As the city’s residential areas expand, there is a growing need for parks and recreation everywhere.

Hoboken is a densely developed city that has some terrific existing parks, but is in need of additional parks, recreation, and open space. Its youthful demographics create a considerable constituency for active recreation, particularly sports such as bicycling, rollerblading, and kayaking, as well as outdoor places to socialize. As the city’s residential areas expand, there is a growing need for parks and recreation everywhere.

The Master Plan introduces new open space features throughout the City, ranging from small interventions to large facilities, that will improve the quality of life for Hoboken’s residents, workers, and visitors. These actions can be summarized in three concepts:

Green connections: reclaim the waterfront and gritty properties to create a circuit of parks and recreational amenities that will attract users from throughout the City
Green plazas: create (and enhance existing) multi-use multi-generational plazas and playgrounds serving population within a short walking distance
Green design: make lots, roofs, and streets more environmentally friendly

Right now, there are 0.78 acres of park for every 1,000 residents—well below (for example) New York City’s standard of 2.5 acres. The open space deficit in Hoboken can be overcome, but it will require the will to ensure that new open space amenities are provided at every possible opportunity, such as in conjunction with large-scale development projects, redevelopment plans, or government actions.

Existing Conditions
Hoboken has four parks that are integrated into its street grid: Church Square, Columbus, Elysian, and Stevens (Hudson Square) Parks. These older parks, while relatively small, serve as gathering places for nearby neighborhoods and break up the developed nature of the City. There are some other existing small, older parks
throughout the City. These include a park on the Hoboken Housing Authority’s property at 4th and Jackson Streets and two “pocket parks”, one at 3rd and Madison Streets and one on east side of Willow Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets. Information regarding these and other parks in Hoboken is listed in Table III-1. These parks also are shown on the Map 3.

The City’s open space inventory has increased dramatically in the past few years with the addition of some new parks. The first of these is Sinatra Park, which was important for being the first significant public open space on the Hoboken’s waterfront. This park was followed a short time thereafter by the opening of Pier A Park and the first leg of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway. Pier A covers four acres in the Hudson River at the south end of the City, and in a short time has become a popular recreation destination. It also is home to movie screenings, recreation classes, and special events.

The Hudson River Waterfront Walkway will eventually stretch 18.5 miles along the New Jersey coast of the Hudson River and New York Harbor from Fort Lee to Bayonne. The walkway is being constructed through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, which requires the provision of land at the water’s edge by developers of waterfront property. While the creation of the walkway is progressing slowly in some areas, Hoboken’s portion is over halfway complete. The original southern section now extends from Hoboken Terminal to Sinatra Park at Sixth Street, with other completed portions along Sinatra Drive beneath Castle Point (as part of Castle Point Park), from Twelfth to Fourteenth Streets in the Shipyard development, and adjacent to the Hudson Tea Building at the north end of Washington Street.

One park that was reconstructed in recent years is the Multi-Service Center Park, which is comprised primarily of a combination basketball court/roller hockey rink.

There are more parks currently under construction, including Jackson Street Park inside the shell of the former City Garage and a small park being built as part of the Shop Rite supermarket project, with a few other parks in various stages of planning. These are listed in Table III-2, and include the following: Pier C, located a short distance north of Pier A; a four-acre park included as part of the approved redevelopment of the Maxwell House property; a 56,000-square foot public plaza that will be part of the Monroe Center development adjacent to the Ninth Street light rail station; and a small park at the north end of Block B on the southern waterfront. Also planned are the final segments of the Waterfront Walkway. Four of these segments—an existing parking lot for Stevens Institute of Technology, Union Drydock, the Maxwell House property, and portions of the Weehawken Cove waterfront—will be completed as developments are constructed. The remaining portion of Weehawken Cove at Hoboken’s northern border is being completed by Hudson County.
There are other existing open spaces that are not listed in Table V-1. Most notably, the campus of Stevens Institute of Technology includes open spaces that are primarily used by Stevens’ students and staff. Although it is not officially open to the general public, much of the campus and its facilities are readily accessible to visitors. There are also numerous small private open spaces in residential developments throughout City. The size and quality of these spaces varies greatly.

In summary, there was a total of 21.6 acres of parkland in Hoboken in 1998 according to the City’s 2002 Master Plan Reexamination Report. As shown in Table III-1, the current existing total is approximately 30 acres of parks. When compared to Hoboken’s 2000 population of 38,577, this amount results in a ratio of 0.78 acres per 1,000 residents. Another ten acres of open space is proposed in the near future as shown in Table III-2, for a total of 40.2 acres of open space. This amount would result in a ratio of 1.04 acres per 1,000 people.

Table III-1
Existing Public Open Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Size (acres)</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Castle Point</td>
<td>East side of Sinatra Drive under Castle Point</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>City*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Church Square</td>
<td>Between 4th, 5th, and Garden Streets and Willow Avenue</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community garden</td>
<td>3rd and Jackson Streets</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Elysian</td>
<td>East side of Hudson Street between 10th and 11th Streets</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Madison Park</td>
<td>3rd and Madison Streets</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MultiService Center</td>
<td>2nd and Adams Streets</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pier A</td>
<td>Hudson River at 1st Street</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pocket park</td>
<td>East side of Willow Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pocket park</td>
<td>Newark Street at southwestern entrance to City</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sinatra</td>
<td>East side of Sinatra Drive between 4th and 6th Streets</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Stevens (Hudson Square)</td>
<td>Between 4th, 5th, and Hudson Streets and Sinatra Drive</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Waterfront Walkway</td>
<td>Bloomfield to 12th Streets, Union Drydock to Stevens parking lot, Sinatra Park to Hoboken Terminal</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>City and private owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. JFK Stadium</td>
<td>10th and Jefferson Streets, adjacent to Columbus Park</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Housing Authority</td>
<td>4th and Jackson Streets</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Columbus</td>
<td>West side of Clinton Street between 9th and 10th Streets</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Hudson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Lackawanna Plaza</td>
<td>North side of Hoboken Terminal</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>NJ Transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Shipyard Park</td>
<td>West side of Sinatra Drive between 12th and 13th Streets</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Shipyard piers</td>
<td>13th and 14th Street on Hudson River</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Long-term land lease from Stevens Institute of Technology

Sources: City of Hoboken; 2002 Hoboken Master Plan Reexamination
This ratio is still well short of open space adequacy standards, however. National standards range from 6.25 to 10.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. A more appropriate comparison is with New York City’s standards of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents, of which 2.0 acres should be active space. Therefore despite the great strides Hoboken has made in recent years to create open space for its residents, there is still much that needs to be done to provide adequate open space for the City’s residents.

Hoboken also has a limited number of recreation facilities as detailed in Table III-3.

Other existing recreation facilities include the Boys & Girls Club at 132 Jefferson Street, the YMCA at 13th and Washington Streets, Stevens Institute of Technology’s facilities, and a number of private health clubs located throughout the City.

Hoboken also is home to various recreation clubs, leagues, and activities. Youth sports leagues include baseball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, and street hockey. Adult sports leagues, clubs, and associations include baseball, boating,
Map 3: Existing Open Space

- Existing Parks and Recreation
- Existing Waterfront Walkway

Note: Numbers are keyed to Table III-1.
cricket, running, skiing, soccer, softball, tennis, ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, and wiffle ball. The City and other institutions also organize youth sports classes and clinics and adult school classes.

Recommendations

General Concepts

1. Maximize park and recreation opportunities for residents. Hoboken has a severe shortage of open space and recreation facilities, as noted above. The City should aggressively pursue the creation of new parks, open space, and recreation facilities as detailed below. Possible sites to be acquired for open space purposes, as well as other recreation facilities, are shown on the Map 4. Notable park sites shown on this map include the Cognis (formerly Henkel) factory site located between Twelfth, Thirteenth, Adams, and Madison Streets, various properties along the light rail tracks, a series of properties in the southwest corner of the City, and various properties in the area of Weehawken Cove at the northern end of the City.

2. Provide full range of active recreation uses in new parks. Hoboken has a limited number of sports facilities available for public use. All sizable new parks and open space should include fields, courts, or other recreation amenities, with the exception of Pier C as discussed below. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to providing new facilities for dogs, if space permits.

3. Give priority for use of athletic fields to the general community. Any new recreation facilities that are constructed should be available for the use of residents first. In addition, equal time should be given to both girls' and boys' sports teams.

4. Build a public swimming pool. The City does not currently have a swimming pool that is open to the general public. If funding or space is not available for a "traditional" pool, a possible approach would be to have a floating pool in the Hudson River, which has been done elsewhere.

5. Alternatively, increase public access to private facilities. If a pool cannot be built, consideration should be given to requiring new recreation facilities built as part of hotels or other developments to be made available to the general public for a fee.

6. Involve the private sector in creating open space. Possible methods include requiring the provision of mini-parks and other publicly accessible open space amenities in any new development. Examples of this approach that are already planned include small parks that will be built as part of the Shop Rite development and on Block B of the Southern Waterfront. The private sector also may begin to realize that certain constituencies within Hoboken (e.g., dog owners, tennis players, ice skaters) may be willing to support pay facilities that are in their interest.

7. Encourage Stevens to continue to provide public access to its recreation facilities. The City should work with Stevens Institute of Technology to allow the use of its facilities by the general public, within certain limitations, as Stevens’
activities would rightly have priority for the school’s facilities.

8. Encourage cooperation among non-profit institutions and government. The City and sports organizations should partner with institutions such as the YMCA and St. Mary Hospital to meet each others’ needs for recreation facilities, and to assist where possible in site location decisions.

9. Create park corridors or “green streets.” One way to increase recreation opportunities is to redesign existing streets for greater use by bicyclists, pedestrians, runners, and skaters. These streets, which are designated as “urban trail” streets on Map 4, ideally would connect existing and proposed parks, and would feature pedestrian improvements, additional trees, and signage.

10. Require street trees as part of development applications. Developers of new buildings or applicants completing substantial rehabilitations of existing buildings should be required to plant trees on the sidewalk in front of these projects.

11. Provide more recreation and parks through better utilization of land. Addressing the City’s open space deficit requires creative thinking and intelligent use of limited resources. Possible ways to increase open space in conjunction with new development and redevelopment include creating parks and recreation over parking garages, requiring “green” rooftops of new large buildings, and requiring developers to provide new public open space as part of new construction.

12. Protect existing open spaces and environmental features. The limited amount of existing open space and environmental features left in Hoboken should

Open Space, Recreation and Conservation
be preserved. These include the remaining portions of the waterfront (which will be publicly accessible as the Waterfront Walkway is completed), open areas on the Stevens campus, existing open spaces on the Housing Authority’s property, and a community garden at Third and Jackson Streets.

13. **Prohibit development on steep slopes.** The Palisades are generally just outside of Hoboken on the west side of the light rail tracks, so there is little that can be done directly to restrict development on their face. However, there are limited areas of steep slopes within Hoboken, most notably the escarpments of Castle Point on the west side of Sinatra Drive. Development should be limited in these areas through enactment of a steep slope ordinance or other mechanism.

**Waterfront/Green Circuit**

1. **Create a green circuit in the City to link recreational and other amenities.** The City should take a bold step by creating a multi-use path around Hoboken’s periphery that would eventually connect a series of parks, as shown on the Open Space Concept map. A portion of this effort is the completion of the Hudson River waterfront walkway in the City, which would be linked to new paths and open spaces created on City property and private land, as well as New Jersey Transit’s property adjacent to the light rail tracks.

2. **Promote public acquisition of undeveloped parcels on the circuit.** There are opportunities to construct new parks, particularly in the northwest section of the City. The City should identify which properties are appropriate for open space, as well as determined methods of acquisition. Priority should be given to vacant or underutilized sites adjacent to the proposed trail network.

3. **Locate active waterfront uses at Weehawken Cove.** The City, County, and a private developer already are working on creating parks and open space in the northeast corner of Hoboken adjacent to Weehawken Cove. The size of this area, as well as its location adjacent to Weehawken, makes it an ideal spot for a sizeable park complex, possibly through additional County support. Possible recreation facilities that could be appropriate in this location include boathouses and a non-motorized watercraft launch.

4. **Move some parades and festivals to the waterfront.** This has already occurred to some extent with the use of Pier A and Sinatra Parks. Other possible locations include Sinatra Drive underneath Castle Point (including Castle Point Park) and Hoboken Terminal.

5. **Close Sinatra Drive adjacent to Elysian Park.** The current approved plan for the redevelopment of the Maxwell House property includes the extension of Eleventh Street east to a new portion of Sinatra Drive on the waterfront. Construction of this new road will make it possible to close the existing portion of Sinatra Drive adjacent to Elysian Park, which would enable this park to be connected with a proposed new park on the Maxwell House site.

6. **Continue to improve Sinatra Drive.** The construction of Castle Point Park and a sidewalk to the south of it on Stevens’ property on the east side of Sinatra Drive have had positive impacts in terms of making this street more friendly to pedestri-
Map 4: Open Space Concept

Note: Letters are keyed to Table III-2.
Additional steps that could be taken to include providing a wider sidewalk on the west side of the street, reducing traffic speeds for motorized vehicles by narrowing travel lanes, and providing additional pedestrian crossings of the street. To the north of Castle Point Park, the sidewalk along Sinatra Drive adjacent to Union Drydock should be widened to better connect the eventual waterfront walkway to the north and south.

7. Locate open, unprogrammed space on Piers A and C. Although the City is deficient in the amount of open space provided per resident, not every square inch new park needs to be dedicated to specified uses. Pier A, which has been open for a few years, is popular due to its location, but also because it provides large areas that can be used for multiple purposes. As the design and construction of Pier C moves forward, a similar principle should be applied to its development. The only possible exception could be for an outdoor skating rink, which would increase winter use of either of the parks.