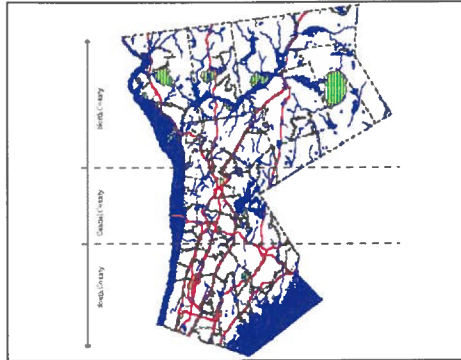


WESTCHESTER COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN PHASE I REPORT



prepared for:



Westchester County
Department of Parks,
Recreation and Conservation

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prepared by:

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Introduction

Every year, thousands of Westchester County residents enjoy the County's extensive park system, from beaches on the Hudson River and Long Island Sound to mountain lakes and urban swimming pools. Since its inception almost 90 years ago, the County park system has developed into one of the premier county systems in the nation. Yet, few realize that Westchester built the nation's first system of parks linked by parkways. This ambitious plan was inspired by America's new attitude toward leisure and was executed by visionary leaders.

Recognizing the need to continue this commitment to maintaining the same excellent level of service of recreation into the 21st century that the citizens of the County have come to expect, Westchester County Parks Recreation & Conservation (WCPRC), together with Vollmer Associates and a team of sub-consultants: Arthur Andersen, Beyer Blinder Belle and Carol Johnson Associates, prepared the first phase of a two phase planning process that develops a Strategic Plan which will guide the development, management and preservation of County park facilities. Phase Two of the master plan study will provide short term individual park master plan solutions and long range county-wide planning objectives and policy. A Steering Committee was established to support the project team in identifying key issues and concerns. The Committee was comprised of representatives of the Parks, Planning and Public Works Departments as well as representatives from the County Executive's Office and other recreational and park groups.

Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan

The County's goals and objectives for this planning project included:

- The preparation of a comprehensive inventory and analysis of all existing parks;
- The identification of needs, options and priorities for the Department's future operation of its parklands;
- The analysis of present and future operating and capital budgets;
- The development of a Master Plan with maximum public input including municipal parks and planning professionals; and
- Formatting project plans for incorporation into a future GIS databank for all County parks in order to assist with their on-going development and stewardship.

To achieve these goals, the project was divided into two phases of grouped tasks: Phase I - Information Gathering, Needs Assessment, and Initial Findings; and Phase II - Synthesis, Solutions and Final Recommendations. Phase I of the study is divided into two parts: inventory and information gathering and assessments and projections. Within the first phase are two major tasks: park, recreation and facility planning and financial planning.

Benchmarking

Part of the Master Plan process was to gather information about comparable counties in the Metro New York area and to analyze how Westchester County is doing in the field of recreation. The counties of Bergen and Morris in New Jersey along with Montgomery in Pennsylvania were selected. Westchester County has the largest number of parks (44) and is the only system that provides County pools (7) for use by residents. Of all the counties, the Westchester County Parks system offers the widest variety of recreational activities to its residents.

The most marked differences between Westchester and the other counties is revealed in Table V-III of the report representing the parks' budget comparison. In 1997, Westchester County devoted the highest percentage of its total budget for salary and wages, 87.6 percent, while Montgomery County, PA devoted less than half, or 40.4 percent. The 44 parks in the Westchester County System require greater allocation of dollars for staff, while the seven in Montgomery County require less staff and therefore fewer dollars. However, the total operating budget for Westchester County, at \$47 million, is more than nine times that of Montgomery County at \$5 million. This kind of comparison, identifying similarities and differences, provides insight into the operations of other counties and help underpin the foundation for the recommendations phase of the Master Plan process.

Growth Opportunities

The Westchester County System has an extensive history and legacy, which results in its positive image. The system also benefits from its location in a large suburban/urban county, which has a high national profile. The profile includes positive demographic features such as income and recreation expenditures growth. Additionally, the parks have the advantage of excellent access by various means of transportation. The significance of this finding is that to the extent WCPRC needs to capture a larger market, diversify the parks' utilization, and increase "earned income", the "product" - a highly respected parks system - is well known and has a positive image. Park utilization has increased, reflective both of current and projected trends in the demand for parks. For example, attendance at County Parks has increased approximately 10% from 1.77 million visitors in 1991 to 1.94 million in 1995.

Financial Summary/ Potential New Revenue Sources

The Westchester County Parks system has significant new revenue potential. That potential comes not only from the development of a new golf course and a new aquatic center (for which demand is clear), but also from reconfiguring existing fee structures and their application, as well as the development of new park uses and the reuse of under-utilized facilities.

New or additional revenue generators have significant potential for the County Parks system and that potential is considered and planned for within the context of a balance between park use by residents and the traditional fees (and taxes) paid by residents. The process of planning for and implementing new revenue generators must respect traditional park use, yet make accommodations for park growth by users and uses, on-going park maintenance which respects future park use into the 21st century, and declining public dollars. The potential for additional receipts revenues can be grouped into two categories: existing and future park uses. Additionally, a flat fee, similar to other county systems, to replace parking and per-use fees may be implemented, as it offers a straight-forward revenue strategy and may, because of its ease of usage and broad-based understanding, offer a basis for further analysis. For marketing purposes, it also offers a unique way of attracting new and repeat usage. Careful monitoring of revenues to assure no loss in overall earned income will be required.

Recreational User Preference Survey Summary

The Westchester County Department of Planning and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation have worked together in studying the recreational activities, needs and preferences of county residents. Recreational surveys have been conducted in 1960, 1971, 1986 and 1996. In the summer of 1996, a survey questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 5,000 county households. Geographic distribution of sample respondent households in the 1996 survey is comparable to 1990 Census distribution of households county wide.

Information relating to popular recreational activities, familiarity and visitation discrepancies, park visitation, use of public facilities, user demand, user fee preference and special event attendance was obtained. Comparisons with the 1986 survey results were made to give a sense of how the recreational patterns and needs of county residents have changed over the past decade. The analysis of the data collected is summarized below:

Leading Sports and Recreational Activities				
Rank	1996		1986	
1	walking/jogging	62.1	swimming	58.1
2	swimming	51.8	picnicking	39.7
3	bicycling	45.3	music/drama	38.9
4	historic sites/museums	40.8	bicycling	34.2
5	cultural performances	40.0	walking program	33.0
6	picnicking	33.9	tennis	31.2
7	golf	30.1	skiing	25.8
8	tennis	27.7	fishing	24.6
9	playground (kids)	25.1	golf	24.5
10	ice skating/hockey	24.7	baseball/softball	24.0

There is a relationship between a respondent's residence and their knowledge of parks and facilities in a particular location. The survey discovered that there is a notable gap, about 10-30 percentage points, between familiarity with and visitation of the facilities within the system, indicating an additional potential or capacity for increased attendance. There is a need to raise the familiarity level of many parks individually and the County park system as a whole.

Master Plan Recommendations

The purpose of Phase II will be to develop specific solutions to short-term needs and outline a long-range plan and policy for future open space recreational needs. The Phase I Report concluded with a summary of all background data obtained in the survey and inventory section, the summary analysis of that data, the results of the financial models and specific course of action proposals identified as "Next Steps" to direct the Phase II portion of the work. These recommendations are based on projections of future demographics, growth patterns, spending patterns and revenue projections. These are practical guidelines to support and direct the future development, management and preservation of recreational parks.

From the Phase I Report, the top six recommendations are briefly discussed below:

1. **Park Preservation and Stewardship:** The legacy of Westchester County Parks has been built on preserving natural landscapes and open space. Based on public meeting responses, meetings with Friends Groups and consistent with the County's mission statement, clearly the vigilant preservation of all the habitats, built facilities, unique environments and natural beauty of the County's parklands

must be the Department's number one priority; also **Infrastructure Improvements** including upgrades and rehabilitation of existing utilities and roads; and **Facility Improvements** of the prioritized list of existing parks, landscapes and buildings.

2. **Economic Studies** of major revenue generators and their primary and secondary impacts.
3. **Park Linkages:** The 1996 Residents Recreation Preference Survey ranked walking/jogging as the number one activity and Bicycling as the number three activity of Westchester County residents. These strong results coupled with the clear indication that these activities will remain popular into the future demonstrate the need for expanding the County's Trailway system.
4. **Swimming:** Because swimming received a high rank in the user surveys, public meeting input and comments from town and municipal park departments, it has been identified as a priority "need" in Westchester County.
5. **Marketing Program:** A comprehensive marketing program should be designed to encourage additional overall park use by County residents and increase usage of under-utilized parks and parks activities. Additional usage will aid in the continued recognition of the parks system and increase annual revenues for the system. Since economic and demographic growth are solid market indicators for increased park use of all types, the aggressive, comprehensive marketing program must be able to capture that potential usage.
6. **Golf:** Based on strong public meeting responses, the Residential Recreation Preference Survey responses, and results from a National Golf Foundation survey that documents an unmet demand in the County of some 400,000 rounds of public golf per year, the County should clearly provide more public golf. In addition, golf benefits the entire system because it is a significant revenue generator that can fund other park programs. Because the demand for golf remains unabated and seemingly will continue that way for some time, it is strongly recommended that the County undertake site feasibility studies for the construction of several new full sized and executive style courses with teaching stations.

The remaining eight recommendations are listed below:

7. **A Master Plan for Playland** including the phased accommodation of historic facilities with new amusements, upgraded access and parking as well as adaptive reuse potentials;
8. **Individual Park Master Plans** developed for parks with critical needs;
9. **Natural Resource Inventory/Environmental Studies** including biodiversity and carrying capacity analyses;
10. **Historic Resource Inventory/Preservation Studies:** documentation and eligibility for National Register;
11. **Geographic Information Systems** as a management tool for projecting future needs;
12. **ADA Compliance** survey of all structures and paths;
13. **Interpretative Plans** for the entire park system and five parks with historic buildings;
14. **Parkland Acquisition** of unique, fragile, waterfront or linking parcels between parks.

A. Mission Statement

The Westchester County Parks Mission Statement is as follows:

The Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation is committed to preserving the 16,000 acres of parkland that has been entrusted to our care for future generations and procuring new properties as they become available. Equally important is our duty to provide programs and services, designed and constantly updated to meet the ever-changing recreation and leisure needs of the Westchester community, while practicing a sound conservation ethic.

Because of the widely varied background and long history of recreation interest from a wide section of the residents in Westchester County, the first task of this current Master Plan effort was to establish a Steering Committee to assist and guide the Department and its consultants in this project. The Committee was comprised of various members of the Westchester recreation, historic and conservation communities. Their duty was to serve as representatives of those constituent communities and act as a 'sounding board' for the ideas and directions arrived at during the planning process. The Steering Committee understood the importance of the continual review and updating of the mission statement as required.

In their initial review of the mission statement, the following items were particularly noted by the Committee:

- The importance of a balance of conservation, preservation and recreation within and throughout the parks system;
- The importance of land conservation for environmentally sensitive parcels as well as the preservation of historic landscapes and structures and natural resources; and
- The role the Parks Department should play in and the ethic of stewardship.

B. History/Background

Every year, thousands of Westchester County residents enjoy the County's extensive park system; from beaches on the Hudson River and Long Island Sound to mountain lakes and urban swimming pools.

Yet, few realize that Westchester built the nation's first county park system through the establishment and linking of parkways. This ambitious plan was inspired by America's new attitude toward travel and leisure and was executed by visionary leaders.

Leisure time doubled at the turn of the century when labor-saving devices were introduced and working conditions improved. Social reformers worried that the middle class would spend this newly discovered time emulating the "wasteful" activities of the wealthy like feasting, gambling, and card games. The reformers felt that organized public recreation would improve health and mold good citizens. Sports were emphasized over more passive activities like walks and picnics.

Meanwhile, railroads and industry began covering southern Westchester. Country clubs, cemetery associations and housing developers were buying huge tracts of land. Some municipalities had parks, but the County had none. At this critical moment, Republican leader "Boss" William L. Ward realized that land was disappearing. Ward had the foresight to see the need for public projects and the ability

to bring people together.

The most urgent project was to clean up the Bronx River, which had become a sewer. The County built the nation's first limited access public parkway and linear park through the lands adjacent to the river acquired for this project. The entire Bronx River Parkway Reservation, including all of its passive and active recreation components, was so popular that Ward asked the State to establish the Westchester County Parks Commission. Between 1922 and the early 1930s, the Commission purchased about 10,000 acres of land for \$17 million and spent \$33 million developing parks. This was the first major project the County had ever undertaken.

The key to the system was parks linked by parkways. A few cities had built similar designs, but Westchester had the nation's earliest County-wide network. Today, five Westchester parks and one site, have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Two of these are also National Historic Landmarks. Other parks, like Tibbetts Brook Park, or buildings within parks like the castles at Glen Island park are also candidates for National Register listing. But regardless of eligibility, all parks are important because they are the legacy of the pioneering visions of Ward and the leaders who followed him, and their landscapes contribute powerfully to the ambience of Westchester.

Like all wise investments, the parks must be maintained or they will lose value. Faced with high taxes and strained resources, the County must still protect these valuable resources while also addressing the recreational needs of today's residents and anticipating the preferences of future generations. This study provides the initial data needed to make decisions that will ensure that future generations can enjoy the legacy as well.

C. Organization

The WCPRC began as two separate and distinct entities: The Westchester Park Commission and the Westchester Recreation Commission, each with a Board of Directors and Commissioner. This twofold approach to the planning, operation and maintenance of all County facilities and programs remained a viable coalition until the late 1950s when the County Board of Supervisors decided that the recreational interests of all the County's residents could be better served if the two bodies were merged into a single Department directly under the County Executive. As of January 1, 1962, this has been the status of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

The current Department is headed by a Commissioner appointed by the County Executive. Reporting to the Commissioner are two Deputy Commissioners: one heading the Parks and County Center Division and the other heading the Golf, Conservation and Recreation Division. At the same level as a Deputy Commissioner but titled differently is the Director of the Playland Division. The Administration Division, dealing with administrative services, personnel and public information, is headed directly out of the Commissioner's office. The operational philosophy behind the functional groupings of the present organization is as follows:

- The Deputy Commissioner of the Parks and County Center Division is responsible for: major items such as the County Center, Muscoot Farm, Lasdon Park, forestry issues, general park

- maintenance, park planning and capital projects and the all facilities within other certain parks;
- The Deputy Commissioner of the Golf, Conservation and Recreation Division is responsible for: conservation issues, recreation programs, golf courses, concessions, contracts and information and customer services;
- The Director of the Playland Division is responsible for all matters regarding the operation and maintenance of Playland.

A number of County parks effectively operate as local parks - i.e they are used by local residents only with little or no regional draw. These include Ridge Road, the eastern portion of V.E. Macy and portions of Kingsland, Croton Point, Tibbetts Brook, Silver Lake and Willsons Woods.

At the County level, two different Departments are involved in recreation and conservation land planning issues. Both the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation and the Department of Planning are charged with identifying and planning for the recreational and conservation needs of the County. The Parks Department may identify a need for a certain form of recreation or a parcel of land that would be suited for its conservation and open space needs, the Planning Department facilitates the purchase of property and the Board of Legislature has the authority to acquire these lands and assign them as they best serve the County. Since both Departments serve similar ends, strong communication and coordination must be in place for this arrangement to work successfully. For example, close coordination is needed so that the Department of Planning's strategic goal of Patterns comprised of county-wide centers and corridors work in harmony with WCPRC's goals of open space linkages via a trail network forming a multi-function alternative transportation corridor.

D. Parklands

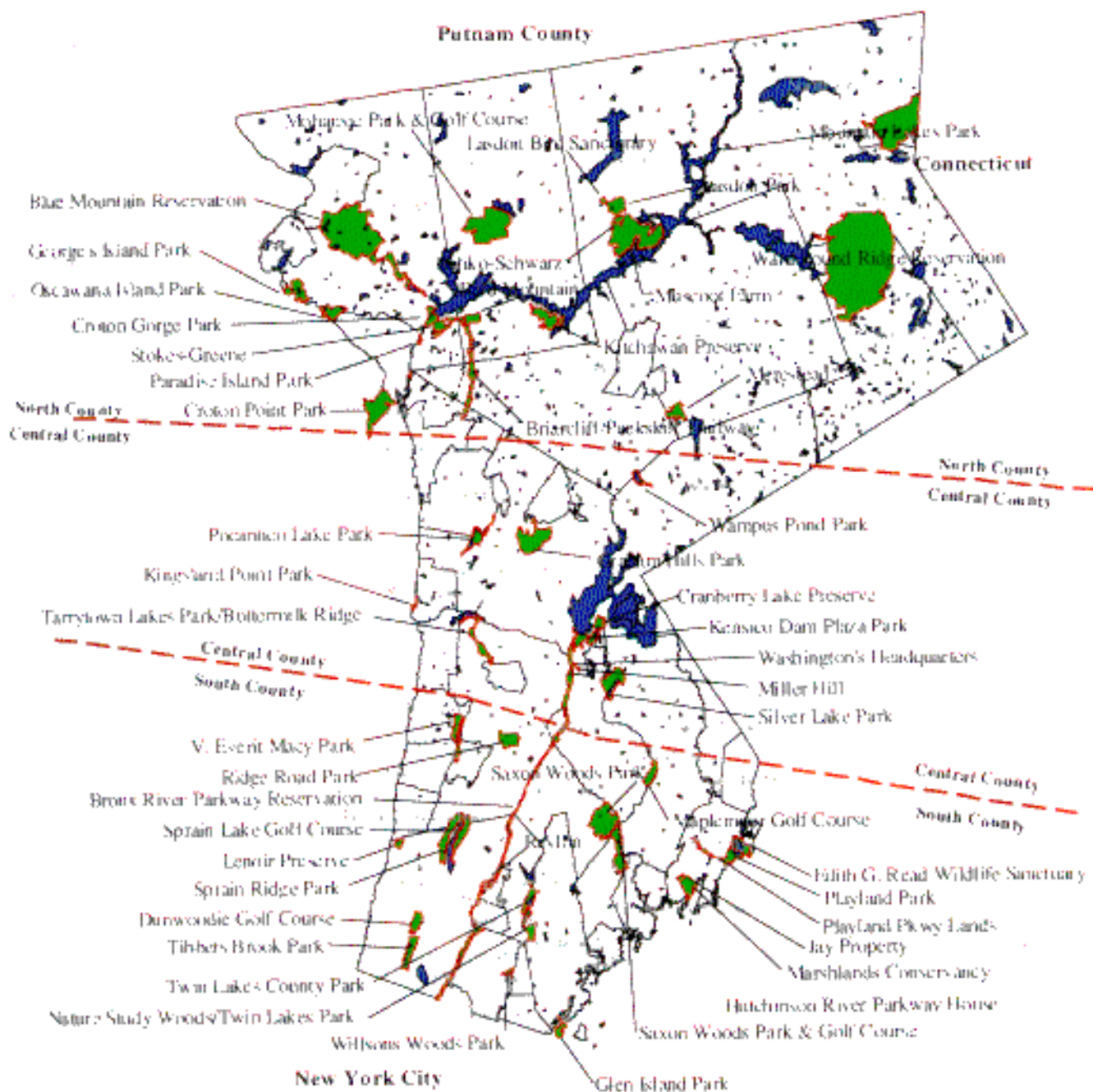
County parklands represent the diversity of over 50 park facilities ranging from active parks with developed outdoor facilities for swimming, hiking, biking, golf, picnicking, ballfields and camping to historic sites and undeveloped land holdings for conservation and potential future recreation activities. Of the present land holdings of 15,996 acres, 16.5% are developed according to the Department's development criteria and 83.5% remain in their natural state in support of the Department's conservation mandate.

The Inventory Report shows the diversity in size of land holdings in the North, Central and South regions and location of historic, archaeological and environmentally sensitive properties. Chapter V of the Phase I report suggests that a comprehensive GIS (Geographic Information System) be instituted so that inventory, operations, schedules, maintenance and programs can be easily accessed and identified for each facility.

E. Programs and Special Events

Perpetuating the legacy established by the original WC Parks Commission, programs continue to range from organized recreation activities, tournaments and organized sports programs (swimming, biking, golf, boating, tennis, fitness) to nature study and environmental education programs, cultural events, ethnic festivals, interpretative programs at historic sites, camp and cabin rental sites, summer camps

Westchester County Parklands



and programs for people with disabilities. Most programs are well attended, are in high demand and need continuing paid staff and volunteer support. Chapter VII discusses in further detail possible future programs and opportunities that should be investigated and incorporated in the Westchester County System.

F. Visitation Levels

Since 1986, the use of services within the Westchester County Parks system has increased fivefold. Visitation levels continue to grow disproportionately to WCPRC resources. Many of the most popular facilities within the system are at least 50 years old and require an enhanced level of maintenance and renovation, brought up to current safety standards. Park utilization has increased, reflective both of current and projected trends in the demand for parks.

For example, attendance at County Parks has increased approximately 10% from 1.77 million visitors in 1991 to 1.94 million in 1995. Illustrative of this increase in popularity are the visitation rates of selected parks as described below:

- Kensico Dam Plaza Park: Attendance has grown rapidly, increasing approximately 130% from 20,000 visitors in 1991 to 46,000 visitors in 1995 due to the park's increasing popularity with in line skaters, bikers, walkers and fitness enthusiasts.
- Saxon Woods Park & Golf Course: Attendance levels have grown significantly, from approximately 63,000 in 1991 to approximately 92,000 in 1995, a 45% increase. This increase is primarily attributed to the golf course and the increased popularity of the swimming area which includes an aquatic playground for children introduced by WCPRC in 1995.
- Willson's Woods Park: Attendance levels have grown significantly, from approximately 15,000 in 1991 to approximately 21,000 in 1995, a 38% increase.
- Marshlands Conservancy: Attendance levels have grown significantly, from approximately 27,000 in 1991 to approximately 35,000 in 1995, a 29% increase. This increase is primarily attributed to increased awareness of nature and the environment.
- Croton Point Park: Attendance levels have grown significantly, from approximately 8,000 in 1994 to approximately 39,000 in 1995, a 382% increase. This increase is primarily attributed to reopening major portions of the park in 1995 after its closure during 1994 in order to cap a landfill which existed on the site .

G. Operations and Maintenance

An efficient and cost effective distribution of maintenance and operations staff and equipment has been achieved by separating the county into northern, central and southern regions. Within each region, major developed parks retain their own maintenance crews and provide centralized storage and repair facilities for the adjacent smaller or less developed parks. For example, the Blue Mountain crew

maintains its own facility as well as George's Island and Oscawana Island Park. The Croton Point Park crew also maintains Croton Gorge, Paradise Island and Kingsland Point. The northern county roving maintenance 'Blitz' crew is based at Lasdon; however, it maintains the Briarcliff Peekskill and North County trailways, Graham Hills, Kitchawan Preserve, Pocantico Lakes Park, Wampus Pond Park and Tarrytown Lakes and John E. Hand Park. Lasdon Arboretum has its own crew which is also responsible for Muscoot Farm. All the golf courses and Playland Park have their own crews.

H. Annual Capital Program

The Master Plan proposes an evaluative technique utilizing a screening matrix for both categorizing and ranking capital projects. The Evaluation Screen Matrix is designed for use by the WCPRC internal staff as a screening mechanism to prioritize various potential Capital Improvement Programs, Activities, System Wide Issues and Operations and Maintenance projects. Weighted values have been assigned to the major heading topics across the top. This screening system will become a tool by which potential requests can be furthered or eliminated. It will be the task of the WCPRC administrators to determine the minimum point value necessary for a potential item to advance to the 'to do' list.

The Evaluation Screening Matrix creates an impartial method for prioritizing future Capital projects. The current method has the potential of being unduly influenced by 'hot topic' issues of the moment where a vocal advocate may influence decisions and priorities may shift monthly. This is not a sound planning practice and it too often leaves equally necessary but less visible projects to slip down the list for lack of a champion. By evaluating all proposed capital needs against evenly applied criteria, a consistent and logical progression of improvements may be realized.

I. Public Funding Concerns

Public funding for Operations and Maintenance has remained at a constant level of approximately \$6 million over the last three years while the budget has increased from approximately \$24 million to \$28 million over the same time period. This has reduced the effective public contribution to the Parks Department's annual budget by approximately 3.6%. Deferred maintenance allocations only exacerbate an already critical situation where soon the most threatened facilities will become virtually nonfunctioning. Furthermore, substantial rehabilitation projects drain scarce available annual budget resources from new capital projects that would enable WCPRC to fulfill its mission of delivering recreational opportunities to all the citizens of the County. Typically in times of budget constraints, the Parks Department's capital requests are viewed as "less essential" and usually suffer the largest reductions first.

It is paramount that the County Board of Legislators recognizes that an adequate revenue source for Parks infrastructure projects is in the County's own financial best interests as deferred expenditures ultimately cost more than necessary. The process by which the yearly struggle to obtain approval of adequate funding from the Board just for the infrastructure needs of the Parks system only addresses half of the Parks funding issue. Dollars for new Capital Improvement projects are no less important than infrastructure costs and both should be properly provided for if the citizens are to be adequately served.

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government's 1993 report on New York State Park System suggests that:

- "...the Agency (in this case WCPRC) and the Division of the Budget (WC Board of Legislators) should reach a multi-year agreement on the amount and timing of the work to be done under the Infrastructure Fund (WCPRC's Annual and Five Year Capital Budget Requests)."
- "The Legislature should revise the Infrastructure Fund legislation to ensure that the contribution from the general fund will not drop below a stated floor, and that a rise in dedicated park revenues will not be used as a reason to decrease general fund support."
- "Park fees should be adjusted for inflation, so that the real level of Fund supported capital investment will not decrease."

All these recommendations are very applicable for use in Westchester County and should be seriously considered in the future.

A. Purpose of the Master Plan

Respectful of the past, looking forward to the future. This is the mission of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation (WCPRC). As the steward of a world famous County parks legacy established more than ninety years ago, the WCPRC has the enormous responsibility of both managing a system of existing parks and programs in addition to peering into the future of Westchester County to prepare for the needs of its citizens in the next century. The WCPRC's award winning system of parks, recreational facilities, historic sites, conservation programs, and parkways is a resource that must be continually reevaluated as the composition of the population changes and the pressure for development increases.

The need to support and buffer the parks has become paramount. Only through the development of a comprehensive master plan, clearly defining both short and long term trends and goals, can the County continue to provide the level of service that its constituents have come to expect. The Master Plan must include both an in-depth analysis of all existing parks and realistic financing plans to achieve long-range goals. This approach must be met with the full support and commitment from the WCPRC, the local communities and civic organizations, the Westchester County Departments of Planning and Public Works, the Board of Legislators and County Executive's Office, all working in a spirit of cooperation and common focus.

B. Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan

The County's goals and objectives for this project included:

- The preparation of a comprehensive inventory and analysis of all existing parks;
- The identification of needs, options and priorities for the Department's future operation of its parklands;
- The development and analysis of operating and capital budgets and operational policies and procedures;
- The development of a Master Plan with maximum public input in addition to input from municipal parks and planning professionals; and
- The development of provisions to incorporate the results of this project's plans into a future GIS databank for all County parks to assist with the on-going development and stewardship of all County parks.

To achieve these goals and objectives, the project was divided into a sequence of tasks grouped into two major phases of work: Phase I - Information Gathering, Needs Assessment, and Initial Findings; and Phase II - Synthesis, Solutions and Final Recommendations.

C. The Planning Process - Phase I

The three major elements of Phase I include:

- Information Gathering - An inventory all existing parks and programs was performed to highlight the current state of the parks system and then serve as the foundation of a needs assessment. The Inventory was prepared by assembling all available plans, documents and data, park user and park facilities management input, demographics and financial history.
- Needs Assessment - The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify short and long term needs for each park and for the system as a whole. The results of the analysis of this needs assessment will be used in developing first a scope and then the specific park plans in Phase II. The Phase I report contains a summary of all background data from the survey and inventory section, an analysis of that data, the results of the financial analysis models and specific proposals to direct the Phase II portion of the project.
- Initial Findings - From all the information gathered and assessed, a preliminary list of initial findings was developed into a list of initial recommendations that will be carried over into Phase II of the Master Plan process.

The project team worked closely with the WCPRC staff and all other associated County departments (i.e. Planning and Public Works), County officials, local and regional recreational groups and community leaders to identify a comprehensive list of concerns and needs which were analyzed, evaluated and prioritized. Communication was maintained through scheduled meetings with WCPRC, meeting minutes and on-going community involvement.

A Steering Committee was also established to support the project team in identifying key issues and concerns. The Committee was comprised of representatives of the Parks, Planning and Public Works Departments as well as representatives from the County Executive's Office, Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (H.P.A.C.) and Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (F.C.W.C.) and other recreational and park groups recommended by WCPRC. All Committee members were familiar with the County's park system, user patterns and community concerns. Their guidance was invaluable in helping the project team identify, evaluate and prioritize the critical issues that face the WCPRC and the citizens of Westchester County. Some of the recommendations from the Committee for inclusion into the Master Plan included:

- Continued provision of adequate parks County-wide in both the short and long term;
- Increased vigilance to conservation, environmental issues and historic preservation;
- Continued provision of accurate financial resource projections to assure adequate funding for future operational and maintenance costs;
- Continued implementation of the WCPRC's Open Space Policies; and
- Identification of recreational needs and trends and prioritization of the options for future operations and growth.

A Westchester County Residents Recreational User Preference Survey was conducted by the Westchester County Community College on behalf of the Westchester County Planning Department to develop an understanding of the County residents' recreational needs, preferences, facility usage and levels of demand. The results (further described in Chapter IV) were used as a major component for determining current and future needs of the users of the County park system.

Additionally, a series of community-based workshop public meetings was held in the northern, central and southern sections of the county to introduce the project to the public and to solicit their input. The first series of workshops introduced the project team and informed the community of the planning process, the project goals, objectives and schedule. At the second series of public workshops, the project team reported on the Phase I findings. The third series of public workshop meetings will be scheduled to occur at approximately the mid-point of Phase II. The goal of those meetings will be to obtain the public input necessary to formulate specific guidelines for the short-term and long-range recommendations.

D. The Planning Process - Phase II

After the Phase I Report is issued, WCPRC will proceed with Phase II of the process: Synthesis, Solutions and Final Recommendations.

Within the framework of an established planning process and on-going public involvement, the project team will develop short-term and long-term recommendations for each of the major categories of this study, which include:

- Physical Park Improvements including park structures and buildings;
- Historic Preservation and Archaeology;
- Nature Conservation;
- Acquisition and Open Space Planning;
- Park & Recreation Programming; and
- Financial Planning.

1. Synthesis

Upon completion of all information gathering, needs assessments and projections, the team will begin the task of synthesizing all the data. This process will enable the elimination of infeasible solutions and the formation of final recommendations that have substantiated merit gained through rigorous analysis.

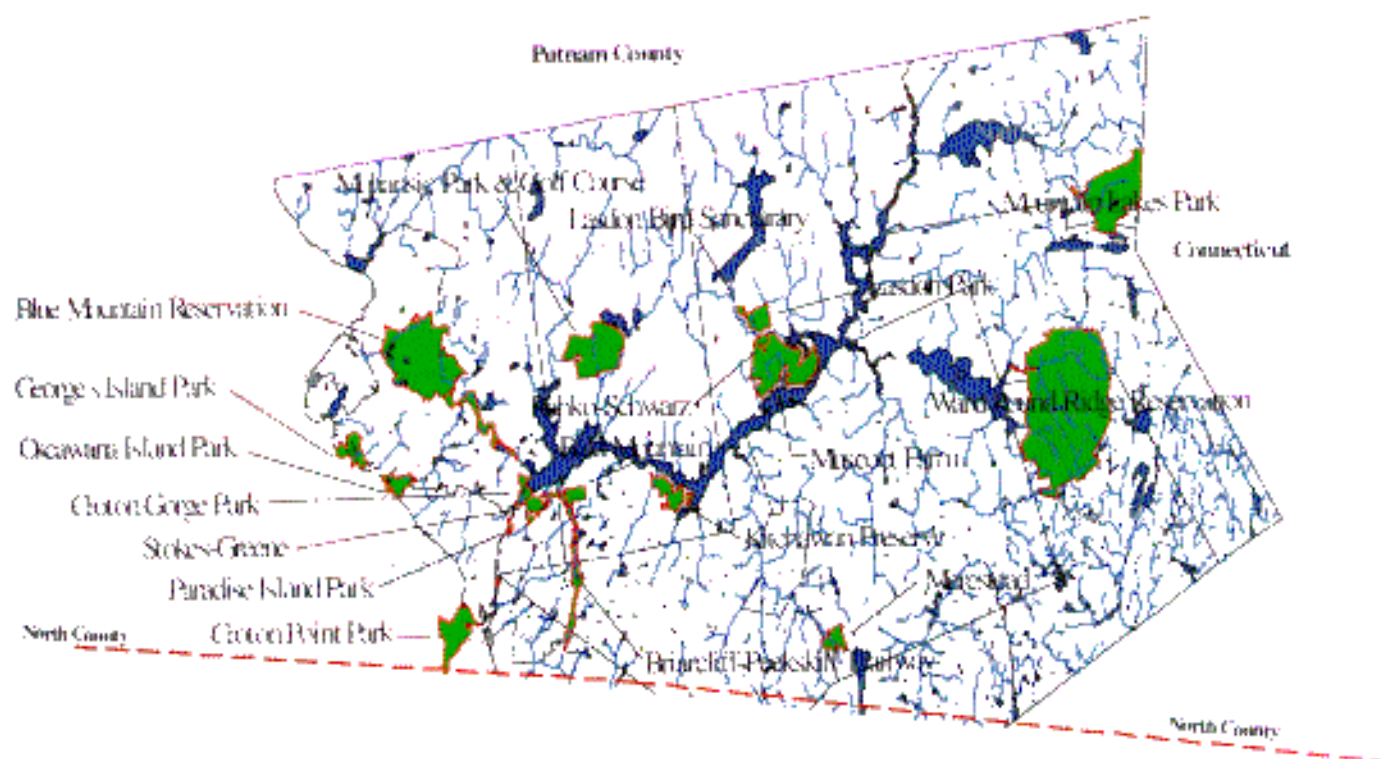
Using the Parks Inventory, demographic and revenue data, the team's synthesis will evaluate needs determined through the user surveys, public input and interviews with park facility management setting a screen line basis criteria for prioritizing alternatives. By listing and ranking the opportunities and constraints of each site, the project team will focus on generating realistic plans and programs to satisfy the goals and objectives of the County's mission and vision as well as identifying budget constraints. This process will result in the final recommendations expressed in the Phase II Report.

2. Solutions and Recommendations

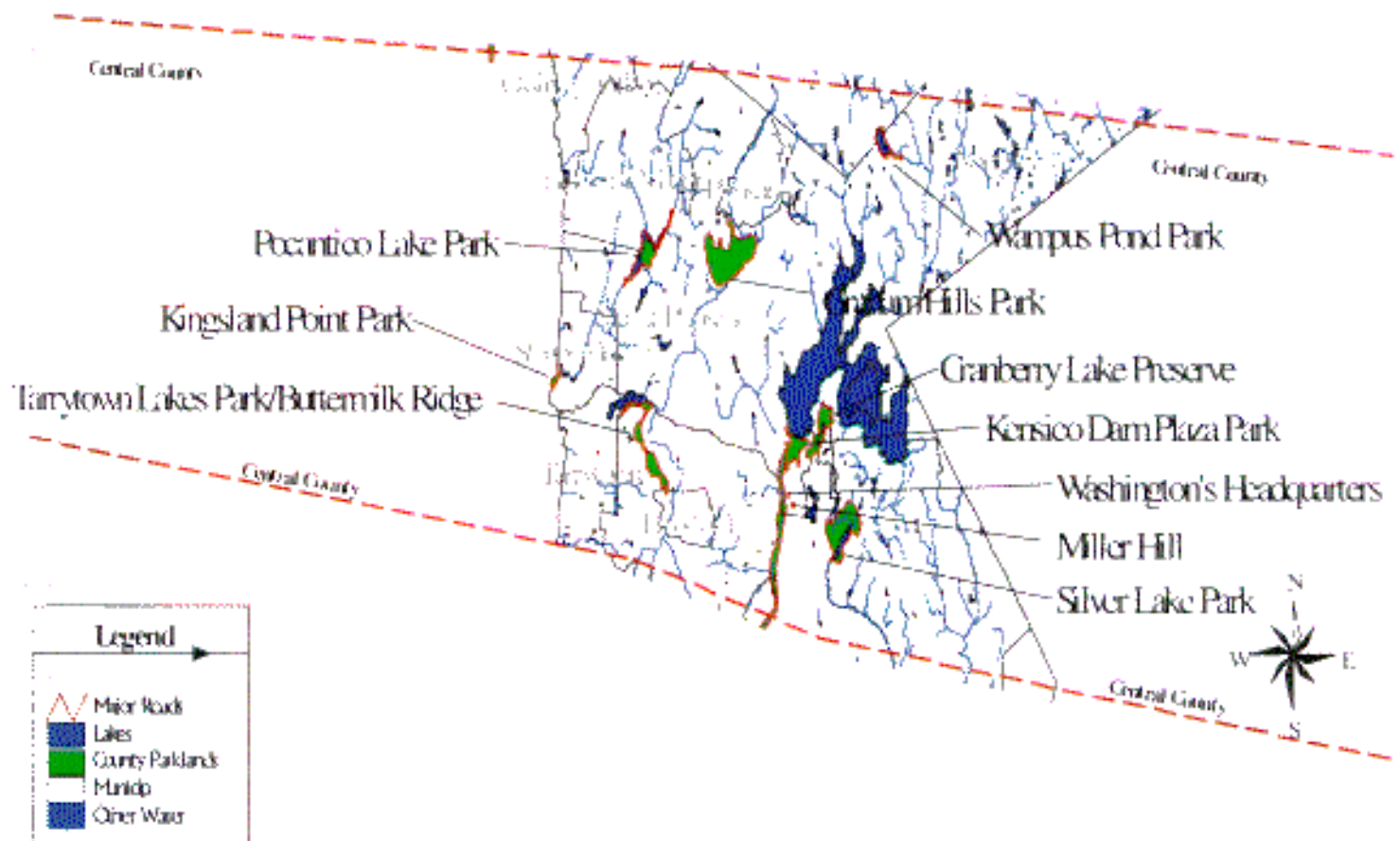
The purpose of Phase II will be to develop specific solutions to short-term needs and outline a long-range plan and policy for future open space and other recreational needs. The Phase I Report concluded with a summary of all background data obtained in the survey and inventory section, the summary analysis of that data, the results of the financial models, some preliminary recommendations and specific course of action proposals identified as “Next Steps” to direct the Phase II portion of the work. These recommendations will be based on projections of future demographics, growth patterns, spending patterns and revenue projections. These will be practical guidelines to support and direct the future development, management and preservation of recreational parks.

The Phase II work will consist of the development of conceptual site specific plans and corresponding cost estimates for the six parks identified in Phase I as most needing immediate attention. Further, the results of additional financial models predicting future revenues and costs and recommendations for long range action plans for acquisition and conservation needs will be summarized. The results of both Phases I and II will be compiled into a Final Master Plan Report combined with an executive summary of the findings. The Final Master Plan Report will consist of the Phase I Report and a combination of reports as recommended and identified in “Next Steps”.

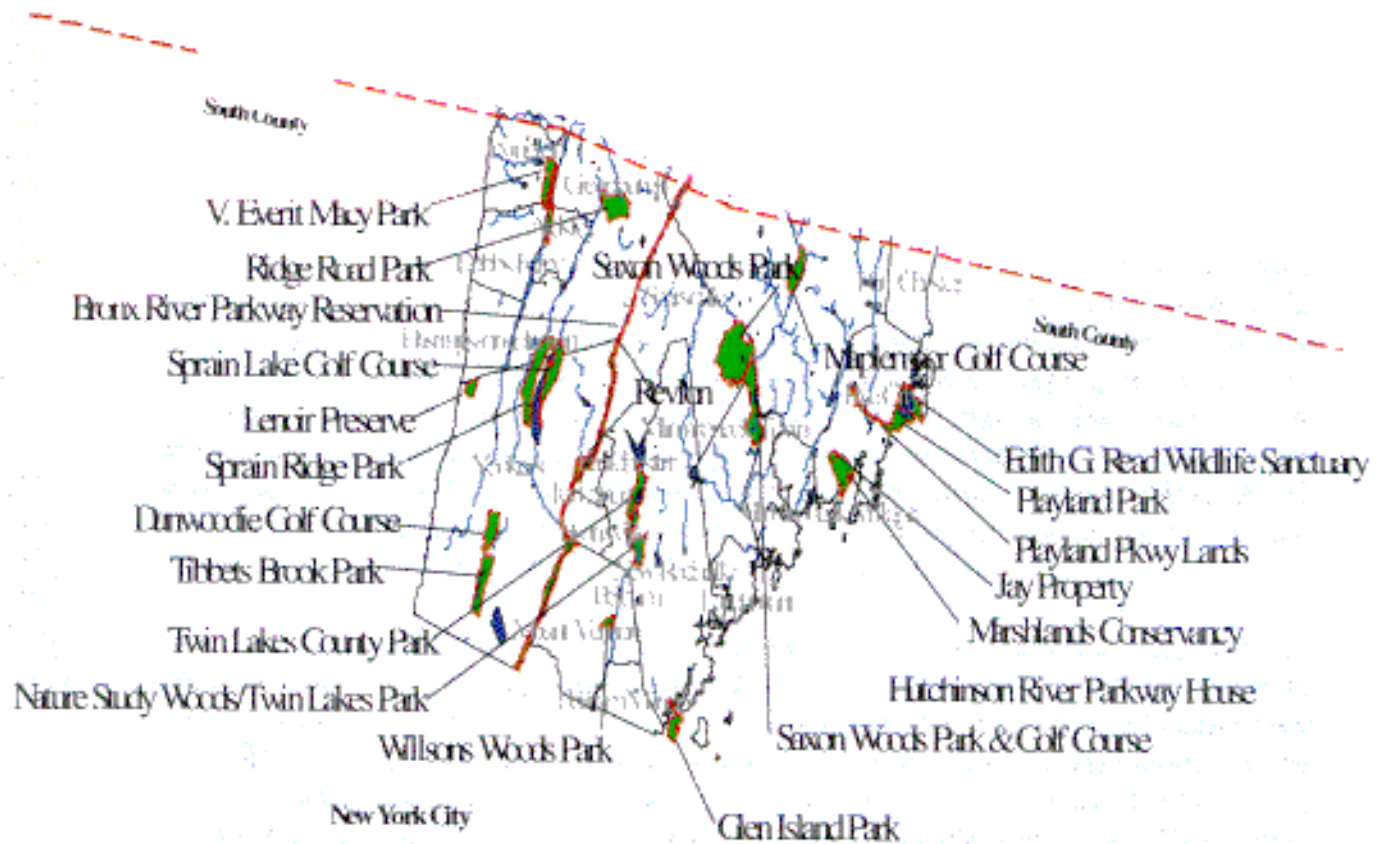
Westchester County Parklands - North County



Westchester County Parklands - Central County



Westchester County Parklands - South County



An physical inventory all existing parks, programs and facilities was completed to ascertain the current state of the parks system and then serve as the foundation of a needs assessment. The Inventory was prepared by: conducting field visits to all facilities; photographing important aspects of each park; assembling all available plans, documents, records, data, demographics and financial histories for each park; and conducting interviews to gain park user and park facilities management input.

A. Summary of Findings

1. Access Issues

The availability of all the County's parks to all its citizens is an issue that was raised at all three public meetings, by the Steering Committee, by facility managers and by other local recreation enthusiasts. The issue involves both providing mass transit service to the parks and having all the facilities in compliance with the provisions of the ADA legislation. In addition, access issues from the WCPRC's perspective involves keeping the parks open, providing parking and keeping costs down. Many parks throughout the County system are not handicapped accessible. Many require extensive renovations to bring them into compliance, while others need only minor upgrades to make them accessible. A full listing of all facilities in need of various ADA-mandated improvements can be found as recommendation 12 in the Recommendations section of Chapter V.

Mass transit accessibility to all County facilities is an issue that affects a disproportionate segment of the County's population. Individuals and families with limited transportation resources have few opportunities to visit and enjoy the County's park's because they typically cannot get to them. It was noted several times at various presentations that the Parks Department could work more closely with Metro-North Railroad and the County's Bee Line Bus system to add mass transit stops to current or planned routes. Particularly in the North County region, private automobile is the only method by which a majority of the County's facilities can be reached. Croton Point Park currently enjoys mass transit access both with bus service on Route 9 and the Croton-Harmon station close by. There is bus service on Armonk Road serving Wampus Pond Park. Oscawana Island Park has Metro-North rail tracks through it but no station. The potential exists to link Blue Mountain, Mohansic, Lasdon/Muscot and Ward Pound Ridge by extending and better utilizing the bus route originating from the population center of Peekskill along Route 35.

In Central county, Kingsland Point Park has the Phillipse Manor Metro-North station relatively close, and a better connection to the park could be made. At Graham Hills, bus service runs on Route 117 and a potential connection to the Metro-North Pleasantville station could be promoted to increase access to this park. The North White Plains Metro-North station is close to both the Bronx River Parkway with its Bike and Blade Sundays and Miller House. The entrances to the eastern portion of V.E. Macy Park and Kensico Dam have bus service to them.

South County, with its large population centers, has a significant need for parks with mass transit access. Lenoir has regularly scheduled bus service near its entrance. There is a bus stop near the entrance to Saxon Woods that could be realigned for better service. Currently, Glen Island and Playland have bus service to their front entrances. During the summer, a bus continues into Playland for better visitor service. Tibbetts Brook, Dunwoodie Golf Course and Willson's Woods also have bus service to them serving the immediately surrounding communities of Yonkers and Mount Vernon. Twin Lakes Park on Mill Road and Maple Moor Golf Course also have bus service adjacent to them. Marshlands, situated on Boston Post Road, and Sprain Ridge Park, do not currently have bus service.

2. Diversity of Recreational and Built Facilities

Discussed in detail in Chapter V, the bench marking analysis found that the Westchester County Parks system offers an extensive array of recreational activities to its residents. Westchester County has the most parks of any comparable metropolitan park system. For example, it is the only system compared that provides County pools for use by residents. The range of park facilities ranges from large, undeveloped tracts of land to highly developed recreation complexes to golf courses to an amusement park. The County has trails, nature centers, nature preserves, picnic areas, ball fields, playgrounds, a sportsmen's center, a County Center, bicycle paths, historic sites, museums, ponds, lakes, rivers, camp grounds and an arboretum. It is only through this wide variety of facilities that the Westchester County Parks Department can offer the kind of recreational opportunities that citizens of the County have come to expect.

3. Diversity of Programs

The County's series of programs tends toward the larger, special event-type presentations and not the typical smaller group-type activity offerings. These smaller programs are left to be handled at the local level. The Conservation and Historical programs tend to be smaller in scale, however, these are not offered at the local level. Within the past year, the County has presented: 7 ethnic heritage festivals at either Kensico Dam Plaza, Tibbetts Brook or Ridge Road; a series of concerts by the Philharmonia Virtuosi at Lasdon Arboretum; a weekend blues festival at Croton Point Park; a series of Sunday concerts in the park at Malcolm Wilson Park, basketball and volleyball tournaments at the County Center; golf tournaments at all 5 County courses; numerous nature lectures and workshops at the Cranberry Lake, Croton Point, Lenoir Preserve, Marshlands, Edith Read and Ward Pound Ridge nature centers; Bike and Blade Sundays on the Bronx River Parkway, farm programs and events at Muscoot; and interpretive and historic programs and events at the Miller House (Washington's Headquarters) Museum. Additionally, Playland offers free entertainment daily throughout the summer, there are numerous programs and events for the Senior Citizens of the county. The County Center hosts many shows, exhibits, concerts and other events, and the County also sponsors tennis tournaments at municipal courts throughout the entire county. Typically, the fees associated with most of these programs are quite reasonable; being either no charge or a very modest amount (\$5.00 or less). For the smaller programs, reservations are usually required. A

Westchester County Park Pass is typically required for registration. The majority of the programs are run with existing staff members and well attended.

B. Methodology

The first step in preparing the Inventory Report involved reviewing past planning efforts, reports and historical materials. The consultant team collected reports from Westchester County Department of Parks Recreation and Conservation (WCPRC), Westchester County Department of Planning, Westchester County Department of Public Works, various Friends groups representing individual parks, the Departments of Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (H.P.A.C), the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (F.C.W.C) and letters and requests from residents of and visitors to Westchester County. The review of prior master planning efforts and research into the rich history of some of the unique parks and structures in the Westchester County system enabled the Project team to form a foundation of knowledge regarding the significance of both individual park elements, the important architectural and historical links that exist between many of the parks, and the County Parks as an overall system.

After reviewing these materials, the Project team began site visits led by members of the WCPRC. These site reconnaissance visits enabled the team to accomplish several tasks vital to completing the existing conditions analysis. These included:

- Inventorying all built and natural features with a description and analysis of the conditions of natural and built facilities,
- Analyzing of visitation, circulation, environmental, archeological and ecological issues, and
- Preparing a photographic inventory.

The Project team also noted possible ideas regarding rehabilitation of and reuse potential for structures and also included recommendations for new construction within and around several parks.

This comprehensive existing conditions inventory was further supplemented with interviews of local and municipal parks professionals and individual park staff. The Project team prepared a list of questions for individual local parks professionals to determine the needs of municipal parks that could be addressed more efficiently on the County level. Issues noted included the levels of interaction municipal parks departments currently have and would like to have in the future with the County Parks system. The results of these interviews yielded recommendations for services and programs that the County could provide to supplement local parks department efforts and included larger multi-purpose athletic complexes, improved transportation services to County offered programs, and more tennis and ice rink facilities.

During the study, public workshops were held in various locations within the County. Public input at these workshops was critical in order for this Strategic Plan to be both comprehensive and responsive to the needs of the Westchester County residents. Comments generally addressed many of the Plan's component parts:

- The WCPRC's goals and objectives,
- Present park usage versus present needs,

- Present unmet demand and future regional recreation trends,
- Park planning concepts,
- Financing strategies for both park land acquisition and facilities' development and operation, and
- General implementation policies and conservation strategies.

Finally, the Project team met with many of the groups within Westchester County representing the diverse constituencies with interest in the Westchester County Parks system. These meetings and presentations were designed to elicit commentary from these groups on their needs and the future plans and programs they would like to see implemented. Recommendations included:

- Increased attention to conservation and preservation issues;
- Increased recognition of the importance of archeological, environmental and historic resources within the Parks; and
- Continued rehabilitation and reuse efforts within particular parks in the system.



These recommendations were included in the summary text portion of the inventory.



C. Structure of Inventory



The Inventory Report was designed to provide a comprehensive catalogue of the distinctive features characterizing each park in the Westchester County system. This Inventory Report will serve as a reference manual when addressing specific features of specific parks. This catalogue will provide a variety of information ranging from total acreage to locations of wetlands and ecologically sensitive areas to primary active recreational uses within the parks.



While the Inventory was not designed to provide recommendations for future uses within the parks, it does include observations regarding potential modifications to circulation patterns, parking and basic building rehabilitation.

The inventory information for each park includes: a “park page”; summary text; and several matrices detailing specific information about park features. This collection of park data provided an overview of park elements, a brief history of each park, an inventory of maintenance and operating budgets as well as other quantitative data. The Inventory also included an analysis of both the natural and built facilities.

The “park page” included a park map, specific bulleted items highlighting unique park features, basic park information including total acreage, dates acquired and a short paragraph describing the features that differentiate that park from the others in the Westchester County system. The park page also included photographs of key features within the park to provide users with a sense of specific features that characterize the park and the appropriate number of four possible icons that highlight particularly sensitive areas or issues within the park. The icons are defined as follows:

A “building” icon indicates that there are historically significant or sensitive buildings

or structures located within the park;

A “landscape” icon indicates that there are historically significant landscapes or natural areas located within the park;

A “flower” icon indicates that ecologically or environmentally sensitive areas are present;

A “shovel” icon indicates that located within or near the facility are archeologically significant areas.

The summary text portion discusses the history of the park in terms of activities, ownership, archeology, environmental and ecological sensitivity. Several of the parks within the County System have an important historical heritage yielding significant architectural, environmental and archeological findings. These special considerations were noted in this section. Some parks are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. These important designations were also noted within this portion of the report.

Also within the summary text portion was a comprehensive review of all built facilities within the park. Buildings and structures were discussed in terms of dates of construction and/or renovation, location, style, condition, and past and present use. Several buildings and structures have been identified as important historic landmarks and have been designated or identified as eligible for designation. The summary text provided a detailed discussion of these features.

Words used in the texts and in the facility matrices are terms recognized by the preservation community and specifically defined by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. The intention of this document to abide by these definitions and to summarize where and how they are applied to county properties. This was of particular value in recognizing the official status of several properties, and in anticipating that additional properties may well be worthy of advancement in status to a higher level of recognition.

For example, "historic context", "historic integrity", "historic district", "historic function", "historic property", and "historic significance" are all expressions used by the National Register in evaluating properties. If the reader of the texts is uncertain whether a term was used in its official capacity, this was clarified in the tables. The "Glossary of National Register Terms" can be found in Appendix IV of the National Register Bulletin 16A, "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form", and may be referred to for additional clarity. There are a few terms used frequently herein worth noting:

"Significance" is defined as, "importance of a historic property as defined by the National Register criteria in one or more areas of significance." Therefore "historic significance" is not inherently graded high to low, but instead is related to a property meeting National Register criteria.

"National Register criteria for evaluation" are "established criteria for evaluating the eligibility of a

property for inclusion in the National Register." Significance may be found in four aspects of American history recognized by the National Register criteria:

- Association with historic events or activities,
- Association with important persons,
- Distinctive design or physical characteristics, or
- Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

Several Westchester County parks have been found in whole or in part to meet these criteria and are now listed on the National Register or as a National Historic Landmark. Their significance is well documented in their registration forms. Several properties are considered as officially "eligible" to meet the criteria although not yet listed in the Register. Both listed and eligible properties are designated in the accompanying tables in which case an individual natural feature or a built feature is not differentiated. The reader is guided to official references for detail and interpretation.

When, in the course of evaluating properties for this document, it was felt that there was historic importance to a particular site aside from official recognition, the tables list "Appears to Have Significance". These statements are cues to potential value, additional study, and possible elevation to a finding of eligibility. Where the importance of a site of special interest is noted, or where there appear to be linkages or resources expressive of a common theme between properties, recommendations are made to advance the evaluation beyond the scope of this document. And lastly, when deteriorating condition or other threat appears to impact the "integrity" of property, a red flag is raised in the evaluation.

This section of the Inventory document was designed to increase the awareness of park administrators and personnel in realizing of the importance of the valuable historic resources within the park system thus leading to a fuller and richer public appreciation of the heritage of Westchester County.

The final section for each park includes a series of matrices that provide quantitative information in a quick reference format. The matrices included an inventory of natural features, landscapes, recreational and built features, and of operating and maintenance expenses. Also included on the matrices were any special features located within the park and an identification of the status of features that have or may appear to have some historic significance. All information listed within the individual matrices was summarized into one allowing an at-a-glance inventory of these resources.

RESIDENTS RECREATION PREFERENCES SURVEY



A. Introduction

The Westchester County Department of Planning and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation have worked together in studying the recreational activities, needs and preferences of county residents. Previous recreational surveys were conducted in 1960, 1971 and 1986. In the summer of 1996, a survey questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 5,000 county households. Geographic distribution of sample respondent households in the 1996 survey is comparable to 1990 Census distribution of households county wide.

Data related to popular recreational activities, familiarity and visitation discrepancies, park visitation, use of public facilities, user demand, user fee preference and special event attendance were obtained. Comparisons with the 1986 survey results were made to give a sense of how the recreational patterns and needs of county residents have changed over the past decade. The analysis of the data obtained are summarized below.

B. Leading Recreational Activities

The top ten leading activities and the percentage of households surveyed with one or more members partaking in each activity in 1996 and 1986 are as follows:

Leading Sports and Recreational Activities

Rank	1996		1986	
1	walking/jogging	62.1	swimming	58.1
2	swimming	51.8	picnicking	39.7
3	bicycling	45.3	music/drama	38.9
4	historic sites/museums	40.8	bicycling	34.2
5	cultural performances	40.0	walking program	33.0
6	picnicking	33.9	tennis	31.2
7	golf	30.1	skiing	25.8
8	tennis	27.7	fishing	24.6
9	playground (kids)	25.1	golf	24.5
10	ice skating/hockey	24.7	baseball/softball	24.0

- The 1996 survey indicates that Walking/Jogging is the most popular activity. Swimming and Bicycling were ranked second and third, respectively.

RESIDENTS RECREATION PREFERENCES SURVEY

- There is a concentration of both “cardiovascular” and “cultural” activities in the top ten list. The demographics of the county would seem to explain this, reflecting the needs and preferences of an ever-growing segment of older residents, as well as those of the mini-baby boom generation.
- Compared to the 1986 survey, Walking, Golf and Bicycling moved up in rank. Swimming, Picnicking, Cultural Performances (Music/Drama) and Tennis lost some favor. Skiing, Fishing and Baseball/Softball activities were knocked off the top ten altogether.
- Completely new to the list of top ten activities in 1996 is Historic Sites/Museums.

C. Activities by Age Group

The top three most popular activities by age groups cited by respondent households are as follows:

Rank	0-5 year	6-11 years	12-18 years	19-35 years	36-59 years	60+ years old
1	playground	swimming	swimming	jogging/walking	jogging/walking	jogging/walking
2	swimming	bicycling	bicycling	swimming	swimming	cultural performances
3	picnicking	playground	basketball	bicycling	historic sites/museums	historic sites/museums

- Swimming cut across all age groups except “60+ years old”.
- Jogging/Walking is the first ranked activity for all age groups over 18.
- Picnicking and Playgrounds are most popular in younger households, “0-5 year(s) old” age group.
- Basketball is most popular for the “12-18 years old” age group.
- Cultural Performances and Historic Sites/Museums is most popular for persons older than 35 years.

D. Activities by Geographic Area

For households in the South, Central and North subareas of Westchester County, the top five activities are essentially the same. In general order and relative magnitude, they are Jogging/Walking, Swimming, Bicycling, Historic Sites/Museums and Cultural Performances. Activities for the remaining five activities in the top ten list particular to a subarea are as follows:

RESIDENTS RECREATION PREFERENCES SURVEY

- Playgrounds and Basketball are particularly strong in the South. The preponderance of the urban population, with a heavy concentration of juvenile age groups, likely explains this.
- Ice Skating/Hockey and In-Line Skating/Roller Hockey are more popular in the Central and North subareas and Hiking/Backpacking is far stronger in the North subarea. These can be expensive activities and may reflect the comparatively higher-income households found in central and northern Westchester. Additionally, the opportunities to participate in these activities are predominantly found in these geographic areas.

E. Familiarity and Visitation of County Parks/Facilities, 1996

A relationship exists between respondents' places of residence and their knowledge of parks and facilities in a particular location. There is, however, a notable gap, about 10-30 percentage points, between familiarity and visitation. This indicates an additional potential or capacity for increased attendance as well as a need to raise the familiarity level of many parks individually and the County park system as a whole.

F. Park Visitation

Over 54 percent of survey respondents fulfill most of their recreation needs within the county. Slightly more than one-third (34.2 percent) find their recreational needs are met about equally within and outside Westchester. On a geographic basis, as in the case with familiarity of parks, respondent householders were more likely to visit parks predominantly in the geographic area in which they live. The leading magnets for visitors from all three subareas were Playland Park, the County Center, Bronx River Parkway/Bikeway, Kensico Dam Plaza, Muscoot Farm, Croton Point Park and Glen Island Park. Only 11.5 percent of survey respondents go outside the county to fulfill most of their recreational needs.

G. Use of County Facilities

The leading facilities used by visitors of county parks in the 1995-1996 season, in the order listed, are Amusement Park (49.1%), Beaches (33.8%), Cultural Events (29.6%), Hiking Trails (28.0%), Swimming Pools (27.0%), Picnic Areas (26.6%), Bike Trails (26.2%), Golf Courses (23.1%), Ice Skating Rinks (21.8%), and Historic Sites (19.8%). These 1996 usage rates are up to five times higher than their 1986 levels.

Thirty-four percent of respondent households (similar to the 1986 rate) indicated that one or more member(s) of their household had a Westchester County Park pass. Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that they had used the County Trailway over the past 12 months. Slightly over 10 percent of the surveyed respondents owned boats, and 34 percent of the boat owners did not launch or moor their boats in Westchester.

RESIDENTS RECREATION PREFERENCES SURVEY

The top four reasons cited by respondent households as to why county facilities/parks are not used more, in the order listed, are “not enough time to use them”, “needs met by other facilities”, “fees too high” and “facilities are dirty”. Over 65 percent (up from approximately 50 percent in 1986) of survey respondents had one or more household member(s) using private facilities for some recreational activities. The 1996 top five private facility usage by one or more persons in the households surveyed are beach/pool (41.0%), fitness (35.4%), tennis (18.0%), golf (16.3%) and boating (7.2%).

H. Identifying Demand

The top suggestions for sports/recreational improvement/expansion by activity indicated by the 1996 survey were bicycling (27.6%), swimming (26.2%), cultural (25.6%), jog/walk (25.3%), historic sites (19.1%), golf (18.4%), ice skating/hockey (17.8%), picnicking (16.8%), nature study (16.3%), playgrounds (14.1%) and tennis (13.9%).

The demand for more public Pool/Beach facilities was particularly strong among respondent households. As indicated by the high usage of private pool/beach facilities, many respondents expressed their desire/need for more public pool/beach facilities. Nearly 73 percent of respondents expressed the preference for facilities with a series of smaller pools, as opposed to a single, large pool.

I. 1996 Fee Ratings

A high percentage of respondents were decidedly noncommittal about fee levels, in that they either “didn’t know” or did not respond. The County’s current Park Pass (\$25 per person for three years) was the only fee cited by a plurality of respondents (40.2%) as being priced “about right”. A majority (52.2%) expressed the preference for “modest fees” - about half-funded by tax dollars. More than four out of five respondents (86.5%) opted for fees ranging from 50 to 100 percent subsidized by tax dollars. The concept of an Annual Fee covering all activities/facilities (except greens fees for golf) was met with interest by an overwhelming majority (over 70 percent) of respondents. The average suggestion for such an annual fee was \$25.

J. Special Events, 1996

Just over 40 percent of the respondents surveyed indicated they had attended a Special Event offered by Westchester (36.5% in 1986). As in 1986, the most popular event was Bike and Blade Sundays. In general, 1996 respondents’ familiarity with Special Events was higher than attendance. Although the survey indicated that 33% of respondents were familiar with special events, it also indicated that some 11% of respondents had actually attended.

K. Corporate/Institutional Survey

A survey of the recreational awareness and needs of the non-residential sectors was conducted in conjunction with the county resident user survey. The survey was conducted by mail in the summer

RESIDENTS RECREATION PREFERENCES SURVEY



and fall of 1996. Out of a sample of 100 organizations and institutions and 100 private corporations, twenty institutions, including 13 non-for-profit organizations, and eighteen corporations responded.

Results indicated that a large market potential may exist for the use of County facilities, events and programs by non-for-profit groups and, to a lesser extent, for-profit groups. The survey also indicated that both sectors would be interested in getting more information on Parks' programs and events, emphasizing the need for an increased public relations effort. The Parks Department also faces competition from private facilities typically rented for events by these sectors. These results indicated that Westchester County Parks may want to target specific corporate groups and market event spaces and programs, competing for this market sector.

PHASE I - MASTER PLAN INITIAL FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS



While a set of Final Recommendations cannot be developed until the end of the Phase II portion of the project, the Project team was able to compile the following list of Initial Findings and Preliminary Recommendations based on a review of the Inventory Report, input from the public and the WCPRC staff. They are as follows:

A. Master Plan Recommendations

1. Park Preservation and Stewardship

The legacy of Westchester County Parks has been built on preserving natural landscapes and open space. Based on public meeting responses, meetings with Friends groups (H.P.A.C. and F.C.W.C.) and consistent with the County's mission statement, clearly the vigilant preservation of all the habitats, unique environments and natural beauty of the County's parklands must be the Department's number one priority. Current County efforts to maintain the integrity of services, safety and beauty of its existing parks will need to continue and grow in scope and attention. As such, it is also necessary to provide funding and assign high priority to renovating and rehabilitating existing buildings in order to preserve the County's current investments in parks and facilities. The inventory and analysis of the existing parks, listed in alphabetical order, identified the following unique conditions that need special preservation and stewardship efforts.

Blue Mountain Reservation's unique natural setting of wooded hills, mountain streams, large rock formations and two peaks, Spitzenberg and Blue Mountain, afford magnificent views worthy of careful environmental planning for trail access and habitat preservation.

Croton Gorge Park, with its monumental Cornell Dam as well as the adjacent Stokes Green parcel's bucolic compound of buildings and historic landscape, requires sensitive analysis of ultimate re-use options and intensity of visitor use to preserve the Park's designed and natural setting.

Renewed interest in Croton Point Park follows the reopening of the landfill. Its recreation facilities are at various levels of renovation within a master plan process. This park has spectacular Hudson River views, historically significant 19th Century buildings and wine cellars constructed of site manufactured brick, and unique habitats all which require special attention directed towards appropriate rehabilitation, adaptive re-use and interpretive history possibilities.

The Saxon Woods Golf Course is one of the County's oldest and is characterized by dramatic topography and steep slopes. It has the potential for designation as a cultural historic landscape. As such, improvements to the course and its buildings need to be sensitive to the course's historic and cultural status.

PHASE I - MASTER PLAN INITIAL FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS



Both the Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary and the Marshlands Conservancy provide unique habitat and refuge for their marine and terrestrial environments whose health should be continuously monitored. Edith Read also suffers from low public awareness and visibility. As with all the County's nature centers, a delicate balance must be struck between the important conservation role they play and their use for passive recreation. As such, all nature centers should be included in this section for special preservation efforts.

Glen Island enjoys its location directly on the Long Island Sound and the special condition of being both a highly developed historic cultural landscape as well an environmentally sensitive site. Both aspects of this park's features must be maintained.

While the historic Kensico Dam is not under the jurisdiction of the WCPRC, the developed landscape at its base is and should be conserved as an historic site.

The popular Lighthouse at Kingsland Point Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is in need of restoration and extra preservation measures so that it remains available for generations to come.

Lasdon Park and Arboretum has both cultural and environmental significance. The main house needs some major rehabilitation which should be performed as soon as possible. Once the summer home of a wealthy Westchester family, it is used for nature study, horticultural research and cultural events, all of which should be expanded, supported and promoted.

The County system's first course, the charming Maple Moor Golf Course, is a cultural landscape that should be recognized and preserved for its significance to the art of golf course architecture.

A solid conservation and preservation plan must be in place when the Department ultimately takes possession of the Merestead Property so that an orderly progression of programs featuring this remarkable property can occur.

The Main Club House at historic Mohansic Golf Course needs some rehabilitation so that it can continue to provide North County golfers an excellent round of golf at one of the finest public facilities in the country.

The rugged landscape of Mountain Lakes Park is environmentally sensitive, historically and archeologically significant and should be researched and conserved.

Muscot Farm, one of Westchester County's premier facilities, exemplifies an historic turn-of-the-century agricultural facility and in keeping with current preservation efforts, it requires continued conservation.

PHASE I - MASTER PLAN INITIAL FINDINGS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS



Besides its obvious historical significance as America's first totally planned amusement park, the nationally renowned Playland Park, with its location on Long Island Sound, also provides critical environmental habitat. These factors mandate the continuation of preservation, structural and infrastructure rehabilitation efforts already in place.

Tibbett's Brook Park, located in the south County's more densely populated area, has both an historic and an environmental role in the County Park system fabric as well as acting as a regional park destination. Equal attention must continue to be given to all these important roles.

The ecological significance of Ward Pound Ridge Reservation cannot be overstated. As the County's largest park, it plays a vital role in ensuring the biodiversity of the region. It hosts the educational and popular Trailside Museum. The park's recreational and archeological value can only be ensured with adequate conservation and preservation efforts.

The County's smallest park is certainly no less significant. Miller House (Washington's Headquarters) is an historic site that requires a number of important conservation and preservation steps. It needs restoration and a 'friends' group to help it attain the proper status which it richly deserves.

2. Economic Studies

Various economic studies are needed on a broad range of topics. An in-depth analysis should be conducted of potential new or expanded recreational developments that would offer significant amounts of potential revenues, e.g., specific golf courses or aquatic centers. Careful analysis should also be made of the economic impacts that the park system's capital and operational budgets has on Westchester County's economy. These economic impact analyses would show potential direct returns to the parks system substantiating continued expenditures. Potential economic impacts could include: construction jobs; tax revenues from capital development projects; permanent job creation; indirect dollar expenditures by park visitor/users (multipliers by type and location); creation of new businesses; tax revenues on certain operating expenditures, and the capture of non-County user dollars. Most importantly, a balance must be achieved between revenue generating potential and park preservation needs.

The demand for recreation in Westchester County, as within the region, is clearly growing, and the economic impact of increased park usage will go beyond initial users direct expenditures. Park usage has grown fivefold in the ten years between 1986 and 1996. The economic impacts of this growth trend could yield considerable revenue in secondary and tertiary receptors including expenditures on recreation equipment (bikes, skates) and even in Westchester County restaurants. An analysis of the additional economic impacts will help develop an overall understanding of the need for continuing growth in capital budgets.

As noted in Chapter VI, the following parks have potential as revenue generators: the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, Croton Gorge Park with Stokes Green, Croton Point Park, Glen Island Park, Kingsland Point Park, Kensico Dam Plaza Park, Lasdon Park & Arboretum, Miller House, Mountain Lakes Park, Playland Park, Tibbetts Brook Park, Wampus Pond, Westchester County Center and Willson's Woods Park. Further studies should address realistic suggestions for potential development in these parks.

3. Park Linkages

The 1996 Residents Recreation Preference Survey ranked Walking/Jogging as the number one activity and Bicycling as the number three activity of Westchester County residents. These strong results coupled with the clear indication that these activities will remain popular into the future demonstrate the need for maintaining and expanding the County's Trailway system.

A Phase II study of possible park recreation linkages should be performed to augment the upcoming study being conducted by the Westchester County Department of Planning. The Department of Planning's study of bikeway/walkway, conducted in concert with the WCPRC, and funded by the DOT, would help identify and support other transportation and circulation issues. Where possible, connectors for bicycling, jogging, and skating should be constructed on dedicated rights-of-way, and Class II or III bike routes and/or trail blazer signs should be used for sections along local streets.

Priority should be given to final design and construction of a Trailway for the entire length of the old Putnam Division Railroad right-of-way. Portions have been completed or are nearing completion and a commitment should be made to complete the remainder. When completed, Trailway users will be able to travel from Tibbetts Brook Park and Dunwoodie Golf Course in the southern sector of the county, north through V.E. Macy Park to Tarrytown Lakes Park eventually connecting with the North County Trailway. Other possible north-south connections that should be assessed include connecting the Bronx River Parkway Reservation trail system at the Kensico Dam Plaza to Graham Hills Park using the lands associated with the Taconic Parkway. The County will also take an active role in developing a trail on the old railroad right-of-way from Mahopac to Goldens Bridge.

Potential east-west Trailway linkages would include using the lands associated with the New Croton and Cross River Reservoirs that would permit travel between Blue Mountain Reservation and the Briarcliff Peekskill Trailway in the east through Croton Gorge Park, Stokes Green, Bald Mountain Park, Kitchawan Preserve, Muscoot Farm, Lasdon Park and Arboretum and Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in the western sector of the County. The Hutchinson River trail along the Hutchinson River Parkway is currently used for equestrian riding but could be expanded for other uses as part of the east-west greenway.

A final recommendation for park linkages involves the possibility of future land acquisitions for linking county parks to state, municipal and town parks and private institutions with significant

open space holdings as well as the Hudson River Greenway. One such connection could originate in Tarrytown along the Route 9 bicycle route, just south of Kingsland Point Park and head east through the Tarrytown Lakes facility, connecting the Old Putnam Division/North County Trail, the Grasslands Valhalla Campus and the Saw Mill River Parkway utilizing Route 100-C/Virginia Road as a corridor to the Bronx River Parkway Reservation and Kensico Dam. Another possible connector would begin at Rockwood Hall State Park in Mount Pleasant, run through the Rockefeller State Park Preserve to the North County Trailway and Graham Hills at Pace University.

A second aspect of linkage between parks is one of historic association and merit. This plan acknowledges certain landscapes and structures that not only appear to contribute to the historic and architectural significance of an individual park, but also take on special importance when seen in the context of other parks. Such a comprehensive view and the need for further study are elaborated in Item 10, Historic Preservation Studies.

Thirdly, the potential for increased tourism generated through a well connected and publicized trail network cannot be overstated. An extended Westchester County trail system is a regional destination for many cyclists from the metropolitan area and the economic benefits to the County can be substantial.

4. Swimming

Because swimming received a high rank in the user surveys, public meeting input and comments from town and municipal park departments, swimming has been identified as a priority “need” in Westchester County and more facilities should be provided. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation is currently rehabilitating the Saxon Woods pool complex and has plans for the rehabilitation of Sprain Ridge Park pool, and the Willsons Woods Pool. Also shown to be on the rise is the desire for natural, open water swimming as exemplified by the popularity of the newly reopened beach at Croton Point Park. A Phase II study would address current plans for rehabilitation of the present traditional pool complex vs. the family oriented aquatic center, and a site feasibility study should be conducted to identify possible locations for additional pool complexes with multiple means of access for residents in the South or Central County. Specific market financial analysis should be undertaken for the principal developments that will yield the greatest potential revenues over the next ten years. These are golf course (on a per course basis), an aquatic center, and specific pools.

5. Marketing Program

A comprehensive marketing program should be designed to encourage additional overall park use by County residents and increase usage of under-utilized parks and parks activities. Additional usage will aid in the continued recognition of the parks system and increase annual

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revenues for the system. Since economic and demographic growth are solid market indicators for increased park use of all types, the aggressive, comprehensive marketing program must be able to capture that potential usage (demand).

The marketing program, in summary, should have specific objectives to be jointly defined by the Westchester County Department of Parks and a defined organizational structure. That structure should include a Marketing Director with an annual salary and support staff or retainer consultants. It should also have an annual operating budget in the range of \$150,000 - \$200,000 for advertising (radio, T. V., brochures etc.); travel, speeches, and seminars; and a designed Target Marketing Campaign by location, market segment, season, and type of park usage. The objective of this campaign is to enhance the image of the Westchester County Park system and increase awareness/usage throughout the County.

6. Golf

Based on strong public meeting responses, the Residential Recreation Preference Survey responses, and results from a National Golf Foundation survey that documents an unmet demand of some 400,000 rounds of public golf per year, the County should provide more public golf. In addition, golf benefits the entire system because it is a significant revenue generator. The County should pursue an aggressive development process at the recently acquired Hudson Hills property to open a golf course as soon as possible. Because the demand for golf remains unabated and seemingly will continue that way for some time, it is strongly recommended that the County undertake site feasibility studies for the construction of several new full sized and executive style courses with teaching stations. These smaller, lower par executive courses are quite popular with seniors, beginners and children. Executive courses require less land and allow for faster rounds. Based on its proven record of providing quality public golf throughout the County, this activity is one that should be strongly encouraged and promoted. The County should also continue to consider the future expansion potential of Mohansic course.

7. Playland Master Plan

A comprehensive master plan for Playland Park and the adjacent Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary should be prepared. The purpose is to plan for other necessary infrastructure and facility improvements for Playland Park. The plan would specifically address Playland Park, its ice rink, pier and bath house outside of the amusement park, and Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in terms of how the parts of each of these facilities comprise the combined whole and how the two facilities can work together, complement each other yet remain separate and distinct. The overall Master Plan would include the phased

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accommodation of this historic facility with new amusements, upgraded access and parking as well as adaptive reuse potentials. Because the amusement area is only one portion of Playland Park, it effectively acts as a “park within a park”. More attention must be given to the other recreational opportunities available at the greater Playland Park area.

8. Individual Park Master Plans

Site specific Master Plan documents should be prepared for the following primary set of parks (and their facilities): Tibbetts Brook Park including all trails, ballfields, the pool and bathhouse; the Bronx River Parkway Reservation and Kensico Dam Plaza Park including a comprehensive boundary survey of both the Dam Plaza and the Reservation; and Mountain Lakes Park. A secondary set of parks recommended for Master Plans includes: Sprain Ridge Park, Blue Mountain Reservation, Pocantico Lake Park, V.E. Macy Park and Ridge Road Park.

9. Natural Resources Inventory/ Environmental Studies

A conclusion drawn from meetings with the Westchester County Parks naturalist, other staff members and the strong involvement of the F.C.W.C and their natural resource matrix, it is recommended that comprehensive biodiversity studies be prepared for all parks within the County system. Biodiversity studies should continue to be developed at all the Nature Centers and Park Preserves noting critical site, program and building issues and recommendations. In addition, the Department should develop a priority schedule for implementation of these studies.

10. Historic Resource Inventory/Preservation Studies

Results of the 1996 Residential Recreation Survey of Westchester County Residents indicated a dramatic rise in the popularity of visiting “Historic Sites/Museums” (number 4 on the 1996 survey up from no mention in 1986). Because the Westchester County Parks system currently offers some of the finest historic facilities in the area, surveying and protecting these sites should be a priority. One possible approach toward this objective would involve the County Parks Department establishing a new division within the Department for this specialized work. This group would contain trained experts in historic and interpretive issues and would utilize existing staff.

When a property (district, landscape or structure) is a National Historic Landmark (NHL) listed on the National Register (LNR), or eligible for listing on the National Register (ENR), recognition is a matter of record. These properties satisfy exacting evaluation criteria for “quality of significance in American History [which possess] integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association,” as well as other specific associations

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and values which are described in their designation statements. Therefore, an individual park and the park system as a whole may be alerted to these qualities and values which fall under their stewardship.

In addition, this plan has identified many structures which “Appear to Have Significance” (AHS). For each of the parks in which structures are noted “AHS”, a special sense of awareness and stewardship may also be inferred. Many of these structures embody distinctive characteristics with public value and appeal if carefully attended. It is not only possible but also likely that certain parks have structures of individual merit or qualities, which seen in the context of other parks are of significance, deserving of advancement to the National Register.

An intellectual framework is needed which identifies the historic potential of park properties in a comprehensive manner leading to any of several findings:

- A. Determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register for properties (and structures) of individual merit.
- B. National Register listing of properties (and structures) of thematic association.
- C. Need for resource documentation which may include record drawings, drawings for the Historic American Building Society (HABS), documentation for the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), concise historic resource statements, expanded Historic Structure Reports, preservation/adaptive use plans, photographic documentation, photogrammetric recording, stabilization plans, etc.
- D. Interpretive plans and/or cooperative action plans with concerned public and private preservation and conservation interests.

The following parks have shown particular qualities and potential for further study in one or more of these four categories (A thru D) above:

Park	Features	Study
Croton Gorge Park	Dam, Bridge, Spillway Relationship to former Stokes Green Property Mid 20th c. structures	A,B,C D A,B
Croton Point Park	Early 20th c. structures Mid 20th c. structures include, gull wing roof comfort stations.	D B,D
Glen Island Park	Landscape, early 20th c. buildings and site structures, bridge, seawall, etc.	A,B,C,D
Kensico Dam Plaza Park	Dam and associated structures	C

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Park	Features	Study
	With Croton Dam	B
Kingsland Point Park	Landscape, Lighthouse, Bath House	A, B C, D A, B
Lenoir Preserve	Landscape Buildings: Manor House, Carriage House	A,B,C A,B,C
Maple Moor Golf Course	Landscape & structures Club House	A, B A, B
Marshlands Conservancy	Landscape Buildings	C, D C, D
Playland Park	Historic Rides, Landscape, Buildings	A,B,C
Saxon Woods Park, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Blue Mountain Reservation, other	Early and mid 20th c. structures include comfort stations	B, C
Tibbetts Brook Park	Landscape, comfort stations, bath house, folly	A, B

11. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation should work with the WC Planning Department in developing a system-wide GIS that would include each park in the Westchester County Parks system to provide an efficient management tool in preparing capital projects, maintenance and facility improvements. The facilities and features matrices prepared for the Inventory Report as part of this master planning effort are easily transferable to the GIS database and include all documentation on recreational features/active recreation, natural features and landscapes, built facilities, and maintenance and equipment for each of the parks in the County system. When these spreadsheets are inserted as attributes, this database can be queried in a whole spectrum of ways to aggregate and disaggregate both use, facility and existing conditions data by sites, sub-regions and County totals. It could also project future needs based on usage patterns. The digital database for each park can be used either in a GIS or CAD platform.

The GIS can also fully document the relationship of each park to its various significant attributes including historic landscape, National Register Historic Landmark and National Register eligible buildings and natural features. It is recommended that the GIS be built with ARCH/INFO utilizing the Westchester County Planning Department's present GIS mapping and various attribute layers as a base.

12. ADA Compliance Survey

Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation is obligated to insure that all new structures and paths are built to ADA compliant standards. However, numerous existing facilities within the parks will need upgrading to accommodate ADA accessibility. While some parks and their facilities are currently undergoing ADA compliant rehabilitation efforts, a number of other facilities are still slated for upgrades. It is recommended that the WCPRC conduct a complete and thorough ADA survey of every park and facility it operates. This list could be a portion of the GIS data base and would also become the basis of future capital programs.

The following is a representative alphabetical list of structures and facilities to be given priority status for ADA upgrades:

- Blue Mountain Reservation - the historic comfort stations within the park are not ADA accessible - should either be upgraded or replaced.
- Blue Mountain Sportsmen's Center - the lodge is not ADA accessible.
- An ADA compliant wilderness path should be constructed at one of the County's Nature Centers.
- Dunwoodie Golf Course - the Main Building is not ADA accessible and is therefore not suitable for some catered functions. Upgrading this Building may increase use by diverse groups.
- Kingsland Point Park - bathhouse is not ADA accessible. Any recommended uses for this building should address its change to ADA compliance.
- Lasdon Park & Arboretum - upper floors of the Main House are not ADA accessible nor is the Bathhouse which is scheduled to become the Visitor's Center.
- Maple Moor Golf Course - Clubhouse is not ADA accessible on the inside.
- Mohansic Golf Course - first floor of the Clubhouse is only ADA accessible from the exterior.
- Ward Pound Ridge Reservation - the office facility, currently slated for rehabilitation and reuse as meeting rooms, is not currently ADA compliant. This facility will need to be upgraded for ADA accessibility.

- Willson's Woods Park - first floor of the bathhouse is not ADA accessible and will need to be upgraded for successful reuse.

13. Interpretative Plans

This recommendation involves preparing interpretative plans as follows: 1) one for the overall WCPRC system and then, 2) individual plans for Playland Park, Kingsland Point Park Lighthouse, Merestead, Muscoot Farm, the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, Miller House (Washington's Headquarters) and the Croton Point Park historic wine cellars and brick buildings. These interpretative plans will establish for the entire park system and each of the above listed parks their historic setting, their purpose and mission, their development over time, changes in development versus preservation goals, and plans for the future.

Interpretive plans will be based on historical research and interviews with key stakeholders and parks and planning officials at local, county and regional levels as well as input from H.P.A.C. These interpretative plans will become the basis for published documents and exhibits that may become traveling shows well suited as marketing materials for publicizing Westchester County's park heritage and legacy for current and future residents. It may possibly become a permanent installation at the County Center, County Office Building or other appropriate public settings such as the Library or Bridge Gallery for the system-wide plan and at the various individual parks for each of their interpretative exhibits.

14. Parkland Acquisition

Consistent with the Parks' mission statement, open space policies and criteria for new parkland acquisition, the Department should take a proactive position on acquisition of new parkland. The focus of this new position should be protecting special, unique and fragile natural habitats as well as providing the wildlife corridors and linkages noted in recommendation #3. Coordination with the Department of Planning's Open Space Plan is key as it is that department that maintains lists of available parcels and a priority listing for various acquisition purposes. WCPRC should give first priority to any parcels along the Hudson River or Long Island Sound waterfronts, secondarily to parcels that satisfy linkage criteria between existing parks or within the existing and proposed trail networks and thirdly to parcels that preserve unique natural resources or views or, will fill in immediately adjacent tracts. Increasing resident populations as well as active and passive recreational demands and trends, particularly in South County, fuel the need to acquire additional properties. In recent years, this need has been partially offset by the donation of some significant North County properties such as Merestead resulting in the lower rank of this recommendation. However, land acquisition is of far greater importance in Central and South County in terms of both population and demand.

B. Bench Marking

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An important step in the Inventory process involved selecting several counties with similar demographics to those of Westchester County for a comparison of other recreational components and expenditure patterns. Bergen and Morris Counties in New Jersey and Montgomery County, just outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were selected based on their demographics, the comparable structure of their parks departments, were the similarities in their facilities and programs and their comparable greenspace acreage. The tables and figures on the following pages detail the information collected for these counties and provide a comparison to different components of Westchester County and the parks system.

Table V-I presents an inventory of information collected for each of the four counties. This includes data on acres of private and public greenspace as well as recreational activities and operating budgets.

Table V-II graphs the ten primary active recreational activities within the four comparable counties. Westchester County has the largest number of parks and is the only system that provides County pools for use by residents. In general, the Westchester County Parks system offers the widest variety of recreational activities to its residents.

Table V-III presents the budget comparison revealing the most marked differences between the Westchester County Parks system and that of the other counties. In 1997, Westchester County devoted the highest percentage of its total budget for salary and wages, 87.6 percent, while Montgomery County, PA devoted less than half, or 40.4 percent. The 44 parks in the Westchester County System require greater allocation of dollars for staff, while the seven in Montgomery County require less staff and therefore fewer dollars. However, the total operating budget for Westchester County, at \$47 million, is more than nine times that of Montgomery County at \$5 million. This kind of comparison, identifying similarities and differences, provides insight into the operations of other counties and help underpin the foundation for the recommendations phase of the Master Plan process.

TABLE V-1
BENCHMARK COMPARISONS

	Bergen County, NJ	Morris County, NJ	Montgomery County, PA	Westchester County, NY
County (acres)	149,760	300,160	309,120	288,837
County (square miles)	234	469	483	451
1990 Population	825,380	421,353	678,111	874,866
1990 Population Density (per sq. mile)	3,527	898	1,404	1,941
1990 Households	308,880	148,751	254,995	336,487
Median Household Income	\$49,323	\$56,414	\$43,811	\$56,688
Municipal Greenspace (acres)	3,684	8,194	20,000	6,040
County Greenspace (acres)	8,110	11,850	6,900	15,918
Fed/State/Regional Greenspace (acres)	4,944	24,738	24,000	6,814
Private Greenspace (acres)	5,692	9,795	2,095	9,009
Golf (holes)	72	72	0	90
Driving Range (number)	1	0	0	2
Miniature Golf	0	0	0	4
Pools	0	0	0	7
Trail (miles)	50	250	35	86
Hiking				50
Paved (bicycle/rollerblade/pedestrian)				36
Boat Ramps (launches)	2	3	2	5
Nature Centers	1	3	3	6
Arboreta/Wildlife Preserve	1	3	1	14
Tennis Courts	10	0	3	13
Ballfields	37	27	4	18
Softball	13			
Baseball	8	17		
Soccer/Football	16	10		
Picnic Areas				
Pavillions	14	6	0	16
Permitted areas	46	14	7	44
Camping Sites	2	10	2	252
Playgrounds	18	5	7	18
Museums	0	0	3	6
Historic Sites	7	3	3	7
Employees	200	250	125	360
Budgets				
Salary & Wages	\$6,470,000	\$8,344,038	\$2,875,100	\$16,973,810
Maintenance & Equipment	\$1,417,000	\$7,057,259	\$617,400	\$11,465,277
Total Operations Budget	\$7,887,000	\$15,401,297	\$3,492,500	\$28,439,087
Total Capital Budget	\$2,600,000	\$3,775,000	\$2,272,000	\$18,570,000
	\$10,487,000	\$19,176,297	\$5,764,500	\$47,009,087

* Private Greenspace for Montgomery County, PA is defined as Lands held by Private Conservation Organizations

7 Parks in Montgomery System

30 Parks in Bergen System

28 Parks in Morris System

44 Parks in Westchester County System

TABLE V-II
Comparable County Comparisons

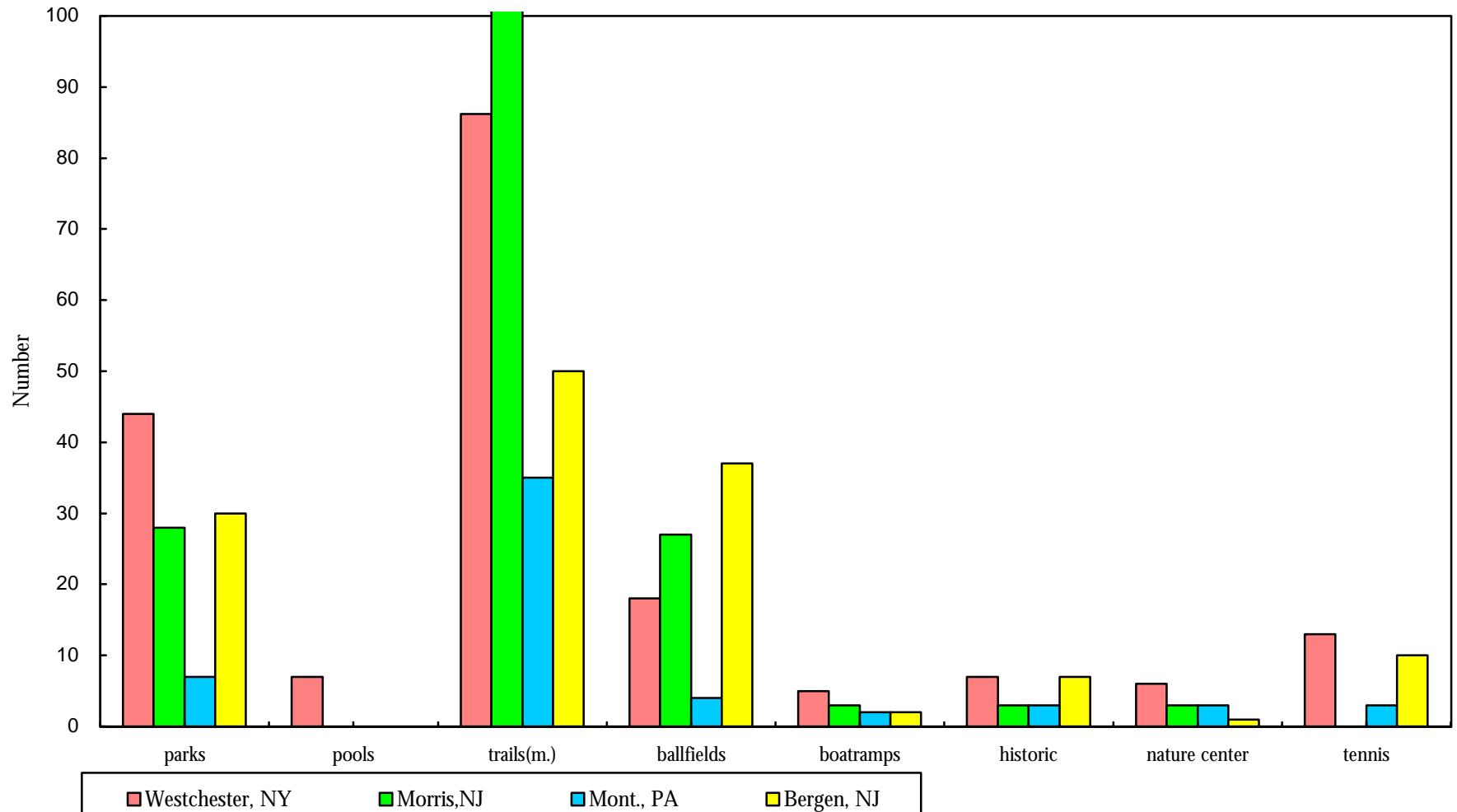
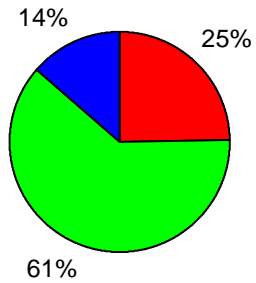


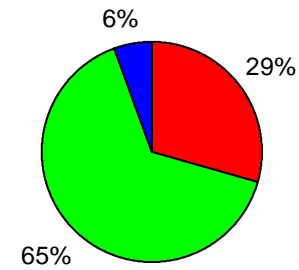
TABLE V-III

Bergen County, NJ 1997 Budget
(in hundred thousands)



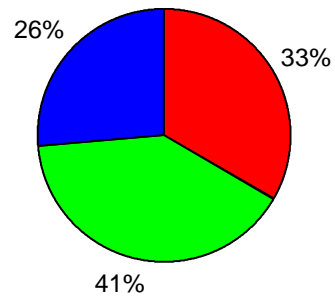
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Morris County, NJ 1997 Budget
(in hundred thousands)



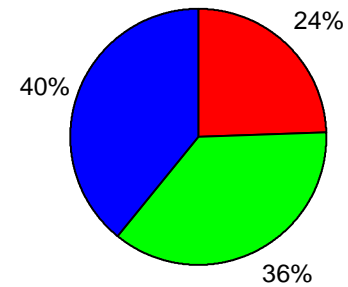
■ Capital ■ Salary/Wages ■ O & E

Montgomery County, PA 1997 Budget
(in hundred thousands)



■ Capital ■ Salary/Wages ■ O & E

Westchester County, NY 1997 Budget
(in hundred thousands)



■ Capital ■ Salary/Wages ■ O & E

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C. Facility Improvements & Specific Park Master Plans

1. Phase I Priority List

The following discussion is a Phase I facility improvement priority list drawn from the park specific improvements discussed further in this Section. This partial list was compiled using suggestions from the public at three public forums, input from Westchester County Parks Department and Westchester County Department of Planning and resulted in the identification of specific improvements at selected parks. Organized alphabetically by county subregion beginning in the north, it includes parks slated for several Capital Improvement projects and some with potential for building re-use and new revenue generating uses.

a. North County

Croton Gorge Park

Croton Gorge Park is an important segment in a connected web of local, private and County owned parks and facilities. The park has direct trail access to the old Croton Aqueduct Trailway as well as using the Briarcliff Peekskill Trailway as a link with Blue Mountain Reservation to the north and John E. Hand Park and Teatown Reservation to the south. It represents a critical node in the effort to create links throughout the Westchester County Parks system. As such, several improvements are recommended to ensure that the Park continues to provide the

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diverse activities that appeal to numerous groups and park users throughout Westchester County. These include:

- Acquisition of Ottinger Property: as County parkland to provide security for the Park; to operate as an environmental center/nature center; or in conjunction with New York State Department of Parks as an interpretive center for the Old Croton Aqueduct.
- A biodiversity study has been recommended for Croton Gorge Park to account for existing wildlife, flora and fauna and to help maintain the ecological balances.
- Explore additional and expanded recreational uses for the Croton River. Some of these may include the feasibility of canoe rentals for trips down the river to Croton Point Park and back and additional fishing activity support services.

As part of a comprehensive effort to upgrade facilities within Croton Gorge Park and Stokes Green, the following suggestions have been made for rehabilitation:

- Repaving the entrance road and parking lots to safely accommodate the potential increases in traffic seeking access to the trails and trailways and install park friendly directional signs along the internal pathways,
- Upgrade existing play structures,
- Expand existing picnic areas, and renovate restrooms
- Rehabilitate Lower Barn and greenhouse at Stokes Green for re-use.

The Main House at the former Stokes Green property is in very good condition and has potential for revenue generating uses including: a conference center, a concession stand & breakfast, meeting center, weekend retreat, and/or an environmental studies center administered by the Conservation division to provide trained volunteers for the entire WCPRC system. A targeted marketing initiative for Croton Gorge Park would encourage increased use of the Parks diverse facilities. In addition, new uses for the Main House at Stokes Green include an environmental studies center to provide trained volunteers and professionals that may allow continued monitoring of the ecology at the park.

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Lasdon Park & Arboretum

Lasdon Park & Arboretum is located adjacent to Muscoot Farm and has potential to become a specialty park within the Westchester County Parks system. The facility currently offers programs and showcases for a number of very diverse civic, environmental and educational groups. A Development Plan has been prepared for and adopted by the Parks Board, the overall concept of which is to have the facility function as an arboretum and "Museum of Nature" or outdoor living museum. The short-term goal is to preserve the estate character of the park for the public to enjoy where garden design and plant materials can be studied and celebrated. The long-range goal is to enhance and expand the gardens as well as to build a greenhouse production facility that would provide for the floral needs of all the County's parks.

In this way, the Park would not only attract people to tour the gardens, but also it would produce plants and flowers for other parks in the system.

Also planned is the design and construction of a multi-purpose area for nature shows, lectures and concerts. Additional uses of the main building should be considered to generate additional revenues to assist in the continued operation of the facility. Suggestions for re-use include a full service food facility and special events space, meetings spaces for scholarly events or botanical meetings or a botanical library or book shop.

Several improvements, preventative maintenance measures and rehabilitation efforts are recommended in anticipation of the realization of the Parks' vision. These include:

- The construction of a path or bridge to Muscoot Farm further reinforcing Westchester County Parks' vision of a continuous interconnected system of parks.
- Upgrade all facilities for ADA compliance. The entrance road will need repaving.
- Upgrade the electric utilities within the site, construct a new roof for the main and pump house buildings and the relocation of the maintenance facilities.
- Construct horticultural production greenhouses, a nursery and a new maintenance building in the newly dedicated 27 acre parcel of parkland located across the road from the main entrance. A building for tree research may be added in the Park if the Arboretum generates interest in that specialty.

Other interested park groups would like to recommended the following policies/improvements for Lasdon Park:

- Increase recognition of park,
- Increase public relations efforts, and

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- Increase attendance to the park by offering more children's and family programs including an instructional resources center.

Mountain Lakes Park

Mountain Lakes Park has been selected for a priority preparation of a Master Plan to determine the policies and vision of the park for the future. This former summer camp offers a number of summer and winter activities using its four lakes including swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, cross country skiing, ice fishing and snow shoeing. The Master Plan would closely examine the potential to further market these diverse uses. In addition, Mountain Lakes has a rich history contributing to its archeological and historical value. The park has been recommended for a biodiversity study to assess its ecology and to ensure the preservation of its unique habitat. All of these assets and its change in use and operation contribute to the need to prepare a Master Plan for the park in order to preserve the natural assets of the park while continuing to provide a myriad of popular uses for more active recreation.

As such, there a number of issues that need to be addressed:

- Although a former summer camp with cabins is still located within the park, the children's summer overnight camp aspect of the park was closed in 1994. The cabins are currently rented by individuals or groups by the day or week. In addition to the cabins, a large dining hall also provides tremendous reuse potential for meetings of large groups. These are assets that should be explored within the recommended Phase II Master Plan and designated for future active use.
- The water supply system is inadequate, antiquated, unsightly and in need of constant maintenance. Since it is on the surface, it must be drained each fall, thus precluding the camp's possible year-round operation. There is a capital project request involving funding for a study and implementation of a new potable water system for the park. Lightning protection, an additional concern to the park, is also included in the capital program.
- The park entrance is not on or close to a major road, and the parks' remote location in the northeastern corner of the County limits potential visitation. This situation, though, helps to maintain the park's rustic wilderness character. Such issues would also be addressed in a Master Plan.

Pocantico Lake Park

This more recently acquired facility has a preliminary development plan that includes limited passive use and a small parking lot on Pocantico Lakes Road. In light of the issues below, a Phase II Master Plan is recommended for Pocantico Lake Park to establish and prioritize the needs of the Park as well as the conduction of a biodiversity study to account for the existing flora and fauna.

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- Further study is recommended for access and parking area improvements and/or the creation of additional areas.
- The stone pump house and the river spillway/dam are in poor condition but have potential for rehabilitation and reuse.
- Adjacent to the park and its trail system are private equestrian riding facilities offering a potential for an operational inter-relationship between the private concessioner and County Parks. The User Survey indicated that equestrian riding is an emerging trend within Westchester County and should be promoted.
- Additional issues in Pocantico Lake Park include the suggestion to maintain this Park as a conservation tract and limit future active development as well as the unlawful hunting currently occurring within the park.

b. Central County

Bronx River Parkway Reservation

All components of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation, including the landscape, bridges, roadway, river, pathway, County Center, etc. are listed on the National Register of Historic Places for 10 miles within the Reservations Westchester length from the split with the Spain Brook Parkway to Kensico Dam. As such, it should be safeguarded as a valuable resource within the County. The primary issue to be addressed is the importance of maintaining the balance between the Parkway's transportation function and the AASHTO/ DOT standards associated with them and the preservation of the historic character of the surrounding Reservation landscape.

- The Reservation has been given a priority recommendation for the preparation of a Phase II Master Plan as well as a biodiversity study.
- As part of the effort to provide linkages throughout the County Parks system, the bikeway system that travels the route of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation should be extended. There are several portions of the paved pathway requiring rehabilitation and additional connections to the neighborhood trailways that would also be provided as part of this effort.
- Achieve a balance between use as a transportation corridor and a historic parkway and parkland. Considerations should be given to the study of the reintroduction of more historically appropriate roadway appurtenances, such as light poles and guide rails, that befit the original design vocabulary of the nations first parkway.

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- Because of the variety of uses that surround Reservation lands, additional plantings on the park's edge would provide screening and noise barriers, shielding this resource from other uses. Locating style appropriate site furnishings such as benches for through travelers or bikers would contribute to more diverse uses.
- Illegal dumping occurs throughout the Reservation and efforts should be made to police and limit such activities.
- Two gas station buildings located on the parkway have been identified to have high potential for re-use. These important structures are part of the National Register Listing and must be treated carefully. Possible uses include an information booth for distributing pamphlets on parks, programs, facilities and events; an equipment rental facility (hiking, biking, camping activities); or a small concessions stand. All of these potential uses should be investigated as part of the Master Plan process and appropriate recommendations made.
- The property maps must be updated for the Comprehensive Corridor Management Plan recommended by Westchester County Planning.
- The Bronx River Parkway Reservation Comprehensive Corridor Management Plan is in progress and will implement some of these recommendations.

Kensico Dam Plaza

Kensico Dam Plaza is located at the northern terminus of the Bronx River Parkway Reservation and is a significant contributing component of the Reservations' National Register Listing. The plaza provides space for a variety of activities and programs and has been recommended for priority preparation of a Phase II Master Plan. Kensico Dam Plaza offers reflecting pools as well as a series of paved loop pathways for more active uses such as in-line skating and biking. Due to the diversity of activities and the fact that Kensico Dam is the site for many large scale County events, a plan is recommended to utilize this area in conjunction with the Bronx River Parkway Reservation. This plan would lay out the future of the Reservation and the Plaza over the next twenty years, assess the potential for high activity during certain times and for more passive uses during others. The recommendations would limit some activities and promote others.

Current park issues include:

- The Westchester County Health Department has recommended the installation of a concrete water tank to improve the potable water system. This has been included in the Parks Capital Program.
- The three fountains and cascades in the reflecting pool require waterproofing. A

request has been prepared for the Capital Program as well.

- A large population of Canada Geese have also created some problems within this park and alternative preventive measures should be contemplated.
- One half of the colonnade structure located on top of the dam is the property of the WCPRC and is in need of rehabilitation.

Kensico Dam Plaza Park also offers the potential for increasing revenue generators within the Park. Currently, a concessions area, park office and restrooms are located in a small building built in 1985. This park center building could be expanded to offer rental equipment for hiking, biking or in-line skating, and model boats could be rented for use on the reflecting pond. The building could also serve as an information/tourist booth distributing pamphlets on other parks and County sponsored events.

c. South County

Sprain Ridge Park

Sprain Ridge Park offers a popular pool with separate water features and sundeck as well as acres of woods in their natural state. It is likely that the majority of the park will and should remain natural and undeveloped. A biodiversity study of Sprain Ridge Park should be prepared to account for the existing flora and fauna. However, the park has potential for upgrading its current assets. As such, Sprain Ridge Park has been noted on the secondary list of parks for which Master Plans will be developed. Issues concerning this park include the following items:

- In keeping with the effort to provide uninterrupted connections between parks, possible linkage suggestions for Sprain Ridge Park include adding a trail link to Austin Avenue to the South County Trail System adjacent to the Saw Mill River Parkway.
- The pool at Sprain Ridge Park is very popular and offers a number of different aquatic recreational facilities including a diving pool, spray pool, slide and wading pool. Possible additions/renovations to the aquatic play area include a new aquatic playground to replace the wading pool, more shaded and spray areas and expanded the grass panels around the children's active pool area for a softer sun bathing area. The food concession area may also have potential for expansion.
- Sprain Ridge Park is also the potential location of a South County camping facility that should be further examined in Phase II.
- Other issues within the park are primarily the result of its location along the parkway. The limited use of the existing paths and trailways has increased the unauthorized use of motorcycles and off-road vehicles on trails. Some of these trails now require rehabilitation. Several picnic tables have been stolen from the more remote locations

and should be replaced.

Tibbetts Brook Park

Tibbetts Brook Park is one of the oldest formally landscaped parks in the Westchester County Parks System. Dedicated and opened in 1927, Tibbetts should be considered a historic landscape and has potential for National Register listing not only for the landscape and site plan, but also for several of the built facilities including the historic clubhouse, boat house and comfort stations. Tibbetts Brook offers a wide variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. The activity lawn is the setting for some of the County's large ethnic festivals, programs and events. There is a very popular pool with teardrop aquatic features, a lake for fishing and several athletic fields used for a number of different sports. Also located within the park is a new 18 hole miniature golf course. Due to the rich and varied park activities, Tibbetts Brook has been given priority status for the preparation of a Master Plan.

Several site planning and rehabilitation design issues affect the park:

- The poorly controlled southern park entry, and park-user parking on the residential streets to the south, and the need for upgrading of the athletic fields all must be addressed.
- Providing transportation from points in South County to Tibbetts Brook Park during County sponsored events would allow a larger sector of the population to access and, therefore, participate in County sponsored events and programs. This issue should be pursued further during the Phase II Master Plan.
- The underutilized second floor of the bathhouse and terrace may provide a unique location for a full service restaurant. The first floor currently houses a number of park and pool related uses including showers, toilets and on the second floor, police offices. The elevator to the second floor is handicapped accessible, and is a consideration when evaluating the issue of providing a public activity on the second floor.
- As part of the on-going effort to provide cross County linkages, Tibbetts Brook Park provides an ideal location for the addition of park trail links to the South County trail system (using the old Putnam Division right-of-way and the Old Croton Aqueduct).
- Other Park issues include: the poor condition of the tennis courts, minimal vandalism apparent throughout the park, pedestrian and vehicular circulation conflicts during periods of heavy park use, poor paving surfaces on walkways and old and worn playgrounds and play equipment requiring rehabilitation. Most of these issues have been identified and are included in the current Capital Program.

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- Other planned park improvements awaiting funding include adding picnic areas, dredging and rebuilding the boating lake for paddle boats, augmenting screening between the south end of the park and the residential neighborhood. All of these issues and elements will be examined in the Phase II Master Plan process.

V.E. Macy Park

A well-defined improvement plan in V.E. Macy Park proposes numerous improvements and outlines the potential for adaptive re-use of the former Cantina Restaurant structure. Within V.E. Macy park lies picturesque Woodlands Lake that could provide boating, fishing, ice skating in the winter and year-round nature study. In addition, as the South County Trailway continues to link parks throughout the Westchester County Parks System, V.E. Macy will become an important access point to the Trailway. As a result, parking areas should be developed within the park for users of the Trailway, bicycle riders, in line skaters, walkers and joggers. Additional picnic areas should be added including paved terraces for family picnics (along lake), grouped picnic areas, and individual picnic tables throughout the park. Other area uses could include additional access points to nature/hiking trails around the lake, general passive recreation and a playground for children.

- The Main Building has many possible uses which could be adjusted seasonally. Summer activities could include boat rentals (canoes, kayaking, paddle boats, row boats), a cafe and/or snack shop, bicycle and in line skate rentals with lessons/learning center, fishing gear rentals, and bait and tackle sales. Winter uses could include a railroad display, historical display, ice skate rentals and bathrooms or changing areas for ice skating.
- Also within the park is a small structure (former gas station), which has potential for use as a public information building with a public telephone. During the summer, seasons, the building could serve as a tourist/information booth distributing fliers and information on parks and other County events (staffed by volunteers on weekends, only).
- The South County Trailway should be completed by the fall of 1998. The completion of the Trailway, lake dredging and concessions area should all be coordinated so that the new activity center can open with all other activities in place. Westchester County must promote the new facility as an outdoor recreation center with an emphasis on "family recreation". In addition, the County should attempt to organize special events at the former Cantina restaurant to draw attention to its new use. These activities could include bike-a-thons, concerts in the park, fishing competitions and family fair (kids day) events.
- Turning this site into an expanded and improved South County recreation area will require demolishing the east wing (addition) of the Cantina, repaving the access road and parking area, creating picnic terrace and group picnic areas, dredging Woodlands

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Lake, renovating Woodlands Lake Dam and Bridge, and associated site work. A number of possible funding sources can be explored. These include ISTEPA (for bridge repair), the New York State Clean Water Bond Act (for lake dredging and dam repair work), Member Item Funding.

- Finally, the picnic area to the east of the New York State Thruway has flooding, circulation and organization problems.

Willson's Woods Park

Willson's Woods Park is one of the oldest parks in the system. It should, therefore, be considered for National Register listing. The park offers a large pool and a limited trail system throughout that could be extended and connected to Twin Lakes and Saxon Woods via the Hutchinson River Parkway corridor. One of the most substantial issues affecting the Park is the unfortunate location of a local road providing access to a private office complex through the middle of the park. This bisecting road physically divides the different features of the park. This access issue coupled with the independent nature of each of the above facilities creates a substantial need to integrate them. The resolution of this access issue as well as a possible pedestrian connection to Metro-North railroad could serve to attract more people to a more united park, thereby increasing its use dramatically.

- Present plans for the park include rebuilding the pool into a series of smaller pools. The project will involve keeping the existing bathhouse and renovating the locker area; demolishing the pool and filter room; and replacing it with a zero-depth entry pool, a lap pool, relaxing pool, and children's aquatic area. A new filter room and system would be part of this project, as well as an upgraded concession facility and an expanded parking area. These improvements are included in the current Capital Program.
- Proposed site improvements include integrating all these park facilities to provide more unity throughout, particularly between the pools and playground area; screening the lake from the Parkway; expanding the security fence around the future or existing pool so as to provide additional shaded lawn areas; and, if the pool is not replaced, upgrading and repairing its systems, coping and decking.
- The open porch area located above the bathhouse has potential for adaptive reuse.

2. Park Specific Findings

The following section details recommendations for specific improvements and studies for each park in the Westchester County Parks system from which the Phase I priority list of improvements was developed. The parks are separated geographically into North, Central and South County. The recommendations are based on visits to each park by members of the consultant team, recommendations from park managers and municipal/town parks commissioners, public input at various meetings and general information accumulated from the Parks User Survey. For the parks with

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no specific recommendations from these sources, Westchester County Parks Department should establish policy as to their future development and/or preservation approach.

The recommendations are categorized as follows:

- a. Rehabilitation
 - i. Building: These recommendations deal with specific building or structural improvements, proposed upgrades to building related facilities, such as electrical facilities, and proposed relocation or re-use potential for existing but vacant structures.
 - ii. Site: This section identifies site improvements such as paving, planting, signage and access issues.
- b. Operations and Maintenance
These issues were identified from park manager interviews, and assorted public input and primarily deal with safety issues and operations issues such as prohibiting and/or limiting particular uses from more passive parks.
- c. New Facilities
These recommendations focus on identifying additional facilities such as picnic structures, Nature Centers, concession areas, greenhouses and boat launches. These proposed facilities would augment existing facilities and activities within the parks that have proven popular and are often profitable.
- d. Conservation and Stewardship
These issues tend to focus primarily on continued protection of sensitive ecosystems, preservation, maintaining present use levels, maintaining existing infrastructure and sometimes decreasing more active uses within passive parks.
- e. Programs
Recommendations for particular programs were generated from public and user survey input and consultant review of programs that are particularly popular among County residents. In addition, the consultant team reviewed growing recreational trends to identify which programs are likely to continue to grow in popularity. Program recommendations cover a wide range of activities including: "Museum of Nature", fishing and environmental seminars, research centers and improved marketing of existing Parks facilities.
- f. Other
This category identifies proposed uses that will require further study to determine their feasibility. These recommendations generally include studying re-use potential for particular structures and facilities.

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The following represents the consultant's recommendations for specific improvements on a park by park basis. It is assumed that in later phases of this study, priority will be assigned to specific improvements based on further review by the residents and the representatives of the Westchester County Parks System and County Legislature.

a. North County

John E. Hand Park at Bald Mountain

- Access
 - Create parking area
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Control hunting within the Park
 - Control unauthorized use after dark
- Programs
 - Promote hiking within the Park

Blue Mountain Reservation

- Access
 - Resurface parking lot and roadways
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Recommend a Master Plan
 - Limit hunting within the Reservation
 - Institute a geese control program at the swimming lake
 - Limit motor biking on trails
 - Limit miscellaneous dumping at edges the park
- Rehabilitation
 - Replace existing chain link fence with split rail fence at bathing beach
 - Replace bollards at entrance
 - Reseed soccer fields
 - Build new roof for the Bathhouse

Blue Mountain Sportsmen's Center

- Conservation
 - Recommend lead remediation study
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade ranges
 - Relocate Large Bore Rifle Range Structure
 - Develop protocol for lead recovery system

Briarcliff Peekskill Trailway

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- Conservation
 - Improve and maintain trails throughout
- Programs
 - Improve public awareness of this facility as link to other parks & open spaces
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade bridges
 - Improve trail blazing

Croton Gorge Park

- Access
 - Repave entrance road and parking lots
 - Provide additional directional and informational signage on pathways
 - Provide history of Dam and Croton Watershed and a tie-in to the Croton Aqueduct
 - Acquire the private residence for reuse as a park residence or nature center
 - Improve access to river
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Promote passive recreation
- Programs
 - Promote marketing initiative of Parks programs and facilities
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade existing play structure
 - Expand existing picnic area
 - Rehabilitate the Lower Barn and greenhouse
 - Rehabilitate comfort station
- New Facilities
 - Examine the possibility of developing non-dedicated 20-acres of property (Stokes Green) for possible use as a conference/meeting center, weekend retreat, environmental study center, etc.
 - Reroute Briarcliff Peekskill Trail from over the Dam along the road to through Former Stokes Green parcel.

Croton Point Park

- Access
 - Improve signage within the Park regarding information and historic equestrian signs
 - Upgrade park entrance
 - Improve pedestrian circulation by adding loop trails and trails to points of interest
 - Upgrade parking area
- Programs
 - Provide interpretive exhibits of wine cellars and natural resources
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade electrical distribution to festival area
 - Upgrade cabins at Teller's Point, Senasqua Hall, beach area, drainage facility, ball fields

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- Restore pool
- Stabilize and appropriately restore wine cellars and other 19th century brick elements
- Rehabilitate existing comfort stations
- New Facilities
 - Implement existing Master Plan
 - Build a new picnic pavilion at Enoch's Nose
 - Provide new comfort stations and picnic facilities for 400-500 people
 - Build new bathhouse and pool house
 - Build new building for offices

George's Island Park

- Access
 - Provide additional signage within the park
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Regulate jet-ski use at the boat launch area
- New Facilities
 - Create a reserved picnic area at the former Gluck residence
 - Provide additional picnic tables and areas

Kitchawan Preserve

- Access
 - Upgrade entrance road and parking area
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
- Programs
 - Improve public awareness of this facility

Lasdon Park & Arboretum

- Access
 - Improve entrance road
 - Provide ADA accessibility
 - Create path/bridge link to Muscote Farm
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Enhance and expand gardens
 - Protect the adjacent watershed
- Programs
 - Develop park as "museum of nature"
 - Develop new revenue-generating uses for Main House such as a meeting center, location for special events, food service, etc.
 - Develop a tree research center

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- Develop horticultural facility
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade electrical facilities
 - Construct new roof for main and pump houses
 - Relocate maintenance facilities
- New Facilities
 - Construct new greenhouse
 - Create multi-purpose area and amphitheatre
 - Create new gardens

Merestead (Patterson Estate)

- Access
 - Provide public access to this currently private facility - when appropriate
- Conservation
 - Create a use-plan
 - Prepare an inventory of the object collections
- Rehabilitation
 - Prepare a historic structures report on condition

Mohansic Park and Golf Course

- Access
 - Encourage use of woods for hiking, cross-country skiing and nature study
- Conservation
 - Limit hunting in woods at golf course
- Rehabilitation
 - Continue on-going rehabilitation of the existing course
- New Facilities
 - Blaze hiking trails
 - Create new cart paths
 - Possibly expand of golf course

Mountain Lakes Park

- Access
 - Provide improved park entrance
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Recommend a Master Plan
 - Limit bicycle use on foot paths
- Programs
 - Study potential for new programs within the mess hall and other buildings
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade water supply system

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- Provide adequate lightening protection system
- Upgrade cabins and dining facility for summer rentals to families and miscellaneous organizations.

Muscoot Farm

- Access
 - Create path and/or bridge link to Lasdon Park
 - Improve ADA accessibility for the entire site and buildings
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Preserve back fields
 - Preserve existing farm buildings
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade several farm structures
 - Restore horse barn, milk house, main barn, roofs of the main house, activities building, reception center, ice house

Oscawana Island Park - Needs policy/vision statement

Paradise Island - Needs policy/vision statement

Pocantico Lakes Park

- Access
 - Create parking areas
- Conservation
 - Maintain property as conservation tract
 - Limit hunting within the Park
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Recommend Master Plan
- Programs
 - Develop nature study program
 - Remove manager's house, steel tank and other deteriorating out buildings
 - Determine re-use and revenue generating potential for former pump house
 - Develop relationship with adjacent private equestrian riding facilities and determine potential revenue generating opportunities

Wampus Pond Park

- Access
 - Upgrade existing parking lot
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Develop a hiking trail around the entire pond

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- Programs
 - Develop fishing, educational and environmental programs
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade existing boat rental shelter
- New Facilities
 - Build new boat launch on Wampus Pond, and comfort station

Ward Pound Ridge Reservation

- Access
 - Resurface park roads (especially at entrance area)
 - Upgrade site at entrance road
- Conservation
 - Limit mountain biking and motorcycle use on internal park paths
 - Limit hunting within the Reservation
- Rehabilitation
 - Rehabilitate Park maintenance garage and park office
 - Rehabilitate old concession building into an office and visitor's center
- New Facilities
 - Build a roofed pavilion and an additional comfort station
 - Provide an additional water source at Michigan Road

b. Central County

Bronx River Parkway Reservation/Governor Malcolm Wilson Park

- Access
 - Extend pathway system
 - Provide additional connections to neighborhood trails
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Recommend a Master Plan and Comprehensive Corridor Management Study
 - Maintain balance between parkway landscape, character and the needs of the pedestrian
 - Maintain balance between transportation issues with park and historic park issues
 - Limit dumping throughout the Reservation
 - Provide additional plant screening from surrounding uses
- Rehabilitation
 - Research re-use possibilities for two gas station buildings in Yonkers for revenue generating uses such as private concessions (rental of hiking and biking equipment)
 - Upgrade deteriorating pathway
 - Provide additional site furnishings
 - Rehabilitate ponds throughout river
 - Stabilize river banks in various locations

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Cranberry Lake Park

- Access
 - Improve control and supervision over access trails to prevent unauthorized activity
- Conservation
 - Limit mountain biking and motorcycle use on trails
- New Facilities
 - Build an open air pavilion
 - Build an ADA compliant wilderness path
 - Build a new nature center

Graham Hills Park

- Access
 - Investigate access alternatives at existing traffic lights on Saw Mill River Parkway at Marble Avenue
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Promote volunteer work on trails
 - Limit hunting within the Park

Kensico Dam Plaza

- Conservation
 - Improve potable water system by installing concrete water tank
 - Conduct boundary survey
 - Recommend a Master Plan
- Programs
 - Institute a geese control program
- Rehabilitation
 - Rehabilitate the waterproofing of the cascades on the fountains in the reflecting pool
 - Determine revenue generating opportunities through the expansion of the park center building for renting equipment (in line skates, hiking and biking) or use as a tourist information center.

Kingsland Point Park

- Access
 - Increase and improve access from the Philipse Manor station and within the Park
 - Upgrade existing parking lot
- Conservation
 - Step up maintenance of National Register-listed Lighthouse
- Programs
 - Promote interpretive programs
- Rehabilitation
 - Demolish pedestrian bridge over Metro-North tracks

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- Redevelop beach swimming area
- Examine re-use potential of bath and boat houses for revenue generating uses such as food concessions.

Miller House (Washington's Headquarters)

- Access
 - Improve existing parking lot
- Conservation
 - Undertake a structural inventory
- Programs
 - Promote a marketing program to increase awareness of the facility
- Rehabilitation
 - Restore period furnishings to the House
 - Restore site

North County Trailway

- Access
 - Build more parking areas
- Programs
 - Promote group/family rides
- Rehabilitation
 - Resurface trailway

Ridge Road Park

- Conservation
 - Recommend a Master Plan
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade parking lot pavement and roadway
- New Facilities
 - Create additional picnic facilities with parking for 200 cars
 - Build a play structure, games area and open grassed area
 - Rehabilitate restrooms

Silver Lake Preserve

- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Limit use of motor vehicles on paths within the Preserve
 - Upgrade security surveillance
- Programs
 - Develop the southern lake shore for more active recreation
 - Limited development of the trails
- Rehabilitation

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- Provide additional signage

Tarrytown Lakes/ Butternut Ridge Park

- Access
 - Provide additional signage from paved paths
- Conservation
 - Preserve the serene nature of the Park

V. E. Macy Park

- Conservation
 - Recommend a Master Plan
- Programs
 - Develop active uses in the western section of this park
 - Further develop the re-use potential for the former Cantina restaurant for use as a recreation center
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade drainage system on ballfields
 - Dredge and rehabilitate the Woodlands Lake area
 - Upgrade bridge over Woodlands Lake
- New Facilities
 - Add lights to the ballfields
 - Build additional ballfields and picnic areas

c. South County

Dunwoodie Golf Course

- Conservation
 - Improve potable water system
 - Limit vandalism
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade golf cart path system
 - Upgrade clubhouse electrical system
 - Rehabilitate parking lot
- New Facilities
 - Construct new cart storage facility
 - Light entrance road

Edith G. Read Nature Park and Sanctuary

- Access
 - Improve signage to Edith Read highlighting the Park as separate from Playland
- Conservation
 - Recommend Master Plan in conjunction with Playland to determine the relationship between the facilities.

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Glen Island Park

- Access
 - Improve access to Weyman Avenue and Glen Island approach
- Rehabilitation
 - Rehabilitate the castles
- New Facilities
 - Build new picnic area at old maintenance facility

Lenoir Preserve - This facility is well maintained and preserved by an active curator

Maple Moor Golf Course

- Rehabilitation
 - Complete upgrade of cart path
 - Upgrade practice green
 - Rehabilitate greens and tees
- New Facilities
 - Construct a new cart storage facility
 - Construct a new soil/fertilizer shed
 - Rebuild and relocate maintenance building to inner course

Marshlands Conservancy

- Conservation
 - Candidate restoration site of the Long Island Sound Study's Habitat Restoration Initiative
- Rehabilitation
 - Relocate the environmental center to former garage/stable and examine potential for revenue generating uses with an emphasis on staff rental of houses

Playland Park

- Conservation/Planning
 - Recommend Master Plan to examine all planning and policy issues
 - Research the potential re-use of the south bathhouse as a restaurant or other potential revenue generating use
 - Research future of Ice Rink

Saxon Woods Park

- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
- Rehabilitation
 - Rehabilitate picnic area and comfort station

Saxon Woods Golf Course

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- Access
 - Improve entrance circulation and roadway geometry
 - Provide ADA accessible ramps to the second floor of the Clubhouse
- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
- Rehabilitation
 - Continue general golf course maintenance
- New Facilities
 - Build new cart paths

Sprain Lake Golf Course

- Conservation
 - Recommend a feasibility study to determine if the reservoir can be used as a source of irrigation
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade irrigation system
 - Complete golf cart path
 - Rehabilitate tees and greens

Sprain Ridge Park

- Access
 - Add a trail link to Austin Avenue to the South County Trail System adjacent to the Saw Mill River Parkway
- Conservation
 - Limit use of motor vehicles on trails through the remote areas of the park
 - Rebuild existing trails throughout the forest
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Recommend a Master Plan
- Rehabilitation
 - Expand grass panels around children's active pool area and evaluate opportunities for expanding food concessions.
- New Facilities
 - Develop an aquatic playground to replace the wading pool and spray area
 - Provide additional picnic tables and grill sites throughout the park

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Tibbetts Brook Park

- Access
 - Upgrade bus transit access to programs and athletic fields within the Park
- Conservation/Planning
 - Recommend a Master Plan
 - Recommend for consideration as a historic landscape
 - Research possible National Register Listing of park due to historic buildings, site plan and landscape
 - Minimize vandalism and dumping within the Park
- Rehabilitation
 - Upgrade athletic fields
 - Evaluate potential for the second floor of the Bathhouse for use as a full service restaurant
 - Upgrade tennis courts
 - Dredge lake
 - Rehabilitate boat house for boat rentals
 - Rehabilitate all paved surfaces

Twin Lakes Nature Study Woods Park

- Conservation
 - Recommend a biodiversity study
 - Candidate restoration site of the Long Island Sound Study's Habitat Restoration Initiative

Willson's Woods Park

- Access
 - Upgrade parking area
- Conservation
 - Provide additional screening of the Lake from the Parkway
- Programs
 - Provide better integration of facilities
- Rehabilitation
 - Research potential adaptive re-use of second floor enclosed porch as snack bar or community programs space
 - Renovate locker room area
 - Upgrade concession facility
 - Expand security fence around the pool
 - Upgrade coping and pool decking
- New Facilities
 - Rebuild pool to include a lap pool, relaxing pool, children's aquatic area, new filter room

D. Evaluation Screen Matrix

The Evaluation Screen Matrix is designed for use by the WCPRC staff as a screening mechanism to

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prioritize potential Capital Improvement Projects, Programs, Activities, System Wide Issues and Operations and Maintenance. This screening system will become a tool by which possible requests can be furthered or eliminated. Weighted values have been assigned to the major heading topics across the top. Ultimately, it is the task of WCPRC Commissioners to determine the minimum point value necessary for a potential item to advance to the 'to do' list.

Based on discussions with WCPRC, the Steering Committee and input from other involved groups, the percentages applied to each item reflect the most appropriate level of importance. Various lists and sources of needs were reviewed. Using that information, three categories were established and a range of percentages for each was established. The following describes ranges of point values that should be used as a guide when applying the weighted value of each item of the matrix screen to establish evaluation criteria that can then be used to filter out the less critical items.

Priority Categories

- Category I 7-10 Point Range
 - 1. Has potential to cause or result in significant policy or O & M changes
 - 2. Has potential to significantly impact natural or historic landscapes
 - 3. Has potential for County government referendum

- Category II 4-6 Point Range
 - 1. Has potential to cause or result in change of use or visitation
 - 2. Has potential impact on quality of park experience
 - 3. Has potential financial impacts

- Category III 1-3 Point Range
 - 1. Has minor effect on park, facilities and/or operations
 - 2. Has primarily park specific impact only
 - 3. Can be addressed under current operations

Screen Matrix Items

CATEGORY I 7-10 pts	CATEGORY II 4-6 pts	CATEGORY III 1-3 pts
Mission Statement 10	New Aq. / Area Req. 6	Equipment 3
Costs & Funding 9	Facility Efficiency 5	Access 2
Environmental Impact 8	User Capacity 4	New Facility Required 2
Demographics 8	User Frequency 4	Landscape Type 1

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County System Adequacy	7	Safety/Security	4	User Availability	1
Costs (O & M)	7	Staffing	4	User Capacity (Number)	1
Park Character	7				
Financial Projection	7				
Totals	63%		27%		10%

Screen Process

For each item, the weighted percentages will be applied as a plus percentage, minus percentage or “0” as follows:

Plus percentage - factor is considered positive, i.e., will increase user frequency, no capital expense or compatible with park character.

Minus percentage - factor is considered negative, i.e., major increase in O & M costs, subsidy required or decreases security.

“0” - Simply not applicable.

Certain categories have a sliding scale so that the evaluator can assign the appropriate number of points depending on the degree of impact the item has on the category.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & CONSERVATION
EVALUATION SCREEN MATRIX FOR: POTENTIAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, SPECIFIC PARK PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

	10%		9%		8%		8%		7%		7%		7%		7%		6%		5%		4%		4%		4%		4%		3%		2%		2%		1%		1%		1%		Totals																	
	Mission Statement Compatibility		Cost & Funding Expense for New Facility		Potential Environmental Impact		Demographic and Trends Compatibility		Current County System Adequacy		Potential Costs for Operation & Maintenance		Compatibility with Existing Park Character		Financial Projections and Revenue Stream		New Acquisition? New Acre Requirements		Affect on Existing Facility Operations Efficiency		Affect on Total County Recreation User Capacity		Affect on Total County Recreation User Frequency		Affect on Safety and Security		Potential Staffing Requirements		Equipment Requirements for Operation & Maintenance		Physical Access to Facility		Will A New Facility be Required?		Proposed Facility's Landscape Type		Facility Potential User Availability		Facility Potential New User Capacity																			
	Consistent With (+10)	Not Consistent With (-10)	Net Capital Expense (-1 to -9)	No Net Capital Expense (+9)	Not Applicable (0)	Signif. Potential Impact (-1 to -8)	No Potential Impact (+8)	Not Applicable (0)	Consistent with Trends (+1 to +8)	Not Supported by Projections (-8)	Not Applicable (0)	Sufficient (-7)	Deficient (+7)	Not Applicable (0)	Net O&M Increase (-1 to -7)	No Net O&M Cost Increase (+7)	Not Applicable (0)	Compatible With (+7)	Not Compatible With (-7)	Not Applicable (0)	Self Supporting (+7)	Subsidy Required (-1 to -7)	Not Applicable (0)	Major +10 Acres (-6)	Moderate 1-10 Acres (-3)	None (+6)	Improves Efficiency (+5)	No Change In Efficiency (-5)	Not Applicable (0)	Will Increase Capacity (+4)	Will Decrease Capacity (-4)	No Affect/Not Applicable (0)	Will Increase Frequency (+4)	Will Decrease Frequency (-4)	No Affect/Not Applicable (0)	Improves Security (+4)	Decreases Security (-4)	No Affect/Not Applicable (0)	Req. New Employee(s) (-1 to -4)	Utiliz. Exist. Staff / No Net Gain (+4)		Not Applicable (0)	Requires New Equipment (-1 to -3)	Utiliz. Exist. Equip./No Net Gain (+3)	Not Applicable (0)	Will Improve (+2)	Will Not Improve (-2)	Not Applicable (0)	Yes (-2)	No (+2)	Not Applicable (0)	Natural (+1)	Hardscape/Built (-1)	Not Applicable (0)	Year Round (+1)	4-9 Months (0)	3-4 Months (-1)	Less Than 10 (-1)
Acquire & Dev. Hudson Hills GC	10		9			8		8			7				7		-6			0	4			4			4			0		4			3			0	-2				-1		1				1	64								
Croton Point Camping	10		-9			-1		5			7			7			-6		6	5		0	4			4		4			4			3		2		0	-2			0	1					1	52									
Dev. New Indoor Sports Complx	10		9			-8		8			7			0	7			6		0	4			4			4			0		4			3			0	-2			-1		1				1	60									
Build E/W Trail Connection	10		-9			8		8			7				-4			7			-7			6	5		4				4			4		2			-2			-1		1				1	51									
New Pool at Glen Island	10		9			-3		8			7				7			7			7			6			6		0	4			4			3			0	-2			-1			-1			1	70								
New Nature Center at Marshlands	10		9			8		5		0				0	7			7			-4			6	5			4			0	4			3		2			-2			-1		1			0	64									
Biodiversity Study at Muscoot	10		9			8		2		0				0	7			7				0		6			6		0			0			3		0			-2		0	1			1			1	52								
Do 'Bike Sundays' on BRP	10		9			8		8			7				7			6		-5			4			6				4			4			3		2				2			0		1	89										
Pk. Deck at WC Center (by WCP)	10		-9			-2		1			7				7			6	5			-2			6			6	5			4			4			-2			-1		1				1	36										
Pk. Deck at WC Center (by Priv.)	10		9			-2		1			7				7			6	5			-7			6			6	5			4			4			-2			-1		1				1	56										
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Rehab. Ent.Road at Croton Grg.	10		-4			8				0				0	7		7		6	5			-5			6	5					0	4			4			2			2			0	1				1	48							
Dredge Sediment Ponds on BRP	10		-9			8				0				0	7		7		6	5			-7			6	5				4			0			3		2			2			1				1			0	44					
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Item Descriptions

The follow is a brief description of the primary goal of each item:

- Mission Statement Compatibility - Does the proposed project comply with the goals and objectives of the County's Mission Statement?
- Cost & Funding Expense for a New Facility - After a funding source for the proposed project has been identified, does it create a net capital expense to the County (on a sliding scale of impact), or, after the funding source is identified and any offsetting income is included, would there be no net capital cost to the County?
- Potential Environmental Impact to the natural, designed and built environment- Does the proposed project present a potential negative environmental impact (judged on a sliding scale), or would there be no impact?
- Demographic and Trends Compatibility - Is the proposed project supported by the County Planning Department's 1996 Recreational Users Survey findings, the County's demographic trends and any recreational trends identified in Chapter IV?
- Current County System Adequacy - Is the County presently adequately served by the recreation type proposed or is there a lack of facilities for this activity?
- Potential Costs for Operations and Maintenance - Will there be a net increase of O & M costs to the County with this proposed project and on a sliding scale, what are those cost implications?
- Compatibility With Existing Park Character - For proposed project intended for existing facilities (e.g.: expansions, additions etc.), would they be compatible with the existing character of the park or would it be inconsistent and perceived as a misplaced intrusion?
- Financial Projections and Revenue Stream - Would the proposed project be self supporting, require a subsidy to operate or would it not only pay for itself but also generate excess revenue that could be used for other park's expenses?
- New Acquisition / New Area Requirements - Would the County need to acquire any new property to accommodate the proposed project and how much would be necessary, or can it be accommodated on existing park land?
- Affect on Existing Facility Operating Efficiency - Would the proposed project improve the operations of the existing facility in which it is sited or have no affect?

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- Affect on Total County Recreation User Capacity - Would the project add available County recreational capacity for the activity proposed, would it decrease total available capacity or have no affect?
- Affect on Total County Recreation User Frequency - Would the project create or promote additional County recreational user frequency for the activity proposed, would it decrease total frequency or have no affect?
- Affect on Safety and Security - Would the proposed project cause an increase in, a decrease of or have no affect on the safety and security of the facility?
- Potential Staffing Requirements - Would the proposed project require the new funding of any full or part-time employee positions (amount noted on a sliding scale) or would the net staffing requirements be zero as they could be paid for either through new revenues generated by the project? Could additional staffing requirements be accommodated by sharing existing staff with other facilities, or would no new staff be needed?
- Equipment Requirements for Operations and Maintenance - Would the proposed project require the new funding of any new equipment (amount noted on a sliding scale) or would the net equipment requirements be zero as it could be paid for either through new revenues or savings generated by the project? Could additional equipment be accommodated by sharing existing equipment with other facilities, or would no new equipment be needed?
- Physical Access to Facility - Would the proposed project increase, decrease or have no affect on the physical access to the facility?
- Will a New Facility be Required - Does the proposed project require the construction of any new facilities or can it be accomplished with current facilities?
- Proposed Facility's Landscape Type - Is the proposed project predominantly a built/hardscape type facility or a natural/softscape type?

Softscape - Is the proposed softscape predominately composed of high maintenance (i.e. dollar, chemical or irrigation dependant), non-native plant material and turf grass or is it a more ecologically conservative type that utilizes more native species reliant on the natural processes?

Hardscape - Is the proposed hardscape composed of high maintenance facilities (i.e. buildings, pools etc.) or are they energy efficient and low maintenance?

- Facility Potential User Availability - What portion of a year would the proposed project be available for use? Are there potential 'off-season' supplemental uses for the facility?

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- Facility Potential New User Capacity - What is the potential total daily capacity for new users of the proposed project?

Evaluation Analysis

Some selected sample projects were evaluated using the Evaluation Screen Matrix and their point values were computed to demonstrate how the process works. After running through a number of examples, three issues were raised:

1) Proposed Capital Projects of the “New Facility” type will generally score higher than typical “Infrastructure/Rehabilitation” type projects, and two different threshold scores must be established to fairly judge “apples and apples”.

2) The matrix is better used to evaluate “bricks and mortar” type efforts. Programs that are more people and/or policy oriented need a slightly different set of criteria for evaluation purposes.

3) Potential projects to be evaluated cannot be too general but rather they should have as much detail as possible so that the category questions can be answered with a context in mind. For example, it’s more worthwhile to suggest “new swimming pool at Glen Island” than “New Swimming Pool in South County.”

Two examples developed in the matrix show the benefit of evaluating the same project using two different funding mechanisms. The “New Parking Deck at the County Center” project that would be funded by the County scored rather poorly (36 pts.). The same project, funded by outside sources having not only no net cost to the County but also the potential for excess revenues, scored much better (56 pts.). Other projects were evaluated to test the scoring potential of projects that have already been done and are deemed to be successful. The highly successful “Do Bike Sundays on the Bronx River Parkway” project scored quite well with a total of 89 points thus confirming the methodology of the matrix.

It appears that after running a number of selected projects through the matrix, a desirable minimum score for new work type projects should be about 60± points. For infrastructure/rehabilitation type projects, the minimum value should be about 40± points.

E. Capital Projects Analysis

The list of Capital Projects that follows was derived from the WCPRC’s 1996 Capital Projects Request Forms list and has been categorized to identify what priority level the project warrants:

- ‘A’- Essential
- ‘B’- Needed but not essential
- ‘C’- New or expanded

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If a proposed project or program is an essential improvement involving health, safety or welfare issues, there should be no question that it is important and a high priority item and therefore not subjected to the master plan other than to point out that it's on a short term list. The staff of WCPRC expressed concern as to how to rank the items on the 'A' list as not all of them can be funded in the year that they're requested. The other categories 'B' and 'C' would then be subject to the screen matrix discussed previously in Section D of this chapter.

The Capital Improvements categories are as follows:

1. Infrastructure/Rehabilitation -Improvements that are essential to park operations, access, utilities, maintaining essential facilities, etc. Included in this category are Capital Improvements numbered: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 38, 39, 42, 44 and 48.
2. Facilities Rehabilitation - Improvements to park and recreation user facilities which are important to quality, efficiency and user experience but not imperative. Included in this category are Capital Improvements numbered: 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 23, 32, 34, 35, 37, 40, 43, 46, 47 and 49.
3. New and/or Expansion - Facilities that are appropriate to add and/or expand but not essential or significant to the quality, efficiency or user experience. Included in this category are Capital Improvements numbered: 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 19, 20, 36, 41, and 45.

The use of the screening techniques will assist the WCPRC staff in determining how items get on the list and how WCDPRC decides priorities.

The following items are drawn directly from the current WCPRC Capital Project Request Forms. This list is constantly being revised as new projects are added and others are funded.

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1. Blue Mountain. - Sportsmen's Center Rehab. Gen. Improve., safety, lead contamination	\$4,650,000
2. Bronx River Rev. Riverbank Stabilization Env. engin. solutions for erosion	\$1,100,000
3. Bronx River Rev. Pond Rehabilitation Maint. & rehab. of sediment basins	\$1,675,000
4. County Center - Modification Ceilings, elevator, HVAC	\$1,125,000
5. County Center - Floor Replacement Full wood floor replacement	\$1,780,000
6. County Center - Parking Structure 1500 car parking deck behind CC	\$18,200,000
7. Croton Point Redevelopment - Infrastructure General utilities improvements	\$3,675,000
8. Croton Point Day Uses & Picnic Area Pk lot paving, planting, bathhouse rehab, boat/bike rentals, new shelters/comfort stat., minigolf, pk lot expan.	\$2,860,000
9. Croton Point Camping RV hookups, boat ramp/pk lot, bath rms, cabin reloc.	\$2,850,000
10. Croton Point - Site Improvements Tellers Pt. Nature trail, wine cellar restore, interp centr., archeol study, concess cafe, storg bldg.	\$2,450,000
11. Croton Ballfields II 2 new ballflds, lighting, comf stat.,	\$ 880,000
12. Davids Island Improvements Park construction after acquisition	\$8,500,000
13. Maple Moor GC Clubhouse Reconstr. Club house, new maint. bldg.	\$2,000,000
14. Mohansic GC - Expansion New 18, new 9, new cart bldg, renov clubhouse, tee/green/fairway renov, irrig improve,	\$10,000,000
15. Maple Moor GC 1st Hole Reconstruction Relocate tee, carpath, irrig, fairway regrade	\$ 500,000
16. 4 Course Golf Tee & Green Rehabilitation Rebuild tee&greens@ MM, SL, SW & Dun	\$4,300,000
17. Sprain Lake GC Clubhouse Renovation Roof, structural, siding, flooring	\$ 200,000
18. Dunwoodie GC Parking Improvements Realign & repave, lighting, carpath, elec system improve	\$1,220,000
19. Hudson Hills GC Development	\$5,400,000

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All site and building work for new course	
20. Georges Island Hudson River Overlook	\$ 450,000
Development of reserved picnic area	
21. Glen Island Redevelopment - Infrastructure	\$2,500,000
Sanitary, water, elec, lighting, pumps, pavements	
22. Glen Island Bridge Repair	\$6,500,000
Rehab to continue functioning	
23. Glen Island Picnic Areas	\$1,400,000
New comfort stat, rehab pavilion, picnic site work	
24. Glen Island Sea walls	\$1,800,000
Repair, rehab, rip rap, jetty, access walks	
25. Glen Island - Castle Improvements	\$ 350,000
Stabilize & repair stone structures	
26. General Infrastructure - ADA	\$ 800,000
ADA Access @ MMoor, SWoods, Dun & Mohansic	
27. Gen. Infrastructure for All Parks Active Rec. Areas	\$3,600,000
Site improve/amenities not included in other specific requests	
28. Gen Infrastructure - Bridge & Dam Inspection	\$5,100,000
Inventory & catagorize condition of all bridge & dams	
29. Gen Infrastructure - Paving & Resurfacing	\$1,000,000
Asphalt repaving @ various parks	
30. Kensico Dam Plaza Water Improvements	\$ 500,000
Potable water, cascade waterproof, restore 3 fountains	
31. Lasdon Infrastructure	\$1,950,000
New pk lot, elec upgrade, maint facil reloc, irrig syst,	
main house roof, pump house roof,	
32. Lasdon Park & Arboretum	\$1,400,000
Estab/improve arboretum, new greenhse for floral production	
33. V.E. Macy Infrastructure Woodlands Lake/Dam	\$1,010,000
Reconstruct Woodlands Lake Bridge/Dam, rehab lake,	
picnic area improve, new storage garage	
34. V.E. Macy Ballfield Improvements	\$ 900,000
Regrade/rehab ballfields, 2 new ballflds, new soccer field	
sports lighting, pk lot	
35. Marshlands Site Development Work	\$1,500,000
New entrance, pk lots, pathways, picnic areas, plantings	
36. Memorial Field Renovation	\$8,600,000
Acquire & improve outdoor multi sport athletic complex	
37. Muscoot Farm - Phase III	\$ 500,000
Connect w/ footbridge to Lasdon, restore stone walls	
38. Mt. Lakes Park Infrastructure	\$1,000,000
New potable water syst, lightning protection	

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39. Gen Infrastructure - Pathways & Trails 2 mi. of connecting trails & pathways @ various sites	\$1,845,000
40. Trail Mod. at Cranberry Lake & Read Sanctuary Boardwalk / ADA trails in sensitive areas	\$1,500,000
41. Ridge Road - Picnic Area Addnl. group picnic area w/ comf stat, 200 pk lot, play equip,	\$ 600,000
42. Saxon Woods - Pool Rehabilitation Replace filtration system	\$3,000,000
43. Saxon Woods Facility Improvements/New Bldgs. With filter proj- demo old bldgs except filter bldg, new public service & staff bldgs, site work	\$1,200,000
44. Sprain Ridge Park Bathhouse Improvements New roof, siding, windows & site work	\$ 860,000
45. Sprain Ridge Pool Modernization Pool redesign and construction	\$4,000,000
46. Tibbetts Brook Park Site Work Renov tennis, pathways, picnic, ballfields, boat house, new bulkhead/dock, landscaping, playground	\$ 800,000
47. Tibbetts Brook Park Infrastructure New maint bldg, 8 pk lot, fences, landscaping, utilities	\$ 250,000
48. Ward Pound Ridge Restor. Of Hist. Bldgs & Site Work Restore maint garage & park office, repave pk. lot & ent. road	\$ 100,000
49. Willson's Woods Pool Modernization Pool redesign and construction, expand parking lot	\$4,000,000

Playland

50. Ice Casino Improvements/Systems Rehabilitation	\$ 2,865,000
51. Auto Scooter - Ride Replacement	\$1,710,000
52. Maintenance Facility, Study & Construction	\$4,515,000
53. Breakwater Rehabilitation	\$ 800,000
54. Various Rides & Components/Repair & Restoration	\$ 4,000,000
55. Colonnade & Music Tower Rehabilitation	\$ 3,790,000
56. Bathhouse Masonry & Brickwork Rehabilitation	\$ 800,000
57. Backflow Prevention Installation	\$ 500,000
58. Picnic Pavilions Rehabilitation	\$ 300,000
59. Music Tower Stage	\$ 500,000
60. Infrastructure Reconstruction	\$9,150,000
61. Boat Launch Ramp	\$ 100,000
62. Redevelopment of Outdoor Arena	\$ 100,000
63. Park Resurfacing - All Blacktop Areas	\$1,000,000
64. Security and Communication System	\$ 350,000

A. Introduction

The park, recreational and facility financial plan analysis is based on a review of economic and area demographic trends, an initial review of revenue and expenses of the Westchester County Parks' system, a review of relevant financial trends of selected, comparable park systems, discussions with WCPRC staff, review of current data, and information gathered from public forums and secondary data sources. The overall purpose is to set a comprehensive basis for on-going, long-term planning.

Information gathering and analysis provides the basis for achieving financial planning goals. The findings from the analysis will set the overall market and financial framework for Westchester County's park system and, more specifically:

- Identify the current and projected primary markets for park use,
- Identify current and prospective uses, as well as major trends,
- Identify selected parks (and park-related opportunities) with revenue generating potential,,
- Develop recommendations for potential, balanced revenue growth and,
- Tie the findings into the future assessments and projections of needs

It is important to note the context in which the analysis and planning are taking place. This context includes pronounced public policy changes, demographic shifts, and consumer/user preferences. In summary, the financial component of short and long term planning must take into account the relatively new public policy requiring that parks must make a substantial contribution to "paying for themselves" because the general County government cannot afford to pay all or nearly all parks capital and operating costs. This policy comes into play at precisely a time when there is increasing utilization of and demand for parks.

Additionally, the changes in national and Westchester County population/demographics have important positive impacts in terms of interest and utilization of parks, the time to enjoy parks, the ability and interest in paying for certain park and recreational services, and a heightened sensitivity to environment, preservation and the careful planning for the future use of limited resources. An overriding consideration throughout the analysis is the need to balance revenue generation with: (1) the most appropriate park uses and; (2) Westchester County resident traditions, park use and payments (both direct and indirect). These factors form the background for the analysis and findings for the Financial Plan.

With regard to the overall financial planning that will impact on future revenues, two key findings have been made as follows:

- The Westchester County Parks and Recreation System has an extensive history and legacy, that results in a positive image. The system also benefits from its location in a large suburban/urban county, which has a high national profile. The profile includes positive demographic features such as growth income and recreation expenditures. Additionally, the parks have the advantage of excellent access to many facilities by various modes of transportation. The significance of

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this finding is that positive image and history are major factors which will assist WCPRC in capturing a larger market, diversifying utilization and increasing revenues.

- Park utilization has increased, reflective both of current and projected trends in the demand for parks. For example, attendance at County Parks has increased approximately 10% from 1.77 million visitors in 1991 to 1.94 million in 1995.

The Financial Plan Analysis section of the report is organized, as follows:

- Potential New Revenue Sources
- Existing Revenue Generators
- Bench Marking: Comparable Park Systems
- Overview of Relevant Trends
- Demographic Trends Analysis

Supportive documentation - Park Attendance, Revenue Trends by Park, and Revenue/Receipts/Expenditures by Park - is provided in the Appendix to the section of the report.

B. Potential New Revenue Sources

Recommendations

The Westchester County Parks system has significant new revenue potential. In summary, that potential comes not only from the development of a new golf course (for which demand is clear) and a new aquatic center, but also from reconfiguring existing fee structures and application, as well as the development of new park uses and the reuse of under-utilized facilities.

New or additional revenue generators have significant potential for the Westchester County Parks system and that potential should be considered and planned for within the context of a balance between park use by residents and the traditional fees (and taxes) paid by residents. The process of planning for and implementing new revenue generators must respect traditional park use, yet make accommodations for park growth (for users and uses), on-going park maintenance which respect future park use into the 21st century, and declining public dollars.

The potential for additional revenues (receipts) can be grouped into two broad categories: (1) Existing Park Uses and (2) Future Park Uses. Each is discussed in summary, as follows:

1. Existing Uses - Under the existing system, there are the following sources/approaches to increasing revenues.
 - a. Total reliance on increasing the use of existing facilities by: (1) Westchester County residents and (2) non-Westchester County residents. This source is based on the following:
 - i. Natural demographic growth (approximately 2% county-wide).

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- ii. An aggressive marketing campaign for targeted uses and targeted market segments. The marketing program should be professional (in terms of graphics, photography, presentation, etc.), targeted to growth market segments within the County, and timely (a seasonal approach, for example, would emphasize certain parks or usage which is most appropriate for the season, e.g. Autumn nature walks). Potential Result: Annual increase of approximately \$7,000 to \$23,000 based on only demographic growth rates, but for each 10% growth in household users (32,755 households), at average non-golf expenditures of \$7.50 per household, an additional \$250,000 annually will be added to revenues.
- iii. Whereas there is presently a policy of uniform housing rates to leases on houses rented by park employees, this policy is not being uniformly applied. This may be a function of varying market appraisals or timing, but it does seem to warrant additional analysis. At present there is a 50% reduction in fair market rents for the provision of services performed by the tenants such as security, opening and closing of gates etc. However, since these employees are paid standard salary rates, there should be rental fee adjustments toward market rates for Westchester County rental housing. At the present time, the range of annual rents are from \$4,900 to \$34,700. Potential Result: Annual increase of \$20,000 to \$60,000.
- iv. Replan and implement concessions policy which individual park uses and demographic trends associated with park and geographic location (the concessions should be able to rely on more than just park users). A balanced approach should be undertaken in which concessions are not viewed solely as revenue generators but as one component of the park experience. Future study must balance revenue generation with reasonably priced services. What is true in Westchester County, however, as well as in the region, is that increasingly, people have income for retail expenditures and are willing to pay for quality. The balance is that park concessions should provide quality goods and services consistent with park user demand and that should translate to increased license fees. Potential Result: Annual increase of \$90,000 to \$150,000 (assume a V.E. Macy's small concession).

Total Estimated New Revenue: \$117,00 to \$230,000

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2. Future Uses - Potential new uses and revenues are illustrated in the following table:

New Uses	Estimated Potential Annual Gross Revenue
Golf Course	\$1,100,000
Executive 18-hole golf course	\$2,500,000
Miniature Golf Course (2-3)	\$75,000
Aquatic Center	\$1,000,000
Pool and Water Facilities	\$200,000
Uses that may increase at the same rates as the expenditure patterns within Westchester County	\$150,000
Total Increase in Annual Revenue	\$5,025,000

It must be emphasized that each of these opportunities or any others considered must be analyzed in detail. In summary, however, the support for the estimated new revenues by major uses is as follows.

For the new golf course, estimated new revenues are based on an average of the current revenues from the five existing parks and on the increasing demand for golf in Westchester County and the region. The demand for golf play, however, is so significant that strong consideration should be given to the development or expansion of existing courses to add two to three Executive 18-hole courses. With the five existing courses operating at or near capacity, little or no growth can be assumed for these courses and the projections are conservative. The projected revenues for the two to three new miniature golf courses and new pool/water facilities are based on existing park use averages. The development of a new Aquatic Center is based on a review of a major center in the region, such as Chelsea Piers, with a slight downward adjustment for revenues per square foot.

Additionally, a flat fee to replace parking and per-use fees (compared to other county systems) may also be implemented. The calculation of the per-household (resident and non-resident) charge to offset, but increase, the average revenue per household would have to be made. Using current resident population (327,550 households) and total existing revenues (excluding golf

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courses) results in a per household charge of approximately \$7.80. This figure is for all Westchester households.

Based on a range of usage by County residents only, assuming 30% to 40% of 327,550 households pay a flat fee of \$7.80 yields a range of fees equal to \$737,000 to \$1,022,000, which is substantially below per park and usage fees currently in place. Even a 60% participation rate results in only \$1.48 million in revenue annually. Reliance on non-County residents for substantial revenues is probably not desirable from a policy point, but also is probably not feasible. To give a sense of the required flat fee for County residents to equal current revenues (less golf fees) at a 50% County-wide household rate, the flat fee would have to be approximately \$16 per household.

The flat fee approach offers a straight-forward revenue strategy and may, because of its ease of usage and broad-based understanding, offer a basis for further analysis. For marketing purposes, it also offers a unique way of attracting new and repeat usage. Careful monitoring of revenues to assure no loss in overall earned income will be required.

Listed below are examples of potential revenues for selected parks, based on field work and internal discussions. Recommended reuses will require setting priorities for in-depth park and use analysis.

1. Bronx River Parkway -- Two abandoned gas stations are located within the Parkway reservation in the town of Yonkers. These two buildings are small rectangular shaped structures with stone walls and gable roofs. These buildings date from the 1920's and are attractive structures. The two buildings are available for private concessionaires (e.g., visitor center providing maps, information, hiking equipment, bike rentals, park passes).
2. Croton Gorge Park/Stokes Green -- The structures at Stokes Green (e.g., Main House, Barns) are an exceptionally attractive and well-sited group of buildings all in fair to good condition. The Main House has an entry portico carried on double height columns facing a small green which evokes the feeling of a New England town square. Stokes Green presents a unique opportunity to develop a master plan of complimentary uses for revenue -producing facilities in an extremely picturesque setting.

Potential uses may include, Conference/meeting center (Main House), Bed and Breakfast (Main House), Weekday corporate meeting retreat, Weekend public/environmental studies retreat (available to civic groups).

3. Croton Point Park -- Since the landfill was capped and the park reopened to full operation, this facility has experienced a significant increase in attendance (a 382% increase from 8,044 in 1994 to 38,754 in 1995) and revenues (a 199% increase from \$30,439 in 1994 to \$91,148 in 1995). As attendance levels

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continue to increase due to this park's waterfront location, there are additional opportunities for food concession building and other services not presently offered by the park.

4. Glen Island Park -- The Casino is leased by the Parks Department to an independent operator for use as a catering hall. The Casino may do better as a full service restaurant with separate quality dining experiences. Further study is needed to define the new building interior renovations as applicable to a restaurant, as well as WCPRC's financial participation beyond the base lease.
5. Kensico Dam Plaza Park -- Located at the northern end of the Bronx River Parkway, and given its current popularity as a place for events/concerts, in line skaters and bicyclers, an expansion of the park center building for a visitor center offering maps, information, hiking equipment, bike rentals, and in line skater rentals has great potential. This visitor center would also effectively market the county park system in the northern part of the County.
6. Kingsland Point Park -- The noteworthy Bath/Boathouse structure may have potential for boating concession, picnic areas and food concessions and would provide visitors an opportunity to enjoy the dramatic views of the Hudson River. Tours of the Lighthouse are regularly given.

Currently, the Bathhouse is in poor condition. The upper level room contains picnic tables, but it is not a well-used space. The lower level is no longer used as a Bathhouse. One half of the floor is occupied by a local sailing club. The other half of the Bathhouse is used for storage. This level is in poor condition with windows along the storage-side boarded up. There are opportunities for a snack bar concession as well as a longer term potential as a catering hall.

7. Lasdon Park and Arboretum -- A Development Plan has been prepared for Lasdon Park. The overall concept is to have the facility function as a "Museum of Nature", or outdoor living museum. It would be in interpretive place where the outdoors can be studied and celebrated. The long range goal is to enhance and expand the gardens as well as to build a greenhouse production facility that would provide the seasonal floral needs of all the County's parks. Also planned is the design and construction of a multi-purpose area and outdoor theater for lectures and concerts. Further consideration must be made for additional uses of the Main House that can augment the current uses of the building and that could generate additional revenues to assist in the continued operation of the facility.

The Main House at Lasdon is a handsome Colonial Revival former residence built in the early 1940's. The ground floor is being used for offices and a horticultural library, which is under development. The second floor is currently

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not being used and the Parks Department was informed that the upper floors could not structurally withstand the live load of an office use.

Potential revenue generating opportunities for the Main House include: restaurant, special events (e.g. small weddings, bar mitzvah, etc.), up and coming scholarly events and botanical meetings, botanical library/ garden shop and the expansion of horticultural and ecological studies.

8. Mountain Lakes Park -- Former summer camp has potential for major reuse as family campsites and/or a corporate outing location. Since the closing of the overnight camps in 1994, the intensity of use of the Mountain Lakes Park facilities has dropped considerably. A day camp operates out of Camp Spruce during the summer and swimming at Spruce Lake is open to the public on the weekends. Boating is allowed at Hemlock Lake and there is a boat rental facility. The former cabins at both camps are available for rent by the public but they are not well used for this activity. All of the buildings appear to be in fair condition and in need of at least cosmetic work. The mess halls are still popular for use by group picnics or other larger events.
9. Playland Park -- The Playland Park Bathhouse is a charming Art Deco facility although portions have not been used for some time. The wing of the Bathhouse closest to the Park is currently being renovated into a nostalgia Playland exhibit. The other wing is not in use and is in poor condition. Proposals could be developed to turn this portion of the Bathhouse into a revenue producing facility such as a sports facility or a restaurant.
10. Tibbett's Brook Park -- The Bathhouse contains a large and under used barrel vaulted space on its second floor. This space has been subdivided into rooms for a model train club. The vaulted space is handsome, as is the entire facility, with views over the pool and the lovely front approach and playing fields. Suggestions for changes to the Bathhouse include a greater use of the terrace overlooking the pool with the addition of tables, chairs, and concessions. Proposals could be explored to relocate the model train club and turn the space into an attractive restaurant, sports related facility or other revenue producing facility.
11. Wampus Pond -- Although Wampus Pond functions as a local park, it offers such varied activities as boating with car-top boat launching, fishing, and picnicking. A preliminary development plan prepared for the Wampus Pond Park recommends improvements to the existing parking lot and entrance as well as the construction of an additional boat ramp. Potential concession opportunities exist which could offer boat rental accessories, snacks and fishing equipment in order to attract interest to the park.

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12. Miller House (Washington's Headquarters) -- This is an Historic site with visibility potential, but it lacks a "Friends" group for support. Currently open only by appointment, locating an organization here to conduct tours, etc., may yield a small maintenance revenue source.
13. Westchester County Center -- The County Center has a large lobby area with very little in it in terms of attractions. There is potential to develop a park visitors information center and expand the existing ticket office to include a call-in reservation center. By offering a visitors center in the lobby area, the County Park System could be marketed to residents within Central County as well as other visitors to the White Plains area. The lobby area could become a showcase representation of the County park system with maps, displays, and historical information, and could offer concessions for recreation equipment rental (such as in-line skates, basketballs etc.) as well.
14. Willson's Woods Park -- Present plans for the park include a major rebuilding of the pool in a design similar to what had been unsuccessfully proposed for Saxon Woods only smaller in scale. The project will involve keeping the existing bathhouse and renovating the locker area, demolishing the pool and filter room and replacing it with a zero-depth entry pool, a lap pool, a relaxing pool, and a children's aquatic area. The Bathhouse is an attractive and well-used facility. It contains a large open space on its second floor that was formerly a Dance Hall and is currently used for storage. This space has potential for a reserved picnic area, sports related facility or an activity room.

C. Existing Revenue Generators

Summary Findings

As the data make clear, WCPRC already generates substantial revenues from a variety of sources, e.g. golf fees, parking, concession, etc. Total revenues in 1996 including golf fees and Playland were approximately \$18.7 million out of a total operating budget of nearly \$28 million. The level, type and consistency of earned income revenues add support to the potential to generate even greater revenue, particularly for uses which are dominant in park growth trends. Although revenues have declined slightly in the past year, the decline is based largely on severe weather conditions, particularly effecting golf play, the closing of portions of Saxon Woods for repair and upgrade, and the closing of V.E. Macy's concession restaurant. Overall, however, the revenues base is stable and provides strong potential for growth.

A review of the budgets and specific revenue trends shows that the largest revenue sources are the golf fees, Playland, the beach/bathing fees, parking fees, youth permits and fees from concession. The analysis also shows the potential for increases in camping and sporting in certain parks. It is clear that the revenues from principal income-generating sources are: (1) interdependent, i.e. parking on the

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number of people using a park; (2) varying major weather trends, i.e. a late, harsh winter; (3) the availability for specific park services, i.e. the closing of a pool for repairs; and (4) user preferences. The initial analysis shows, however:

- There is a need for consistency with regard to how parking fees are applied and where. In some parks there appear to be no fees imposed, despite a relatively high utilization, e.g. Sprain Ridge.
- There is a need to review concessions on both a system-wide and park-by-park basis. It appears that concession revenues vary so substantially that greater revenue could be generated by having a more comprehensive planned concession leasing for: (1) percentage rents which are most effective when carefully constructed with uniform leases and proper controls; (2) controlling flexible leases (a lease which allows the lessor [the WCPRC] and the lessee to agree upon an initial rent which allows for tenant start-up and increases as the success of the lessee increases. In other words, the landlord flexes with the tenant, but understands how to benefit if the tenant does.); (3) types of concession uses consistent with actual park usage trends and new demand; and (4) expansion.
- That "housing" on park land does not have a uniformly applied leasing policy or utilization policy that maximizes obtainable rent. While recognizing that in some instances, tenants in WCPRC housing also act as a form of security for a given park, the rents should be more in line with the market. The absence of any revenue for some housing, or decline in rents, indicates underutilization of existing facility. A uniform and fair "housing" policy would yield more revenues. Additionally, unoccupied housing on park land may lend itself to other forms of use, i.e. bed and breakfast, which will generate revenues and be consistent with a park use.

From the field surveys and demographic analysis, using a comprehensive balance between park use and income generation, it is also clear that there are additional revenue opportunities that can support park operations and future developments.

These opportunities, as previously described, include parking fees, (new and existing) golf courses fees, new developments such as an aquatic center, and changes in park housing fee structures.

Primary Sources

Table 1, following, shows total revenues by major parks and principal sources of receipts excluding Playland, which is shown separately in Table 3, and County Center. The data is clear that the park system currently generates substantial revenues, ranging from approximately \$7.9 million in 1995 to \$7.5 million in 1996. Although there was, in fact, a 5% decline in total receipts, \$450,000 (all figures are rounded), the decline is accounted for primarily in golf-related receipts, which fell from \$5.5 million in 1995 to \$4.9 million in 1996. This means that receipts from other revenue sources, e.g. parking and beach, fees increased.

Table 1 illustrates the amount, type, and diversity of revenues by major parks. The items broken out for each park show the principal source or sources of fees for each park. The specifics of Table 1 are

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used to: (1) group the revenues by major categories and (2) support the recommended new revenue development previously discussed.

Table 1
Income-Revenues By Park

Park	1995	1996	Change (Number)	Change (Percent)
Dunwoodie Golf Course Locker & Golf Fees: \$985,657	\$980,989	\$973,390	(\$7,599)	-0.8%
Maple Moor Golf Course Golf Fees: \$928,000	\$934,128	\$876,926	(\$57,202)	-6.1%
Mohansic Golf Course Golf Fees: \$100,000	\$1,034,883	\$934,604	(\$100,279)	-9.7%
Saxon Woods Golf Course Golf Fees: \$682,000	\$1,039,168	\$633,307	(\$405,861)	-39.1%
Sprain Lake Golf Course Locker & Golf Fees: \$1,118,470	\$954,477	\$945,265	(\$9,212)	-1.0%
Blue Mountain Reservation Sportsman Center Fees: \$73,300	\$132,397	\$109,780	(\$22,617)	-17.1%
Croton Point Park Parking: \$66,800 Camping: \$60,000	\$91,150	\$183,600	\$92,450	101.4%
Georges Island Park Parking: \$17,000 Boat Fees: \$15,000	\$47,855	\$56,108	\$8,253	17.2%
Glen Island Park Parking: \$102,000 Beach Admin: \$106,000	\$243,980	\$299,100	\$55,120	22.6%
Tibbetts Brook Park Parking: \$62,000 Beach Admin:\$114,000	\$203,200	\$249,800	\$46,600	22.9%
V.E. Macy Park Parking: \$11,600 Ground Permit:\$18,700 Concession (closed): \$83,000	\$125,000	\$40,477	(\$84,523)	-67.6%
Ward Pound Ridge Reservation Parking: \$109,000	\$205,584	\$201,815	(\$3,769)	-1.8%

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Park	1995	1996	Change (Number)	Change (Percent)
Rental House: \$34,700				
Washington's Headquarters Youth Permit Fees: \$6,000	\$7,225	\$7,000	(\$225)	-3.1%
Willson's Woods Park Beach Admin: \$33,400 Parking: Free	\$40,250	\$45,700	\$5,450	13.5%
Sprain Ridge Park Beach Admin: \$176,000 Parking: Free	\$244,200	\$245,000	\$800	0.3%
Wampus Pond Park	NA	NA	NA	NA
Marshlands Conservancy Youth Permits: \$27,000	\$32,000	\$30,700	(\$1,300)	-4.1%
Cranberry Lake Park Youth Permits: \$21,000	\$28,030	\$36,266	\$8,236	29.4%
Croton Gorge Park Parking: \$5,780	\$6,335	\$5,270	(\$1,065)	-16.8%
Muscoot Farm Youth Permits: \$67,000 Rental House: \$16,400	\$103,271	\$95,200	(\$8,071)	-7.8%
Kingsland Point Park Parking: \$12,500 Permits: \$ 10,600	\$23,065	\$25,940	\$2,875	12.5%
Ridge Road Park Ground Permits: \$37,300 Parking: Free	\$38,520	\$46,560	\$8,040	20.9%
Saxon Woods Park Beach Admin: \$253,000	\$319,200	\$326,350	\$7,150	2.2%
Lenoir Preserve: Youth Permit: \$12,000	\$22,040	\$19,264	(\$2,776)	-12.6%
Kensico Plaza Parking: \$13,400	\$12,840	\$13,270	\$430	3.3%
Lasdon Park & Arboretum Rental House: \$22,600	\$47,397	\$29,655	(\$17,742)	-37.4%
Edith Read Nature Park and Sanctuary Misc/Youth Permit:\$12,000	\$12,600	\$12,480	(\$120)	-1.0%

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Park	1995	1996	Change (Number)	Change (Percent)
Mountain Lakes Park Camping: \$32,200	\$53,636	\$61,070	\$7,434	13.9%
Bronx River Reservation Concessions: \$318,700	\$293,000	\$413,000	\$120,000	41.0%
GRAND TOTAL	\$7,276,420	\$6,916,897	(\$359,523)	-4.9%

Grouping the attendance/users and revenues into four broad categories results in the following:

Table 2
Revenues and Attendance
1996 (Rounded)

	Gross Revenue	Attendance*	Revenue/Attendee
Golf	\$4,920,000	242,000	\$21.35
Parks	\$2,000,000	730,000	\$2.74
Recreation	\$1,600,000	382,000	\$4.19
Playland	\$9,100,000	1,100,000	\$8.27
Parking	\$280,000	-	

*Includes County Center

Full breakouts by park and year (1991-1996) are provided in the Appendix.

Table 3 shows income/revenue generated by major parks and by predominant generators for 1996. The Playland revenues are shown in Table 4 for comparative purposes, as well as for further analysis.

Table 3
Total Park Revenues by Major Receipt Categories
1996

Category	Revenue
Golf Fees	\$4,918,000
Admission Fees	\$688,400

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Concessions (V.E. Macy closed) ¹	\$474,700
Parking	\$416,000
Grounds & Field Permits ²	\$216,100
Youth Permits	\$168,000
Housing	\$139,700
Camping and Shelter Permits	\$114,000
Miniature Golf	\$51,400
Boat Rentals and Launch	\$32,000
Other	\$256,000
Total	\$7,474,300

* Excludes Playland and County Center

1. V.E. Macy generated \$83,000 in 1995

2. Includes Sportsman Center \$73,300

Table 4
Playland Park Revenues

	1995	1996	Change
Playland Amusement Park Parking: \$ 776,000 Bath/Rental Fee: \$ 6,000,000	\$7,340,371	\$7,547,000	\$206,629
Playland Beach and Pool Bathing/Rental Fees: \$199,000	\$307,880	\$252,500	(\$55,380)
Playland Ice Casino Fees: \$807,000 Skating/rental: \$250,000	\$1,419,850	\$1,361,200	(\$58,650)
Total	\$9,070,096	\$9,162,696	\$92,600

After golf, the principal revenue generators currently are in admission fees, concessions, and parking. Although all are demand driven, e.g. requiring more users, there are other factors, that may be used to increase these revenues. For example, at least three major parks do not charge any parking fees (Sprain Ridge, Ridge Road, and Willson's Woods). At least two approaches could be considered to increase these parking receipts: (1) employ parking charges directly across all parks or (2) drop all parking fees by park and include parking as an additional cost in (county-wide) park permits.

D. Bench Marking - Comparable Park Systems

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As previously noted, three park systems were selected for comparison to WCPRC, primarily for the purpose of identifying trends, determining if there are lessons to be learned, and identifying any revenue/cost elements which may be applicable to WCPRC. The three systems selected for comparison were Bergen County, NJ, Morris County, NJ, and Montgomery County, PA. They were selected as comparable based on the maturity of the parks system, their reputations, the relative size of their population and geographic area, their diversity of park usage and their user populations. The tables below summarize the comparisons and show that in virtually every category WCPRC far exceeds these comparable parks systems. This is in terms of budgets, number of parks in the systems, revenues generated and total greenspace.

As shown in Table 5, Westchester County spends more per capita than any of the comparable systems. This is reflective of the size of the Westchester County park system, users of the parks, and absolute size of the budget.

Table 5
Per Capita Expenditure
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

County	Per Capita Expenditure
Westchester County	\$53.82
Bergen County	\$12.73
Morris County	\$45.50
Montgomery County	\$8.50

The significance of Westchester County's revenue is made more pronounced by comparing the per resident expenditures for operating and capital budgets for Westchester County to that of the comparable systems. This is illustrated in the charts below.

Table 6
Per Resident Expenditures for Operating and Capital Budgets
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

County	Population	Operating Expenditure
Westchester County (NY)	875,000	\$32.58
Bergen County (NJ)	825,000	\$9.56

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Morris County (NJ)	422,000	\$36.49
Montgomery County (PA)	678,000	\$5.15

Westchester County's operating budget also reflects that 27% comes from earned revenues, a major contribution to the system.

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Per resident expenditures for capital expenses are also noteworthy:

Table 7
Per Resident Expenditures for Capital Expenses
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

County	Expenditures/Resident
Westchester County (NY)	21.22
Bergen County (NJ)	3.15
Morris County (NJ)	8.94
Montgomery County (PA)	3.35

Combining the capital and operations budget expenditures per resident (\$53.72) clearly shows that Westchester County's efforts are significant.

Unit fees for comparable parks vary significantly over eight to ten different uses. Table 8 shows the basic park permit fees for each park system.

Table 8
Basic Park Permit Fees

County	County Resident	Non-County Resident
Bergen County	\$12.00	\$12.00
Morris County	\$0.00	Daily \$7.00 Yearly \$30.00
Montgomery County	\$35.00	\$70.00
Westchester County	\$25.00	N/A

The tables suggest a wide disparity in fees charged among the four park systems, and of this point, no clear model or lesson is evident.

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Table 9
Golf Fees (Basic)

	Registration		Green Fees		Tee-Time Registration	
	Res	NRes	Res	NRes	Res	NRes
Westchester County	\$25.00 for 3 years	NA	wkday \$16 wkend \$19	wkday \$39 wkend \$44	\$1.00	\$2.00
Bergen County	\$22.00	NA	\$17.00	\$31.00	\$1.50	\$3.00
Morris County	\$15.00	\$30.00	\$18.00	\$37.00	\$2.00	\$4.00
Montgomery County	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

The basic findings from strictly a financial standpoint are that there do not appear to be major lessons to be gained from further study of comparable parks. Fees vary significantly; the earned-income as a percent of total budgets are either less than or comparable with WCPRC; and there do not appear to be major new revenue generators in place.

The contrasts between Westchester and comparable county parks systems continues at numerous levels, including staffing levels, staff per acre, operating costs per acre, and operating costs and capital budget per resident.

Table 10
Staff Per Acre
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

County	Persons/Acre
Westchester County (NY)	45.7
Bergen County (NJ)	40.5
Morris County (NJ)	47.4
Montgomery County (PA)	55.2

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Table 11
Staff Per Facility
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

County	Persons/Facility
Westchester County (NY)	7.9
Bergen County (NJ)	6.7
Morris County (NJ)	8.9
Montgomery County (PA)	17.0
Westchester County w/o Playland etc.	6.4

Table 12
Operating Cost Per Acre
By Comparable County Park System: 1996

	Gross Cost	Net Cost (Less Income Generated)
Westchester County (NY)	\$1,783	\$466
Bergen County (NJ)	\$972	\$730
Morris County (NJ)	\$595	\$477
Montgomery County (PA)	\$406	\$306
Westchester County w/o Playland etc.	\$1,010	\$253

It is critical to note that Westchester County Parks are responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of far more labor and maintenance intensive facilities, e.g., pools, golf courses, and recreation fields, than the comparable counties in this study and that when these types of facilities are factored out, the efficiency of Westchester County Parks is well within the range of the other benchmarked counties.

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E. Overview of Relevant Trends

Economic and demographic trends suggest a solid demand for recreational services. For Westchester County and the New York Region (defined as 23 counties, including Fairfield, Litchfield, and New Haven Counties in Connecticut; Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester Counties in New York; and Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties in New Jersey) the following describes both general and specific trends.

As a general trend, there is and will continue to be overall stable population and household growth in Westchester County, paralleling the trends in the New York Region. Specific elements of population and household growth include:

- **Westchester County:** 1996 estimated population of 895,000 projected to increase 1.6% to 908,500 by 2001; 330,300 estimated households in 1996 projected to increase 2.0% to 337,000 by 2001.
- **New York Region:** 1996 estimated population of 16.8 million projected to increase 0.6% to 16.9 million by 2001; 6.2 million estimated households in 1996 projected to increase 0.7% by 2001.
- According to Westchester County's Department of Planning, slow, steady growth of Westchester County's population will take place until the turn of the century. After the year 2000, a brief period of retrenchment is expected, followed by another round of growth. By the year 2020, population is expected to be in the 905,000 - 910,000 range.
- Through the year 2020, there appears to be a threshold population level beyond which Westchester County is not likely to grow. The county is at a mature stage developmentally and a population of 910,000 appears to be its threshold level.

The specific trends relevant to the parks systems market are also positive. Median household income is high and is expected to continue to grow for both Westchester County and the region as follows:

- Westchester County: 1996 estimated median household income of \$57,000 projected to increase 12.8% to \$64,000 by 2001.

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- New York Region: 1996 estimated median household income of \$45,000 projected to increase 12.9% to \$51,000 by 2001.

Importantly, there are increasing consumer spending patterns for recreation, food away from home and entertainment. Consumer spending patterns indicate that Westchester County residents spend a high percentage of their available after-tax income, also known as effective buying income, on retail items related to recreation, food away from home and entertainment. This trend is even more pronounced in Westchester County than in the New York Region as a whole.

Table 13 summarizes average household consumer spending patterns for recreation (e.g., fees and admissions), food away from home and entertainment. The table compares average household consumer spending patterns in Westchester County to the New York Region.

Table 13
Average Household Consumer Spending Patterns
Westchester County and the New York Region

Fees and Admission	1996 Estimate	2001 Projection	Percent Change (1996-2001)
Westchester County	\$828	\$876	5.80%
New York Region	\$676	\$729	7.84%
Food Away from Home			
Westchester County	\$3,356	\$3,487	3.90%
New York Region	\$2,935	\$3,088	5.21%
Other Entertainment			
Westchester County	\$881	\$916	3.97%
New York Region	\$699	\$740	5.87%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Tourism in Westchester County is growing as evidenced by increasing marketing efforts and new initiatives, including: the Garden & Sculpture Tour at Kykuit to attract additional press interest and visitors, book festivals in Tarrytown, 300 Year Anniversary Celebration at Cortlandt Manor, and the

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new initiative with AT&T in Westchester -- AT&T/Westchester Arts network. There have been record setting attendance levels, which have increased for the fourth straight year as Historic Hudson Valley sites drew 244,000 people to local attractions in 1996 (a 10% increase from 1995 levels). New promotions are expected to help draw approximately 270,000 tourists to the area in 1997.

There has been record employment growth in travel-related industries (which has risen 25% adding over 6,100 jobs since the mid 1970s) primarily in Central and Southern Westchester County. According to the New York State Department of Labor, the Westchester County travel/ tourism industry currently employs approximately 32,000 people.

Visitors are generally "day trippers" who come to the area to experience the "place" and visit local attractions, including, heritage and historic sites, man-made facilities and natural sites destination resorts, specialty retail and restaurants, and unique recreational activities (e.g., boat cruises). The predominant visitor attractions have been the heritage and historic sites, which have increased in popularity over the past few years due, in part, to more aggressive marketing efforts to promote visitation.

F. Demographic Trends Analysis

Population trends show selected age cohorts will experience positive growth. For example, Westchester County's juvenile population (ages 5-14) will experience continued growth. The Westchester County Department of Planning projects an increase of 18.2 percent in the juvenile population from 108,000 in 1995 to 120,000 by 2005. According to the User Survey, major activities of interest for this age group include:

- Swimming
- Bicycling
- Playground
- Ice skating/hockey
- Soccer
- Basketball
- In-line skating
- Interpretive natural history displays

Also, Westchester County's over-age 45 cohorts (ages 45-64) is projected to grow. This age cohorts include those households that have entered peak earning period and therefore, have the highest

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1996 estimated median income and the highest 2001 projected median income. According to the Residential Recreation Preferences Survey, major activities of interest for this age group include:

- Jogging/walking
- Swimming
- Cultural performances
- Historic sites/museums
- Bicycling
- Picnicking

Finally, and consistent with both national and regional trends, Westchester County's elderly population (ages 75 and up) will grow. According to the Westchester County Department of Planning projections, the number of elderly will grow by nearly 50 percent from 1990 to the year 2020, but its percent share of total population will increase from 14 percent in 1990 to about 20 percent in 2020. Based on the User Survey, major activities of interest for this age group include:

- Jogging/walking
- Swimming
- Cultural performances
- Historic sites/museums
- Bicycling
- Picnicking

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Table 14 summarizes population by age for these selected age cohorts. The trends are consistent for Westchester County and the New York Region.

Table 14
Population By Age
Selected Age Cohorts

Age Cohort	1990 Census	1996 Estimate	% Change (1990-1996)	2001 Projection	% Change 1996-2001
Westchester County					
5-14	101,305	112,477	11.03%	118,489	5.35%
45-64	191,458	213,905	11.72%	239,836	12.12%
75+	55,810	63,083	13.03%	68,402	8.43%
New York Region					
5-14	2,060,878	2,165,659	5.08%	2,228,886	2.92%
45-64	3,355,905	3,716,292	10.74%	4,147,911	11.61%
75+	915,924	1,038,314	13.36%	1,128,850	8.72%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

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Table 15 summarizes median household income by age cohort for empty nesters in Westchester County and the New York Region.

Table 15
Median Household Income
Empty Nesters

Age Cohort	1990 Census	1996 Estimate	% Change (1990-1996)	2001 Projection	% Change 1996-2001
Westchester County					
45-64	\$65,850	\$74,237	12.74%	\$80,553	8.51%
55-64	\$58,912	\$67,505	14.59%	\$72,294	7.09%
New York Region					
45-64	\$49,754	\$58,771	18.12%	\$63,859	8.66%
55-64	\$44,423	\$51,841	16.70%	\$56,992	9.94%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Population trends show a change in the racial and ethnic composition of the population from 1990 to 2020. According to the Westchester County Department of Planning, substantial growth in key groups of Westchester's population is forecast through the year 2020. One out of every ten Westchester residents will be of Asian origin. One out of every four Westchester residents will be of Hispanic origin (Hispanic can be of any race). Nearly one out of every six county residents will be Black/ African-American/ Caribbean. The substantial growth of the non-white population expected through the year 2020 will remain largely in the South County.

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Table 16
Westchester County Population by Race and Hispanic Origin
1990 and 2020

	1990 Census	2020 Forecast	% Change
White	640,558	450,000	-29.75%
Black/African-American	114,265	150,000	31.27%
Asian	31,611	90,000	184.71%
Other*	2,238	NA	NA
Hispanic	86,194	215,000	149.44%

* "Other" population group includes: 1,405 Native Americans and 833 not classified elsewhere. 2020 Projections were not provided, as the 1990 base figure was statistically too small.

Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

The growing ethnic and racial index of Westchester's population, and the many differences in demographic characteristics between North and South County, present their own challenges. These challenges have to do with providing an adequate and equitable level of recreational and cultural services for a heterogeneous population residing in sparsely populated rural areas as well as densely settled urban communities.

A. Introduction

While there are limitations to long-range forecasting of national recreational trends due to changing political, social, and economic environments, several common trends are influencing recreational activities which are likely to occur in our public parks in the future:

- increased public use,
- dwindling public budgets,
- increased awareness of health and physical fitness,
- increased concern about the environment and the preservation of physical, historical and cultural resources and,
- changing demographics (family size, age, ethnic diversity).

Creative management techniques and program models are being adopted nationwide to build bridges between public and private agencies to:

- support social policies,
- conserve natural, historic and cultural resources, and,
- respond to the diversity of communities' needs.

B. Public/Private Partnerships - Building Bridges

Due to dwindling public budgets, public agencies are finding they must build creative public/private partnerships to support multi-purpose, cost-effective, recreational facilities and programs which complement other private and public resources, which are consistent with the carrying capacity of the land, and which meet the changing diversity of needs in their communities. Examples include innovative initiatives to acquire land, organize volunteers, and develop regional tourism opportunities.

1. Concessions and Special Events

Many public agencies continue to look toward contracting out to private managers and investors who can restore and manage properties, run programs, or provide visitor services in a more cost effective manner than local government agencies. Simple examples include rental of in-line skates, construction of skateboard parks or other recreational facilities and equipment in public sites; others involve substantial private investment and long term management contracts for restaurants, elderly day care and health care facilities. These arrangements must be set up to meet mutually compatible goals of both parties and must respect and protect the long-term public interest.

The recent rehabilitation to the Playland Pier and contracting with private Long Island Sound boats to provide cruises are a good example of how the public facilities can be enhanced and made more accessible through public/private partnerships. The County also has had successful arrangements for the management of riding stables, food service and other services. Other kinds of public/private partnerships, such as hot air balloon shows, musical series or holiday light shows, have been successful in other areas. It may be that such special annual events could be hosted at existing facilities to extend their useful season, or at new facilities.

2. Involving Volunteers

"Friends" groups of volunteers that provide in-kind services and financial assistance to park and recreation agencies continue to be critical to many agencies and organizations across the country. Many Westchester County parks currently enjoy the support of a "Friends of..." group that acts as an

advocate for that facility with both the WCPRC staff as well as the public at large. Westchester County also has other programs that aid the park system such as employing disabled people in group homes to do park maintenance work or the “Pitch in for Parks and Golf programs.”

Other types of programs could also be developed to not only make use of volunteers’ labor but also build a constituency of support for the parks. Growing numbers of retired people with time and energy to share represent an important resource for community organizations. Professional staff resources are needed to take advantage of these resources and to focus, organize and support these activities for long-term sustainable success. Successful management of volunteers requires clear concept of needs of the agency or institution, staff liaison to support training needs, oversight and recognition of volunteers.

Passport in Time is a program of the U.S. Forest Service designed to recruit people to help rangers in archeological digs, historical restorations and other projects. There are more willing volunteers than projects. Successful projects have included sowing wild flowers along Texas highways, raising funds for the restoration of an historic carousel, creating community garden plots from empty lots and stabilizing run-down public parks.

3. Tourism and Recreational Management

Tourism is one development strategy which many communities view as having great potential for the support, protection and expansion of their recreational resources and Westchester seems well placed to promote its recreational resources to a larger number of potential user from the region. There must be increased coordination between the public sector (which often owns the land) and the private sector (which often creates the jobs and services to meet visitors’ needs) to effectively manage, market and operate long-term, sustainable and high quality recreational experiences for visitors. The hotel tax in Westchester is already being used to support programs of the Visitors and Convention Bureau. It may be that increased opportunities exist to promote use of the County’s recreational resources to promote tourism.

A single municipality may not have enough attractions and tourist services to attract tourists on its own, but when attractions in several communities are linked together, they can provide a package of different experiences for potential visitors.

Lodge owners in northern Minnesota cooperated with the public sector to link public and private ski trails to create hundreds of miles of linked trails where skiers can ski from lodge to lodge.

The same concept could be used to support growing interest in tourism in Westchester by encouraging bicycle touring, linking activity nodes along existing trails through County lands, by developing themed historical tours highlighting the rich resources within the County, by promoting county-wide bed and breakfast establishments and other regional visitor services.

C. Programs Supporting Public Social Policy

Nationwide there is increasing recognition of the importance of recreation in support of community social policy to create a desirable quality of life in communities. Successful recreational models from across the country are described in *Beyond Fun and Games*, *Emerging Roles of Public Recreation*, and *Programs that Work; Public Recreation in High Risk Environments*, both published by the National Recreation and Park Association as part of ongoing research programs. These programs are designed to meet a wide variety of community needs for at-risk youth, the homeless, and the elderly.

1. At-Risk Youth

Many of these recreational programs are aimed at-risk youth; from preschool through to adolescence. These programs embrace academic enhancement, substance abuse prevention, employment training, pregnancy prevention and artistic enrichment. They are replicable, cost effective and results oriented.

*In Metropolitan Dade County, FL, the **Good Life Mentoring Program** is designed to reach high risk youth and redirect their energies through a comprehensive sports mentoring program. It focusses on education and recreational extracurricular activities for elementary and middle-school youth. The program runs year round after school from September through May and all day during the summer months. Program content is developed by school administrators, teachers, coaches, park and recreational personnel, police officers, parents, students and community representatives.*

*In Orange County, FL, a **Rec 'n Roll" Mobile Recreation Program** reaches out to under served areas to provide free, supervised recreational activities, leisure education and drug awareness programs to under served areas. Housed in a bright orange bus staffed with two recreational professionals, the program is supported by other County agencies. A single van provided recreational services in 1991 to 1,100 children. The van has also become highly visible public communications vehicle for conveying information about the mobile program and other programs.*

Recreation for the Homeless :The Park and Recreational Department of Mecklenburg County NC and the City of Charlotte, NC have joined forces with a 70-member Homeless Services Network to provide over 40 events, activities and programs for the region's growing numbers of homeless families.

2. Elderly Day Care and Health Services, Fitness Programs

Programs for the growing elderly population will include adult day care, meals, low-impact exercise and health programs.

*The City of LaGrange and Troup County, GA, recognized the needs of its growing elderly population: 25% over 55 and 18% over 60. The Troup County Park and Recreation Commission formed the Troup Council on Aging which, in collaboration with other entities, opened a new **Senior Center** in 1993. The new 12,000SF facility with a commercial kitchen provides a safe, comfortable environment for learning, leisure, nutrition and health.*

With increasing interest in fitness and wellness by an aging population, programs to support physical fitness and wellness for all ages and abilities are likely to increase. While recreational activities and sports have traditionally provided excellent exercise to promote physical fitness, at least one model recreational program has gone much further. In the Champaign, IL, Park District, high medical costs, lack of health insurance and the logistics of getting to doctors offices was preventing many residents from obtaining medical services or preventive health care. The Park District, in partnership with the Christie Clinic -- a private regional medical facility which needed a centrally accessible location -- purchased equipment and supplies for a new facility, the Springer Recreation Center. The Center offers wellness and fitness programs, clinical research, programs on lead prevention, a Sisters program for at-risk teens. The Clinic pays an annual sum to the park district to operate the program. All professional services and speakers are provided to the community at no charge.

D. Meeting a Diversity of Needs

Recreational programs will be called upon to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population with varying ethnic backgrounds and physical abilities. Recreational programs are ideally suited to the teaching of multi cultural sensitivity through structuring of activities which provide exercise, social connections, and education.

With the enactment of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) barriers to persons with disabilities are disappearing nationwide. According to *Trends Magazine*, more people with disabilities are participating in fully integrated park and recreation programs nationwide, and the scope and variety of these activities is growing.

E. Stewardship, Conservation and Environmental Education

There is increasing national awareness of and interest in the necessity to protect our environment. Recent issues of *Trends* magazine reflect the importance of topics such as ecotourism, river conservation, and preserving natural resources to recreational planners. With diminished public funding and increased user demands, partnerships among public and private agencies are likely to increase to order to protect and enhance natural, historic and cultural resources and to avoid duplications of effort. Where multiple private and public resources can be managed and marketed in a coordinated effort, their impact can be greater than if several smaller entities promote their own programs and resources. Land-based assets should be linked where possible to improve the potential for wildlife corridors and appropriate use of resources.

F. Future Demand for Specific Recreational Activities

A review of information, news articles, trends analysis by others and interviews with sports organizations at both the national, metropolitan New York, Westchester County and municipal levels reveals a certain amount of consensus on a positive and growing future for mountain biking, roller blading, salt-water recreational swimming, golf, soccer and ice hockey as well as cultural events and historic site visitation. There are large and growing constituency groups for each of these activities with their political will and effectiveness.

Salt-water swimming is on the rise with improved water quality and the State's environmental bond act funding opportunities. Cultural events includes a potential summer home for the New York Philharmonic. There is a large untapped, market potential for both corporate and non-profit sponsorship of recreational activities, competitions, races, and sports events occurring within existing County facilities and open space as well as the integration of cultural events and interpretative programs of historic sites with recreational activities for both county resident day-trippers and out-county weekend visitors.

All of these trends need to be accounted for in a modified mission statement and programmed into the future land acquisition and facility needs by the WCPRC as well as their efforts at coordination with both other public agencies and the non-profit and corporate sectors within the county. The role of the County versus municipal support for these activities will continue to be debated; however, inter-agency agreements, many already in place with WCPRC, enable County funded construction and ownership of facilities with local level operation and maintenance. This mutually beneficial arrangement often provides solutions to these present and future recreational and cultural needs.

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NEXT STEPS - PHASE II MASTER PLAN

The next steps in the master plan are the beginnings of a scope for the Phase II study. Depending on the level of planning funds available, the scope could consist of the following short term activities from the Chapter V discussion of Preliminary Recommendations scheduled for implementation within the next five years. The items would include:

- Perform the recreational **linkage study** between existing and proposed park lands and facilities described in recommendation #3.
- From recommendation #4, conduct a study of the traditional pool complex versus the family oriented aquatic center as a means of meeting the increasing **swimming** demand as well as a site feasibility study of possible locations.
- Implement the major components of a county-wide **marketing program** for the parks system and its facilities and programs outlined in recommendation #5.
- As noted in recommendation #6, develop a more detailed study of the degree to which the increasing demand for **golf** will be met by Hudson Hills versus the additional need to expand existing courses.
- Conduct **economic impact** studies of park system's budgets and specific revenue generating and privatization opportunities within the first tier of parks listed in recommendation #2.
- Prioritize the list of **biodiversity studies** in recommendation #9 suggested for John E. Hand Park at Bald Mountain, Blue Mountain Reservation, Bronx River Parkway Reservation, Croton Gorge, Georges Island, Graham Hills, Kitchawan Preserve, Lasdon Park and Arboretum, Mountain Lakes, Muscote Farm, Pocantico Lakes, Saxon Woods, Silver Lake, Sprain Ridge, Twin Lakes, and Wampus Pond. Additionally, prepare a generic scope and fee range for these studies noting the various sizes of parks and levels of complexity of natural features.
- Develop a program which identifies a schedule for staff completion of **historic preservation studies** for a prioritized listing of the 13 parks listed in recommendation #10 along with a generic scope for the four different "findings" categories.
- Compile a priority listing of available parcels that should be considered for **acquisition** by WCP and WCPRC as described in recommendation #14 .
- Commission **individual park master plans** with phasing and order-of-magnitude capital budgets for Tibbetts Brook Park and the Bronx River Parkway Reservation as described in recommendation #8 and Playland Park and Edith G. Read Natural Park and Wildlife Sanctuary as suggested in recommendation #7. If sufficient planning funding is available, master plans should also be prepared for the secondary set of facilities listed in recommendation #8.

NEXT STEPS - PHASE II MASTER PLAN

- Prepare a scope and order-of-magnitude fee and equipment acquisition budget for the development of a parks system component expansion of the Westchester County **GIS** suggested in recommendation #11.
- Undertake a comprehensive **ADA survey** for the parks and their facilities listed in recommendation #12.
- Define the direction to be taken for an **interpretative plan** for the overall park system with a broad brush outline and, if funding allows, the five individual parks listed in recommendation #13. The outline will include a phasing of plan implementation and costs of both brochures, signage and exhibits.