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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Middlebury is the “Shire” (capital) town of Addison County and as such is the hub of much of the county’s employment, recreational, and shopping opportunities. It is also home to Middlebury College which has approximately 2,000 students and is a major employer of the area. Other major employers are Standard Register, CPC, Cabot’s and Porter Medical Center. The population of Middlebury, including the college students, is estimated at 8,769 in 2,000 and is projected to grow to 9,077 by 2005 and 9,213 by 2010. *NO GROWTH DID NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS*

The citizens of Middlebury have done very well in meeting their recreation needs over the years. Middlebury was one of the first Vermont communities to apply for a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant and in 1972 secured funding to begin development at the Recreation Park, and since then has worked to expand and improve its recreation and park offerings. It was one of few early communities to develop a long-range plan for parks and recreation in 1978 with the help of the Allen Organization.

Since the Allen Organization Plan, the Town has completed Recreation Masterplans using its own resources in 1993 and again in 1998. A decision was made that it would again be beneficial to have an outside consultant assist with updating the Recreation Masterplan and in July of 1999 the Town engaged the firm of Recreation and Leisure Services Consultants.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan is to guide the town for the next ten years in the development and improvement of parks, recreation, and leisure services. The plan sets out both a broad vision of what parks and recreation should be like by the year 2010 and specific objectives for accomplishment during the intervening years.

Vision Statement

In the next decade, Middlebury Parks & Recreation will play a significant contributing role in efforts to improve the quality and appeal of life in Middlebury. With a focus on the needs of the greater community and visitors alike, the Department will provide year-round opportunities for healthful enrichment.

Mission Statement

The Middlebury Parks & Recreation Program shall provide lands, facilities, and services for community members of all ages and all income levels. It shall provide programs for both sport and leisure. The department shall serve as instructor, facilitator, and partner in efforts to promote an improved quality of life for participants. It will work with an involved public and business community to provide a healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment with opportunities for cultural growth. Finally, the department shall be flexible enough to meet the changing needs and tastes of the community, while finding creative ways to deliver recreation programs and facilities that are affordable to the residents of Middlebury.

Recreational Philosophy

Recreation is defined as any activity engaged in for the satisfaction it brings to the individual. Community recreation is public-sponsored recreation that must be goal-oriented, purposeful, and socially acceptable. Today's public park and recreation administration is immediately concerned with the methods of providing effective parks, facilities, and recreational opportunities to all citizens of the community in as efficient a manner as possible.

The increasingly important role played in recreational activity is due to a variety of causes beginning with those that gave rise to the industrial revolution. With increase in production it became possible to reduce the hours of work. With the decrease in work hours came increased dependence on recreational activities.

Since the beginning of the parks and recreation movement the objective has been to enhance the quality of life for people. Availability of open space, recreational facilities, and recreation programs enhance the quality of life. Open space contributes to a community's sense of place, has environmental benefits, and allows people to enjoy nature. Through recreation facilities, people can meet physical, mental and emotional needs - contributing to health and wellness. Recreation programs offer an opportunity for people to learn new skills, interact with others, and to maintain a sense of community.

Parks and recreation services are essential parts of town government. The benefits of providing these services fall into the following categories.

Personal

- Better physical health and health maintenance
- Better mental health and health maintenance
- Personal development and growth
- Personal appreciation/satisfaction

Social

- Community satisfaction
- Family bonding
- Environmental awareness
- Helps in prevention of crime, substance abuse and other social problems

Environmental

- Preservation of particular sites
- Ecosystems protection
- Air and water quality

Economic

- Increased recreational opportunities help promote new industrial development
- Tourism and related economic services
- Increased value of adjacent properties
- Natural resource conservation
- Attract business and industry

National studies and our own resident survey show that:

- Citizens believe that recreation and park services are worth supporting with public funds
- Recreation and parks services provide benefits to users and non-users

Long Range Planning Process

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD DETERMINES NEED FOR PLAN

Recreation and Leisure Services Consultants is engaged to help the Town of Middlebury prepare a comprehensive parks and recreation plan.

INVENTORY IS CONDUCTED

Information is gathered on the existing recreation facilities, programs and administration in Middlebury.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED

Personal interviews are held with sixteen community leaders to discuss their perceptions. A survey is conducted of a representative sample of the voters of Middlebury to determine their feelings about the parks and recreation needs of the community.

GOALS ARE ESTABLISHED

Information from the inventory, needs assessment, professional judgment of the consultants, and ideas of the Recreation Advisory Board are combined into a draft comprehensive parks and recreation plan.

PUBLIC REVIEW CONDUCTED

Copies of the draft plan are made available, a public hearing is held, copies of the plan are given to the legislative bodies, and information is published by the newspapers.

PLAN ADOPTED

The plan is adopted by the Recreation Advisory Board and the Selectboard. The Executive Summary of this plan is to be incorporated into the next Town Plan. Capital items in the plan are incorporated into the Town's Capital Budget.

Significant Events In The History Of Middlebury Parks And Recreation

- 1970 Parks and Recreation Department established and first Recreation Council appointed.
- 1970 First full time Parks and Recreation Director employed.
- 1978 First Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan prepared by Allen Organization.
- 1979 Swimming Pool constructed at Recreation Park using Land and Water Conservation Funds.
- 1982 Middlebury establishes a Guinness Book of Records feat with the world's longest banana split at the Addison County Fairgrounds under the leadership of then Director, Doug MacDougall.
- 1988 Middlebury Area Land Trust formed.
- 1990 Memorial Sports Center constructed at Recreation Park using local fund raising.
- 1991 Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) initiated.
- 1996 Recreation building at Recreation Park replaced using Land and Water Conservation Funds.
- 2000 Second Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan prepared by Recreation and Leisure Services Consultants

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT

Public participation played a major role in planning and developing the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan 2000 - 2010* for the Town of Middlebury. Specifically, four separate approaches were taken to secure citizen involvement, in an effort to ensure that the issues and recommendations set forth in this plan would represent the desires of the people living in the Town of Middlebury. (1) Interviews were conducted with 16 residents of the community. (2) A community recreation survey was conducted during November and December 1999 and a total of 318 Middlebury residents returned completed questionnaires. (3) The Recreation Advisory Board reviewed a first draft of the plan. (4) A public hearing was held to provide the entire community with a chance to comment on a draft of the plan before it was finalized.

Interviews with Members of the Middlebury Community

During the month of July 1999, interviews were held with 16 members of the community who currently or in the past had been somehow linked to the delivery of recreation services in Middlebury. The purpose of the interviews was to begin to develop some baseline data about what was working well, what wasn't working, and what were some of the critical recreation needs in the community. The information gathered during this process was helpful in identifying questions to be included in the community recreation survey and issues to be addressed in the final plan.

Individuals interviewed were:

Rob Alberts, Owner, Middlebury Fitness
Tom Anderson, Director, Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department
Bonnie Bourne, Principal, Mary C. Hogan Elementary School
Fletcher Brush, Memorial Sports Center Board & Past Chair, Recreation Advisory Board
David Clarke, Head Librarian, Ilsley Public Library
Fred Dunnington, Planner, Town of Middlebury
David Foote, Skatepark Employee, Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department
Bill Ford, President, Memorial Sports Center Board
Tom Hanley, Chief of Police, Town of Middlebury
Tilford Hudson, Recreation Advisory Board & General Manager, Middlebury Little League
Yvon Pouliot, Facilities Supervisor, Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department
Bud Reed, Director, Middlebury Land Trust
Mary St. Peter, Middlebury Swim Association
Becky Saward, Program Supervisor, Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department
Neil Sinclair, Athletic Director, Middlebury High School
John Tenney, Chair, Middlebury Selectboard and Recreation Advisory Board Liaison

Community Recreation Survey

Introduction

As part of the process of planning for the future of parks and recreation services in Middlebury, the Town decided to conduct a random sample survey of the residents to find out how the

general public felt about parks and recreation issues. The purpose of the survey would be threefold: (1) to obtain a measure of satisfaction with existing parks and recreation services in the community, (2) to obtain representative public input regarding needs for new recreation programs and facilities and (3) to create public awareness of the Town's efforts to plan for the future of parks and recreation in St. Albans. The results of the survey would have a significant impact on the final *2000-2010 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan for Middlebury*.

In the early stages of this project, it was learned that the five-year strategic plan for the Ilsley Public Library called for a survey of library users and Middlebury residents. In an effort to maximize the use of public funds and complete this project within the available budget, the Trustees of the Ilsley Public Library were asked if they would like to participate in the survey being conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department. They agreed to participate and share the cost of tabulating the survey results. Therefore the survey included questions about parks, recreation, and library services in Middlebury.

The goal was set to achieve a 95% level of confidence with a plus or minus 5% margin of error, the highest achievable level of confidence. If achieved, the Town could be 95% confident that the results accurately reflect the opinions of the total Middlebury population, within 5% of each response. For example, if 75% of the survey respondents said they were satisfied with the maintenance of the parks, one could be 95% confident that 70%-80% of all Middlebury residents were satisfied with the maintenance of the parks.

The Survey Methodology

The survey population selected was the registered voters of the Middlebury community. While the List of Registered Voters is typically less accurate than the Grand List, it provides a more representative picture of the total resident population because it includes both property owners and renter households. The Town felt strongly that the opinions of renter households should be included and made a commitment to spend the extra effort necessary to conduct the survey using the List of Registered Voters.

For the purposes of this survey, all college addresses were excluded from the List of Registered Voters used to generate the random sample. This was done because it was felt that (a) the list of Middlebury College students registered as voters may be less accurate than the list of non-students, (b) the College provides many recreational services for its student population and students might be less likely to be aware of the services provided by the Town Parks and Recreation Department, and (c) the rate of return for students might be lower than expected for the general resident population.

The sample size was determined on the basis of the assumption that approximately 50% of the surveys would be returned. A sample size of 850 was chosen because it was about 100 more than twice the number of completed surveys needed to obtain the desired level of confidence. A simple random sample was computer generated at the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont from a list of Registered Voters provided by the Vermont Municipal Resource Center. The Town of Middlebury has a contractual agreement with the Vermont Municipal Resource Center to maintain an updated List of Registered Voters.

The survey instrument was developed by Recreation and Leisure Services Consultants, with the help of the Parks and Recreation Director, Tom Anderson, and the Director of the Ilsley Library, David Clark. The final questionnaire was limited to 29 questions so that the survey could be completed in less than ten minutes. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

On October 29, 1999, the survey questionnaires were mailed using first class postage. After eliminating the surveys that were returned undeliverable, the actual sample size of delivered surveys was 762. Each survey had been assigned a number so that the returned surveys could be tracked and a second copy of the survey could be sent to those people who did not return their survey by the two-week deadline. A second copy of the survey was mailed on November 15th to every person who had not yet returned a completed survey, once again using first class postage. Although not originally planned, a reminder postcard was mailed to every person who had not returned a survey by the second deadline. This step was taken because the rate of return was lower than expected.

A total of 318 completed surveys were returned, for a 42% response rate. This was short of the number needed to provide the original goal of a 95% level of confidence with a plus or minus 5% margin of error, but more than enough to provide a 90% level of confidence with a plus or minus 5% error of margin.

Survey Results

The data entry and computer tabulation of responses was completed at the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont. Write-in comments and suggestions were reviewed. The complete report of survey results is contained in Appendix B.

In preparation for reviewing the results of the survey, it is helpful to understand who the respondents were. Survey demographic information can be compared to available demographic information for the purpose of determining how closely the survey sample represents the community demographics. Because the census data includes the Middlebury College students and the survey sample did not include Middlebury College students, it is difficult to make a direct comparison between the two. However, a comparison to the 1990 census data will be discussed briefly in order to provide a general frame of reference. The survey responses indicate the following:

- ◆ 85% of the respondents lived in a home they owned and 15% lived in renter households. The survey methodology selected was successful in obtaining a sample of property owners and renter households. In comparison to 1990 census data, homeowners were over-represented and renters were under-represented.
- ◆ 61% of the respondents had no children living in their household, 31% had one or two, and 8% had three or more children living in their household. In comparison to 1990 census data, households with children were over-represented and households with no children were under-represented.

- ◆ The Town survey responses indicate a representation across all age groups over 18 years of age. In comparison to 1990 census data for Middlebury, individuals under 24 years of age were under-represented and individuals over the age of 35 years were over-represented.
- ◆ The survey responses indicate a fairly equal representation across all levels of household income, consistent with the 1990 census data.

The results indicate that 79% of Town respondents feel that living in Middlebury is desirable. 79% of respondents said that a strong Recreation Department is important to Middlebury as a community and the availability of parks and recreation opportunities is important to 67% of respondents and their families. 72% of respondents would be willing to pay additional property taxes to increase recreational opportunities in Middlebury and 42% would be willing to pay \$25 or more.

Rather than providing a summary of the survey results in this section, refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the survey results.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

History and Inventory

The Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1970 upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectman and Recreation Council. The Recreation Council became an official part of the Town's municipal organization as a non-policy-making board called the Middlebury Recreation Advisory Board. The Town hired its first Parks and Recreation Director in 1970 as a fulltime municipal employee. Right from the start, the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department made a name for itself with innovative special events worthy of recognition in the Guinness Book of World Records.

In the year 2000, the department staff includes a full-time Director, a full-time Facilities Supervisor, a Program Supervisor who works 24 hours/week, and a shared Secretary who commits 60% of her time to the Parks and Recreation Department. Additional part-time program staff is hired throughout the year to teach/lead programs and activities and seasonal maintenance workers are hired as needed. The Director reports directly to the Town Manager and works closely with the other administrative offices that provide services to the residents of the Town. In addition to providing parks and recreation services to its residents, the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department is the key recreation service provider to the surrounding towns in the greater Middlebury area.

The Recreation Advisory Board continues to be a seven-member board appointed by the Selectmen that meets once each month. The Recreation Advisory Board provides guidance to the Director on program development and evaluation, recreation area and facility operations, and fiscal management. Each member of the Recreation Advisory Board serves for a term of three years. A member can only serve for two consecutive three-year terms.

In FY1999, the Town of Middlebury spent \$249,299 on parks and recreation services and took in \$116,430 in recreation revenues for a total impact on the general fund budget of \$132,869. With the exception of some one-time maintenance expenses at the pool in FY1999, the Town has approved comparable budgets for FY2000 and FY2001. A summary of actual and approved revenue and expenditures for the years 1996 through 2001 is included in Appendix C.

In addition to the general fund budget, some parks and recreation projects are also included in the Town's Capital Improvements Plan. A summary of recent actual and currently approved expenditures for recreational improvements are included in Appendix D.

Recommendations

Perhaps now more than ever, citizens demand that their municipal officials take a serious look at the efficiency of their operations. They expect prudent use of public funds and staff time. The following recommendations are made with the goal of making the most efficient use of the Town's Parks and Recreation Department staff for the least amount of money, at a level of service that meets the expectations of the community's residents.

Goal #1 – Relocate the Secretary’s Office into the Parks and Recreation Department. (July 2000)

Customer service is a critical component of any successful business. Operation of a municipal Parks and Recreation Department is no exception. With the current staff and desk/office locations, there are times when no one is available to greet customers as they enter the office or call on the telephone. It would be helpful if the office of the existing secretary could be moved into the Parks and Recreation Department space as soon as possible. This would improve the quality of customer service immediately, within the existing organizational structure. It is recommended that this should be a top priority of the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department and should be done as soon as possible.

Goal #2 – Begin to educate the public about this Ten Year Recreation Plan. (July 2000)

Every opportunity should be taken to share this plan with the residents of Middlebury. It must be embraced by the community and its organizational leaders if the mission and goals are to be accomplished.

Goal #3– Improve communication with other Town boards by having Recreation Advisory Board members become liaisons to all relevant boards and committees. (September 2000)

Communication is key to any successful operation. It is impossible for staff and board volunteers to participate on every committee/organization that is doing something relevant to recreation and leisure services in Middlebury and difficult to even stay informed of all such activities.

One fairly easy way to keep better informed about municipal issues and projects relevant to recreation in Middlebury, is to assign members of the Recreation Advisory Board to serve as “liaisons” to other Town boards and committees doing work that may impact the Parks and Recreation Department. This assignment can be as simple as receiving the minutes of a specific committee and reporting any relevant information at the monthly Recreation Advisory Board meetings. Ideally, someone from the selected committees will agree to read the minutes of the Recreation Advisory Board and report any relevant information back to their respective committee. It would be helpful, particularly at the start, for Board members to attend a meeting of their “assigned” (or preferably, selected) committee to introduce themselves and the intent of the initiative. It will also be an effective way to share this plan with the community.

Board liaison assignments can be made for one year, and could be easily incorporated into the annual organizational meeting where officers are elected. Relevant committees to be considered for board liaisons include the Selectboard, Planning Commission, Zoning Board, Middlebury Land Trust, Memorial Sports Center Commission, School Board, Library Trustees, Middlebury Business Association, and special interest committees like the group formed to develop the Fucile athletic field.

Goal #4 – Begin assisting the Planning Commission with the acceptance of recreational amenities proposed as part of the Subdivision Approval process. (September 2000)

The Middlebury subdivision regulations require the dedication of recreation lands and facilities in new residential subdivisions. The intent of these regulations can best be accomplished through thoughtful discussion between the developer and the staff of the Planning and Parks and

Recreation Departments. It is important that this dialogue begin as early as possible in the planning process.

It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department and the Planning Department work together to establish a procedure for this to occur. At a minimum, the Parks and Recreation Director should provide input to the Planning Department during the sketch plan review process. When time allows, it would be helpful to have the Recreation Advisory Board review proposed projects and make recommendations to the Planning Commission.

Goal #5 - Upgrade the Administrative Assistant position to be 100% committed to the Parks and Recreation Department. (July 2001)

The existing secretarial position that is shared 60/40 between Parks and Recreation and the Business Manager, should be upgraded to a full-time Administrative Assistant position in the Parks and Recreation Department, as soon as possible. The person in this position should have their desk in the main room of the Parks and Recreation Department office. The primary responsibilities of this position should include direct contact with the public, both on the telephone and in-person, and computerized registration and record keeping for all recreation programs.

Goal #6 – Establish a separate fund for all recreation program revenues and expenditures. (July 2001)

It is difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate the number and types of recreation programs that you will want to offer a year and a half from now. Trends change and public interest in particular activities may grow or diminish tremendously from one year to the next. A private business may close down and the Town may decide to offer new programs to fill the void left by the closing. Your daycamp staff may be extraordinary and twice as many people want to register next summer. Staying within the approved expenditures in the general fund budget may limit the activities you can offer, even though you would receive revenues to cover all program expenses.

A town may better respond to the ever-changing recreation needs of its residents by managing its recreation program revenue and expenditures through a special fund separate from the general fund. Such a fund is often referred to as an enterprise account. In an enterprise fund, you may offer unlimited programs as long as you maintain a balance between the revenues and expenditures. The enterprise fund revenue and expenditure estimates are presented during the municipal budget process but not voted on as part of the approval of the town budget. Fund balances carry over from one fiscal year to the next, adding to the flexibility offered by this budget approach.

It is recommended that an enterprise fund, similar to the one currently in place for the operation of the Memorial Sports Center, be established for recreation programs.

Goal #7 – Develop a program to increase public awareness of all parks and recreation facilities in Middlebury. (January 2002)

The residents of Middlebury are fortunate to have such a wealth of public natural areas and conservation lands so close to home. Unfortunately, one out of three survey respondents was unfamiliar with several of the recreation lands listed on the survey. A strategy should be

developed to educate the residents of Middlebury on the location of all public recreation lands available to them. This could be accomplished through a variety of methods such as (1) developing a new brochure/map identifying and describing each parcel, (2) including a list and/or map of all facilities in one or more Parks and Recreation Department brochures each year, (3) hosting walks/events in the different natural areas, and (4) publishing articles in the local newspapers. The important thing is to develop a plan to increase the awareness of these unique facilities.

Goal #8 – Recommend the establishment of a Recreation Impact Fee for all new residential development. (December 2002)

The current Middlebury Town Plan calls for considering the establishment of a recreation impact fee. Once this comprehensive ten-year recreation plan and preliminary capital recreation budget is in place, the Town will be in a good position to consider establishing such a fee. Most towns in nearby Chittenden County have enacted recreation impact fee policies and would be excellent resources for information. The Parks and Recreation Director and Recreation Advisory Board should take an active role in pursuing this initiative.

Goal #9 – Upgrade the Program Coordinator position to a full-time position. (July 2003)

The survey results suggest that more than half of Middlebury's residents don't use the recreation programs offered. The Town needs to expand the variety of programs offered if it is to be successful in attracting more participants. The department will be limited in its ability to expand as long as the Program Supervisor's position is part-time. As time and money permit, it would be advantageous to expand this position to a full-time position.

It may be a realistic goal to fund this additional expense without increasing the general fund request. The Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department currently serves the residents of Middlebury and several surrounding towns. The Town should consider going to the neighboring communities and asking them to sign on as "member" towns and pay an annual amount of money towards the administration of recreation programs and facilities for their residents, through the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department. In turn, residents from "member" towns would be entitled to resident rates and registration privileges.

Goal #10 – Evaluate the existing structure for the delivery of park maintenance services. (December 2003)

The scope of this plan has included very little evaluation of the facility maintenance component of the Parks and Recreation Department. It appears that additional seasonal staff may be needed. When the recommended administrative changes have been made, it is anticipated that the Director will have considerably more time available to focus on special projects. One project worthy of attention is an evaluation of the way the town currently handles the maintenance and upkeep of the Town's parks and other public lands.

Goal #11 – Work with the Planning Commission to develop the recreation section of the next Town Plan. (March 2004)

The current Town Plan covers the years 1999-2004. The next Town Plan should include reference to this ten-year *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan*. Parks and Recreation Department staff and Recreation Advisory Board members should participate actively in the

development of the recreation portion of the next Town Plan to ensure that the goals set forth in this plan are incorporated into it.

Goal #12– Review and update this ten-year Comprehensive Plan. (December 2005)

Long range plans need to be reviewed and modified to remain effective. It is recommended that this plan be reviewed in 2005. If time permits, it would be helpful to do this in 1994, in preparation for developing the recreation section of the next Town Plan.

Goal #13 – Develop a Policy and Procedure Handbook for the Parks and Recreation Department. (December 2006)

Every organization should have written policies and procedures that outline how it will operate. In many cases, work on this type of project is put on the back burner until time allows and time never allows. As the organization of the department is strengthened to include full-time Administrative Assistant and Program Supervisor positions, developing written policies and procedures should become a priority for the Director.

Goal #14 – Conduct another random sample survey of the community in preparation for developing the 2010-2020 Middlebury Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan. (September 2008)

The information gathered in the recent recreation and library survey was critical to the identification of the goals and issues outlined in this ten-year plan. A random sample survey provides input from the general public that is difficult to replicate any other way. As the town prepares to plan for the next ten years of parks and recreation services in Middlebury, it is recommended that another random sample survey be conducted.

Goal #15 – Develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan for 2010-2020. (December 2009)

The Town of Middlebury stepped out ahead of most towns when it set out to develop this ten-year *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan*. Hopefully this plan will have been so helpful in guiding the direction of the department that there will be little question about developing a similar plan for the next ten years. This can be accomplished with or without help from a consultant. Obviously, hiring an outside consultant allows for the completion of such a project in a specified timeframe, regardless of the workload of the department staff. An outside consultant also brings fresh perspective, objectivity, and a variety of relevant experiences.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

History and Inventory

The survey results verify that residents of Middlebury, young and old, with and without children at home, agree with the generally accepted principle that a strong Recreation Department is important to the quality of life in their community. The results also indicate that the availability of parks and recreation opportunities is important to the people who choose to live in Middlebury. These findings are no surprise when you consider the recreation program participation statistics in Middlebury over the last thirty years.

The Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department currently offers four seasons of recreation programs. The summer program schedule is the most comprehensive with a wide variety of activities and sessions including day camp, pre-school camp, sports camps, gymnastics, dance, tennis, swimming, adventure programming, golf, lacrosse, martial arts, and skateboarding. The majority of the summer programs are planned for children and teens, although there are a limited number of adult programs offered. The Parks and Recreation Department offers approximately ten different programs in each of the Fall, Winter and Spring seasons. In general, the programs are sports oriented and most are offered for children and teens, although a few adult programs are offered each season. Interested residents register for these programs in a mass registration and pay a fee that covers the cost to operate the program. Non-residents may enroll and pay a slightly higher registration fee.

In addition to organizing the seasonal schedule of recreation programs, the Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department participates in the planning of several community special events such as the annual Festival on the Green, Halloween events, Thanksgiving Turkey Trot, New Year's Eve celebration, and Summer Band Concert Series.

The Recreation Supervisor is primarily responsible for coordinating the seasonal recreation program offerings and the Recreation Director assists as necessary. The Recreation Director is primarily responsible for the Department's role in planning special events. Responsibility for program registration is currently shared by the Secretary, Program Supervisor, and Recreation Director.

The summer program brochure is mailed to every Middlebury address and the Fall, Winter and Spring program brochures are distributed through the schools. The survey results indicate that 87% of the residents receive a recreation program brochure. Some residents asked that the brochures be mailed each season and that they be made available in the Ilsley Public Library.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in an effort to strengthen the existing level of service provided in the delivery of recreation programs and to significantly increase the number of residents who choose to participate in recreation programs offered by the Town.

Goal #1- Improve access to recreation programs for residents with special needs. (September 2000)

All literature published by the Parks and Recreation Department, including seasonal program brochures, should state clearly that the Town is committed to accommodate residents with special needs and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Every effort should be made to adapt programs to meet the needs of all participants and publications should invite people to contact the department if they have questions about needing special services. Coordination with the School Department, particularly with guidance department staff, can help to attain a greater level of service in this area.

Goal #2- Provide guidance to the members of the Russ Sholes Senior Center in their efforts to improve their program offerings and increase membership. (January 2001)

During a discussion between the consultant and the Directors of the Russ Sholes Senior Center in April 2000, the seniors expressed an interest in hosting new programs at the center including light exercise and walking. While they were interested in participating in these programs themselves, they also saw them as a means of enticing new people to become members of their group and getting more Middlebury senior citizens involved.

The department should pursue the opportunity to provide guidance to the Directors as a means of expanding recreation programs for all Middlebury senior citizens. Collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging and Porter Hospital Outreach Program should be investigated as a means of providing new programs at the lowest possible price. Including the senior activities in a special section of the seasonal recreation brochures could accomplish goals of both the Parks and Recreation Department and the Senior Center, at no additional cost to either group.

Goal #3- Increase programming for teens. (June 2001)

Survey respondents ranked teen programs as their top choice for new programs and a teen center as their top choice for new/improved recreation facilities. Clearly, the community feels that they'd like to be doing more for teens. With the former Middlebury Teen Council no longer functional, it is recommended that another group be formed to address the issue of more programming for teens. There are no easy answers for planning a successful teen program. It is important to have a diverse group of teens and adults on such a committee. This is a community-wide issue and due to time constraints, it would be helpful if the Parks and Recreation Department could actively participate in this process and assume responsibility for certain aspects of this effort, rather than leading the entire process.

Goal #4- Purchase and begin using a computer software program designed to manage recreation program registrations. (July 2001)

The Department needs to improve the way it manages the registration of program participants. It is recommended that the Town purchase the RecTrac program offered by Vermont Systems in Essex Junction, VT or an equivalent software program. RecTrac is a software package designed specifically for this purpose. Ideally the program would be networked to the computers used by both the Administrative Assistant and the Program Coordinator. It is recommended that the Administrative Assistant be assigned primary responsibility for all program registration.

Goal #5- As opportunities present themselves, transfer the administration of sports leagues from the Parks and Recreation Department to volunteer Sports League Administrations. (On-going)

The administration of sports leagues takes an inordinate amount of time. With the ever-increasing popularity of youth sports activities, the Town will spend more and more time to deliver new programs and to meet the demand of increased participation in existing programs. While the level of control on the quality of the experience offered may be compromised somewhat when the administration of a sports league shifts to volunteers, staff sometimes can continue to provide input on league policies and coaches training requirements that affect the quality of the experience offered. The shift in responsibility would free up program staff to offer new programs and improve the quality of the programs currently being offered. As opportunities present themselves, the Town should consider letting volunteers manage the administration of all the youth sports leagues, just as the Middlebury Little League and Middlebury Amateur Hockey Association are now doing.

Goal #6- Broaden the scope of recreation programs offered. (September 2001)

When the Administrative Assistant becomes committed 100% to the Parks and Recreation Department and assumes primary responsibility for all program registration, it is anticipated that the Program Supervisor will have time available to broaden the range of recreation programs and activities offered. With 54% of the survey respondents saying that they and their family members did not participate in any programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department during the last twelve months, it is likely that more people would become involved if a more diverse schedule of recreation programs were offered.

One out of three survey respondents said they would like to see the following new programs offered: adult education, after school programs, arts and cultural programs, family programs, fitness and wellness programs, summer programs, and teen programs. These results could be used to guide the expansion of recreation programs as time allows.

When the administrative structure of the Parks and Recreation Department has been re-organized to allow for a more diverse and comprehensive year-round schedule of recreation programs, the following guidelines may be helpful.

- ◆ Include programs for all ages and abilities, and for all skill levels.
- ◆ Include programs for physical, intellectual, social, and creative growth.
- ◆ Include active and passive, indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- ◆ Give consideration to activities that emphasize appreciation and understanding, as well as skill development.
- ◆ Encourage seasonal resident participation.
- ◆ Encourage non-resident participation on a space-available basis.
- ◆ Provide for the leisure needs of special populations including senior citizens, single parents, physically and mentally handicapped, financially challenged, etc.
- ◆ Provide for varying degrees of personal involvement including opportunities for spectating, participating, and teaching/coaching.
- ◆ Capitalize upon local resources and cultural characteristics.
- ◆ Be as inclusive as possible. Involve participants in planning, administration (volunteers, judges, paid staff, etc.), and sponsorships.

- ◆ Be planned to complement other recreational opportunities available in the community.
- ◆ Be in compliance with state and federal legislation relevant to participation in programs and services.
- ◆ Be flexible enough to adjust to ever-changing constituent needs.

Goal #7- Expand the advertising of new Fall, Winter, and Spring recreation programs. (September 2001)

As the schedule of recreation programs expands to include new activities for residents of a wider variety of ages and interests, it will become important to advertise these new programs in more venues than just the schools. Initially, it may be possible to do this without a lot of additional costs other than the cost to print additional brochures. Possible advertising opportunities include public access television and radio stations, local daily and weekly newspapers, and placing brochures in the public library and other strategic locations. It will be recommended that the Town consider mailing all four recreation brochures to Middlebury residents in the future, just as it currently distributes the summer brochure.

Goal #8- Initiate a regularly scheduled system of evaluation by recreation program participants in order to begin to monitor the quality of the services being delivered. (December 2001)

It is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a high level of quality without specific and regular feedback. This is certainly true with regards to the delivery of recreation programs. It is recommended that a plan be developed to obtain systematic feedback from the people participating in the programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. Evaluation forms can be distributed a variety of ways including having the instructor distribute and collect completed evaluation forms during the last class, mailing an evaluation form to all participants following each class or program, or mailing an evaluation form to a random sample of participants. The important thing is to develop an evaluation form and to distribute it systematically.

Goal #9- Increase the amount of financial assistance available for participation in recreation programs. (August 2002)

16% of the survey respondents said that the cost of the recreation programs offered by the Town keeps them from participating in more programs. It is recommended that the Town look at ways to reduce this number by the year 2010. Possible strategies include getting a local service group to fund an annual scholarship program and/or allocating additional general fund money for recreation program scholarships. Additional funds could be allocated to a scholarship fund from special fundraising projects earmarked for this purpose, but this is often a time-consuming venture for the department staff.

Goal #10- Distribute the Fall, Winter, and Spring recreation program brochures to all Middlebury residents. (September 2002)

As the Town commits the time, money, and effort needed to expand its recreation program offerings, the success of the new programs will depend heavily on advertising. Traditionally, most programs have been offered for children and special effort will be needed to inform the public of the expanded focus of the department. Sending the information directly to residents' homes is one way to increase awareness.

Every effort should be made to accomplish this goal with minimum impact to the department budget. Distribution options include mailing brochures to each postal address or inserting the brochure in a local newspaper that is delivered to each address. Funding options include soliciting paid business sponsorship for each page of the brochure and/or adding a small amount to each program user fee to cover the cost of printing and distributing the brochures.

**Goal #11- Improve access to year-round swimming opportunities for all residents.
(September 2002)**

Survey respondents indicated that one of the top choices for new recreation facilities they would support with tax dollars is an indoor swimming pool. The costs associated with the construction and on-going maintenance of an indoor swimming pool are high. Recommending the construction of an indoor municipal pool at this point in time would be incongruous with the current Town Plan's stated goal to maintain and improve recreation facilities without adding to the Town's tax burden.

The Town should investigate the possibility of increasing public access to existing indoor pools at Middlebury College and Vermont Sun Fitness Center during non-peak hours.

RECREATION AND PARKS AREAS AND FACILITIES

Introduction

In order to facilitate the planning process for the Town of Middlebury Parks and Recreation Department, it is essential that existing areas and facilities currently being used for recreation purposes be inventoried. The initial section of this chapter provides an inventory of these available areas. The inventory information includes active and passive recreation parks, natural areas and open space lands owned by the Town, non-town owned facilities used by the Parks and Recreation Department, school properties used for recreation, and miscellaneous recreation and leisure facilities in the greater Middlebury area. The inventory includes a brief description and a list of recommended action goals for each site. The action goals recommended in this section are also included in a combined list of recommendations listed by calendar year. The inventory data is also summarized in chart form in Appendix E.

Town Owned Lands Actively Managed By The Parks And Recreation Department

Cannon Park

Location: The park is located downtown between Main Street and Park Street.

History: In 1997, the Veteran's of Foreign Wars refurbished the cannon and bench in the park. In FY2001, the Town plans to refurbish this park and add a brick paver area, perimeter walk, new benches, landscaping, and a bike rack.

No. of Acres: Approximately 0.25 acres. The Town owns the land on which the park is located.

Topography and Resources: Flat grassed area.

Facilities:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| ❖ Cannon | ❖ Bench |
| ❖ Historical Marker | ❖ Sidewalks. |

Use Figures: The park is used by many to sit and rest, view the surroundings and read the sign regarding John Deere and his early beginnings in Middlebury.

Recommendations:

None.

Harold Curtiss Park

Location: The park is located behind the Community House and Library on Rt. 125 in East Middlebury.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 2.2 acres. The Town of Middlebury owns the land.

Topography and Resources: A flat field surrounded by trees.

Facilities:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ❖ Two tennis courts | ❖ 5 picnic tables |
| ❖ Basketball court | ❖ Grass play area |
| ❖ Playground | ❖ Parking area for approximately 10 cars. |

Use Figures: Moderate use by neighborhood.

Income: None

Operating Cost: \$5,000

Recommendations:

Goal #1 - Repair playground and add safety surfacing. (June 2001)

The playground is old and needs repair. It also needs additional safety surfacing to meet current playground safety standards.

Goal #2 – Replace playground. (June 2005)

The playground is an old wooden structure and will need replacing by this time. Providing playgrounds throughout town for pre-school age children is especially important because the playground is a critically important learning environment for this age group. Also, this is often an age group that is not very well served by organized recreation programs or activities. The playground serves another important role as a place for parents with young children to gather and socialize.

Goal #3 - Reconstruct tennis courts and replace lighting. (June 2007)

The tennis courts are cracked so badly that they are essentially unplayable and the lighting is not working. In an effort to maintain the existing municipal recreation facilities and provide quality recreation facilities outside of the downtown area, it is important to reconstruct these courts to their original condition.

Middlebury Recreation Park

Location: The park is located on Court St. and adjacent to Mary Hogan Elementary School.

History: Development of the park began in 1972.

No. of Acres: Approximately 12.25 acres of land is leased to the Town by the ID-4 School District. The town is in year one of a renewed twenty-five year lease. Another 6.9 acres of land where the west half of the pool and the Memorial Sports Center are located, is owned by the Town.

Topography and Resources: The land is mostly flat with wetlands on the easterly edge of the property.

Facilities:

- ❖ Preschool playground
- ❖ Two basketball courts
- ❖ Four tennis courts
- ❖ Recreation Center, including a 20' x 30' multi-use room, indoor and outdoor restrooms, and the Maintenance Supervisor's office.
- ❖ Memorial Sports Center, a 120' x 220' enclosed sports facility used for ice skating in the winter, skateboarding in the summer, and special events during the year.
- ❖ Swimming Pool, a 25-yard six lane outdoor swimming pool with three-meter and one-meter diving boards and bath house facilities.
- ❖ Lighted softball field
- ❖ Multipurpose field
- ❖ 10 Picnic tables

- ❖ Two parking lots; one is shared with the Elementary School and the other is located behind the pool. The two lots provide a total of 266 parking spaces.

Use Figures: The park is extensively used according to the results of the survey conducted and data available from the Parks and Recreation Director. The park serves as the center for recreational programs conducted during the summer by the Department. The fields at the park are overused and are not given ample time for necessary maintenance. Additional fields in another location would allow for proper maintenance of these fields. The Recreation Center has seen increased use since its reconstruction. Many groups use it for their regularly scheduled meetings and banquets. The preschool-age playground receives little use.

Income: \$300 for use of the community room.

Operating Cost: \$3,000 for the Community Building.

Unique Situations: The lease of some of the land from the School District and the Management Plan with the Sports Center provide unique management opportunities and challenges.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 – Upgrade the filter system at the pool. (May 2000 and May 2001)

The pool filter is being replaced and a PVC liner added in FY2000. In FY2001, the remainder of the filter system replacement should be upgraded.

Goal #2 - Construct a picnic shelter adjacent to the swimming pool. (June 2002)

A picnic shelter would add significantly to the use of this area. It would provide needed shade for pool visitors, a covered area necessary to offer additional summer recreation programs at this site, and an opportunity for new revenue from the rental of the shelter for group picnics and parties.

Goal #3– Complete Phase I parking lot improvements. (October 2001)

There is currently inadequate on-site parking, particularly when major events are held at the Sports Center. There has been discussion of constructing a new parking area on land east of the Court House, and connecting this parking lot with a paved driveway to loop between the pool and the Sports Center. The Town's Capital Improvement Plan includes money for two phases of parking lot improvements at the Recreation Park.

Goal #4 – Install an irrigation system at the ball field to maintain better turf and maximize use. (July 2002)

An irrigation system will improve the health of the turf, particularly during dry periods, and improve the quality of the playing surface.

Goal #5 - Complete Phase 2 parking lot improvements. (October 2002)

Goal #6 – Evaluate management structure for the Memorial Sports Center. (July 2003)

Under the present agreement the Sports Center is managed by the Sports Center Board during the winter months of October to March and the Recreation Department manages it from April to September. While this seems like a reasonable arrangement, it is resulting in some confusion and lack of clear responsibilities. This confusion will likely become even greater if the Sports

Center is connected to the pool with shared locker room facilities. The management structure of the Sports Center should be evaluated before the next phase of development has been completed. The concept of turning over the year-round management to the Parks and Recreation Department, with the Sports Center Board serving as a fund raising organization and the Middlebury Area Hockey Association administering the youth hockey programs, should be carefully considered. If management changes are recommended, it would be helpful to implement them when the locker room facilities are complete.

Goal #7- Expand the facilities within the Memorial Sports Center to include locker rooms, storage and public rest rooms. In addition, bleachers and heaters for the comfort of fans should be considered. (September 2003)

A plan has been proposed by the Sports Center Board of Directors, where these facilities would be built to service both the Sports Center and the municipal pool. Most, if not all, of the funds should be raised privately and through grants.

Goal #8- Replace the preschool-age playground with a contemporary structure and add benches. (June 2004)

The current playground is not used because it is outdated and unattractive. The existing playground needs to be removed and replaced with a new structure for pre-school age children. Relocation closer to the pool and proposed picnic shelter should be considered.

Town Hall Recreation Facilities

Location: The Municipal Gym is located next to the Municipal Building in the triangular piece of land between College Street, South Main Street and Franklin Street. The Senior Center is located downstairs in the Municipal Building.

History: The Municipal Gym was constructed in 1939 as the gymnasium for the Town's high school. Accessibility improvements and a new floor were constructed around 1978. Interior painting, new lighting, and a new ceiling were improvements made in 1995. A new scoreboard was installed in 1997. The Russ Sholes Senior Citizens Center has been in use since ???

No. of Acres: 1.6 acres ???

Facilities:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ❖ Stage | ❖ Locker facilities |
| ❖ Basketball courts with six hoops | ❖ Senior Citizens Center, kitchen and meeting space. |
| ❖ Public restroom | |

Use Figures: The gym is heavily used with about 85% of the use by Park and Recreation Department programs. This is an invaluable resource to the Town and it should be maintained and enhanced. The availability of the municipal gymnasium has become critical for the recreation programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department and it should be replaced if the Municipal Building is relocated.

Income: \$3,000.

Operating Cost: \$10,000 including staffing.

Recommendations:

**Goal #1 – Refurbish gym locker rooms with a new ceiling and other improvements.
(September 2006)**

The locker rooms are in need of upgrading to make them more pleasant. In the event that Town plans call for the Municipal Building and gymnasium to remain in the existing location, this improvement should be considered.

Village Green

Location: The Village Green is located in the downtown area.

History: Pedestrian lights were added in 1999.

No. of Acres: Approximately 1.6 acres. The Town of Middlebury owns the land.

Topography and Resources: Sloping lawn with trees and plantings dispersed throughout.

Facilities:

- ❖ Gazebo (constructed and maintained by the Middlebury Rotary Club).
- ❖ Benches
- ❖ Trash receptacles
- ❖ Sidewalks with pedestrian lights.

Use Figures: The area is used for numerous special events including the “Festival on the Green” and a summer concert series. A lot of community gatherings begin at the Gazebo.

Other Information: Maintained by the Public Works Department.

Recommendations:

None.

School and Library Facilities Used by the Parks and Recreation Department

Ilsley Library

Description: The library is located on Main Street in downtown Middlebury. The library offers books, newspapers, magazines, books on tape, videotapes, records, Internet access, reading-discussion sessions, and special children and adult programs. The building also includes an all-purpose meeting room and offices and studio of Middlebury Community Television (MCTV).

Recommendations:

None.

Mary Hogan Elementary School

Description: This public school is located off Court Street and is comprised of approximately 8.5 acres. The school is administered by the ID-4 School Board. It is adjacent to the Middlebury Recreation Park. Facilities include a gymnasium and outdoor play apparatus, including the “Kidspace” playground. The use of the outdoor apparatus is restricted during school hours. The

gymnasium and classrooms have been made available to the Town for recreation programs.

Recommendations:

None.

Middlebury Union High School (MUHS)

Description: This public school is located on Charles Street and is administered by the UD-3 School Board. In addition to the senior high school, the Hannaford Vocational Center is located on the grounds.

Facilities:

- ◆ Gymnasium
- ◆ Training room
- ◆ Practice fields for field hockey, soccer, football, softball and lacrosse.
- ◆ The High School also maintains two softball fields, a lacrosse field, and a soccer field, on a 12 acre parcel that is owned by Middlebury College, leased to the UD-3 School Board, and located adjacent to the former American Legion baseball field site. The playing fields are very heavily used by the school and community sports programs and require considerable maintenance. The fields are located within the Otter creek floodplain and often remain wet during the spring and fall when they are needed most.
- ◆ Lighted football field
- ◆ Baseball diamond

Recommendations:

Goal # 1 – Maintain the existing partnership between the Town and UD-3 School Board which provides for the shared use of schools and community facilities. (Ongoing)

Goal # 2 - Work with the UD-3 School Board to identify and meet the Town and School District's immediate and long-term athletic/recreation facility needs. (December 2004)

It is important for the community to work together in order to maximize the use of tax dollars. The plan must include strategies to relieve the stress on existing fields and provide sufficient time for much needed maintenance.

Middlebury Union Middle School (MUMS)

Description: This public school is located on Middle Road. Facilities include a gymnasium, combination soccer/lacrosse field, and a ball field. MUMS is administered by the UD-3 School Board.

Recommendations:

Same as for MUHS recommendations.

Non Town-Owned Lands Used By The Parks And Recreation Department

American Legion Site

Location: The site of the former American Legion Hall, more recently known as the Community Center, is located on Creek Road.

History: The baseball field on this site is owned by the American Legion and leased to the town.

No of Acres: 2.5 acres

Topography and Resources: Flat.

Facilities:

- ❖ Little League baseball field.
- ❖ Former American Legion Building.
- ❖ Parking for ?? cars.

Use Figures: Very heavy use.

Other Information: The future of this site is up in the air at the time of writing this report. The School District is contemplating buying the building and land from the American Legion because it needs the existing parking facilities for its adjacent athletic fields.

Unique Situations: As long as the leases are maintained there is no problem. Should the leases be terminated this would present major problems for the high school and the community baseball programs.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 – Secure the long-term availability of the ballfield, building, and parking area. (December 2000)

This could be accomplished through a long-term lease or purchase.

Goal #2 – Purchase the additional acreage needed, and construct a new soccer/lacrosse field with lights, to be called the Fucile Field. Most, if not all, of the funds should be raised privately, just as was the case with the Memorial Sports Center. (August 2002)

There is a major need for another soccer/lacrosse field in Town. The lights will add to the usefulness of the field. A special committee has been formed to accomplish this goal. However, their work is on hold until acquisition of the land is finalized.

Goal #3 – Rebuild the youth baseball field in order to provide a safer environment and better playing surface. (August 2003)

The field is in need of upgrading.

Goal #4 – Improve parking area including paving and striping to increase the number of vehicles that can be parked and improve attractiveness of the area. (September 2003)

Parking is presently haphazard.

Goal #5 – Construct a combination picnic shelter/restroom building. (October 2008)

There are no permanent restroom facilities at this site. The shelter would add to the usefulness of the area and provide another sheltered site for sports camps in the summer.

Jack Brown Park

Location: The park is located on Lower Plains Road in East Middlebury.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 2.5 acres. The land is leased at no charge from the Brown Novelty Company.

Topography and Resources: The field is pasture. A barbed wire fence delineates the perimeter of the property.

Facilities:

- ❖ Softball/Little League field used primarily for girl's softball
- ❖ Parking for 10-15 cars.

Unique Situations: Town people seem to view this as a distant and isolated facility.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 - Improve the ballfield and add a new backstop. (April 2001)

The field is quite rough and in need of upgrading.

Goal #2 – Evaluate the potential for additional facilities at this site. (October 2004)

Assess the benefit of continuing to lease this property through a benefit/cost analysis and a review of the liability exposure. It appears that it is worth continuing to lease this land but it should be given further study. This parcel is surrounded by open space and may have potential for a larger community park.

Goal #3 – Build another ballfield and expand parking lot. (August 2006)

With the shortage of fields in Middlebury it would make sense to add a second field to this location if possible.

Starr's Park

Location: West of old College St. School (Twilight Hall).

History: Owned by Addison County Grammar School Corp. Permanent lease to the Town and ID4 for public recreational use???

No. of Acres: 2.2 acres.

Topography and Resources: ???

Facilities:

- ❖ Swing set

Recommendations:

None.

Other Town-Owned Lands

Middlebury has several parcels of land that are largely undeveloped, receive little or moderate use, and only minimum maintenance. The Parks and Recreation Department has all it can do to maintain the developed parks. It is suggested that the maintenance of these undeveloped parcels be turned over to the Middle Land Trust which is better suited for this type of maintenance. The Land Trust already works with the trustees for some of these properties and this would be expanding and formalizing that relationship.

Each site is unique in its resources, legal status, and potential for recreation use, and should have its own plan regarding appropriate development for the site and how it is to be managed. It is recommended that the Town, the Land Trust, and the corresponding Board of Trustees work together to develop a long range development and management plan for each site. The plans should consider the possibility of the Middlebury Land Trust taking over the management of these lands once the plans are complete. The Land Trust could be provided an annual fee for this work and the Town could still be responsible for funding any capital improvements on the lands.

Barnes Brook Delta

Location: At the mouth of Barnes Brook at Otter Creek.

History: ???

No. of Acres: 1.5 acres.

Topography and Resources: Wooded flood plain.

Facilities: ???

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop a management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Battell Woods

Location: The area is located east of Buttolph Acres residential development and south of Seminary Street Extension.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 95 acres. The land is owned by the Town and administered by the Middlebury Land Trust in cooperation with a Board of Trustees.

Topography and Resources: The area is primarily a mature forest with evergreen and mixed hardwoods. The topography varies from wet marshes to ledge ridges.

Facilities:

- ❖ There are a few trails, which are in poor condition.

Use Figures: It receives extensive use by mountain bikers.

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Chipman Hill

Location: The area is north of Seminary Street and east of Route 7.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 132 acres. The land is owned by the Town and administered by the Battell Park Trust Association. The Old Village Reservoir land of 17.1 acres abuts the Chipman Hill property and is connected by a system of trails.

Topography and Resources: The area is heavily forested with some steep slopes.

Facilities:

- ❖ 2.5 miles of hiking and biking.
- ❖ Picnic Area???
- ❖ Parking lot for people to enjoy the panoramic view to the west.
- ❖ Low ropes course maintained by Addison County Counseling Service.
- ❖ The Old Village Reservoir.
- ❖ Water storage tank.
- ❖ A cable TV antennae.

Use Figures: The area is a favorite of walkers, hikers, and mountain bikers.

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Harry Goodro Recreation Area

Location: At the Rt. 125 bridge over the Middlebury River.

History: Owned by the E. Middlebury Fire District #1.

No. of Acres: 1.25 acres.

Topography and Resources: ???

Facilities:

- ❖ Swimming hole.

Other Information: This is an informal swimming location and no supervision is provided.

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Jessica Swift and Marble Works River Front Parks

Location: These parks are located along the banks of the Otter Creek in the downtown area from the waterfalls at the Battelle Bridge to a point downstream. The parks are largely undeveloped, although the Marble Works area has picnic tables. The Marble Works River Front Park is privately owned, while the Jessica Swift Park is owned by the Town.

History: The walking bridge was installed in ???

No. of Acres: .75 acres in Jessica Swift Park.

Topography and Resources: Relatively open and flat at the top dropping sharply off to wooded and rocky.

Facilities:

- ❖ Trails exist on each side of the Otter Creek, west of the waterfalls. These trails are not maintained. The Jessica Swift Park is flooded during periods of high water such as spring runoff. The two areas are connected by a steel walkbridge spanning the Otter Creek.
- ❖ 6 Marble Benches

Other Information: The Public Works Department maintains the bridge.

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Goal #3 - Develop hiking trails along the banks of the Otter Creek. (August 2007)

Walking trails will increase the opportunities for enjoyment of the gorge.

Goal #4 - Construct an asphalt walking path from the walkbridge to Mill Street. (October 2009)

An asphalt path will improve the attractiveness and accessibility to the handicapped as well as reduce erosion.

Klink Parcel

Location: Off of Mill St.

History: ???

No. of Acres: 1 acre.

Topography and Resources: Natural area abutting Otter Creek.

Facilities:

- ❖ Trail

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

D. M. Means Memorial Woods

Location: The area is north of Seminary Street Extension across from Battell Woods.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 94 (29) acres??? The area is owned by the Town and managed by the Middlebury Land Trust.

Topography and Resources: Similar to Battell Woods in topography and flora and fauna.

Facilities:

- ❖ The area has numerous hiking trails.

Recommendations:

None.

Municipal Forest

Location: Between the Airport and Burnham Development.

History: ???

No. of Acres: 31.5 acres.

Topography and Resources: Woodland.

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Jeffrey Murdock Nature Preserve

Location: Adjacent to the Middle Union High School.

History: ???

No. of Acres: ???

Topography and Resources: ???

Facilities: ???

Recommendations:

Goal #1- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #2 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

Palmer Springs

Location: This area is located on Route 116.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 3.5 (19.6)?acres. (Well Site #3 & #4 supplement original well and consist of 79.52 acres.)

Topography and Resources: This area includes a pond and the Town's main water supply facility, which is a well. The pond is used for a fishing fun day for children.

Facilities:

- ◆ Small parking area.
- ◆ Small pond.

Recommendations:

None.

Wright Park

Location: The area is located east of the Otter Creek, north of Seymour Street Extension, and south of the New Haven town line.

History: ???

No. of Acres: Approximately 162.8 acres. (The Stump Dump consisting of 14 acres abuts Wright Park. It is used for composting and community gardens.)

Topography and Resources: Within the park are meadows, pine forests, hardwoods, wetlands, ledge, and approximately 1.3 miles of shoreline on Otter Creek.

Facilities:

- ❖ There are several trails, which have been maintained by local residents.
- ❖ An informal community garden is located at the entrance to the park.

Use Figures: The area receives relatively little use as most residents do not know about it. This area has great potential for recreational activities including cross-country skiing.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 – Upgrade access road and parking area. (October 2001)

Goal #2- Develop management plan. (September 2004)

Goal #3 – Transfer management to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September 2005)

The Town owns several small parcels of land that have been acquired for recreational use through the subdivision approval process. These are mostly very small in size and are often on land that is not easily developed for either recreation or housing. While an argument could be made for disposing of these lands, they do serve as open space and as limited play areas for the children of the neighborhood. These lands should be retained but maintenance should be left to the homeowners of the adjacent neighborhoods as they are the primary beneficiaries. An inventory of these properties follows.

Butternut Ridge

Location: This area is located within the Butternut Ridge Development.

No. of Acres: 0.77 acres.

Topography and Resources: The area is primarily ledge and is surrounded by homes. The land has little, if any use for the Town.

Facilities: None.

Recommendations:

Hold this property for future use.

Langevin Property

Location: This area is located on Buttolph Drive north of the Commons Housing apartments.

No. of Acres: Approximately 10.2 acres.

Topography and Resources: This area was formerly a pasture and currently has a storm water retention pond. A large portion of the area is wooded.

Facilities: None.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 - Assess potential for active recreation uses such as a baseball or softball field. (November 2004)

Middlebury Estates (Painter Road Land)

Location: This area is located off Painter Road in Middlebury Estates.

No. of Acres: Approximately 5.3 acres.

Topography and Resources: The area includes the Muddy Branch Creek. The deed for the property contains restrictions on its uses.

Facilities: None.

Recommendations:

Hold this property for future use.

Painter Hills

Location: This area is located in the Painter Hills Development.

No. of Acres: Approximately 1.95 acres.

Topography and Resources: ???

Facilities: None.

Use Figures: The area is used by neighborhood children.

Recommendations:

Hold this property for possible future use.

Peterson Heights

Location: This area is located off Washington Street Extension adjacent to the D.M. Means Memorial Woods. It is in the Peterson Heights subdivision.

No. of Acres: 8.9 acres.

Topography and Resources: ???

Facilities: ???

Recommendations:

Hold this property for possible future use.

Rolling Acres

Location: This area is located within the loop of the development off Quarry Road.

No. of Acres: Approximately 1.85 acres.

Topography and Resources: The area is narrow and is marshy on the northern end. There is a stream running through the property and a very few level spots.

Recommendations:

Hold this property for possible future use.

Institutional Resources

Middlebury College

Description: Middlebury College has a wealth of recreational lands and facilities, including athletic and performing arts facilities. The College allows the use of some of the facilities by the public. The College has a formal recreational use policy that defines policies for each facility. The policy varies from allowing access to some facilities only to those closely connected with the College, to providing full public access to other facilities. Requests from public groups are considered for limited access facilities on a case-by-case basis. The College has been generous in the past and many community programs benefit from the use of the College owned facilities.

Facilities:

- ◆ Outdoor athletic facilities include baseball, softball, field hockey, soccer and football fields; a football stadium; a rubber running track; tennis courts; an 18 hole golf course on 111.8 acres; and a cross country ski trail.
- ◆ Indoor athletic facilities include a 50 meter swimming pool; two field houses which contain tennis courts, a new ice skating rink, basketball courts, squash courts, running track and a fitness and training center.
- ◆ Other indoor facilities include the Art Museum at the Center for the Arts and the Observatory on the roof of the existing Science Center. A new observatory is planned in connection with the construction of the Bicentennial Hall.
- ◆ The Middlebury College Center for the Arts which includes performance space, a library and archives.
- ◆ The Carroll Rikert Cross Country Ski Touring Center located on the Bread Loaf Campus.
- ◆ The Snow Bowl Downhill Skiing Facility in Hancock, Vermont.
- ◆ The Battell Biological Reserve consisting of 103.9 acres of old growth soft and hard woods. This is used as a research area.
- ◆ The Middlebury River Gorge consisting of 71 acres located along Vt. Rt. 125. The Gorge has unusual plant communities and geologic features.

Recommendations:

Goal #1 - Continue to strengthen the relationship between the Town and the College and provide opportunities for mutual support to area youth and adults. (Ongoing)

Bridge School

Description: This private school is located on Exchange Street near Route 7.

Facilities: A soccer area, playground and a small ice arena in the winter. The Town does not use these facilities.

Recommendations:

None.

Mary Johnson School

Description: This facility is located on Water Street and is administered by a Board. The facility provides childcare services and programs. Playground equipment is available to children within the program. After-school and summer programs have been offered to school age children.

Recommendations:

None.

Commercial Facilities

The **Marquis Theater** is located on Main Street and houses two theaters each with an approximate seating capacity of 100.

Middlebury Fitness provides a range of health and wellness programs to members. Facilities include a weight training room, tanning room, dance and aerobics room and exercise room.

Vermont Sun Fitness Center provides a range of health and fitness programs to members. Facilities include a swimming pool, aerobics rooms, racquetball court, sauna, jacuzzi, and gym area.

Other Recreation Facilities In The Greater Middlebury Area

Middlebury River Picnic Area consists of 1.7 acres owned by the Agency of Transportation and located at the intersection of Rt. 7 and the 3-mile Bridge Road at the Bridge over the Middlebury River.

Middlebury Lower Dam is located on 4.6 acres of land on the west side of the Pulp Mill Bridge in Weybridge and is owned by Central Vermont Public Service Corp. It has a view of the lower falls.

Green Mountain National Forest owns 3316 acres of land in Middlebury. There are trails on this land that extend into the mountains in adjacent communities.

The Trail Around Middlebury when completed will be a 14 mile long trail that goes around the perimeter of the village. About ??? miles are presently available for use. It is mostly dirt and is suitable for walking, bicycling, and jogging in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter. The Middlebury Land Trust maintains it. It exists because of the support of the town, college, state, and others who have given permission for the trail to be on their land.

The **Sheldon Museum** is located on Park Street and houses Middlebury memorabilia. The Museum annually hosts a Fourth of July Concert featuring the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

Branbury State Park is the state park closest to Middlebury, and there are several other state

parks within a one hour drive from Middlebury.

The **Green Mountain National Forest** land extends into several abutting communities and totals significantly more than the 3316 acres in Middlebury.

Lake Champlain Museum is the home of historic exhibits, nautical archaeology, and Revolutionary War gunboat *Philadelphia II*. It is located at Basin Harbor in Vergennes.

UVM Morgan Horse Farm is located in Weybridge. This farm has been a world famous Morgan horse breeding farm since the 1870s.

General Facility Recommendations

Goal #1 – Evaluate all facilities for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and develop a plan for modifications. (December 2000)

Many of the facilities do not comply with the Americans with Disabilities regulations and modifications are needed.

Goal #2 – Assist with a collaborative effort to develop an Alternative Transportation Masterplan for the Town of Middlebury. (September 2003)

The survey results indicate that one of the top priorities for new or improved recreation facilities is more paths and trails for bicycling, walking, hiking, and X-C skiing. With Otter Creek and major highways intersecting Middlebury, it is a difficult community for travel from one section of town to another without the use of an automobile. This makes it particularly difficult for children and adults who do not drive. The Trail Around Middlebury is helping that situation to some degree but it is not the total answer.

There are currently a variety of groups and organizations working on alternative transportation and recreation path projects in Middlebury. It would be helpful for the Town to have a comprehensive plan for a network of trails and paths that would link neighborhoods with community resources such as schools, parks, natural areas, and shopping areas. With the availability of Enhancement Funds and Alternative Transportation Project monies through the Agency of Transportation, now is a good time to apply for financial assistance to complete such a plan. If no one else steps forward to lead such a project, the Parks and Recreation Director should consider assuming this role.

Goal #3 – Develop a plan for a pleasant, attractive, and functional teen center. (December 2003)

There is a strong interest and need in Middlebury to provide more leisure activities for teens. The issue of providing a site specifically for a teen center versus increasing teen activities through a variety of existing programs should be thoroughly explored before finalizing the decision to build a new teen center.

2002

- Increase public awareness of parks and recreation facilities in Middlebury. (January)
- Construct a picnic shelter adjacent to the swimming pool in the Recreation Park. (June)
- Install an irrigation system at the ball field in the Recreation Park. (July)
- Increase the amount of financial assistance available for scholarships. (August)
- Purchase Fucile parcel and construct a lighted soccer/lacrosse field. (August)
- Begin to mail all seasonal recreation program brochures to Middlebury residents. (September)
- Improve access to year-round swimming opportunities for all residents. (September)
- Complete Phase 2 of parking lot improvements at the Recreation Park. (October)
- Recommend a Recreation Impact Fee for all new residential development. (December)

2003

- Upgrade the Program Coordinator position to a full-time position. (July)
- Evaluate management structure for the Memorial Sports Center. (July)
- Rebuild the youth baseball field on the American Legion property. (August)
- Improve parking area at the American Legion ballfield site. (September)
- Complete Alternative Transportation Masterplan. (September)
- Complete locker rooms and restrooms at the Memorial Sports Center. (September)
- Develop a plan for a teen center. (December)
- Evaluate the existing structure for the delivery of park maintenance services. (December)

2004

- Work with Planning Commission on the recreation section of next Town Plan. (March)
- Replace the preschool-age playground at the Recreation Park. (June)
- Complete management plans for several parcels of natural area owned by the Town. (September)
- Evaluate the potential for additional facilities at the Jack Brown Park property. (October)
- Evaluate potential for active recreation facilities on the Langevin property. (November)
- Work with UD-3 School Board to plan for immediate and long-term facility needs. (December)

2005

- Replace playground at Harold Curtiss Park. (June)
- Transfer management responsibilities for several parcels of Town-owned natural area to the Middlebury Area Land Trust. (September)
- Review and update this Ten-Year Comprehensive Plan. (December)

2006

- Upgrade existing and build another ballfield, and expand parking at Jack Brown Park. (August)
- Refurbish locker rooms if existing municipal gymnasium is still in use. (September)
- Develop a Policy and Procedure Handbook for the Department. (December)

2007

- Reconstruct tennis courts and replace lighting at Harold Curtiss Park. (June)
- Develop hiking trails along the banks of the Otter Creek. (August)

2008

- Conduct another random sample survey of the community. (September)
- Construct a picnic shelter/restroom building at the American Legion site. (October)

2009

Develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan for 2010-2020. (December)

Construct an asphalt walking path from the walkbridge to Mill Street. (October)

2010

Acquire an additional tract of land for another recreation area. (December)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS