

Open Space and Recreation Plan Element

INTRODUCTION

What is an Open Space and Recreation Plan?

This Element of the City of New Brunswick's Master Plan is intended to serve as the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) defines a Recreation Plan Element in §40:55D-28.b (7) as follows: "A recreation plan element showing a comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation". This Plan analyzes the current amount of open space and recreation offerings in the City relative to the needs of current and projected future residents, and ultimately makes recommendations on how to improve the City's park system to meet the needs of current and future generations. The OSRP outlines a community's vision for its future parks and open space system, and sets a framework for how to achieve that vision.

What are Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces?

Parks, recreation spaces, and open spaces, are those "green" places that are integral to the health and well-being of any community. Recreation areas provide the room for people to play and engage with nature, while open space affords scenic views, space to roam freely, and the space for the natural environment to be free of interference of human development. Parks can often be the center of social life for a community, as the place where children gather to play, friends meet to take walks, or the setting where special events are held. Parks and open spaces, as much as any other development in the built environment, can contribute to what gives a place its identity.

Open space, parks, and recreation areas can take on several forms. For the purposes of this Plan, they will be discussed in the following terms. Although the terms are generally intended to be distinguishable from one another, there can be overlap.

- **Open Space** – Open space generally refers to a parcel of land that is not currently developed with housing, businesses, or any other type of structure or man-made improvements which would occupy the land. Open space can occur in many forms, including; parks, fields, woodlands, scenic vistas, or trails. Open space can serve multiple purposes. Open space may function as a local park, which provides recreational offerings to area residents; a nature preserve, which provides a critical habitat for endangered wildlife; and as an environmental resource, which provides restorative qualities through water filtration within wetlands or reducing the urban heat island effect through the presence of woodlands and vegetation. Open space is an invaluable resource that serves many purposes that positively impact both the built environment and the natural environment.

- **Active Recreation Spaces** – Active recreation consists of parks or other spaces that allow for the active use of athletic fields, courts, playgrounds, or other facilities such as skate parks or dog parks, that utilize some form of organized or structured activities. Users of active recreation spaces can be used by individuals or groups.
- **Passive Recreation Spaces** – Passive recreation spaces are those areas that can be used without requiring the active participation of their users, and don't require any specialized equipment or facilities. These include open fields, nature or walking trails, fishing ponds, or public greens or plazas. Passive recreation areas are informally organized generally, and can be used by different people for different purposes at the same time without conflict.
- **Conservation Areas** – A conservation area is an open space that is intended for wildlife habitat, or an ecological preserve. These are areas that are environmentally sensitive, and human disturbance on these spaces should be limited. Active recreation is typically discouraged in such spaces.

Why do We Preserve Land?

Undeveloped lands or spaces developed for public parks play a special role in the community. Often, these spaces are preserved lands, or protected from future development. This means that there is a prohibition written into the deed for the property that prevents the owner, whether a public or private entity, from developing the property as anything other than a park or open space. When a place is preserved legally, this ensures that the public benefits derived from its current use are available for future generations.

Undeveloped land may be permanently preserved as open space or developed as parks or recreation spaces for any one of the following of reasons:

- **Recreational Purposes** – While some forms of recreation can take place on private property, such as a swing set in the backyard of a family home, most individual property owners don't have the land or capital necessary to provide the appropriate fields and facilities for the outdoor activities in which they might participate. To meet these needs of the community, public parks are developed to provide a wide range of amenities such as soccer and baseball fields, tennis courts, bike trails, and many other recreational facilities to serve the community.
- **Social Purposes** – In addition to providing spaces for recreation, public parks are often the central gathering spaces of a community where social life takes place. Parks provide the setting for activities to take place, or for people to meet one another outside of their homes or offices. Public parks and open spaces can provide a destination where all members of a community can come on equal terms and be afforded the opportunity to participate in the social life of their neighborhood.
- **Public Health** – People tend to be both healthier and happier when they have greater access to parks and recreation spaces. This is a direct result of more people living a more active lifestyle when parks are located convenient to them. The close proximity encourages more physical activity which leads to a healthier population overall.

- **Aesthetic Value / Scenic Beauty** – Open space is preserved because many people enjoy the scenic qualities of nature and can appreciate keeping some land undeveloped. After witnessing many bucolic settings lost to generic development, many people sense an impending loss of connection to nature and wilderness. Preserving scenic areas helps to maintain that connection to unspoiled wilderness amongst areas which may otherwise be experiencing rapid urban expansion.
- **Environmental Protection** – Where urban or suburban development occurs, there is inevitably some degradation to the natural environment. Whether from the loss of forested areas and tree canopy, or the increase in impervious surfaces which increases stormwater runoff, the impacts of development are often negative for the natural environment and local ecological systems. Preserving critical environmental areas as open space in the form of forested areas, woodlands, or open fields without development, can help to provide critical vegetation that cleans the air, allows for natural groundwater recharge of aquifers, and reduces the risks of flooding by allowing stormwater to more naturally be absorbed into the ground and vegetation.
- **Wildlife Habitat** – Preserving land as open space also allows for the retention of natural habitat for critical or endangered wildlife. Many species of plants and animals are not suited for survival in the midst of dense human development. When large tracts of open lands are preserved, this can provide the much-needed space for nature to thrive, which helps to maintain the natural ecological diversity that sustains life.

Goals and Policies

Open Space Vision

The vision for New Brunswick’s open space and recreation spaces is one of a series of neighborhood parks, regional recreation facilities, and open spaces that provide a myriad of recreation and play opportunities for all residents, while protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural environment, and preserving scenic open spaces for enjoyment for generations to come.

Goals and Policy Guidelines

The following goals were identified in the City’s 2004 Master Plan and 2012 Master Plan Reexamination. These goals still provide an excellent guide for the City’s parks, recreation and open space planning efforts and are thus reproduced for this Master Plan.

1. Ensure that parks and recreation facilities meet the needs of the City’s population and make necessary improvements and modifications to meet those needs.
2. Provide additional parklands and recreation facilities within the City’s neighborhoods and within the Downtown area.
3. Permanently protect the City’s most environmentally sensitive lands not currently protected.
4. Maximize access to City parks and recreation facilities.

5. Maximize the use of existing recreation facilities.

Additionally, in 2019 the City adopted its Municipal Public Access Plan. Based on the MPAP, the following additional goals are identified:

6. Enhance the connectivity of the City, especially Downtown, with the Raritan River.
7. Enhance the connectivity of the City's open spaces with open spaces in surrounding municipalities.
8. Increase passive recreational opportunities for City residents and others in the conservation areas within the City.

Municipal Public Access Plan

In 2019 the City of New Brunswick adopted its Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP) as part of its existing Master Plan. With this Master Plan update, the MPAP is being incorporated directly into the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element. The MPAP, as adopted in 2019, is reproduced almost in its entirety later in this OSRP. Modifications were made to the MPAP where circumstances warranted.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

According to State records and mapping, the City of New Brunswick has 56 properties, and approximately 300.2 acres of land listed on its Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). There is one City-owned parcel listed on the ROSI property which is located within Franklin Township in Somerset County along the City’s Mile Run border with Franklin. This property was included in the City’s Declaration of Encumbrance (DOE) to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) which was recorded in 2016 (Book 6846 Page 236), and is included in Table OS1 (Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties) located below.

NJDEP’s Bureau of GIS maintains a database State, Local and Nonprofit Open Space of New Jersey, which is publicly available via the New Jersey Geographic Information Network (NJGIN). This database (the “NJGIN Open Space Inventory”) was utilized in creation of this Master Plan Element. Data, shapefiles and other parcel data available from NJGIN, were used to calculate “Mapped Acres” for all properties identified as open space, recreation spaces, or parks within Table OS1.

There are two properties listed on the Declaration of Encumbrance (“2016 DOE”) that do not appear on State-level mapping of open spaces or ROSI list, which are highlighted in blue in Table OS1. There are also discrepancies between the land area for parcels includes in the 2016 DOE and the acres identified in the State’s records. These differences are highlighted in orange in Table OS1. These differences should be examined further by the City and, if needed, should be reconciled with the State. In addition, Welton Park, acquired after the recordation of the 2016 DOE, is subject to Conservation Restriction Agreement recorded in 2017 (Book 6922 Page 145) and is further addressed in the Recommendations section of this Element

Lands on the ROSI can be owned by the municipality, county, or another entity and leased by the municipality, but must be utilized and held for recreation or conservation purposes. Properties listed on the ROSI generally do not include those owned and used by schools or as farmland.

Table OS1 below includes all of those properties within New Brunswick that are encumbered from future development by being listed on the City ROSI, as well as County and State-owned open space parcels. In addition, this list includes one parcel (Block 1.01 Lot 6.01) located at the northern end of Boyd Park, which was subject to a deed recorded in 2003 (Book 5320 Page 14) between the NJ State Department of Transportation and the City which is further addressed in the Recommendations section of this Element.

Table OS1: Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties						
Facility Name	Block	Lot	Interest	Type	Declared Acres*	Mapped Acres^
Alec Baker Park	330	1	Fee	M	7.30	6.90
Alice Jennings Archibald Park	596	5.05	Fee	M	10.35	10.16
Boyd Park	1.01	1.01	Fee	M	13.37	14.33

Table OS1: Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties

Facility Name	Block	Lot	Interest	Type	Declared Acres*	Mapped Acres^
Boyd Park**	1.01	1.02 (part of)	Easement on PSE&G Land	M	0.50	0.46
Boyd Park	1.01	1.04 (part of)	Fee	M	1.00	1.04
Boyd Park**	1.01	6.01	Fee	M	1.26	1.26
Boyd Park	103.06	1.01	Fee	M	2.32	2.32
Boyd Park	103.07	1	Fee	M	0.20	0.20
Boyd Park**	103.08	1.01	Fee	M	Not Declared	5.35
Boyd Park	703.01	1.01	Fee	M	1.36	1.77
Buccluech Park	437	1	Fee	M	78.12	78.04
Civil War Memorial (Monument Square)	127.01	1.01	Fee	M	0.16	0.16
Feaster Park	191.01	1.01	Fee	M	4.89	4.89
Feaster Park**	191.01	1.03	Fee	M	0.14	0.15
Firemen's Memorial	73	1	Fee	M	0.04	0.04
Joyce Kilmer Park	221	1.04	Fee	M	3.87	3.82
Joyce Kilmer Park	226	23	Fee	M	0.93	0.92
Kossuth Park	418	54	Fee	M	0.87	0.87
Langley Place Park (Village Greens)	505	24.01	Fee	M	0.46	0.46
Langley Place Park (Village Greens)	509	24.01	Fee	M	0.46	0.46
Memorial Stadium	321	12	Fee	M	5.31	5.55
Memorial Stadium	321	12.02	Fee	M	0.20	0.20
Memorial Stadium	475.01	1.01	Fee	M	0.83	0.83
Memorial Stadium	475.01	1.02	Fee	M	8.61	8.61
Mile Run Brook**	435.01	1.01	Fee	M	2.22	2.17
Mile Run Brook	438	1	Fee	M	1.89	1.74
Mile Run Brook	440	1.01 (Less 20' Buffer)	Fee	M	1.18	1.48
Mile Run Brook	441	1.01 (Less 20' Buffer)	Fee	M	1.41	1.62

Table OS1: Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties

Facility Name	Block	Lot	Interest	Type	Declared Acres*	Mapped Acres^
Mile Run Brook (parcel located in Franklin Township, Somerset County)	189	7	Fee	M	0.68	0.30
Murphy Park	718	23.02	Fee	M	3.49	3.50
Pitman Park	177	9.01	Fee	M	0.92	0.92
Quentin Avenue Play-ground	596	1	Fee	M	1.14	1.38
Raritan River Conservation Area	702	14.01	Fee	M	1.10	1.17
Raritan River Conservation Area	703	14.01	Fee	M	2.50	3.36
Raritan River Conservation Area	703.03	1.03	Fee	M	68.51	68.51
Raritan River Conservation Area	703.03	20.02	Fee	M	7.60	7.86
Recreation Park	233.01	1	Lease	M	7.27	7.27
Simplex Playground	500	1.01	Fee	M	0.34	0.34
Welton Street Park**	130	9.04	Fee	M	0.22	0.30
Weston's Mill Watershed	710.01	3.03	Fee	M	12.35	14.68
Weston's Mill Watershed	710.01	5	Fee	M	0.11	0.12
Weston's Mill Watershed	710.03	1.01 (part of)	Fee	M	0.32	1.36
Weston's Mill Watershed	710.05	2.01	Fee	M	0.24	0.24
World War I Monument Park (Women's War Memorial Clock)	184	1.01	Fee	M	0.41	0.41
Youth Sports Complex	321	4.02	Fee	M	13.99	13.70
Rutgers Village Mini Park**	710.03	4.02	Fee	M	0.11	0.48
Raritan River Conservation Area	703	16.01	Fee	C		9.17
Raritan River Conservation Area	703	17.07	Fee	C		10.02
Raritan River Conservation Area	715.02	70.01	Fee	C		0.49
Raritan River Conservation Area	738	36.01	Fee	C		0.34
Wolfson Park (New Brunswick Park)**	8	1.01	Fee	C		1.18
Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park	103.09	1.01	Fee	S		2.56

Table OS1: Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties

Facility Name	Block	Lot	Interest	Type	Declared Acres*	Mapped Acres^
Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park	103.09	1.02	Fee	S		4.24
Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park	103.09	8	Fee	S		0.17
Joyce Kilmer Historic Site	144	3.01	Fee	S		0.18
TOTAL City Park/Open Space Acres					270.55	279.23
TOTAL County Park/Open Space Acres						21.20
TOTAL State Park/Open Space Acres						6.97

Notes:

*Declared Acres = Area included for this property by the City in its 2016 Declaration of Encumbrance

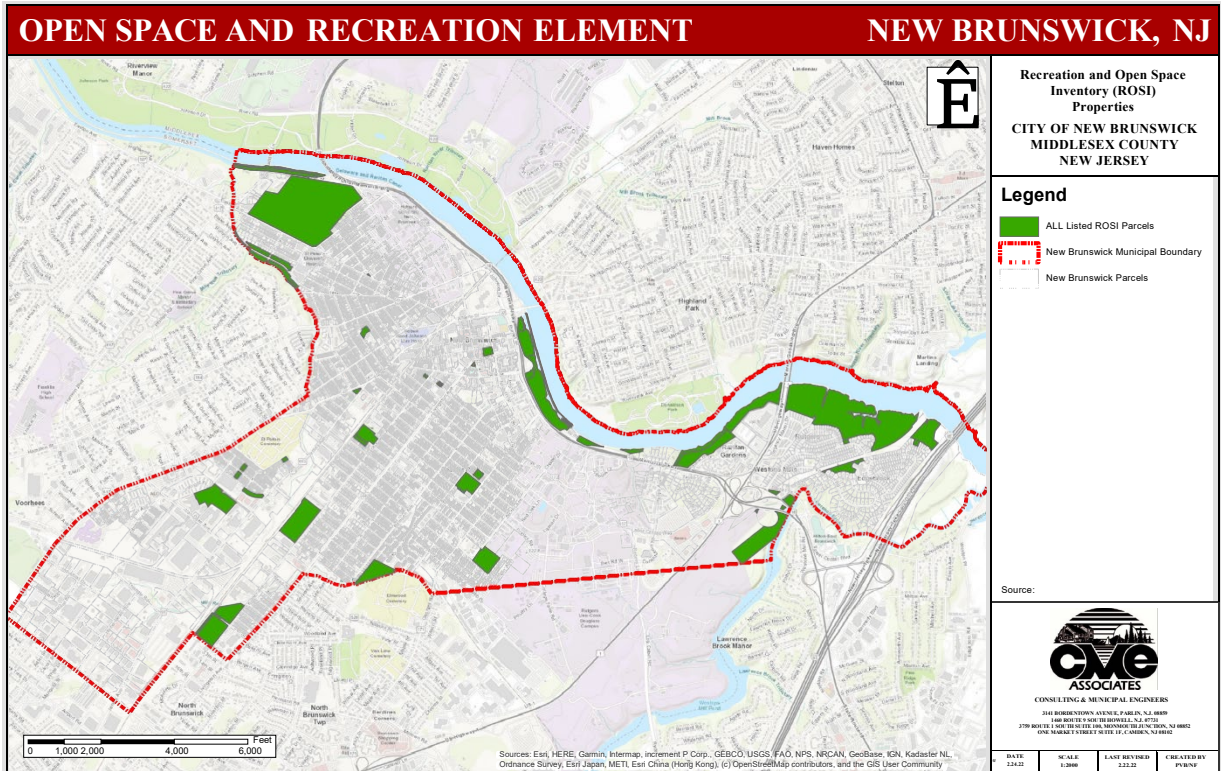
^ROSI Acres = Area calculated from the State-based Open Space shapefile

Type (of ownership/management): M = Municipal, C = County, S = State

**Properties whose status and/or other information is further addressed and investigated within the Recommendations section of this Plan.

Values highlighted in Orange are large enough differences between declared and calculated acreages that should be examined further by the City and rectified with the State if needed.

The following map provides a visual representation of the ROSI properties. The map includes the two properties noted in the table as being declared by the City but not included on the ROSI list kept by the State of New Jersey.



While the ROSI on file with Green Acres identifies the lands protected as parks or open spaces, there are additional lands within the City that are publicly owned, and used for open space or recreation purposes, although not necessarily permanently protected. New Brunswick has listed all of its publicly-owned parks on its ROSI, with the exception of the recently constructed Welton Park, although according to deeds reviewed for this Element, the Welton Park properties are encumbered with a Conservation Easement granted by the City to Middlesex County. Welton Park includes 0.30 acres of park space according to State records.

Parks and recreation spaces can be owned by a public entity such as the state, county, or the City, or they may be owned by a private entity, such as a non-profit organization, although most open space or recreation lands in New Brunswick are owned by either the City or Middlesex County.

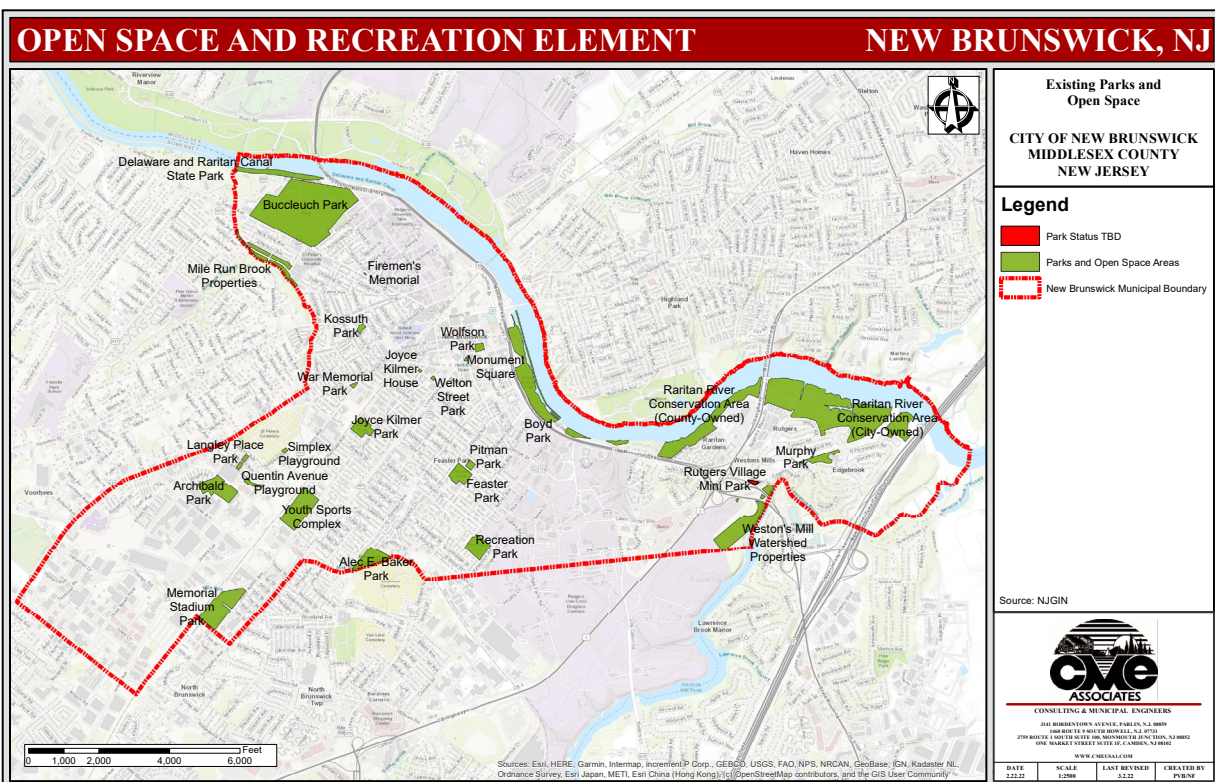
The following is an overview of all the parks, open space, and recreation lands in New Brunswick.

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The following map indicates the location of all City, County, and State parks located in the City of New Brunswick. There are 23 parks, open space and conservation areas within New Brunswick that are owned or operated by the City. These spaces include vacant undeveloped land in residential neighborhoods, pocket parks with playgrounds, larger athletic complexes with multiple sports fields, and conservation areas. According to GIS mapping of open spaces published by the State of New Jersey, the City of New Brunswick owns recreation and open space within the City amounting to just over 257 acres.

Of this acreage, 0.48 acres is provided by a parcel identified as "Rutgers Village Mini-Park". This parcel is currently listed on the City ROSI, is fee-owned by Public Service Electric & Gas (PSEG), and is discussed separately under the section titled "NJGIN Open Space Inventory: Other Parcels" located at the end of the description of parks below.

The following map indicates the location of all City, County, and State parks located in the City of New Brunswick.



In 2017 The Trust for Public Land and Rutgers examined sixteen of the City's parks and produced a document entitled *New Brunswick Parks and Action Plan* (the "2017 Plan"). Assisted by the New Brunswick Parks Action Plan Steering Committee and the City's Parks and Gardens Commission, this Plan included park descriptions and recommendations for each of the sixteen parks examined. These descriptions and recommendations were utilized to produce the Park Descriptions and Recommendations that follow. While the City has begun to follow the recommendations of the Action Plan, all recommendations are reproduced here to ensure they, and the progress the City has made, are known and incorporated into the Master Plan.

The Municipal Public Access Plan adopted by the City also included descriptions and recommendations for certain parks or open space/conservation areas. For these parks or open space areas a reference to the MPAP is included with its description below.

Alec E. Baker Park



- **Block 330, Lot 1**
- **1 May Street**
- **6.91 acres**

Park Description

Located on the City’s southern border with North Brunswick, Alec Baker Park has a main entrance on Remsen Avenue near the intersection with Ellen Street, and a secondary entrance across from May Street. Our observations of the amenities at the Park comport with those identified in the 2017 Action Plan, and include a baseball field, a tennis court, playground, fitness station, two basketball courts, and picnic tables. There are also less developed areas for passive recreation, including a shaded area along the forested stream buffer, a dappled shade lawn, and a woodland area.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term:

1. Initiate casual, periodic authority walk-throughs for safety.
2. Address basic repairs.
3. Improve visibility of existing entrances (signage, crosswalks, etc.).
4. Add two entrance in the north.

Mid-Term:

1. Create Park master plan.
2. Install walking loops through site.
3. Add clustered seating (e.g. picnic area).
4. Add additional amenities (game tables, open frame play house, etc.).
5. Install splash pad or water feature.
6. Address drainage issues.

Long-Term:

1. Develop robust programming schedule.
2. Incorporate low, colorful plantings and public art throughout Park.

Alice Jennings Archibald Park



- **Block 596, Lot 5.05**
- **23 Van Dyke Avenue**
- **10.35 acres**

Park Description

Located in the southern half of the City, off of Wright Place and with McKinley Community School to the west, Alice Jennings Archibald Park (opened in 1998) provides many active recreational opportunities. The amenities at this developed park include: a baseball diamond and soccer/football field, complemented by two tennis courts, two handball courts, two basketball courts, restrooms, a pavilion with a picnic table, and periodic seating support comfortable use of the site. A circular paved entrance area off of Wright Place provides additional seating. After the 2017 Action Plan was published, the Park received upgrades including a splash pad at its northern-most corner, and a fitness circuit.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Update entrance signage and experience.
2. Clarify parking.
3. Repair Wright Place entrance amenities.
4. Repair amenities (replace hoop, re-turf field, etc.).
5. Improve safety around grates.
6. Add more shaded seating near activities.
7. Repair pavilion roof.

Medium-Term

1. Create walking circuit.
2. Develop interpretative signage in wetland.
3. Add new playground.
4. Shade trees along soccer field.
5. Plant along baseball promenade.

Long-Term

1. More seasonal programming/events.
2. Replace handball courts.
3. Explore connection to Quentin Avenue Tot Lot.

Boyd Park



- **Block 1.01 Lots 1.01, 1.02, 1.04, and 6.01 – 575, 675, 725 & 795 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **Block 103.06 Lot 1.01 & Block 103.7 Lot 1 - 575 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **Block 103.08 Lot 1.01 - Canal**
- **Block 703.01 Lot 1.01 - 437 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **21.6 acres**

Park Description

Boyd Park is one of New Brunswick's two signature parks. It extends in a linear fashion along the Raritan River, roughly between the Albany Street Bridge and the southern terminus of George Street. Route 18 forms the western boundary of the Park, and provides the main entrance to the Park, between the George Street and Paul Robeson Boulevard exits. An amphitheater serves as a central landmark in the Park near the main entrance and parking area.

As a signature park, Boyd Park provides numerous amenities, including a paved shared bike/walk path extending along the river, a riverfront promenade, two playgrounds, the Rutgers rowing boathouse, two pavilions with lawns, and a boat ramp for the River. Most of these amenities are provided in the southern section of the Park. The southern terminus of the historic Delaware & Raritan Canal sits near the boathouse, and four bridges at various points along the canal provide access to the towpath. To the north of the amphitheater is a large lawn with scattered trees.

Further descriptions and recommendations for Boyd Park are provided in the Municipal Public Access Plan later in this OSRP.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Increase maintenance in northern area.
2. Address main playground surface.
3. Add picnic benches under trees in lawns.

Mid-Term

1. Update historic and ecological signage.
2. Add low plantings along walk/bike path, pavilions, and back of boathouse.

Long-Term

1. Program open lawn areas.
2. Develop strategies for drawing public into park, including a potential shuttle pilot project.
3. Incorporate vacant land and add amenities (e.g. kayak rental).
4. Activate southern end of park and investigate connecting it to conservation land.
5. Develop a maintenance plan for the health of the Canal/pond as habitat/wildlife viewing.

Additional Recommendations

At the time of this Master Plan Update the below three (3) parcels are included as part of recommendations for this Master Plan Element as a whole (not just for this facility) to investigate said parcels as to their origin and delineation as part of the Recreation and Open Space Inventory. More details on these specific recommendations are located at the end of this Master Plan Update.

- Block 1.01 Lot 1.02: this PSEG parcel is identified as “part of” on the 2016 DOE but is not on the State ROSI or Open Space shapefile.
- Block 1.01 Lot 6.01: this City-owned parcel appears to function as the northern portion of Boyd Park, but is not listed on the 2016 DOE and is not on the State ROSI or Open Space shapefile.
- Block 103.08 Lot 1.01: this parcel is not listed on the 2016 DOE but is listed State ROSI and the Open Space shapefile.

Bucleuch Park



- **Block 437, Lot 1**
- **321 Easton Avenue**
- **78.12 acres**

Park Description

The second of New Brunswick's two signature parks, Bucleuch Park sits near the far northwestern corner of the City, between Easton Avenue to the south and George Street to the north. The northern end of the Rutgers College Avenue campus is located to the east, and St. Peter's University Hospital to the south.

Bucleuch features over 78 acres of active and passive recreation. Active amenities include four baseball fields, fourteen tennis courts, two basketball courts, a volleyball court, an extensive fitness circuit, a large playground, a soccer field. For passive recreation, the park includes large lawns, benches, picnic tables, horticultural display gardens, a large pavilion and a picturesque gazebo. The Park is well-connected to vehicular circulation, providing multiple access points and internal parking. Circulation within the Park is also well done, allowing for vehicular and pedestrian circulation throughout the Park to all major amenities.

Further descriptions and recommendations for Bucleuch Park are provided in the Municipal Public Access Plan later in this OSRP.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Complete soccer field.
2. Fix urinal and drinking fountains.
3. Add bike racks near activity clusters.
4. Pave desire path at north end.
5. Pave desire path at maintenance yard.

Mid-Term

1. Provide ADA-accessible paths at main entrance and throughout Park.
2. Update road with improved connection between road and pedestrian path.
3. Unify signage and provide pedestrian-friendly wayfinding.

Long-Term

1. Update fitness circuit.
2. Expand community events programming.
3. Add splash pad.
4. Create shaded game tables plaza.
5. Renovate edible forest garden area.
6. Unify site furnishings as they are replaced.
7. Collaborate with hospital's in area to promote health in the parks.

Civil War Memorial (Monument Square Park)



- **Block 127.01, Lot 1.01**
- **2 Livingston Avenue**
- **0.16 acres**

Park Description

Monument Square Park is located at the convergence of two major streets, Livingston Avenue and George Street. The recently completed New Brunswick Performing Arts Center and the historic State Theatre are situated to the west of the Park, across Livingston Avenue. The Park provides passive recreational space in a busy area of the City, but does include: a central Civil War monument featuring water at its base; a statue of John Neilson reading the Declaration of Independence; decorative directional signpost pointing to New Brunswick's sister cities in Hungary, Ireland and Japan; benches; hedges; historical plaques; three concrete walkways radiating from the center of the Park; colorful shrub plantings; and small lawn areas with some small trees. This Park also holds the New Brunswick time capsule, scheduled to be opened on the City's 400th birthday.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Remove trash from under plantings.
2. Identify the park name.

Mid-Term

1. Explore opportunities to enhance stormwater management and habitat value onsite.

Long-Term

1. Collaborate with local arts community to infuse the Park with temporary art installations.

Feaster Park



- **Block 191.01, Lots 1.01 and 1.03**
- **175 and 191 Paul Robeson Boulevard**
- **5.59 acres**

Park Description

Located along Commercial Avenue to its east, Feaster Park is a large community park located in the central residential area of the City. The Park is also bounded by Handy Street to the north and Throop Avenue to the west. Paul Robeson Community School lies just south of the Park. Three paved paths cross the Park, including two going from corner to corner, and one bisecting between Commercial and Throop Avenues. The side of the Park along Commercial Avenue is more than six feet higher than sidewalk grade, requiring steps up the hill to enter or see the park. Amenities and other attractions at the Park include basketball courts, a playground, a community garden in the western corner, a historic plaque by Throop Avenue, and a fitness station. Lawns and scattered trees along with some benches and picnic table make up the rest of the Park is lawn and scattered trees, with some scattered benches and picnic tables.

The city has recently unveiled a proposal for a new design for Feaster Park that will include new playing fields, a fitness court, a playground, a splash pad, a perennial garden, new walking paths, public restrooms, and a new outdoor classroom and amphitheater for the use of students of the nearby Paul Robeson Community School.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Fix broken plastic dome on play equipment, cover exposed filter fabric, re-align the retaining wall, paint over the graffiti and clean up the sand.
2. Weed the fitness station.
3. Fill basketball courts cracks and assess whether bleachers need repair.
4. Spruce up existing site furnishings.
5. Add colorful perennials near entrances and high use areas to indicate care and build momentum of change.
6. Initiate periodic casual walk-through by authority figure(s) at varying times of day/evening to discourage undesirable behavior.

Mid-Term

1. Add clear street parking signage and paint available stalls for public use.
2. Rotate informational signage at the community garden for new seasonal interest; diminish barrier between the public and the garden by adding plants outside the fence perimeter.

Long-Term

1. Develop new site design for the Park, including re-grading for better visual street surveillance, a richer experiential sequencing, a splash pad and strong connection to Pittman Park.

Additional Recommendations

At the time of this Master Plan Update the below parcel is included as part of recommendations for this Master Plan Element as a whole (not just for this facility) to investigate this lot as to its origin and delineation as part of the Recreation and Open Space Inventory. More details on specific recommendation at the end of this this Master Plan Update.

- Block 191.01, Lot 1.03: this small parcel is listed as an additional lot to Block 191 Lot 102, a Board of Education-owned property.

Fireman's Memorial



- **Block 73, Lot 1**
- **161 Easton Avenue**
- **0.07 acres**

Park Description

The New Brunswick Fireman's Memorial is a triangular-shaped plaza located along Easton Avenue, at its intersection with Wyckoff Street and Stone Street. The Memorial is bounded to the southwest by Easton Avenue and to the northeast by Wyckoff Street. To the rear (northwest) of the Memorial is a Mediterranean restaurant. Across Wyckoff Street to the northeast is Lincoln Elementary School, while across Easton Avenue to the southwest are residential and mixed-use commercial/residential properties.

The monument forming the central focus of the plaza consists of a bronze statue in the image of a New Brunswick firefighter, oriented between two sets of ornate columns and erected on top of a granite base engraved with an inscription honoring the cities firefighters from 1747-1941. The rest of the plaza consists of open space with a ground of pavers. Seven round planters with shrub-like plantings line the boundary of the plaza.

Recommendations

Short-Term

1. Identify the park name.
2. Provide plantings with vibrant colors in the planters.
3. Remove weeds growing between the pavers.
4. Provide temporary shaded seating in the form of tables with chairs and umbrellas to activate the plaza.

Mid-Term

1. Work with the elementary school to activate the space.

Long-Term

1. Collaborate with the local arts community to infuse park with temporary art installations.
2. Work with the Fire Department and other interested parties to add monuments to the space.
3. Redesign the plaza.

Joyce Kilmer Park



- **Block 221, Lot 1.04 - 143 Joyce Kilmer Avenue**
- **Block 226, Lot 23 - 150 Railroad Avenue**
- **4.80 acres**

Park Description

Lying southeast of Downtown New Brunswick, Joyce Kilmer Park is one of the City's most-used parks. The Park is bordered to the west by the NJ Transit train line, while Joyce Kilmer Avenue provides to Park entrance to the east. Half of the park is made up of a baseball field, with the other half providing a full-sized basketball court, a large playground and a space with several fitness stations. Several passive and supportive amenities are also located in the Park, including: a pavilion, picnic tables, benches, bleachers, and a combined restroom and maintenance building with drinking fountains.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Repair drinking fountain(s).
2. Paint benches.
3. Begin casual, periodic police/ranger walk-throughs.
4. Keep restrooms open during daytime and clean more frequently.
5. Connect paths into loop.
6. Assess long-term viability of baseball diamond versus other recreational uses.

Mid-Term

1. Re-design park entrances to incorporate sidewalk; add coordinated signage.
2. Add low, colorful plantings.
3. Add bike racks.

Long-Term

1. Add linear skate park.
2. Add splash pad.
3. Add flowering shrubs and understory plants.
4. Develop unique park identity, incorporating Joyce Kilmer as inspiration.
5. Update aging fitness station.
6. Add water feature to diminish traffic noise.

Kossuth Park



- **Block 418, Lot 54**
- **77 Harvey Street**
- **0.87 acres**

Park Description

Kossuth Park (formerly Harvey Street Park) is a small pocket park located in the northwestern section of the City, with an open perimeter along Harvey Street. The Park includes shaded areas, a playground, a blacktop, and lawn space. In early 2021 a compact soccer space of about 2,800 square feet (40 feet by 70 feet) was opened to the public, following a recommendation from the 2017 Action Plan.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Collect trash and remove graffiti
2. Repair picnic table.
3. Repair drinking fountain.

Mid-Term

1. Install basketball hoop.
2. Plant border along Harvey Street.
3. Investigate playground concerns.

Long-Term

1. Design plaza space.
2. Install ADA accessible paths and other senior-friendly amenities.
3. Install planting bed along fence.

Langley Place Park (Village Gardens)



- **Block 505, Lot 24.01**
- **Block 509, Lot 24.01**
- **Langley Place**
- **0.92 acres**

Park Description

Langley Place Park is located in the center of the Lincoln Gardens neighborhood, hence one of its alternative names: Lincoln Garden Greens. The Park is split into two nearly equally sized sections by Mitchell Avenue. Between Mitchell Avenue and Lufberry Avenue to the northeast the Park is bordered on both sides by the rear of townhouse rows. The same is true to the south of Mitchell Avenue between it and the Park's southern border along Quentin Avenue. The Park is surrounded by residential uses on all sides, with the exception of a warehouse located to the south across Quentin Avenue.

The Park is more of an open space with no amenities. The Park appears to be well-shaded by numerous trees lining the east and west sides of the park.

Recommendations

Short-Term

1. Provide signage identifying the Park.

Mid-Term

1. Work with neighborhoods residents and other stakeholders to identify possible improvements to the Park.
2. Generate a master plan for the Park to guide its further development.

Memorial Stadium Park



- **Block 321, Lot 12, additional Lot 12.02**
- **Block 475.01, Lot 1.01, additional Lot 1.02**
- **795-801 Joyce Kilmer Avenue**
- **14.95 acres**

Park Description

Memorial Stadium is New Brunswick's premier active recreational facility, hosting a wide array of youth and adult athletic programs and events. The Park is located in the southeastern section of the Town, bordered by Joyce Kilmer Avenue to the east and the NJ Transit rail line to the west. There is also a natural area buffer along Mile Run, to the north of the Park. Across Joyce Kilmer Avenue is New Brunswick Middle School.

Active recreational facilities within the Park's fifteen acres include: a multi-sport stadium for football, soccer and track with bleacher seating for 5,000 spectators; two baseball diamonds with bleachers; six tennis courts; long jump and shot put infrastructure; and an open lawn that serves as a practice soccer/football field. Locker rooms, restrooms, drinking fountains, concession stands, and picnic tables are also provided on the Park grounds.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Re-paint crosswalks and clarify parking.
2. Re-paint worn picnic table.
3. Address perimeter vegetation maintenance.
4. Complete necessary lawn enhancements.
5. Add bike parking.

Mid-Term

1. Replace curbs and provide ADA access on both sides of street.
2. Develop connector path between north and south sides of the Park.
3. Add plantings along rail line.
4. Improve entry experience (cover blank walls, add signage, etc.)

Long-Term

1. Investigate walking loop around track and practice field.
2. Add strategic low plantings near activity areas.
3. Address stormwater management.

Mile Run Brook



- **New Brunswick Parcels:**
- **Block 435.01 Lot 1.01, Block 438 Lot 1, Block 440 Lot 1.01, Block 441 Lot 1.01: Riverside Boulevard**
- **Franklin Township (Somerset County) parcel:**
- **Block 189 Lot 7: Mile Run Brook**
- **7.32 acres**

Park Description

The City owns land adjacent to the stretch of Mile Run Brook located between Jefferson Avenue and Park Boulevard, in the northwestern section of the City. Mile Run is a tributary of the Raritan River, and makes up a portion of the border between New Brunswick and Franklin Township. The properties are undeveloped and held as an undeveloped conservation area. The area is bordered to the north by a residential neighborhood, and to the northeast by St. Peter's University Hospital. To the south, across Mile Run, are open spaces and residential neighborhoods in Franklin Township.

Recommendations

The City should explore ways to enhance the ability of residents and others to enjoy this area as passive recreation.

At the time of this Master Plan Update the below parcel is included as part of recommendations for this Master Plan Element as a whole (not just for this facility) to investigate the lot as to its origin and delineation as part of the Recreation and Open Space Inventory. More details on specific recommendation at the end of this this Master Plan Update.

- Block 435.01 Lot 1.01: this parcel is identified on the 2016 DOE but is not on the State ROSI or Open Space shapefile.

Murphy Park



- **Block 718, Lot 23.02**
- **131 Tunison Road**
- **3.49 acres**

Park Description

Murphy Park is the eastern-most of New Brunswick's recreational parks, located between Pennington Road and Tunison Road. Immediately adjacent to the Park is Woodrow Wilson Elementary School to the east. Passive and active recreational opportunities in the Park include: a shaded picnic area, two playgrounds, a fitness area, a baseball diamond, tennis courts, basketball courts, and an additional small playground.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Basic repairs, pick up litter near school, clean garbage bins, neaten swingset area.
2. Enhance entrances with updated signage and low plantings; clarify parking.
3. Decide future of baseball diamond.

Mid-Term

1. Install ADA path to connect main activity areas.
2. Add strategic low plantings along southern fence line and utility ROW
3. Replace old play panels.
4. Add more tables to picnic area.

Long-Term

1. Develop robust seasonal programming (youth soccer camps, neighborhood movie nights, etc.).
2. Add solar-powered lighting.
3. Add a water feature.

Pitman Park



- **Block 177, Lot 9.01**
- **101 Handy Street**
- **0.92 acres**

Park Description

Pitman Park is a quiet pocket park in the central residential area of the City, just across Handy Street from Feaster Park. Seaman Street bounds the Park to the north. The Park has no active amenities, but does provide plenty of shade from mature trees, including a central tree, from which sidewalks radiate to connect to the streets in an X-shaped pattern. Historic graves form a ring around the base of the tree, with a more recent grave off to the side. Open lawn dotted with trees makes up the remainder of the Park.

As a part of the improvements planned for both Pitman and Feaster Park, a speed table with curb bump-outs will be installed on the stretch of Handy Street in-between the two parks. This increased traffic control will allow visitors to cross between the parks more easily and increase foot traffic to Pittman Park.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Add seating and tables (for eating, chess, etc.) in shady spots.
2. Add low, colorful plantings along paths and near new seating.
3. Adopt more tree-sensitive maintenance routines.

Mid-Term

1. Address the cause of the muddy patch and re-seed the grass.
2. Add bike parking.

Long-Term

1. Visually and physically link Pittman Park to Feaster Park.
2. Celebrate the parks out in the rest of the streetscape.
3. Add water feature.

Quentin Avenue Playground



- **Block 596, Lot 1**
- **399 Jersey Avenue**
- **1.15 acres**

Park Description

The Quentin Avenue Playground functions as a quiet park for very young children to play with their caretakers in the western section of the City, near the intersection of Quentin Avenue with Jersey Avenue. The publicly-accessible portion of the Park is a small triangular space fenced in on all sides. The amenities within this area include a playground and small open lawn. Openings in a perimeter chain link fence provide access from the street sidewalks.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Cover filter fabric with mulch.
2. Add seating and waste receptacles.
3. Replace chain link fence with low fence.
4. Add identifying signage at entrances and paint crosswalks.
5. Landscape low fence along street

Mid-Term

1. Install path.
2. Landscape along east and west edges.
3. Add additional play features.
4. Add drinking fountain.

Long-Term

1. Develop seasonal programming for young children in the park.
2. Investigate woodland trail feasibility.
3. Develop connection with Archibald Park.

Raritan River Conservation Area



- **Block 702 Lot 14.01 – 401 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **Block 703, Lot 14.01 – 275 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **Block 703.03, Lots 20.02 and 1.03 – 2 US Highway 1**
- **79.7 acres**

Through the help of Green Acres funding, the City acquired a large swath of environmentally sensitive land along the Raritan River in 1997. This area includes nearly the entire waterfront of the Raritan River between U.S. Route 1 (to the west) and Interstate 95 (the New Jersey Turnpike, to the east). To the south, the area is bordered by apartment and single-family uses. Just to the west of Route 1, Middlesex County owns hold additional properties as conservation areas that also identified as Raritan River Conservation Area; these properties are discussed further under the Middlesex County Parks and Open Space section, below. It is recommended that the City continue to explore opportunities to provide passive recreational enjoyment within this area, as noted in the Municipal Public Access Plan later in this OSRP. Further description of this area is also found within the MPAP.

Recreation Park



- **Block 233.01, Lot 1**
- **7 Pine Street**
- **7.27 acres**

Park Description

Recreation Park is located near the City's southeastern border with North Brunswick, with Rutgers Cook/Douglass Campus facilities to the west and north. In fact, the Park is located on land leased to the City from Rutgers University. At the time of the 2017 Action Plan, the Park had undergone major upgrades that made it one of the newest looking parks in the City system. Those upgrades were a preview of upgrades made at some of the other City parks after the Action Plan was published. Amenities at the park include a skate park, a splash pad near a restroom building, basketball courts, a community garden, open fields for soccer, and a fitness circuit along a walking path around the fields.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Add shaded seating for parents near splash pad.
2. Add low, colorful plantings along paths (in periodic drifts) and near activity areas, especially near skate park/splash pad.
3. Trim bush on the southeast fence line.
4. Add signage to community garden.

Mid-Term

1. Add another picnic table by basketball courts in shade.
2. Add additional picnic tables/benches in shade along path in lawn areas.
3. Plant trees to eventually screen out nearby water treatment plant.

Long-Term

1. Incorporate interactive art into the Park to help activate the edges, add character, and draw passerby in.
2. Draw residents into the Park by adding color (e.g., sidewalk art), signage, plantings, etc. on nearby streets and sidewalks.
3. Address cut fencing along southeast perimeter.

Simplex Playground



- **Block 500, Lot 1.01**
- **1 Simplex Avenue**
- **0.34 acres**

Park Description

Simplex Park is a small pocket park located to the north of the dead end of Simplex Avenue, in the western section of the City near St. Peter's Cemetery (the Park is immediately south of the Cemetery). Simplex Park is dominated by the playground, with the only other active amenity being a half-court basketball. The Park has an open layout, and benches are arranged between the street and the playground with more seating along the cemetery fence.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Re-orient playground edging to remove the tripping hazard.
2. Address hole in fence.
3. Paint benches and graffiti.

Mid-Term

1. Improve signage.
2. Install sidewalk and path to amenities for ADA access.

Long-Term

1. Install pavilion.
2. Plant low, colorful shrubs near seating and perimeter areas.

Welton Street Park



- **Block 130, Lots 9.04**
- **141 Welton Street**
- **0.30 acres**

Park Description

The newest of New Brunswick’s parks, Welton Street Park is located just south of Downtown New Brunswick, and just one block east of the Livingston Avenue corridor, at the corner of Welton Street and Drift Street. It sits south of and adjacent to the Puerto Rican Action Board (PRAB). The Park is surrounded by a mix of uses, including institutional, commercial, and residential.

Most of Welton Park consists of developed open space with concrete, landscaping, and numerous seating areas that blend into the landscaping of the Park. The Park is graded so that it rises from Drift Street in the west to the Park’s eastern border. Two sets of stairs and a ramp lead to more open area and a padded area with short climbing structure. An additional set of stairs from this section lead to children’s sensory circuit at the Park’s northeastern corner. The Park is bordered on all sides by low-lying shrubs. There are a few trees scattered inside the Park, but not enough to provide a significant amount of shade during the summer months.

Recommendations

1. Provide more shaded areas.
2. Utilize the open spaces of the Park by providing weekly programming for children in the area.
3. Add to the DOE and reconcile current ROSI parcel records.
 - a. More details on specific recommendation at the end of this this Master Plan Update.

Weston's Mill Watershed Properties



- **Block 710.01, Lot 3.03 – 2 State Route 18 Southbound**
- **Block 710.01, Lot 5 - 8 State Route 18 Southbound**
- **Block 710.03, Lot 1.01 - 2 Burnet Street**
- **Block 710.05 Lot 2.01 - 3 State Route 18 Northbound**
- **12.91 acres**

The Weston's Mill Watershed contains a mixture of woodlands and open fields, as well as steep slopes and streams corridors. The properties owned by the City are held as conservation areas. All three properties are located along Weston's Mill Pond. The largest is south of Route 18 and extends southwest to the City's border with North Brunswick. Another property is located between the northbound and southbound lanes of Route 18 along Weston's Mill Pond. The final property is located between Route 18 northbound and Burnet Street. This final property (Block 710.03, Lot 1.01) includes a wooded area and a New Brunswick Water Utility facility.

These properties are further described in the Municipal Public Access Plan, which also provides recommendations. It is recommended that the City continue to explore opportunities to enhance the ability of residents and others to utilize this area for passive recreation, as noted in the MPAP.

World War I Memorial Park (Women's War Memorial Clock)



- **Block 184, Lot 1.01**
- **1 Jersey Avenue**
- **0.41 acres**

Park Description

War Memorial Park is a triangular-shaped plaza located within the City's Esperanza neighborhood, in between French Street and Jersey Avenue near the intersection with Handy and Alexander Streets. The design of the Park is simple, with a circular memorial in the center transected by a path from French Street to Jersey Avenue. The plaza includes elevated small lawn areas above sidewalk grade, with shade trees lining the perimeter and dotting the southern lawn. Seating is only provided along the perimeter.

In May 2021 the Park's landscaping was re-done to make the space more attractive to the community.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Repair benches along perimeter
2. Repair retaining wall along perimeter.
3. Repaint crosswalks on French Street and Jersey Avenue.
4. Initiate casual, periodic walk-throughs by police or park ranger.

Mid-Term

1. No recommendations

Long-Term

1. Redesign plaza.

Youth Sports Complex



- **Block 321, Lot 4.02**
- **419 Joyce Kilmer Avenue**
- **13.99 acres**

Park Description

The Youth Sports Complex is a 14-acre outdoor sports center located in south New Brunswick along Joyce Kilmer Avenue, and bounded to the west by the NJ Transit rail line. The Complex hosts the New Brunswick Little League, as the northern portion of the park consists of three baseball diamonds, a central flagpole, a picnic area, visitor center/maintenance building, and main entrance parking lot. Southeast of the baseball fields is a large soccer field that can function as two smaller soccer fields for youth games. An unlined soccer field is also provided in the southwest corner of the property, and is connected to the rest of the Complex by a bridge spanning Mile Run.

Recommendations

The 2017 Action Plan provided recommendations for this Park. These recommendations are provided below.

Short-Term

1. Replace main entrance sign and add signage at other entrances.
2. Refresh main soccer field turf and lines.
3. Add low, colorful plants to picnic area and flagpole.

Mid-Term

1. Remove perimeter fencing to welcome community in throughout the day.
2. Install ADA accessible path system from parking lots to main activity areas.
3. Add shaded seating near picnic area and soccer field.
4. Add bike parking.
5. Add seating around base of flagpole.
6. Address drainage issue.

Long-Term

1. Investigate feasibility of a second bridge over Mile Run to facilitate a walk/jog loop connecting to other paths.
2. New design for the secondary soccer field area that facilitates soccer programming and creates a strong link to the adjacent school.
3. Add unexpected feature (e.g. art piece) to enhance bridge crossing experience.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

New Brunswick contains 21.2 acres of County-owned open space conservation areas. Of this acreage, 1.18 acres is provided by Wolfson Park, also known as New Brunswick Park. The Wolfson property is currently owned by the County and is listed on its ROSI, but is currently still in a proposal phase. Additionally, the County and City are determining final arrangements on ownership and management. As such, Wolfson Park is discussed separately under the section titled "*NJGIN Open Space Inventory: Other Parcels*" located at the end of the description of parks below.

Raritan River Conservation Area



- **Block 703, Lots 16.01: 225 State Route 18 NB**
- **Block 703, Lots 16.01 and 17.07: 1 US Highway 1**
- **Block 715.02, Lot 70.01: 14 Roberts Road**
- **Block 738, Lot 36.01: 108 Tunison Road**
- **20.02 acres**

Park Description

Middlesex County owns several properties along the southern bank of the Raritan River, in the northeastern section of the City. The properties mostly lie between U.S. Route 1 to the east and the Carpender Road neighborhood to the west. To the south the property is bordered by a movie theater and residential apartment complexes. The properties are held as conservation areas and do not have any recreational amenities. This is similar to the City-owned Raritan River Conservation properties, lying just east of the County-owned Area's boundary along Route 1. The City-owned properties are discussed above under the City of New Brunswick Parks and Open Spaces section. This area is further described in the Municipal Public Access Plan later in the OSRP.

STATE PARKS

There are currently two (2) state owned parks or sites located within New Brunswick.

Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park



- **Block 103.09 Lots 1.01: 1 Landing Lane**
- **Block 103.09 Lots 1.02: Canal**
- **Block 103.09 Lot 8: 2 Landing Lane**
- **6.98 acres**

Park Description

The Delaware and Raritan Canal is a historic canal that was originally built in the 1830's to connect the Delaware and Raritan Rivers. Since its disuse as a shipping it has been converted to a trail network. The Park is located on the Raritan River and is accessible at multiple points across its path. The walking trail promotes fitness for park visitors and offers opportunities for fishing in the Raritan River. Further descriptions and recommendations for the Park and the City's use of it are provided in the Municipal Public Access Plan later in the OSRP.

Joyce Kilmer House Historic Site



Photograph obtained from:

Thinkery&Verse, https://www.thinkeryandverse.org/kilmer_house.html#:~:text=The%20Joyce%20Kilmer%20House&text=To%20honor%20his%20memory%2C%20the,and%20all%20over%20the%20world

- **Block 144, Lot 3.01**
- **17 Joyce Kilmer Avenue**
- **0.18 acres**

Park Description

This historic site was the birthplace of the poet, journalist, lecturer, and soldier Joyce Kilmer, who was killed in action at the age of 31 during World War I. The property contains no recreation or open spaces.

FEDERAL / NATIONAL PARKS

There are currently no federally owned lands or park spaces within New Brunswick.

NJGIN OPEN SPACE INVENTORY: OTHER PARCELS

Rutgers Village Mini Park



- **Block 710.03, Lot 4.02 (part of)**
- **8 Burnet Street**
- **0.48 acres**

Park Description

At the time of this Master Plan Update, this Public Service Electric & Gas Co. (PSE&G) owned parcel's status as a ROSI property has been brought into question by City Planning Officials. One of the recommendations for this Master Plan Element as a whole (not just for this facility) is the investigation and reconciliation of this property's origin and delineation as part of the Recreation and Open Space Inventory. More details on that specific recommendation can be found at the end of this Master Plan Update.

This mostly undeveloped parcel (identified as "Rutgers Village Mini-Park within the 2004 Master Plan) lies on a strip of land between State Route 18 Northbound/U.S. Route 1 northbound interchange and Burnet Street. To the north, beyond Burnet Street is the Rutgers Village neighborhood. To the south is the Route 18 corridor, south of which is additional open space in the form of the Weston's Mill Watershed Area. A bus stop serviced by NJ Transit routes 815 and 818 is located on the north side of the property, along Burnet Street. The Park has PSEG-owned and operated high-voltage electrical lines running overhead.

In addition, there is a separate City-Owned parcel near Map ID #11, located in the Municipal Public Access Plan portion of this Element which is identified as "Rutgers Village." Per Mod IV and tax records this 0.35-acre vacant parcel is identified as Block 715.03 Lot 91 (Goodale Cir) which is located near the New Jersey Turnpike to the east.

Wolfson Park (New Brunswick Park)



- **Block 8, Lot 1.01**
- **145 Neilson Street**
- **1.18 acres**

Park Description

This parcel of land used to be the site of the Wolfson Parking Deck, which was demolished in 2017, was purchased from the New Brunswick Parking Authority by Middlesex County, and is currently classified as Middlesex County Open Space. The property is currently vacant with only grass cover and is awaiting plans from the County and City. The site is located in Downtown New Brunswick, bordered by Neilson Street to the east, Bayard Street to the north, and Liberty Street to the south. There is a grade to the site, as it slopes up from Neilson Street to its rear property boundary to the west. The property is surrounded by a mix of uses, including apartments, retail, offices, churches, and parking decks.

The site was the subject of a study conducted by Rutgers Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy graduate studio project in Fall 2015, which recommended the following: (1) Address pedestrian safety in high access areas; (2) Prioritize sidewalk and crosswalk improvements near the intersection of New and Neilson Streets; (3) Prioritize sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in the residential neighborhoods south of New Street; (4) Consider redesigning the wayfinding network to direct visitors to downtown green space; and (5) Create a uniform wayfinding system that integrates city and county wayfinding signage, and employs the use of maps and multi-lingual signage at transitional points. In addition, there is a separate City-Owned parcel near Map ID #11, located in the Municipal Public Access Plan portion of this Element which is identified as "Rutgers Village." Per Mod IV and tax records this 0.35-acre vacant parcel is identified as Block 715.03 Lot 91 (Goodale Cir) which is located near the New Jersey Turnpike to the east.

Recommendations

Given the ongoing redevelopment of this area, the City should work with the County to finalize the plans for this Park and move forward as soon as possible. Per City officials, the County and City are still determining the final arrangements for management and ownership of the Park, with the proposed being a County-owned facility that is constructed and managed by the City. More details on specific recommendation at the end of this this Master Plan Update.

OTHER OPEN SPACE, PARK, AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Our observations and analysis on other facilities comport with those noted in the 2004 New Brunswick Master Plan, which indicated that there are numerous other recreational facilities provided at City and private schools and elsewhere. These facilities and activities include organized basketball and volleyball games, clinics for tennis, soccer, basketball and baseball are provided at public and private schools. Gymnasiums and community rooms that can serve as multi-purpose rooms are located at many of the City's schools including at: New Brunswick High School, McKinley Community School, Paul Robeson Community School, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Redshaw Elementary School, Lord Stirling Elementary School, Roosevelt Elementary School, and Livingston Elementary School. Rutgers University also provides recreational facilities for students and staff at both the College Avenue and Cook/ Douglass campuses. Certain areas of the City such as Saint Peter's Cemetery and the Cook/ Douglas provide a sense of open space in their respective areas of the City.

Municipal Public Access Plan

On November 18, 2019, the City of New Brunswick adopted a Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP). The MPAP was prepared by:

Sara J. Malone, MES
The Environmental Analysis and Communications Group
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
33 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Financial assistance for the MPAP process was provided by: The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, administered by the Office of Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Coastal Management Program.

The MPAP is reproduced nearly in its entirety below to incorporate it into the Master Plan for the City of New Brunswick through the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element. Modifications have been made where changed circumstances warrant them.

Introduction

The intent of the MPAP is to provide a comprehensive public access plan for the City of New Brunswick which lays out their vision for providing access to tidal waters and shorelines within the municipal boundary. This Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP) was developed in accordance with Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Rules and in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), and has been approved by the NJDEP. The development and implementation of this MPAP supports the policy of local determination of public access locations and facilities, while safeguarding regulatory flexibility and potential funding opportunities for the City of New Brunswick.

Public rights of access to and use of the tidal shorelines and waters, including the ocean, bays, and tidal rivers, in New Jersey are founded in the Public Trust Doctrine. First set by the Roman Emperor Justinian around A.D. 500 as part of Roman civil law, the Public Trust Doctrine establishes the public's right to full use of the seashore as declared in the following quotation from Book II of the Institutes of Justinian:

By the law of nature these things are common to all mankind – the air, running water, the sea, and consequently the shores of the sea. No one, therefore, is forbidden to approach the seashore, provided that he respects habitations, monuments, and the buildings, which are not, like the sea, subject only to the law of nations.

Influenced by Roman civil law, the tenets of public trust were maintained through English Common Law and adopted by the original thirteen colonies. Following the American Revolution, the royal right to tidelands was vested to the thirteen new states, then to each subsequent state, and has remained a part of public policy into the present time. Through various judicial decisions, the right of use upheld by the Public Trust Doctrine has been incorporated into many state constitutions and statutes, allowing the public the right to all lands, water and resources held in the public trust by the state, including those in New Jersey.

The NJDEP adopted new rules governing public access on November 5, 2012 that enable municipalities to develop and adopt MPAPs to govern public access within their municipality. This MPAP consists of an inventory of public access locations, plus plans to preserve and enhance access based on community needs and State standards.

On October 1, 2014, representatives from the City of New Brunswick met with NJDEP staff to begin the public access planning process. A stakeholder team was convened to address both the MPAP and the associated Coastal Vulnerability Assessment and consisted of members of the NJDEP, numerous city stakeholders including the Mayor’s Office, the city’s Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development, the Environmental Commission, the Planning Board, City Market, New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO), Public Works Department, and stakeholders from outside the city including the Middlesex County Office of Planning, Middlesex Office of Emergency Management, staff from Rutgers’ Bloustein School and other Raritan basin stakeholders. The team reviewed existing public access along the Raritan River and Lawrence Brook borders of the city, and reviewed concepts for expanded or improved public access in the area. The MPAP is the result of those meetings and discussions. The MPAP was presented to the New Brunswick City Council and was approved for submission to the NJDEP on November 1, 2017. The MPAP was incorporated into the existing Master Plan by vote of the Planning Board on November 18, 2019, as memorialized on December 9, 2019. The MPAP is being incorporated into the current Master Plan through its inclusion in this OSRP Element.

All public access decisions made within the City of New Brunswick will be consistent with this plan.

Authority for Municipal Public Access Plans

The authority for a municipality to develop a MPAP is derived from the CZM Rules. The premise of the authorization of Municipal Public Access Plans is that public access to tidal waters is fundamentally linked to local conditions. Municipalities have a better awareness and are more responsive to these conditions than a broader State “one size fits all” mandated public access plan.

The voluntary development of a MPAP by the City of New Brunswick enables the municipality to better plan, implement, maintain, and improve the provision of public access for its residents and visitors. The MPAP has been incorporated into the municipality’s Master Plan, in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A 40:55D). The MPAP, as an official component of the municipal Master Plan, informs and/or identifies public access requirements associated with any proposed development or redevelopment project.

Having previously approved the MPAP, and with its incorporation into the present Master Plan, the City of New Brunswick will be responsible for ensuring that public access to tidal waterways along the municipality’s shorelines is provided in accordance with the MPAP. For each new public access project, the City of New Brunswick will provide NJDEP with a letter confirming its consistency with this MPAP. Any permit issued by the NJDEP will reflect this and ensure that public access requirements are satisfied in accordance to this plan. Per CZM Rules, the City of New Brunswick is required to submit a progress report on plan implementation to NJDEP within five (5) years from date of plan adoption. The Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development will oversee and coordinate the progress report filing efforts.

The sections of this plan as indicated below are prescribed by CZM Rules adopted by NJDEP.

State of New Jersey Public Access Goals

Through the New Jersey CZM Rules, the State of New Jersey establishes a broad set of coastal protection goals, including the following specifically addressing public access:

- Effectively manage ocean and estuarine resources through sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries, as well as through the safe and environmentally sound use of coastal waters and beaches.
- Provide meaningful public access to and use of tidal waterways and their shores.
- Preserve public trust rights to tidal waterways and their shores.
- Preserve and enhance views of the coastal landscape to enrich aesthetic and cultural values and vital communities.
- Enhance public access by promoting adequate affordable public facilities and services.
- Create and enhance opportunities for public access to tidal waterways and their shores, on a non-discriminatory basis.
- Maintain all existing public access to, and along tidal waterways and their shores.
- Provide opportunities for public access to tidal waterways and their shores through new development.
- Provide public access that does not create conditions that may be reasonably expected to endanger public health and safety, damage the environment, or create significant homeland security vulnerability.

The City of New Brunswick's MPAP embraces and reflects these goals and will help preserve, protect, and enhance the public's ability to access the Public Trust lands that surround the city.

City of New Brunswick Public Access Vision

Municipal Description

Located in east central New Jersey in Middlesex County, the City of New Brunswick is an urban community of approximately 55,266 people (2020 US Census) with a population density of approximately 16.58 people per acre. New Brunswick, according to the 2019 American Community Survey estimates is diverse with a population breakdown of approximately 63.8% white, 16.2% Black or African American, 0.1% Native American, 9.9% Asian, 9.9% from other or mixed races. Hispanics or Latinos of any race account for approximately 46.8% of the population.

Major employers in the city include Rutgers University, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, St. Peter's University Hospital, Johnson & Johnson, County of Middlesex, and OHM Labs (Ranbaxy), raising the city's daytime population to 70,221. Rutgers' New Brunswick student population numbers 40,434, while faculty and staff number 5,527. In addition, cultural activities in the city attract 400,000 patrons annually to cultural and theatre events (New Brunswick 2013).

New Brunswick was designated a Transit Village in 2005, with a walkscore of 90. It is easily accessible by mass transportation including 90 trains daily by Amtrak and NJ Transit, five bus routes through the city, two commuter bus routes, and Rutgers Campus buses that connect the New Brunswick campus with Piscataway and North Brunswick (New Brunswick 2013).

Many areas of the city are zoned for high-density, mixed use development, and current development plans reinforce the Transit Village focus. As demonstrated in the Land Use Element of this Master Plan, the city is nearly fully developed with limited available vacant and developable land, and opportunities for further growth will be through redevelopment, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of existing buildings with limited in-fill. Other remaining open space is wetlands, woodlands, and/or floodplains.

New Brunswick's 5.21 square miles of land area, or approximately 3,333.8 acres, includes about 272 acres of City-owned and/or operated parks, recreation areas and open space (including playgrounds, passive areas, athletic fields, facilities, lawns, and gardens). An additional 21.2 acres of open space are owned by Middlesex County, and an additional 6.97 acres of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park are owned by the State of New Jersey. The entire north border of the city – approximately 4.5 miles in length – is bounded by the Raritan River and is tidally influenced along its entire length. The eastern border of the municipality is bounded by the Lawrence Brook and is tidally influenced up to the Westons Mill Pond Dam. In 1999, two city parks, Boyd Park and Alice Jennings Archibald Park, were selected for National Awards (City of New Brunswick Website, Parks & Gardens).

Public Access Description

Public access for residents and visitors to the City of New Brunswick is provided by the State of New Jersey, the City of New Brunswick, Middlesex County, and Rutgers University and consists of a variety of access points and facilities that extend from the tidal reach of the Raritan River at the city's northwestern-most boundary to the tidal reach of the Lawrence Brook at Westons Mill Pond Dams along the city's southeastern edge.

In the strictest sense of public access – where you can physically touch the water – public access is fairly limited and mostly restricted to a short section of the D&R Canal, sections of Boyd Park, unimproved access in the conservation areas, and unimproved access at Westons Mill Pond. Existing public access areas and their amenities are:

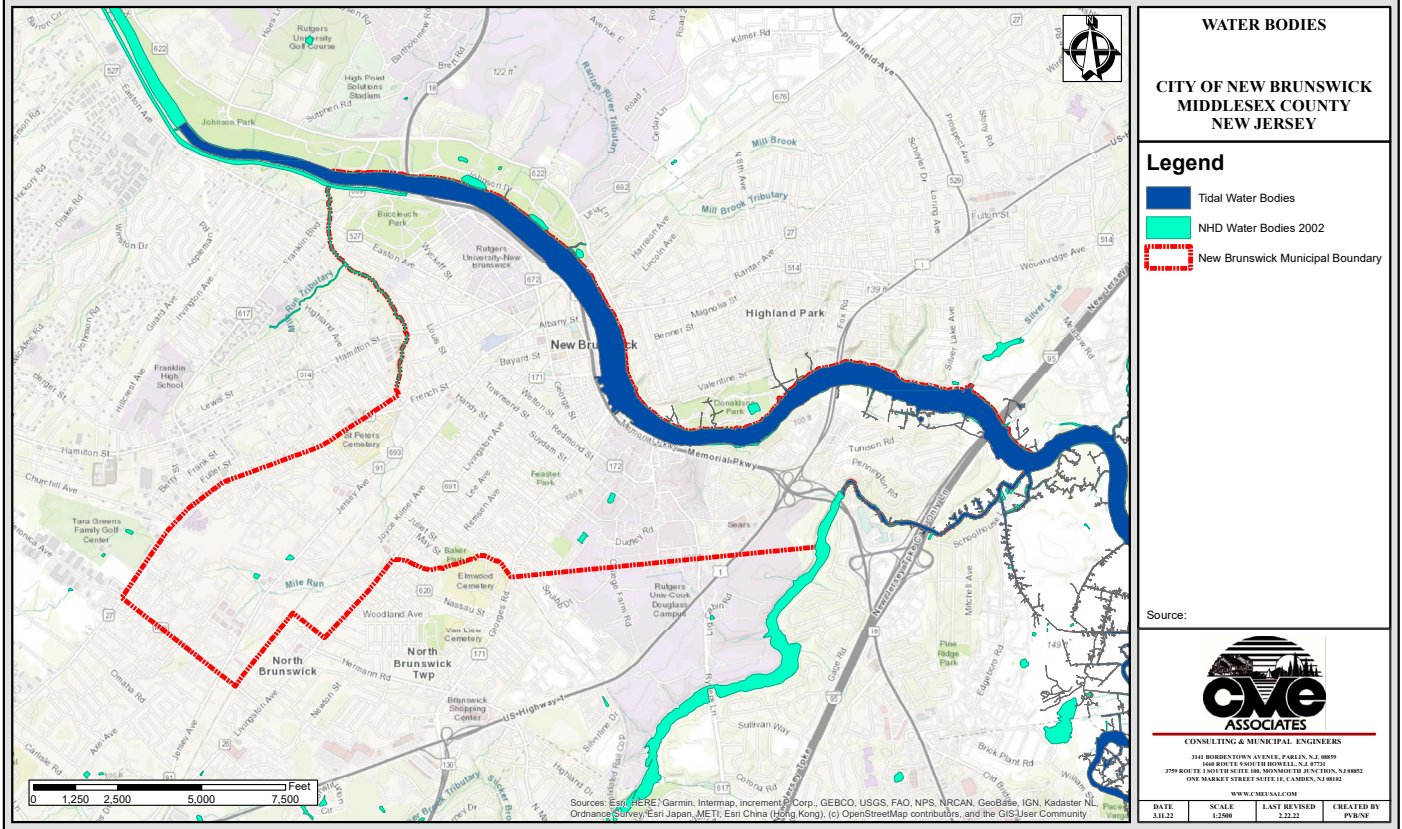
- A short section of the D&R Canal, the Route 18 Trench Bikeway and Boyd Park offer several miles of linear bikeway/footpaths
- Boyd Park includes access for fishing, birdwatching, a concrete boat launch, restrooms and portable toilets, parking, picnic tables, picnic pavilions, benches, seasonal day-time boat dock, playgrounds, an historic canal and lock, historic and informative signage, and a festival/concert area with an amphitheater
- Unimproved conservation areas offer bird watching, views of the river and some shoreline fishing opportunities
- Westons Mill Pond offers fishing and limited boating with access to a human- powered or electric motor boat launch just outside of the New Brunswick city boundary in East Brunswick

A more detailed description of the amenities associated with each area of public access are noted in the Existing Public Access section below.

The majority of the land along the Raritan and Lawrence Brook through New Brunswick is protected by zoning for waterfront conservation consistent with the city’s long term efforts to protect open space and to provide passive public access in New Brunswick. This designation does not, however, ensure public access in perpetuity. Listing these properties in the city’s Recreational and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) or adopting more stringent measures such as a conservation easement or restriction will permanently preserve access and ensure that the city meets requirements for public access in accordance with CZM Rules. Part of the waterfront conservation area is characterized by steep slopes (greater than 10% grade) down to the river – effectively limiting development along the shoreline. But the ability to walk along the Raritan and Lawrence Brook and to view the water is possible (if not presently practicable) along most of the riparian boundary of the city.

Public access in the city has been the topic of several studies and projects in the recent past including a 2011 study by The Trust for Public Land, discussions of public access as a component of the 2016 New Brunswick Blueprint for Health, the very recent development of a new Parks and Gardens Commission, application through the State for the MPAP grant, as well as an analysis by Rutgers of the MPAP as part of their new Health Impact Assessment program. The City continues to explore enhancements to public access discussed in these studies/projects. (See the Community Needs Assessment below for more information.)

The overall goal of this MPAP is to establish the City of New Brunswick’s plan to maintain and enhance all existing public access locations to and along tidal waterways and their shores.



The above map entitled *Water Bodies* shows all the tidal waterways within the municipality (see also larger scale map in Appendix 2).

Consistency with Other Master Plan Elements

As part of the planning process, the MPAP has been reviewed and is consistent with the following goals, elements, and policies established in the rest of this Master Plan.

Land Use Element: The Land Use Plan Element of this Master Plan provides a long-range policy guide for development of the City and supports the zoning ordinance by giving explanations and rationale for land use decisions. The listed land use most pertinent to this MPAP is *Conservation, Parks, Public Property, and Other Exempt Lands* that includes riverside parks Buccleuch and Boyd, and riparian open space lands including the Raritan River Conservation Area.

Recommendations identified in the 2019 MPAP that remain consistent with the Land Use Plan Element of this Master Plan are that the city should:

- Continue to work with Rutgers in order to ensure that the University’s facility planning and other planning efforts are in line with city planning objectives, and vice-versa,
- Retain the pastoral setting of the Westons Mill Pond area and ensure that development in this area minimizes disturbances to environmentally sensitive lands and preserves as much woodland as possible,

- Retain all existing open spaces, park and recreational areas of the city, specifically the Raritan River Conservation Area located in the northeasterly portion of the city, as well as Buccleuch Park and Boyd Park,
- Retain the conservation district zoning in areas of the city currently located in the WC Waterfront Conservation District,
- Protect, preserve and conserve environmentally sensitive areas, particularly the city's waterfront, wetlands, floodplains, streams, steep sloped areas and ravines, and forested areas in balance with the city's economic development efforts,
- Protect and preserve historically significant structures, districts and areas in balance with the city's economic development efforts, and
- Bring activity to the riverfront and connect the waterfront to the city's downtown and the rest of the city.

Circulation Plan Element: While traditionally, a Circulation Plan Element addresses public transportation and automobile traffic, due to the constraints of city buildout and congested roadways, pedestrian infrastructure has been identified as an important component of the City via this Master Plan's Circulation Plan Element. Identified in the Circulation Plan Element are recommendations for improvements to various pieces of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These recommendations concerning pedestrian access have persisted since the adoption of the 2012 Master Plan Reexamination Report:

- Improvements to the crossings are not visible enough especially at Paul Robeson Boulevard and George Street. There appears to be a vehicular speed issue at the New Street ramp and the pedestrian crossing to access the walkway is at an awkward intersection which does not properly address pedestrian crossings.
- The issue of pedestrian crossings near and around the New Brunswick Train Station in Downtown New Brunswick remains an issue.
- There is a lack of bike racks in strategic locations such as the train station, schools, and parks.
- Jersey Avenue, Easton Avenue, and Livingston Avenue are all lacking bike lanes. As of 2021, the bicycle lane street surface markings along portions of Remsen Avenue were faded and should be re-marked in order to safely indicate which portions of the street are intended for vehicular travel and which portions of the street are intended for cyclists.
- There has been a flashing crosswalk installed at on Johnson Drive and at Hamilton Street and George Street; however, there is still an issue with car speed in that area.

At the time of this Master Plan Update, improvement efforts to the pedestrian accessibility to Boyd Park have been made through the improvement of crossings, though further evaluation and improvements may be needed to effectively provide access to the Park. In addition to these crossing improvements, another long-standing recommendation to the City's pedestrian infrastructure network is a Route 18 Trench Bikepath. This recommendation has persisted since the 2004 Master Plan Update and remains a recommendation at the time of this Master Plan Update.

Community Facilities & Educational Facilities Plan Element: The Community Facilities Plan Element lists an inventory of existing community facilities and identifies the city departments that provide services to the public including the Division of Parks (under the Department of Public Works) that is responsible for maintenance of all city parks, playgrounds, passive areas, athletic fields, facilities, lawns and gardens, and the Division of Recreation (under the Department of Social Services) that is responsible for all recreational programming including seasonal events.

Relevant recommendations in this Element are for: (1) the City to continue to monitor and improve existing community facilities; (2) Bolster shared services with neighboring municipalities and government entities; and (3) update and improve the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Network. The third of these goals that pertains to GIS will allow the City to produce more accurate and effective maps that are available to City residents. An improvement of available maps should spur the need for improved wayfinding to public access points.

MPAP Goals

In addition to those goals inherent in the above recommendations and outlined elsewhere in this Master Plan, and inherent in the three State required goals below (#1 through 3), the City of New Brunswick establishes the following as goals specifically for public access:

1. All existing public access shall be maintained to the maximum extent practicable
2. Maintain safe and adequate access locations for fishing
3. Provide clear informative signage for access locations
4. Work with partners to expand public access programming and improve amenities to increase usage of public access areas
5. Work with partners to provide a continuous safe and enjoyable linear public access from Landing Lane Bridge to Westons Mill Pond Dam
6. Work with Rutgers and Middlesex County to resolve pedestrian and bicycle access safety issues

Existing Public Access

Public Access Locations

The riparian boundary of New Brunswick from the northwest city boundary along the Raritan River to the southeast city edge bordering Westons Mill Pond is rich in public access opportunities and connects with other public access trails and corridors that expand and enhance public access for many New Jersey residents. Public access at the northwest edge of the city connects to two important greenways -- the East Coast Greenway section between Camden/Trenton and New York, and the nationally historic Delaware and Raritan (D&R) Canal that stretches across New Jersey to the Delaware River and provides over 60 miles of hiking and biking trails as well as canoe and kayaking pleasure. The southeastern corner of New Brunswick is graced by the Westons Mill Pond, and the Helyar Woods section of Rutgers Gardens with opportunities to follow trails into Rutgers Gardens to explore those environs or to follow the Lawrence Brook upstream to Farrington Lake.

The following is a description of existing and promising public access in New Brunswick starting upstream where the Raritan leaves Franklin Township and traveling along the riparian edge of the city from the D&R Canal Towpath to Helyar Woods. Each section includes a description of the public access points, existing conditions, amenities, limitations to access, and prospective improvements where applicable. Zoning or other protective measures for the site are also noted.

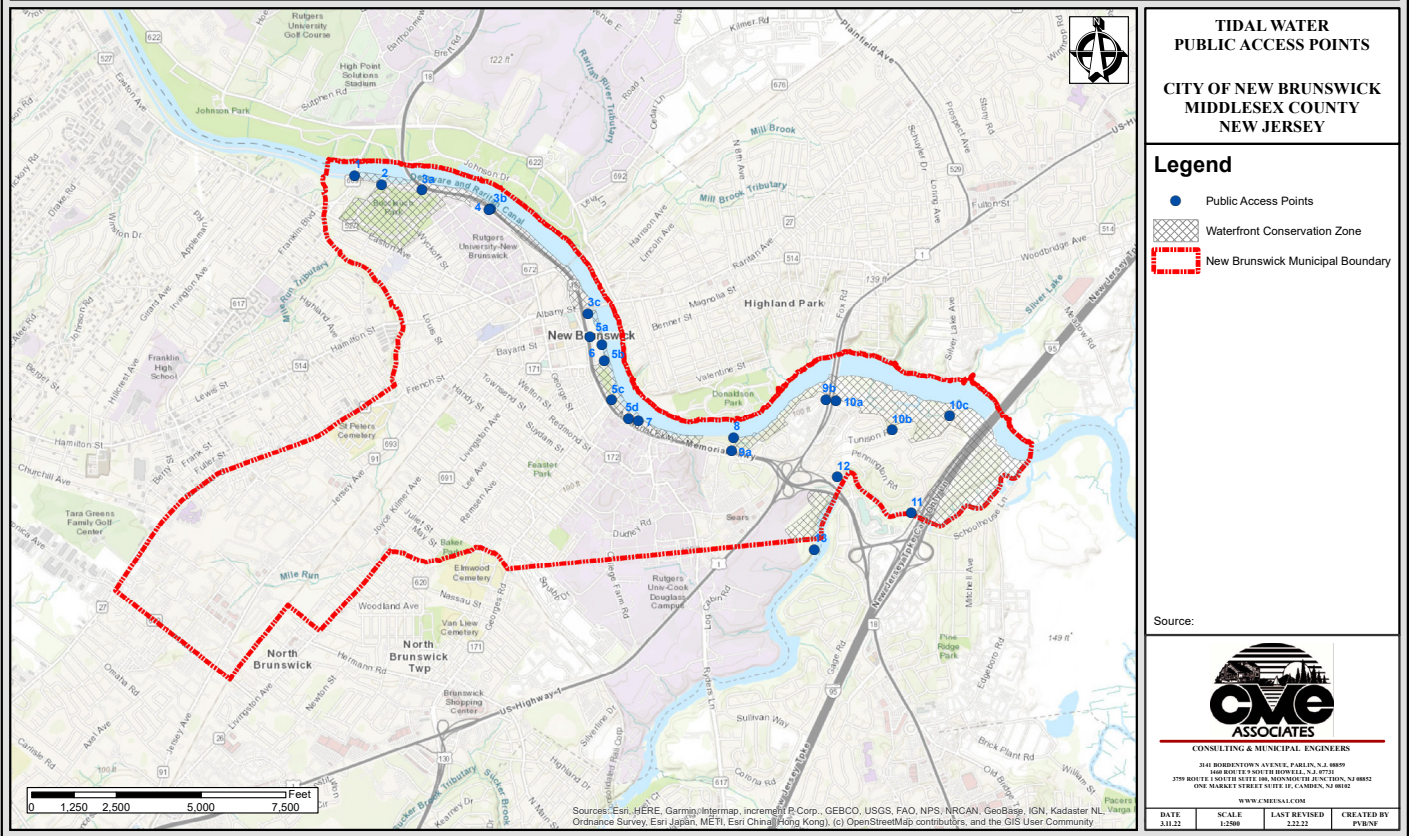
The Map IDs next to the name correspond with the numbers indicated on the below map titled *Tidal Water Public Access Points*, below, with any sub-letter referring to specific egress points for a linear public access feature such as exits to a bikeway. A larger scale map is found in Appendix 2. For example, Map IDs for the Route 18 Trench Bikeway that are indicated as 3a (the north entrance), 3b (Deiner Park stairway), and 3c (Albany Street entrance).

Approximate latitude and longitude coordinates are provided for existing or potential public access points and are marked as utilized, un-utilized, or restricted. Utilized indicates the location is used by the public and provides official or unofficial public access. Un-utilized indicates the location contains no improvements and receives little or no use by the public. Restricted indicates the location poses known or likely public health and safety or environmental damage concerns or where access is presently not feasible.

See also table *City of New Brunswick Public Access Location Amenities* later in this Element.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ



Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #1

Utilized (at Landing Lane Bridge): Lat 40.508002, Long -74.464077

From 1834 to present day, New Brunswick has derived benefit from the D&R Canal. At its start, the D&R supported the commerce and industry of goods transported along the canal from the Delaware River to New Brunswick and then out onto the Raritan River where larger ships could work the Raritan's tides to reach New York and New Jersey markets beyond Raritan Bay. Though no longer carrying goods, the canal continues to benefit the city as one of its primary water supplies.

The section of the canal and towpath between the Franklin Township line and Landing Lane Bridge is an active part of the historic D&R Canal State Park and is overseen by the D&R Canal Commission. Walkers, bikers, canoeists and kayakers can traverse the canal and path from here to Trenton and on up the Delaware River.

The portion of the canal between Landing Lane Bridge and the John A. Lynch Sr. Memorial Bridge (Route 18) is maintained by the city's Parks Division and is minimally used by local residents and fishermen as it dead-ends at the large spillway adjacent to the city's main water intake. Public access is restricted here by the spillway and water utility structures. A portion

of the remainder of the canal going south has been buried under Route 18 and the Route 18 Trench Bikeway but the canal appears again in Boyd Park. Further discussion about the canal can be found in those report sections below.

For those wishing to explore the sections of the canal abutting Landing Lane Bridge, parking is in nearby Buccleuch Park or a short walk along a protected walkway/bikeway on the Landing Lane Bridge to public parking at Johnson Park in Piscataway.

The area north of Landing Lane Bridge is zoned C-R, Corporate Retreat. This area is also in Review Zone of the D&R Canal Commission for water supply protection purposes. The area south of Landing Lane Bridge is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation. Both are proposed to retain their zoning with this Master Plan.

Buccleuch Park

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #2

Utilized – (at north entrance on George Street): Lat 40.507284, Long -74.461201

Although this 78-acre park doesn't directly touch the Raritan, it is listed in the MPAP because it provides the nearest public parking and restroom facilities to other MPAP resources such as the Landing Lane entrance to the D&R Canal, north entrance to the Route 18 Trench Bikeway, and the south entrance to the bike path across the Raritan River on the John A. Lynch Memorial Bridge (Route 18). In addition, Buccleuch (pronounced "Bugle-low") offers a variety of amenities including athletic fields for baseball, softball, tennis, soccer, cricket and basketball, a 1.5 mile fitness loop, playground, and seasonal sledding, and historic sites. The park was mentioned in public access sessions for the opportunity to coordinate parks programming to draw new users to the adjacent public access points.

The park is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation. This zoning is proposed to remain with this Master Plan.

Route 18 Trench Bikeway

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #3a to 3c

Utilized – (at Buccleuch Park off George Street): Lat 40.506827, Long -74.456953

Un-utilized – (Deiner Park entrance at top of stairs): Lat 40.505335, Long -74.449628

Utilized – (at Boyd Park entrance under Albany Street): Lat 40.496842, Long -74.439315

In the 1980s, expansion of Route 18 from Albany Street north into Piscataway essentially buried a section of the D&R Canal between Albany Street and Buccleuch Park, disrupting access to the Raritan along this stretch. At the time of the expansion, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) constructed a bikeway that ran between the highway and the Raritan River. The bikeway is a 1.4 mile long narrow blacktop path with a tall chain link fence on the river side and a sometimes high concrete wall on the Route 18 side. There are three unmarked entrances to the bikeway: (a) on the north side of the John Lynch Bridge at Buccleuch Park; (b) a gated (presently locked for safety concerns) entrance at the top of stairs at the back of Deiner Park that is behind the Rutgers Student Activities Center, and (c) through a tunnel under Albany Street/Route 27 at the northern end of Boyd Park. The bikeway is poorly maintained with extensive trash and weeds along its length. Public input deems the bikeway to be unsafe since it is narrow, has limited egress, poor sightlines, extensive trash and graffiti, and occasionally homeless encampments in woodier sections. Also, though there are no documented colonies along the bikeway, the area is designated potential habitat for Indiana bats and long-eared bats, both protected species in New Jersey. Any maintenance or improvements to the bikeway would need to comply with applicable regulations under the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Rutgers University has proposed a new vision for this bikeway in its Facilities Master Plan for 2030 where the bikeway entrances are enhanced, the entrance from Deiner Park is improved and reopened, and the bikeway is widened with an improved interface with the Raritan – similar in concept to the Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rutgers vision for the bikeway would also provide a connection across the Raritan to Piscataway via a pedestrian and bicycle bridge, further improving public access.

Middlesex County is also interested in this bikeway as an off-road alternate route for the East Coast/Middlesex Greenway connections through the area.

The bikeway area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation. This zoning is proposed to remain with this Master Plan.

Deiner Park

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #4

Utilized – (at Rutgers Student Activities Center): Lat 40.505269, Long -74.449805

Deiner Park was built in 1980 by the NJDOT on top of Route 18 as it passes below Rutgers University between Huntington Street and Bishop Place. Named for journalist Frank Deiner Sr., the park was once the site of Rutgers' annual spring Deinerfest and later the Rutgersfest. The 3.8 acre park was originally maintained by the City of New Brunswick but is now controlled by Rutgers University. The park offers tennis courts, picnic tables, basketball courts, views of the Raritan River, and access to the Route 18 Trench Bikeway through a gated (and presently locked) entrance to a bridge walkway over Route 18 to stairs that lead down to the bikeway along the river. The main entrance to Deiner Park is off of George Street between Hardenburgh Hall and Campbell Hall near the Student Activities Center.

Rutgers has proposed improvements to this park in its Facilities Master Plan for 2030 that addresses access issues both from George Street and the Route 18 Trench Bikeway as well as improvements to park amenities.

The park is zoned IN-1, Education Institutional. This zoning is proposed to remain with this Master Plan.

Boyd Park

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #5a to 5d

Utilized – (parking to The Landing off Route 18N): Lat 40.494981, Long -74.439100

Utilized – (pedestrian entrance at New Street): Lat 40.493023, Long -74.437598

Utilized – (pedestrian entrance at Commercial Ave): Lat 40.489828, Long -74.436820

Utilized – (entrance off NJ 18 Service Road): Lat 40.488310, Long -74.434986

This mile long riparian park encompasses approximately 20 acres of open green space from Route 27/Albany Street to just beyond the Rutgers Boathouse south of Commercial Avenue and is bounded on the west by Route 18 and on the east by remnants of the D&R Canal and by the Raritan River. The park was named for publisher Elmer B. Boyd of the New Brunswick *Daily Home News*. The park won a national award following extensive renovations in 1999. The park also has historic signage to inform visitors of the role the Raritan River and the canals played in the development of the City of New Brunswick. The park is ADA compliant. Amenities include picnic pavilions, benches, playgrounds, a concrete boat ramp, comfortable paved walking and biking paths, and restroom facilities both as portable toilets and as public restrooms (that are open concurrent with programming at the amphitheater) near the amphitheater at Commercial Avenue.

Boyd Park is the site of several festivals and music series/concerts including the city's 4th of July celebration, a variety of ethnic festivals, and the Raritan River Festival. City Market Inc., the City of New Brunswick's Recreation Division, and New Brunswick Cultural Center collaborate on park programming.

A significant feature of Boyd Park is the terminus section of the D&R Canal. Historic canal components at Boyd Park include a three-quarter mile long tow path, relatively intact canal, historic swing bridge and the original terminus lock as the D&R Canal reaches the Raritan River. There is no interpretive signage at the locks nor are other canal components effectively promoted as assets of the park. Several footbridges cross the D&R Canal to the cinder/gravel path on the historic towpath. The canal has a cobbled overflow to the Raritan River south of Albany Street, and due to the Route 18 construction over the section of the canal north of Boyd Park, there is no flow-through to provide flushing of the water in the canal. Water quality in the canal remnant is, therefore, poor and the canal is partially silted in. Access to the river side of the lock is restricted by a fence. A rusted bulk head protects the lock from storm surge and was also

intended to control the water level in the canal. The canal and locks were damaged in recent storms and the tide gates don't properly operate. In their current degraded state, the canal and associated amenities detract from Boyd Park's appeal.

Boyd Park provides access to several other public access features. The Route 18 Trench Bikeway (see above) is accessed through a tunnel under Route 27/Albany Street at the north end of Boyd Park; the entrance to the Middlesex County Landing floating boat dock (see below) is via a footbridge below the New Street pedestrian entrance to Boyd Park, and the Rutgers Boathouse (see below) is just south of the D&R terminus locks at the New Jersey 18 Service Road entrance to the park off of Route 18 North.

Park amenities are somewhat concentrated in the southern end of the park. Complaints during public engagement were that most seating is in the pavilion area south of Rutgers Boathouse and benches are not more available throughout the park. Also, picnic areas are not scattered around the park but are also concentrated below Rutgers Boathouse and no barbecue facilities are available.

Swimming is not permitted in the park, but fishing is available along the canal path in the northern and central portions of the park and along the bulk-headed and fenced river's edge south of Rutgers Boathouse.

The majority of the park is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation, however, the area between Albany and New Streets and bounded by Route 18 and the D&R Canal is zoned R-7, Apartment Residential. This area was once the site of the former police station, which was relocated after repeat flooding at this location. A portion of this area is utilized for public access and includes parking, a portable toilet and the dock attendant's shed for the New Brunswick Landings floating docks. This parcel also includes an extension of the D&R Canal path via two foot bridges as the path detours around a spillway in the canal path that floods during moderate to high water events. Public access to the Landings and from the Route 18 Trench Bikeway into Boyd Park could be impeded if this land is developed as zoned. If developed as zoned, a conservation easement should be included to preserve access. The zones are proposed to remain with this Master Plan.

New Brunswick Landing

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #6

Utilized – (for dock entrance): Lat 40.494324, Long -74.437818

New Brunswick Landing is a seasonal floating dock on the Raritan River that is maintained and operated by the Middlesex County Parks System. The 24 slip dock in Boyd Park near New Street, is open seven days a week from late May until mid-September and can accommodate boats up to 45 feet in length with a minimum depth of six feet at low tide. There are no docking charges. The Landing offers closed circuit cameras and dock attendants to watch over vessels during daylight operating hours. No overnight docking is permitted. The docks are designed to respond to the Raritan's tides and downstream flows, and during the Landing's operating season, the County maintains channel buoys along the eleven nautical miles from the Landing out to

Raritan Bay. The docks are a five to ten minute walk to downtown New Brunswick. There is a paved parking area near the Landing that is accessed off of Route 18 North just after the New Street exit and before the Route 27/Highland Park exit. There is an ADA accessible portable toilet by the parking lot. There is no boat ramp here, but there is a boat ramp at the southern end of the park (see Boyd Park description).

The County website indicates that the docks close in mid-September, but they usually stay open until the end of September to accommodate the Raritan River Festival (held at Boyd Park) that is usually the fourth Sunday in September. Discussions during the MPAP public component noted that the Landing is presently underutilized. It was surmised that the lack of advertising, lack of programming ties to activities in New Brunswick or activities at Boyd Park and/or lack of coordination with Rutgers events (such as the potential for “sailgate” parties before Scarlet Knight home games) were part of the concern. Also noted were the lack of supplies for fishermen who might otherwise stop there. It’s important to note that fishing is not permitted from the Landing, but fisherman frequently boat in the area or fish from the adjacent shores.

The area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation. With this Master Plan, this zoning is proposed to remain.

Rutgers Boathouse

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #7

Un-utilized* – (main entrance): Lat 40.488117, Long -74.433965

Built in 1950 through a gift of the Class of 1914, the Rutgers Boathouse is owned and operated by Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The building was expanded in 1961 and extensively remodeled in 2010. It consists of three bays, locker rooms, a training room and coaches’ offices. The crew and sailing teams operate from this location and the facility is open to Rutgers students for lessons or team sports. Presently the boathouse and associated docks and launch areas are for the sole use of Rutgers Athletics.

Rutgers Facilities Master Plan 2030 envisions expansion of boathouse and surrounding amenities to include a larger boat launching dock and addition of a second level to the boathouse that could accommodate event space for the university. (p183) Whether these improvements would be open to area residents and therefore improve public access for New Brunswick will require further discussions and collaboration with Rutgers.

There are several opportunities for enhanced public access at this site. Rutgers’ Marine & Coastal Sciences program out of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences is in the process of building a new research vessel that will be docked at the Rutgers Boathouse and will be used to enhance academic programming as an interactive and interdisciplinary field laboratory and classroom. Discussions with affiliated Rutgers’ faculty and staff indicate that they may eventually partner with area schools for public education/STEM education programs utilizing this field laboratory. We also had exploratory discussions with recreation personnel about the potential for public access from the boathouse that could include water safety programs,

special sail days, and canoe and kayak rentals from or near this location. These potential public access opportunities merit further investigation.

The area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation. With this Master Plan, this zoning is proposed to remain.

*Though Rutgers actively uses this facility, the location is marked as Un-utilized since the access point is limited to Rutgers affiliates and is not presently open to the public.

Carpender Road

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #8

Restricted – (Raritan shore south of residential area): Lat 40.486784, Long -74.423860

There is no improved public access along the next half mile stretch of the Raritan River from the south end of Boyd Park to the south end of Carpenders Road. This is in part because of steep terrain, and in part because access to the area is through private residential holdings.

Participants in the public meetings indicated that one can presently traverse this area by scrambling through tree roots and along the muddy banks, though this appears improbable except at extreme low tide (based on a tour of the area from the water). This informal path would be inaccessible during moderate or higher flows of the Raritan.

During the redesign of Boyd Park in 2002, NJDOT consultants Vollmer Associates did a quick concept plan of a path that would run along the Raritan shore from Boyd Park to Paulus Boulevard below the Carpenders Road area. The path had egress points at the south end of Boyd Park, up a switchback to Route 18 just north of Carpenders Road, and via another switchback to Paulus Boulevard. Notes on the plan indicated that part of the path was on private land and would require an easement.

The area is zoned R-2, Single-Family Residential. With this Master Plan, this zoning is proposed to remain.

Raritan River Conservation Area – County Owned

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID # 9a & 9b

Restricted – (northwest of property at Route 18): Lat 40.485668, Long -74.424096

Un-utilized – (corner of AMC Loews parking lot Route 1): Lat 40.489860, Long -74.414086

Middlesex County owns the 20.73 acre parcel of land along the Raritan from the south end of Carpenders Road to Route 1. The area is not easily accessed – in part because of steep terrain, and in part because access to the area is through private residential or commercial holdings.

An easement in the southeast corner of the parcel abuts Route 18 between the pedestrian overpass and Paulus Boulevard but is blocked by a high wall.

Participants in the MPAP public access sessions gained access to the south end of this property through the corner of the Loews AMC parking lot near the Route 1 overpass. They gained access by clambering down the under-bridge embankment to an abandoned road that travelled a short distance north into the conservation area.

The area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation and is further restricted by steep slope development requirements and riparian setbacks.

Raritan River Conservation Area – City Owned

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #10a to 10c

Un-utilized – (gated egress off Regency Manor Dr): Lat 40.489746, Long -74.412981

Restricted – (conservation easement at Tunison Road): Lat 40.487364, Long -74.407026

Utilized – (path intersect w/PSEG maintenance road): Lat 40.488506, Long -74.400954

Below the Rutgers Village section of New Brunswick is a large tract of conservation land owned by the City of New Brunswick. The land is unimproved with no official access points. Participants at the public meetings were able to gain access to the area under the Route 1 overpass as described above. Once under the Route 1 bridge, there are remnants of a paved road along the bottom of the escarpment southeast to the PSEG service road that follows the high tension lines from Tunison Road to where they cross the Raritan just north of the Turnpike. This abandoned road was once reached via Regency Manor Drive in the Raritan Crossing Apartment complex, but the access is now gated and locked. Another potential access point to this area is via an easement between Wilcox Road and Bowser Road that abuts Tunison Road in Raritan Village. Access at Tunison Road would require negotiating a steep bank down to the abandoned road along the river.

The walk along the road is easy and pleasant and shaded in most sections by mature trees, but views to the river are obscured by huge stands of phragmites.

The city also owns conservation land on the south side of the New Jersey Turnpike at the confluence of the Raritan and Lawrence Brook. Access here is restricted by the Turnpike which bisects the conservation land. We did not attempt to traverse this area and didn't determine if access could be secured under the turnpike overpass. We note, however, that the city's Parks/ Recreation/Open Space map indicates the proposed trail extends under the turnpike bridge at the Raritan River and continues along the riparian boundary through this conservation area and then under the turnpike bridge at the Lawrence Brook.

There is a cleared pipeline right of way through the conservation area east of and parallel to the turnpike running from the Raritan to the Lawrence Brook. It is mentioned here as a potential pathway through this area if access under the turnpike can be secured and permission for use from the pipeline is granted.

The area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation.

Rutgers Village

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #11

Un-utilized – (east edge of Village at Lawrence Brook): Lat 40.480640, Long -74.405052

There is no improved public access along the Lawrence Brook from the turnpike crossing to the bridge at Burnet Street near the Water Utility at Westons Mill Pond Dam. Per Mod IV and tax records there is a 0.35-acre city-owned parcel near this location (Block 715.03 Lot 91, Goodale Cir). This is a residential area with property lines extending to the water's edge.

The area is zoned R-2, Single-Family Residential.

Westons Mill Pond Conservation Area and the Weston Mill Pond

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #12

Un-utilized – (for entrance to path beside water utility at dam): Lat 40.483568, Long -74.412870

Westons Mill Pond Conservation Area is located on the western shore of the Westons Mill Pond from the south side of Route 18 to the city boundary with North Brunswick.

The pond is formed behind two dams. The 309 foot long Westons Mill Pond Dam is a mostly stone masonry gravity dam constructed in 1888 that marks the present-day tidal reach of the Lawrence Brook; the Westons Mill Arch Dam, a short distance upstream, is a 248 foot long concrete arch dam constructed in 1919. The pond encompasses approximately 92 acres and serves as water supply for the City of New Brunswick under the control of the New Brunswick Water Utility.

The upper portion of the pond is a popular spot for kayaks and canoes; only human powered vessels and electric motor boats are permitted. Jersey Shore Sea Kayak Association includes a brief description of the passage along the pond and the portage around the dams to continue down the Lawrence Brook to the Raritan. Boat access is via a car top boat launch at Ryders Lane in East Brunswick. Parking for the launch is a small dirt lot with no facilities. The launch area is dirt and rocks. There is also an informal launch on the New Brunswick side of the arch dam from a path that enters from Burnet Street next to the Water Utility facility. This launch area would require portage over approximately 900 feet from Burnet Street. There is no designated parking or signage for this informal launch.

Fishing posts on NJFishing.com and AnglerWeb.com note the presence of pickerel (*Esox niger*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy x Esox lucius*), sunfish (*Lepomis spp.*), catfish (*Ictalurus spp.*) and carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). The New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife has periodically stocked the pond with channel catfish and tiger muskellunge.

Prior to the installation of the Westons Mill Pond Dam, migratory fish including the anadromous blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), and the catadromous American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) utilized the Lawrence Brook habitats in their life cycle. While the dams cannot be removed since the ponds supply water for New Brunswick, a recent study by Princeton Hydro LLC (2013) explored the feasibility of installing fish ladders to open an additional three miles of steam habitat above the dams to migratory fish. Preliminary findings are that the proposed fish ladders would enable target fish passage. Further investigation is needed to identify potential funding partners, confirm regulatory requirements, and ensure continued safe water supplies for the city in concert with adequate flows for fish passage. Discussion from the MPAP public meetings encouraged utilizing the fish ladders (once built) for educational purposes and to look at the ladders as an additional public access site with appropriate educational signage and possible educational programming to complement the resource.

Unmarked trails wander through the woods on the west shore of the Pond and connect with trails to Helyar Woods in Rutgers Gardens (see below).

The area is zoned WC, Waterfront Conservation.

Helyar Woods & Rutgers Gardens

Tidal Water Public Access Points Map ID #13

Utilized – (trail entrance from Helyar Woods to Westons Mill Pond): Lat 40.477665, Long -74.415313

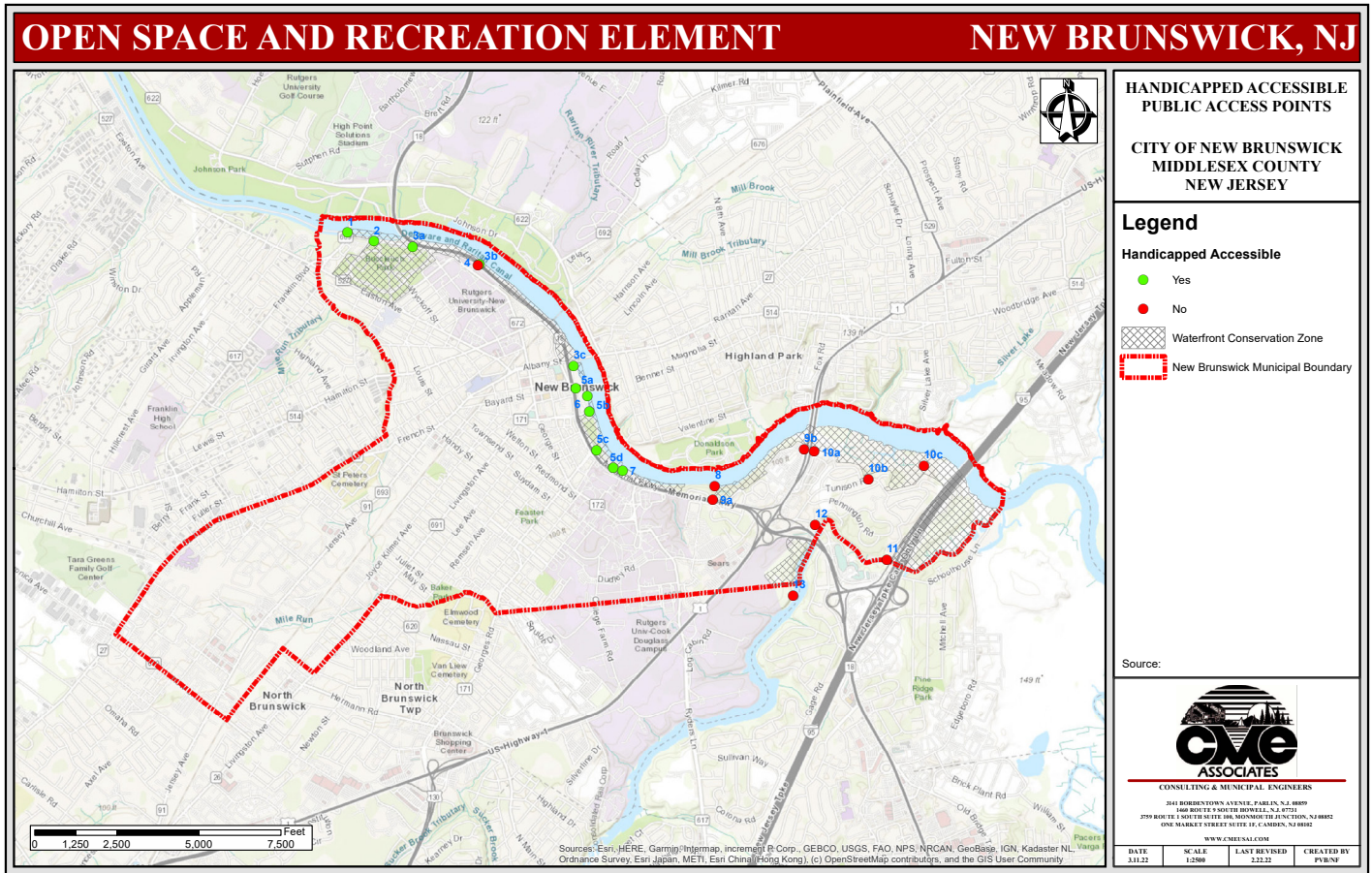
Though no longer technically part of the tidal zone of the Lawrence Brook because of the Westons Mill Pond Dam that stops the tidal flows, Helyar Woods at Rutgers Gardens marks the southeastern-most edge of riparian access for the City of New Brunswick. Named for Rutgers' Professor Frank G. Helyar, this 70-acre woods abuts Rutgers Gardens and the Westons Mill Pond and includes 2.5 miles of easy trails through predominately beech, oak and maple woods. Access to the pond is unimproved and the trails are not well marked. Access to the pond trail is through Rutgers Gardens where parking is available and from behind the water utility at the pond dam. Helyar Woods and Rutgers Gardens are owned by Rutgers University.

Rutgers University is presently developing a new facilities master plan for Rutgers Gardens that may include improved public access through the Gardens and a trail that better connects Rutgers Gardens to other city and university access points including Westons Mill Pond.

Improved Public Access Locations

The map entitled *Handicapped Accessible Public Access Points*, below, provides an inventory of the preferred, existing and proposed, public access locations that provide access to public trust lands and waters. See the table *City of New Brunswick Public Access Location Amenities*, below, which provides detailed information on each location. Both table and map may be found in Appendix 2.

Detailed descriptions of the improved public access locations are noted above under Public Access Locations. Noted here are specifics related to existing signage, parking, handicap accessibility, restrooms/toilet facilities and other amenities.



Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Trail

Handicapped Accessible Public Access Points Map ID #1

The D&R Canal State Park Trail starts on the west side of Landing Lane Bridge with a dead-end section leading east to the water utility pump station and spillway. There is no road-side signage for the canal entrance nor is there any signage to indicate that the spur leading to the east is a dead-end. A cobbled canal overflow section of the trail just west of this entrance may impede handicapped accessibility to the canal trail from here.

There are approximately nine parking spaces in an unmarked lot on the southeast corner of George Street and Landing Lane. Curb cuts and crossing signals allow access to the path entrance from the corner lot. Parking is also available across Landing Lane Bridge in Johnson Park (grove 5).

There is no signage for the canal entrance at either of the parking lots. There is also no signage giving directions to other nearby public access points such as the Route 18 Trench Bikeway.

There are restrooms/toilets across the river in Johnson Park or in nearby Buccleuch Park.

Route 18 Trench Bikeway

Handicapped Accessible Public Access Points Map ID #3a to 3c

There is no signage to indicate the entrances to the Route 18 Trench Bikeway or what to expect once you are on the trail such as how long it is, how far to the next exit, or directions to parking, restrooms, or other nearby public access points such as the D&R Canal State Park Trail.

Parking for the bikeway would be in Buccleuch Park or in the lot adjacent to the New Brunswick Landing at Boyd Park.

The bikeway has handicapped accessibility concerns. The north entrance to the bikeway, near the New Brunswick side of the Lynch Memorial Bridge Pedestrian and Bikeway, is adjacent to a pedestrian crossing of George Street at the foot of a set of stairs from Buccleuch Park. There are no curb cuts at this crossing. About a half mile down the trail, the Deiner Park egress from the bikeway is up a long flight of stairs and over Route 18 via a bridge to a (locked) gated entrance that is at grade with Deiner Park. The south entrance to the bikeway is at grade from stairs and ramps off Albany Street or from Boyd Park.

There are no restrooms or toilets available for the bikeway. The nearest facilities are in Johnson Park (see D&R Canal above), in Buccleuch Park, or near the New Brunswick Landing in Boyd Park (see below).

Boyd Park

Handicapped Accessible Public Access Points Map ID #5a to 5d

Directional signage for Boyd Park is fairly limited. There is a green park sign on the NJ 18 Service Road with an arrow directing traffic to the south entrance of the park (nearest George Street) and there is a brown park sign with an arrow to the New Brunswick Landing Boat Docks at the north end of the park off the NJ 18 Service Road. There are no signs from downtown New Brunswick indicating pedestrian entrances to the park at New Street or Commercial Avenue. Once across Route 18 at Commercial Avenue, there is a large arched entrance for Boyd Park near the amphitheater. Within the park, there are numerous interpretive signs that describe, among other things, the history, planning concepts, ecology and recreation of the area. There are no

signs in the park to direct park-goers to other nearby public access points such as the Landing or the Route 18 Trench Bikeway.

Parking is fairly limited within the park. There are 47 parking spots available at the southern end of the park off of the New Jersey 18 Service Road entrance; 34 spots are in the lot behind the amphitheater and 13 spots are below Rutgers Boathouse. There is also room for approximately three cars with boat trailers at the top of the boat ramp in that same area. Designated parking at the north end of the park is off of the NJ 18 Service Road north of New Street at the New Brunswick Landing (10 spots) with possible overflow parking in a graveled area to the north of that entrance. There is also ample public parking for the park across Route 18 in downtown New Brunswick either on the street or in nearby lots/garages (hourly or day rates apply at most). There are no signs at the garages or lots to indicate proximity to the park, nor are there signs in the park to direct visitors to additional parking areas.

Walkways into the park from downtown New Brunswick (across Route 18) are handicapped accessible with crossing signals and ADA curb cuts at all four main entrances. Paths within the park are a combination of concrete, asphalt and crushed stone and are generally well maintained and accessible.

The northern end of the park is fairly unstructured open space with only a portable toilet and a few park benches near the New Street pedestrian entrance at the New Brunswick Landing Boat Dock. Most other amenities are in the southern portions of the park below Commercial Avenue. There you will find flexible entertainment and festival space including stadium seating, a stage, concession area, restrooms (open during park functions), portable toilets, parking, and a playground with concrete benches and a picnic table. This part of the park also contains the historic terminal lock for the D&R Canal, though it is presently in disrepair and lacks any interpretive signage.

Just below the amphitheater area is a fenced off section containing the Rutgers Boathouse facility and below that is the remaining section of Boyd Park. Access to the lower section of the park is along a sidewalk between the Boathouse and the access drive or through a fenced path through the Boathouse site. The lower section of the park contains a portable toilet, two picnic pavilions with picnic tables, a playground, numerous benches, bicycle racks, a concrete boat launch, and parking as noted above.

New Brunswick Landing

Handicapped Accessible Public Access Points Map ID #6

A brown park sign indicating the New Brunswick Landing Boat Dock is posted near the driveway to the parking area off of the NJ 18 Service Road between New and Albany Streets. At the main path to the Landing, there is an interpretive sign that describes the Riverfront Plan Concept and showing how convenient the Landing is to downtown New Brunswick and other nearby river destinations. Other signage at the Landing indicates no swimming or fishing from the docks. There is no signage to direct visitors to other parts of Boyd Park or to other nearby public access such as the Route 18 Trench Bikeway.

Ten parking spots are available near the dock tenders shack at the end of the access road from the NJ 18 Service Road. There is no boat launch access at this location. Overflow parking may be available in an unmarked gravel and dirt area just north of the main road entrance.

The boat dock access ramps and pathways have appropriate curb cuts and are accessible, though parts of the paths are crushed packed stone.

There is an ADA accessible portable toilet off of the parking area near the dock tender's shack.

Table OS2: City of New Brunswick Public Access Location Amenities

ID	SIGNS	PARKING	NUM_PARKING	STREET	BADGE	SWIMMING	FISHING	SURFING	PLAY-GRD	PARK	PIER	BOAT-LNCH	MARINA	FOOD_DRINK	RESTROOM	SEATS	H_C	SHORELINE	ACCESS_TYPE
1	Yes	Yes	9	south end of Landing Lane Bridge	No	No	Unrestrict	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	River	Physical
2	Yes	No Fee	Through-out	George Street east of Landing Lane	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Visual
3a	No	No	-	George Street east of Landing Lane	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	River	Visual
3b	No	No	-	stairway to Deiner Park	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	River	Visual
3c	No	No	-	west end of Albany Street Bridge	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	River	Visual
4	Yes	No	-	George Street at Rutgers Parking Lot 20	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	River	Visual
5a	Yes	No	-	west end of Albany Street Bridge	No	No	Unrestrict	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Physical
5b	Yes	No Fee	10	New Street and Route 18	No	No	Unrestrict	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	River	Physical
5c	Yes	No	-	Commercial Street and Route 18	No	No	Unrestrict	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Physical
5d	Yes	No Fee	47	NJ 18 Service Road southeast of Commercial Avenue	No	No	Unrestrict	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Physical
6	Yes	No Fee	10	NJ 18 Service Road north of New Street	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Physical
7	Yes	No Fee	-	NJ 18 Service Road southeast of Commercial Avenue	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	River	Physical
8	No	No	-	Carpender Road	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	River	Visual
9	No	No	-	NJ 18 Service Road	No	No	Unrestrict	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	River	Physical
10	No	No	-	Regency Manor Drive	No	No	Unrestrict	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	River	Physical
11	No	No	-	Burnett Street at Lawrence Brook	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	River	Visual
12	No	No	-	Burnett Street near Edgebrook Road	No	No	Unrestrict	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Pond	Physical
13	Yes	No Fee	-	Ryders Lane	No	No	Unrestrict	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Pond	Physical

Limitations to Public Access

Public enjoyment of some of New Brunswick's public access areas is constrained by temporary or more permanent restrictions. Temporary restrictions impede active use and include lack of or restricted parking, inadequate signage, lack of restrooms, excessive noise, unpleasant environmental conditions, safety concerns, etc. Permanent restrictions are related to zoning, physical constraints and other impediments that would require potentially significant resources to circumvent. The following sections describe temporary and permanent restrictions for public access in the City of New Brunswick.

Temporary Restrictions: Restrictions noted for the following public access points are ultimately resolvable. They include: lack of amenities, such as seating and picnic facilities that would attract users; lack of parking; poor or no signage; trash or under-maintained features, such as path lighting and overgrown vegetation; perceived or actual safety concerns; and seasonal or hourly use restrictions.

Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Trail: The portion of the canal heading south from Landing Lane Bridge dead-ends at the large spillway adjacent to the city's main water intake. Public access is restricted here by the spillway and water utility structures. There is no signage at the Landing Lane entrance to this spur to indicate that it is not a through path. At best, this is inconvenient to trail users; at worst, it could be dangerous if users needed to quickly exit the path for safety reasons. The city should coordinate with the D&R Canal State Park to place signage at this entrance to indicate it is a dead-end until further improvements can be made.

The next section of the canal going south has been buried under Route 18 and the Route 18 Trench Bikeway but appears again in Boyd Park. Rutgers University, in its Facilities Master Plan for 2030, has proposed installing either a boardwalk similar to Philadelphia's Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk or, more recently, a cantilevered platform off the existing bikeway that would link this section of the canal with the remaining canal towpath in Boyd Park.

Route 18 Trench Bikeway: As previously noted, the 1.4 mile long bikeway is bounded on the river side by a tall chain link fence, and on the landward side by the embankment for busy Route 18. There is a gated entrance to the Route 18 Trench Bikeway at the back of Deiner Park behind Rutgers' Hardenburgh and Campbell Halls off of George Street. This entrance, at the top of pedestrian bridge and stairs that leads down to the bikeway, is presently locked and poses a potential hazard for visitors needing emergency egress from the bikeway. Other exits from the bikeway are 0.6 miles to the north, or 0.8 miles to the south.

This limited egress coupled with restricted sightlines, the narrow path, graffiti, periodically overgrown vegetation and seasonal homeless encampments along the route cause users and potential users of the bikeway to perceive it as unsafe.

In its 2030 Facilities Master Plan, Rutgers has proposed rebuilding the bikeway by constructing a boardwalk in the Raritan River – similar to Philadelphia's Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk – that reconnects the D&R Canal Trail through this area and to the remnants of the canal towpath in Boyd Park. (See discussion in Section III. Community Needs Assessment: Studies). Rutgers is also exploring a cantilevered platform off of the existing bikeway that may have fewer ecological impacts. Designs for the new path are for a wider, more open walkway/bikeway, and would

have a new open access to Deiner Park that would also connect to a new pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the Raritan River into Piscataway. Reconnecting the bikeway to the D&R Canal Trail and with a Raritan crossing into Piscataway would likely increase the number of visitors to Boyd Park and possibly bring more visitors into downtown New Brunswick.

Boyd Park: Community needs assessment captured concerns that the park is underutilized and not the gem of downtown New Brunswick that it could be. Despite recent park improvements, it is perceived as poorly accessible by area residents and faces several restrictions that inhibit more active use of the park including a dearth of parking, lack of signage to direct visitors to the park, limited amenities, degraded features, and seasonal/periodic flooding.

Paved parking spaces at Boyd Park are limited to 57 cars. Though additional parking is available across Route 18 in the city, it is not marked for proximity to the park. Also, picnickers or families with small children are not likely to carry their supplies along the long pedestrian access roads across Route 18 and then through the park to the designated picnic areas. For example, the distance from the corner of Commercial Avenue and Neilson Street to the first picnic pavilion near the boat launch is approximately 0.5 miles (following ADA pathways); from New Street and Neilson Street, the distance to the picnic pavilion is 0.75 miles.

These crossings, though recently improved, are still perceived to be dangerous as there are no barriers between the pedestrian walkways and traffic exiting and entering Route 18 via Commercial Avenue and New Street – the main pedestrian entrances to the park. Further, there is no signage at the city-side entrance to these access roads indicating that they provide park access.

Comments about park amenities during the community needs assessment indicated a demand for more picnic areas possibly with barbecue stations and more benches throughout the park. Presently, picnic tables and pavilions are only available below Commercial Avenue near the Rutgers Boathouse, and there are no barbecue stations.

Also, there are only two benches near the New Street entrance to the park with all other seating south of the amphitheater.

One of the more significant concerns for Boyd Park is that the river periodically inundates the park. Part of the natural floodplain of the Raritan, Boyd Park floods at extreme high tides, during storm surges, and during high precipitation events in the upland regions of the river basin. Storm surge from Superstorm Sandy and significant down basin flooding from Tropical Storm Irene has damaged some of the park infrastructure. Additional issues emerged as the result of flooding from Tropical Storm Ida.

Also, lighting fixtures along the towpath that were vandalized and further damaged in subsequent floods have not been repaired and lend to the general sense of disrepair and resulting unsafe feeling for sections of the park.

A further area that detracts from enjoyable use of the park is the condition of the remaining section of the D&R canal. The section within Boyd Park is cut off from the feeder canals and receives only limited flushing from Raritan overflows or rain events. The water in the canal, therefore, has poor flows and so gets stagnant and fills with trash. Several different entities including co-LAB Arts, Rutgers University, and the D&R Canal Watch (informally) have proposed new concept plans for revitalizing Boyd Park's riparian zone and merit further investigation (See the Studies section below).

New Brunswick Landing Boat Dock: The Landing Boat Dock is a seasonal fixture in the Raritan. Annually, Middlesex County Parks Department installs the docks and channel markers in late May and removes them in late September. The boat dock season officially runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but the docks are often reopened for the Raritan River Festival on the fourth Sunday in September. In season, the docks are open from noon to 8:00 pm weekdays and from noon to 10:00 pm on weekends.

The docks are underutilized. Participants in the community needs assessments thought the poor use of the facility was in part due to lack of park programming or ties to area events as well as the lack of marina-type amenities, such as a bait shop, fuel and water supply, and boat launch. The nearest launch is in the south end of Boyd Park about a half mile away, and the nearest marina is in Edison – a little more than one nautical mile downstream and across the river.

Carpender Road: Lack of existing connections and steep embankments behind the houses on Carpenders Road and off of Paulus Boulevard and Chester Circle restrict direct access to the river in this section of the city's riparian zone. As noted in Section II.A. above, during the redesign of Boyd Park in 2002, NJDOT consultants Vollmer Associates did a quick concept plan of a path that would run along the Raritan shore from Boyd Park to Paulus Boulevard through the Carpenders Road area. The path had egress points at the south end of Boyd Park, up a switchback to Route 18 just north of Carpenders Road, and via another switchback to Paulus Boulevard. Notes on the plan indicated that part of the path was on private land and would require an easement.

Should easements be secured, the path should be designed for resiliency to high flows associated with storm events and would require installation of appropriate signage. Parking and other amenities would (most likely) not be available at this otherwise residential access point.

Raritan River Conservation Areas – City and County: The primary restrictions for the county and city conservation areas are the lack of improved access points and no linkages to other public access in the city. A potential public access point off of Regency Center Drive is gated and locked, as is potential egress from the south portion of the area off of the PSEG service road just north of the NJ Turnpike (see comments under Section II.A. above). Of course, there are also no designated parking areas, signage, maps, or associated amenities such as benches or toilets provided in the conservation areas; these should be considered as plans for opening a path through the conservation areas are developed.

The conservation areas are in the flood plain of the Raritan and would be inundated during high flow and some high tide events. Further, in large portions of these conservation areas, views of and access to the river are obscured by thick stands of phragmites. Public access improvement in the conservation land should address restoration of this habitat and ensure consideration for resiliency.

Westons Mill Pond Conservation Area and the Weston Mill Pond: There is no signage at the Westons Mill Pond to indicate public access, but there is unimproved access on the north side of the water utility facility adjacent to the Westons Mill Pond Dam. The unmarked trail off of Burnet Street is initially grass and quickly degrades to dirt with a short concrete section under Route 18 to a wire reinforced cobbled stream crossing before reaching the Westons Mill Arch Dam. There is an informal pull out here for portage around the dams. The dirt trail continues south along the shore of the pond and connects with paths to Helyar Woods and Rutgers Gardens beyond.

Use of this site is further restricted by a lack of designated parking. There is evidence that the ponds periodically flood and the sometimes steep dirt paths (between the dams and Rutgers Gardens) would be difficult in wet conditions.

Helyar Woods & Rutgers Gardens: The Rutgers research and display gardens offer unimproved access to the shores of Westons Mill Pond. Mown grass and dirt paths lead from a small paved parking area and an adjacent overflow field parking area at the back of the Log Cabin approximately 0.75 miles through woods and fields to Burnet Street south of Tunison Road. These paths, some very informal, follow the north shore of the pond with numerous off-trail paths down to the water's edge. The trails would be difficult in wet weather and there is evidence that parts of the trail are periodically flooded especially where it passes under Route 18 between the upper and lower dams. The New Brunswick end of the trail is on the north side of the city's water utility facility near the Engine Company 2 Fire Station. There is no designated parking at the New Brunswick end of the trail. There is a NJ Transit bus stop across from the fire station. Rutgers Gardens closes at dusk.

Rutgers University is presently revising the Master Plan for Rutgers Gardens and Heylar Woods that will likely include increased access and better connections to Rutgers Cook Campus across Route 1. Collaboration with Rutgers to consider better linear access between the Gardens, Woods, and the Westons Mills Pond would further the city's and the university's public access goals.

Permanent Restrictions: Sections of New Brunswick's riparian zone that will not be available for public access in the foreseeable future are the conservation area east of the New Jersey Turnpike at the confluence of the Lawrence Brook and Raritan River, and the Rutgers Village residential area along the Lawrence Brook between the New Jersey Turnpike and Route 18 North. Specific restrictions for these areas are noted below.

In consideration of the restrictions to securing access under the Turnpike and through the Rutgers Village properties the city might explore securing passage along the high tension line right of way from the county and city conservation areas connecting through Murphy Park to the Westons Mill Pond dams. The high tension line right of way joins Burnet Street only 300 feet from the informal access point for the Westons Mill Pond at the water utility facility. Should public access to the

conservation area at the confluence be secured in the future, it could be connected to improved public access points in the conservation area west of the turnpike or to Westons Mill Pond as a spur or loop trail.

Raritan River Conservation Area – City Owned: The New Jersey Turnpike poses a significant barrier for access to the new conservation area at the confluence of the Lawrence Brook and Raritan River. A fenced access road from the south bound lanes crosses under Route 95 on the Raritan River side of the parcel. Depending on grade and distance from that road to the river shore, it may be possible to pass under the turnpike parallel to that road. No such road exists on the Lawrence Brook crossing for I-95 and access is further restricted there by the adjacent private residences on the west side of the turnpike (see below).

Rutgers Village: While the prior 2004 Parks/Recreation/Open Space Plan showed a proposed trail along the Lawrence Brook through this area, in reality the trail would be in city residents' back yards. This area is zoned residential and properties back up to the river with no easements leading to the shores of the Lawrence Brook. Passage through this area would require securing over a half mile of linear easement or installation of an equally long boardwalk.

Westons Mill Pond Conservation Area and the Weston Mill Pond: Westons Mill Pond supplies water to the City of New Brunswick. No swimming is permitted. No gas powered motors are permitted.

Community Needs Assessment

- Community needs assessment for the MPAP took a variety of forms including: soliciting input during public meetings of area stakeholders; review of public access surveys done specifically for this project and for other related projects; review of previous studies and reports on public access in the area; phone interviews, and review of potential public access projects as presented by regional stakeholders to the MPAP steering committee at public meetings. The public outreach process facilitated and encouraged dialog on public access among diverse constituents. Representatives from the following were included in some aspect of the community needs assessment:
 - Center for Advanced Infrastructure & Transportation, Rutgers
 - City of New Brunswick City Market
 - City of New Brunswick Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development
 - City of New Brunswick Department of Social Services
 - City of New Brunswick Development Corporation
 - City of New Brunswick Engineering
 - City of New Brunswick Environmental Commission
 - City of New Brunswick Fire Department/OEM
 - City of New Brunswick Parks Division
 - City of New Brunswick Public Works Department
 - City of New Brunswick Water Utility
 - coLAB Arts
 - Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission
 - Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers
 - Facilities and Capital Planning, Rutgers
 - Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership
 - Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership
 - Marine & Coastal Sciences, Rutgers
 - Middlesex County HAZMAT Planning
 - Middlesex County Improvement Authority
 - Middlesex County Office of Planning
 - Middlesex County Parks
 - New Brunswick Cultural Center
 - New Jersey Water Supply Authority, Watershed Protection Program
 - New York-New Jersey Harbor and Estuary Program
 - Parking and Transportation, Rutgers
 - Raritan Riverkeeper
 - Recreation, Rutgers

Numerous other entities were invited but did not attend. This list does not reflect participation in the process by private citizens or through online surveys.

The community needs assessment methods and results are described in the following sections.

Steering Committee and Public Meetings

The MPAP was done in conjunction with a Coastal Vulnerability Assessment (CVA). The authors of the MPAP utilized the same steering committee for both the MPAP and CVA, and also opened the MPAP meetings to area stakeholders and interested residents. Steering committee members included city personnel from Engineering, Planning, Fire/OEM, Parks and Development; members of the Environmental Commission; City Market; representatives from Middlesex County including the Improvement Authority, Planning and emergency personnel; representatives from the New Jersey Water Supply Authority; and Rutgers staff conducting the plan development. Interested others who attended the public meetings included representatives from Rutgers' Facilities and Capital Planning, Recreation, Parking and Transportation, and several faculty and staff from various Rutgers schools; as well as representatives from local non-profit groups such as the Raritan Riverkeeper, the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program, coLAB Arts, Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership, and the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership. Meetings usually had a presentation followed by discussion and plan input. A total of six meetings were held as well as one field trip to the conservation areas.

Surveys

The MPAP authors conducted an electronic survey to assist with the needs assessment for the MPAP and also reviewed the results of other recent surveys in the area that had a New Brunswick public access component.

New Brunswick Public Access Survey:

The New Brunswick Public Access research study was conducted on behalf of the City of New Brunswick for the MPAP and for an associated Health Impact Assessment by the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University in the spring of 2016. The purpose of the research was to determine the public's needs and concerns as they relate to access to and use of the parks and public spaces adjacent to the Raritan River and the Lawrence Brook in New Brunswick and the public's understanding of how climate change may impact the river and surrounding areas. The Institutional Review Board- certified survey was anonymous and voluntary and was available on-line in English and Spanish. Links to the survey were distributed via email to representatives of local stakeholder organizations who pushed the survey to their membership. One hundred and thirteen surveys were completed. The 50-question survey was designed to take between five and ten minutes to complete. It focused primarily on awareness and use of Buccluech Park, Boyd Park, and Deiner Park and the three conservation areas – two along the Raritan (city and county owned) and one at Westons Mill Pond. In general, respondents indicated that they would use the three parks more if: there were more special events (71.8%); they were safer and easier to get to by foot or bicycle (55.7%); they offered canoe, kayak or paddleboarding rentals (71.6%); or they were cleaner and better maintained (64.7%). When asked about damage associated with flooding, 72.2% of respondents thought Boyd Park should be redesigned to be more resilient to storm damage, 75.3% thought restored wetlands would help control flood waters, and 64.4% wanted to see the terminal lock on the D&R Canal in Boyd Park restored. Participants were also asked if they would like to see improvements at the Westons Mill Pond to aid in fish migration and 87.7% of respondents said yes.

Survey questions related to health and economic impacts will be further reviewed as part of the associated Health Impact Assessment (see *Rapid Health Impact Assessment: New Brunswick Municipal Public Access Plan* under Studies below).

MyCampus Findings: Connecting Rutgers to the Region, the Raritan and the Community

The MyCampus Findings survey was a two part interactive mapping and text-based survey designed to capture input from faculty, staff and students that would help inform Rutgers facilities master planning processes. Over 5,500 people participated in the New Brunswick portion of the survey (surveys were also conducted for Camden and Newark). The survey solicited input on, among other things, recreational facilities and opportunities and open space. Some of the comments collected on the interactive mapping portion of the survey for recreation and open space related to public access issues included: the D&R “towpath is great for running, biking. Wish it were easier to park nearby”; Boyd Park is “my favorite place to run! I sometimes go as far as Busch and Livingston. More connecting footpaths are required between all the campuses!”; and, Boyd Park is “surprisingly quiet”. A primary conclusion of the survey was that opportunities for better open spaces and connectivity exist at all locations (campus centers in New Brunswick/Piscataway) and that connections to the Ecological Preserve and the Raritan are also desirable.

Improving Student Health through Active Recreation in Campus Design

In the spring of 2015, a public health intern with the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy conducted a series of interviews, student engagement sessions and a survey to capture student opinions on recreation in campus design (Patel and Lowrie, 2015). Among other things, this project explored what outdoor activities were preferred by young adults and perceived obstacles to active outdoor recreation as well as reactions to Rutgers’ concept plans for revitalizing Deiner Park and the Raritan River Boardwalk and pedestrian/bicycle bridge to Piscataway. Of students surveyed, 61.9% said they would most likely or definitely use the proposed walking path and bridge across the Raritan. When asked if the walking paths or availability of kayak/canoe rentals would increase their participation in physical activities: 73.8% indicated they might or definitely would participate more in kayaking/canoeing; 90.4% said they might or definitely would participate more in walking for leisure; 88.7% said they might or definitely would walk more for exercise; 82.5% might or would jog more; and between 63 and 65% said they might or would bicycle more for leisure or exercise if the paths were built. A variety of factors were deemed somewhat or very important in influencing students’ decisions to use the new paths and included: that they are clean and well-maintained (82.5% somewhat or very important), that they are lighted (81%), that they lead to places with activities or programs (73%), the paths are patrolled by officers (74.2%), the paths are free of homeless or vagrants (82.6%) and that they could get to class faster [on the paths] than using the buses (82.5%). Safety, crime and weather (cold in winter) were the biggest concerns with using the proposed paths.

Studies

The Park System of New Brunswick, New Jersey: Findings and Recommendations:

In its 2011 *Findings and Recommendations* report, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) under a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reviewed parks, open space and recreation strategies city-wide and made recommendations for improving and better utilizing these assets in New Brunswick's "ongoing revitalization efforts ... to further 'brand' and sell the city as a great place to live, work, and visit." (p3) The report noted that New Brunswick had more public space on a per-capita basis than some of its neighboring municipalities, but that the quality, layout and amenities were somewhat lacking. In particular, the report noted that "the outstanding resource of the Raritan River is not fully capitalized" (p4) and that there are "still key opportunities where New Brunswick could score greater success by linking parks and, especially, by reestablishing an intimate relationship between the city and the Raritan River." (p4) TPL noted that the city could benefit from coordination and collaboration with area stakeholders such as Rutgers University, the Robert Wood Johnson Medical complex, the Johnson & Johnson Company, Middlesex County, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park to more fully maximize park system benefits. They also suggested that the, "city would benefit by going beyond a physical parks plan to a set of programmatic activities that promote a theme and a marketing strategy" (p4) and recommended that an "aggressive marketing campaign to promote use of the river could result in the need for increased access points. Moreover, there is no pedestrian or bicycle connection between New Brunswick and the Delaware and Raritan State Park's canal trail." (p5) The report culminated in ten key recommendations including new local and regional collaborations, realigning the parks and recreation departments, programmatic changes, and developing new or refocusing existing planning and implementation entities to spearhead specific efforts such as improving human and economic connections between the river and the downtown core.

Rutgers 2030: Rutgers University Physical Master Plan, Volume 1: New Brunswick:

An important aspect of the university's physical master planning was to consider Rutgers as more than an amalgam of buildings and structures and to instead focus on its large scale infrastructure and physical systems. In particular, the plan looked at Rutgers New Brunswick "as a natural ecosystem centered on the Raritan River, and traced how future development could enhance and reinforce that ecosystem." (p1) Among other aspects, the plan addresses transportation, health and wellness and recreation, as well as stewardship and sustainability. Rutgers plan explores enhanced bicycle and pedestrian access between the Livingston and College Avenue campuses via a new bike/footbridge across the Raritan that connects to paths through the Rutgers Ecological Preserve to the Livingston and Busch campuses in Piscataway. The plan proposes reconnecting Rutgers to the Raritan via a walkway "along the New Brunswick side of the River and connecting the College Avenue and Douglass, [which] would be accessible from new and restored stairs and ramps from the river's bluff, and will revive town, campus, and river connections severed by Route 18." (p20) "Extending from this new bridge is a boardwalk running along the Raritan River, connecting the Delaware and Raritan

(D&R) canal and trail network at the north end of College Avenue to Boyd Park and the Rutgers Boathouse at Douglass. This boardwalk increases access to the river and connects two disconnected recreational areas within New Brunswick.” (p117) Improvements to Deiner Park outlined in the plan include:

...linking it directly to both George Street and the new quadrangle [near the new transit hub] where a pavilion is proposed to provide shelter and meeting place, with an outdoor terrace with views of the river. ... A new stair and ramp between the park and the river will provide access to the park from the east, and connect the park to the rest of the network of parks along the river, and to the DNR canal.... Rutgers 2030 envisions a boardwalk along the west river edge to provide safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle access along the river, with areas of seating and activity along the boardwalk. The boardwalk is connected to the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the Raritan. The proposed bridge provides access to Johnson Park from College Avenue, and extends north to the Livingston. (p153).

[An improved pedestrian network will be achieved through]: ... connection from the proposed [College Avenue] quadrangle at the site of Records Hall eastward, towards Deiner Park and to a proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the Raritan River. This proposed bridge provides a connection to a proposed boardwalk along the Raritan River between the DNR Canal and Boyd Park. This pedestrian bridge is a central element to connecting College Avenue with Piscataway through Johnson Park and northwards to the Ecological Preserve, forming a recreation axis extending north to the Livingston.” (p157).

Phasing of Rutgers 2030 proposed elements begins with feasibility studies and design work for the pedestrian bridge over Raritan River in Phase 1 (2015 to 2019) with construction pending permits and funding in later phases. (p303) Work on the Raritan River Boardwalk would be in Phase 4 (2030 and beyond) with planning/feasibility likely in earlier phases. “This boardwalk serves to improve access to the river, connect riverfront parks and the DNR canal to its north, the Rutgers Boathouse at Boyd Park to the south. The boardwalk is also connected to the proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge extending across the Raritan River.” (p307) Recommended next steps include further studies and will require participation from key stakeholders including the Coast Guard, SHPO, and Raritan River communities in order to properly assess the probability of constructing in the river.” (p309)

Fish Ladder Feasibility Study:

On behalf of the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership, Princeton Hydro LLC (2013) conducted a preliminary study to determine the feasibility of utilizing fish ladders to restore fish passage above the dams at the Westons Mill Pond on the Lawrence Brook. These dams limit the natural tidal flow of the Lawrence Brook and restrict the passage of migratory fish to the Brook’s upper reaches. Restoring connectivity and habitat for migratory fish is consistent with the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (US Army Corp, 2009). The study determined that, despite water supply withdrawals, fish passage using Denil-style fishways should permit passage by river herring, American Shad and American eel.

A presentation by Kate Boicourt of the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program at one of the MPAP public meetings elicited favorable reactions to the plans. Participants voiced a positive response and interest in the plan as potentially providing additional public access through expanded fisheries and depending on the fish ladder construction, could also encourage public stewardship and environmental education. An example of this is public viewing areas at fish ladders and/or the installation of interpretive signage.

The fish ladder construction and maintenance would require collaboration among state, federal and local partners. Plan recommendations included working with the city to determine the feasibility of utility adjustments to ensure adequate flow for effective fish ladder operation, further analyzing upstream habitat, establishing a maintenance partnership, seeking funds for implementation and maintenance/management, and working with partners to develop educational aspects of fish passage. Also discussed in the MPAP public meetings was the possibility of partnering with Rutgers for better access through Rutgers Gardens as well as for educational programming and research that could ensure partnership for ongoing support/maintenance of the fish ladders.

Room for the River:

Rail->Arts->River is a landscape and community engagement concept that “champions urban arts and riverfront recapture, focusing on communities dynamically connected to the Raritan River and New Jersey Transit’s commuter rail line” (LRWP website). Originally a joint project of coLAB Arts and the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership, the concept is evolving to encompass municipalities along the Lower Raritan Watershed – including New Brunswick – with the intent to raise awareness to the river and to address stormwater runoff through creative/artistic solutions. Proponents of the project presented their concept plan to the MPAP Steering Committee during one of the public meetings. The concept plan included signage and wayfinding ideas for the waterfront as well as floodplain restoration in Boyd Park that allowed room for the river to flood while preserving public enjoyment of this tidal park’s amenities.

Rapid Health Impact Assessment: New Brunswick Municipal Public Access Plan:

The New Brunswick Municipal Public Access Plan is presently the subject of a “desktop” Health Impact Assessment (HIA) conducted by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy (Lowrie, 2016). An HIA is a tool that evaluates potential health impacts of planning and decision-making about projects and policies, with the overall aim to create conditions that encourage and support the protection and improvement of people’s health and wellbeing. The HIA of the MPAP will be completed in September 2017 and will consider the impacts of the MPAP recommendations on community health in the areas of physical activity, safety (crime and accidents), social cohesion, and local economic activity. It will include specific recommendations related to maximizing the health outcomes associated with public access to the Raritan River and minimizing any potential public health concerns.

Building a Culture of Health in the City of New Brunswick:

A network of partners throughout New Brunswick completed an 18 month planning process to enhance health and wellness in the City of New Brunswick resulting in a comprehensive, multi-year plan called a “Blueprint for Action.” The Blueprint recognizes the tremendous value that access to recreational opportunities contributes to health and wellness. More specifically, the Blueprint acknowledges that research suggests that increasing physical activity levels requires more than messaging and understanding – more specifically it requires a commitment to creating healthy, active communities that include recreation and sports facilities, parks and trails that are well designed, safe, functional and inviting. The public health literature also indicates that improved infrastructure will increase physical activity in communities while addressing critical health challenges like overweight, obesity, asthma, and stress, improving quality of life while simultaneously strengthening the community. Among the many objectives within the Blueprint, are ones that strive to ensure that more New Brunswick residents will have access to free, clean and safe spaces for physical activity within walking distance of their homes.

A key strategy within the Blueprint is the development of a strategic plan for public spaces and parks in New Brunswick to facilitate maximum availability and accessibility to these amenities for New Brunswick residents.

Implementation Plan

The City of New Brunswick has created an Implementation Plan for the MPAP composed of Priorities, Preservation of Public Access Locations, Signage, Proposed Access Improvements and Facilities, and Municipal Tools for Implementation as described in the following section:

Timeline for development of improvements is contingent on further development of plans, including engineering of various components of walkways and connector paths. Implementation is also dependent on local, county, State or other regulatory approvals, market conditions and funding, and collaboration/cooperation of various partners.

Priorities

1. The City of New Brunswick's priorities are foremost to preserve and maintain existing public access, to increase awareness and usage of public access by city residents, and to work with area partners to expand public access into conservation areas and to develop linkages and connections to facilitate enjoyable use of these areas. The current priorities include:

Maintain Existing Public Access: The City's Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development in collaboration with the New Brunswick Environmental Commission will continue to work with the city's Parks and Gardens Commission, Parks Division, Recreation Division, City Market, Middlesex County, NJDOT, Rutgers University and other area stakeholders including public-private partnerships and governing authorities to preserve and maintain existing public access locations at the D&R Canal Trail near Landing Lane, the Route 18 Trench Bikeway, Boyd Park and the New Brunswick Landing boat dock. Their combined efforts will ensure that existing public access points along the waterfront are safe and accessible by residents and visitors.

Further all maintenance and improvements to public access areas in New Brunswick will be accomplished respective of coastal vulnerability concerns and associated impacts on city property, public access assets and the health and safety of city residents, work force, and visitors.

- a. *Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Trail:* This short spur of the D&R Canal in New Brunswick lacks adequate signage to direct potential users to area parking, facilities and directions to other city public assets, as well as to indicate that the section going south from Landing Lane is presently a dead end.
- b. *Route 18 Trench Bikeway:* Until the proposed Raritan River Boardwalk is developed and built, the existing Route 18 Trench Bikeway requires maintenance and improvements as follows:
 - i. Work with Rutgers to open access from Deiner Park for safe egress from the bikeway and improve use
 - ii. Work with the NJDOT to manage vegetation, graffiti and trash along the length of the bikeway to enhance views of the river
 - iii. Work with local NGOs such as the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership or the Central Jersey Stream Team to do periodic cleanups of the river banks on the Raritan side of the bikeway fence
 - iv. Install signage at entrances to the bikeway with information about length and egress and directions to other public assets

- v. Ensure adequate and well-maintained lighting at the Albany Street end of park and as needed throughout the bikeway
- vi. Improve access to the bikeway entrance from Buccleuch to ensure safe crossing of George Street (presently no curb cut or crossing signal)

Ongoing maintenance of the Route 18 Trench Bikeway is presently within the jurisdiction of the NJDOT. Further, the bikeway is designated as potential habitat for Indiana bats and long-eared bats, which are protected species. Any tree or brush work or significant capital improvements would need to comply with applicable NJDFW and USFWS regulations. The city's Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development in collaboration with the city's Parks and Gardens Commission and New Brunswick Environmental Commission will work with the NJDOT and other stakeholders, including applicable state and federal entities, to ensure maintenance improvements are addressed

- c. Boyd Park: Boyd Park will also enjoy improvements once the Raritan River Boardwalk is Economic Development in collaboration with the Parks and Gardens Commission and the New Brunswick Environmental Commission will work with relevant stakeholders and public-private partnerships to ensure more enjoyable use of the park by area residents and visitors by:

- i. Managing and replacing vegetation as needed to enhance views of the river
- ii. Emptying trash cans and clearing vegetation to improve sightlines and aesthetics along canal paths
- iii. Installing more benches along paths especially in the New Street end of park
- iv. Installing fishing line disposal containers
- v. Installing picnic tables at the northern end of the park near New Street and investigate placement of additional pavilions and barbecue stations in the park
- vi. Improving awareness of Boyd Park from downtown New Brunswick by installing directional signage at the city side of entrances and entrance ramps at Albany Street, New Street, Commercial Avenue, and George Street, as well as at other locations such as near restaurants and theaters and the train station
- vii. Improving access to parking through placement of signage within the park to nearby parking amenities, by expanding available parking in the north end of the park, and by signing public parking facilities in downtown New Brunswick for their proximity to Boyd Park entrances
- viii. Repairing and/or replacing lighting along the towpath
- ix. Working with the D&R Canal Commission, the D&R Canal Watch and others to restore the terminus canal lock and improve educational/historical signage
- x. Continuing to maintain paths throughout the park

Ongoing maintenance of Boyd Park will be conducted by the city Parks Division. The city's Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development in collaboration with the city Parks and Gardens Commission and the Environmental Commission will work with the Parks Division and other stakeholders to ensure maintenance improvements are addressed.

- d. New Brunswick Landing Boat Dock: The New Brunswick Landings are an asset to aid in redevelopment of downtown New Brunswick and to help reconnect the downtown core to the Raritan River waterfront. As such, the Department of Planning, Community and

Economic Development in collaboration with the Parks and Gardens Commission and the Environmental Commission will work with the county as well as engage other stakeholders such as the university and area boating enthusiasts to increase usage of the Landings boat dock. Further, the city will:

- i. Work with the county to continue to maintain the docks and channel markers and as feasible expand the season to accommodate boat passenger access to the park, university events, and downtown activities
- ii. Install signage to other nearby public access and directions to the boat launch in the southern end of Boyd Park

Ongoing maintenance of the Landing boat dock and surrounding grounds will be coordinated by Middlesex County Parks. The Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development with the city Parks and Gardens Commission and Environmental Commission will work with Middlesex County to ensure maintenance improvements are addressed.

2. Planned Enhancement to Public Access Locations and/or Facilities: The Municipal Public Access Plan process, in conjunction with other community planning efforts as outlined in the Community Needs Assessment section of this report, reaffirmed the city's plans to provide access to the conservation areas and to enhance access to Westons Mill Pond and to work with university, county, public-private partnerships and other area stakeholders to develop linkages between its public access holdings for the further benefit of residents and visitors. The city intends to:

- a. Work with the county and other area stakeholders to develop access points into and trails through the conservation areas east from Boyd Park to the confluence of the Lawrence Brook and Raritan Rivers. It is expected that these will be improved to facilitate access but will have few amenities other than trails, signage (directional as well as interpretive) and associated parking. Enhancement plans will also include maintenance programs.
- b. Work with Rutgers, public-private partnerships and other stakeholders to develop the proposed Raritan River Boardwalk to enhance/replace the Route 18 Bikeway, to improve access to the waterfront from Deiner Park, and to reconnect the D&R Canal State Park Trail to Boyd Park
- c. Work with Rutgers, public-private partnerships and other stakeholders to develop the proposed Raritan River pedestrian/bikeway bridge across the Raritan River to Piscataway
- d. Work with partners to enhance access to Westons Mill Pond for boating, hiking and fishing commensurate with the pond's function as a municipal water supply. Enhancements will include improved public access, signage, associated parking, improved boat launch, and seating
- e. To further its conservation goals, the city will also work with area stakeholders to advance designs to install fish ladders at Westons Mill Pond dams and to pursue opportunities for public education through interpretive signage related to fish migration and habitat preservation and through possible partnership with Rutgers on public STEM education programming

Enhancements to existing locations such as a linkage trail through the conservation areas, the proposed Raritan River Boardwalk, and the proposed Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge are in concept phases. It is anticipated that the plans will be developed over the next several years. Contingent

on funding, the conservation area trail could be implemented in one to three years. Rutgers has proposed implementing the Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge within the next five years, while work on the Raritan River Boardwalk is presently proposed for ten to fifteen years – through some plan proponents would like to see implementation advanced more quickly.

3. *Other:* There are several other unimproved or restricted access points along the city’s waterfront that are not in the public domain and will require further investigation and stakeholder collaboration to ensure public access for the future. These are residentially zoned areas at Carpender Road and Rutgers Village, and the area immediately around the water utility at Westons Mill Pond that is zoned Educational Institutional.

As discussed elsewhere in this Open Space and Recreation Plan, the city will continue to explore ways to ensure linkages to other nearby public access areas with the goal of establishing a public access trail along the entire riparian border of the city from Franklin Township to North Brunswick – ultimately linking the D&R Canal on its northwest boundary with Westons Mill Pond on its southeast boundary. To that end, the city will continue to explore options to facilitate public access through Carpender Road and Rutgers Village and will also collaborate with Rutgers and other stakeholders to improve access to Westons Mill Pond and to improve public access linkages through Rutgers Gardens and Helyar Woods. Likewise, the Westons Mill Pond fish ladder requires further study to ensure its feasibility and will require partnership with numerous external stakeholders to implement.

It is anticipated that further study on these proposed public access locations will continue in the next two to three years with potential realization of the concepts in ten years.

Preservation of Public Access Locations

The majority of New Brunswick’s public access areas are zoned W-C, Waterfront Conservation District. Per the zoning regulations, the intent and purpose of the Waterfront Conservation District is to “recognize the particular environmental features of land area which lies between the waterfronts of the Raritan River and Lawrence Brook and the uplands adjacent to Route 18, Route 1 and the New Jersey Turnpike, while providing the opportunity for reasonable, environmentally sensitive development which maximizes waterfront views and allows public access to the waterfront.” The Waterfront Conservation District designation does not, however, ensure public access as required under CZM Rules. Under CZM Rules, public access locations need to be preserved either through inclusion in the city’s ROSI or through the use of conservation easements or restrictions. It is recommended that the city adopt one or more of these more stringent measures of protection to ensure public access in perpetuity for those access points not already listed on the ROSI identified previously in this OSRP.

In addition, the D&R towpath, Boyd Park, Buccleuch Park, the city and county conservation areas and the Westons Mill watershed are listed on the Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory.

Signage

The community needs assessment recommended a number of improvements to public access signage as discussed more fully above. The city recognizes its obligation under CZM Rules to provide adequate signage to public access in the municipality. The city further recognizes the benefit to its residents and

visitors that expanded signage can provide including interpretive/educational signage and directions to associated amenities such as parking, restrooms, or other nearby public access points. The Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development in conjunction with the Parks and Gardens Commission and Environmental Commission will collaborate with appropriate stakeholders including the Parks Division, the Recreation Division, City Market, DEVCO, the D&R Canal State Park, Rutgers University, and public-private partnerships among others to develop and implement a comprehensive signage campaign for public access throughout the city.

Proposed Access Improvements and Facilities

Raritan River Boardwalk and Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to Piscataway

Rutgers, in its Facilities Master Plan for 2030 has proposed a plan to replace the Route 18 Trench Bikeway and to reconnect the D&R Canal towpath to Boyd Park via a boardwalk. The boardwalk is similar in concept to Philadelphia’s Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk. Rutgers is also considering a cantilevered platform built off the existing bikeway that may have fewer ecological impacts. Concept designs for this walkway also include construction of and connections to a pedestrian/bicycle bridge connecting New Brunswick to Piscataway in the area of the Student Activities building on George Street near Deiner Park. The boardwalk design may include enhanced or restored wetlands in the Raritan River floodplain between boardwalk sections and the city’s river shoreline. Enhancements to these wetlands and floodplains were also explored in the Rail->Arts->River concept component for *Room for the River* by the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership and coLAB Arts. Both concepts are described in the Community Needs Assessment section, under Studies.

Raritan River Conservation Trail

The City is committed to opening access to the conservation areas for passive enjoyment. Improvements will include developing access points, installation of signage, and development of maintenance and monitoring plans to ensure the trails are well maintained. The conservation areas are within the Raritan’s floodplain. As such, the trail designs and access plans will need to accommodate periodic inundation. Access to the conservation lands will require collaboration among the city, Middlesex County, and potentially with area residents and businesses.

Westons Mill Pond Fish Ladders and Expanded Pond Access

The fish ladder feasibility study conducted by Princeton Hydro LLC on behalf of the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership identified a new opportunity for public access at the Westons Mill Pond through expanded fisheries and opportunities for public stewardship and environmental education. The fish ladder construction and maintenance would require collaboration among state, federal and local partners. Plan recommendations included working with the city to determine the feasibility of utility adjustments to ensure adequate flow for effective fish ladder operation, further analyzing upstream habitat, establishing a maintenance partnership, seeking funds for implementation and maintenance/management, and working with partners to develop educational aspects of fish passage. Also discussed in the MPAP public meetings was the possibility of partnering with Rutgers for better access through Rutgers Gardens as well as for educational programming and research that could ensure partnership for ongoing support/maintenance of the fish ladders.

Municipal Tools for Implementation

As the MPAP is part of the City of New Brunswick's Master Plan, the City's Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development will be primarily responsible for implementing the MPAP. In addition, the city has recently appointed a new Parks and Gardens Commission that will be working closely with the Mayor's Office, the Parks Division, the Recreation Division, the Environmental Commission, and with other city entities, public-private partnerships and area public access stakeholders to support the Department in ensuring comprehensive tools for the maintenance, enhancement and development of public access locations.

Implementation

The City's Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development will work with the recently appointed Parks and Gardens Commission, the Environmental Commission and other city entities and regional stakeholders to continue to maintain and improve existing public access locations and facilities with on-going maintenance provided by the Parks Division. The implementation schedule for expansion of existing facilities and new public sites or linkages is dependent on final design and approval of concepts, availability of funding, and securing appropriate permits.

Army Corps of Engineers Requirements for Shore Protection Projects

The City of New Brunswick will work with all appropriate agencies including the ACOE to ensure its plans for public access improvements meet all requirements.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Garden State Greenways Mapping

The Garden State Greenways Program, a part of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, is a collaborative planning tool designed to help communities coordinate and plan for open space across boundaries. Garden State Greenways encourages linking parks, recreation, and farmland together to form an interconnected system of preserved lands throughout the state of New Jersey. This is achieved primarily through providing maps, data, and other information for municipalities and other regional bodies for their use in planning for their communities.

The Garden State Greenways mapping is broken down into specific areas of environmental and open space concerns, and can be viewed individually. Several of those individual maps are discussed below.

Priority Lands for Ecological Integrity

The priority lands or ecological integrity are those identified as being the most important for protecting the quality of the environment. These lands are vital to maintaining the overall health of the ecosystems of the lands and waters in the state. As illustrated in the map below, with New Brunswick being an existing developed city, there are not large areas of priority lands in the City. The maps show that the most important areas in New Brunswick for environmental protection are the areas in the northeastern end of the City, between the New Jersey Turnpike and the Raritan River. In addition, within the Cook/Douglass Campus of Rutgers, along the Raritan River, and in the southern section of the City, are identified as being low to medium priority.



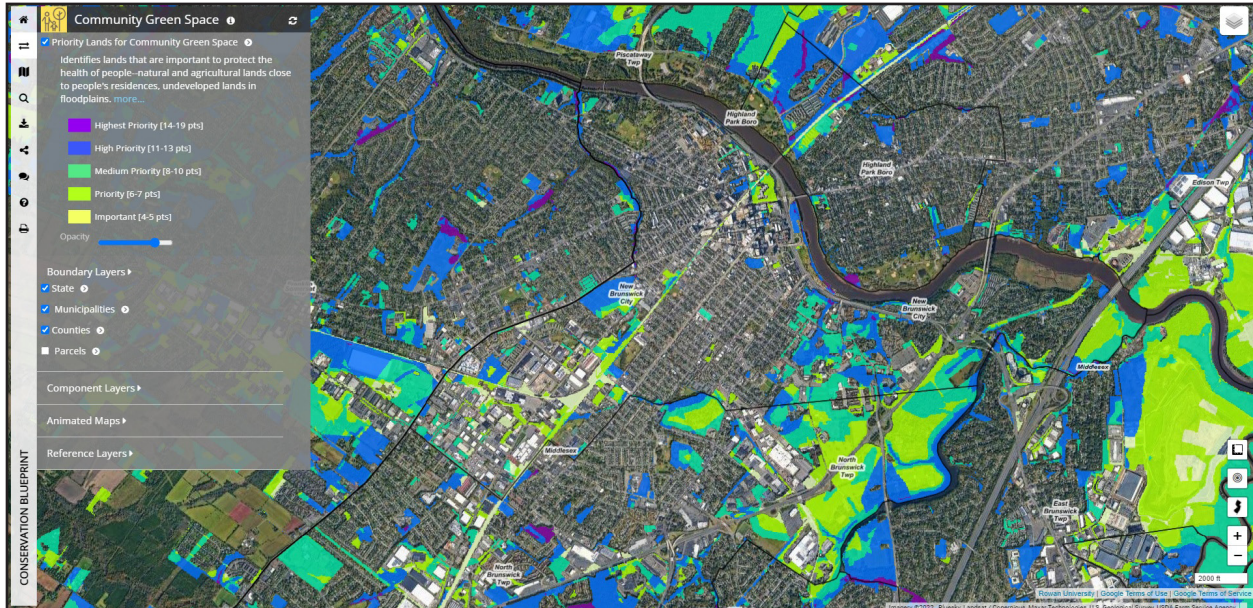
Priority Lands for Water

The water quality priorities mapping shows those areas that are most important for protecting the quality of surface and ground water resources. As expected, the lands most important for protecting surface water quality are also the lands that are closest to surface waters. These are the lands which surround the brooks and rivers. Lands around the northern stretch of the Mile Run is shown as a high priority, with lands further south along the Run identified as medium to medium-high priorities. Lands along the northeastern land boundary of the City, along the Raritan River, are also noted as medium-high priorities. However, it is noted here that the lands between Route 1 and the New Jersey Turnpike have already been acquired by the City of New Brunswick for conservation purposes.



Priority Lands for Community Greenspace

The priority lands for community greening data and mapping is intended to identify the lands in New Jersey that might be the most appropriate for open space and recreation purposes. The focus of these priority lands is not as much on protecting the environment, but on meeting recreation needs and connecting people with nature. While there are small parcels of land throughout the City given the highest priority designation, there are many more swaths of land identified as high and medium priority, especially in the eastern section of the City around the Cook/Douglass Campus of Rutgers. St. Peter's Cemetery is also noted as a high priority.



Garden State Greenways mapping follows a pattern of prioritizing lands proximate to surface waters for their importance to the environment. Protecting the lands surrounding the surface waters helps to maintain the ecological integrity of the area by reducing run off into streams, which reduces the chances of flooding, as well as naturally filtering stormwater before it reaches the creeks and streams. The bodies of water and the lands surrounding them are also the home to the greatest diversity of wildlife found in the area. These natural corridors also provide immense potential for interconnected open space greenway systems through passive recreation trails that follow the rivers and creeks. Given the data and mapping provided by Garden State Greenways, it is clear that through protecting water resources, many goals can simultaneously be achieved.

RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are differing methodologies for determining an appropriate number of parks and recreation space within any given area.

On a national level the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has issued guidance which had continually evolved over time, including recommendations that there be a set amount of park space for every 1,000 persons living in that area (Population Method) and that there be an established percentage of land devoted to parks (Balanced Land Method). The State of New Jersey has previously utilized balanced land use methods, with available records from Rutgers University indicating the concept was part of the 1963 New Jersey Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Summary Report. Balanced Land Use guidelines were included most recently in the NJ Green Acres 2008 – 2012 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The 2013– 2017 SCORP briefly references balanced land use but provides no guidelines, while the 2018-2022 SCORP contains no references to the concept.

In 1996 the NRPA published the Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines, which furnished a model of typical park classifications and included Level of Service (LOS) analysis which is a “systems approach” to facility planning. Common LOS Metrics include Acres Per Capita a/k/a the Population Method, and Access Distance/Time, which seeks to determine if parkland and facilities are easily accessible to residents.

In 2009 NRPA Park Metrics (a nationwide benchmarking tool for parks and recreation) replaced the NRPA Areas and Facilities Standards. The NRPA indicates that the Areas and Facilities Standards will never again be updated as “...there is not a single set of standards for parks and recreation that could possibly encompass the uniqueness found in every community across the country. Communities vary greatly by size, needs and desires; so too should their park and recreation agencies’ offerings.”¹

Though needs assessment methodologies have changed over time, traditional methods blended with newer approaches still have an important place in system planning. Using these methods can provide a basic understanding of whether or not the City of New Brunswick has sufficient park lands in comparison to a few established standards for measuring park space, and determining recreational space needs.

For the purposes of the following analyses, open space areas that function as conservation spaces are not included. Parks that are not yet open to the public are also not included in the total. Parks, plazas, or open spaces that provide active or passive recreation opportunities are included in the analysis. When the areas of these open spaces are summed, New Brunswick has 179.19 acres of recreational parkland. The following parks were included in this summation:

1 NRPA Park Metrics Replaces NRPA Areas and Facilities Standards, Parks and Recreation Magazine, November 2019

- Alec E. Baker Park
- Alice Jennings Archibald Park
- Boyd Park
- Buccleuch Park
- Civil War Memorial (Monument Square Park)
- Feaster Park
- Fireman's Memorial
- Joyce Kilmer Park
- Kossuth Park
- Langley Place Park (Village Gardens)
- Memorial Stadium Park
- Murphy Park
- Pitman Park
- Quentin Avenue Playground
- Simplex Playground
- Welton Street Park
- World War I Memorial Park (Women's War Memorial Clock)
- Youth Sports Complex
- Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park

Balanced Land Use Method

One of the traditional approaches is the Balanced Land Use method, which treats recreational needs uniformly across all contexts, regardless of population or other extenuating circumstances, on the basis of the amount of developed or developable land available in the jurisdiction.

In New Jersey, the Balanced Land Use Concept (BLUC) was premised on the idea that land is finite and that a certain amount of land needs to be set-aside for parks and recreational purposes if it's not to be "consumed" by development. The proportion of developed/developable land that is to be set-aside for parks and recreation differs based on the level of the jurisdiction. The last BLUC Guidelines from the 2008-2012 SCORP ("2008 SCORP") provided set percentages of developed and developable land to be dedicated to recreation open space requirements at both the County and Municipal level. The 2008 SCORP excluded acreage of slopes over 12%, wetlands, low density areas of the Pinelands, and federal and state-owned open space from developable area calculations.

The BLUC Method recommends that 3% of developable lands in a municipality be set-aside for parks and recreational facilities. Table OS3 below displays the land area of New Brunswick, along with the required amount of land for parks in it. The table then also provides the total number of acres actually provided for parks and recreation in the municipality, which includes State, County and municipal parks and open spaces. The final column demonstrates how far above (surplus) or below (deficit) the needed 3% of developable lands the City's park/recreation offerings fall.

As the table demonstrates, the City includes 3,333.8 acres of developable land, which yields a recommended 100.01 acres of recreation and open space areas from the BLUC metric. The inventory of publicly owned or operated parks and recreation facilities (not including conservation areas) shows the City has 179.19 acres of open space acreage. With just these spaces the City has a surplus of 79.18 acres of parkland/open space according to the BLUC metric.

Table OS3: Balanced Land Method Metrics for New Brunswick

New Brunswick	Size		Total Recreation & Open Space Acreage	BLUC Metrics	
	Square Miles	Acres		Metric (3 % of Municipal Land)	Excess / (Deficit)
	5.21	3,333.8		179.19	100.01

Source: US Census (2010 Decennial Census), New Jersey Open Space dataset, New Jersey Geographic Information Network (New Jersey Office of GIS), 01/21/2021

Level of Service Metrics

Six times a year the American Planning Association (APA) Planning Advisory Service publishes a “PAS Memo”, which is an online newsletter covering a wide range of topics relevant to planning practitioners. The PAS Memo issued May/June 2016 was entitled “Alternatives for Determining Parks and Recreation Level of Service” (“PAS Memo”), and discussed a wide range of historic and current techniques utilized in Parks Planning, including Level of Service (LOS) Metrics. Table OS4 is taken from the PAS memo, and describes the most common parks and recreation LOS metrics. As noted in the PAS Memo “The last set of national guidelines published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 1996 encourages communities to develop their own LOS standards rather than rely on any national standards: “A standard for parks and recreation cannot be universal, nor can one city be compared with another even though they are similar in many respects” (Mertes and Hall 1996, 59). Each city or county must determine the appropriate LOS required to meet the specific needs of its residents.² Two of the metrics listed below (Acres per Capita, Access/Distance) are addressed in the following sections.

Table OS4: Common Parks and Recreation LOS Metrics

Metric	Purpose
1. Acres per capita	To determine if a community has enough parkland To determine if parkland is equitably distributed based on population and geography
2. Facilities per capita	To determine if a community has enough recreation facilities such as athletic fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. To determine if the facilities are equitably distributed based on population and geography

2. Alternatives for Determining Parks and Recreation Level of Service, APA PAS Memo May/June 2016, page 1

Table OS4: Common Parks and Recreation LOS Metrics

Metric	Purpose
3. Building square footage per capita	To determine if a community has enough indoor recreation space such as recreation centers, community centers, senior center, or gymnasiums To determine if the indoor space is equitably distributed based on population and geography
4. Access distance/ time (bike, ped, car, transit)	To determine if parkland and facilities are easily accessible to residents via preferred modes of transportation including driving, transit, bicycling, or walking
5. Quality of facilities and experience	To determine if park facilities and geographies are consistent and equitably distributed across geographies
6. Operating expenditures per acre managed	To help determine if adequate funding is being provided for effective operations and maintenance
7. Operating expenditures per capita	To help determine if adequate funding is being provided for effective operations and maintenance
8. Revenue per capita	To help determine if a community is recovering enough costs to meet expectations and goals
9. Revenue as a percentage of operating costs	To help determine if a community is recovering enough costs to meet expectations and goals
<i>Source: Alternatives for Determining Parks and Recreation Level of Service (David Barth, PhD, AICP), APA PAS Memo May/June 2016</i>	

Acres per Capita

The “acres of parkland per 1,000 residents” is historically one of the most common techniques for determining whether a community has sufficient parkland. Still commonly referred to as the “Population Method” the acreage-based LOS metric “was first established in the 1930s by George Butler of the National Recreation Association, who proposed a standard of “10 acres of park and open space per 1,000 population within each city...Butler acknowledged that the standard may vary based on location and other factors, and today there is no published Acreage LOS standard in the U.S. Each community must determine its own standards based on local history, culture, demographics, density, development patterns, and other factors.” Acres per Capita LOS analysis for this Master Plan utilizes both the traditional “10 acres per 1,000” standard as well as more flexible LOS metrics.

As indicated in Table OS5 (Acres per Capita by Municipality, Union County NJ), and has been discussed above, there are 179.19 acres of open space and parkland within New Brunswick based on NJ Geographic Information Network data. New Brunswick has a population of 55,266 as of 2020 per the US Census count, which is estimated to grow to 69,304 by 2050 per the NJTPA. This translates to an Acreage LOS of 552.66 and 693.04

acres of parkland in 2020 and 2050, respectively. These recommended acreages exceed the existing open space/parkland in New Brunswick, resulting in deficits of 373.47 acres for 2020 and 513.85 for 2050.

Table OS5: LOS Acres per Capita for City of New Brunswick						
Population Estimates		Acreage LOS Metric (10 acres parkland per 1,000 population)		Total Recreation & Open Space Acreage	Acreage LOS: Excess / (Deficit)	
2020	2045	2020	2045		2020	2050
55,266	69,304	552.66	693.04	179.19	(373.47)	(513.85)
Source: US Census (ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles), North Jersey Transportation Authority, New Jersey Open Space dataset, New Jersey Geographic Information Network (New Jersey Office of GIS), 01/21/2021						

Alternatives to the “10 acres per 1,000” standard have been applied elsewhere. In its 1983 publication entitled “Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines” the NRPA recommended “that a park system, at minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population”.³ (Lancaster, 1983, p. 56). Many communities have adopted different benchmarks to assess how much parkland should be provided. For instance, Clark County, Washington, which has been experiencing growth due in great part to its proximity to Portland, Oregon, has adopted a standard of 6 acres/1,000 population for urban parks and natural areas combined.⁴

New Brunswick’s population density of 10,607.7 persons per square mile exceeds the overall urbanized area population density of 2,534.4 persons per square mile density within the US overall⁵. The City’s 2020 population of 55,266 meets the US Census classification of an Urbanized Area (UA, defined as 50,000 or more people). As such it’s appropriate that alternate Acreage Level of Service metrics more applicable to urbanized areas be reviewed.

3 *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, Roger Lancaster (Author), NRPA 1983*
 4. *Park System Level of Service Assessment, Clark County, WA, 2014*
 5. *US Census Urban Area Facts, last revised May 15, 2018*

Table OS6: Alternative LOS Acres per Capita Metric for City of New Brunswick						
Population (2020)	Population Density (per square mile)	Acreage LOS Metric (acres of parkland per 1,000 population)		Total Recreation & Open Space Acreage	Acreage LOS: Excess / (Deficit)	
		10	6.25		10	6.25
55,266	10,607.7	552.66	345.41	179.19	(373.47)	(166.22)

Source: US Census (ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles), North Jersey Transportation Authority, New Jersey Open Space dataset, New Jersey Geographic Information Network (New Jersey Office of GIS), 01/21/2021

Table OS6 provides a side by side comparison of a 10 acre per 1,000 and 6.25 acre per 1,000 Acreage LOS metrics for the City. Utilizing the 6.25 acre per 1,000 population metric instead of the 10 acre per 1,000 population, the present deficit, based on the 2020 population count from the U.S. Census, is reduced to 166.22 acres. However, this deficit will rise as the population of the City increases, and may be at 253.96 acres in 2050, if the population projection for that year holds true.

Access Distance

Analyses often concentrate on overall acreage of parks and recreation spaces in a specific community but do not examine if parks and open space are clustered or evenly distributed throughout. One rule of thumb, and a general standard for parks and recreation planning within a community, is that parks should be accessible to the population in that most people should be able to get to a public park or recreation space in a 10-minute walk or less. Where a person can walk to a park, there have been demonstrated public health benefits, in populations that can walk to parks show lower rates of obesity, diabetes, and other health issues related to exercise. This is largely attributed to the exercise that residents get simply walking to and from the park. Also, where people live within a 10-minute walk of a park, they are more likely to walk to, and use, the park facilities. The further away a person lives, the less likely they are to use the facilities.

The Trust for Public Land (“TPL”), a non-profit land conservation and parks organization, provides data via their ParkServe® interactive mapping site, part of their national campaign that every person in America has access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of home. The database contains information for over 14,000 cities, towns, and communities throughout the country. Using Census data and publicly available tax records, the TPL has calculated an estimate of the percentage of the population, population estimates and other available data and compiled data for New Brunswick. As indicated in Table OS7, 93.5 % of the City’s residents have a 10- minute walk or less to a park or open space

Table OS7: Walkable Service Area Survey for New Brunswick, NJ		
Total Population	Served Population	% of Residents within 10 Minute Walk of a Park
59,456	55,575	93.5 %
<i>Source: Trust for Public Land (*2020 US Census Block Group estimates provided by Esri)</i>		

Needs Assumptions

The need for different sports and recreational features is continually evolving. While participation in some activities wanes, participation in other sports and recreational activities expand. Some declining sports include tennis, baseball and football with some school systems eliminating football programs because of the physical contact and reduced international interest. Interest in other sports and activities like lacrosse, cricket, pickleball, soccer, and mountain biking are on the rise because of a need for sports with less contact, increased international interest, more individual activities, and the changing demographics of an area.

Based upon the previously discussed metrics the parkland situation in New Brunswick is a mixed bag. Utilizing the Balanced Land Method the City has ample recreational space, although it is important to note that nearly half of the City's parkland acreage comes from Buccleuch Park in the far northwestern corner of the City. Despite this, the access/distance metric demonstrates that nearly the entire City is within a 10-minute walk of a park or recreation area. However, using Level of Service metrics, the City has a severe deficit of parkland to meet the service needs of its population. Even using the lower (and more suitable to an urbanized environment) acres per population standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 people yields a deficit of over 166 acres. This deficit is expected to grow through 2050, when the City's population is projected to reach 69,304.

It is unlikely that the City will be able to generate enough parkland to meet the Level of Service standards because of its largely built-out nature. Although large redevelopment opportunities do exist, these are largely located in industrial or commercial areas that may be contaminated and are removed from residential neighborhoods.

Given these parameters and assumptions, the best approach for the City of New Brunswick can be summed up as "maintain and target." The City should maintain its current park, recreation, and open space to the highest possible standard, while also targeting activities and amenities at these parks that meet the needs of the existing population. Maintaining and targeting current parks also means providing more physical and The City should also keep track of opportunities to "target" vacant or underutilized properties closer to residential neighborhoods for the purposes of obtaining them and developing them as recreation spaces that meet the needs of the surrounding community. The City will need to coordinate with community and neighborhood stakeholders during any such process to determine what amenities are most suitable for a potential park or recreation facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list provides the recommendations for the City's parks and open space system.

1. Follow the recommendations provided by the 2017 Action Plan for individual parks in the City system.
2. Where not noted in park-specific recommendations, identify opportunities for integrating parks into the fabric of existing neighborhoods or communities in the City.
3. Work with City communities to identify suitable programming for each park.
4. Work with Rutgers University to conserve land and provide additional recreational opportunities for the entire City.
5. Maintain existing parks to a high level of cleanliness and safety.
6. Work with City communities to identify what amenities are best suited for each park, including potential new parks.
7. Plan for a future municipal pool. Identify possible sites for such a facility and the financial requirements of the same.
8. Expand passive recreational opportunities within the City's conservation areas, as noted in the MPAP.
9. Maintain a list of properties in the City that have the potential to be acquired and developed as parks or open space, especially in the central residential area of the City.
10. Identify and reconcile any discrepancies between City records and the ROSI list. This reconciliation should take place for the properties identified earlier in the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element "**Table OS1: Recreation and Open Space Inventory Properties**". Those properties that are highlighted in **Red** and the issues related to their status on the ROSI are as follows:

- a. Boyd Park: B: 1.01 L 1.02: This PSEG-owned parcel is identified as "part of" on the 2016 DOE but is not on the State ROSI or Open Space shapefile. The portion of the property dedicated to open space should be added to the added to the ROSI.
- b. Boyd Park (B: 1.01, L: 6.01): This property was not listed on the 2016 DOE when designating the Boyd Park area as part of the City's ROSI. The property was formerly identified as Block 1 Lot 6, portions of which were deeded to the NJ State Department of Transportation (Book 5320 Page 14) in 2003 as part of the Route 18 widening and improvement projects. The property appears to function as a part of the park, and it is recommended that it be added to the ROSI if it is considered as such.
- c. Boyd Park (B: 103.08, L: 1.01): This parcel is not identified on the 2016 DOE but included on the State ROSI and Open Space shapefile. The property should be added to the DOE when it is next amended/revised.
- d. Feaster Park (B: 191.01, L: 1.03): although listed on the ROSI, when examining this property on New Brunswick City tax maps this lot appears to be continuation of the Hale Street right-of-way and does not appear to function as part of Feaster Park. The lot functions more as a rear access alley to the adjacent Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts and thus, consideration should be given to

removing this parcel from the ROSI.

- e. Mike Run Brook (B: 435.01, L: 1.01): this parcel is identified on the 2016 DOE but not included on the State ROSI and Open Space shapefile. The property should be added to the ROSI.

- f. Rutgers Village Mini Park (B: 710.03, L: 4.02): at the time of this Master Plan Update, this property's status as part of the ROSI was called into question by City Planning Officials. The property does not function as a park and is considered vacant land that is clear due to the overhead utility lines. The origin of the lot's addition to the ROSI was not clear at the time of this Master Plan Update and the City should look to reconcile the reasoning behind listing the property as recreation and open space. Furthermore, the City should determine if the property functions as open space to the point where it is considered a ROSI property. In addition, there is a separate City-Owned parcel near Map ID #11, located in the Municipal Public Access Plan portion of this Element which is identified as "Rutgers Village." Per Mod IV and tax records this 0.35-acre vacant parcel is identified as Block 715.03 Lot 91 (Goodale Cir) which is located near the New Jersey Turnpike to the east.

- g. Welton Street Park (B: 130, L: 9.04): a Conservation Restriction Agreement (Book 6922 Page 145) for Welton Street Park was recorded in 2017 between the City and Middlesex County, which lists the parcels as Block 130 Lots 9.02, 10.01 and 11.02. The most recent tax map Current Mod IV data and tax map (revised through December 2019) indicates the current parcel is Block 130 Lot 9.04 (former Lot 9.02), reflecting a consolidation of the three lots listed in the 2017 Conservation Restriction Agreement as one tax parcel (Lot 904). However, available GIS data from state resources still identifies the park parcels under their former lot numbers. It is recommended that the City work with the NJDEP to amend GIS information to reflect the new lot configuration. In addition, it is also recommended that Welton Street Park be added to the DOE when it is next amended/revised.

- h. Wolfson Park (B: 8, L: 1.01): this parcel is the former location of the Wolfson Parking Deck which was demolished in 2017, and is currently listed on the Middlesex County ROSI. At the time of this Master Plan Update there are ongoing efforts to develop this site (which may or may not be called Wolfson Park), which is anticipated to be maintained by the City. We recommend it be determined if the site will continue to be listed on the County ROSI once developed as a park and amend ROSI and DOE records accordingly once future plans are finalized.