

Chapter IX RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

"We, as a community, must recognize the necessity, importance, and benefits afforded by recreational facilities in Loudon. The Town must continue to provide quality recreational opportunities and prepare to meet future needs of all members of the community by exploring new opportunities."

- Loudon 2001 Community and Recreational Facilities Subcommittee

INTRODUCTION

An important component to a high quality of life, recreation provides a much-needed means of stress reduction and physical well-being. Recreation facilities also provide residents with a place to interact and create a sense of community that is beneficial to residents of all ages. In recent years, numerous studies have identified that recreational facilities and programs also give children and teenagers a place to go, thereby reducing delinquent activity by those sectors of the population.

Loudon's recreational programs were established in 1985, and have since been continuously improved and diversified. Over the past 15 years, new facilities have been constructed and new and different programs have been created to better meet the needs of the community. The Loudon Recreation Committee plans bus trips, Red Cross babysitting courses, and many activities for the public at large. The Loudon Young at Heart, which is an entity of the Recreation Committee, also organizes educational and recreational programs for its own membership. Since its inception, the Loudon Recreation Committee has added lights to its outdoor facilities, constructed ball fields on Staniels Road, and built a skateboard park. These improvements to its programs and facilities are ongoing in order to meet the needs of Loudon residents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

- To identify existing recreational facilities and opportunities within Loudon and to determine if they meet the needs of the population;
- To determine potential locations for future recreational opportunities; and
- To facilitate the linkage, via trail or sidewalk of Village Road, to Loudon's recreational opportunities to promote safety in recreational programs.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

To better determine the needs and sentiments of the community regarding recreational opportunities in Loudon, residents were asked whether or not they felt that Loudon’s recreational programs were adequate to meet the needs of the residents. Of the almost 784 people that responded, many felt that the Town should add more programs to its already existing programs in order to serve all facets of the population, including young children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. With respect to survey results, residents most favored creating recreational programs for children and teenagers.

Do you think the Town should encourage recreational programs or activities for its residents?

Table IX-1
Create programs for teens

Create programs for teens	Total	Percentage
Do not support creation of programs	51	6.5%
No Opinion	94	12.0%
Support Creation of Programs	572	73.0%
(blank)	67	8.5%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-3
Create programs for adults

Create programs for adults	Total	Percentage
Do not support creation of programs	110	14.0%
No Opinion	151	19.3%
Support Creation of Programs	397	50.6%
(blank)	126	16.1%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-2
Create programs for seniors

Create programs for seniors	Total	Percentage
Do not support creation of programs	82	10.5%
No Opinion	140	17.9%
Support Creation of Programs	456	58.2%
(blank)	106	13.5%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-4
Create programs for kids

Create programs for kids	Total	Percentage
Do not support creation of programs	54	6.9%
No Opinion	102	13.0%
Support Creation of Programs	544	69.4%
(blank)	84	10.7%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Survey results also indicated that a majority of respondents believe that the Town should actively encourage recreational programs for its residents. However, results also indicated that a small minority felt existing recreation facilities were adequate and no improvements or expansions were necessary. Specific amenities desired include a boat launch, picnic areas, a community center, trails and bike paths, and playgrounds:

Table IX-5
Recreational Facilities Residents Would Like Developed in the Future

Desired Recreational Facility	Total	Percentage
Public swimming pool	169	5.8%
Basketball courts	203	6.9%
	<i>Indoor</i>	76
	<i>Outdoor</i>	35
Canoe/boat launch (Soucook River)	369	12.6%
Picnic areas	308	10.5%
Community center	262	9.0%
Recreational trails (all types)	332	11.4%
Bicycle paths	341	11.7%
Playgrounds	255	8.7%
Cultural activities	122	4.2%
Senior center	206	7.0%
Ice/skateboard rink	202	6.9%
None. Recreational facilities are adequate.	54	1.8%
Other	28	1.0%
No opinion	72	2.5%
Total Responses (does not include indoor/outdoor basketball choice)	2923	100.0%

The highest percentage of responses generated, 12.6%, indicated that residents want the Town to develop more recreational facilities that incorporate the Soucook River (Table IX-5). Responses of how respondents presently use the Soucook River are displayed in Tables IX-6 through IX-11.

Do you use the Soucook River for any of the following activities? If so, how often?

Table IX-6
Presently use Soucook for fishing

Use Soucook for fishing	Total	Percentage
No	358	45.7%
Want to in future	35	4.5%
Yes	273	34.8%
(blank)	118	15.1%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-9
Presently use Soucook for boating

Use Soucook for boating	Total	Percentage
No	399	50.9%
Want to in future	59	7.5%
Yes	145	18.5%
(blank)	181	23.1%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-7
Presently use Soucook for swimming

Use Soucook for swimming	Total	Percentage
No	456	58.2%
Want to in future	51	6.5%
Yes	81	10.3%
(blank)	196	25.0%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-10
Presently use Soucook for birding

Use Soucook for birding	Total	Percentage
No	450	57.4%
Want to in future	41	5.2%
Yes	83	10.6%
(blank)	210	26.8%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-8
Presently use Soucook for hiking

Use Soucook for hiking	Total	Percentage
No	426	54.3%
Want to in future	55	7.0%
Yes	107	13.6%
(blank)	196	25.0%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Table IX-11
Presently use Soucook for nature

Use Soucook for nature	Total	Percentage
No	380	48.5%
Want to in future	46	5.9%
Yes	183	23.3%
(blank)	175	22.3%
Grand Total	784	100.0%

Responses stating how often the River is used are depicted in CHAPTER XIII, APPENDIX. Fishing, nature activities, and boating were the most popular uses of the Soucook River amongst Loudon residents. The community survey asked residents to identify what types of businesses should be located along the river to support such activities. Of the types of businesses which respondents could select, equipment rental shops, restaurants, and information kiosks were the most popular responses. However, 27.6% of respondents also felt that no businesses or services should be constructed along the River:

If a greenway were created along the Soucook River for public recreational uses, what types of businesses/services along the greenway would you like to see support the activities? (Please check all that apply).

Table IX-12

Businesses to Support Greenway	Total	Percentage
Equipment rental shops	157	14.2%
Retail shops	98	8.8%
Inns/Motels	74	6.7%
Restaurants	148	13.4%
Public information kiosks	119	10.7%
Tourism-related businesses	104	9.4%
Agricultural-related businesses	65	5.9%
No businesses/services	306	27.6%
Other	37	3.3%
Total Responses	1108	100.0%

DISCUSSION OF POPULATION TRENDS

When assessing the adequacy of existing and planned recreational facilities, an understanding of community growth is essential. Since 1960, the population of Loudon has increased by 288% (from 1,194 to 4,635 people). Furthermore, survey results indicate that the largest segments of the population are currently adults age 40-64 and children age 5-12. See Tables IX-13 through IX-15 for more detail.

Table IX-13

Historic Population Trends and Percent Growth, 1960-1999

Year	Population	% Growth
1960	1194	
1970	1707	43%
1980	2454	106%
1990	4114	245%
1999	4635	288%

Source: US Census, 1960-1990, NH OSP Population Projections

Of the households that responded to the Community Survey, there were 889 adults represented and 360 children represented. Table IX-14 below is a breakdown of the population by age. As noted in the table, the largest segment of population in 2010 will be age 45 and over.

Table IX-14
Loudon Population by Age, 1970 - 2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
0 to 4	185	193	377	320	275
5 to 14	402	433	686	719	211
15 to 24	244	449	473	491	439
25 to 34	245	443	886	544	328
35 to 44	217	309	716	922	648
45 to 54	160	271	416	742	1,159
55 to 64	133	170	299	368	983
65 to 74	72	121	160	245	533
75+	49	65	101	130	372
Total	1,707	2,454	4,114	4,481	4,947

Source: 1970-2000 US Census. 2010 estimates developed by CNHRPC using mortality data and trend analysis

Table IX-15
Age Grouping as Percent of Total Population, 2000 and 2010

	2000	Percent of Total Population	2010	Percent of Total Population
0 to 4	320	7.1%	275	5.6%
5 to 14	719	16.0%	211	4.3%
15 to 24	491	11.0%	439	8.9%
25 to 34	544	12.1%	328	6.6%
35 to 44	922	20.6%	648	13.1%
45 to 54	742	17.0%	1,159	23.4%
55 to 64	368	8.2%	983	19.9%
65 to 74	245	5.5%	533	10.8%
75+	130	2.9%	372	7.5%
Total	4,481		4,947	

Source: 2000 and 2010 estimates developed by CNHRPC using mortality data and trend analysis

HISTORY OF RECREATION IN LOUDON

Established in 1985, the Loudon Recreation Committee has traditionally run youth sports programs, summer youth programs, and bus trips. In addition, they manage the recreational facilities owned by the Town, such as the sports fields and other recreational areas. These programs are run by Recreational Committee, a committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Recently, the Recreation Committee has planned trips to State Parks for adults and children, ran youth sports programs, created a skateboard park, and run monthly bus trips to places such as Boston, New York City, Cape Cod, Pennsylvania, Canada, and more. These trips and programs are advertised through the Loudon Ledger and through the Town Crier section in the Concord Monitor.

REVIEW OF FISCAL RESOURCES

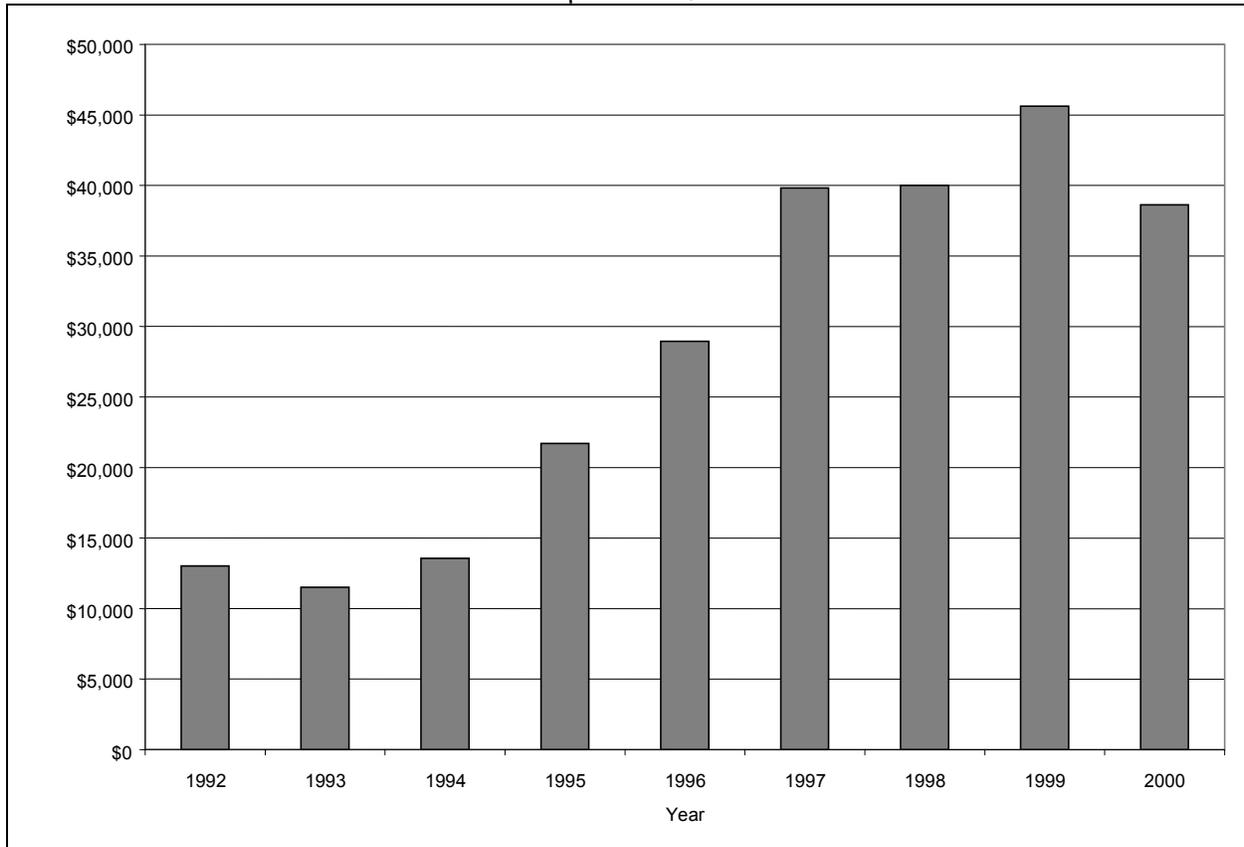
As recreation services in Loudon have been expanded, the Town has committed more financial resources. In 1992, the total recreation budget for the community was \$13,015. In 2000, the budget was \$38,625. Over the period of 1992 through 1998, the recreation budget increased by \$25,610. This represents a 197% increase. This was sharper increase than that of the total town budget. Loudon current spends \$8.62 per person on recreation. Please see Tables IX-16 and IX-17 for more detail.

Table IX-16
Recreation Expenditures, 1992 - 2000

Year	Recreation Committee Budget	Total Town Budget	Recreation as Percent of Total Budget
1992	\$13,015	\$1,400,713	0.9%
1993	\$11,500	\$1,421,207	0.8%
1994	\$13,569	\$1,511,576	0.9%
1995	\$21,704	\$1,660,156	1.3%
1996	\$28,965	\$2,014,404	1.4%
1997	\$39,840	\$2,181,041	1.8%
1998	\$40,000	\$3,276,211	1.2%
1999	\$45,625	\$4,249,466	1.1%
2000	\$38,625	\$3,920,063	1.0%
Increase 1992-1999	\$25,610	\$2,519,350	
Increase 1992-2000 as Percentage	197%	180%	

Source: Loudon Annual Reports, 1992-2000

Figure IX-1
Recreation Expenditures, 1992 - 2000



Source: Loudon Annual Reports, 1992-2000

Table IX-17
Recreation Expenditures per Capita, 1992 - 2000

Year	Recreation Committee Budget	Population	Expenditure per Capita
1992	\$13,015	4,246	\$3.07
1993	\$11,500	4,300	\$2.67
1994	\$13,569	4,340	\$3.13
1995	\$21,704	4,358	\$4.98
1996	\$28,965	4,437	\$6.53
1997	\$39,840	4,468	\$8.92
1998	\$40,000	4,635	\$8.63
1999	\$45,625	4,553	\$10.02
2000	\$38,625	4,601	\$8.39
Increase 1992-2000	\$25,610	355	\$5.32

Source: Loudon Annual Reports, 1992-2000, and NH OSP Population Projections.
1997 Population Estimate developed by CNHRPC

EXISTING RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Recreation opportunities are delivered to residents through a variety of groups and businesses in the community.

Town Owned/Recreation Committee Maintained Facilities

Currently, the Recreational Committee in Loudon manages a few facilities located throughout the Town. Its official operations are run from the Selectmen's Office, and it also maintains several recreational facilities including the South Village Road Recreation Area, Clough Pond Recreation Area, and Staniels Road Recreation Area.

Merrimack Valley School District (MVSD)

Often, small communities rely heavily on school recreational facilities to help meet the needs of the Town. Currently, the school makes all facilities available to the general public. These include the gymnasium, ball fields, playground, and basketball court. The Loudon Youth Athletic Association uses the facilities for basketball and baseball. In addition, the facilities are sometimes used for adult aerobics instruction and other events. However, it must be stressed that the existing gym at the Loudon Elementary School is only a half-court facility, and thus severely undersized for the needs of the community.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over several large parcels of open space, which provide both passive and active recreation opportunities. One natural area with high recreational value is the State's Hoit Road Marsh Wildlife Management Area. These lands are used for hiking, fishing, and cross-country skiing.

Private, For Profit Recreational Resources

In addition to public lands, private facilities also provide an important source of recreation in the community. Privately owned and operated recreational amenities in Loudon include the Loudon Country Club and the New Hampshire International Speedway. The Loudon Country Club is located on Route 106, north of Shaker Road. The facility is located on 84 acres of land and includes an 18-hole golf course, driving range, pro-shop, and restaurant.

The New Hampshire International Speedway (NHIS) is located on Route 106 near the Canterbury town line. The facility, constructed in the early 1990s on over 400 acres of land, hosts a variety of motor racing events, including NASCAR auto racing and motorcycle racing. The facility has total capacity of over 100,000 spectators and hosts approximately six main events per year. In addition, NHIS frequently used by local automobile clubs for events and rallies.

For a complete summary of public and private recreational amenities in Loudon, please see Table IX-18. They are also shown on the *Recreational Facilities Map*.

Table IX-18
Existing Recreational Opportunities and Resources

	Ownership	Type	Location	Acreage
Loudon Recreation Field	Town	Ball fields, hiking, basketball, skateboarding, etc	Intersection of Routes 106 & 129, Recreation Drive	21 acres
Staniels Road Ball Fields	Town	Ball fields	Staniels Road	5.2
Loudon Country Club	Private	Golf Course, Driving Range, Pro-shop and Restaurant	Route 106, north of Shaker Road	84 acres
Cascade Park	Private	RV Campground	Route 106	60 acres
Loudon Elementary School	MVSD	Playground, Gymnasium	School Street	3 acres
Clough Pond Boat Launch	State	Boat Launch	Cough Pond Road	1 acre
Hoit Road Marsh & Wildlife Management Area	State	Marsh, hiking trails, passive recreation	Hit Road at Concord / Loudon Town Line	64 acres
Osborne Wildlife Management Area	State			370 acres
Oak Hill State Forest	State	Hiking Trails, Fire Tower	Oak Hill Road	2 acres
Soucook River State Forest	State		West of Route 106 at Concord City Line	50 acres
NH International Speedway	Private	Motor racing	Route 106 at Canterbury Town Line	438 acres
Crooked Pond Boat Launch	State	Boat Launch	Off Route 129	1 acre
Town Beach	Town	Public Beach	Clough Pond Road	1 acre

Source: CNHRPC Natural, Cultural, and Historical Resources Inventory of the CNHRPC Region, 1999

Loudon's existing recreational programs currently use some of these facilities. However, the community survey respondents indicated that they would like to see enhanced recreational programs, so these facilities could be further integrated into recreational programs, or new facilities could be created in order to accommodate a wider range of recreational activities.

LOUDON'S RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROFESSIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

It is important that all segments of the population are afforded the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational programs and experiences. In an effort to better assist communities in understanding what basic levels of recreational programs and facilities are appropriate, guidelines have been developed by several professional recreation associations and planning organizations throughout the country. Standards used in this chapter are general guidelines and commonly accepted standards published by recreation and planning professionals throughout New England for a community of 2,500 to 5,000 residents.

The following is a summary of existing recreational facilities in Loudon as compared with commonly accepted facility standards.

Indoor Recreational Facilities Guidelines

Indoor recreational facilities are important to communities as they afford recreational opportunities to residents year-round. Such facilities provide important places for social interaction that helps to foster a sense of community. Table IX-19 details suggested guidelines for indoor recreational facilities for a community with a population similar to that of Loudon. Notably, use of these standards indicates Loudon should currently provide both a senior center and teen center and associated programs for each.

Table IX-19
Comparison of Indoor Facilities, Loudon NH to Suggested Standards

Indoor Facilities	Suggested Number of Indoor Facilities For Populations of 2,500 to 5,000	Current Facilities, Population 4,635 (1999)	Location of Facility
School Facilities Available For Public Use	Yes	Yes	Loudon Elementary School
Gym or Large Multiuse Room	1	Yes	Loudon Elementary School
Auditorium or Assembly Hall	1	Yes	Loudon Community Building, Loudon Elementary
Art and Crafts Facilities	1	None	
Teen Center	1	None	
Senior Citizen Center	1	None	
Public Library	1	Yes	Maxfield Public Library

Source: Facility Guidelines, Maine SPO, Office of Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Dept of Economic and Community Development, 1989.

Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Like indoor recreational facilities, outdoor recreational facilities are also very important to communities as they also provide a place to interact. Based upon the standards outlined in Table IX-20, the Loudon should consider developing the following amenities:

- At least one (1) basketball court
- One (1) additional tennis courts
- At least (1) multi-purpose field

These amenities are important for all sectors of the population and efforts should be made to develop these facilities in the future. Please see Table IX-20 for more detail:

Table IX-20
Comparison of Outdoor Facilities, Loudon NH to Suggested Standards

Outdoor Recreational Facilities	Facility Standard per 1,000 Population	Suggested Recreational Facilities for Loudon 2000, Population 4,481	Inventory of Existing Facilities in Loudon 2000	Existing Need, 2000	Anticipated Need, 2010, Population 4,800-5,000
Community Recreation Facility, 12 - 25 acres in size, in a centralized location with ball fields, tennis courts, etc.	At least 1	1.0	Yes, Village Recreation Center	None	None
Community Park, 100 + acres, largely undeveloped with walking & cross country ski trails	At least 1	1.0	Yes, Hoit Road Marsh	None	None
Baseball Field (90 Ft. Base lines)	0.16	.7	1	None	None
Softball / Little League Fields	0.75	3.3	4	None	None
Basketball Courts	0.5	2	1	1	3 courts, total
Tennis Courts	0.67	3	2	1	3 total courts
Multi-purpose Field for Soccer, Football, and Field Hockey	0.5	2.0	1	1	3 total
Swimming Area to serve 5% of population (15 sq. ft. / person)	At least 1 to serve 195 people	At least 1	Yes, Clough Pond Town Beach	None	None
Ice Skating Facility	5,000 Sq. Ft. / 1,000 Population	22,400 Sq. Ft. Rink	None	22,400 Sq. Ft. Rink	25,000 Sq. Ft. Rink
Play Grounds - Tot Lots (General)	0.5	2.0	2	None	3 total
Horse Shoe Court	At least 1	1.0	1		1.0
Shuffle Board Court	At least 1	1.0	None	None	1.0
Picnic Area equipped with tables and grills	2 Tables / 1,000 population	At least 1 facility with 9 tables	None	None	At least 1 facility with 10 tables

Source: Facilities Guidelines, Maine SPO, Office of Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Dept of Economic and Community Development, 1989.

Recreation Administration and Staffing

In addition to guidelines regarding the various types of recreational facilities a community should provide, staffing and programming guidelines have also been established. As recommended by these commonly accepted levels, Loudon currently has a Recreation Committee and shared facilities between School and the Town. However, based on the standards described in Table IX-21, Loudon should consider providing the following:

- Full-time Recreation Director
- Full-time staff person
- Supervised playground programs
- Senior citizen club/center
- Teen program
- Ice skating
- Adult recreation program
- Day camp program for young children

These suggested guidelines also indicate that the Town should review the need and feasibility of hiring trained professional personnel, including a recreation director, to administer the daily operation of Loudon's recreational programs and facilities. Furthermore, based on the guidelines outlined below, Loudon should establish a community center with programs to serve the teenage and elderly populations of the community:

Table IX-21
 Comparison of Suggested Municipal Recreational Guidelines to
 Existing Municipally Operated Programs in Loudon, New Hampshire

	Suggested Number of Facilities For Populations of 2,500 to 5,000	Current Loudon Facilities, Population 3,945 (1999)	Notes
ADMINISTRATION			
Recreation or Park Board	Yes	Yes	
Park and Rec. Committee	Yes	Yes	
Combined School and Town Program (facilities and programs)	Yes	Yes	On Informal Basis Only
STAFFING			
<i>Summer Programs</i>			
Swimming Instructor	Yes	Yes	Clough Pond
Summer Rec. Director	Yes	None	
<i>Winter Programs</i>			
Skating Rink Supervisors	1	None	
Program Supervisor (as needed)	1	None	
<i>Year Round Programs</i>			
Full-time Recreation Director	1	None	
Full-time Staff Person	1	None	
Part-time Program Specialists (as needed)	Yes	Yes	Swim Instructors, Grounds Laborers
<i>Other Programs</i>			
Swimming Lessons	Yes	Yes	
Supervised Play Ground Programs	Yes	None	
Senior Citizen Club / Center	Yes	None	
Teen Program	Yes	None	
Skiing Club	Yes	Yes	
Ice Skating	Yes	None	Mill Pond - Informal
Special Community Events	Yes	Yes	Old Home Days
Adult Recreation Program	Yes	None	
Dance Program / Lessons	Yes	Offered Privately	
Day Camp Program for Young Children	Yes	None	

Source: Facilities Guidelines, Maine SPO, Office of Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Dept of Economic and Community Development, 1989.

LAND REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Availability of suitable land is a crucial component for expanding community recreational facilities. Table IX-22 summarizes land requirements for the construction of selected outdoor recreational facilities. Please note that the minimum lot area does not include land for off street parking, restrooms, or other facilities commonly associated with outdoor recreational amenities.

Table IX-22
Land Area Requirements for Selected Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Type of Facility	Recommended Minimum Lot Area
Basketball Court	5,040 Square Feet
Handball Court	800 Square Feet
Tennis Court (Single Court)	7,200 Square Feet
Tennis Court (2 Courts)	12,240 Square Feet
Volleyball Court	4,000 Square Feet
Baseball Diamond (Babe Ruth League)	3 to 3.85 Acres
Horseshoe Pit	1,400 Square Feet
Ice Hockey Rink	22,000 Square Feet
Soccer (Adult)	1.7 to 2.1 Acres
Soccer (Children's)	.8 to 1.4 Acres
Softball Field	1.5 to 2 Acres
Touch / Flag Football	41,200 Square Feet
Multi-purpose fields	Minimum area determined by type and number of facilities

Source: NH Office of State Planning, "Design Standards for Recreational Facilities", 1997

Town Owned Property Suitable for Future Recreational Facilities

Underutilized or vacant municipally-owned property can sometimes be used to expand recreational opportunities for residents of the community. Currently, the Town owns thirty-three (33) properties totaling approximately 593 acres. The majority of parcels owned by the Town are either "land-locked" or located away from the center of town or have environmental constraints not conducive to recreational uses. Of the 33 town owned parcels, 7 have potential for future recreational facilities. These sites are lots 11.007, 15.010, 20.045, 28.034, 29.026, 34.004, 49.016. Most of these parcels are suitable for neighborhood parks and passive recreation activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and similar activities. Though beneficial, Loudon, based upon outdoor recreational facilities guidelines cited in this chapter, has a greater need for lands suitable for field-based recreation, such as soccer, softball, and baseball fields. Table IX-23 summarizes the potential future recreational use of all Town owned properties:

Table IX-23
Possible Future Recreational Uses of Town Owned Property

Map / Lot	Location	Acres	Existing Use	Potential Use
M1L22	Staniels Road	5.2	Recreational Facilities	Recreational Facilities
M2L37	Bee Hole Road	5.37	Vacant	Conservation land due to high concentration of wetlands
M10L06	Broken Ground Road	38	Vacant	Conservation land
M11L07	Wales Bridge Road	1.05	Vacant	Potential fishing area, canoe / kayak launch
M13L10	Bear Hill Commons	17.6	Vacant	Conservation Land due to high concentration of wetlands
M15L10	SS Route 129	60	Vacant	Passive recreation due to topography, non-centralized location
M20L29	Library	0.64	Town Library	Town Library
M20L30	Cooper Street	2	Town Safety Complex	Town Safety Complex
M20L33	Main Street	20.7	Town Offices / Recreation Area	Town Offices / Recreation Area
M20L45	Route 106	0.27	Vacant	Abuts recreation area, merge with lot 20.033
M20L75	Route 106	0.02	Vacant	Small, narrow piece of land, sell to abutters
M20L71	Route 106	0.3	Vacant	Small, narrow piece of land, sell to abutters
M21L17	Route 129	2.3	Vacant	Conservation Land due to high concentration of wetlands
M24L08	Route 129	50	Town Forest	Conservation land
M28L34	Oak Hill Road	4.33	Vacant	Possible neighborhood park
M29L26	Foster Road	2	Vacant	Possible neighborhood park
M29L84	Church Street	6	Union Cemetery	Union Cemetery
M33L08	Youngs Hill Road	0.14	Town Pound	Town Pound
M33L09		2	Town Hall, Town Garage	Town Hall, Town Garage
M34L04	Youngs Hill Road	152	Vacant	Passive recreation due to wetlands, non-centralized location
M40L08		23.4	Transfer Station	Transfer Station
M40L15	Flagg Lot	20.3	Soucook River Recreation Area	Lot has 1,000' frontage on Soucook River. Parcel appears to be land-locked. Town should negotiate access with abutters.
M49L16	Hill Top Drive	1	Vacant	Possible neighborhood park
M49L16	Soucook Lane	2.8	Vacant	Study feasibility of transferring to Fillmore Industries in exchange for access to Soucook River Recreation Area
M49L99	Soucook Lane	1.1	Vacant	Sell to abutter
M49L104	Route 106	1.78	Vacant	Sell to abutter (NH DOT Maintenance)
M54L11		0.23	Ridge Fire Station	Ridge Fire Station
M56L05	Shaker Road	145	Vacant	Conservation land due to high concentration of wetlands, non-centralized location, poor access
M56L07	Flagg Road	1	Vacant	Sell to abutter
M58L84	Clough Pond Road	0.5	Town Beach	Town Beach
M58L86	Clough Pond Road	0.6	Town Beach	Town Beach
M58L103	Old Shaker Road	0.5	Vacant	Sell to abutter
TOTAL		593		

Sources: Town of Loudon 2000 Annual Report, Loudon Tax Maps, and CNHRPC Geographic Information System (GIS)

In the long-term, the Town should consider liquidating all properties which have little or no recreational, cultural, or conservation value. Proceeds from any transactions could be used for the purchase of land near the center of Town that could be developed into recreational opportunities in the future.

FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS

Currently, all Recreation Committee activities are carried out from the Selectmen’s office. The Recreation Committee runs the Town recreation facilities, including the recreation area off of South Village Road and its outbuildings, the Staniels Road ball fields, and the public beach at Clough Pond. Below, in Table IX-24, are the short- and long-term needs of the Recreation Committee.

Table IX-24
Short- and Long-term Recreation Needs

Short-term Needs (5 to 10 Years)	Long-term Needs (10 to 20 Years)
Office Space for Recreation Committee	Acquire additional land for play/ball fields
Rec. Center for Teens	Construct sidewalks to link Loudon Elementary with Village Road Recreation Area and Mill Pond
Rec. Center for Elderly	Develop an after school recreation program
Maintenance Equipment for Staniels Road Ball fields	Create boat launch/fishing area at Mill Pond near 106/129 intersection
Handicap accessibility improvements at Clough Pond	
Outdoor lighting improvements at Staniels Field	

Source: Community and Recreational Facilities Subcommittee

In the short-term, the Recreation Committee will require additional facilities, such as an Office and Recreation Center. Also, the Recreation Committee will also need to expand and improve facilities, such as enlarging the skateboard area, installing a ramp accessible to persons with disabilities at Clough Pond, and lighting for the Staniels Road ball field. In the long-term, more land will be needed for additional playing fields. In addition, the Recreation Committee would like to blaze a trail connecting the Elementary School to the Recreation Area on Village Road, develop an after school program, and create a boat launch and picnic at the Mill Pond or at the fishing area near the Route 106/129 lights.

Other Future Needs

Community / Senior Citizens' Center

The community does not have a senior citizens' center, despite a strong need for such a facility. Recreation and social interaction for senior citizens is very important, as such opportunities provide needed social interaction and stimulation for older residents. This greatly improves the quality of life and general welfare of elderly persons in the community. Typically, senior citizen recreation programs include "bingo nights", field trips to cultural events and attractions, community dinners and social luncheons. Based upon the standards cited in this chapter, as well as the public opinion that senior citizens need a community center, the Town should actively start planning for the development of such a facility. Historically, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) administered by the NH Office of State Planning have been a good source of funding for such facilities.

Teen Recreation Center and Programs

The teenage population of the community also lacks a community center and recreational program. Such programs can serve as positive influences on teenagers, reduce loitering and other negative behaviors. Typically, teen recreation programs include structured summer and "midnight" basketball leagues, field trips to sporting events and attractions, day trips (such as white water rafting), a rollerblade/skate board park, and dances. Generally, these programs are geared toward individuals under age 17. In the future, the Town should consider conducting a feasibility study to determine the exact facility, staffing, and funding needs of such a program should be conducted by the Town. A combination teen/senior center could be investigated in order to maximize investments into the community.

Fitness Trail

In conjunction with the Merrimack Valley School District, the Town should consider constructing a fitness trail. This trail would include workout stations to help users get a complete workout. Such trails usually contain 10 individual stations equipped with such facilities as spring-up bars, pull up bars, monkey bars, and balance beams. Such a facility could help to supplement an existing playground. The cost of such a facility is estimated at five to ten thousand dollars.

COMMUNITY TRAILS SYSTEM

In recent years, trails have become a very popular source of recreation in New Hampshire. Hiking, back packing, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling have become more popular. Therefore, public demand for trails has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. According to the National Park Service, hiking, jogging, and backpacking are likely to show the greatest growth through the year 2010 (NH OSP NH Outdoors Summary Plan, 1994).

Loudon currently has several independent trail systems maintained by different entities including the Loudon Conservation Commission, Canterbury Sno Shakers Snowmobile Club, and the Bee Hole Beavers Snowmobile Club. There are numerous needs and opportunities that the Town could investigate with local trail enthusiasts to help to expand trail opportunities for all residents of the community. One regulatory measure includes requiring developers to preserve existing trails on properties during the development process. Such an effort will not only preserve the trail network but also increase property values and marketability of new developments. For a more detailed review of local trails, and trail needs, please refer to the Loudon Open Space Trail System Plan, completed in July 2001.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

It is the general consensus that Loudon has a finite amount of resources, and therefore, recreationally-oriented projects will likely continue to rely upon the generosity of members in the community. In addition to volunteer efforts, there are numerous funding opportunities for the improvement and expansion of recreational programs in Loudon. Loudon, with help from private professional grant writers, should pursue these resources outlined below. The following is a summary of programs that can help defray the costs of expanding recreational facilities and programs:

- ❖ **TEA-21 Recreational Trails Program:** This is a federal program administered in New Hampshire by the Department of Resources and Economic Development's Trails Bureau. Funding for the program is derived from the Federal Gas Tax. Annually, communities submit competitive grant applications for funds. Grant amounts are limited to a maximum of \$20,000 and require an "in-kind" community match of 20% of the grant amount. Acceptable forms of matching contributions include cash, materials, labor, and in-kind services. Projects eligible for this funding include trails for both motorized and non-motorized uses. In 1999, New Hampshire received a total of \$472,741 for this program.
- ❖ **Community Development Block Grants:** Depending on the location, social value, and functional use of a community or recreational facility, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can sometimes be a good source of financing. CDBG funds are allocated from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and, in New Hampshire, are administered by the Office of State Planning. Each year, communities are invited to submit grant applications for funding of projects. An example of a project funded by CDBG is the Town of Pittsfield's Community Center. In 1999, New Hampshire received over 10 million dollars in CDBG funds that, through the competitive grant process, were allocated to communities across the State.
- ❖ **Town Appropriations:** In addition to grants, community groups can also seek appropriations through the annual budget process to pay for the expansion of recreational facilities.

- ❖ Sale or Use of Excess Property: Another possible method to finance or expand recreational opportunities is to either use or sell excess town owned property. Excess property is often property acquired from private citizens for failure to pay taxes. If the property is centrally located and has potential for development into a recreational facility, then the Town should retain such property. However, if acquired property is not conducive to recreational uses or has little conservation or aesthetic value, such property should be sold and proceeds from the sale should be earmarked for the construction of new recreational facilities.
- ❖ On-Site Developer Exactions: The Planning Board, when reviewing large developments, has the ability to require developers to provide the community with the construction of a recreational facility or money for future construction of such facilities.
- ❖ Impact Fees: The purpose of this ordinance is to collect funds from new development to help offset additional infrastructure needs associated with the development. In addition to financing new school additions and roadway projects, impact fees could also be collected to help pay for new recreational facilities. In the near future, the Planning Board should explore creating a set impact fee schedule for recreational needs created by new development.
- ❖ Private Foundations/Trusts: For years, communities have been the beneficiaries of trusts and donations created by private citizens and foundations. The Town should actively solicit such resources for assistance regarding the development or expansion of recreational facilities and programs.
- ❖ User Fees: During the 1980s, the concept of user fees for funding of numerous public facilities and services were widely adopted throughout the nation. User fees have been adopted by several communities in New Hampshire to help finance recreational facilities and programs.
- ❖ Regional Co-ops: Another option for defraying the cost of developing recreational facilities is co-ops among local communities in the region. Used for years for water, sewer, and solid waste facilities, co-ops among communities are rarely employed for recreational facilities. Loudon should explore the possibility of creating a co-op with Canterbury, Chichester, Concord, Gilmanton, and Pittsfield to construct and staff recreational facilities.
- ❖ Volunteers: Loudon is fortunate to have a strong volunteer ethic among its residents. Loudon should continue to seek the help of volunteers and publicly recognize their efforts.

SUMMARY

Availability of recreational facilities for all age groups of the population is a critical component to quality of life in Loudon. Though the Town is fortunate to contain plentiful passive recreation opportunities and the presence of several local private recreational facilities in the community, the Town still lacks some key facilities to have a truly comprehensive recreational program. Facilities that need to be developed to meet the current and anticipated needs of the community include a teen center, a senior center, a full-sized gymnasium, as well as a multi-use field and tennis court, and recreational trails.

RECOMMENDATIONS***Objective***

To identify existing recreational facilities and opportunities within Loudon and to determine if they meet the needs of the population.

- ◆ Establish a continuous dialog with residents, including youth groups, the teenage population, and the elderly, to determine their ongoing recreational needs.
- ◆ Appoint a Community/Recreation Coordinator to help expand and plan additional community recreation programs and coordinate those programs with existing public and private recreational facilities and programs.
- ◆ Establish a telephone hot line and website to distribute information about booking and use of community and recreational facilities.
- ◆ Develop a long-term recreational improvement plan for future expansions or construction of additional recreational facilities in order to maintain and expand recreational opportunities for residents as part of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program for the community and amend annually as needed.
- ◆ Make appropriations to construct facilities including basketball courts, tennis courts, ball fields, and certain elderly recreational opportunities to bring Loudon into line with the standards indicated in this chapter of recreational guidelines for communities that are similar in size.
- ◆ Develop a Senior Citizen recreation program based upon the professional guidelines discussed in this Chapter.
- ◆ Develop a teen recreation center and program based upon the professional guidelines discussed in this Chapter.
- ◆ Pursue alternative funding sources including grants, impact fees, user fees, and private donations for expansion of recreational opportunities to limit the tax burden of constructing new recreational facilities.
- ◆ Consider working with adjacent towns to offer joint recreational activities and facilities in order to defray costs of expanding recreational programs and facilities.
- ◆ Study the feasibility of developing land on both sides of Soucook in the Village into a park or other passive recreational use which would take advantage of the River.
- ◆ Develop a plan to acquire additional land for recreational facility use, particularly land adjacent to any land currently owned by the Town.

- ◆ Request easements from developers during the site plan or subdivision review process, or purchase easements as necessary to protect land along the Soucook River. Unquestionably, the Soucook River is a key resource that the community has not yet fully utilized. The river is focal point and, in addition to providing character to the Village area, it could also be used as a source of recreation. By developing an area along the river into a public park, the Town could not only provide additional means of recreation, but also help strengthen economy of the village.

Objective

To determine potential locations for future recreational opportunities.

- ◆ Conduct a study of the drainage area above the Mill Pond to determine whether or not there is still active stream bank erosion, erosion from gravel pits, or other sources.
- ◆ Dredge Mill Pond, repair the dam, and improve canoe access. Improve parking and pedestrian infrastructure to increase usage of the Mill Pond area. Explore ways to develop parking at or near Mill Pond. Should off site parking be necessary, the Town should develop sidewalks to link parking to Mill Pond.
- ◆ Expand the Loudon Elementary School Gymnasium into a full-sized facility to increase its potential use. In the short-term, the Town and School District should work to find a way to expand the facility to full size.
- ◆ Review the July 2001 Open Space Trail System Plan and incorporate its recreation-oriented recommendations for public trail opportunities and utilization of Town Forests.
- ◆ Obtain the use of proposed recreational fields located at the new school district-owned property on map 29, lot 87 behind the Elementary School.

Objective

To facilitate the linkage via trail or sidewalk of Village Road to Loudon's recreational opportunities to promote safety in recreational programs.

- ◆ Require applicants of developments to provide on-site exactions, impact fees, or donation of easements to the Town to ensure that existing trails remain open to the general public. Furthermore, in cases of unusually large developments, the Planning Board, through the Land Development Regulations, should require developers to construct recreational facilities to serve those developments. Lastly, large developments abutting trail networks should expand trail systems into their development to help foster a town-wide trail network.
- ◆ Establish a partnership with snowmobile clubs, hikers, the Conservation Commission, and landowners to develop a comprehensive multi-use trail system in Loudon in conjunction with the Open Space Trail System Plan.