columbus Circle, Lucey, Patten, Truxton Drive and Washington Parks currently have bicycle racks.*

Map 8

**Proposed Bicycle Routes, Connections and Greenways**



## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

- *Coordinate with Middlesex County to implement the Conceptual Linkage System discussed in the 2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Three routes were proposed through Perth Amboy:*
  - *The Middlesex County Greenway currently runs through Edison, Metuchen and Woodbridge. A natural expansion of the Greenway is to continue into Perth Amboy, which may be possible along the abandoned Conrail rail line. If the Conrail rail line is to become active again, it is feasible to expand the Greenway along the line by way of a “Rails AND Trails” program as opposed to a “Rails to Trails” program.*
  - *The Arthur Kill Linkage would extend north of the existing esplanade along the Arthur Kill Waterfront connecting Perth Amboy with Woodbridge and Carteret.*
  - *The Raritan River/Raritan Bay Linkage would extend south of the existing esplanade along the Raritan River connecting Perth Amboy to Highland Park.*

### **GOAL 5: Pursue Additional Funding Opportunities for Park Improvements**

To achieve the above goals of maintaining and improving the current park system, as well as expanding the system in the future, the City will need to pursue additional funding sources by building partnerships and leveraging existing resources. In the past, Perth Amboy has successfully received grants and loans from a variety of local, State and Federal resources. For example, the City has successfully administered the federal Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for more than 30 years. Perth Amboy received approximately \$646,000 in CDBG funds in 2011, which were used for a variety of public service activities, housing, historic preservation and public improvement projects. Additionally, the City is able to offer a variety of senior programs, children programs and seasonal events that are made possible through various types of funding and local partnerships. These resources should be expanded.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1: Identify federal, state, county and private resources**

With limited funds and tight budgets municipal governments have difficulty maintaining and expanding services within their communities. As stated previously, the recreational facilities in Perth Amboy show the signs of strain and heavy use. In order to expand facilities and programs, the City must reach out to local businesses, regional businesses, non-profits, other governmental agencies and residents to look for new resources to support its recreational programs. There are many sources of funding and resources to be explored locally, regionally and nationally, which can support recreational goals in Perth Amboy.

#### *Recommendation:*

- *Hire a Recreational Resource Manager or assign current staff dedicated to researching and applying for grant opportunities. The Recreational Resource Manager may consider the following initial tasks to expand its municipal recreational resources:*
  - *Contact local, state and national public recreational and open space grant programs to begin developing relationships and looking at funding opportunities (see Appendix).*
  - *Contact private foundations which have youth development, health and recreational missions to begin developing relationships and looking at funding opportunities (see Appendix).*
  - *Contact private community recreation leagues and recreation associations to solicit project and facility funding support.*

#### **OBJECTIVE 2: Improve coordination and relationships with local stakeholders**

The support of local organizations, private schools, the YMCA, Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood associations (such as the Jewish Renaissance Federation), service organizations, home owners, realtors, national chains, property owners and international companies with a presence in Perth Amboy all offer opportunities for financial support and services. These stakeholders have a financial interest in the health and prosperity of Perth Amboy and are the best source of support for local recreational projects that will address quality of life issues. Relationships with public entities, such as the Perth Amboy Board of Education and Middlesex County are also essential. The City may also look to national sports

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

organizations, such as the United States Tennis Association, for partnerships. To effectively utilize and coordinate these resources requires a full-time organizational commitment from the City.

### *Recommendation:*

- *Hire a Recreational Resource Manager or assign current staff dedicated to developing and maintaining relationships with community resources, mentioned above. A full time Recreational Resource Manager is the lynchpin to getting park and program expansion going by identifying non-municipal government resources and following up on grants, donations and man-power.*
- *Prepare a detailed request for access to and participation with the Middlesex County Parks Department and use of Middlesex County park facilities (i.e., Warren Park). Update annually with recommendations for program development to meet the need of Perth Amboy residents.*
- *Prepare a detailed report on utilization and coordination of school recreational resources with Perth Amboy City resources.*
- *Explore better integration of YMCA programs and facilities into the Perth Amboy recreation program. Issue an annual white paper on facility use.*
- *Reach out to Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and other local service organizations, the YMCA Board of Directors, local businesses, and national chains with a local presence with personal contact and speak with groups regarding recreational needs of the City.*

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Leverage City funds in order to maximize available funding**

The City should utilize existing departmental budget funding to maximize additional resources available. Sometimes matching funding is required for grants, staff resources for grant administration as well as time commitments to pursue the various local, county, regional and national opportunities for program support. Perth Amboy needs a plan in place to match these opportunities.

### *Recommendation:*

- *Hire a Recreational Resource Manager or assign current staff to identify program and facility needs with budgets and funding amounts.*
- *Establish a “Recreational Facilities and Program Fund” to accept donations.*
- *Prepare audio visual presentation on “Perth Amboy Recreation Program and Facility Needs.”*
- *Work with existing City recreational groups and leagues to solicit funding and program support.*
- *Undertake an annual Recreation Budget review with the Recreation Resource Manager or assigned staff and determine what budget areas can be targeted for alternative funding or community support assistance*
- *Consider proposing a municipal open space and recreation tax to supplement the above resources.*
- *Promote Perth Amboy as a regional recreation destination in order to bring in outside revenue.*

### **GOAL 6: Promote the Use of Recreational Programs and Facilities**

Efforts to improve and expand the recreational opportunities within Perth Amboy will be truly successful only if the City’s residents ultimately make use of available facilities and participate in programs offered. Outreach activities such as the focus group sessions held in March 2013 are critical to generating support and enthusiasm for the goals, objectives and recommendations highlighted in the Recreation Element. A priority of the 2003 Recreation Element was to establish Perth Amboy as a regional destination point by creating attractions that will draw people to the City. This continues to be a goal of the City.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Increase awareness of recreational programs and facilities**

Focus Group participants suggested that activities sponsored through the Office of Recreation need to be more aggressively promoted by the City. However, as with any promotional campaign, these efforts to include and inform the public must be ongoing. In this digital age, it is relatively easy to publicize events

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

and programs through the internet and social media, and such methods are very important for increasing awareness; but to ensure that all segments of the local population are informed and made to feel welcome, other avenues should also be investigated. These include using traditional means such as the print media and public service announcements; partnering with area clubs, businesses, public schools and libraries; as well as more innovative marketing techniques involving special events or promotional campaigns to increase awareness within the community. Focus group participants felt strongly about increasing educational opportunities for parents and coaches in order to promote and encourage more participation.

### *Recommendation:*

- *Solicit volunteers with expertise in social media and/or marketing techniques to develop a promotional campaign for the City's overall recreational program.*
- *Invite residents to participate in the City's recreational programs through special outreach events that offer opportunities for signup and/or volunteering.*
- *Promote recreational opportunities at scheduled City activities such as Harvest Fest, Family Day, the annual ethnic day parades, etc.*
- *Offer free training programs to educate and empower coaches, parents, and volunteers.*
- *Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to promote and promote Perth Amboy as a regional recreation destination.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Promote the benefits of participation in recreational programs**

The benefits of participation in recreational activities are numerous and range from improved health, increased socialization, enhanced quality of life, to a better sense of community. An important part of the City's recreational program should be to educate the public about these benefits so as to encourage support and participation. This objective goes hand in hand with that of generally increasing awareness of the City's recreational facilities and programs and should be integrated into any outreach efforts.

### *Recommendation:*

- *Emphasize the benefits of recreational activities in promotional materials and at popular community events.*
- *Consider offering incentives for reaching community-wide health goals through participation in recreational activities (e.g., miles walked, heart healthy activities completed, etc.).*
- *Incorporate information about the benefits of recreational activities in promotional campaigns.*

## **Conclusion**

The City of Perth Amboy has a young, diverse and growing population, which requires a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for a wide variety of users. A long term plan for providing the amount of facilities required for a growing city like Perth Amboy needs to be developed in partnership with State, County and local stakeholders. Consistently maintaining and upgrading existing equipment and fields is and should remain a priority of the City, through the Office of Recreation, the Public Works Department, and the City Council. The focus and dedication to a healthy recreational program is clear at this time, but given the increasing demands on tight municipal budgets, that attention must be maintained.

It is imperative to the success of the Recreation Element that there is an organizational structure that will ensure that the recommendations in this document are implemented. Collaboration between the City's elected officials and staff, residents and local stakeholders is key. Below is a list of suggested next steps the City should consider in order to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Recreation Element.

- The Planning Board should share the Recreation Element with the Governing Body and Mayor.
- The Mayor should provide a copy of the Recreation Element to the relevant City Departments, the Board of Education, the County Planning Board and the County Parks and Recreation Dept.

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- The Planning Board should include on its monthly agenda a discussion of the goals, objectives and recommendations set forth in this Recreation Element.
- The Recreation Advisory Committee should work together with the Office of Recreation staff to complete the following tasks:
  - Establish a set of subcommittees to further research the goals, objectives and recommendations outlined in the Recreation Element. Each subcommittee could undertake a specific goal or group of objectives and may be temporary or permanent, depending on the assigned task. For example, a subcommittee could be formed to concentrate specifically on non-athletic recreational activities such as the visual and performing arts. Subcommittees would report to the Recreation Advisory Committee.
  - Hold annual focus group meetings to solicit feedback from the community. The City has a vast resource of residents, stakeholders and elected officials that could participate.
  - Recommend actions for consideration by the Governing Body. The Recreation Advisory Committee may prioritize the recommendations set forth in this Recreation Element by “ranking” each recommendation as a short-term, mid-term or long-term need.
  - Work with the Business Administration Office to prepare a cost/benefit analysis to assist in the prioritization of the recommendations set forth in this Recreation Element.
  - Prepare an annual report tracking the progress made and present it to the Planning Board.
- The City should consider the goals, objectives and recommendations set forth in this Recreation Element when adopting or amending other components of its Master Plan to ensure consistency.



## Appendix

### State Grant Programs

#### NJ Department of Transportation

##### The State Aid Program

The State Aid Program is one method by which the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) can work with county and municipal governments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's transportation system. The Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) has provided the opportunity for state assistance to local governments for road, bridge, and other transportation projects.

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Following are the State funded programs administered by the NJDOT Local Aid Division:

- Municipal Aid
- County Aid
- Centers of Place
- Local Aid Infrastructure Fund
- Bikeways
- Safe Streets to Transit
- Transit Village

In addition, The State Aid Handbook is a valuable resource about financing programs and projects. For more information, contact **David Kuhn (609) 530 5228**

##### Transportation Enhancement Act 21 (TEA21) program

The NJDOT also administers the federally funded Transportation Enhancement Act 21 (TEA21) program in New Jersey. This program provides grants to transportation enhancement projects such as construction of pedestrian and bicycle trails.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has established that funding for trail development and enhancement is an eligible expenditure from the Federal Transportation Trust. The amount of funding for these purposes is substantial, and funds for land acquisition are available. A special category of funding is dedicated to enhancement of National Recreation Trails. An eligible project must show that the trail is part of the community's overall transportation system. Funds can be used for facilities such as signage, bike racks, surfacing, as well as acquisition of land through easement or fee simple. TEA-21 funding can jumpstart a community's bikeway and walking trail system. For more information, contact **Andrew Swords (609) 530 2866**

#### NJ Department of Environmental Protection

##### Green Acres Program

Green Acres provides low interest (2%) loans and grants to municipal and county governments to acquire open space and develop outdoor recreation facilities. Green Acres works with local governments from the time of application through project completion. Over 80,000 acres have been protected and hundreds of recreation development projects throughout the state have been financed through Green Acres' Local and Nonprofit funding program. Green Acres also provides matching grants to nonprofit organizations to acquire land for public recreation and conservation purposes.

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The Planning Incentive Program provides grant and loan funding to local governments (municipalities and counties) that have enacted an open space tax and have adopted an open space and recreation plan. Green Acres administers the \$15 million in coastal blue acres funds. Designated municipalities and counties can receive grants and loans from Green Acres to acquire land for storm protection and recreation purposes in New Jersey coastal areas that have been damaged by storms, are prone to storm damage, or buffer or protect other lands from storm damage.

Funding assistance is provided for the acquisition of local park and recreation areas. Through its Planning Incentive Program, Green Acres provides grants that cover up to 50% of the land acquisition costs of a particular tract. The money is granted to municipalities through the Planning Incentive Program (for towns with open space plans and open space taxes) and through the Standard Acquisition program (for towns without both a plan and a tax). Both applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year, but funding decisions are made once to twice a year. In order to receive funds from the Planning Incentive program a municipality needs to complete the following:

- Establish an open space trust fund either through a voter-approved referendum or an alternate funding means approved by Green Acres.
- Approved Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) documenting all municipally held land for recreation and conservation purposes. The ROSI is a contract between the Township and the State of New Jersey itemizing permanently protected municipal parkland in the Township.
- Two public meetings on the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Adoption of the Open Space and Recreation Plan as an element of the Master Plan, or a resolution passed by the Planning Board confirming consistency between the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Township's Master Plan.
- One public hearing on the Green Acres Planning Incentive Application.
- Resolution by the Township's governing body authorizing and approving the application to NJ Green Acres Planning Incentive program.

For more information, contact **Fawn McGee (609) 984 0609**

### *The Brownfield Development Program*

The Brownfield Development Program is designed to help communities affected by multiple brownfields to plan for and implement remediation and reuse of those brownfields in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. BDA designation initiates a long-term partnership among the applicant Steering Committee, the host municipality, DEP and other involved agencies to focus available resources to develop and implement a strategic plan for remediation and reuse of the brownfield sites within the BDA. Although a dedicated local planner is not required, the Department's experience indicates that BDA Steering Committees can benefit from having an environmental/planning point person assist with BDA project development, coordination and implementation. This point person can be a resource to the Steering Committee and help realize the full benefit of the BDA designation by keeping the projects on track. This person may be a municipal employee or a consultant.

**Brownfield Reimbursement Program** - The Brownfield Reimbursement Program is administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) and the Department of Treasury (Treasury). The Brownfield Reimbursement Program allows developers to enter into an agreement that allows for the reimbursement of up to 75% of the remediation costs incurred at a brownfield site. The reimbursement comes from certain new state taxes generated by the project. Created under the Brownfields and Contaminated Site Remediation Act of 1998, the Brownfields Reimbursement Program is designed to provide financial incentives for developers to remediate and redevelop New Jersey's many brownfield sites. The reimbursement process starts with the developer submitting a request to NJDEP to approve its remediation costs. For more information, contact **NJDEP – Tim Bartle 609 984 2001 or NJEIT – Frank Scangarella (609) 219 8600**

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### *Other NJDEP Programs*

NJDEP has a Livable Communities Grant program whereby municipalities and counties can apply for money to be used for maintenance and upgrading (but not purchase) of open space, parks, and playgrounds. These grants are up to \$100,000 for each municipality and/or county.

The New Jersey Trails Program administers federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants to develop, maintain and restore trails and trail-related facilities. Projects are funded on an 80% Federal share, 20% matching share basis. Available funding varies from year to year, but the maximum grant is \$25,000.

For more information, see <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/natural/njtrails.html>.

### **Department of Community Affairs**

Recreation Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities Grants – The Department provides funding for governmental entities to develop or expand recreational programs for individuals with disabilities within their communities. Visit the DCA SAGE portal for the 2012 Grant Application.

Athletics for Individuals with Disabilities Grants – State funds are provided to the Association of Blind Athletes of NJ, NJ Tournament of Champions, Special Olympics NJ, and Wheelchair Sports Council of NJ for statewide sports training and competition for individuals with disabilities.

For more information, see <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dhcr/rec/grants.html>

### **Middlesex County Programs**

The Middlesex County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund is a valuable county financial resource which should be pursued by Perth Amboy. The Middlesex County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund (Trust Fund) receives \$.03 per \$100 of assessed value from the property taxes paid in Perth Amboy. In order to maximize the City's return from the Trust Fund Program, the Recreation Resource Manager should continue to develop its relationship with the County and the Trust Fund and attend all future Trust Fund meetings. The Recreation Resource Manager should prepare a detailed request to the Trust Fund for funding of recreational equipment and property acquisitions. Update the detailed request list annually.

In addition a strong relationship to the Middlesex County Planning Department should be developed, especially in the development of a County-wide master plan. Also the Middlesex County Department of Parks and Recreation should be involved since it provides recreational and cultural activities for the general public throughout the year. Extensive facilities for summer sports, winter sports, theater and concert programs offer opportunities for enjoyment to County residents. The park system consists of 18 county parks encompassing 6,631 acres. Thirteen of these parks contain active recreational facilities and five others are conservation areas or are being held for future recreational development. The County is in the process of acquiring 7,000 acres of open space through the Open Space Trust Fund, and an active farmland preservation program has preserved 2,500 acres. The Middlesex County Improvement Authority operates three golfing facilities: The 36 hole Tamarack Golf Course in East Brunswick, the Meadows at Middlesex in Plainsboro, and the Raritan Landing Golf Course in Piscataway.

For more information, contact:

Middlesex County Planning <http://co.middlesex.nj.us/planningboard/index.asp>

Middlesex County Parks and Recreation <http://co.middlesex.nj.us/parksrecreation/>

Middlesex County Improvement Authority, Office of Open Space:

**Paul Clark, Chief Operating Officer (609) 655 5141** [http://www.mciauth.com/open\\_space.htm](http://www.mciauth.com/open_space.htm)

## Federal Programs

There are several federal resources for recreation programs. For example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established to provide funds and matching grants to federal, state and local governments for the acquisition of land and water, and easements on land and water, for the benefit of all Americans. Projects that have benefited from the LWCF assistance range from small municipal passive parks and tot lots to county urban waterfront parks and athletic complexes. The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program was established in November 1978 by Public Law 95-625, authorizing \$725 million to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities. Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program provides support to state and local governments to purchase coastal and estuarine lands that are important for their ecological, conservation, recreational, historical or aesthetic values and are under threat of conversion. The Departments listed below may be a resource for the City of Perth Amboy.

Department of Education - <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html>

National Science Foundation - <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

Department of Agriculture - <http://www.usda.gov>

Department of Energy - <http://www.doe.gov>

Department of Health and Human Services - <http://www.hhs.gov>

Health Resources Services Administration - <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/home.asp>

Department of Housing and Urban Development - <http://www.hud.gov/grants/index.cfm>

Department of Labor - <http://www.dol.gov>

Department of State - <http://www.state.gov>

Department of Transportation - <http://www.dot.gov>

National Institutes of Health - <http://www.nih.gov>

Corporation for National and Community Service - <http://www.nationalservice.org>

<http://www.americorps.org>

Environmental Protection Agency - <http://www.epa.gov>

National Endowment for the Arts - <http://www.nea.gov/grants/apply/index.html>

National Endowment for the Humanities - <http://www.neh.gov/grants/grantsbydivision.html>

National Association of International Educators - <http://www.nafsa.org>

Institute of Museum and Library Sciences - <http://www.imls.gov>

Smithsonian Institution - <http://www.si.edu>

United States Institute for Peace - <http://www.usip.org>

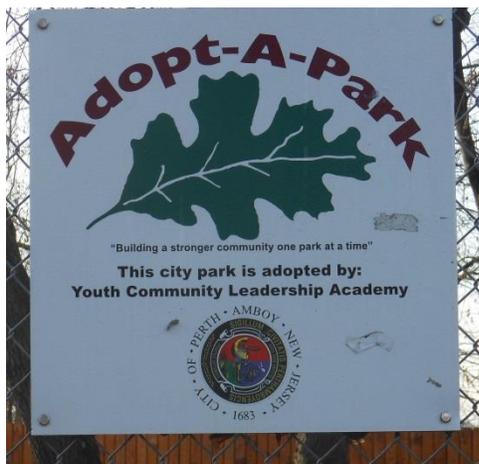
Small Business Administration - <http://www.sba.gov>

National Park Service - <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures/index.htm>

## Private/Foundation Grants

In addition to the various Federal, State and County resources, the City may consider partnering with local businesses that have a history of social responsibility in the community such as Amerada Hess, Tropical Cheese Industries, US Foods, Englert, Chevron, Gerdau, Morton Salt, Shell Oil and others. Large corporations commonly donate funds, time and supplies to the communities in which they are located in or do business with. For example, according to the Hess website, [www.hess.com/company/history/socialresponsibility.aspx](http://www.hess.com/company/history/socialresponsibility.aspx), the company has created a long-lasting, positive impact in the communities where they do business. The company partners with host governments, community groups and other stakeholders to develop programs that can make a measurable and sustainable difference. Additionally, according to Gerdau's website, <http://www.gerdau.com/longsteel/>, the company notes that it financially supports many local charities in the areas where our employees live and work. All Gerdau employees are encouraged to participate in regular community service projects. Tropical Cheese sponsors several events in Perth Amboy such as the Puerto Rican Parade, Dominican Parade and Mexican Parade. The City may find other corporations and private foundations that offer grants to communities at <http://lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html>. A dedicated Recreation Resource Manager should focus time and resources to finding identifying and collaborating with local resources.

Additionally, the City may look to local and national organizations, which advocate and promote recreation opportunities. For example, the National Recreation and Parks Association lists grant opportunities on their website: <http://www.nrpa.org/fundraising-resources/>. Also, the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association tracks grant programs at its website: [http://arts-health.com/njrpa/?page\\_id=99](http://arts-health.com/njrpa/?page_id=99). Further, municipalities may find out about the latest grant opportunities to help funding playground projects at <http://playandpark.com/funding/grant-opportunities/>. National Grant Opportunities for playground grants may be found at <http://rulesoftheparkground.com/83-playground-fundraising-and-grant-links/>. Park Pride provides programs, funding and leadership to engage communities in developing and improving parks and green spaces. More information can be found at <http://www.parkpride.org/get-involved/funding-your-park>.



The New Jersey State League of Municipalities posts grant opportunities for recreational activities on their website at [http://www.njslom.org/grants\\_recreation.html](http://www.njslom.org/grants_recreation.html). The website contains this description of their program by Triad Associates: “With continued budget cuts looming and a lack of funding for essential police and fire departments, reductions for municipal recreational program funding are also very likely. Additional pressure from the national administration and the “Let’s Move” campaign, coupled with the urgency of the childhood obesity epidemic in our nation, make cuts in recreational programs unpopular. To fill this funding gap, there are several grant opportunities through the national sport league foundations; they have stepped in and contributed big dollars in the form of grant programs for sporting fields, equipment and

lights. Major League Baseball, The National Football League and Major League Soccer all have non-profit foundations with grant programs to help communities with a variety of recreational field improvements and equipment purchases. While these grant competitions are on a national level, several New Jersey municipalities have received awards in recent years.”

The resources described in this Appendix offer the City of Perth Amboy a wide variety of funding opportunities to implement the goals, objectives and recommendations set forth in the Recreation Element. The Recreational Resource Manager should research the funding amounts, deadlines, eligibility criteria and restrictions to ensure each grant program meets the specific goals and objectives of the City.