

# Town of Stratford Parks and Recreation Five - Year Master Plan 2017-2021



## DRAFT

### Greenway Project

Recommended to Council  
On \_\_\_\_\_ by  
Parks & Recreation Committee

Presented to Town Council and  
Mayor on \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT 9/28/16**

**FINAL DRAFT 6/1/17**



Park and Recreation Committee  
Stratford, Connecticut

To: Mayor John Harkins  
Stratford Town Council Members

Subject: Park and Recreation Five-Year Master Plan

The Park and Recreation Committee is pleased to submit its Master Plan for 2017 to 2021 for your consideration and approval. The Park and Recreation Committee approved the Plan with a recommendation for approval on \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

A subcommittee of that group, other committee representatives, Town Employees and individuals prepared the Plan. It is the result of data collected from a WEB based survey of Townspeople, League Leader responses and a review of prior Master Plans.

It is not a request for funds. As described in the Purpose section, it is intended to serve as a guide to consider Action Items for inclusion into the CIP budgets.

The Committee recognizes the past contribution of Edward Matosian. Mr. Matosian wrote the past 3 Five Year Plans and his contributions are still found within these pages.

Committee Members:

Gary Bauer	P & R Committee Member
Chad Esposito	Parks Superintendent
Paul Hoydick	P & R Committee Chairman
Robert Jaekle	P & R Committee Member
Wali Kadeem	P & R Committee Chairman
Bill O'Brien	P & R Committee Member
Pat Patusky	Recreation Superintendent
Matt Salerno	P & R Committee Member

Respectfully submitted,

Wali Kadeem  
Chairman, Park and Recreation Committee

**TOWN OF STRATFORD  
FIVE -YEAR MASTER PLAN  
2017-2021  
Table of Contents**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page #</u>
Transmittal Letter	1
Table of Contents	2
Purpose of the Five Year Plan	3
Methodology of the Master Plan	4
Action Items Listing	5-8
Greenway/Smart Streets Action Items	9
Stratford Wellness Park Action Item	10
Showcase Action Item	11
Survey Executive Summary	12-16
League Meeting Minutes	17-18
Field Usage Summary	19
Park Department Mission	20-21
Recreation Department Mission	22
Facility Inventory	23-29
Recreation and Open Space Locations	30-32
Recreation Locations	33
Open Space Locations	34-35
Stratford Demographics	36-37
2008-2013 Five Year Plan	38-41

### THE PURPOSE OF THE FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN

The purpose of a five-year plan is to provide management (Mayor and Town Council) a broad view of what is needed or desired within the next five years. It is the result of a collection of data analyzed, summarized and prioritized to produce a list of proposed Goals and Action Items.

It is intended to enable the Mayor and Town Council to prepare long term plans to accomplish action items selected for inclusion into the next five-year CIP budget consideration.

The Action Item listing is supported by a series of reports and tabulations included in the Plan.

A five year master plan can be divided into steps: outline the Goals and Process of the effort, collect, analysis/summarize the data and most importantly recommend how to best use the data.

In the first step, outline the Goals and Process of the effort is written in the Methodology of the Process. The Park & Recreation Committee appointed a sub-committee to: 1) to update the Facility Inventory lists of twenty five facilities available by district, 2) a listing of recreation locations indicating district, acreage and general description of events available at each, 3) a listing of open space locations by district indicating location and acreage 4) Town Demographics, etc.

In the second step, COLLECTION, we performed a citizen survey, solicited responses for desired action within the next five years from league leaders and reviewed action items not completed from the previous five-year plan.

In the third step, ANALYZE/SUMMARIZE, we consolidated the individual requirements into a meaningful prioritized summary of Actions Items that represented the most critical or most requested.

In the fourth step, RECOMMEND, we recommend how to achieve the best results from the effort.

The first three steps need little explanation. The fourth step is the most critical. It is intended to enable the Mayor and Town Council to prepare long term plans to accomplish action items selected for inclusion into the next five-year CIP budget considerations.

**METHODOLOGY**

1. Appoint a sub committee from interested Town committees, commissions and town employees as resources.
2. Solicit input from facility and program users via questionnaires, surveys and meetings. Advertise in local newspapers asking for suggestions and comments.
3. Solicit input from other town agencies: Boothe Park Commission, and Roosevelt Forest Commission.
4. Review current Master Plan for inclusion in updated Master Plan.
5. Perform a physical inventory of the facilities available at Park and Recreation locations. Update reports of the facilities available in alphabetical and Council District sequence.
6. Review other municipalities' Master Plans.
7. Review town's demographics.
8. Analyze, summarize, consolidate, organize and prioritize input into a tentative Action Plan.
9. Sub committee approves plan and submits to the Park and Recreation Committee for review and approval.
10. Park and Recreation Committee hold a public hearing on the Master Plan
11. Park and Recreation Committee votes to forward plan to Town Council
12. Town Council votes to accept Master Plan.

1. **Goal: Create Showcase Facilities which include: dugouts, scoreboards, press boxes, bleachers, possibly turf – Locations: Short Beach, DeLuca Field, Longbrook Park, Bunnell Fields, Clover Fields**

Action: Turn Bunnell field into a Showcase Facility for baseball with scoreboard, fix bleachers, dugouts

Turf field at Bunnell baseball and add lights for extended use

Add press box, and scoreboard at Clover

Turf DeLuca Field

Add lights to Basketball and tennis courts at Short Beach

Install splash pad at Johnson Academy

Study the feasibility of a water splash pad at Short Beach

Install security cameras at showcase facilities

Work with Beautification Committee to improve aesthetics to parks

Develop a list of “secondary fields” for the next level of maintenance – Birdseye, Johnson, Chapel, Stonybrook, Dillon, Flood or Wooster. “Third Level Maintenance fields” are Nichols, Lordship, Eli Whitney, SHL (until refurbished), Wilcoxson.

2. **Goal: Better maintain and improve existing parks and fields**

Action: Perform annual review of parks and field conditions

Allocate adequate staffing and capital resources to ensure high quality maintenance and improvements to parks and open spaces throughout the Town of Stratford

Provide more trash cans and recycling receptacles with frequent disposal

Install team benches and fencing in front of benches at baseball fields

Reconstruct field at SHL #1. Add team benches and fencing.

Perform yearly maintenance on all fields to include aeration, over seed, re-clay infields with crown.

Continue to maintain in summer and fall.

Inspection plan of all parks facilities especially playground equipment should be established and inspections should be continued throughout the year. A Parks Dept staff member should be a Certified Playground Inspector.

Consider establishing a Community Garden in the south end of Stratford

Study a Non Smoking Ban for Parks, Beaches and Golf Courses

Perform a study for the best location for pickleball

Start a bleacher replacement program

Inspect basketball courts for painting, nets. Review use of Nichols basketball courts. Wooster courts need to be reconstructed.

Tennis Courts at Longbrook need a yearly maintenance program

Short Beach tennis and basketball courts need renovations.

Extend fencing at Dillon field to keep basketballs out of ponds

Repair infields at Johnson

Increase permanent receptacles at Paradise Green

Construct new skatepark

Look into automatic lighting systems

Fix drainage problem at Birdseye #3

Develop and sustain a tree replacement initiative to maintain and protect Stratford's historic beauty

**3. Goal: Encourage the use of bikes, walking paths and nature programs**

Action: Start a bike club and add bike races and rodeos

Support the expansion of the Greenway and add bike paths

Continue to develop nature programs

Study solutions to the Transportation problems youth identified in the Blueprint for Youth paper

Increase handicap accessibility to Parks for example Longbrook Park

**4. Goal: Increase public awareness of parks**

Action: Develop a marketing plan aimed at attracting visitors to the town's landscapes, waterfronts and greenway system, including Long Beach/Great Meadows Marsh, Roosevelt Forest, Dog Park/Short Beach Complex and Stratford Greenway.

Install signs at park with rules regarding park hours and park rules

Work with the Beautification Committee to start an Anti Littering and Graffiti Campaign

Install digital signs for Event Announcements at various locations and eliminate A frame signs

Publicize a Memorial Bench Program

Consider parking spaces for pregnant women and families at Short Beach

Additional signs regarding picking up after dogs

**5. Goal: Increase the number of Picnic Areas**

Action: Add picnic tables at some small pocket parks

Add another large picnic pavilion at Short Beach

Add picnic area to Juliette Low Park

Fix the Picnic Areas at Boothe Park adding grills, electricity and water

Install picnic pavilions at various small parks

Close the landfill at Short Beach and complete the scenic overlook.

**6. Goal: Improve bathroom facilities**

Action: Open bathrooms at ball field nearest Short Beach lacrosse field

Arrange to have bathrooms at all fields cleaned everyday

Arrange to have porta johns cleaned each week if not twice per week

Add bathrooms at Long Beach and George Force Courts

Investigate automatically locking bathroom facilities

**7. Goal: Meet the therapeutic needs of townspeople and youth**

- Action: Expand hours at Ella Grasso pool  
Add pool not attached to school  
Add splash pads around town  
Expand swim lessons  
Support the plan for a Wellness Park at the Baldwin Center

**8. Goal: Add soccer and lacrosse fields**

- Action: Redesign Longbrook Park practice fields into lacrosse/soccer/football fields. Add additional parking.  
Determine whether Glendale Rd could be closed.  
Reconstruct field at Short Beach Park for lacrosse/soccer  
Reconstruct field at Pirhalla Farm to soccer/lacrosse

**9. Goal: Improve Cultural & Arts Programs**

- Action: Add Taste of Stratford or Food Truck Event  
Add theater programs at Shakespeare and other theatrical programs and events  
Add multiple day music festivals  
Add outdoor art shows  
Add Historical Reenactment Events  
Add events and enhance access to Roosevelt Forest. Support the Conservation Corp and 4-H Club

**10. Goal: Increase Athletic Tournaments**

- Action: Add soccer tournaments  
Add Lacrosse tournaments & jamboree  
Add Basketball tournaments  
Add Baseball tournaments

**11. Goal: Increase Use of Short Beach Golf Course**

- Action: Diversify the use of Golf Course by adding Frisbee golf, Soccer golf and others to make it more family friendly

**12. Goal: Promote Town Achievements**

- Action: Install sign at Exit 32 chronicling recent achievements by Town teams

**13. Goal: Provide a Winter time Ice skating rink**

- Action: Install an ice rink at an appropriate location

**Master Plan 2017-2021**

**Goal/Action Plan**

**14. Goal: Communicate with the town's population**

Action: Increase use of social media

Add mobile device capabilities to the registration program

Use bilingual flyers and brochures

Construct digital signs to publicize events at West Broad & Paradise Green

**15. Goal: Commission a Boothe Park Master Plan & Feasibility Study**

**16. Goal: Continue to strive to reach the Town's open space goal of 15%**

Action: Will require approximately 300 additional acres. Should be added all over Town

**17. Goal: Expand public access opportunities to the Town's waterfront**

Action: Provide additional waterfront recreation activities

Establish new walking trails and fishing spots along the waterfront

Develop birdwatching accommodations

**GREENWAY ACTION ITEM**

The Park and Recreation Five-Year Master Plan continues to support the Greenway Plan to provide access to the Housatonic River, to provide hiking, cycling and walking trails along the river, and throughout Town to encourage economic development and to promote waterfront activities.

These items encompass the potential for a wide variety of recreation and economic activities that will over an extended period supplement the action items recommended in this Park and Recreation Five Year Plan. It is important to understand the background of the Greenway Project.

In 2003 during the effort to update the ten-year Town Plan of Conservation and Development the Planning Commission conducted a Town Survey and public seminars to determine what our citizens believed should receive significant attention during the next ten year period.

Interested parties were invited to specific public seminars for the Waterfront Plan, Economic Development, Open Space Plan Update and Affordable Housing. The common thread with the Waterfront and Economic Development attendees and the survey results was access to the Housatonic River and planned river based economic developments projects.

In 2005 the Planning Commission and representatives from several town committees such as the Conservation, Environment, PYE and Park and Recreation formed an informal group to explore the feasibility of such a program and how to proceed.

With seed funds received from the state EPA, the Town Council, the Conservation Committee and others, a basic plan was developed with the help of a consulting firm and the Greater Bridgeport Development Authority. This first small step in realizing this dream has been sent out to bid and should be visible in a few months. The Greenway Committee has made several applications for Federal and State grants to enable it to proceed to the next step.

The next step is to develop a plan to extend the Greenway from DeLuca Field to the center of Town. That plan is currently being vetted and progress should be seen starting in 2017.

**Master Plan 2017-2021****STRATFORD WELLNESS PARK ACTION ITEM**

Studies show that physical wellness and emotional/mental well-being go hand-in-hand. While Senior Services offers many programs related to maintaining good physical health, and periodically provides programs related to mental and emotional well-being, we would like to develop a more comprehensive program to accommodate the greater number of people we are seeing, and to attract more baby boomers. As baby boomers are approaching their later years, they want to stay healthy, and seek programs and resources to do so. They seek a safe environment where they can exercise with their peers, and participate in other physically and mentally stimulating activities. They seek areas close to their residences, and for many low-income members of the community, these resources are currently lacking. Developing wellness sites would take into account any physical limitations participants may have. This project also would be developing areas that would be inviting to people and encourage everyone to develop and achieve their optimal level of functioning. While Senior Services provides an array of exercise classes including aerobics, Zumba, tai chi and yoga, to name a few, we are lacking in space developed for balance programs (which are very popular), reflexology paths, and more outdoor activities for seniors. The idea of an outdoor wellness park would meet some of the need for people to stay active and socialize, while enjoying the outdoors.

The health benefits of exercise for elders are many and well documented. Regular exercise prevents falls, reduces the risk of strokes and heart attacks, lessens cognitive decline and controls obesity, diabetes and hypertension. The World Health Organization recommends adults 65 and older do an average of 150 minutes of exercise each week. In conjunction with staying physically fit, social engagement and mental stimulation are important to keep the older population involved in their community and prevent premature institutionalization in long-term care facilities, which is also costly for the general population. As more people approach advancing years, it is important to provide an opportunity and safe environment where they can exercise and be emotionally and mentally stimulated to maintain their highest level of functioning.

Stratford Senior Services has been a leader in the state with its program development. We were the first senior center to use the brain fitness program, Dakim, now used by over 40 seniors a week (our current maximum capacity). We offer ten different exercise classes a week, some of them multiple times due to demand. We have language classes, and programs in the arts and literature. We offer special programs related to stress management, such as Qi gong and the Alexander Technique. Periodically we have various health screenings and guest presenters on health-related topics. But the time has come to see where the gaps are, and how we can develop additional space, both outdoors and indoors, to bring more programs to our older population and have them be available all the time. It is imperative to set in motion a plan that will last for many years to come, and meet the growing demand of our growing senior population.

The greatest benefit from this project will be the increased availability of health and wellness resources for all persons using Senior Services. This means that anyone 55 and over can take advantage of these resources, from walking paths with reflexology sections and exercise equipment that focuses on balance, to raised gardens, water features, and the development of existing areas that welcome seniors and their family members, including grandchildren.

**Master Plan 2017-2021****SHOWCASE FACILITIES ACTION ITEM**

Stratford continues to host representatives from local, state, regional and national teams to compete with representatives from Stratford. Our teams, in turn, often visit and use the facilities in other communities. The general consensus is that our facilities do not compare favorably with the other communities.

The Five Year Master Plan written in 1995 recommended that the Town identify selected facilities as "Showcase Facilities". A committee was appointed and designated the nine locations listed below. DeLuca field was added in the 2002 Master Plan. The concept of a Showcase Facility was to focus enhancement and maintenance attention on high visibility, high activity Park and Recreation locations.

Location	Primary Use
Academy Hill	Monuments, Town Ceremonies
Boothe Memorial Park	Historical Buildings, Museum, Picnics
Bunnell School Grounds	Soccer, Football, Baseball, Softball
DeLuca Field	Softball
Flood School Grounds	Tennis, Swimming, Soccer, Softball
Longbrook Park	Baseball, Football, Tennis, Soccer/Lacrosse Platform Tennis, Splash Pad
Paradise Green	Concerts, Craft Fairs
Roosevelt Forest	Camping, Hiking
Short Beach	Soccer, Softball, Lacrosse, Swimming, Tennis, Beach Volley Ball, Golf, Picnics

It was determined that, where feasible, the following should be included in any consideration to update these locations.

- Well-maintained areas
- Appropriate fresh line markings
- Parking facilities
- Controlled access
- Toilet and/or dressing accommodations
- Lights
- Spectator seating
- Announcer/press box
- Score Boards
- Dugouts
- Signage

## Master Plan 2017-2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SURVEY

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan survey was an online survey conducted June-September 2014. There were 421 responses which represents less than 1% of the Town Total Population of 51,384.

This is not a scientific survey but a random sampling of the population and therefore the demographics of the individuals completing the survey do not match those of the overall town. The concerns are that the survey is heavily weighted toward female responders, only 3% of those under 20 completed the survey as compared to the overall population of 24% and the disparity in the responses between north and south ends of town is heavily skewed to the north end (56% versus 32%). In addition 46% of those surveyed have a household income of over \$90,000 which is well over the median income of \$60,461 or the 29% of the total population. We unfortunately did not capture more than 11% of those with incomes under \$50,000 which represents 37% of the total population. Seventy five did not respond to the question regarding income.

The individual demographics were:

Female - 59% (town – 53%)	Male - 41% (town – 47%)
Age: 20 & Under	3% (town 24%)
20-34	28% - (town 16%)
35-64	62% - (town 42%)
65+	7% - (town 18%)
Households with children	57%
Household income of \$100,000	46% (town 29%)
Household income of \$75-99,000	10% (town 14%)
Household income of \$50-74,999	12% (town 20%)
Household income under \$50,000	11% (town 37%)
Respondents from north Stratford	56%
Respondents from south Stratford	32%

Paradise Green (63), Lordship (59), Wilcoxson (44) and Chapel (43) areas had the most respondents followed by Eli Whitney (39), Bunnell (37), Wooster (30), Second Hill (26), Franklin (19), Nichols (17), Oronoque (14), Stratford HS (17), Mac's Harbor (12), Birdseye (12), Honeyspot (7) and Center (3).

The individuals completing the survey were those who use beaches (66%), Short Beach (65%), Lordship Seawall (41%), Playground equipment (41%), Soccer fields (36%), Longbrook Park (33%) and School gyms (30%). We did not or do not have users of Street Hockey (93%), Platform Tennis (82%), Boat Launching Ramp (80%), Clover Park (79%), Lacrosse fields (75%), Skate Park (77%), Volleyball Courts (75%), and Softball Fields (71%).

More than 50% of the respondents wanted more of Bike paths (67%), Splash parks (61%), Picnic Areas (54%), and Swimming pool (52%).

The most important programs for 50% or more people were Concerts on the Green (65%), Swim lessons and open swims (60%), Holiday programs (59%), Self Improvement classes (57%),

Nature programs (54%), Hiking programs (52%), and Biking Events (49%). The least important were Boxing (69%), Drill Team (62%), Daycare programs (53%), Programs for mentally/physically challenged (51%), Preschool programs (51%) and Lacrosse (47%).

**Master Plan 2017-2021**

Once again there was an overwhelming response for the town to have Music Festivals (95%), and Taste of Stratford (94%). Overtaking Outdoor Art Shows (83%) this year were Athletic Tournaments (88%) and Theater programs at Shakespeare Theater (85%).

The respondents were once again very interested in expanding the Greenway and Bike paths (66%), followed by Restrooms at Long Beach (56%), Security cameras in parks (52%), Beach walkway to Long Beach West (52%) and Restrooms at Wooster field (48%).

The respondents were most dissatisfied with the conditions of the Bathroom facilities (72%), Recycling receptacles (50%), Trash receptacles and benches (48%), Lighting in parks (47%), Picnic Areas (39%), Bike paths (37%), and Swimming pools (36%). Most respondents are satisfied with Bunnell Track (93%), Indoor basketball courts (87%), Par 3 golf course (86%), Softball fields (84%), Platform Tennis (82%), Tennis Courts (80%), Outdoor basketball courts (79%) and Baseball fields (78%).

Seventy four percent (74%) knew they could register online for Recreation Department programs and 73% would register from their mobile device. Fifty eight percent (58%) would like to see a therapeutic pool in town. Fifty five percent (55%) felt another indoor pool should be built not attached to a school building.

Seventy two percent (72%) find out about programs by word of mouth, 52% by the Community Calendar, 48% by Town website and 45% via local newspaper.

In addition the respondents felt the "Town should improve existing services and programs" (52%) while 28% felt the town should create new services and programs.

More definitive responses were that most did not want a pool attached to an existing school (73%), wanted a therapeutic pool (60%), would be willing to purchase a membership to a town indoor water park playground pool if the price were reasonable (67%) and 65% would enroll their youngsters in swim lessons at a pool specially designed as a teaching pool. The remaining responses tended to be less than 59% in response to our questions.

**Master Plan 2017-2021**

**Executive Summary of Survey (cont'd)**

The following are the tabulation of responses to the survey questions:

On the question of which Facility their Household uses, the top 5 were:

- Public Beaches
- Playground Equipment
- Soccer Fields
- School gyms
- Picnic Areas

The Least used facilities were:

- Street hockey
- Platform tennis
- Boat Launching
- Skateboard Park
- Lacrosse Field

The top 5 Parks mentioned by those surveyed were:

- Short Beach
- Lordship Seawall
- Longbrook Park
- Small Neighborhood Parks
- Long Beach

The least used Parks mentioned by those surveyed were:

- Clover Park
- Baldwin Center
- Flood Pool
- Wooster Park
- Roosevelt Forest

On the question of what they would like more of, the top 5 were:

- Bike Path (66%)
- Splash Park (61%)
- Picnic Areas (54%)
- Swimming Pool (52%)
- Playground Equipment (42%)

Keep the same (as indicated by those surveyed):

- Boat Launching (86%)
- Football (83%)
- Baseball (80%)
- Softball Fields (78%)
- School gyms (76%)

Less of (as indicated by those surveyed):

- Cricket Field (30%)
- Pickle ball courts (24%)
- Rugby (20%)
- Platform Tennis (20%)
- Street Hockey (17%)

Based on these percentages we should not eliminate anything. We should concentrate on Bike Paths, Pool, and Picnic Areas. The majority of respondents want the town to keep facilities the same.

In the program area when you combine "Very Important" and "Important" responses receiving more that 50% are:

- Concerts on Green 65%
- Swim Lessons 60%
- Open Swims 60%
- Holiday Programs 59%
- Self Improvement 57%
- Nature Programs 54%
- Hiking Programs 52%
- Biking Events 49%

## Master Plan 2017-2021

## Survey Executive Summary (cont'd)

Should the Town sponsor weekend events:

Music Events	95%
Taste of Stratford	94%
Athletic Tournaments	89%
Theater Programs at Shakespeare Theater	85%
Outdoor Art Shows	83%
Birding Festivals	63%

Other events mentioned were: Historical Walking Tours, Forest walks, Children's concerts, cycling or kayaking events, food truck event, Renaissance Fair, Air Shows, Flea Market. Some suggested a small charge, donation or charge to non residents.

Which project should be undertaken by the Town of Stratford in the next 5 years:

Greenway Expansion	66%
Restrooms at Long Beach	56%
Security Cameras at Parks	52%
Beach walkway to Long Beach West	52%
Restrooms at Wooster Field	48%
Nature Programs at Roosevelt Forest	43%

Other suggestions were: Roller skating, Dog Park, Skate Park, Frisbee Golf, Lacrosse field, Playground at Roosevelt Forest.

In the area of Maintenance, facilities with the "Greatest Satisfaction" (Very satisfied combined with Satisfied) as mentioned by those surveyed were:

Track at Bunnell	93%
Indoor Basketball	87%
Par 3 Golf Course	86%
Softball fields	84%
Platform tennis cts	82%
Tennis cts	84%
Outdoor basketball	79%
Baseball Fields	78%
Playground Facilities	76%

Areas expressing "Dissatisfaction"

Picnic Areas	46%
Small Neighborhood parks	45%
Playground Facilities	42%
Bike Paths	41%
Swimming Pools	39%

Specific facilities of "Dissatisfaction"

Bathroom facilities	72%
Recycling Receptacles	50%
Trash Receptacles	48%
Benches	48%
Lighting in Park	47%

Do you think the Town should build another indoor pool not attached to a school building?

Yes 56%                      No 44%

Would you like to see a Therapeutic Pool?

Yes 58%                      No 42%

Did you know that you can register online for most Recreation Department Programs?

Yes 74%                      No 26%

Would you register for programs online from you mobile device?

Yes 73%                      No 27%

How do you find out about programs and activities?

Word of Mouth              72%

Community Calendar      51%

Town Website                48%

Local Newspaper            46%

Social Media                 43%

School Flyers                41%

Which statement best describes you household's opinion of Parks and Recreation budge options?

The Town should improve existing services and programs?              52%

The Town should create new services and programs?                      28%

The Town should continue its current level of services?                    12%

The town should eliminate some existing services?                        8%

## Master Plan 2017-2021

## Meeting with Leagues Summary

Park & Recreation Master Plan Sub Committee  
July 17, 2013

Members present: Matt Salerno, Bill O'Brien, Craig Budnick, Ken Poisson, Guy Stelmack

Leagues: Chuck Mulin, Stratford United (150 youth in fall, 180-200 in spring)  
Bill O'Brien, Sterling House (805 youth in fall, 812 in spring)  
Ben Kusinski, Little League (32 boys teams or 400 & 4 girls teams or 100)  
John Kelly, Stratford Baseball (37 teams or 374)  
Norm Aldrich, Tom Galatie, Mo Scioletti, American Legion (2 teams or 40 ages 14-18)  
Norm Pariseau, Xtreme Chaos(7 teams or 90 girls)  
Pat Corcorran, Lacrosse (184 boys & girls or 8 teams)

Summary of Recommendations from Leagues:

Soccer    Field for youth 50x75 yds  
Practice fields during the week  
Dedicated soccer fields  
Close Glendale Drive at Longbrook Park and add fields  
Pirhalla Farm for U12 soccer field  
Reduce # of fields with backstops (Craig Budnick)  
Software to allow individual tams to get permits (Craig Budnick)  
Use of small field at Flood on Fridays (Ken Poisson)

Little League/Stratford Baseball

Need lighted fields in fall to have teams  
No fields have mounds  
Fields at Second Hill Lane not well maintained  
Need more 50/70 ft fields, Field at Short Beach near mini golf 50/70 ft  
Put taller fence at Short Beach #2,3 for 50/70  
Bleachers at Short Beach  
No fields for Senior Babe Ruth 16-18 yrs old  
Bunnell field locked  
Need 60/90 ft fields  
Wooster field #3 in bad shape  
Add field at Clover  
High Park has neighborhood issues

American Legion

Bunnell HS Baseball field not in good shape  
Need lights at Penders 2-3 nights per week during 5 week season  
Privatize field maintenance  
Dugouts at Penders need benches and bat racks  
Concrete in dugouts is wet and may cause structural issues  
Need field on Sunday mornings for Fall

Girls Softball

- Field maintenance is a problem
- turned away 3 teams due to field availability
- Adopt a field program – privatize maintenance
- Needs 5 fields twice per week

Lacrosse

- Dedicated field 60x120 yds
- Turf on weekends
- Wooster available from March to June 15
- Short Beach field fixed with equipment shed
- Need to know Turf field availability in January
- Bathrooms (portajohns) and gates at Bunnell
- Wooster building with bathrooms

## Master Plan 2017-2021

## Field Usage Listing 2016

Field Usage Listing 2016											
Location											
Birdseye	3	softball/baseball			1	youth soccer			1	football	
Chapel	1	<b>softball</b>									
Clover			2	<b>baseball</b>							
DeLuca	1	<b>softball</b>									
Eli	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
Flood	1	softball	1	baseball	1	soccer					
Bunnell	1	<b>softball</b>	1	<b>baseball</b>	1	<b>soccer</b>		1	<b>lacrosse</b>	1	<b>football</b>
High Park	2	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
Johnson	4	softball/baseball			1	soccer				1	football
King St	2	softball/baseball			1	youth soccer					
Penders			1	baseball	1	soccer		1	lacrosse	1	football
Longbrook	1	softball/baseball			2	soccer		2	lacrosse	1	football
Lordship	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
Nichols	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
North End	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
SHL	1	softball/baseball	1	<b>baseball</b>	2	soccer		2	lacrosse		
Short Beach	3	<b>softball/baseball</b>	1	baseball	1	<b>soccer</b>		1	<b>lacrosse</b>		
Stonybrook	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
Wilcoxson	1	<b>softball/baseball</b>									
Wooster	1	softball	2	baseball	1	<b>soccer</b>		1	lacrosse		
Totals	27		9		12			8		5	
Dedicated	14		3		3			3		1	

Deliver responsive municipal services to ensure a safe, welcoming and vital community now and in the future.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Protect and improve the existing system of open spaces throughout the town through capital rehabilitation, maintenance, programming, and other system operations to protect the environmental resources of the open space system to enable the restoration and maintenance of their high quality and to reduce the costs of mitigating adverse consequences.

The town will continue to seek, not only from its own work force, but also from other contracted providers, an ever increasing commitment to high quality, maintainable designs and construction for its historic parks and modern play facilities. The Parks Department will continue to refine its field-based definition of a consistent standard of maintenance, and will work with others such as property owners to maximize operating and capital funds for this standard.

Maintain facilities and resources at existing or improved levels through the Quality Control Program, interagency coordination, and constituent-based work plans.

Update management plans for selected parks where needed due to changing conditions.

Improve the training program and other ongoing educational opportunities which commit to the further development of the professional and skilled workforce.

Inventory trees town-wide and design a planting and maintenance program to replenish and add to the tree inventory

Design program, including budget, personnel, equipment, and software space system

Take advantage of potential opportunities to advance the open space system as a way to promote its citizens' health and well-being

Advocate for the long-term protection and stewardship of non-town publicly and privately owned urban wilds and other natural areas.

Manage and maintain town-owned natural areas to facilitate public access and promote ecological values. Promote the use of town-owned urban wilds and other natural areas for passive recreation, environmental education, and other uses in keeping with their natural character.

Develop administrative, fiscal, and programmatic resources to ensure ongoing, long-term maintenance and management of town-owned urban wilds and other natural areas. Develop and implement an urban tree and forest management and development plan which treats the town's trees as a part of the capital infrastructure that ensures a quality environment

Encourage public policies and actions that are consistent with the town Open Space Plan such as agency area plans, zoning, conservation legislation, regulatory decision-making, and easements

## PHILOSOPHY:

The mission of the Recreation Department is to provide quality, affordable recreational services to enable the community to utilize their leisure time constructively and to enhance the quality of life. The department is committed to working cooperatively with all agencies, departments and volunteer groups to promote the well being of all residents.

The goal is to provide the individual with facilities and programs through which they can:

- Have a greater opportunity for social interaction
- Improve their physical conditioning
- Develop new skills
- Enjoy safe, wholesome, relaxing and satisfying activities
- Assist in improving their academic, economic and social well being

To meet these goals, the department objectives are:

1. To develop a qualified professional staff and adequate facilities to meet the leisure time activities
2. To provide a comprehensive program with the development of a new activity each season in the following areas:
  - a. Water Safety and Education
  - b. Youth and Teen Activities
  - c. Special Population Activities
  - d. Faculty Administration
  - e. Lifetime Activities including fitness programs and educational classes
  - f. Athletics
  - g. Special Events
3. To establish cooperation with community and area agencies and to complement and supplement, but not compete with, these agencies.

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS**

**PRIMARY GENERAL ACTION ITEMS**

1. HIGHEST PRIORITY DESIRED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS WAS TO HAVE MORE PROGRAMS SUCH AS:

- MUSIC FESTIVALS (94%)
- TASTE OF STRATFORD (93%)
- OUTDOOR ART SHOWS (88%)

2. THE NEXT HIGHEST ITEMS DESIRED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS WAS:

- CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR GREENWAY (73%)
- PROVISION FOR A SWIMMING POOL UNATTACHED TO SCHOOLS (73%)
- PROVISION FOR A TEACHING POOL FOR YOUNGSTERS (65%)
- IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS (63%)
- PROVISION FOR A THERAPEUTIC POOL (60%)

3. THE HIGHEST ITEMS OF DISSATISFACTION REQUIRING ACTION:

- MORE AND BETTER-MAINTAINED REST ROOMS (76%)
- BETTER CARE OF PARK GROUNDS (69%)
- MORE BENCHES (68%)
- MORE TRASH RECEPTACLES AND SCHEDULED PICKUPS (63%)
- SECURITY CAMERAS (60%)

4. NEXT HIGHEST ITEMS OF DISSATISFACTION REQUIRING ACTION:

- MORE PICNIC AREAS (46%)
- MORE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (45%)
- BETTER-MAINTAINED PLAYGROUND AREAS (42%)
- MORE BIKE PATHS (41%)
- MORE ACCESS TO SWIMMING POOLS (39%)

5. REPAIR/MODIFY WATER DRAINAGE AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- |             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| BUNNELL     | FIELD AND PREVENT FLOODING IN DUGOUT |
| DELUCA      | IN RIGHT FIELD                       |
| FLOOD       | SOCCER FIELD                         |
| SECOND HILL | BASEBALL FIELD                       |
| WOOSTER     | CORRECT WATER PONDING ON BASE LINES  |
| FRANKLIN    | PLAYGROUND                           |

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS (continued)**

## 6. REPAIR TENNIS COURT SURFACES:

FLOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL  
LONGBROOK PARK (HAR TRU SURFACE)  
SHORT BEACH PARK  
STRATFORD HIGH SCHOOL

7. REVIEW ALL PLAYGROUNDS, ESPECIALLY IN NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS; REPAIR/REPLACE EQUIPMENT. UPGRADE TO CURRENT STANDARDS REQUIRED BY LAW. ADD BENCHES AND TABLES. APPLY GROUND COVERING. INSTALL MORE TRASH CONTAINERS AND SCHEDULE MORE PICK UPS.

8. DEVELOP PILOT PROGRAM TO HAVE SELECTED PARK MAINTENANCE PERFORMED BY CONTRACTED FIRMS.

9. DEVELOP A PILOT PROGRAM TO HAVE SELECTED PARKS WITH PROBLEMS TO BE MAINTAINED WITH FULL TIME PERMANENT STAFF.

10. DEVELOP A PLAN TO PROVIDE MORE POLICE OVERSIGHT AT RECREATION LOCATIONS.

11. CONTINUE STUDY TO PROVIDE AN ARTIFICIAL TURF PLAYING FIELD.

12. DEVELOP LONG TERM PLAN FOR ROOSEVELT FOREST.

13. EXPAND LIFETIME ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS INCLUDING FITNESS, SELF IMPROVEMENT AND NATURE PROGRAMS.

14. REQUEST THE ZONING COMMISSION ALLOW LONGBROOK FIELD LIGHTS BE USED A MAXIMUM OF TWICE PER WEEK FOR NON STRATFORD HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS TEAMS UP TO 11:00 PM.

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS (continued)****PRIMARY SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS**

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
1. BALL FIELDS	WOOSTER	CORRECT POOR RESODDING
2. BASEBALL	BUNNELL	REPAIR CONCRETE IN VIEWING AREA
3. BASKETBALL	WOOD END	REPLACE RIMS, REPAIR/REPLACE BENCHES
4. BOCCE COURT	Longbrook	INSTALL BOCCE COURT
5. CAR TOP BOATING	TBD	PROVIDE ACCESS TO RIVER
6. DOG PARK	TBD	DETERMINE LOCATION AND ESTABLISH RULES
7. HANDBALL	WOOD END	REPAIR PLAYING SURFACE
8. HORSESHOES	Longbrook	INSTALL TWO PITS
9. LIGHTS	BUNNELL NORTH END SHORT BEACH WOOSTER SHORT BEACH	BASEBALL FIELD BASKETBALL COURTS BASKETBALL COURTS BASKETBALL COURTS TENNIS COURTS
10. MINI GOLF	SHORT BEACH	UPGRADE/REPAIR
11. PARKING	Longbrook	PROVIDE MORE
12. PIRHALA FARM	CONNORS LANE	DETERMINE POSSIBLE USES
13. SOCCER	BIRDSEYE	INSTALL NEW FIELD
14. SOFTBALL	SECOND HILL	PROVIDE BETTER BACK STOP
15. TRACK	JOHNSON	INSTALL WALKING TRACK
16. WADING POOL	Longbrook	REPAIR; CONSIDER CHANGING TO SPRINKLER POOL

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ACTION ITEMS (continued)**

## 17. BREWSTER POND LONGBROOK INVESTIGATE AERATION SYSTEM

**SECONDARY SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS**

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
1. BASEBALL	WOOSTER	PROVIDE PONY LEAGUE FIELD
2. BASKETBALL	SECOND HILL	BUILD COURT BEHIND SCHOOL
3. BASKETBALL	NORTH END	INSTALL RIMS AND BENCHES
4. BEACHES	SHORT BEACH LONG BEACH	IMPROVE QUALITY AND CARE OF SAND, ETC.
5. BOAT RAMP	BIRDSEYE	EXCELLENT FACILITY NEED MORE LOCATIONS
6. EDUCATION	BOAT RAMP	DEVELOP PLAN FOR MARINE EDUCATION CENTER
7. FENCING	GENERAL	REPAIR/REPLACE
8. ICE SKATING	GENERAL	CONDUCT STUDY TO PROVIDE A FACILITY
9. PRESS BOX	LONGBROOK	BASEBALL FIELD
10. SCOREBOARD	CLOVER SHORT BEACH BUNNELL	INSTALL
11. SIGNAGE	LONGBROOK SECOND HILL SHOWCASE LOC. SHORT BEACH GENERAL	INSTALL    DOG LEASHING AND CLEANUP
12. TOWN PARK	FRASH POND	CONDUCT STUDY TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC
13. TRACK	CLOVER	INSTALL WARNING TRACK AND GRASS INFIELD
14. WATER PARK	SHORT BEACH	FEASIBILITY STUDY

### Executive Summary of Survey 2007

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan survey was an online survey conducted January 10-February 26, 2007. There were 308 responses of which 9 were done offline.

The demographics of the individuals completing the survey are similar to those of the overall town. The concerns are that only 1% of those under 18 completed the survey as compared to the overall population of 17%. In addition 47% of those surveyed have a household income of over \$90,000 which is well over the median income of \$59,146. We unfortunately did not capture more than 4% of those with incomes under \$35,000.

The individual demographics were:

Female - 55% (town – 51%)	Male - 45% (town – 49%)
Age: 40-49	36% - matches the median age for the town
25-39	32% - 33% of town is between ages 25-49
50-64	24% - (town 19%)
65+	7% - (town 19%)
Married with children	58%
Household income of \$90,000	48%
Household income of \$50-74,999	22% – matches the median income for the town
Household with 4 members	37%
Household with 2 members	22%
Household with 2 children under 18	35%
Household with 0 children under 18	29%
Respondents from north Stratford	50%
Respondents from south Stratford	44%

Lordship/Mac Harbor and Wilcoxson areas had the most respondents with 17% each followed by Eli Whitney (11%), Chapel (10%) and Honeyspot (9%).

There was an overwhelming response for the town to have Music Festivals (94%), Taste of Stratford (93%) and Outdoor Art Shows (88%). The respondents were also very interested in building the Greenway (73%). In addition the respondents felt the “Town should improve existing services and programs” (63%). More definitive responses were that most did not want a pool attached to an existing school (73%), wanted a therapeutic pool (60%), would be willing to purchase a membership to a town indoor water park playground pool if the price were reasonable (67%) and 65% would enroll their youngsters in swim lessons at a pool specially designed as a teaching pool. The remaining responses tended to be less than 59% in response to our questions.

Receiving responses between 50-59% were “No” (55%) “Would you go to a pool located in the South End of Town”. This response matches the number of respondents from the north end who have Flood Pool nearby and would probably be less willing to travel to the south end. On the question of whether the town should build another indoor pool not attached to a school building, 54% responded “Yes”. “Should the town build a pool with a diving well”, 51% responded “No”. On the question of which type of pool to build, 28% responded “Neither”, while 27% responded “Both”. Overall 72% responded to either “Both”, Indoor Recreational WaterPark (26%) or competitive pool (20%).



### Executive Summary of Survey 2007(continued)

The following are the tabulation of responses to the survey questions:

On the question of which Facility the top 5 were:

- Public Beaches
- Picnic Areas
- Playground Equipment
- Small Neighborhood Parks
- School gyms

The Least used facilities were:

- Street hockey
- Wading pool
- Platform tennis
- Volleyball courts
- Lacrosse field

The top 5 Parks mentioned by those surveyed were:

- Short Beach
- Lordship Seawall
- Longbrook Park
- Long Beach
- Roosevelt Forest

The least used Parks mentioned by those surveyed were:

- Clover Park
- Baldwin Center
- Booth Park
- Flood Pool
- Wooster Park

On the question of what they would like more of, the top 5 were:

Bike Path (60%)	(33%) Keep the same
Picnic Areas (52%)	(43%) Keep the same
Swimming Pool (51%)	(38%) Keep the same
Playground Equipment (48%)	(44%) Keep the same
Public Beaches (39%)	(56%) Keep the same

Keep the same (as indicated by those surveyed):

- Football (70%)
- Boat Launching (67%)
- Volleyball courts (66%)
- Softball fields (64%)
- School gyms (63%)

Less of (as indicated by those surveyed):

- Platform tennis (14%)
- Street Hockey (11%)
- Baseball (10%)
- Softball (7%)
- Wading pool (7%)

Based on these percentages we should not eliminate anything. We should concentrate on Bike Paths, Pool, and Picnic Areas. We should not expand Public Beaches or Playgrounds. The majority of respondents want the town to keep facilities the same.

In the program area when you combine "Very Important" and "Important" responses receiving more than 50% are:

Fitness Classes	59%
Open Swims	56%
Self Improvement	54%
Swim Lessons	54%
Concerts on Green	54%
Concert at Booth	52%
Nature Programs	52%
Holiday Programs	50%
Drop In for teens	50%

## Survey Executive Summary

In the area of Maintenance, facilities with the "Greatest Satisfaction" (Very satisfied combined with Satisfied) as mentioned by those surveyed were:

Indoor Basketball	58%
Baseball fields	49%

Areas expressing "Dissatisfaction"

Picnic Areas	46%
Small Neighborhood parks	45%
Playground Facilities	42%
Bike Paths	41%
Swimming Pools	39%

Specific facilities of "Dissatisfaction"

Bathroom facilities	76%
Care of grounds	69%
Benches	68%
Trash Receptacles	63%
Security cameras	60%

Below are the responses to the question as to what they would like to see at the Pirhalla Farm site.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agricultural programs (educational)	124	40%
Community Park	115	37%
Community gardens	102	33%
Soccer field	67	22%
Open space	66	21%
Other	42	14%
Lease land to farmers and landscapers	31	10%



**Town Wide Survey Comment Extract for 2007**

The Town wide survey conducted for the Park and Recreation Five Year Plan provided for responses to specific questions and space for commentary the respondents wished to add. These comments have been analyzed to edit personal comments and to combine duplicates into a series of action items the respondents thought important enough to have included in the Five Year Plan. (Not listed in any sequence)

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT A SPECIFIC PARK OR LOCATION OR ANY CONCERNS ABOUT SOMETHING WE HAVE NOT ADDRESSED?

Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

- Develop a schedule to review park conditions periodically
- Repair/Replace broken equipment
- Upgrade playground equipment with more swings and climbing type equipment
- Schedule more frequent clean up of play areas, removing broken glass, tree stumps and metal pipes
- Provide more trash containers and empty daily
- Provide mulch ground cover more frequently
- Develop a plan to provide benches with backs and tables for each park
- Provide a police presence to prevent teen/young adults from intimidating small children
- Correct flooding problem at Franklin

Baseball and Softball Fields

- Provide better and more frequent maintenance of ball fields

This request had the most impassioned personal comments of all comments and as such it is worthy of emphasis

- Develop plan to provide more benches or bleachers for spectators
- Provide lights on more softball/baseball fields
- Little league and other need more access to quality fields.

## Town Wide Survey Comment Extract for 2007 (continued)

Tennis Courts

- Resurface all asphalt courts to repair all cracked surfaces

This request had a substantial number of comments and as such it is worthy of emphasis

- Purchase annual contract to repair cracks in asphalt surfaces
- Continue annual contract to replace Har Tru surface on Longbrook courts
- Provide lights at Short Beach courts
- Improve lighting at Flood and Longbrook courts

Lacrosse Fields

- Provide for more Lacrosse fields to accommodate fastest growing sport

This request had a substantial number of comments and as such it is worthy of emphasis

- Explore the use football fields or soccer fields in the spring for Lacrosse.
- Provide for nets/goals and coaches.
- Advertise Lacrosse events
- Provide field lighting

Longbrook Park

- Clean Longbrook Pond and Brooks
- Schedule more frequent clean up of Longbrook Park

These two requests had a substantial number of comments and as such are worthy of emphasis

- Remove dead branches hanging from trees
- Provide more off street parking
- Provide more night security during warmer nights
- Repair/replace grills, tables and benches
- Provide for more tables and benches
- Update and provide scheduled clean up of picnic area
- Consider changing wading pool to sprinkler park
- Repair wading pool
- Provide better supervision of wading pool for use by age appropriate children only
- Stock pond with fish and bring back trout derby

**Town Wide Survey Comment Extract for 2007 (continued)**Dog Park

- Provide for a Dog Park

Short Beach

- Increase cleaning and maintenance schedule at beach and park

This request had a substantial number of comments and as such it is worthy of emphasis

- Provide schedule clean up of glass, etc in the picnic area by the playground
- Provide for clean up of sand and gravel on sidewalk/bike path.
- Increase trash pick up schedule
- Clean bike paths leading to Short Beach after winter of sand
- Repair/replace equipment at in playground

Long Beach

- Provide benches with backs for older and disabled who can not sit on sand.
- Schedule regular clean up
- Provide trash receptacles

Wooster Field

- Correct drainage problem to eliminate rain pools that limit the use of the soccer playing field.
- Clean Wooster pond of debris

Roosevelt Forest

- Improve appearance
- Provide directions on Town's WEB site or Channel 79
- Develop hiking trails
- Make entrance more accessible
- Provide better markings for trails, put trail map on line

**Town Wide Survey Comment Extract for 2007 (continued)**Boothe Park

- Upgrade neglected baseball field
- Continue effort to upgrade park and buildings to its former glory

Other

- Continue effort to provide at least one artificial field for high school sports
- Provide more soccer fields to accommodate teams and leagues
- Apply clean up effort to the entire town, not just parks
- Concentrate on making what we have better.
- Provide more running/biking/skateboarding paths.
- Provide more, safer car top river access for canoes and kayaks
- Provide more portable toilets in playing areas during season
- Keep ATV's off Flood Field
- Provide some maintenance at Shakespeare grounds