

L. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Currently, the Town of Colonie maintains several public recreational resources, including the Town Park, Municipal Golf Course, and Community Center. Approximately fifteen (15) pocket parks are located throughout the Town, providing public recreation facilities for specific neighborhoods.

The Colonie Town Park is located adjacent to the study area along the Mohawk River. Encompassing approximately one hundred sixty (160) acres, the park provides facilities for variety of recreation activities including basketball, baseball and softball, biking, nature walks, picnicking, swimming and tennis. The park also features a public boat launch and provides access to the Hudson-Mohawk Bike Trail, which extends from the City of Albany to the Town of Rotterdam. Approximately five and one quarter (5-1/4) miles of this trail are located within the Town of Colonie along the Mohawk River. Colonie Town Park is open from late May through November 1; the swimming pool is only open during July and August.

According to the Town Recreation and Parks Department, approximately one hundred ten thousand (110,000) persons pass through the Town Park gate annually for both pool and general park use. Use of the pool is currently at or near capacity. The park in general is at capacity only during holiday periods such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day, and other than these holidays, it is currently not utilized near capacity.

Though difficult to quantify, the Recreation and Parks Department indicated that Colonie's portion of the bike trail is currently underutilized. As no statistics are available, this is based upon general observation.

At this time, the Town Recreation and Parks Department has indicated that there are no plans for the expansion of the existing Town park or creation of a new Town park. It appears that the Town will continue the trend of creating local neighborhood pocket parks where appropriate.

The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is located along Consaul Road in the western portion of Town. Encompassing approximately one hundred eighty (180) acres, the course consists of twenty seven (27) holes over ten thousand one hundred twenty nine (10,129) yards. This facility includes a clubhouse with locker rooms, pro shop, restaurant, a driving range, a putting green, and five (5) tennis courts which are on a first come-first serve basis. During the winter months, the Town maintains approximately five and one half (5-1/2) miles of cross country ski trails over the course.

A Town permit, issued to residents upon request, is required to reserve a tee time at the Municipal Course. Non-residents may use the course, but cannot reserve a specific tee time. In an effort to reduce both wear on the course and peak hour demand, the Town issued new permits in 1988. Prior to 1988, nearly 27,000 permits had been issued. By December 1988, only 6,849 new permits had been issued, though this figure is expected to increase in the future as new residents and old car holders seek new permits. During the 1988 golf season, fifty nine thousand six hundred ninety nine (59,699) rounds of golf were played at the Colonie Municipal Golf Course. This figure is well below previous annual averages of approximately sixty four thousand (64,000) rounds, and is primarily attributed to the extreme weather conditions experienced during the summer.

The Colonie Community Center is located on Central Avenue in the former Colonie Village School. A variety of recreational activities are provided by the center, which houses a gymnasium, ballet and Karate studios, a weightlifting room,

a ceramics and wood shop, and an auditorium. The center also provides a nursery school and teen drop-in center and is adjacent to approximately three and one half (3-1/2) acres of ballfields and playground areas.

According to officials at the Colonie Community Center, the facilities available at the center (auditorium, studios, etc.) are currently not utilized to full capacity. This observation is based on the fact that several rooms are usually available for nightly meetings or activities. However, these officials also noted that the gymnasium was usually at or over capacity and that there is a need for a swimming pool.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Population projections indicate that the Town of Colonie will contain approximately ninety-eight thousand seven hundred fourteen (98,714) residents by 2009, with a large percentage of the population growth occurring within the study area (Section II, A, Demographics). Therefore it can be inferred that a large percentage of the impacts upon public recreational facilities associated with future population growth are attributable to growth in the study area.

The LUMAC Technical Report indicates that typical recreation standards for municipal parks requires five (5) acres per thousand (1,000) residents. Based upon the 1980 Town population, Colonie's one hundred sixty (160) acre park is less than one half (1/2) of the standard, and by 2009 will represent only thirty nine (39) percent of the standard.

According to Town of Colonie Recreation and Parks Department officials, rather than enlarging the Town park, the Town will most likely continue the current trend of creating pocket parks where necessary. Recreation standards suggest that pocket parks, designed to serve specific neighborhoods, contain one (1) acre per thousand (1,000) residents. Currently, the study area contains a one (1) acre

pocket park and, as stated in the LUMAC Technical Report, the area "is not adequately served" by this park. It appears that a minimum of fifteen (15) acres of additional pocket parks will be necessary to provide adequate public recreational facilities for the anticipated growth in the study area. Fees or contributions of cash or property by developers will be the mechanism designated for the development of pocket parks. It is estimated that each acre developed will cost approximately thirty thousand (30,000) dollars for both land acquisition and development. This would result in a Development Mitigation Cost of one hundred twenty dollars (\$120.00) per residential unit.

Use of the Town swimming pool is currently at or above capacity, and the anticipated future growth will amplify the existing problems. As the demand for public pool facilities increases with the future population growth, the Town may consider construction of additional facilities. Based upon contact with several commercial swimming pool construction firms, it appears that construction costs will be approximately thirty (30) dollars per square foot of pool surface. The potential benefit of an additional swimming facility may be maximized by developing a site not in proximity to the existing park (i.e., western part of Town). This would serve to alleviate congestion in the Town park and reduce travel times for many residents.

The Hudson-Mohawk Bike Trail is currently underutilized, and it is anticipated that future population growth will not result in any significant impacts. The Town may consider providing direct access to the trail from the study area to encourage public use.

The Town of Colonie Municipal Golf Course is currently utilized below or near capacity, experiencing only occasional waiting periods during peak hours. Current use is reflective of recreation standards, which indicate a twenty-seven (27) hole course should effectively service a population of seventy-five thousand

(75,000) (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1967). As a result of the anticipated population growth (ninety eight thousand seven hundred fourteen (98,714) by 2009) the course will not meet recreation standards and is likely to be utilized above capacity.

One option to alleviate potential impacts to the existing golf course is the construction of an additional nine (9) holes. In order to estimate the costs for this new construction, the construction cost of the Red Course, built for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in 1981, was adjusted to 1989 dollars. As a result, based on a cost increase of four (4) percent per year, 1989 construction costs would be approximately six hundred eighty five thousand (685,000) dollars.

According to the Town of Colonie Recreation and Parks Department, it is estimated that an additional one hundred thirty two thousand (132,000) dollars would be needed annually for operation and maintenance. In addition, the existing golf maintenance building would require expansion at an estimated cost of one hundred thousand (\$100,000) dollars.

In regards to land needed for the new nine (9) holes, a minimum of approximately fifty (50) acres are required. Currently, the Town owns forty three (43) acres contiguous to the golf course. Therefore an additional seven (7) acres would have to be acquired for new construction. The price of the additional land is estimated at twenty thousand (20,000) dollars per acre for a total of one hundred forty thousand (140,000) dollars.

Using the Federal Recreation Standard of twenty seven (27) holes adequately supporting a population base of seventy five thousand (75,000), we see that current population levels in the Town exceed this standard by six thousand two hundred fifty (6,250) persons. However, in order to meet the threshold to support an additional nine (9) holes a population base of one hundred thousand (100,000)

would be required. By projecting the population growth to the Year 2009, Table 11-A-2 indicates that the Town will be below this threshold by one thousand two hundred eighty six (1,286) persons.

Based on the above the total increase in population from 1989 to the Year 2009 is anticipated to be seventeen thousand, four hundred sixty four (17,464). Of this sixty two percent (62%), ten thousand eight hundred seventy four (10,874) persons are projected to be located within the study area, therefore is reasonable to assume that the property owners within the study area should be responsible for incurring sixty two percent (62%) of capital costs for constructing an additional nine (9) holes. Total construction costs for a nine hole golf course are estimated at nine hundred twenty-five thousand (\$925,000) dollars, with sixty two percent (62%) or five hundred seventy-three thousand five hundred (\$573,500) dollars being attributed to the study area. Attributing the above cost to the three thousand seven hundred fifty (3,750) housing units in the study area by 2009 equates to one hundred fifty-three (\$153) dollars per unit.

The cross country ski trails maintained during the winter appear to be adequate for the near future. If these trails become over-utilized as a result of population growth, the Town may consider extending the trails over the course. In light of the anticipated growth in the study area, it may benefit the Town to consider maintaining trails through the Town Park.

While it is difficult to project a population figure at which the community center's facilities will be inadequate, Town officials have indicated an existing need for gymnasium and swimming facilities. It is anticipated that future growth will increase the demand for additional community center facilities.

The Development Mitigation Costs outlined in the above paragraphs will be approximately two hundred seventy three (273) dollars per dwelling unit. These costs should be monitored annually in conjunction with building trends, to ensure that they are sufficient to continue to meet the goals and policies of the Town of Colonie. It is important that the estimated costs are reviewed for accuracy, as many factors such as land acquisition costs, development costs and changing population trends can create increases or decreases in the costs associated with the above recreation improvements.