

**IMPACT FEE METHODOLOGY  
FOR PUBLIC RECREATION  
FACILITIES**

**Town of Hooksett, NH**

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Prepared for:

Town of Hooksett  
Planning Board

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# HOOKSETT PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES IMPACT FEE

## A. Authority and Limitations

New Hampshire RSA 674:21,V authorizes municipalities to assess impact fees to new development for the cost of "...public recreational facilities not including public open space". Impact fees may be used to recoup the costs of capital improvements made in anticipation of the demands of future growth or can be used to fund future improvements that provide capacity to absorb new development. The cost of simply upgrading or improving existing recreation facilities is not chargeable in the form of an impact fee assessment. Recreation impact fee assessments cannot be based on the cost to provide facilities that are already needed to support the needs of the existing population at reasonable standards.

An important caveat of the New Hampshire authorizing legislation is its prohibition on using impact fees to fund *public open space* costs within an impact fee assessment. Since many recreation spaces and facilities include multiple functions embracing both active recreation and sports as well as passive uses of open space, it is necessary to interpret this statutory restriction in a way that distinguishes public open space from public recreation facilities. The level of active recreational sports uses, the degree of improvements to the land, and the presence of developed facilities on the property are reasonable means to define "recreational facilities" within the meaning of RSA 674:21, V.

Projects whose primary purpose is to create conservation lands and public open space for water and wetland conservation, natural habitat and wildlife preservation, aesthetics or view preservation may also support passive recreational uses such as walking and hiking. While these spaces are supportive of some forms of recreation, such conservation lands serve primarily open space objectives, and are not considered to be *recreation facilities* for the purposes of the impact fee calculations in this study. While providing the valuable function of open space preservation, such lands are not significantly developed or improved with capital facilities or equipment, and the recreation uses they support tend to be passive and subordinate to their conservation functions.

## B. Existing Recreation Facilities and Needs

### 1. Inventory of Current Facilities

An inventory of the existing public recreation facilities in Hooksett (including those owned and operated by the Hooksett School District, is shown in Table 1 on the following page. Distinctions are made in the inventory between active recreation facilities and primarily open space or conservation parcels. Under RSA 674:21, V "public open space" is excluded from the public capital facilities for which impact fees may be assessed.

**TABLE 1**

**HOOKSETT NH RECREATION FACILITY AND LAND INVENTORY**

LOCATION AND TYPE					FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS (Number)																
NAME OF AREA OR FACILITY	Ownership	Useable Outdoor Recreation Acreage	Location	Primary Recreation Use/Other Uses on Site	Gymnasium	Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	Basketball Courts (Indoor)	Tennis Courts	Baseball Fields	Softball Fields/Youth Baseball	Soccer/Multipurpose Fields	Football Fields	Running Track	Swimming Pool or Swimming Area/Beach	Playgrounds	Picnic Areas	Picnic Tables	Boat Launch	Ice Rink/Rollerblade - Outdoor	Clubhouses	
<b>ACTIVE RECREATION AREAS/FACILITIES</b>																					
Donati Park	Municipal	28.0	Village	Field sports		1	2	3	1	1	1		Yes 1/6th mile		2	1	Yes			2	
Fraser Park	Municipal	3.0	South-on K Ave	Field sports		1	2								1						
Riverside Park	Municipal	9.8	Merrimack St.	Boat access, skating, rollerblade. P/o District Court Site														1	1		
Peter Brook Park	Municipal	6.0	Industrial Drive	Donated by Manchester Sand & Gravel							2										
Underhill School	School District	1.0	Sherwood Dr.	Playground	0.5		0.5								1						
Hooksett Village Elementary	School District	--	Village	Donati Park adjacent	0.5		0.5														
Memorial Middle School	School District	2.5	Off Rte 3 S.	Soccer/multipurpose	1						1										
New Middle School (Planned)	School District	10.0	Whitehall Rd	Athletic fields	1	1	1		1	1	2		Proposed 1/4 mile								
<b>TOTAL -ACTIVE RECREATION</b>		<b>60.3</b>			3	3	2	4	4	2	6	1	0.42	0	4	1	0	1	1	2	
(Acres for recreation facilities at new middle school estimated based on number of fields to be provided)					(miles)																
<b>PASSIVE PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS</b>																					
Lambert Park	Municipal	5.0	Merrimack St.	Town Provided Easement for State Boat Ramp												Yes		1			
Jacobs Square	Municipal	1.0	North-on Veterans Drive	Passive/War Memorial																	
<b>Subtotal Passive Areas/Parks</b>		<b>6.0</b>																			
<b>TOTAL RECREATION FACILITIES</b>		<b>66.3</b>			3	3	2	4	4	2	6		0.42 miles	0	4	1	0	2	1	2	

## 2. Additional Facilities Needed to Meet Current Demand

### *a. Use of Recreation “Standards”*

In order to distinguish between existing needs of the current population, and growth related needs in Hooksett, the quantity of recreation facilities required at different population thresholds needs to be estimated to calculate a reasonable level of growth-related facility needs and costs. Generally, this process involves determining an appropriate number of recreation facilities per 1000 persons, and applying that standard to both the base year and future year population. The number of facilities needed today based on the standard, less the number available currently, represents an existing deficiency that cannot be paid for with impact fees. However, the difference between the number needed for the base year population and the number needed in the projection year is attributable to new development. These standards may change over time as additional recreation needs are identified, or as demands shift from one type of facility to another.

There are several sources of reference standards (number of recreation facilities needed per 1000 population) to estimate the capital needs of a given service area population. These include:

- 1) New Hampshire Outdoors, a periodic publication of the NH Office of State Planning, which sets forth goals for desirable ratios of facilities per thousand population;
- 2) Guide to Municipal Recreation (1995) published by the NH Office of State Planning;
- 3) Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (1983) published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA);
- 4) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (1995), published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA); and
- 5) Locally defined standards that reflect the community’s experience with its own level of recreational facility demand and participation.

For most facilities, the standards in sources 1-3 above are about the same because (1) and (2) rely heavily on (3) the NRPA standards of 1983. When needs defined by published standards are compared to the actual inventory of recreation facilities typically supported by New Hampshire communities, the indicated “needs” often far exceed the quantity actually provided in most communities. Therefore local judgment is essential in interpreting or applying any ratio standard for recreation facilities. The most recent national handbook on recreation program and facility development is Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, published by the NRPA in December 1995. In this edition, the handbook encourages local judgment in applying any published standards, including those contained in its own 1983 publication. In the 1995 NRPA handbook, the use of rigid national standards is discouraged in favor of a community needs assessment approach.

*b. 1997 Hooksett Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Current/Future Needs*

In August 1997, the Hooksett Parks and Recreation Advisory Board issued a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Plan discussed immediate needs as well as long term (20 year) goals for facility development and improvement. Some of the projects listed in 1997 have already been completed, and some of the anticipated needs will be met as a new middle school is constructed in 2002-2003. The Plan called for two tennis courts at Fraser Field, which have been constructed. An outdoor lighted skating area was called for, south of the Safety Complex, which has been built.

The Plan cited a need for a site to accommodate two soccer fields and one additional baseball field south of the Safety Complex. The two soccer fields have since been constructed (Peter Brook Park). An additional baseball field will be constructed as part of the development of a new middle school this year.

One of the other major needs identified was for a community center with a gymnasium. An additional gymnasium will be constructed as part of the new middle school, and there has been speculation about possible re-use of the Village Elementary School as a community center in the future. However, no specific plan has been developed for such a use.

Remaining long-term needs as estimated in the 1997 Plan included obtaining about 10 acres on the west side of the Merrimack River for a baseball field and a soccer field, and to pave the boat ramp and add a picnic area at the launch near the Court House. Another four tennis courts are anticipated, with two near the Safety Center, and two on the west side of the river.

Another major long-standing need in Hooksett is the development of a facility or site for public swimming. While the Town's January 1989 Master Plan and the 1997 Park and Recreation Master Plan call for a public swimming pool, current expectations are that a large parcel with a beach at Head's Pond may be donated to the Town as Manchester Sand and Gravel proceeds with a large-scale master planned development. The actual cost to the Town to develop such a site with support facilities for public swimming use has not been determined, nor has the site actually been secured. Therefore, swimming facilities have not been included as part of the basis for impact fee assessment. If concept plans are developed for such a facility, or for a public swimming pool or pools, these needs could be added to the model and included in the basis for the impact fee.

*c. Facility Need Estimate for Hooksett*

In estimating the need for existing and future recreation facilities in Hooksett, standards based on the above sources were considered, but adjusted to reflect estimated current needs for a base year population estimated by the 2000 Census at 11,721. The same standards per 1000 population were then applied to a projected future year service population of 17,351 for the purpose of establishing future recreation needs. The number of facilities needed to serve the current population was reviewed with the Hooksett Recreation Director Dale Hemeon and with Dave Dixon of the Hooksett Youth Athletic Association (HYAA). Based on HYAA registration

data, demand for youth soccer and football programs have had the highest rates of long-term growth among four sponsored sports.

HYAA Program Registrants for Selected Years				
Sport	1986	1996	% Change	
			2002	1986-2002
Soccer	200	550	700	250%
Football	120	150	235	96%
Baseball	400	550	411	3%
Basketball	250	400	375	50%
Total Registrations	970	1,650	1,721	77%

Based on the 1997 Park and Recreation Plan, discussion with the HYAA and the Recreation Director, and other guidelines, the Town has current demand for the following additional facilities are needed to address current demand. These additional facilities do not include those to be added to the facility inventory as a result of the development of the new middle school.

- 1 Youth Baseball Field
- 1 Fenced T-Ball Field
- 1 Football Field
- 4 Tennis Courts (2 near Safety Center; 2 on West Side)

Additional outdoor basketball courts are needed now and in the future. The 1997 Parks and Recreation Master Plan had a goal of constructing a court at each new recreation facility site. A reasonable standard has been estimated at 0.50 per 1000 population.

Using NH Outdoors standards, 2 additional playgrounds are currently needed based on a ratio of 0.5 per 1000 population.

Additional facilities anticipated to be needed within the population projection period include a lacrosse/field hockey field, and a lighted volleyball court. These facility needs have been attributed to the future year service population, thus serving both existing and future needs.

Some base year needs will be fulfilled with the completion of the new middle school in Hooksett. The recreation facilities expected as part of this project include a softball field, baseball field, two soccer fields, and an outdoor running track. These facilities, which should become available in 2003, have been attributed to the existing inventory of facilities in Hooksett. The selection of appropriate standards was guided principally by the number of facilities estimated to be needed for the base year population. This selection implies a certain ratio of facilities per thousand population. The same ratios are then applied to the future year population to estimate needs in the projection year. Application of the selected ratios of facility needs per thousand persons is illustrated in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**

**RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS BASED ON FACILITY RATIOS PER THOUSAND POPULATION**

	Standard Used	Source	Existing Facilities (1)		Facility Needs Based on Population and Facilities Per 1000 Capital Cost Estimates							
	Per 1000 Population	Reference Standard	Number of Units	Existing Avg Per Thousand Population	Existing Demand Base Year 2000 Population @ 11,721	Additional Facilities Needed for Base Year Population	Total Facilities Needed for 2020 Population Of: 17,351	Growth-Related Needs	Estimated Capital Cost/Unit	Cost To Meet Existing Needs	Growth-Related Expense	Total Investment Projected In Period
<b>Selected Recreation Facilities</b>												
Baseball Diamond/Field	0.34	Local Need	4	0.34	4.0	0.0	5.9	1.9	\$75,000	\$0	\$142,500	\$142,500
Softball/Youth Baseball Fields	0.26	Local Need	2	0.17	3.0	1.0	4.5	1.5	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$112,500	\$187,500
T-Ball Fenced Field	0.10	Local Need	0	0.00	1.0	1.0	1.7	0.7	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$10,500	\$25,500
Basketball Courts-Outdoor Hard	0.50	Local Need	3	0.26	5.9	2.9	8.7	2.8	\$30,000	\$87,000	\$84,000	\$171,000
Soccer/Multipurpose Fields (2)	0.51	Local Need	6	0.51	6.0	0.0	8.8	2.8	\$75,000	\$0	\$210,000	\$210,000
Football Fields	0.17	Local Need	1	0.09	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
Field Hockey/Lacrosse Field	0.06	Local Need	0	0.00	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.3	\$75,000	\$52,500	\$22,500	\$75,000
Tennis Courts	0.68	Local Need	4	0.34	8.0	4.0	11.8	3.8	\$30,000	\$120,000	\$114,000	\$234,000
Volleyball Court-Lit Sand Court	0.05	Local Need	0	0.00	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.4	\$15,000	\$9,000	\$6,000	\$15,000
Ice Rink - Outdoor	0.10	Local Need	1	0.09	1.0	0.0	1.7	0.7	\$50,000	\$0	\$35,000	\$35,000
Playgrounds (w/equipment)	0.50	NH Outdoors	4	0.34	5.9	1.9	8.7	2.8	\$50,000	\$95,000	\$140,000	\$235,000
<b>Total Facilities</b>										\$528,500	\$952,000	\$1,480,500
Raw Land Acreage Needed To Support Major Outdoor Facilities:	5.70	Land Area to Support Rec. Facilities	60.3	5.145	66.8	6.5	98.9	32.1	\$20,000	\$130,000	\$642,000	\$772,000
<b>Total Recreation Capital Cost</b>		(Includes some acreage owned by School District)								\$658,500	\$1,594,000	\$2,252,500

(1) Inventory includes anticipated recreation facilities to be constructed at new middle school (2003)

(2) Does not include Tri-Town soccer field (not town-owned or operated at this time).

Projected Number of New Residents Served	5,630
Growth-Related Cost Per New Resident	<b>\$283</b>

In the model in Table 2, the selected standards are applied to the base year population and the projected 2020 population to project the number of facilities needed in the future. Where current needs are greater than the existing inventory of facilities, Table 2 indicates is an existing need for more facilities to serve the current population. The difference between current facility *needs* (which may be different from the number actually in place) and the future facility demand projected for the horizon year represents the quantity of facilities reasonably attributable to new development.

The current land area available for active recreation facilities is estimated at 60.3 acres. According to the Recreation Director, there is little surplus public recreation land available to support major new fields and facilities. Hooksett's existing current ratio of land supporting active recreation is slightly lower a 5.145 acres per 1000 persons. An overall ratio of 5.7 acres per 1000 persons has been assumed as a reasonable average that reflects Hooksett's existing inventory of facilities and its minimum development needs for the current population. A standard of 5.7 acres per 1000 persons is a ratio that is consistent with NRPA's 1983 recommended land for community park space of 5 to 8 acres per thousand persons. It is anticipated that similar quantities of recreation land per thousand residents will be needed to support future recreation facility development of active recreation land per 1000 persons represents the estimated minimum land area needed to support recreation facilities in the future.

Public open space has been excluded from the land and facility value assumptions for impact fee calculations so that related cost of open space is not part of the impact fee assessment, in compliance with RSA 674:21, V.

## **C. Facilities Cost and Impact Fee Derivation**

### **1. Capital Cost of Facilities Attributable to New Development**

The purpose of this recreation impact fee assessment is to help fund a long-term program of improvements involving a variety of recreation facilities that together provide adequate public recreation opportunities. Impact fees assessed under this methodology may be used to fund projects that constitute incremental portions of an overall recreation facility development program that is implemented over a period of years. The cost of recreation facility development can vary greatly from one site to another and from town to town based on site conditions, quality of materials and installation, lighting, site clearing, drainage needs, and the extent of ancillary facilities and associated parking that are constructed.

The costs of facility development shown in Table 3 are based on generic estimates reviewed by the Recreation Director to reflect reasonable cost estimates. If sports field development were to require extensive site clearance work and drainage, or if fields were to be lighted, these costs are probably conservative. In some cases, the actual out-of-pocket cost to the Town has been less as the result of donations and discounts obtained by the Recreation Director.



The cost of raw land acquisition has been estimated at \$20,000 per acre, based on average per-acre listings of land for sale in Hooksett and the area (August 2002) for both large and small parcels zoned for residential and commercial/industrial uses. In some developed areas with access and utilities, raw land costs are considerably higher. In areas without utilities and access, the cost per acre of a large site may be less.

In total, the model in Table 2 above indicates that **existing need** for recreation land and facilities at the assigned costs represents a cost of about \$658,500. The use of impact fees for additional facilities should be predicated on first rectifying existing deficiencies by using non-impact fee funds to construct the additional facilities needed for the base year population.

The capital investment required to serve **new development** is estimated at **\$283 per capita**, or nearly \$1.6 million to serve residential growth of 5,630 persons.

2. Credits for Funding Existing Needs or Deficiencies

In order to provide the full complement of recreation facilities needed for the design year population, the Town will need to fund improvements that benefit the existing residents as well as new development. The model in Table 2 above estimates the capital value of existing facility development needs at \$658,500. Because this amount is required to fund existing needs, it cannot be recovered in an impact fee. These costs may require property tax funding unless donations or unexpected grant funds become available.

In the short term, the cost to fund existing needs will be shared by all taxpayers, including those who are assessed a recreation impact fee. New housing units will pay property taxes for costs that may be related to funding of existing deficiencies. A credit is therefore recommended to offset this possibility. (See Table 3.)

**TABLE 3**  
**CREDIT CALCULATION FOR FACILITY DEFICIENCY**

Cost to Cure Existing Deficiency:	\$658,500 (From Table 2)
Taxable valuation (October 2001)	\$740,054,246
Credit Per \$1,000 Assessed Value	\$0.89

**ASSIGNMENT OF CREDITS PER DWELLING UNIT**

Structure Type	Avg Assessed Val. Per Unit	Credit/Unit
Single Detached	\$170,000	\$151
Townhouse	\$100,000	\$89
Duplex	\$100,000	\$89
Multifamily 3+ Units	\$50,000	\$44
Manufactured Home	\$60,000	\$53

The cost to fund existing needs, expressed as a lump sum relative to the taxable value of the Hooksett (as of October 2001), represents a property tax rate equivalent of \$ 0.89 per thousand assessed valuation. By applying this amount to the assessed property value of average newer housing units in Hooksett, we can calculate a credit for the cost to rectify existing deficiencies

that are not related to new development. Table 3 above assigns these credit amounts to various structural types. In future updates, as progress is made in rectifying deficiencies and as Hooksett's assessed valuation increases, the amount of the credits should decline. Average assessed values were derived based on data from the town's assessed valuation files compiled as part of a school impact fee study conducted in 2001 for the Town of Hooksett.

### 3. Recreation Impact Fee Schedule

To derive the capital costs generated by various types of dwelling units, the number of persons per occupied dwelling unit is multiplied by the recreation facility cost of new development (\$283 per capita) to derive a recreation capital cost per housing unit. The number of persons per occupied unit has been computed from 100% count Census data for Hooksett extracted from the 1990 Census. As of this writing, 2000 Census data have not been released with sufficient detail to update the 1990 averages for Hooksett. These data should be available within the next year, and once available the updated demographic data can be used to recalculate the fees per unit.

A recreation impact fee schedule based on all of the above assumptions is shown in Table 4. The impact fee assessments are based on a capital cost of \$283 per capita for in growth-related recreation facility investments, less the credit amounts shown earlier in Table 4. Impact fees shown in the schedule are amounts to be assessed *per dwelling unit*.

**TABLE 4**

**RECREATION IMPACT FEE SCHEDULE PER DWELLING UNIT**

Type Of Unit	Persons Per Occupied Unit (1)	Capital Cost Per Dwelling Unit (2)	Credit for Existing Deficiency	Impact Fee Assessment
Single Detached	2.99	\$846	(\$151)	<b>\$695</b>
Townhouse	2.32	\$656	(\$89)	<b>\$567</b>
Duplex	2.67	\$756	(\$89)	<b>\$667</b>
Multifamily 3+ Units	2.20	\$623	(\$44)	<b>\$579</b>
Manufactured Home	1.88	\$532	(\$53)	<b>\$479</b>

(1) 1990 Census, Hooksett NH. (similar level of detail not yet available for 2000 Census)

(2) Based on per capita recreation facility cost of: \$283 (less credit allowance)

Under this model, the impact fee for a single family detached unit would be **\$695** per unit. Impact fees for other types of units are somewhat lower based primarily on their differences in average household size, and the amount of credit assigned to the unit for the cost to cure existing deficiencies.

The total recreation facility expenditure required to serve basic recreation facility needs through the projection year of 2020 (population of 17,351) based on the model is about \$2.25 million. The amount attributable to existing deficiencies in the recreation facility inventory is \$658,500, with nearly \$1.6 million attributable to the capital cost of new development. This portion of

capital costs may be assessed as an impact fee. If the Town were to construct the facilities indicated as deficiencies, it should anticipate total costs of about *\$110,000 per year* for recreation facility development over the next six years. Facility development could rely on a combination of taxes, donated funds and services, and capital reserve accounts to provide for existing facility needs. If these improvements are made (using non-impact fee sources of funds), the Town can retain its recreation impact fee assessments received during and after this period for the construction of additional facilities to serve new development.

#### **D. Updates of Impact Fee Model**

This model is adaptable to changes in the recreation inventory, the selection of alternative ratios of the number of facilities per thousand population, and the estimated cost per facility. The omission of a particular facility from the impact fee calculation should not be viewed as excluding such a facility from consideration for development. If a particular facility is not found within Table 2, it means only that it has not been included as part of the cost basis for the impact fee. For example, gymnasiums and running tracks are not included in the recreation fee calculation, as they are likely to be provided as part of a new school construction project (for which impact fees are already being assessed). The need for a community center and public swimming pool were identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan of 1997, but have not been included in the basis for the impact fee because concept plans and cost estimates have not yet been developed for these facilities.

Since the Town is now going through the process of updating its comprehensive plan, the need for public recreation facilities should be identified and confirmed as part of the public planning process. As the need and public support for recreation facilities is further refined in this process, consideration should be given to updating the facility need estimates and ratios within the impact fee model.