Collingswood

PLAN *to* PLAY

Recreation Master Plan

BRANDSTETTER CARROLL INC
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Collingswood Plan to Play Recreation Master Plan
Collingswood, New Jersey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Need for a Plan

Collingswood is a small borough located in Camden County, New Jersey, just outside Philadelphia. Nestled among other small boroughs and townships, Collingswood has no opportunity for geographic expansion and is completely built-out, resulting in a population that has hovered around 14,000 since 2000. Despite the consistency of the overall population, Collingswood has recently experience an increase in the average age and percentage of the population over 65. In 2027, the percentage of Collingswood's population over 65 is expected to increase to 20%, up from 15% in 2000. Similarly, the percentage of the population under 18 is expected to decrease to 18% in 2027, down from 22% in 2000. Collingswood is also becoming more diverse, more highly educated, and wealthier compared to the rest of Camden County.

Overall, 77% of Collingswood residents live within a 10-minute walk to a neighborhood or community park. All residents live within a 5-minute drive to a park. This level of service is largely due to the size of Knight Park in the center of Collingswood and the two linear county parks along the borough's southern and northern borders. Knight Park carries a heavy load in meeting the outdoor parks and recreation needs of the borough. The park's diamond and multipurpose fields cannot meet current demand and need significant upgrades. The borough operates a community center that offers a location for many programs; however, Collingswood lacks a recreation center with indoor court space.

This plan will be Collingswood's first comprehensive parks and recreation master plan. Meant to instill focus, establish priorities, and inspire action, the plan was produced with guidance from an active steering committee appointed by borough officials and staff. It is supported by robust data collection, including hours of in-person engagement, and provides a foundation for continuous improvement of Collingswood's parks and recreation offerings. This plan is important because it…

- Provides a vision for Collingswood Parks and Recreations for the next 10 years
- Prepares the department to align with changing community needs and recreation trends
- Advocates for the department to add the staff and make the organizational changes required to meet these needs
- Identifies gaps & inequities in service delivery and offers solutions
- Avoids duplication of services available to borough residents
- Describes future funding requirements and potential sources
- Strengthens fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and efficiency

Vision, Mission, and Values for Parks and Recreation

Developed from all the input gathered during the engagement phase, and approved by the steering committee, this strategic plan articulates a freshly inspired vision, mission, and set of defining values. These strategic elements will help pilot implementation of actions identified in this Master Plan, and thereby shape the future of parks and recreation in Collingswood.

Vision

We envision a thriving community with abundant opportunities for everyone to engage and connect

Mission

Offer enriching activities and amenities that are adaptive to change and promote wellness and community spirit

Values

Fun – We invite the community to experience joy while improving health and wellness.

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Community – We create opportunities for engagement, cooperation, and connections.

Accessibility – We provide equitable experiences for everyone in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Responsibility – We innovate to maximize investment and advance fiscal and environmental sustainability.

Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives will guide parks and recreation operations, improvements, and services in Collingswood for the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Inclusive and Accessible Spaces - Provide inviting parks and amenities that improve quality of life for everyone

Objective 1.1 – **Welcoming Parks:** Provide engaging spaces that inspire community enjoyment and provide abundant space for programming

Objective 1.2 – **Attractive Amenities:** Pursue continuous improvement and replacement of features

Objective 1.3 – **Responsive Development:** Increase parks and recreational participation through carefully planned facility development

Goal 2: Engaging and Inviting Activities - Provide well-rounded programs and events that serve all and inspire community inclusivity

Objective 2.1 – **Quality Athletics:** Offer ample access to engaging sports opportunities

Objective 2.2 – **Diverse Programs:** Encourage a variety of welcoming opportunities that promote discovery, wellness, and enjoyment

Objective 2.3 – **Inviting Community Events:** Provide welcoming and appealing opportunities for community interaction

Goal 3: **Consistent and Effective Communication** - Emphasize ongoing communication between agencies, partners, and participants to increase awareness of needs and availability of opportunities

Objective 3.1 – **Clear Marketing and Promotional Strategies:** Increase program participation and park usage with improved efforts to reach the entire community

Objective 3.2 – **Continuous Engagement:** Seek consistent and ongoing public involvement to respond to evolving needs and attract volunteers

Objective 3.3 – **Strong Partnerships:** Build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships that explore creative ways to address community priorities

Goal 4: **Cohesive Structure** - Streamline operations, budgeting, maintenance, and planning for efficient management

Objective 4.1 – **Centralized and Coordinated Operations:** Optimize services for efficient management of staff and volunteers and to better monitor the use of resources

Objective 4.2 – **Reliable Funding:** Explore creative strategies to obtain needed funding for operation and capital improvements

Objective 4.3 – **Proactive Management:** Implement best practices for maintenance that advance quality, efficiency, consistency, and sustainability

Moving Forward – Let's Play

This plan will guide Collingswood and its partners in their efforts to expand and upgrade programs, facilities, and services to meet community needs and fulfill the new vision: We envision a thriving community with abundant opportunities for everyone to engage and connect. Additionally, the plan offers improvements to Parks and Recreation department operations.

Systemwide Recommendations

1. **Centralize operations** of the Recreation Department and park maintenance in Collingswood
2. Improve **ADA access** throughout the system
3. Add **support features** (e.g., seating, shade structures, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, Wi-Fi, bike racks) throughout the park system to **improve experiences and extend visits**
4. Improve connectivity throughout the borough with **better bike and pedestrian access** to parks and other destinations
5. **Add indoor space** for borough programs (Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, bike share, etc.)
6. **Upgrade fields** at Knight Park & Collingswood Middle/ High School complex
7. Expand **opportunities at Knight Park for all ages,** including non-sports activities
8. **Better utilize existing spaces,** especially Knight Park and school complex
9. Partner with Collingswood Public School to allow **access to school yards** after hours
10. **Adjust event and program offerings** in response to community feedback and changing needs
11. **Continuously engage the community** throughout implementation of this Master Plan
12. **Improve marketing/promotion** to make sure residents are aware of what is available
13. Continue to seek and utilize **partnerships** and **sponsorships** to maximize offerings, avoid duplication, and reduce costs

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14. Find **additional/alternative funding** – voter-approved funds, grants, fundraising

Action Plan

The Collingswood Parks and Recreation Master Plan concludes with an action plan of strategies and recommendations to improve facilities, programs, and overall service. The specific action items outlined in Chapter 5 offer a path towards successful implementation of the master plan.

The Process – Why are these Actions Needed

Existing Conditions of Parks and Recreation

A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas with each meeting a particular public need; the system should provide a combination of smaller neighborhood parks, larger community parks, and special use parks. For all residents, whatever their background, parks help provide a variety of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities. Proximity to these valuable resources invariably improves community health and wellness, not to mention create more adaptable, robust local economies.[1]

Collingswood Parks and Recreation System

Recreation Facilities

- Collingswood Community Center
- Roberts Pool
- Scottish Rite Auditorium

Parks

- Knight Park (community park)
- 1 pocket park
- 2 community gardens
- School Complex
- 2 county parks

Over 200 acres

Demographic and Benchmarking Analysis

- Collingswood's total population has remained steady for almost 30 years
  - More seniors and fewer children as a percentage of the population
  - More educated and more diverse
- High level of service for overall parkland compared to benchmark communities
  - Fewer playgrounds, basketball courts, diamond fields and multipurpose rectangular fields
  - No dedicated pickleball courts
  - No indoor courts or pool

Service Area Analysis

Maps of service areas for various parks and facilities were used to identify service gaps or underserved areas within Collingswood. Maps were also created to illustrate levels of access to various park categories and facilities. The analysis indicated that about 77% of residents within Collingswood are within a 5-minute walk to Knight Park and/or one of the two county parks. If the school and Roberts Pool (currently inside the pool fence) playgrounds were made available, those properties could be added to the neighborhood park inventory, increasing walkable access to 98% of the population.

What Collingswood Residents Said

Understanding the needs and wants of Collingswood residents was essential to developing the Master Plan. Residents were engaged through a variety of methods, including a random sample Mail Survey, Web Survey, open house workshops, booth at GreenFest, and conversations with key stakeholder groups. These options for involvement gave park users and non-users a means to share their individual needs, perceptions, concerns, and desires for the park system.

Workshop & GreenFest

Nearly 150 people attended the workshop and nearly 250 stopped by the booth at GreenFest in March of 2022. During the workshops, participants were asked what would make the borough's parks and programs better. Popular responses included:

- Upgrade high school/middle school fields and track
- Improve Knight Park – fields, trees, turf, lights, governance, sidewalks, ADA accessibility
- Pickleball courts
- Indoor courts
- Dog park
- Roberts Pool improvements – shade, food truck night, hours, fitness classes
- Skate park
- Odyssey of the Mind space and funding
- Teen programs
- Music programs
- Adult/senior programs
- Meditation garden
- Boat rental

1 https://www.fastcompany.com/90624316/great-parks-dont-just-haverec-space-they-create-jobs?mc_cid=105f89bd93&mc_eid=6c9b6b28d4

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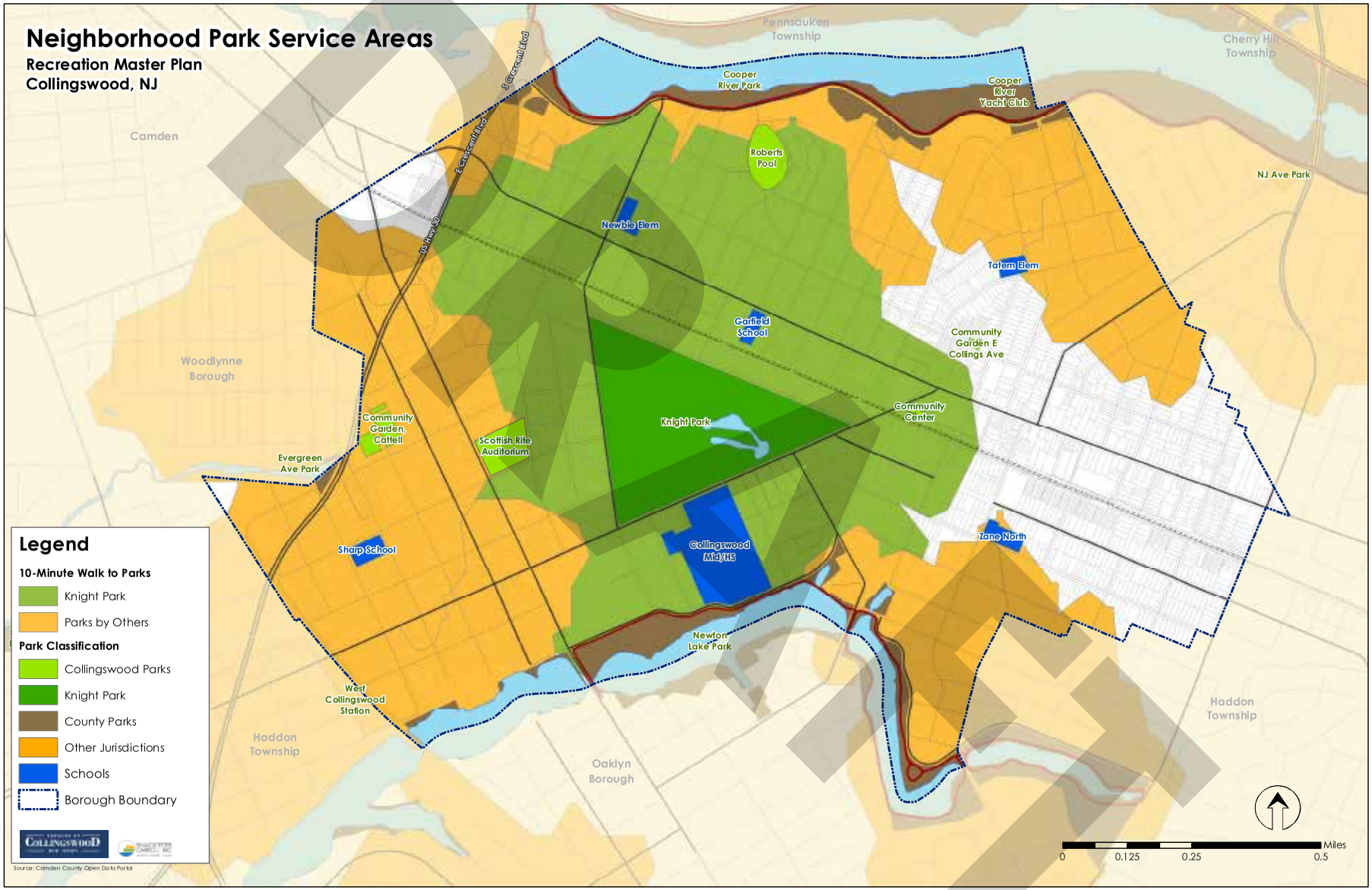
Neighborhood Park Service Areas
Recreation Master Plan
Collingswood, NJ
Pennsauken Township
Cherry Hill Township
Camden
Woodlynne Borough
Haddon Township
Oaklyn Borough
S Crescent Blvd
E Crescent Blvd
Rt Hwy 30
Cooper River Park
Cooper River Yacht Club
Roberts Pool
NJ Ave Park
Newbie Elem
Tatem Elem
Garfield School
Community Garden E Collings Ave
Community Center
Knight Park
Community Garden, Cattell
Scottish Rite Auditorium
Evergreen Ave Park
Sharp School
Collingswood Mid/HS
Zane North
Newton Lake Park
West Collingswood Station
Legend
10-Minute Walk to Parks
Knight Park
Parks by Others
Park Classification
Collingswood Parks
Knight Park
County Parks
Other Jurisdictions
Schools
Borough Boundary
Source: Camden County Open Data Portal
0
0.125
0.25
0.5
Miles

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Participants were also asked to "spend" $1,000 to indicate how they would support funding for parks and recreation facilities. Approximately 150 participants allocated $153,200. "Build/upgrade the school athletic fields" received the most support with $36,000 (24%) allocated. "Upgrade Knight Park" was next with $27,000 (18%) allocated. Third most popular was "Develop new indoor recreation facilities" with $16,400 (11%) allocated.

Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder groups interviewed during the planning process included sports groups/leagues, government officials/agencies, and community organizations such as:

- Borough staff and officials
- Little League, Camps, Basketball, Field Hockey, Soccer, and Softball
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Bike Share
- Youth Theater
- Knight Park Board of Trustees
- High School Baseball
- Arts Program

Stakeholder Broad Recommendations

Facility Needs

- More playgrounds (e.g., Roberts Pool playground for public use, school properties).
- Knight Park upgrades
  - Athletic field upgrades – lighting, turf, grading, dugouts, batting cages
  - Improved ADA accessibility
  - Pavement improvements
  - Improved maintenance
- Indoor recreation space – teen space, indoor pool, sports training facilities

Programming/Operational Needs

- Improved partnerships
  - Senior programs
  - Nature programming at county parks
- Additional space for Odyssey of the Mind – space ideal for camps, tool/equipment storage
- More adult programming – fitness/wellness
- Improved athletic field reservation systems

Surveys

The Mail Survey utilized a representative random sample to represent the residents of Collingswood as a whole, both users and non-users. 321 surveys were returned allowing for a precision of at least +/– 5.4% at the 95% level of confidence. The Web Survey was completed by 840 respondents, who are mainly residents with a connection to parks and recreation in Collingswood, either as users or stakeholders. According to the Mail Survey, 86% of households visited Knight Park, 47% visited the Scottish Rite Auditorium, and 44% visited Roberts Pool in the past year.

Highest Priority Facilities for Investment (% of households supporting)

1. Trails-walking/hiking (68%)
2. Natural areas/nature parks (63%)
3. Large community parks (58%)
4. Bike trails (49%)
5. Pocket Parks (42%)
6. Swimming pools/aquatic centers (38%)

Highest Priority Programs for Investment (% of households supporting)

1. Concerts/art performances (46%)
2. Fitness/wellness programs (40%)
3. Nature Programs (34%)
4. Special Events (32%)
5. Outdoor movies (27%)
6. Water fitness programs (24%)

Continued public engagement will be necessary as Collingswood implements the Master Plan. Public input is an important part of the design process for new park facilities and in evaluating programs for improvement. Engagement efforts should be flexible and creative, utilizing tools like on-site feedback and interactive online platforms.

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Collingswood Recreation Master Plan

Mission

Offer enriching activities and amenities that are adaptive to change and promote wellness and community spirit

Vision

We envision a thriving community with abundant opportunities for everyone to engage and connect

GOAL 1: INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES

- 1.1 – Welcoming Parks
- 1.2 – Attractive Amenities
- 1.3 – Responsive Development

GOAL 2: ENGAGING AND INVITING ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 – Quality Athletics
- 2.2 – Diverse Programs
- 2.3 – Inviting Community Events

Core Values

- **Fun –** We invite the community to experience joy while improving health and wellness.
- **Community –** We create opportunities for engagement, cooperation, and connections.
- **Accessibility –** We provide equitable experiences for everyone in a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- **Responsibility –** We innovate to maximize investment and advance fiscal and environmental sustainability.

GOAL 3: CONSISTENT AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- 3.1 – Clear Marketing and Promotional Strategies
- 3.2 – Continuous Engagement
- 3.3 – Strong Partnerships

GOAL 4: COHESIVE STRUCTURE

- 4.1 – Centralized and Coordinated Operations
- 4.2 – Reliable Funding
- 4.3 – Proactive Management

The Collingswood Community Desires:

Upgrades and Improvements

- Improved maintenance
- Additional shade features
- Restrooms
- Additional playground access

Athletic Field Improvements

- Diamond field improvements (grading, lighting, dugouts etc.)
- Multipurpose rectangular field improvements

New Facilities

- Pickleball courts
- Splash pads
- Amphitheater
- Dog park

Additional Indoor Space

- Program space (teen, art, etc)
- Basketball/gym space
- Space for Odyssey of the Mind

New Programs and Improvements to Existing Programs

- Concerts & movies
- Nature programs
- Age 50+ programs
- Adult classes – fitness and wellness, art, cooking, etc.
- Youth sports and youth programs – improved operations
- Summer camps
- Water fitness programs
- Arts and cultural programs

How do we get there?

1. Centralize operations of parks and recreation
2. Improve ADA access
3. Add support features (e.g., restrooms, seating, shade, Wi-Fi, bike racks)
4. Improve bike and pedestrian access to parks and other destinations
5. Add indoor space for borough programs
6. Upgrade sports fields
7. Expand opportunities at Knight Park for all ages, including non-sports activities
8. Better utilize existing spaces
9. Partner with Collingswood Public Schools for access to school yards
10. Adjust event and program offerings based on changing needs
11. Continuously engage the community
12. Improve marketing/promotion of parks and programs
13. Continue to seek and utilize partnerships and sponsorships
14. Find additional/alternative funding opportunities

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Need for a Plan

The purpose of this *Plan to Play Recreation Master Plan* is to provide an ambitious yet feasible roadmap for the future that encompasses the needs and desires of both the residents and staff of Collingswood. In the fall of 2022 Brandstetter Carroll Inc., a consulting firm based out of Lexington, Kentucky, partnered with the Collingswood Recreation Department to develop this publicly driven plan.

This plan is important because it…

- Provides a vision for the future of parks and recreation in Collingswood
- Ensures department offerings are aligned with community needs
- Fosters civic engagement and creates a sense of community
- Develops clear priorities based on community needs and desires
- Identifies gaps & inequities in service delivery
- Strengthens fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and efficiency
- Identifies future funding requirements and potential sources
- Increases user participation, satisfaction, revenue, and capital investment
- Enables the borough to keep up with parks and recreation trends
- Reduces duplication of service and improves partnerships

Parks and Recreation Facilities are Essential to Public Health

Through programs, facilities, open space, and other services, parks and recreation agencies are essential to improving health outcomes and enhancing quality of life. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) highlights a few of the primary benefits of utilizing parks and recreation facilities and programs:[1]

- **Help reduce obesity and incidence of chronic disease by providing opportunities to increase rigorous physical activity in a variety of forms;**
- **Provide a connection to nature which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels, tightens interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health**
- **Aid in reducing hunger in America and increasing access to nutritious food options**
- **Foster overall wellness and healthful habits, such as becoming tobacco–free and engaging in enrichment opportunities that add balance to life**

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) prepares ParkScore every year to rank the park systems of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S. In 2023, TPL added data about the positive health outcomes of the top-scoring cities. A new report, The Power of Parks to Promote Health , breaks down the new data to show communities how to make parks a more formal part of their health programs, helping to ensure more are able to experience the physical and mental health benefits of public parks and green spaces.

TPL found that "people are on average 9% less likely to suffer from poor mental health and 21% less likely to be physically inactive" in the top 25 ranking cities, compared to the lower-ranked cities, even after controlling for race/ethnicity, income, age, and population density. The report offers examples of how public agencies, non-profit community organizations, and healthcare providers can leverage public park space to improve health outcomes.

Two key findings from the ParkScore data were that **close-to-home parks are associated with lower obesity rates and improved health in both young people and adults and that staffed programming, such as fitness classes, dramatically increased physical activity. Each additional supervised activity increased park use by 48% and**

[1] Role of Parks and Recreation on Health and Wellness. National Recreation and Parks Association. Accessed 2/26/2024. https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-on-health-and-wellness/

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moderate to vigorous physical activity time by 37%. The report also highlights a program in Columbus, Ohio where doctors prescribe an 11-week fitness program offered free through the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department to patients struggling with obesity and high blood pressure.

Community Background

Collingswood is located in Camden County, New Jersey in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area. The borough's population has declined slightly over the past 20 years but has remained roughly 14,000. During this time, household size has decreased, the median age has increased from 38.3 to 41.5. This change tracks with the percentage of the borough over 65 growing, while the percentage under 18 decreased. Collingswood residents may utilize recreation programs offered by the Collingswood Recreation Department, Knight Park Board, Camden County, and Collingswood Public Schools. The facilities available to Collingswood residents include:

- 3 community parks
- 1 community center
- 3 special use parks (including Roberts Pool)
- School complex
- 2 community gardens

Knight Park is a large community park owned and maintained by the Knight Park Board. Collingswood Recreation department, in partnership with the Foundation, offers programs and events in the park for Collingswood residents.

1.2 The Master Planning Process

This Master Plan acts as a compass for the department and incorporates findings from the four-phase process including:

- Evaluating existing facilities and programs
- Analyzing current trends and benchmarking
- Engaging with a steering committee, community stakeholders, staff, and the public (open house, booth at GreenFest, online survey, random sample mail survey, and stakeholder meetings)
- Visioning sessions
- Reviewing recommendations and strategy prioritization

1.2.1 How to Read the Master Plan

CH 1-2

The **EVALUATE** phase is encompassed in Chapters 1 & 2 and provides a baseline understanding of the existing conditions of Collingswood's recreation facilities and programs. The text evaluates the make-up of the population and the levels of service in the community. Additionally, Chapter 2 includes trends and benchmarking analysis which reveals how Collingswood measures up to nearby communities of similar make up and to national recreation trends. Contents include:

- Parkland and facility inventory & analysis
- Program analysis

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- Benchmark comparisons of similar agencies
- Geographic park and facility service area mapping
- Trends in parks and recreation

CH 3

The **ENGAGE** phase is summarized in Chapter 3 and ultimately leads the discussions throughout the rest of the Master Plan. Identifying what the community desires is essential to determine and prioritize the future of the parks, recreation facilities, and special events/ programming.

- Open house workshops
- Web/handout & mail surveys
- Stakeholder group meetings

CH 4

The **ENVISION** phase is driven by the visioning sessions and meetings with the steering committee and can be found in Chapter 4. Findings from the evaluate and engage phase are reviewed and used to produce a new vision, mission, values, goals, and objectives for the department.

CH 4-5

The **PLAN** phase combines all the information gathered throughout the first three phases of the planning process and formulates operational and capital – both systemwide and individual park related – recommendations to meet the goals for the future. Chapters 4 & 5 discuss these topics at length and help provide direction for the departments for the next 5-10 years. Chapter 4 presents recommendations or programs, facilities, and operations. Chapter 5 presents the action plan that can be used as a checklist for implementation.

- Systemwide recommendations
- Individual park recommendations
- Capital improvements and estimated costs
- Operational and programming recommendations
- Action plan

1.3 How To Use This Plan

The action plan is a living document. This plan will act as a guiding document over the next 10 years for Collingswood and will be revisited annually to measure progress. The recommendations found in the latter half of the plan include capital improvements that prioritize systemwide, departmental, and individual park enhancements. Upon acceptance of this plan, the action plan provided in Chapter 5 will begin to guide and bring to life the needs and desires of both Collingswood Recreation and the community.

Assign Responsibility

ACTION PLAN - Collingswood Plan to Play Recreation Master Plan								
Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations								
Rec = Collingswood Recreation (including the proposed centralized structure)				OP = Recreation Operating Budget				
Borough = Mayor and Commissioners, Other Borough Departments				CIP = Capital Improvement Budget				
Partners = Other Organizations (Knight Park Board, county/state, private agencies, schools, state/federal grants, etc.)				Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue				
Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	**Timeframe (Years)**			**Category**	**Agency**	**Funding Source**	**Section Reference**	
	0-2	**3-5**	**6-10**					
Goal 1: Inclusive and Accessible Spaces								
Objective 1.1 – Welcoming Parks: Provide engaging spaces that inspire community enjoyment and provide abundant space for programming								
Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a Master Plan with a long-term vision for Knight Park with engagement from the community	✓			Planning	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.4.1	
Strategy 1.1.2: Provide better access to the pond, picnic shelters, perimeter trails, and fitness areas at Knight Park in response to public engagement		✓		Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1	
Strategy 1.1.3: Consider limiting vehicles to the outside of Knight Park to make the interior more pedestrian friendly while improving safety and reducing traffic noise	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1	
Strategy 1.1.4: Establish a plaza space, potentially with a water feature, at Knight Park to encourage community gathering and additional events		✓	✓	Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1	
Strategy 1.1.5: Replace the bridge, expand the playground, and consider arboretum signage when upgrading Knight Park			✓	Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1	
Strategy 1.1.6: Consider adding an outdoor performance space at the Scottish Rite property to make better use of the property for small community events			✓	Planning/ Capital	Rec	CP	4.4.2	
Objective 1.2 – Attractive Amenities: Pursue continuous improvement and replacement of features								
Strategy 1.2.1: Continue to develop the pocket park currently in progress on Woodlawn Avenue near Haddon Avenue and utilize the plaza to host community programs (in progress)	✓			Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2	
Strategy 1.2.2: Prioritize improvements to support features throughout the system, including drinking fountains, security cameras, lighting, and site furnishing (e.g., restrooms, trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste	✓			Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2	

Identify action based on priority and timeframe

Locate funding type

Location of relevent text in plan

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2

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

The Community Background & Needs Assessment chapter provides an evaluation of the existing conditions of parks and recreation in Collingswood. This chapter provides detailed analysis of the following:

- Population demographics
- Inventory of existing parks and facilities
- Benchmarking against other agencies
- Service areas of parks and facilities
- Trends in parks and recreation

The ensuing text serves to provide the context needed to understand the existing and potential future needs of the community. The data compiled in this chapter is necessary to understand and interpret the desires of the community which are outlined in Chapter 3.

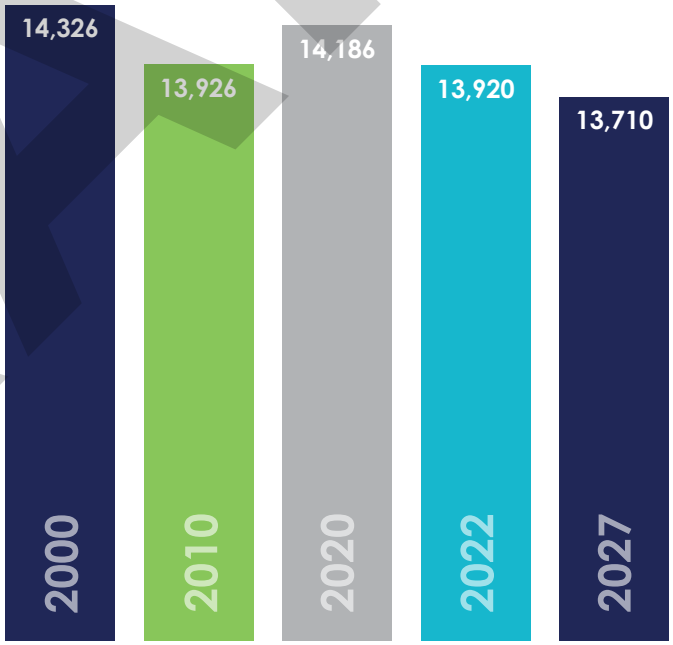
2.2 Population and Demographic Trends

Needs vary between demographic groups, and these needs also invariably change over time. Each of the following demographic categories examines specific elements of the population. This exploration of general demographic trends in Collingswood helps define current conditions as well as identify potential future needs for parks and recreation services in the community.

2.2.1 Population Change

Figure 2.1 illustrates the population change in Collingswood from 2000 to 2022 using data from the US Census Bureau and Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027, which are based on previous years' growth rates. The figure shows how Collingswood's population has remained around 14,000 over the past 20 years. By 2027, the borough's population is projected to decline by about 200 from 2022, but is dependent on planned housing development.

Figure 2.1: Population Change in Collingswood



2.2.2 Household Size

Unlike the state and most of the nation, Figure 2.2 shows Collingswood's household size has decreased throughout the past 20 years but is projected to decline only slightly through 2027. Both Camden County and the state have also experienced a slight decrease in household size though not as large as Collingswood. Overall, households in Collingswood are much smaller than all comparisons.

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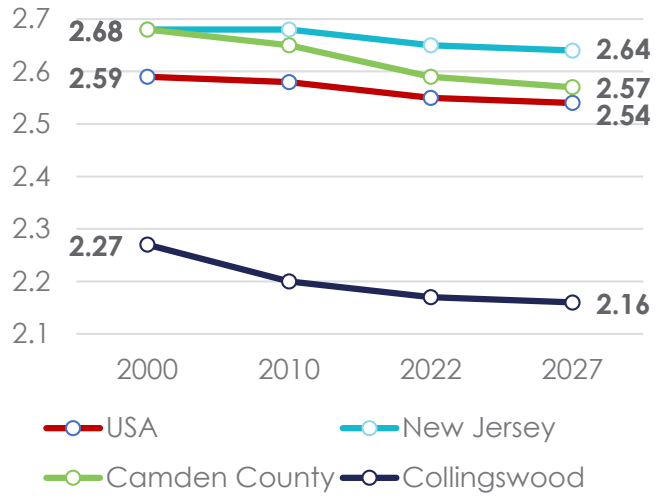
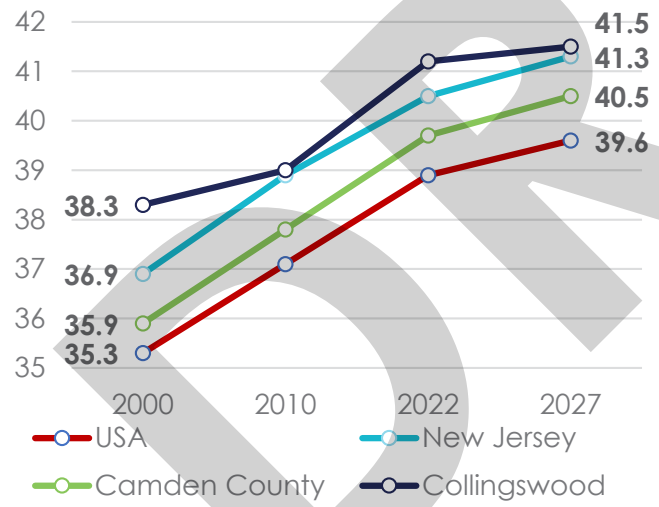
Figure 2.2: Average Household Size



2.2.3 Median Age

Figure 2.3 shows the increase in the median age in Collingswood since 2000. It is expected to reach 41.5 by 2027, still a bit above the comparisons. All geographies have and will continue experiencing aging, and Collingswood will continue to be older than the rest of Camden County and New Jersey.

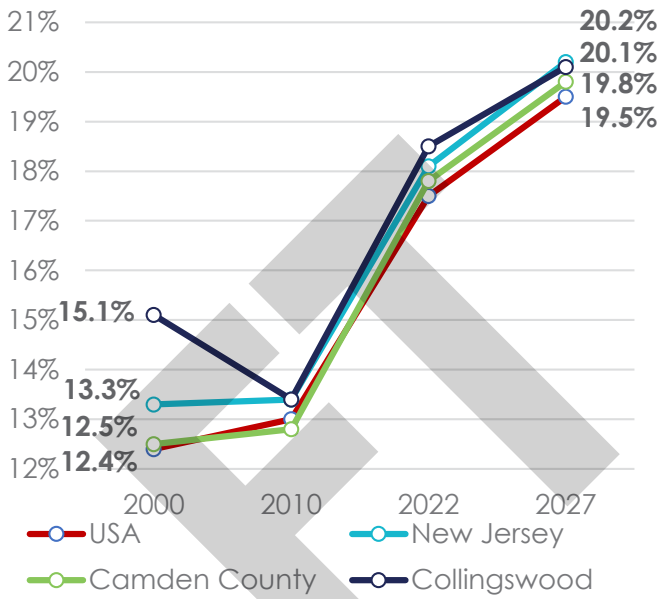
Figure 2.3: Median Age



2.2.4 Senior Population

Figure 2.4 shows how Collingswood's age 65 and over population has grown over the last two decades. Collingswood has the largest proportion of seniors, but projections show New Jersey matching the borough by 2027. The rising senior population is expected to exceed 20% by 2027.

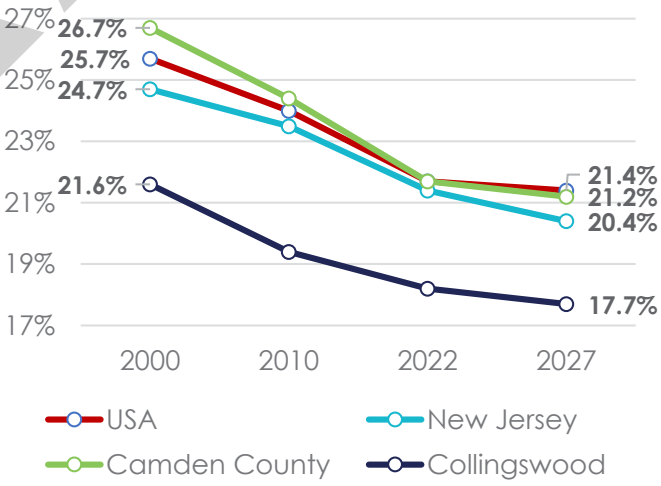
Figure 2.4: Population Age 65 and Over



2.2.5 Children

Youth populations of all geographies have decreased as a proportion since 2000 as indicated in Figure 2.5. The under 18 population is projected to continue dropping to 17.7% in 2027, lower than all other comparison geographies. Collingswood already has more seniors age 65 and older than children under age 18, a characteristic not yet shared by Camden County or New Jersey.

Figure 2.5: Population Under Age 18



2.2.6 Poverty

Table 2.1 shows the population living below the poverty line for both individuals and children. Poverty levels (as of 2021) are lower in Collingswood than Camden County and the nation but just above the state. Child poverty levels are also lower than the comparison geographies,

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including New Jersey. Unlike the comparison geographies, poverty levels for individuals have slightly increased in Collingswood from 2010 to 2021.

Table 2.1: Population Below Poverty Line

	Population	2000	2010	2021
USA	All	12.4%	15.3%	12.8%
	Children	16.1%	21.2%	16.9%
New Jersey	All	8.5%	10.2%	9.8%
	Children	10.8%	14.2%	13.5%
Camden County	All	10.4%	12.4%	12.0%
	Children	14.5%	19.0%	16.9%
Collingswood	All	6.1%	10.7%	11.8%
	Children	6.8%	17.9%	10.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS

2.2.7 Income and Educational Attainment

The median household income values in Table 2.2 show a large increase in Collingswood ($85,986 for 2022) since 2000, even after adjusting for inflation. All three New Jersey geographies are above the nation's median household income, but Collingswood shows the largest growth since 2000.

The per capita income reflects much of the same findings as for households. Per capita, Collingswood has the highest per capita income (about $58,000) of the four geographies, a result likely linked to the smaller household sizes in the borough.

Table 2.2: Household Income

	2000	2000 Adjusted	2022	2027
Median Household Income				
USA	$41,994	$65,076	$72,414	$84,445
New Jersey	$55,146	$91,849	$93,666	$106,515
Camden County	$48,097	$80,109	$79,801	$89,435
Collingswood	$43,175	$71,911	$85,986	$100,081
Per Capita Income				
USA	$21,587	$33,452	$40,363	$47,064
New Jersey	$27,006	$44,980	$50,570	$58,246
Camden County	$22,354	$37,232	$43,657	$52,312
Collingswood	$24,358	$40,570	$58,112	$70,878

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts, BLS

Table 2.3 shows the increasing educational attainment for all geographies for 2000 and 2021. As of 2021, nearly half (48%) of Collingswood's population age 25 and over have a bachelor's degree or above, compared to only 30% in 2000. The other geographies all have lower education levels than Collingswood, with New Jersey the closest.

2.2.8 Population Diversity

As shown in Table 2.4, Collingswood is experiencing a diversification trend. As the white alone (non-Hispanic) population declined over the 10 years between 2010 and 2020, all other racial groups grew in population. However, the declining white population still represents nearly three quarters of residents.

Table 2.3: Educational Attainment Age 25 and Over

Educational Attainment (Highest Level)	Collingswood		Camden County		New Jersey		USA	
	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021	2000	2021
No High School Diploma	12.4%	3.7%	19.8%	9.7%	17.9%	9.0%	19.6%	11.1%
High School/GED	27.5%	23.5%	32.1%	29.0%	29.4%	25.5%	28.6%	26.9%
Some College, No Degree	21.0%	17.5%	18.6%	16.6%	17.7%	15.4%	21.0%	19.8%
Associates Degree	8.7%	7.3%	5.5%	8.6%	5.3%	7.0%	6.3%	8.7%
Bachelors Degree	20.1%	26.7%	15.6%	21.8%	18.8%	25.7%	15.5%	20.6%
Graduate/Professional/Doctorate Degree	10.2%	21.3%	8.4%	14.3%	11.0%	17.4%	8.9%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts, ACS 5-year estimates

Table 2.4: Population by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin

Year	Total Population	White Alone		Black Alone		Asian or Pacific Islander Alone		Other Race Alone		Two or More Races		Hispanic or Latino	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2010	13,926	10,792	77.5%	1,190	8.5%	306	2.2%	36	0.3%	255	1.8%	1,347	9.7%
2020	14,186	10,216	72.0%	1,256	8.9%	350	2.5%	126	0.9%	600	4.2%	1,638	11.5%
# Change	260	-576		66		44		90		345		291	
% Change	1.9%	-5.3%		5.5%		14.4%		250.0%		135.3%		21.6%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Multiracial populations have seen the greatest percentages of growth compared to any other racial group since 2010, followed closely by the Hispanic or Latino population. The borough's racial composition is clearly shifting, and minority populations will likely continue to grow (despite often being undercounted).

2.2.9 Conclusion

The Collingswood community has experienced considerable change over the past decade. Like trends seen across the nation, Collingswood's senior population is growing, and racial diversity is increasing. Overall, Collingswood has also seen a large increase in education levels, pointing to potential shifts in demand and preferences. These changes will certainly impact the needs and expectations for parks and recreation services in the community.

These trends are already working to shape the future of Collingswood. Programming, development, and other services will need to take into consideration the changing demographic landscape to ensure inclusive service can be enjoyed by everyone. As the borough continues to change and diversify, Collingswood will benefit from parks and recreation opportunities that meet the needs and expectations of this evolving community.

2.3 Inventory of Parks and Recreation Areas in Collingswood

Classification of parks helps to evaluate the overall recreation opportunities available to the public. A park system should be evaluated as a composite of recreation areas that collectively meet public needs. It should provide a combination of smaller neighborhood parks, larger community parks, special use parks, and natural areas located throughout the community.

Knight Park

Table 2.5 defines each park category by its typical size and service area, population served, typical features and facilities, desirable characteristics, and ownership. Categories and descriptions are adapted to meet the specific needs of the Collingswood system from "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines," by the National Recreation and Park Association. The inventory in this chapter identifies each park by its classification and lists the specific facilities it provides.

Residents of Collingswood are offered a variety of parks, recreation facilities, and programs by multiple organizations. The Parks and Recreation Inventory (Table 2.6) provides a summary of all the amenities in Collingswood with a classification for each property.

The table identifies the parks by category as defined in Table 2.5. The Existing Parks and Trails map (Figure 2.6) shows the location of each of the parks and recreation areas offered in the Borough of Collingswood. The following text provides a summary of these facilities.

2.3.1 Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve multiple neighborhoods and offer a wider variety of facilities. Community parks should be conveniently located (within approximately a 5-minute drive) and easily accessible with facilities intended to occupy visitors for extended periods of time (field or game court complex, disc golf, etc.).

Collingswood Parks and Recreation offers one community park in partnership with the Knight Park Board. This 62-acre park provides a central gathering place for borough residents and hosts most of the outdoor facilities and recreation activities in Collingswood.

Knight Park

2.3.2 Special Use Parks & Facilities

Special use parks are areas designed for specialized or single purpose recreational activities, and can include places such as plazas, singe use facilities, and aquatic facilities. Collingswood oversees several special use parks, such as Collingswood Community Center and Roberts Pool.

Special use parks include:

- Collingswood Community Center
- Roberts Pool
- Scottish Rite Auditorium
- Cattell Community Garden
- E Collings Avenue Community Garden

Collingswood Community Center

Roberts Pool

Scottish Rite Auditorium

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Table 2.5: Park Classifications

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Local Space				
Mini Park	▪ Size: Less than 2 acres of developed parkland; less than 3 total acres ▪ ½-mile service area 10-minute walk	Combined with Neighborhood Park	▪ 1-4 total features ▪ Typical facilities include playgrounds, small court area, and seating	▪ Often provided in at elementary schools ▪ Some developed as part of residential developments (HOAs) ▪ May function as communal yard space in high density neighborhoods
Neighborhood Park	▪ Size: 2-10 acres of developed parkland; 3-15 total acres ▪ ½-1-mile service area ▪ 10-minute walk ▪ To serve a population up to 5,000	0.5 Acre/1,000	▪ 5-10 total features ▪ Suited for intense development ▪ Typical facilities include athletic fields, game courts, playgrounds, drinking fountains, picnic areas/shelters, and walking paths	▪ Easily accessible to neighborhood population (safe walking and bike distance) ▪ Sometimes developed in conjunction with school district
Community Park	▪ 10-25+ acres of developed parkland; 20 or more total acres ▪ 1-2-mile service radius 5-minute drive ▪ To serve several populations up to 20,000	3.0 Acres/1,000	▪ 10+ features ▪ Include neighborhood parks features plus longer trails, regional aquatic facilities, pool, field or court complex, recreation/community center, etc. ▪ May have an active or passive focus or a balance of both ▪ Parks with passive focus will have a higher percentage of undeveloped land	▪ Capable of providing a range of intensive recreational activities ▪ Provides activities that attract users from multi-neighborhood areas. ▪ May meet neighborhood park needs for users within a 10-minute walk
Special Use	▪ Serves community-wide area	N/A (but may contribute to total open space requirement)	▪ Specialized areas such as plazas, riverfront park areas ▪ Single purpose golf courses, athletic complexes, regional pools, indoor facilities, etc.	▪ Located to meet the specific needs of the intended use
Open Space	▪ Any	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	▪ Special use areas of low or limited development ▪ Includes undeveloped areas and designated natural areas with limited features ▪ May include urban greenspaces (mowed and landscaped) areas) of any size ▪ Often provide trails, picnic areas, gardens, and open grass areas	▪ Includes undeveloped properties that may be developed in the future ▪ May also function as small nature parks ▪ Educational opportunities desirable in developed or undeveloped areas

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Table 2.5: Park Classifications (Continued)

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TYPICAL SIZE and SERVICE AREA	DEVELOPED ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	TYPICAL FEATURES/ FACILITIES	DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Regional Space				
Regional Park	▪ Size: 50+ acres of developed parkland; 75+ total acres ▪ 3-5-mile service radius ▪ 10-minute drive (potentially longer depending on amenities) ▪ To serve most of the city but located regionally	Combined with Community Park	▪ 20+ features ▪ Active and passive recreation features ▪ A large percentage of natural features ▪ Target size of 100 or more acres w/ up to 50% developed for recreation ▪ Good access ▪ Destination-oriented parks w/ picnic areas, any active elements from local space, regional aquatic facilities, regional indoor facilities, etc. ▪ Connections to linear park and trail system	▪ Capacity to providing a wide range of recreational facilities ▪ May include unique natural areas of ecological interest ▪ May meet smaller park needs for users within those service areas ▪ May be located in rural areas but should be readily accessible to the city and county population ▪ May serve multiple jurisdictions and beyond the county
Nature Parks or Preserves	▪ Size as needed to protect the resource	N/A (but contributes to total open space requirement)	▪ Extensive trails and often water access ▪ Majority of park to remain in its natural state (less than 20% developed) ▪ Facilities should focus on education w/ habitat enhancement, nature centers, and interpretive signage ▪ Should include parking, restrooms, and seating areas	▪ Should be of sufficient size to protect the natural resource and provide a buffer from offsite conditions ▪ Should include unique natural areas with ecological interest ▪ Optimally over 50 acres for management efficiency and to promote ecosystem services

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Table 2.6: Parks and Recreation Inventory

Park Name	Park Type	Acreage		Athletic Fields					Game Courts		Outdoor Facilities		Passive Recreation							Indoor		Support			Special Features/Notes
		Total	Developed	Small Diamond	Large Diamond	Backstop/Playfield	Small Rectangular	Large Rectangular	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Aquatic Centers	Paved Trails	Community Garden	Dog Park	Fishing/Water Access	Large Shelters	Medium Shelters	Gazebos/Small Shelters	Community Center	Rental Facility	Restroom Buildings	Concessions Buildings	Parking (Spaces)	
Collingswood Parks and Recreation																									
Knight Park Foundation																									
Knight Park	Community	62.0	62.0	3	1	1	1	1			1						1		1			1	1	50	
Collingswood Parks																									
Collingswood Community Center	Community Center	0.4	0.4																	1	1				Shared parking
Roberts Pool	Special Use	5.0	5.0								1	1						1	4			1		22	
Scottish Rite Auditorium	Special Use	3.8	3.8																					306	Indoor performance theater
Community Garden, Cattell	Community Garden	2.0	2.0											1										0	
Community Garden, E Collings Avenue	Community Garden	0.2	0.2											1										0	
Subtotal - Collingswood Parks		**73.4**	**73.4**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0.0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**378**	
School Parks																									
Collingswood Middle/High School	School Park	17.2	12.9	2			1	1	2	7														N/A	
Garfield School	School Park	0.6	0.6						1*		1*													N/A	
Newbie Elementary	School Park	0.6	0.6						1*		1*													N/A	
North Elementary	School Park	0.3	0.3								1*													N/A	
Sharp School	School Park	0.8	0.8						1*		1*													N/A	
Tatem Elementary	School Park	0.5	0.4						1*		1*													N/A	
Subtotal - School Parks		**20.0**	**15.6**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total - Collingswood Parks and School Properties		**93.4**	**89.0**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**7**	**2**	**1**	**0.0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**378**	
Parks by Others in Collingswood																									
Cooper River Park	Community	55.0	10.9	1							1		5.2		1			2						N/A	
Cooper River Yacht Club	Special Use	9.8	9.8													1								N/A	
Newton Lake Park	Nature/Community	129.0	11.6								2					3		3						N/A	
Subtotal - Parks by Others		**193.8**	**32.3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**5.2**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total - Parks & Facilities in Collingswood		**213.8**	**136.9**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**7**	**5**	**1**	**5.2**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**378**	

*Not available for public use

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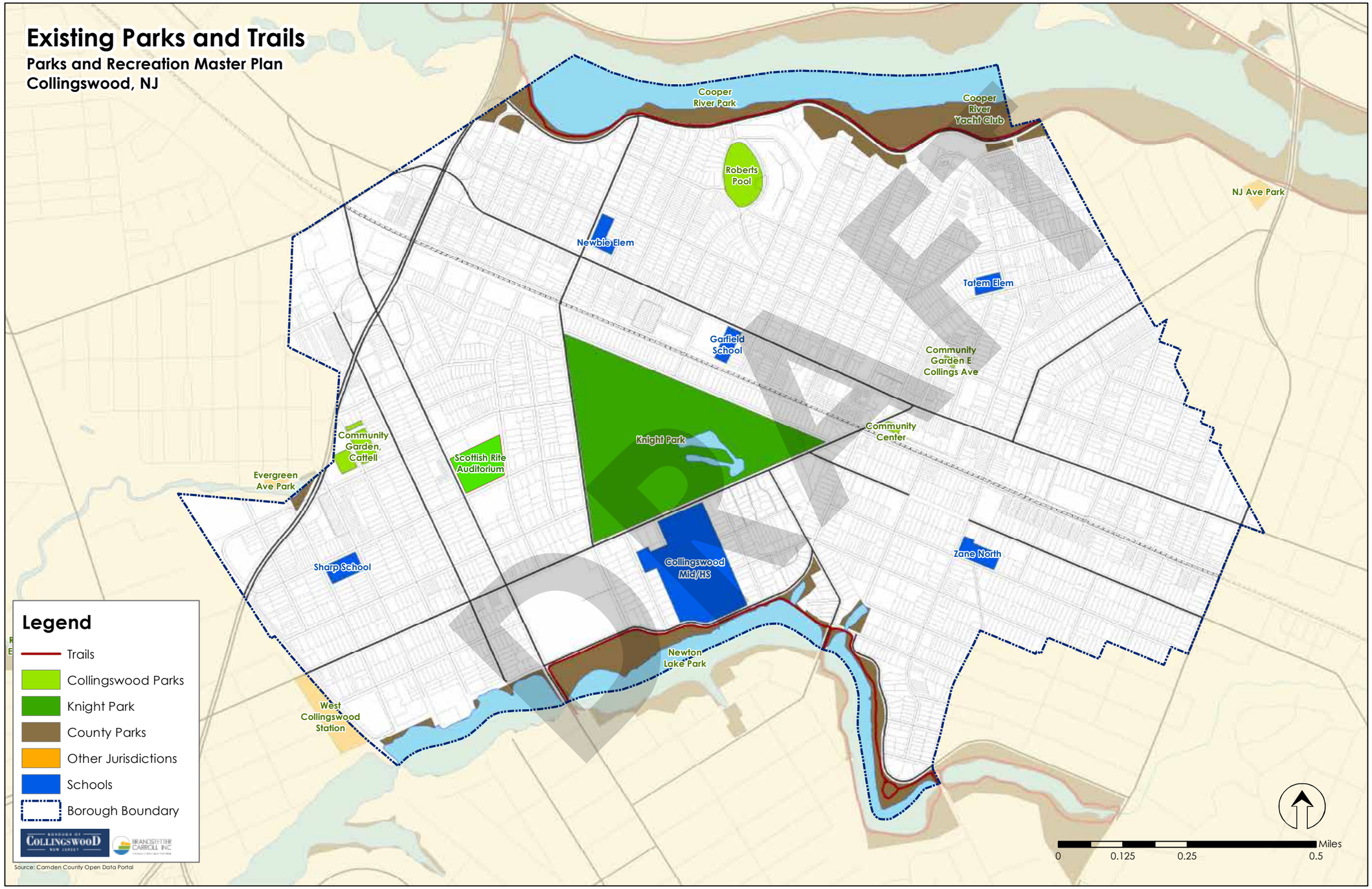
Figure 2.6: Existing Parks



2.3.3 School Parks

Collingswood Public Schools also offers recreation amenities that are available to Collingswood residents when not in use for school functions. Currently, only the facilities at the Collingswood Middle/High School complex are open to the public. This property offers the borough's only outdoor public basketball courts and tennis courts, along with rectangular fields and diamond fields. The district has four elementary schools in Collingswood with playgrounds and basketball courts, but these amenities are locked behind a fence and cannot be used by residents.

2.3.4 Parks by Others in Collingswood

Residents in Collingswood have easy access to two Camden County Parks – Cooper River Park and Newton Lake Park. Between the two parks, residents can take advantage of various opportunities not currently available in borough-operated parks.

Cooper River Park is a community park that stretches across the northern portion of the community and has multiple recreational opportunities ranging from trails, picnic shelters, playgrounds, a dog park, and a ball field. Newton Lake Park is a nature park supporting more passive activities.

Cooper River Park

Newton Lake Park

2.3.5 Parks by Others Near Collingswood

Table 2.7 shows nearby parks and recreation areas that may be available to Collingswood residents but are outside of the borough. They are owned and maintained either by a nonprofit, a county or local organization, or a local jurisdiction. Each of these spaces contributes to the full spectrum of recreational opportunities available to residents of Collingswood.

These parks are included to create a full inventory of all recreation amenities available to residents. If major improvements are made in any of these parks, the borough and the owners/operators of these spaces should coordinate their efforts to best address the community's needs and to avoid potentially costly and inefficient duplication of services and amenities.

Table 2.7: Parks by Others Near Collingswood

Facility Name	Agency	Playgrounds	Basketball Courts	Splash Pad	Trails (Miles)
West Collingswood Station	West Collingswood Extension Civic Association	1			
Evergreen Avenue Park	Oaklyn Borough	1			
NJ Ave Park	Haddon Township	1			
Saddler's Woods	Saddler's Woods Conservation Organization				0.7
Farnham Park	Camden County	2	1	1	
Total - Other Parks near Collingswood		**5**	**1**	**1**	**0.7**

2.4 Programs Inventory

Quality recreational programming is an important aspect of a vibrant and healthy community. Programs can be useful for meeting specific needs of different groups in the community – like active adults, young children, families, or teenagers – in a way that is more creatively tailored. In fact, programs can be an essential access-point for users; offerings such as fitness classes, sports leagues, cultural crafts, and camps give residents unique ways to meaningfully interact with parks in their community.

When properly managed and promoted, programs are an invaluable tool for strengthening social connectivity and enhancing the livability of a community. Programs offered by Collingswood Recreation are available to residents of Collingswood along with those from Oaklyn and Woodlynne.

2.4.1 Core Program Guidelines

The core program concept provides direction in the planning, scheduling, and coordination of community-based recreational activities. Involvement of community representatives, parents, participants, and advisory groups in the planning and development of program opportunities is critical for success.

The Core Program Guidelines include six components used as benchmarks for determining the quality of specific activities conducted at each program location. The level of Core Program offering may vary in activity type, intensity, and scope depending on such factors as size of the facility, equipment availability, and the number of staff required. The discussion below provides a description of the core program components as well as a summary of if and how well Collingswood Recreation is, as of 2024, addressing these components.

Appendix A provides an expanded description of each broad program category (component six). It includes possible program formats, identifies the primary values served by the activity, and lists specific program examples.

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The list can be a helpful resource for determining and developing programs in the Borough of Collingswood.

Core Program Components

The summary below uses the following abbreviations after each bullet point to describe whether Collingswood is meeting the core program components:

- Y = Yes offered by Collingswood Parks and Recreation
- L = Limited offerings by Collingswood Parks and Recreation
- O = Offered by partner organizations in Collingswood
- N = No, not offered in Collingswood

This analysis is based on the cumulative offerings and participation rates over the last five years.

1. Broad Appeal

Parks and community centers should have broad appeal by conducting activities and special events for people young and old and of varying needs and skill levels. Target groups for programs include:

- Preschool (N)
- Elementary School Age (Y)
- Teens (Y)
- Adults (Y)
- Seniors (Y)
- Intergenerational (Y)
- Multiple Ages (Y)
- Therapeutic/Adaptive (N)

2. Administrative Feasibility

Activities should be administratively feasible, and the following factors should be considered as part of any program development process:

- Facility and Equipment Requirements (Y)
- Safety (Y)
- Cost vs. Benefits (N)
- Specialized Instruction Requirements (N)

Collingswood has not yet completed a detailed analysis of the costs of programs. This type of analysis can determine the cost of each program per participant in terms of dollars and staff time and compare those numbers to program outcomes and revenues. This type of analysis can be especially useful for evaluating partnerships with outside organizations.

3. Coordination

Program and service offerings should be of a coordinated nature within the community, thus serving to complement rather than duplicate activities already provided elsewhere by other organizations or agencies.

Collingswood coordinates with partner organizations to expand recreational services; partner relationships range from regularly scheduled programming to one-time collaborations or providing space. The following entities are current partners with Recreation in providing programs and activities to the community (not an exhaustive list):

- Knight Park Foundation
- Collingswood Public Schools
- Camden County Parks
- Collingswood Public Library
- Collingswood Youth Theatre
- Perkins Center for the Arts
- Collingswood Oaklyn Soccer Club (COSC)
- Collingswood Marlins Swim Team

4. Settings and Times

Activities should be conducted in a variety of settings and formats, formal and informal. Programs should also be offered at a variety of times to meet the competing schedules of residents. For example, working adults may not be able to participate in programs until the evening or on weekends. Additionally, parents with children may benefit from availability of childcare or children's programs running concurrent to their chosen activity.

Settings and formats include:

- Instructional Classes (Y)
- Progressive Skill Levels (Y)
- Drop-In (N)
- Special Events (Y)
- Special Interest Clubs (Y)
- Leagues and/or Tournaments (Y/O)
- Outings and Field Trips (N)
- After School Programs (N)
- Camps (Y)

5. Constructive Nature

Programs should be constructive in nature and satisfy the creative, cultural, physical, and social desires of the participants.

6. Diverse Range of Activities

A diverse range of activities should be offered and should include a balanced mix of the following broad program categories:

- Athletics (L/O)
- Community Events (Y)
- Creative Arts (Y)
- Senior Programs (Y)
- Cultural Performances (Y)
- Education, Life Skills, and Fun (L)
- Games (N)
- Green Living/Environmental Education (N)
- Health, Fitness, and Wellness Activities (Y)

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- Health and Wellness Education (N)
- Heritage and History (L)
- Nature/Outdoor Programs (O)
- Performing Arts (Y/O)
- Volunteer Training & Opportunities (Y)

2.5 Benchmarking Comparisons

One method for evaluating parks and recreation services offered in a community is to use benchmark comparisons to other communities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics program provides a variety of data for use in benchmarking. The following analysis uses data from 20 agencies located in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, New York, Maryland, and Vermont (serving populations between 5,000 and 20,000) that participated in the Park Metrics program (Table 2.8). Additionally, NRPA provides an annual report[1] which includes national performance benchmarks; these figures are also used in this evaluation process.

Table 2.8: Benchmark Agencies

Agency	State	Year	Population	Budget
Boylston Parks and Recreation	MA	2021	5,248	N/A
Colchester Parks and Recreation	CT	2022	15,501	$183,427
Concord Recreation Department	MA	2022	18,184	$3,452,186
East Goshen Township	PA	2022	18,026	$675,000
East Longmeadow Recreation Department	MA	2021	16,430	N/A
East Lyme Parks and Recreation	CT	2022	18,850	N/A
Eatontown Recreation	NJ	2021	12,700	$650,000
Hanover Parks & Recreation	NH	2022	11,870	$1,177,383
Hartford Parks and Recreation Department	VT	2021	10,000	$1,500,000
Hopkinton Parks & Recreation	MA	2021	16,720	$700,000
Mount Joy Township	PA	2022	10,721	$461,267
New Boston Recreation	NH	2021	5,800	$260,000
New Castle (Town of)	NY	2022	17,862	$2,426,908
Ocean City Recreation & Parks	MD	2022	7,000	N/A
South Whitehall Township	PA	2021	19,903	$322,930
Warren (Township of)	NJ	2021	15,923	N/A
Waterford Recreation & Parks Commission	CT	2022	19,571	$1,450,000
Weston Recreation Department	MA	2022	11,500	$1,607,000
Williston Recreation & Parks	VT	2022	9,578	$579,300
Winooski (City of)	VT	2022	7,333	$1,097,000

Numbers for Collingswood were calculated based on information provided by the borough. The data for other park systems was limited to parks and facilities managed by those agencies; however, Knight Park and school facilities are included for Collingswood due to the unique nature of the system. The figures used in this analysis for Collingswood were those from the approved fiscal year 2023 borough budget. The figures for the comparison municipalities were the most recent available of those entered for 2021 and 2022.

The following text details the findings of the benchmark analysis. The values presented in these comparisons are based on information reported to Park Metrics by the municipalities and may vary from actual budgets and measurements. Values used for Collingswood Recreation are shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Agency Data

Data	Collingswood	Source/Notes
Borough Values		
Total SQMI	1.9	GIS
Total Acres	1238.7	GIS
Population	13,920	Esri Forecasts (2022)
Department Values		
# of Parks	6	Inventory
Total Park Acres	73.4	GIS
Developed Acres	73.4	GIS
Trail Miles	0	Inventory
Total Operations	$476,000	Adopted 2023
Total Revenue	$485,000	Adopted 2023

1. Recreation only

2.5.1 Agency Operations and Budget

Table 2.10 shows various measures of recreation and parks operations by the Borough of Collingswood. The table also shows the median values for the 20 benchmark agencies and the national benchmark provided by the 2023 NRPA annual report.

The borough provides 5.3 acres of parkland per thousand population, slightly less than the benchmark median (6.0 acres). As a percentage of the entire jurisdiction, which controls for the different land area of the comparison agencies, 5.9% of land in Collingswood is borough-operated (or Knight Board) parkland, more than double the benchmark (2.6%). This finding indicates that Collingswood is more densely populated than the benchmark, which make population-based metrics more difficult to reach.

Although less parkland per thousand people, all parkland available is developed while only 57% of the benchmark's is developed. The parks per 1,000 population is nearly half that of the benchmark (0.4 vs. 1), indicating fewer parks overall.

Collingswood does not maintain any trails within its park system and, therefore, does not compare favorably to the benchmark medians. However, trails are available to

[1] National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review Park And Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks," https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/2022-nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf (accessed August 2022).

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residents and provided by Camden County at Cooper River Park. If these trails were included, the borough would be much closer to the benchmark – 1.7 miles per 10,000 compared to 2.2 for the benchmark. It is important to note, however, that these benchmark communities also contain trails offered by other agencies that are not included in their numbers.

Table 2.10: Agency Operations and Budget

Benchmark	Collingswood	Benchmark	National[1]
PARKLAND INFORMATION			
Acreage of Parkland	73.4	192.0	N/A
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Pop.	5.3	6.0	10.8
Parks per 1,000 Pop.	0.4	1.0	N/A
Parkland as a % of Jurisdiction	5.9%	2.6%	N/A
Percent of Acreage Developed	100%	57%	N/A
TRAILS			
Trail Miles Managed or Maintained	0	5.0	14
Trail Miles per Jurisdiction Sq. Mi.	0.0	0.3	N/A
Trail Miles per 10,000 Pop.	0.0	2.2	N/A
OPERATING BUDGET			
Operating Expenditures (Annual)	$476,000	$700,000	$5,500,000
Non-Tax Revenue (Annual)	$485,000	$500,000	N/A
Cost Recovery	102%	69%	25%
Operating Expenditures per Capita	$34	$60	$95
Operating Expenditures per Acre	$6,485	$6,400	N/A
Operating Exp. per Developed Acre	$6,485	$14,000	N/A
Non-Tax Revenue per Capita	$35	$35	$22

1. NRPA National medians obtained from 2023 report

Collingswood Recreation's operating expenditures per capita are about half of the benchmark. Operating expenditures per acre are also half the benchmarks despite having a higher percentage of developed land. Due to such low operating expenditures, the departments' cost recovery is over 100%, outstanding for a parks and recreation department and connected to the need to operate Roberts Pool as a utility that must cover its expenses. The high-cost recovery rate indicates room for program and facility improvements or expansions. Survey results – as shown in Chapter 3 – indicate respondents would like to see additional programs, such as special events, concerts, and adult fitness programs.

2.5.2 Programs

The list of program categories in Table 2.11 provides the percentage of benchmark agencies that offer each type of program and whether Collingswood Recreation offers them. The data in the table is separated into two groups: "activities," which cover programs intended for all users, and "out-of-school-time activities," which include programs for specific user groups (children, seniors, etc.).

Photo: The SpongeBob Musical at Collingswood Scottish Rite Theater Community Theater

Collingswood offers programming in most of the more common program categories with some notable exceptions. Collingswood does not offer programs, or people with disabilities, after school programs, or preschool programs (offered by over 50% of benchmark agencies). When considering any new programs, the Borough of Collingswood should continue to seek new and expanded collaborative partnerships to provide fresh and effective recreation opportunities.

Table 2.11: Programs

Programs	Collingswood	Benchmark	National
Activities			
Themed special events	✓	93%	89%
Social recreation events	✓	93%	88%
Racquet sports	✓	93%	71%
Safety training	✓	93%	71%
Team sports	✓	87%	86%
Fitness enhancement classes	✓	87%	81%
Individual sports	✓	80%	77%
Health and wellness education	✓	80%	80%
Performing arts	✓	67%	62%
Natural and cultural history activities	✓	53%	63%
Cultural crafts	✓	47%	62%
Golf		40%	48%
Martial arts	✓	40%	57%
Trips and tours		40%	61%
Aquatics	✓	33%	69%
Visual arts		33%	61%
Running/cycling races		33%	52%
eSports/eGaming		20%	23%
Out-of-School Time (OST) Activities			
Summer camp	✓	100%	82%
Specific senior programs	✓	73%	77%
STEM Programs	✓	67%	58%
After school programs		67%	53%
Specific teen programs		60%	65%
Programs for people with disabilities		40%	63%
Preschool		20%	33%
Before school programs		7%	19%
Full daycare		0%	7%

2.5.3 Facilities

Table 2.12 compares population per facility to evaluate the existing supply. Looking at population served per facility can help identify new facilities that the Borough may

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want to add in the future. This table shows the benchmark median values for a range of facilities – outdoor and indoor. A lower value indicates a higher level of service.

Table 2.12: Population Per Facility

Facilities	Collingswood		Benchmark		National	
	Offered[1]	Pop. per	% Offered	Pop. Per	% Offered	Pop. per
Outdoor Activity Areas						
Playgrounds	✓	6,960	100%	4,789	95%	3,759
Basketball courts	✓	6,960	93%	3,791	86%	7,404
Diamond fields - youth baseball	✓	4,640	93%	3,181	79%	6,863
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	✓	6,960	87%	4,180	69%	9,177
Tennis courts (outdoor only)	✓	1,989	80%	5,484	76%	5,860
Diamond fields - youth softball	✓	13,920	73%	5,800	62%	11,384
Dog park		N/A	60%	15,501	68%	43,532
Diamond fields - adult softball	✓	13,920	60%	15,501	63%	15,345
Community gardens	✓	6,960	60%	12,700	52%	31,395
Pickleball courts		N/A	40%	2,785	31%	13,922
Skatepark		N/A	33%	7,333	41%	53,144
Swimming pools (outdoor only)	✓	13,920	20%	11,500	51%	38,365
Multipurpose artificial turf field		N/A	20%	9,786	25%	36,844
Performance amphitheater		N/A	13%	18,438	37%	67,862
Indoor Activity Areas						
Community centers	✓	13,920	40%	15,363	59%	29,494
Recreation centers	✓	N/A	20%	5,800	63%	31,215
Senior centers		N/A	27%	11,350	41%	59,727
Teen centers		N/A	7%	18,850	13%	55,494

1. Includes school facilities open to the public

Collingswood has lower levels of service for all outdoor facilities except for community gardens, tennis courts, and adult softball fields. Of the indoor activity areas, the community center has a higher level of service than the benchmarks due to the borough's smaller population. Many of these service ratios can only by improved through the development of new facilities; however, access to playgrounds and basketball courts could be improved through a partnership making the facilities at the elementary schools available to the public.

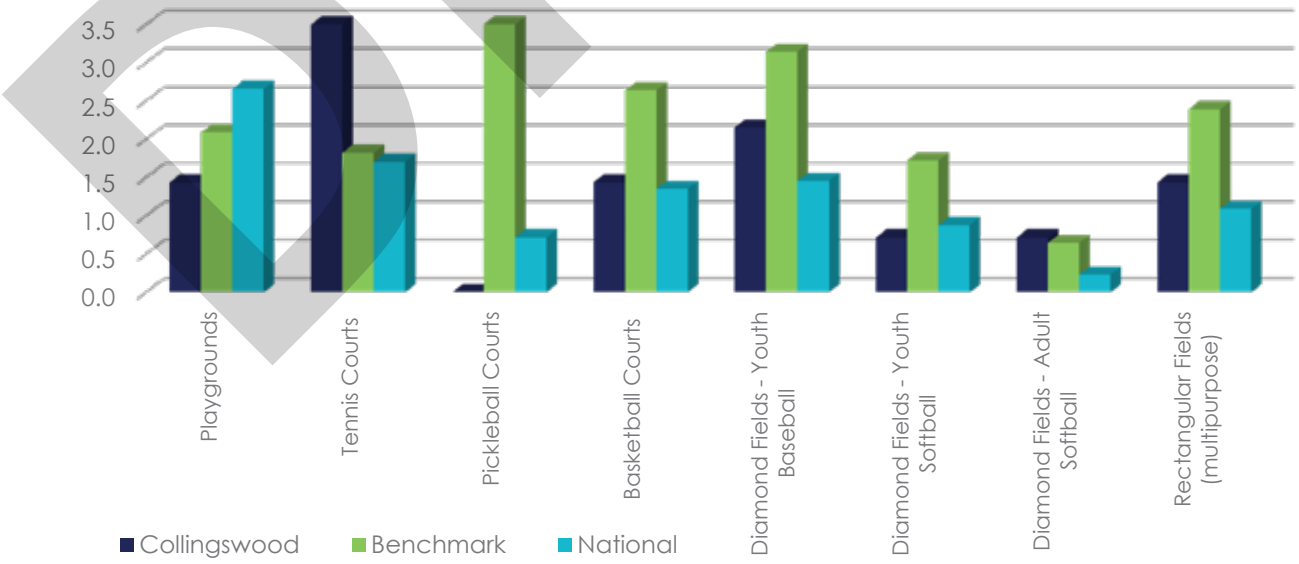
Figure 2.7 shows active use/athletic facilities per 10,000 population (converted from the numbers in Table 2.16) for playgrounds, game courts, and athletic fields. This figure underscores some of the same findings in Table 2.15, showing how Collingswood has a much lower level of service for most facilities but higher levels for tennis courts, which are provided by the school district.

2.6 Geographic Distribution of Parks and Recreation Areas

The spatial distribution of parks throughout Collingswood is important to consider, because residents are better able and more willing to utilize facilities that are close to their homes. Of note, these service areas are not necessarily representative of all users of the borough's parks; after all, some users may be more willing to travel greater distances than those defined in the figures below. However, the most frequent users generally live within the areas indicated and usage rates tend to decline sharply in relation to travel times.

A 10-minute walking distance represents about a half mile range and is a commonly used measurement for the walkability of an area; most residents can easily travel this distance without using a car. The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and the Urban Land Institute have all joined forces to develop the "10-minute walk campaign" which strives for healthy, walkable communities and easy access to greenspace for everyone in the country. As part of their multi-pronged campaign, cities all over the U.S. are committed to ensuring that by 2050 all residents will have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of their home.[2]

Figure 2.7: Facilities Per 10,000 Population



2 https://10minutewalk.org/

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2.6.1 Park Service Areas

Figure 2.8 shows areas in Collingswood that are within a 10-minute walking distance to a neighborhood park (or larger). Walkable access is distributed throughout Collingswood with a notable gap in the eastern portion of the borough. **Overall, 77% of the population of Collingswood is within walking distance to a neighborhood park or larger.**

Providing walkable access to all residents in the borough is a realistic goal and could be accomplished by largely using existing public properties. If the elementary school and Robert Pool (currently inside the pool fence) playgrounds were made available, those properties could be added to the neighborhood park inventory, increasing walkable access to 98% of the population.

Figure 2.9 shows 5-minute drivetime areas to community parks. This figure shows that most of the borough is within a short drive to a larger park.

2.6.2 Facility Service Areas

This portion of the needs analysis focuses on the distribution of facilities provided by Collingswood for use by residents. Service areas for these key facilities within Collingswood are illustrated in Figures 2.10 through 2.18. As with the geographic distribution of parks, both drive and walk times are used for defining service areas

Larger and unique facilities are intended to serve greater populations; typically, residents are willing to travel longer distances to access these amenities. In contrast, smaller and more common facilities usually serve more localized (smaller) populations and are more often within walking distance. The following text describes access and gaps in service for facilities in Collingswood; though portions of the borough are highlighted as outside of facility service areas, a new facility is not necessarily recommended.

Field Hockey

Playgrounds (Figure 2.10)

- 10-minute walk for the western portion of borough, gaps in north and east
- 5-minute drive access for the entire borough

Outdoor Basketball Courts & Tennis Courts (Figure 2.11)

- Grouped due to sharing a single location
- Walking access limited to those in southern part of borough near Collingswood Middle/High School
- 5-minute driving access encompasses most of the borough except for the northeastern portion

Baseball/Softball Diamond Fields (Figure 2.12)

- Three different locations with fields (Knight Park, Collingswood Middle/High School, and Cooper River Park)
- 5-minute drive access for entire borough

Multipurpose Rectangular Fields (Figure 2.13)

- 10-minute walking access for the western and central parks of the borough (Knight Park & Middle/High School)
- 5-minute drive access for entire borough

Picnic Shelters (Figure 2.14)

- Most of the borough is within a 10-minute walk of a shelter at one of four locations (Knight Park, Roberts Pool, Cooper River Park, and Newton Lake Park)
- 5-minute drive access for entire borough

Community Center (Figure 2.15)

- 10-minute walk for most of the eastern half of the borough
- 5-minute drive access for the entire borough

Dog Parks Service (Figure 2.16)

- Single dog park at Cooper River Park offers limited 10-minute walk access to those living northeast of Tatem Elementary School
- 5-minute drive access for those in the northern portion of the borough

Swimming Pools (Figure 2.17)

- Walkable access north edge of borough between Newbie and Tatem Elementary Schools
- 5-minute drive access gaps in southwest and southeast of borough

Trails (Figure 2.18)

- 10-minute walk access for roughly 60% of the borough
- 5-minute drive access for the entire borough

Army Field Band

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Figure 2.8: Neighborhood Park Service Areas

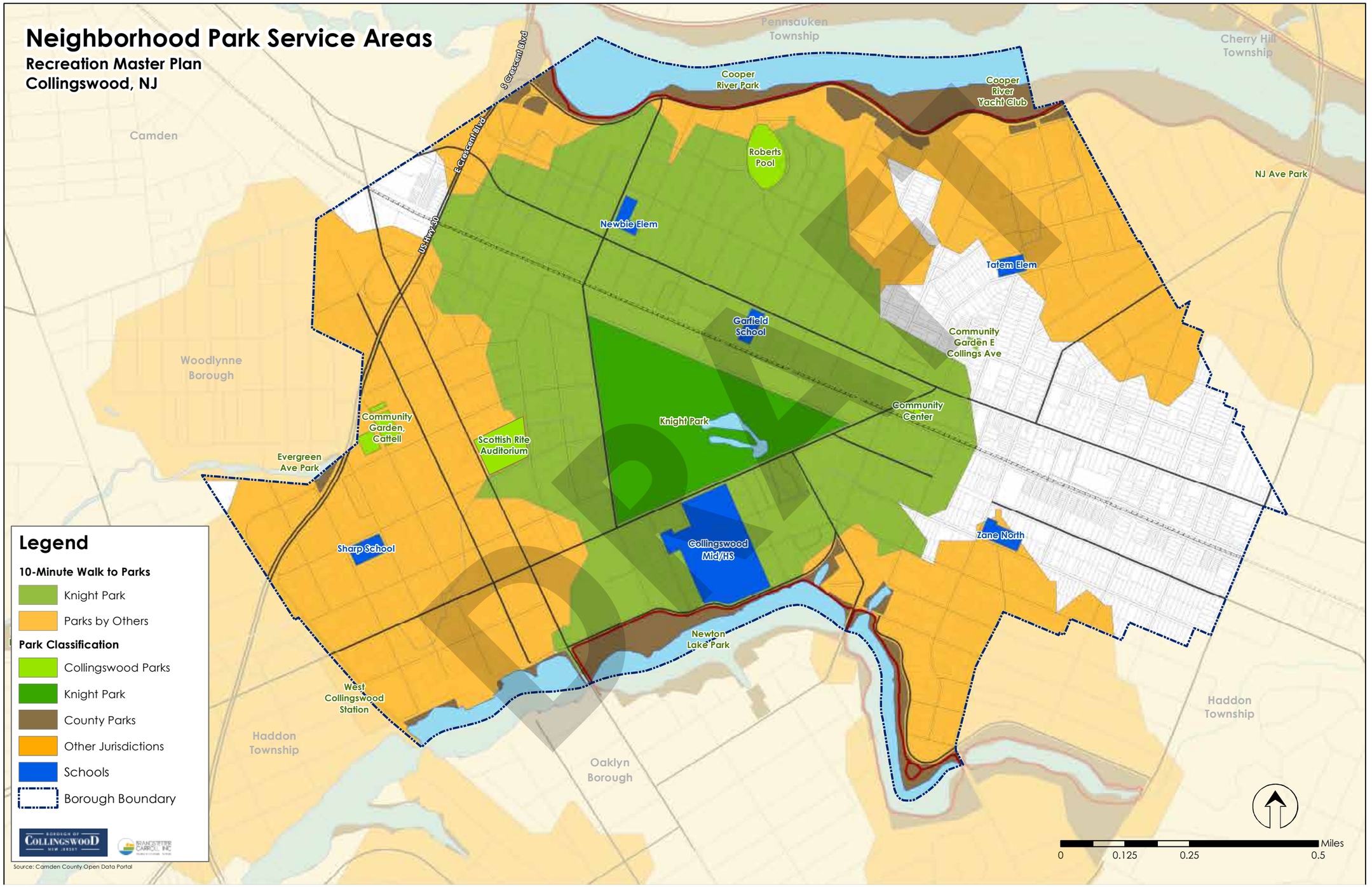

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Figure 2.9: Community Park Service Areas

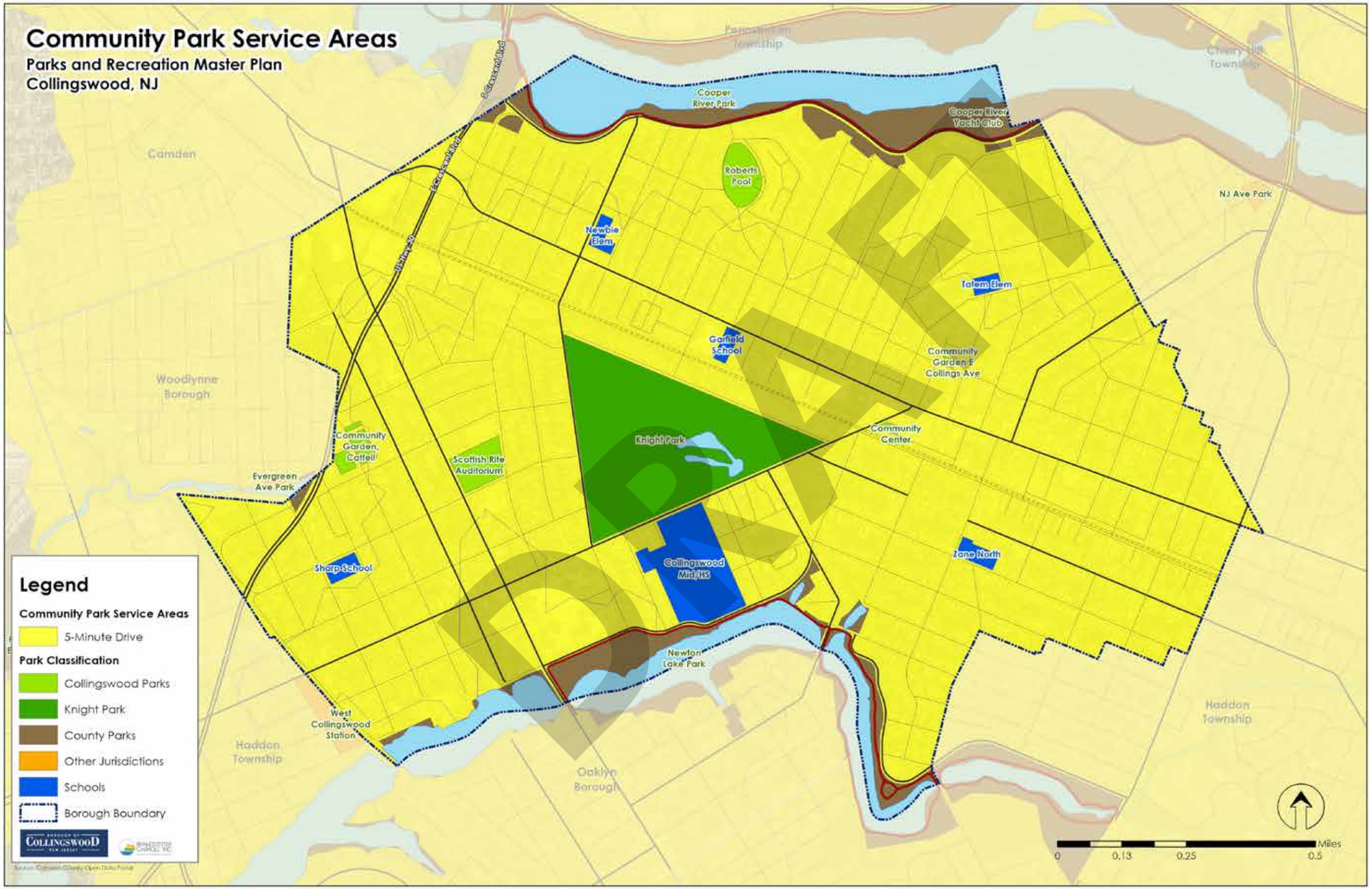

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Figure 2.10: Playground Service Areas

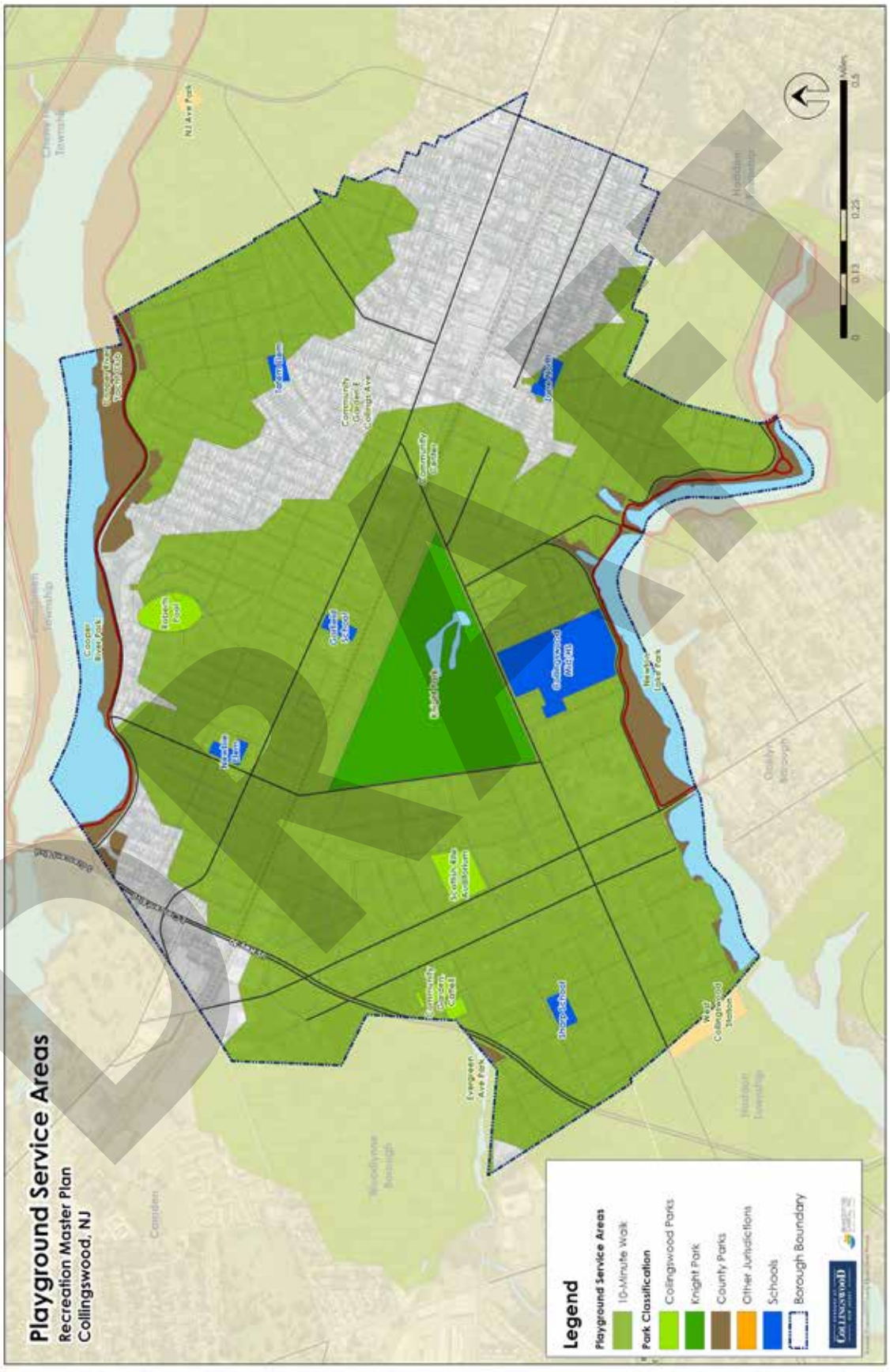

Figure 2.11: Outdoor Basketball & Tennis Court Service Areas

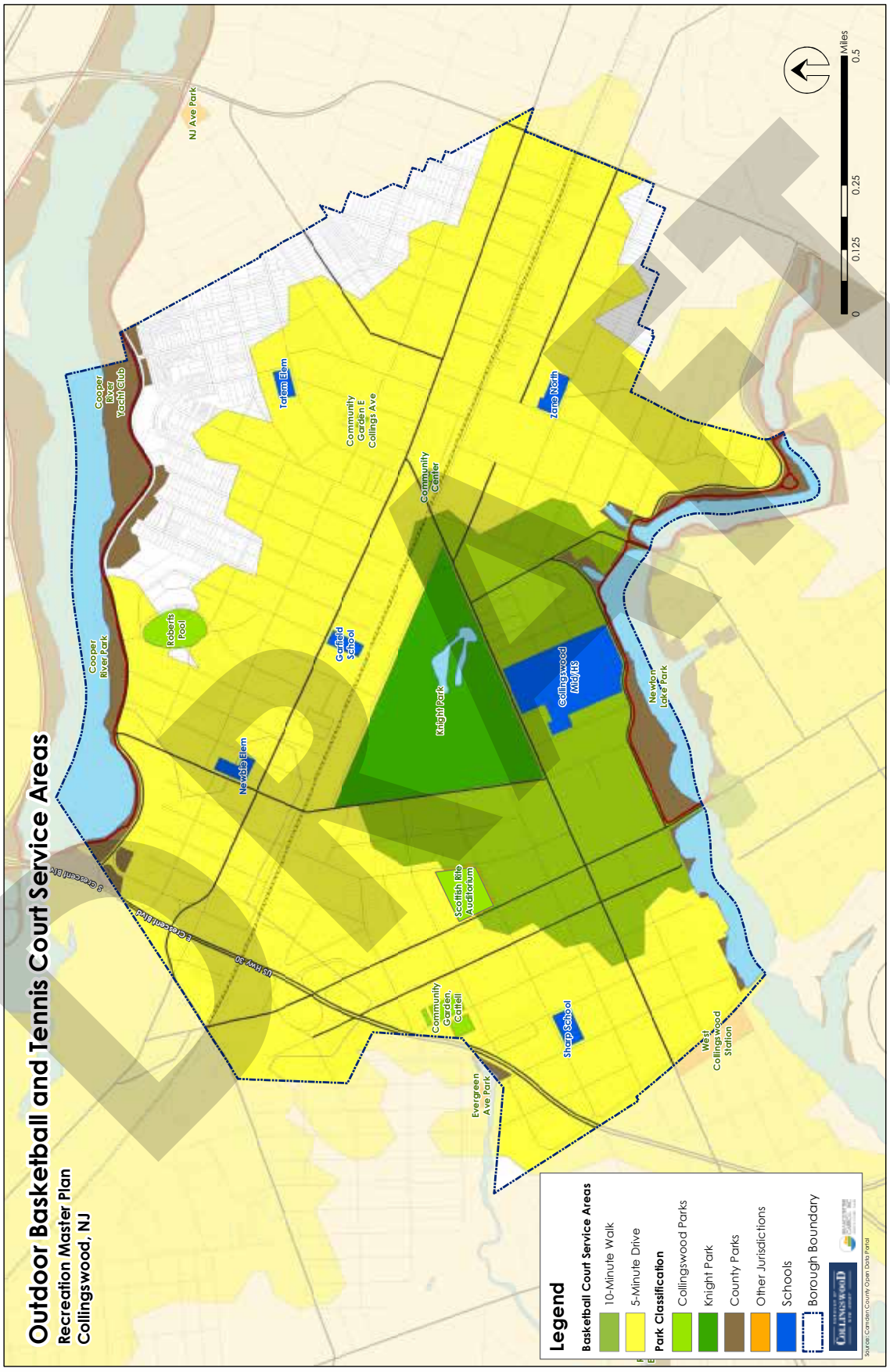

Figure 2.12: Baseball/Softball Diamond Field Service Areas

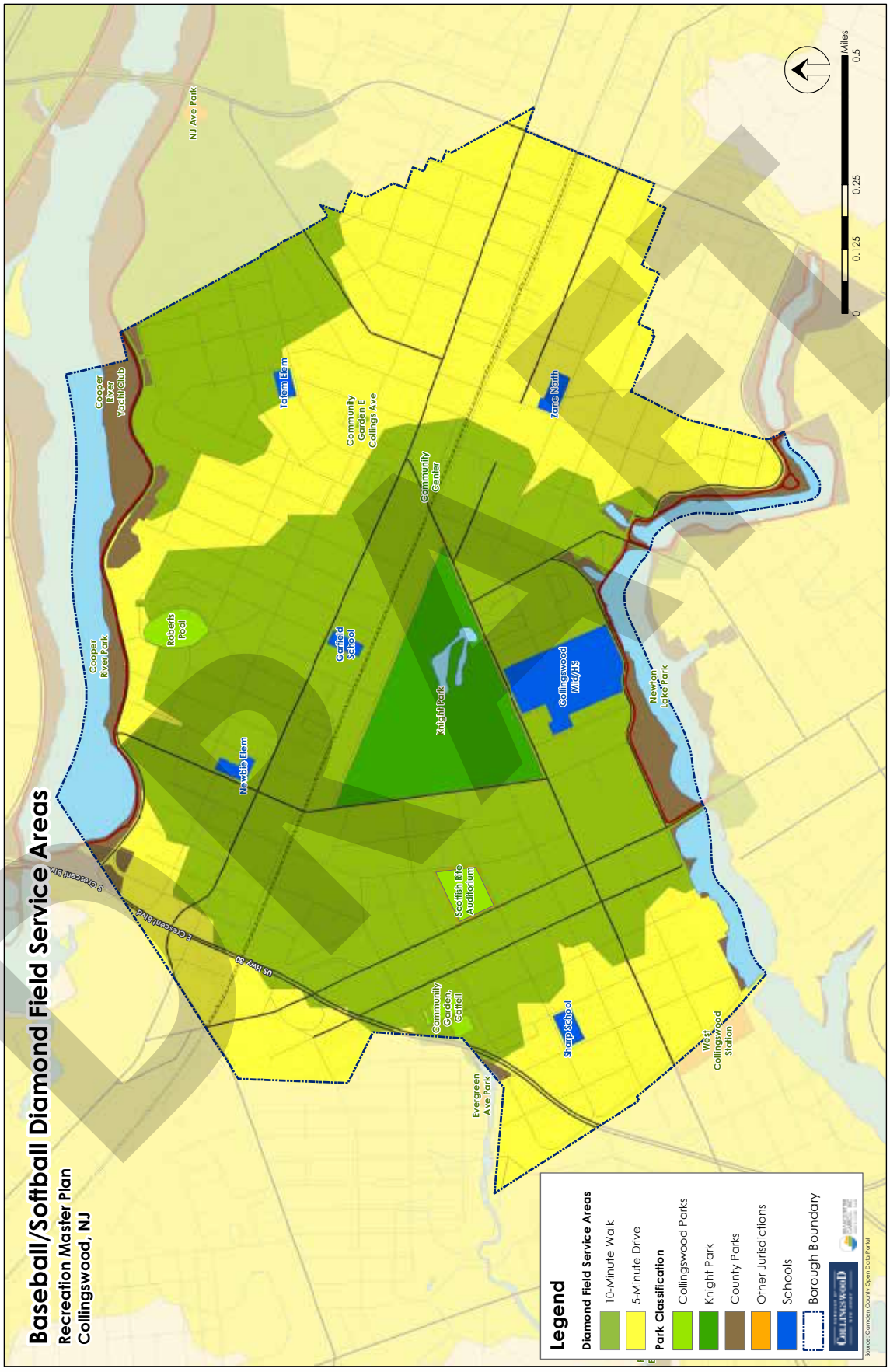

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Figure 2.13: Multipurpose Rectangular Field Service Areas

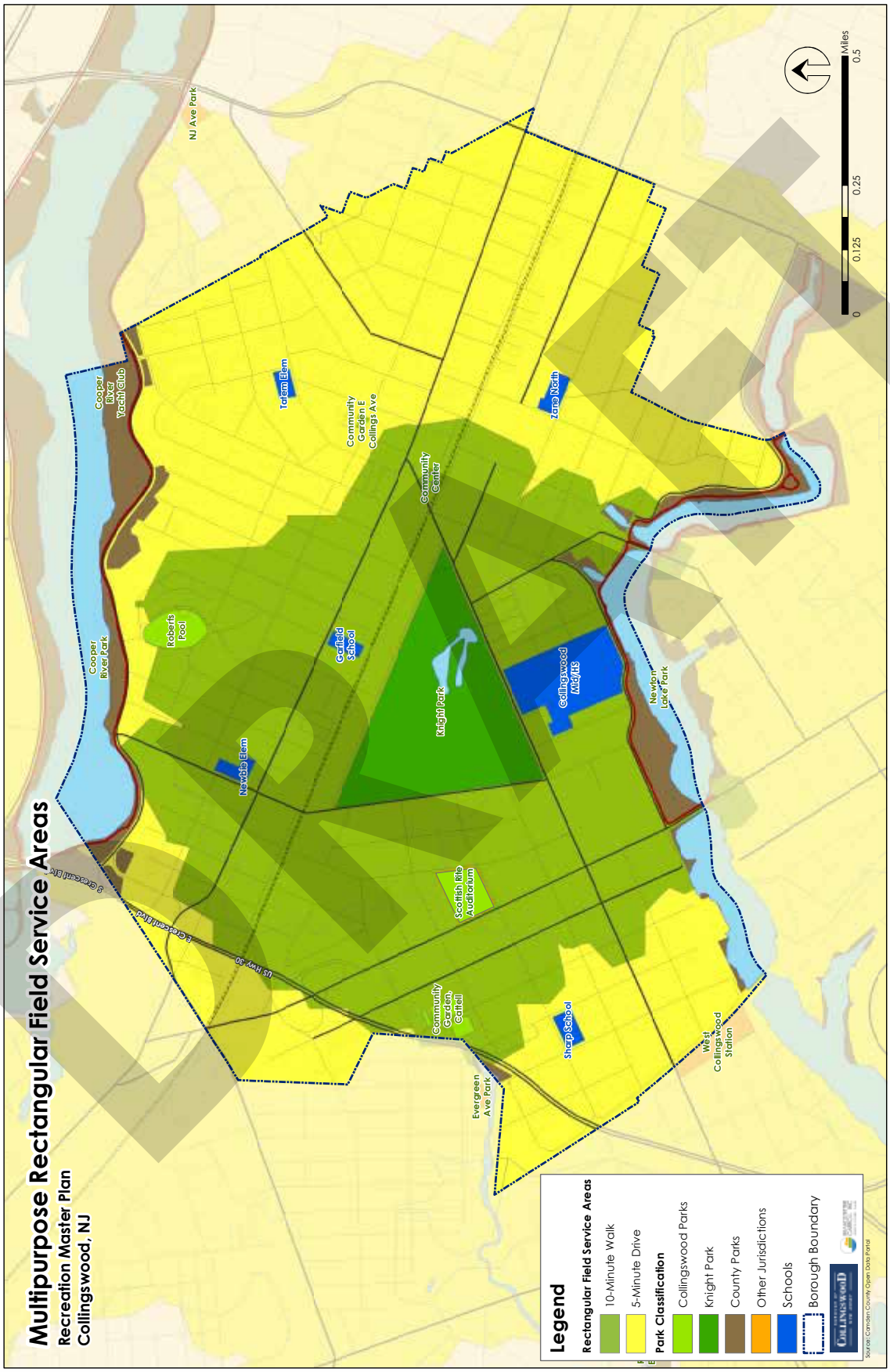


Figure 2.14: Picnic Shelter Service Areas

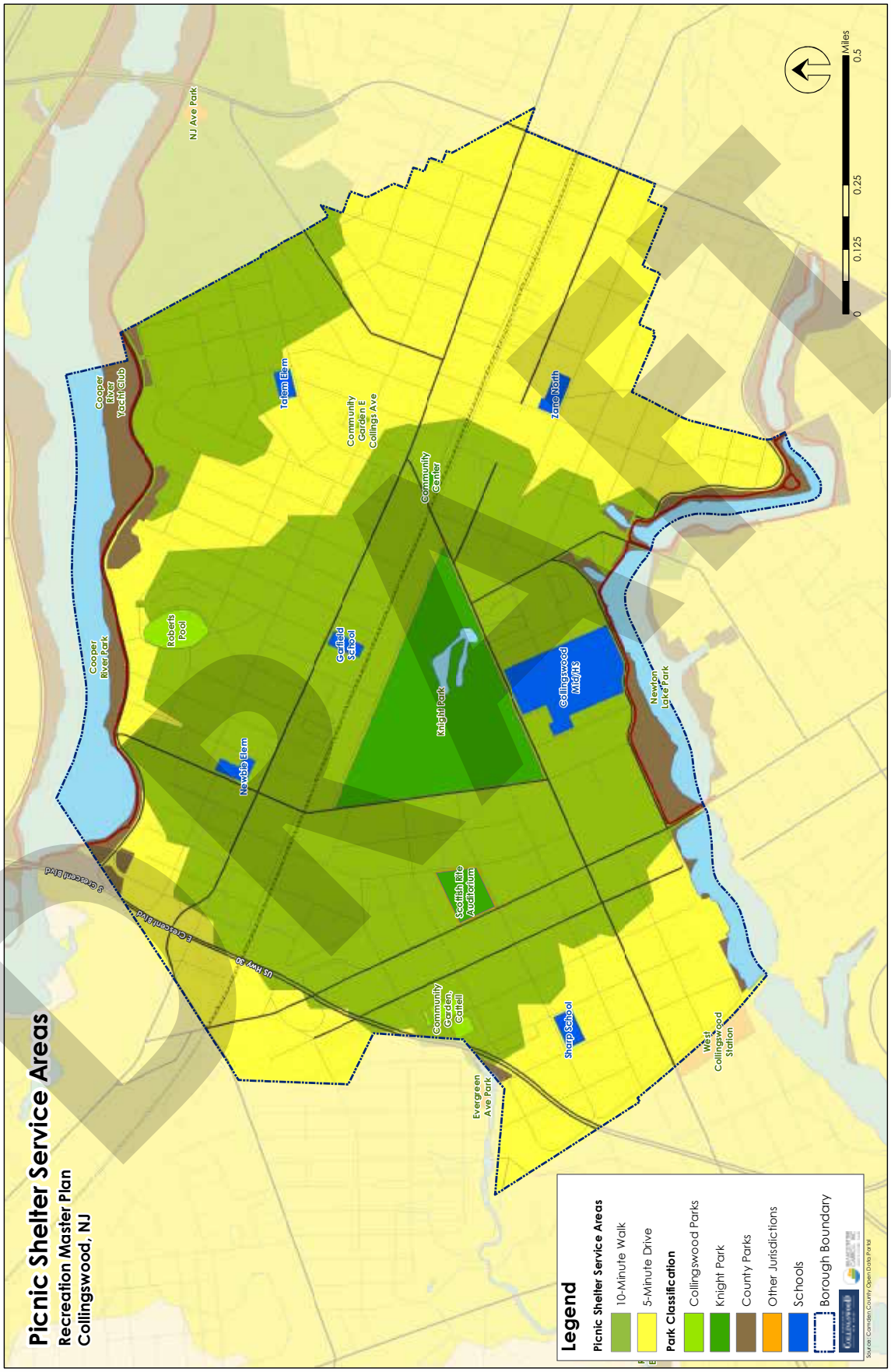


Figure 2.15: Community Center Service Area

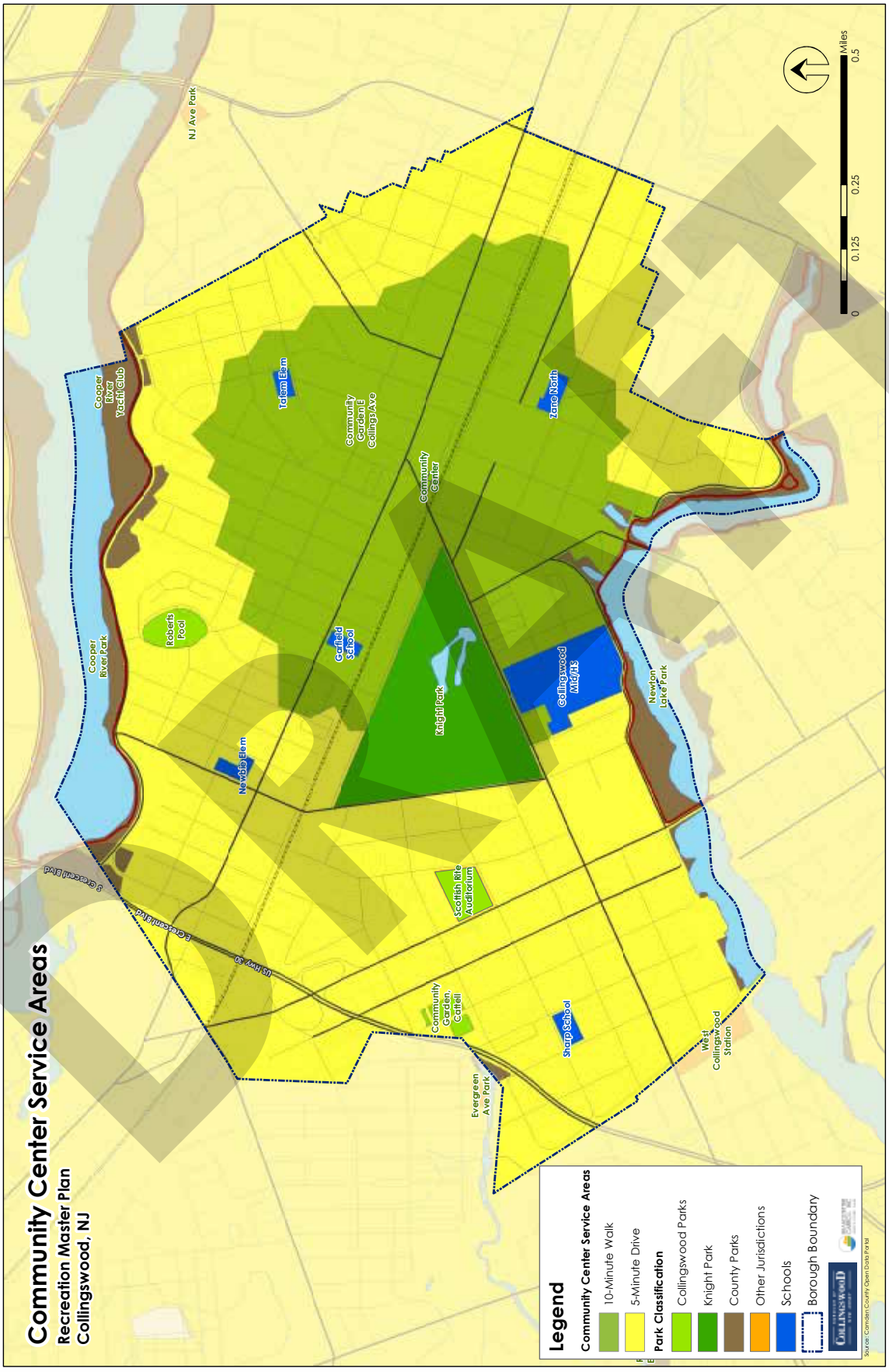


Figure 2.16: Dog Park Service Area

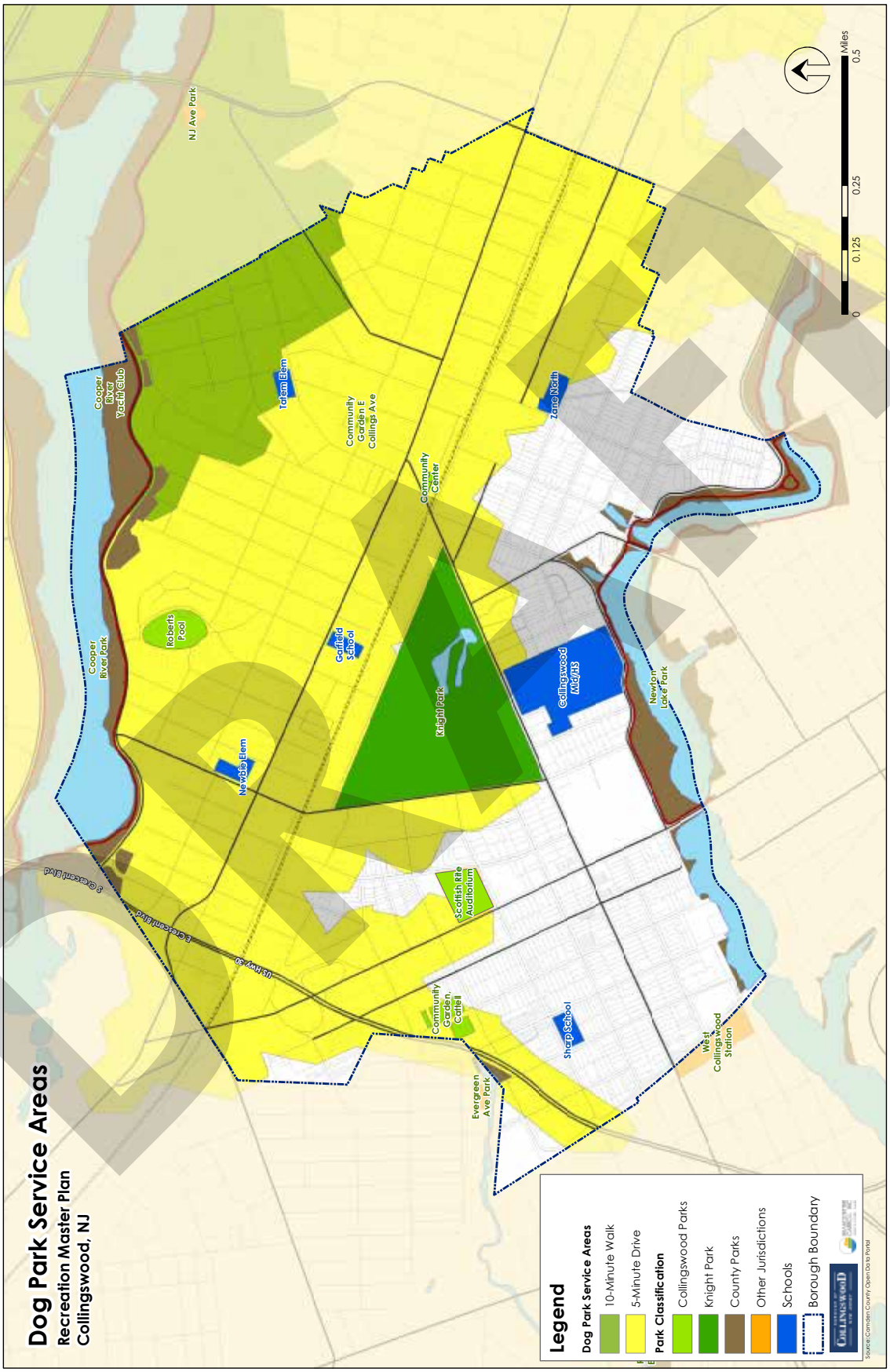


Figure 2.17: Swimming Pool Service Area

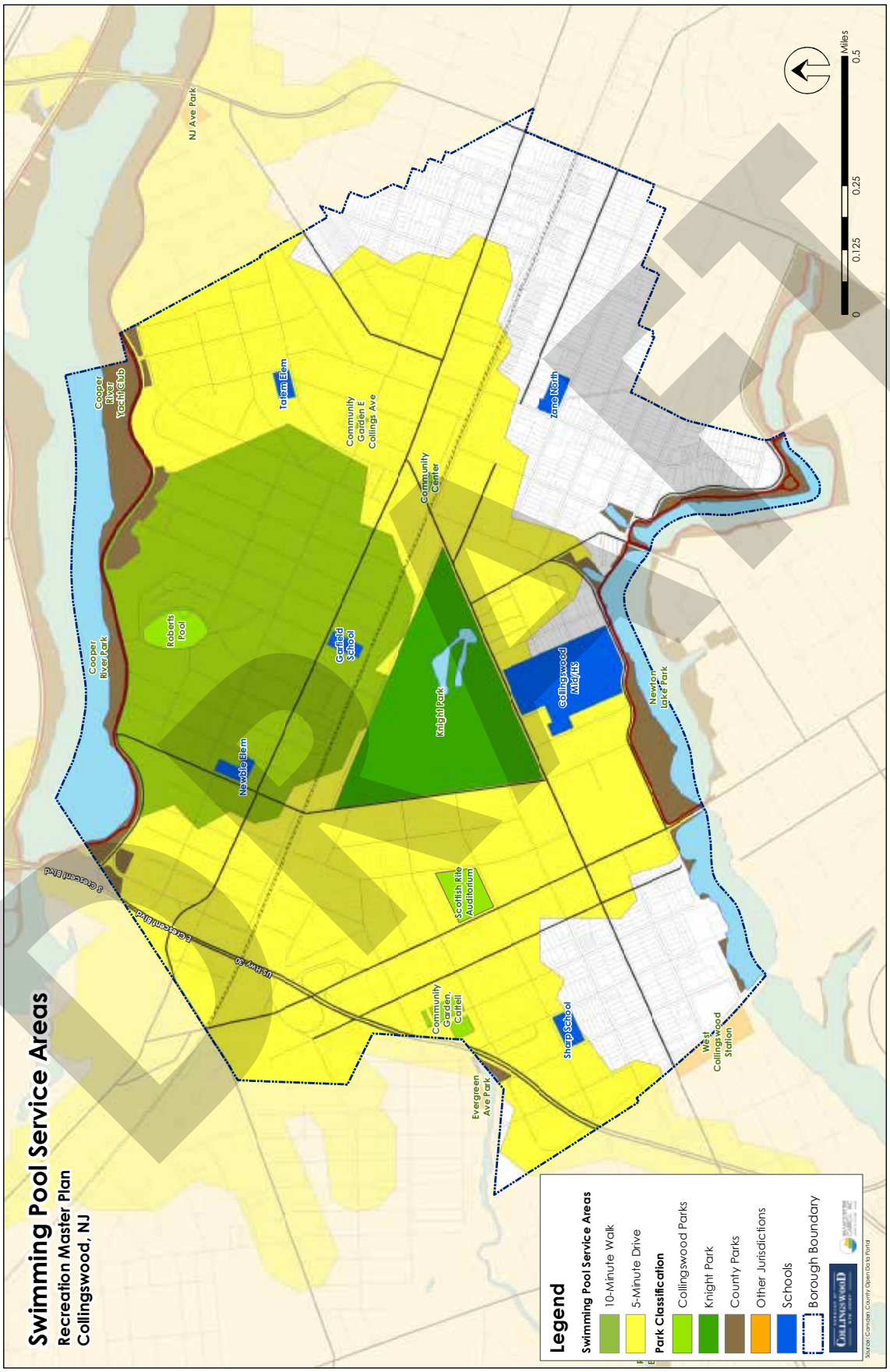
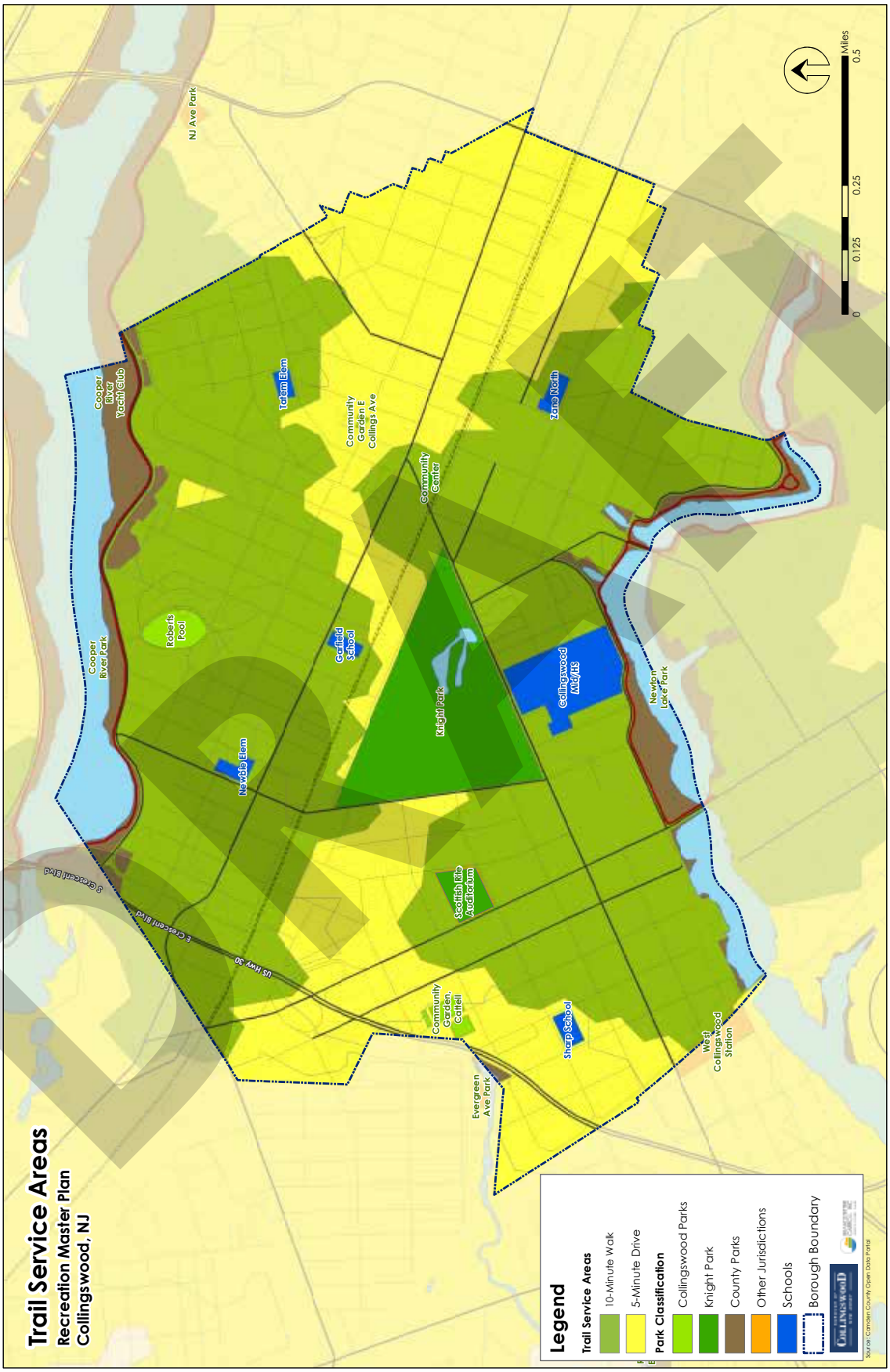


Figure 2.18: Trail Service Areas



2.7 Trends in Parks and Recreation

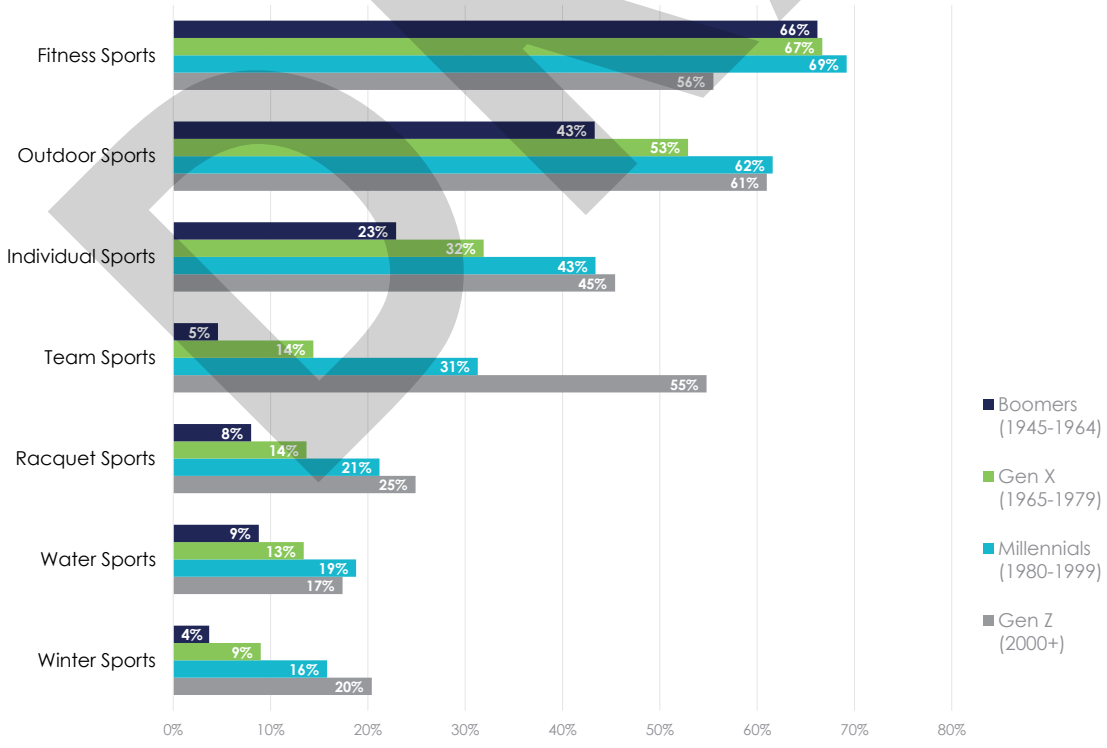
The following text analyzes national trends in recreation, including types of activities and their associated facilities. First, a look at participation rates for various activities – using data from the Sport and Fitness Industry Association then a deeper dive into the latest trends (relevant to Collingswood) occurring in programming and facilities across the nation.

There will be different emphasis and considerations particular to Collingswood, but also an exploration of overall patterns. Looking through a broader lens can provide insight into the origin and trajectory of more localized preferences. Understanding how trends in fitness, recreation, athletics, and cultural resources reflect in the parks and recreation industry illuminates present conditions and future possibilities in Collingswood. Equipped with industry context, the Collingswood Recreation Department can better sustain, expand, and realign its existing offerings.

2.7.1 Trends in Participation

On an annual basis, the Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) conducts a survey of individuals and households throughout the United States to determine participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities. By using a weighting technique, the survey produces results reflective of the total U.S. population age 6 and older; the 2022 sample consisted of 18,000 online interviews of households. The following text examines the findings of this SFIA report and connects relevant data to generate insights about Collingswood.

Figure 2.19: Participation Rates by Generation



Generational Differences

Figure 2.19 shows the difference in participation rates between generations for seven types of sports. The youngest generation (Gen Z) had the highest participation rates for individual sports (e.g., archery, skateboarding, golfing, etc.), team sports (e.g., baseball, ultimate frisbee, soccer, etc.), and outdoor sports (e.g., hiking, trail running, bicycling, etc.). With each generation, participation rates dropped as age increased except for fitness sports. The other three generational groups had high participation rates in fitness sports (e.g., barre, weight-training, kettlebells, etc.). the remaining three types of sports (racquet, winter, and water sports) have similar trends, Millennial's and Gen Z representing the highest levels of participation.

With growing percentages of residents in the older two generations, demand for fitness sports programming is likely to increase into the future. Even though participation diminishes with age, outdoor sports remain popular with all age groups (43% of Boomers take advantage of these outdoor activities). Fitness sports are also popular with all age groups. Team sports are far more popular with the youngest generation (55% Gen Z and only 5% Boomers).

Trends by Activity

Table 2.13 displays the 5-year participation rates for 56 different sports and fitness activities. This table also shows the 5-year annual growth rate and highlights which activities show either significant growth or decline in participation rates. The fastest growing sports are highlighted in blue, with pickleball, skateboarding, trail running, tennis, day hiking, birdwatching (>¼ mile from home), and recreational kayaking showing the fastest rates of growth (more than 5%) over the 5-year period.

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Table 2.13: Nationwide 5-Year History of Selected Sports Participation

Sport/Fitness Activity	Category	Participants (in Thousands)						5-Year Average Annual Growth
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Adventure Racing	Individual Sports	2,529	2,215	2,143	1,966	1,826	1,714	-7.4%
Aquatic Exercise	Aerobic Activities	10,459	10,518	11,189	10,954	10,400	10,676	0.5%
Archery	Individual Sports	7,769	7,654	7,449	7,249	7,342	7,428	-0.9%
Badminton	Racquet Sports	6,430	6,337	6,095	5,862	6,061	6,490	0.3%
Baseball	Team Sports	15,642	15,877	15,804	15,731	15,587	15,478	-0.2%
Basketball	Team Sports	23,401	24,225	24,917	27,753	27,135	28,149	3.9%
Bicycling (BMX)	Outdoor Sports	3,413	3,439	3,648	3,880	3,861	4,181	4.2%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	Outdoor Sports	8,609	8,690	8,622	8,998	8,963	8,916	0.7%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	Outdoor Sports	38,866	39,041	39,388	44,471	42,775	43,554	2.5%
Birdwatching (>¼ Mile from Home)	Outdoor Sports	12,296	12,344	12,817	15,228	14,815	15,818	5.4%
Cardio Tennis	Racquet Sports	2,223	2,499	2,501	2,503	2,608	2,812	4.9%
Cheerleading	Team Sports	3,816	3,841	3,752	3,308	3,465	3,507	-1.5%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	Aerobic Activities	32,283	33,238	33,056	27,920	27,618	27,051	-3.3%
Fishing (Fly)	Outdoor Sports	6,791	6,939	7,014	7,753	7,458	7,631	2.5%
Fishing (Freshwater)	Outdoor Sports	38,346	38,998	39,185	42,556	40,853	41,821	1.8%
Football (Flag)	Team Sports	6,551	6,572	6,783	7,001	6,889	7,104	1.7%
Football (Tackle)	Team Sports	5,224	5,157	5,107	5,054	5,228	5,436	0.8%
Free Weights (Hand Weights)	Strength	52,217	51,291	51,450	53,256	52,636	53,140	0.4%
Golf	Individual Sports	23,829	24,240	24,271	24,804	25,111	25,566	1.4%
Gymnastics	Team Sports	4,805	4,770	4,699	3,848	4,268	4,569	-0.5%
High Impact/Intensity & Training	Aerobic Activities	21,476	21,611	22,044	22,487	21,973	21,821	0.3%
Hiking (Day)	Outdoor Sports	44,900	47,860	49,697	57,808	58,697	59,578	6.0%
Ice Hockey	Team Sports	2,544	2,447	2,357	2,270	2,306	2,278	-2.2%
Ice Skating	Individual Sports	9,998	9,721	9,460	9,857	9,481	10,086	0.3%
Kayaking (Recreational)	Water Sports	10,533	11,017	11,382	13,002	13,351	13,561	5.3%
Kayaking (White Water)	Water Sports	2,500	2,562	2,583	2,605	2,623	2,726	1.8%
Lacrosse	Team Sports	2,171	2,098	2,115	1,884	1,892	1,875	-2.8%
Martial Arts	Individual Sports	5,838	5,821	6,068	6,064	6,186	6,355	1.7%
Mixed Martial Arts for Fitness	Individual Sports	2,376	2,365	2,405	2,445	2,339	2,524	1.3%
Pickleball	Racquet Sports	3,132	3,301	3,460	4,199	4,819	8,949	26.4%
Pilates Training	Conditioning	9,047	9,084	9,243	9,905	9,745	10,311	2.7%
Racquetball	Racquet Sports	3,526	3,480	3,453	3,426	3,260	3,521	0.1%
Roller Hockey	Team Sports	1,834	1,734	1,616	1,500	1,425	1,368	-5.7%
Rugby	Team Sports	1,621	1,560	1,392	1,242	1,238	1,166	-6.3%
Running/Jogging	Aerobic Activities	50,770	49,459	50,052	50,652	48,977	47,816	-1.2%
Scuba Diving	Water Sports	2,874	2,849	2,715	2,588	2,476	2,658	-1.5%
Skateboarding	Individual Sports	6,382	6,500	6,610	8,872	8,747	9,019	7.9%
Soccer (Outdoor)	Team Sports	11,924	11,405	11,913	12,444	12,556	13,018	1.8%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	Team Sports	2,309	2,303	2,242	1,811	2,088	2,146	-0.8%
Softball (Slow-Pitch)	Team Sports	7,283	7,386	7,071	6,349	6,008	6,036	-3.6%
Stand Up Paddling	Water Sports	3,325	3,453	3,562	3,675	3,739	3,777	2.6%
Stationary Cycling	Aerobic Activities	36,035	36,668	37,085	31,287	32,453	32,102	-2.0%
Swimming for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	27,135	27,575	28,219	25,666	25,620	26,272	-0.5%
Swimming on a Team	Team Sports	3,007	3,045	2,822	2,615	2,824	2,904	-0.5%
Table Tennis	Racquet Sports	16,041	15,592	14,908	16,854	15,390	15,824	0.0%
Tai Chi	Conditioning	3,787	3,761	3,793	3,300	3,393	3,394	-2.0%
Tennis	Racquet Sports	17,683	17,841	17,684	21,642	22,617	23,595	6.2%
Track and Field	Team Sports	3,126	2,710	2,290	2,325	3,587	3,690	-2.0%
Trail Running	Individual Sports	9,149	10,010	10,997	11,854	12,520	13,253	7.7%
Treadmill	Aerobic Activities	52,966	53,737	56,823	49,832	53,627	53,589	0.5%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	Individual Sports	2,162	2,168	2,001	1,846	1,748	1,780	-3.7%
Ultimate Frisbee	Team Sports	3,126	2,710	2,290	2,325	2,190	2,142	-7.1%
Volleyball (Beach/Sand)	Team Sports	4,947	4,770	4,400	4,320	4,184	4,128	-3.5%
Volleyball (Court)	Team Sports	6,317	6,317	6,487	5,410	5,849	6,092	-0.3%
Walking for Fitness	Aerobic Activities	110,805	111,001	111,439	114,044	115,814	114,759	0.7%
Weight/Resistance Machines	Strength	36,291	36,372	36,181	30,651	30,577	30,010	-3.5%
Yoga	Conditioning	27,354	28,745	30,456	32,808	34,347	33,636	4.3%

Legend

- >3% Increase
- 1-3% Increase
- Minimal Change
- 1-3% Decrease
- >3% Decrease

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Walking for fitness (over 100 million participants), day hiking, treadmill, free weights (hand weights), and running/jogging have the largest number of participants. With many of the top activities potentially utilizing trails, it is no surprise these facilities are in such high demand. Collingswood residents are not unusual in expressing their strong interest in trail-based activities as indicated through previous planning efforts and this plan (see Chapter 3).

COVID related impacts are apparent in these participation rates. **Many outdoor activities, such as skateboarding, tennis, pickleball, birdwatching, and hiking, grew substantially from 2019 to 2020 and have maintained or increased usage levels since.** Conversely, some indoor activities, such as stationary cycling, weight/resistance machines and elliptical motion trainer, declined in 2020 and never recovered.

2.7.2 Aging Communities

Throughout the United States and in Collingswood, the median age of the population is increasing along with the number of persons 65 years and older. Census data indicates that the percentage of the Collingswood population age 65 and older was 15% in 2000 but is expected to increase to reach just over 20% by 2027.

Senior centers are shifting from a focus on activities like card games to more active programming such as fitness activities and outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and nature programs.

While the aging population should inspire parks and recreation agencies to invest more in activities, programs, and facilities for older users such as walking trails, fishing areas, community gardens, and cultural and nature education programs, many of these more involved and nature-oriented activities are appealing to all generations.

Active Seniors in Parks

The existing senior center in Collingswood currently offers a myriad of activities and programming opportunities for seniors. The two community gardens, although not specifically for seniors, also provide recreation opportunity for this population. The growth of this population will continue to increase demand for these activities, which is also supported by the input gathered for this plan. Many residents through the survey and open house expressed a desire for more senior activities.

2.7.3 Universal Access

Many park systems are developing unique facilities designed to go well beyond the minimum requirement for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Park system administrators are uniquely positioned to set the best example for inclusivity – by creating an environment that is totally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities, parks and recreation agencies are changing the landscape not just physically but also culturally and in terms of mental health.

ADA accessible playground at Delran Community Park, Delran Township, NJ

Universal access extends beyond the physical to include interpretive signage, buildings, and all programs. **Providing barrier-free parks should become an essential part of the process for any park improvement.** Most equipment providers have available options for individual features, but it is necessary to take a wholistic approach to the design process to guarantee fully inclusive experiences.

Universal Design is defined as the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.[3] These principles, developed by Ronald Mace, FAIA, and promoted by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, were originally intended to guide design of housing, public and commercial facilities, and related products. Architects, landscape architects, and engineers often utilize these principles of designing parks and recreation facilities.

1. **Equitable Use** - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Flexibility in Use** - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and Intuitive** - Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.
4. **Perceptible Information** - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. **Tolerance for Error** - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort** - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with minimum fatigue.

[3] The Principles of Universal Design. 1997. NC State University, The Center for Universal Design

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7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use** - Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

More recently, the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University, in collaboration with PlayCore, adapted the principles of Universal Design to form a set of guidelines for designing outdoor play environments for children.[4] These 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design are intended to guide communities in creating "universally designed play environments that are usable by more people, to the greatest extent possible, and therefore better serve a diverse community through outdoor play destinations where everyone is welcomed as a valued participant." Among other additions, the 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design supports inclusion of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions by providing opportunities for physical, sensory, communicative, social-emotional, and cognitive states of play.

The department has a great opportunity to prioritize accessibility and universal access for the benefit of the community, especially with many aging facilities that will need improvement or replacement over the next ten years. Many existing amenities are not at the universal access standard needed for a fully engaging and participatory experience. At multiple recreation areas, accessible sidewalks and connections from existing ADA parking spaces are unavailable or incomplete. These situations could be remedied as part of parking lot resurfacing which is needed across the system.

Some simple examples of physical treatments that go beyond the basic ADA requirements:

- Textured edging on trails help to make the facilities more accessible for the visually impaired;
- Fragrant plants, sensory gardens, and interactive displays provide a more hands-on approach to education and engagement;

Table 2.14: Universal Design to Inclusive Playground Design

Universal Design	Inclusive Playground Design
Equitable Use The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.	**Be Fair** ▪ Address the needs of the whole child. ▪ Encourage multigenerational play. ▪ Program the space for inclusion.
Flexibility in Use The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.	**Be Included** ▪ Offer various types and forms of play. ▪ Ensure variety and graduated levels of challenge. ▪ Provide choices.
Simple and Intuitive Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.	**Be Smart** ▪ Provide behavioral cues. ▪ Support intuitive play patterns. ▪ Define play settings.
Perceptible Information The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.	**Be Independent** ▪ Promote diversity, acceptance, and mutual respect. ▪ Provide accessible surfacing and routes of travel. ▪ Offer sensory rich experiences. ▪ Encourage independent play.
Tolerance for Error The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.	**Be Safe** ▪ Apply safety standards and address. potential hazards. ▪ Integrate emotional well-being. ▪ Accommodate for comfortable supervision.
Low Physical Effort The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with minimum fatigue.	**Be Active** ▪ Accommodate children's diverse physical needs. ▪ Integrate equitable alternatives. ▪ Encourage cooperation and socialization.
Size and Space for Approach and Use Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.	**Be Comfortable** ▪ Address approach and reach ranges. ▪ Provide adequate space for movement and gathering. ▪ Offer a balance of environmental conditions. ▪ Plan for amenities.

[4] 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design. 2016. PlayCore & Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University

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- Therapeutic textures, ground-level features, and mobility-enhancing elements like ramps or bridges in playground equipment ensures all children – including those who are differently-abled – have space to play.

2.7.4 Pickleball

Pickleball is a sport played on a badminton-sized court with the net set to a height of 34 inches at the center. It is played with a perforated plastic ball and composite or wooden paddles about twice the size of ping-pong paddles. It can be played one-on-one or two-on-two. From 2021 to 2022, Pickleball grew by 86% in the US, according to the 2022 Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) report (Table 2.15).

While growth of the sport began with seniors, popularity is growing with all ages. Those under age 24 were the fastest growing cohort from 2020 to 2021 at 21%. Growth for ages 55 and under was 10%. Core players (play 8 times or more a year) are more likely to be older, while casual players (1-7 times per year) are more likely to be younger.[5]

Photo: USA Pickleball Association

Pickleball Tournament

Public engagement indicated support for pickleball in Collingswood. The borough does not currently offer pickleball courts but does offer seven tennis courts at the Middle/High School. A partnership with the schools to add pickleball lines to the courts could be a great way to start to address the need in the community in the short-term prior to adding any permanent courts elsewhere.

2.7.5 Technology

The use of technology is becoming increasingly common in parks and recreation. Many park users want to remain connected while visiting parks and expect instant access to information about facilities and programs at those parks. They also want to be able to register for the events and programs they discover on their mobile device. While there may sometimes be concerns about distraction, especially in nature-oriented spaces, technology – when applied intentionally – can be a tool to enhance park experience.

Considering the extent to which technology is part of many user experiences across sectors, it is likely going to be an element necessary to keep people – especially youth – engaged.

Potential applications of technology in parks:

- **Wi-Fi hotspots** – to record the number of connections or searches to create a picture of visitation trends[6]
- **Beacon counters** – to detect cellphone signals to help determine the number of users in an area[7]
- **Device-charging areas**
- **QR codes** – to promote and inform
- **Trail counters** – to detect & record types of users

Photo credit: mycountyparks.org, Denison, IA

Smart Trail Signage, Denison, IA

All social media for Recreation is handled through the borough's official pages. The department does not currently have a social media presence of its own. Creating dedicated accounts on social media platforms would allow the department to make varied posts (e.g., video content, informational flyers, community polls, etc.), which could be helpful for attracting followers and expanding impact. These posts would, in turn, provide the department with additional means of gathering information on park conditions, plant health, visitation levels, and more.

Even without a dedicated Recreation social media presence, expanding the borough's online presence to include a more active presence on other platforms such as Instagram and X would improve Recreation's reach to all members of the community as not everyone uses Facebook where the borough has about 18,000 followers (more than the borough population). Particularly, the younger and more diverse generations utilize Instagram and X over Facebook. According to Pew Research Center, about 70% of Americans ages 18 to 29 report using Instagram.[8]

Sharing posts by partner organizations would also help promote awareness in Collingswood. Additionally, the

[5] USA Pickleball Association. Pickleball fact sheet. USA Pickleball, https://www.usapickleball.org/docs/USA-Pickleball-Fact-Sheet-2023.pdf

[6] National Recreation and Park Association, "Parks Using Technology to Engage and Inspire," https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/may/parks-using-technology-to-engage-and-inspire/. (May 1, 2017)

[7] Dolesh, R. J. (2019, January). Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2019. Parks & Recreation.

[8] Schaeffer, K. (2021, October 7). 7 facts about Americans and Instagram. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/10/07/7-facts-about-americans-and-instagram/

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borough could extend its effort to provide public Wi-Fi into heavily used areas of parks, improving user experiences while also potentially providing information about park and program visitation.

2.7.6 Nature Interaction, Education, and Programming

Geocaching

Photo credit: NRPA

Geocaching

Geocaching is a technology-based activity that has been growing in popularity since the early 2000s, when GPS technology improved significantly. Participants travel to local parks and open spaces to hunt for objects previously hidden by others using a set of coordinates and a digital GPS device (typically on a smart phone). Once found, participants generally exchange the now-discovered item for a new item, guaranteeing future use of the same geocache. The search can have varying levels of complexity – one cache leads to another, or a puzzle must be completed.[9]

Geocaches are already present at various locations in Camden County, with one previously placed at Knight Park (now archived due to its location being moved). This cache was part of a series of caches meant to bring awareness to historical locations within the county. Reactivating geocaches in Knight Park would provide residents additional opportunities to recreate and more reasons to get outside and visit Collingswood's parks.

Environmental Education

There is a need for expanded environmental education and parks and recreation agencies have a considerable role to play. Environmental education centers throughout the country are having great success as communities are seeking out better access to engage with and learn from their natural environment. Potential subjects include natural processes, resource management, and wildlife habitats. Partnering with Camden County to explore other recreational areas nearby but not part of Collingswood parks system such as, Newton Lake Park and Cooper River Park could provide a setting for environmental education.

Not only does this outreach promote and encourage greater use and appreciation of local parks in the community, but it also creates opportunity for collaboration between organizations, institutions, and advocacy groups and it helps instill a lasting connection to the natural world.

Birdwatching (or Birding)

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nearly 545 million Americans participate in birdwatching (as of 2016) or about 13% of the population. The most common form of birding is watching birds near one's home; however, 35% of birders, or 16 million people, participate in birding away from the home. Participants in birdwatching tend to be older and more highly educated than the general population.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report also includes an analysis of the economic impact of birdwatching activities. Birdwatchers direct substantial amounts of dollars into the economy because of trip-related ($14.9 million) and equipment expenditures ($26 million). The report finds that the birding industry, including indirect effects resulting from the multiplier effect, generates about $96 billion annually throughout the United States and supports 782,000 jobs. These expenditures lead to an additional $16 million in local, state, and federal tax revenue.[10]

Photo credit: New Jersey Audubon

The New Jersey Audubon promotes awareness and understanding of birds and other wildlife in their natural habitats in and around the area. **In the engagement for this Master Plan, a recurring need emerged for additional opportunities to connect and interact with nature.** Collingswood should consider expanding the relationship with the New Jersey Audubon and others for collaborating to provide expanded birding opportunities.

Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Many communities utilize parks as examples of best management practices (BMPs) to serve as models for minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing the sustainability of both park sites and operations. Parks and recreation departments are in great positions to lead in the implementation of these practices because they are typically among the largest landowners (if not the largest) in their jurisdictions. To assist in the implementation of these practices, some park departments establish manuals detailing the BMPs which are generally divided into categories.[11] Some potential categories include (with examples):

[9] National Recreation and Park Association, "How to Leverage Geocaching to Promote Park and Recreation Events," https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/october/how-to-leverage-geocaching-to-promote-park-and-recreation-events/. (October 5, 2017)

[10] Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2019.

[11] Environmental Best Management Practices Manual. Borough of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation. 2011.

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1. Site Selection – which properties to acquire and protect
2. Design – strategies for management of stormwater, water quality, riparian/wetland buffers; use of vegetation; choice of building materials
3. Construction – controlling of pollutants, soil restoration, recycling of construction materials
4. Operation and Maintenance – practices for water conservation, use of organics, weed control, composting, energy use, etc.
5. Programs and Special Events – consider carrying capacity of facility, provide recycling receptacles

Although Collingswood is built out and land is not currently available to add to the park system, any improvements made to the existing sites should follow best management practices and have the potential to incorporate specific improvements that can double as educational opportunities. Even small details such as adding stormwater swales to mitigate runoff from parking areas with proper landscaping along with signage could be considered a BMP. **The borough has additional opportunities to encourage best management practices within existing parks and future park developments and to use them to educate the public and serve as an example for others.**

Nature Play Areas

Many parks and recreation agencies are placing increased emphasis on the availability of nature play areas and programming for children. The Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) recently released a document titled *Nature Play & Learning Places*, which provides a series of national guidelines for the creation of places for children to interact with nature.

Natural play structure (Silver Falls State Park – Oregon)

The guidelines are meant to support communities in providing opportunities for children to learn about their natural environment and to develop healthy active habits. The guidelines also encourage incorporating natural materials like plants, stones, water, fallen trees, etc. to augment sensory experience and facilitate tactile play. According to the guidelines, a nature play or learning place is:

"A designated, managed area in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms, and habitats, through sensory, fine motor and gross motor experiences."[12]

The following are examples of nature play features:

- Natural Play Structures
- Multipurpose Lawns
- Meadows and Woodlands
- Vegetable Gardens
- Natural Aquatics
- Gathering and Performance Structures

Given its size and natural features, Knight Park presents an opportunity to incorporate some of these natural play structures and host environmental educational opportunities.

2.7.7 Trails and Connectivity

Demand for trails, trail linkages, and pathways that connect parks, open spaces, and other destination sites (like downtown districts) has been growing all over the U.S., including in Collingswood. Where surveys have been conducted there is a high level of demand for connectivity. Communities with existing and extensive trail systems express pride and continued desire to build trails between neighborhoods and develop pathways to schools, shopping areas, other community attractions, and neighborhoods. Livable communities where residents report a high quality of life generally have robust trail systems and reliable connectivity that support active, engaged lifestyles.

Trail at Cooper River Park

The expressed need for trails – both for recreational use and for transportation – was conveyed clearly through the public input process. Trails are available along both the northern and southern edges of the borough at county parks, but no trails are currently available to connect users to these trails or within borough parks.

From a departmental perspective, Collingswood can help connect residents to the existing trail network by including thoughtful trail development within Knight Park. Additionally support amenities to trails can also be installed at parks such as bike racks and bike repair stations. With

[12] Moore, R. (2014). Nature Play & Learning Places. Creating and managing places where children engage with nature. Raleigh, NC: Natural Learning Initiative and Reston, VA: National Wildlife Federation. Version 1.6. (pages vii, 5, 7-8, 51, 65, 71-83).

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considerable demand and support, the Borough can aid in the trail connectivity effort for the Borough.

2.7.8 Creative Placemaking

The Trust for Public Land – a nonprofit organization with a mission to bring high-quality parks within a 10-minute walk of every person in the U.S. – is a leading champion of creative placemaking as a strategy for affecting change. Creative placemaking is cooperative, community-based process using arts and cultural expression to create or rejuvenate parks and open spaces, thus deepening a sense of place and inspiring community pride.[13]

Parks and recreation agencies around the nation offer community connection in physical and social forms; creative-placemaking is just another tool for ensuring successful parks that equitably reflect the people who use them. Many agencies partner with local entities (like other government departments, nonprofits, schools, places of worship, art institutions, and other groups) to put in place opportunities for resident-led installations, programs, and events.

Credit: Madisonville Creative Placemaking Butler Studio

Creative Placemaking in the Madisonville Neighborhood of Cincinnati (2015)

Creative-placemaking can take countless forms. It may look like an outdoor sculpture walk at the center of the neighborhood park featuring resident and local artists' work. It might be an annual arts performance downtown that showcases immigrant and refugee cultures in the community. It can also be as low-profile as a pollinator garden including interpretive signage about the plants chosen and why. Whatever it may look like, it is essential that the community be inclusively integrated into every phase: ideation, selection (of artist(s), piece(s), feature(s), etc.), installation, activation, and long-term care.

When parks and recreation agencies prioritize local traditions, cultural identities, and native resources, making sure these are reflected in program and facility offerings, community members will be more likely to participate and do their part to sustain the system. A reciprocal relationship forms, where community engages with parks and recreation to the extent that parks and recreation agencies seek to provide place-based resources.

Collingswood could include creative placemaking into any future park improvement by incorporating it into the planning process. It provides an opportunity to make every park unique and to build and connect community around these parks. With clear expectations, fair compensation, and meaningful engagement, the arts community in Collingswood has the power to enliven the borough's parks and community spaces.

2.7.9 Drones

Since the late 2000s, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has increased tremendously. Used for both military and civilian purposes, these devices are having a considerable impact on parks and recreation agencies nationwide. A contentious activity, tensions exist around safety, privacy, and environmental impact, as well as applications (professional and recreational) like habitat and wildlife monitoring, photography, and map-making.

Popularity of drones is only growing, but regulations at the federal, state, and local levels have been slow to prevent, mitigate, or manage negative impacts. Many cities have enacted no-fly zones and other restrictions which means UAV-users – licensed or not – have limited available spaces. This then has led drone pilots to look to parks and public open space for flying opportunities.

Requiring permits (day or seasonal) and designating fly areas with set times for flying are tactics agencies are using. These measures help legitimize UAV use and maintain safe park spaces; permitting is also a potential revenue opportunity. Since drone use is only increasing, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) offers useful insight into the future of drone-use in parks:

Photo: NRPA 2018

"Park agencies will face increasing public pressure to look at allowing hobbyist flights and commercial-use drones in parks… By creating stronger guidelines and policies about how to fly drones in parks instead of adopting blanket restrictions, parks can give people an outlet and place to fly recreationally. New programming and events can be planned around drones, bringing in visitors and related businesses that benefit the parks…Keep it focused on safety and respect for all parties. Acceptance will protect the public and park resources and enable an exciting new form of recreation to take place."[14]

Collingswood does not currently have a designated space

[13] Trust for Public Land, Field Guide for Creative Placemaking. https://www.tpl.org/resource/field-guide-creative-placemaking-and-parks

[14] Wootton, Courtney; Bradley, Michael J.; Ray Neal NRPA. Drones in Parks: It's All About Perspective. https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/december/drones-in-parks-its-all-about-perspective/

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for flying drones. However, given their popularity and open sports fields, the borough may need to implement clear rules and regulations.

2.8 Key Findings from the Evaluate Phase

Collingswood has:

- A population that is seeing limited growth but is aging and diversifying
- A small number of parks borough owned
- A variety of parks, facilities, and programs with some notable gaps
- A high level of walkability with opportunities to improve
- Established partnerships with local organizations with potential for growth
- Some aging facilities
- ADA deficiencies
- Cost recovery that is above the benchmarks
- Lower expenditures per capita
- Opportunities to incorporate up and coming trends in parks and recreation to keep the department relevant

Data in this chapter describes a growing, aging, and diversifying population in the Borough of Collingswood. These changes in population composition have and will likely continue to alter the parks and recreation needs of the community. Additionally, the borough generally compares favorably to the benchmarks, but there are opportunities to improve services, and the benchmarks are also facing needs to change.

The inventory and the mapping analysis reveal that most of the borough has access to some parks and recreation facilities. **This analysis paired with the public input derived from this plan will help guide the recommendations of both what and where to add facilities and programs in the future.**

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3

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the processes used and the public input gathered throughout the planning process and summarizes the following elements:

1. Open House Workshops
2. Stakeholder Conversations
3. Surveys – Web/Handout Survey & Random Sample Mail Survey
4. Attendance at Events

The public engagement process is essential for identifying the needs and preferences of Collingswood's residents. The findings of the public input process are, therefore, integral to the vision for the future and serve as the foundation of the recommendations of this Master Plan.

3.2 Open House Workshops

The borough held an open house workshop on April 20, 2023 at the Collingswood Community Center to solicit feedback from the community regarding the present and future of the Recreation Department and parks in Collingswood. Dot boards were also utilized at GreenFest in April 2023. In addition, the planning team hosted dedicated event in May 2023 with open houses for seniors and with JEVS Independence Network.

The meeting allowed participants to visit a series of stations to provide their input and learn more about the Master Plan. The primary input stations were arranged around the room and provided opportunities for input on three general topics. At each of these stations, participants were asked to share their responses to two questions: "What makes them great now?" and "What would make them better?"

The three input topics were as follows:

- Parks and Facilities
- Programs and Events
- Trails and Natural Areas

The final stations provided activities, including dollar allocation and dot voting (see section 3.3). The summaries of comments in the ensuing text reflect the top noted items. The full text of comments can be found in Appendix B.

Parks and Facilities

This station encouraged discussion of recreation facilities. Most comments were related to athletic field conditions and pickleball court availability.

What makes them great now? – 86 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

- Roberts Pool (15)
- Knight Park location (9)
- Natural spaces (9)
- Community volunteers (7)
- Open green space (7)
- Great staff and underappreciated (7)
- Space for watching summer movies (6)

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What would make them better? – 286 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

- Pickleball courts (30)
- Artificial turf fields with lights (20)
- Upgrade HS/MS fields (16)
- Lighting for evening activities (16)
- Improve/regrade grass in Knight Park (12)
- Organized sports on Sundays (9)
- More indoor basketball access (7)
- Off-leash dog park (6)
- Food truck night at Roberts Pool (6)
- Public access to school playgrounds (6)
- Murals in blighted areas (5)
- Extend library hours to 9 pm (5)
- Open on Sunday (5)

Programs and Events

This topic provided a location for comments about programs, including sports, special events, and more. Overall, attendees desired more funding and dedicated space for Odyssey of the Mind, additional youth sport programs/updated sports fields, and more teen programs. Attendees would also like to see additional concerts, performances, and older adult programming.

What makes them great now? – 145 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

- Farmers market (13)
- Green festival (8)
- Bike share (7)
- Arts and crafts festivals (7)
- Affordable kids' activities, classes and camps, free teams (6)
- Sensory friendly programs (6)
- Disability/neurodivergent advocacy groups (6)
- Coaches in youth sports/HS (6)
- Volunteers and coaches (6)
- Outdoor movies (6)
- Archery (6)

What would make them better? – 282 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

- Dedicated space for Odyssey of the Mind program (20)
- Better fields for youth sports (11)
- More funding for Odyssey of the Mind (11)
- More teen programs (9)
- More concerts and art performances (7)
- Active programs for older adults (7)
- Boat rental for public (7)
- Group fitness at Roberts Pool (e.g., aqua-Zumba, aerobics) (6)
- More outdoor movies (6)
- Extend bike share hours (6)
- Crew/rowing (6)
- Adult rec and social programs (6)
- More camp and class options for all ages (especially K-8) (5)
- Recreation lacrosse K-6 (5)

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Trails and Natural Areas

This topic represented built amenities and general recommendations for parks. The largest number of comments pertained to the maintenance of parks and the need for new facilities.

What makes them great now? – 66 comments and check marks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

- Knight Park (14)
- Love being next to two beautiful waterbodies (7)
- Loop around Cooper River Lake (9)

What would make them better? – 139 comments and checkmarks/likes (# in parentheses), top items only

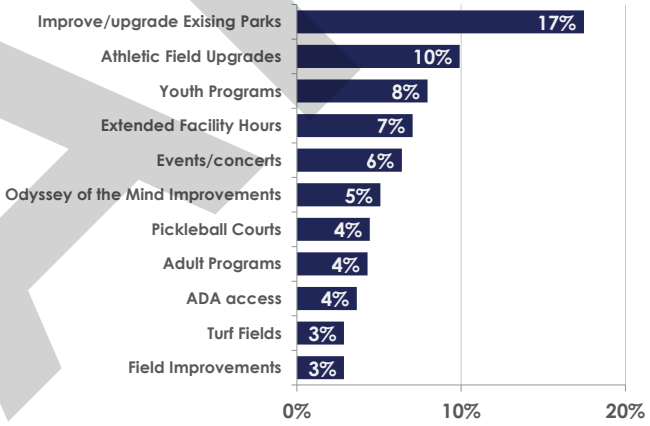
- Maintain old trees (20)
- Bike lanes to parks and trails (10)
- Preserve natural spaces for habitat (8)
- Improved drainage (8)
- Replacement of Cattell Garden (8)
- Wider and better pavement (7)
- More trash cans, park clean-up/litter removal (7)
- ADA sidewalks throughout Collingswood (6)
- Dog park (6)
- Food trucks in Knight Park (6)
- Trail maps (6)

Overall Open House Comment Summary

The chart below (Figure 3.1) provides a summary of the comments to the question, "What would make them better?" at all stations. Each of the over 700 comments (and checkmarks/likes) were placed into one or more categories to show what improvements attendees of the meetings desired to see in the future. The list includes both general and specific items, so many comments qualified for multiple categories.

Additionally, some comments discussed more than one topic and were categorized accordingly. The chart presents the results as a percentage of overall comments. The results indicate that attendees would like upgrades to existing parks, more programs, and extended hours.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Open House Comments (top topics)



3.3 Preferences Boards and Dollar Voting

3.3.1 Preference Boards

Attendees of the open house workshops and GreenFest were given three red dots and three green dots to place on boards indicating their preferences for park features and programs. The boards provided a list of 16 park amenities and programs with pictures. These activities asked participants to choose the features and programs most important to them and their households. Children were also invited to participate. Nearly 400 community members participated in each of these activities. The results of the selections are presented in Figures 3.2 and 3.3.

On the features board (Figure 3.2), trails and natural areas received the largest number of dots (124 or 10%), followed by athletic fields (9%) and game courts, restrooms, and playgrounds (8% each). The provided features were intended to be general, so features were combined into categories whenever possible. On the programs board (Figure 3.3), youth sports received the largest number of

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dots (or 13%), followed by nature programs and youth sports (12%), movies/music concerts (10%), and cultural & performing arts (8%).

Figure 3.2: Feature Preference Boards

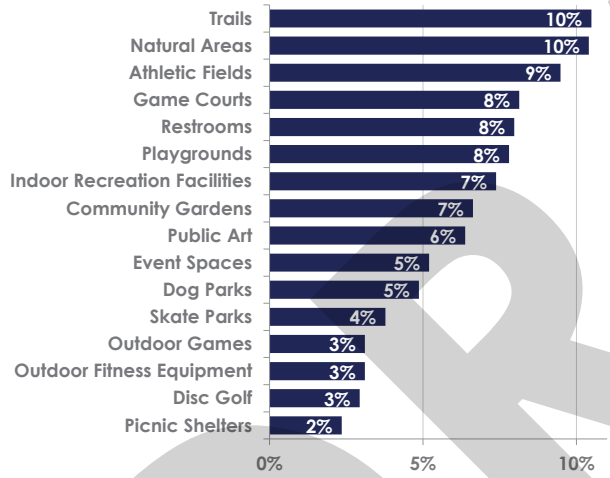
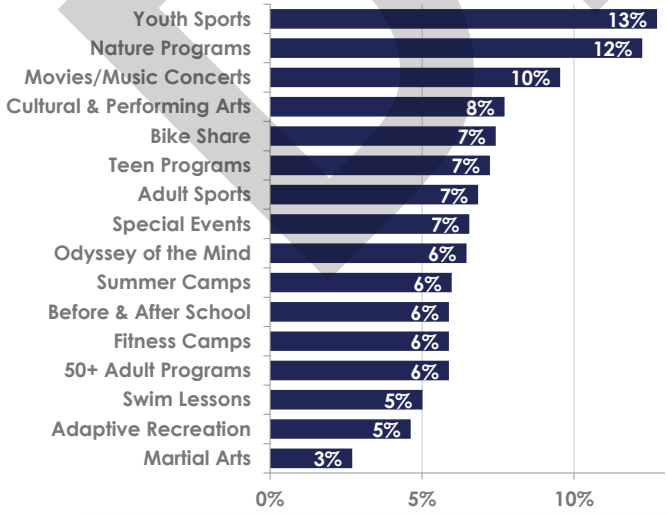


Figure 3.3: Program Preference Boards



3.3.2 Dollar Voting

Participants at the open house workshops were given $1,000 in play money to place into boxes to indicate how they would like Collingswood to allocate funds for recreation facilities and parks/open space. Table 3.1 shows the total allocations for each of eight categories (or boxes). Participants could also place money into a box marked "other" to request specific amenities or improvements not included in one of the provided categories.

Of the provided options *build/upgrade school athletic field* received the largest allocation at $36,200 or 24% of total dollars. *Upgrade Knight Park* was second followed by *developing new indoor recreation facilities*. "Other" comments are provided in Appendix B.

Table 3.1: Dollar Voting Allocation

Action (Box Title)	Total
Build/ Upgrade School Athletic Fields	**$36,200** *24%*
Upgrade Knight Park	**$27,000** *18%*
Develop New Indoor Recreation Facilities	**$16,400** *11%*
Expand Program Offerings	**$14,000** *9%*
Build New Walking & Biking Trails	**$13,300** *9%*
Acquire Buildings for Current Programs	**$11,300** *7%*
Develop New Pocket Parks	**$9,300** *6%*
Improve Existing Indoor Facilities	**$7,700** *5%*
Other	**$18,000** *12%*
Total	**$153,200**

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3.4 Stakeholder Conversations

In April 2023, the consultant met with a series of stakeholders to determine their priorities for parks and recreation in Collingswood. More than 15 stakeholder groups participated in these discussions, contributing their respective visions to this Master Plan. At these meetings, stakeholders were asked a series of questions about Collingswood parks, recreation facilities, and programs that included discussions of strengths as well as future opportunities. Summaries of the meetings with complete comments are included in Appendix C.

3.4.1 Groups Engaged

The following stakeholder group meetings were held as part of this Master Plan:

- Borough representatives
- Little League
- Sports camps
- Basketball
- Field hockey
- Softball
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Youth theater
- Bike Share
- High school sports
- School Employees and BOE reps
- Knight Park Board of Trustees
- Arts and high school baseball
- Arts program
- Travel and recreation basketball
- Travel and recreation soccer

3.4.2 Stakeholder Broad Recommendations

Facility Needs

- More playgrounds (e.g., Roberts Pool playground for public use, school properties).
- Knight Park upgrades
  - Athletic field upgrades – lighting, turf, grading, dugouts, batting cages
  - Improved ADA accessibility
  - Pavement improvements
  - Improved maintenance
- Indoor recreation space – teen space, indoor pool, sports training facilities

Programming/operational needs

- Improved partnerships
  - Senior programs
  - Nature programming at county parks
- Additional space for Odyssey of the Mind – space ideal for camps, tool/equipment storage
- More adult programming – fitness/wellness
- Improved athletic field reservation systems

3.5 Public Opinion Surveys

The following pages summarize the findings of the online and the random sample survey. Because the Mail Survey results were collected using a representative random sample, they are intended to represent the residents of Collingswood as a whole, both users and non-users. On the other hand, the Web Survey results reflect the views of the respondents, not necessarily Collingswood residents as a whole; Web Survey respondents are often already engaged in some way with the borough's parks and programs.

The figures in this section display side-by-side the results from both surveys (where available). Some figures show only the top results for a survey question; however, full results can be found in Appendices C and D.

3.5.1 Representative Statistically Valid Random Sample Survey – Overview and Methodology

ETC Institute conducted a Collingswood Parks Community Survey (Mail Survey) during the Summer of 2023 to help establish priorities for the future development of recreation programs and facilities and parks/open space in Collingswood. This statistically valid (random sample) Mail Survey was designed to obtain representative results from households throughout the borough.

The Brandstetter Carroll Inc. project team worked with Collingswood Recreation representatives to develop the survey questionnaire. Tailored to issues of strategic local importance, the survey was mailed to a random sample of households throughout Collingswood. Households were also provided with a web address for completing the survey online.

ETC Institute had a goal of 300 survey responses for representative results and met this goal with a total of 321 surveys. Based on this random sample, the overall results have a precision of at least +/- 5.4% at the 95% level of confidence. The full report is available in Appendix C.

3.5.2 Web Survey – Overview and Methodology

In addition to the random sample survey conducted by ETC Institute, a web and handout survey (Web Survey) was administered by BCI from the beginning of project through fall 2023. The questions in this Web Survey were similar to the Mail Survey with the overall length reduced. This version was powered by Survey Monkey with a total of 840 surveys completed. The full survey report can be found in Appendix D.

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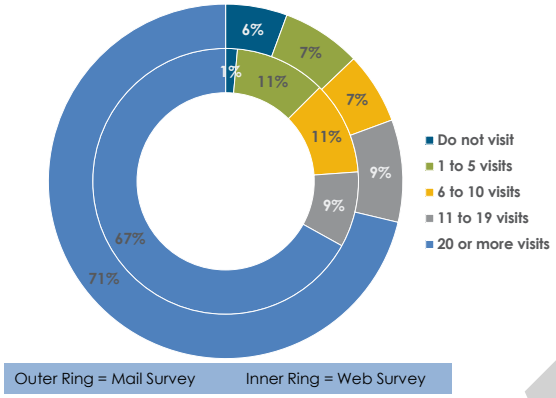
3.5.3 Frequency of Visits to Parks & Recreation Facilities in Collingswood

According to the Mail Survey, 94% of Collingswood households visited a park or recreation facility in the past year (Figure 3.4), and **71% of households visited 20 or more times**. Web Survey respondents reported visiting at similar rates (67% for 20 or more times).

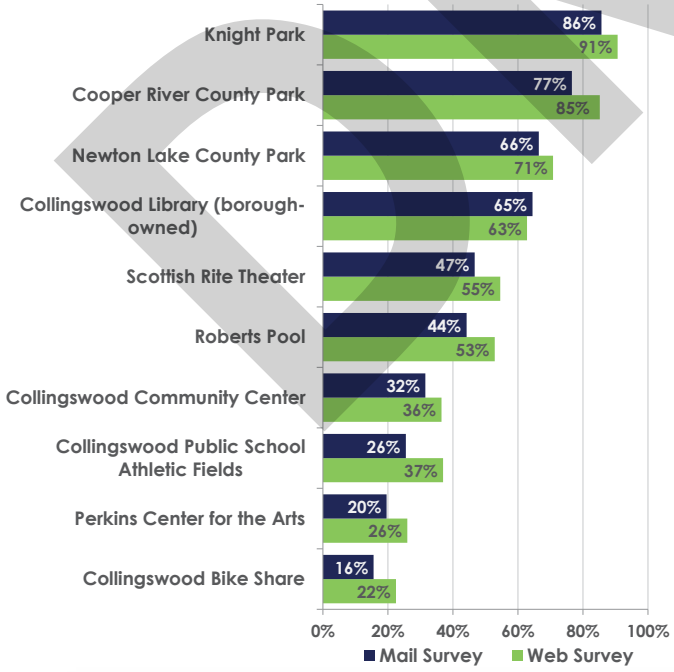
Figure 3.4: Frequency of Visitation



3.5.4 Recreation Facilities and Parks Visited (Mail Survey Only)

Figure 3.5 shows the rate of visitation to parks and facilities in Collingswood over the past year. Knight Park was the most visited park, offering a wide variety of amenities and settings for recreation programs. Cooper River County Park came in second, followed by Newton Lake County Park. Overall, Web Survey respondents tended to visit facilities more than respondents to the representative Mail Survey.

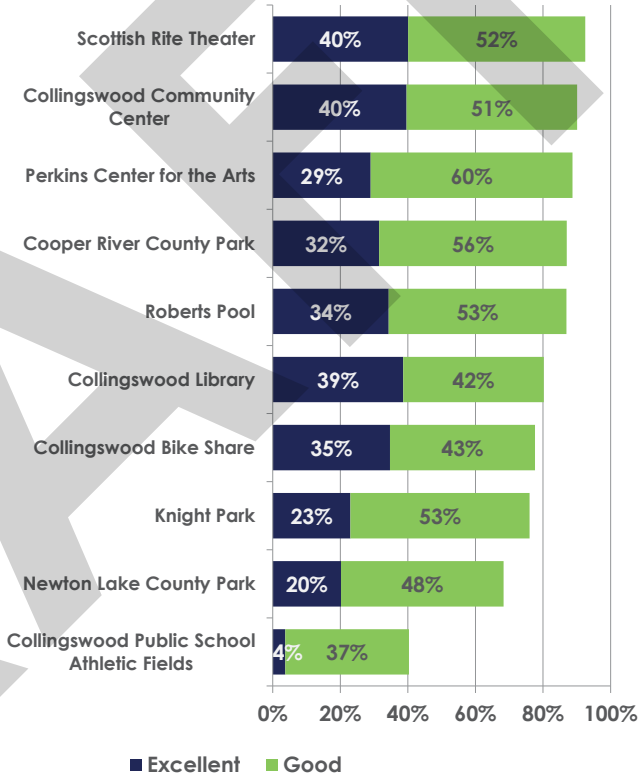
Figure 3.5: Parks Visited in the Past Year



3.5.5 Physical Condition of Facilities Offered by Collingswood (Mail Survey Only)

As indicated in Figure 3.6, households rated the condition of parks and recreation facilities in Collingswood. The Scottish Rite Theater rated the highest with 92% rating it as excellent or good. The Collingswood School Athletic Fields were rated the lowest by far with only 41% rating the fields as excellent or good and almost a quarter of respondents rating them as poor (24%). These results indicate general satisfaction with most facilities but show some room for improvement.

Figure 3.6: Condition of Facilities



3.5.6 Household Needs and Desire for Facility Investment

Figure 3.7 shows the percentage of households that reported a need (i.e., currently use or would if it were available) for various facilities. **Walking/hiking trails (71% Mail & 74% Web) and natural areas/parks (69% Mail & 59% Web) ranked as the top two most needed facilities.** Large community parks, bike trails, and outdoor swimming pools were next with over half of households reporting a need. Mail Survey households were also asked to select their three most important facilities. The top five results, shown in Figure 3.8, are mirrored in the Web Survey results.

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Figure 3.7: Facilities Used or Would Like to Use if Available

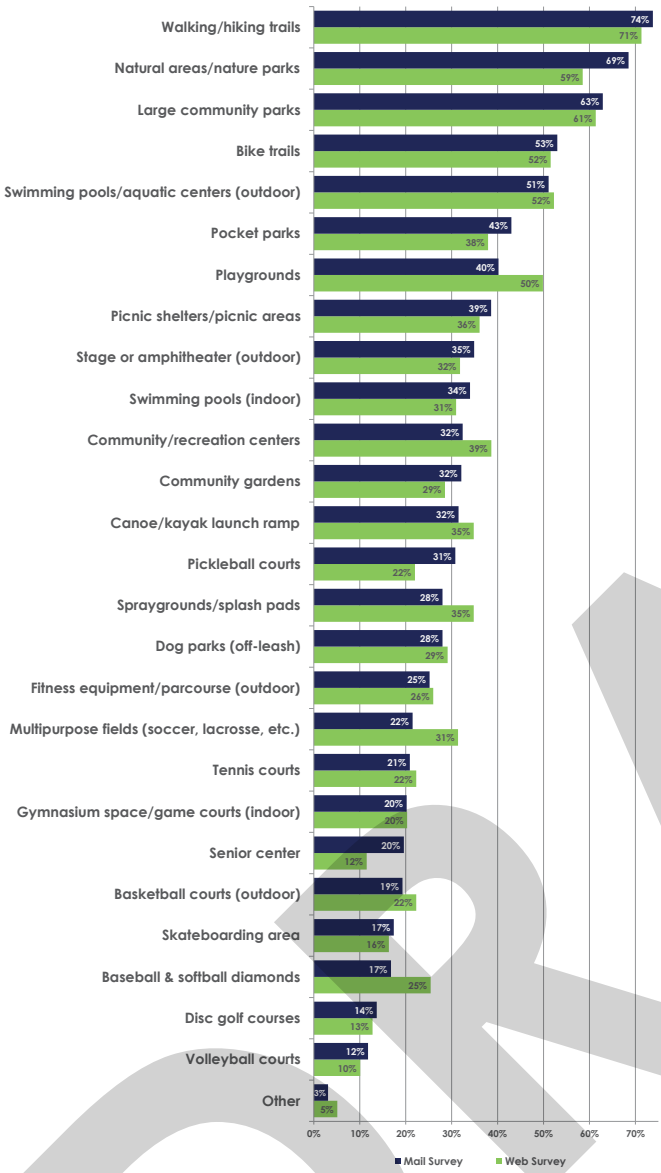
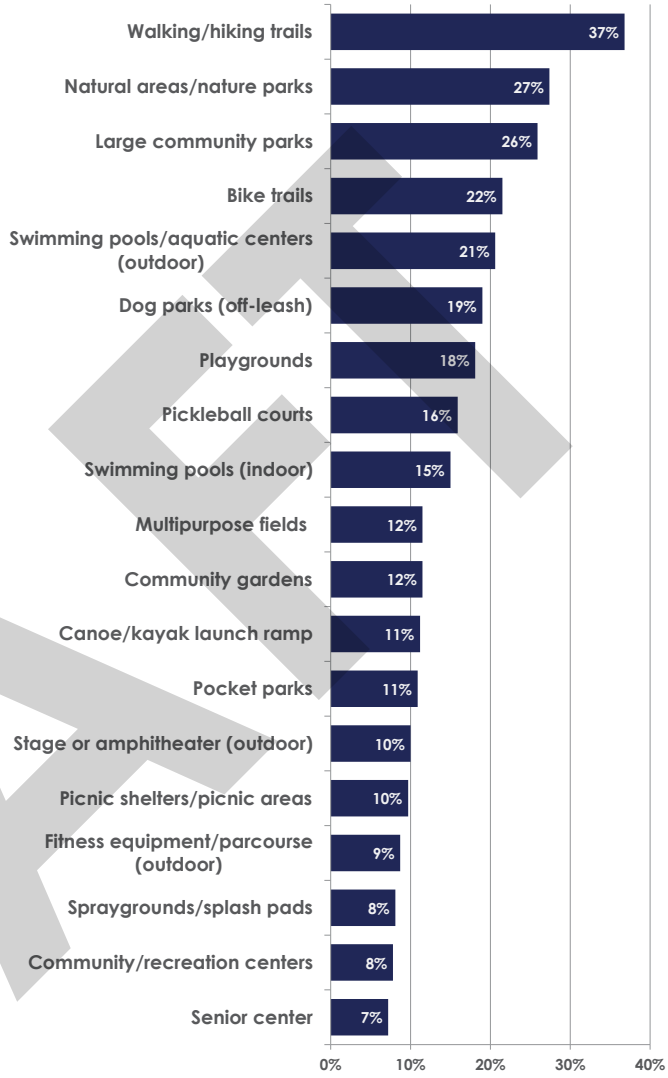


Figure 3.8: Most Important Facilities (Mail Survey Only)



When asked what type of investment households would like to see for facilities, natural areas and trails again appear at the top of the list, as shown in Figure 3.9. **Large community parks, large bike trails, pocket parks, and outdoor swimming pools also ranked at the top of the list with an emphasis on improvements to existing facilities over new development.** Outdoor stage/amphitheater, indoor swimming pools, and pickleball courts were the top rated for development of new facilities.

Based on these finding, the **highest priority facilities for investment** are:

1. **Walking/hiking trails**
2. **Natural areas/nature parks**
3. **Large community parks**
4. **Bike trails**
5. **Pocket Parks**
6. **Swimming pools/aquatic centers (outdoor)**
7. **Picnic shelters/picnic areas**
8. **Playgrounds**

3.5.7 Household Needs and Desire for Program Investment

Figure 3.10 shows the percentage of households who have needs (i.e., currently use or would if it were available) for various program categories, similar to the earlier question about facilities. Concerts/art performances easily ranked first with over half of households indicating a need. Special events were second with just under half of households indicating interest.

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Figure 3.9: Desire for Investment for Facilities (Mail Survey Only)

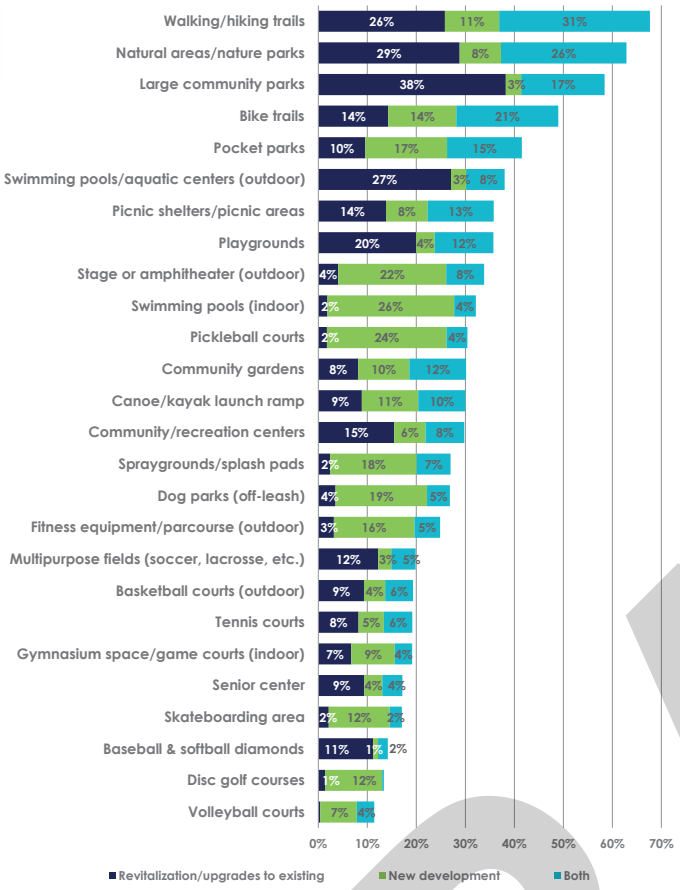
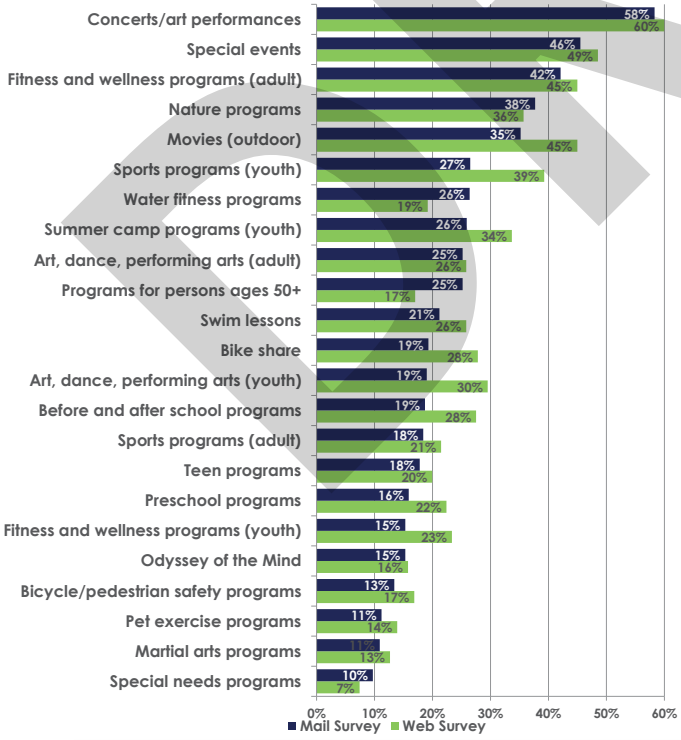


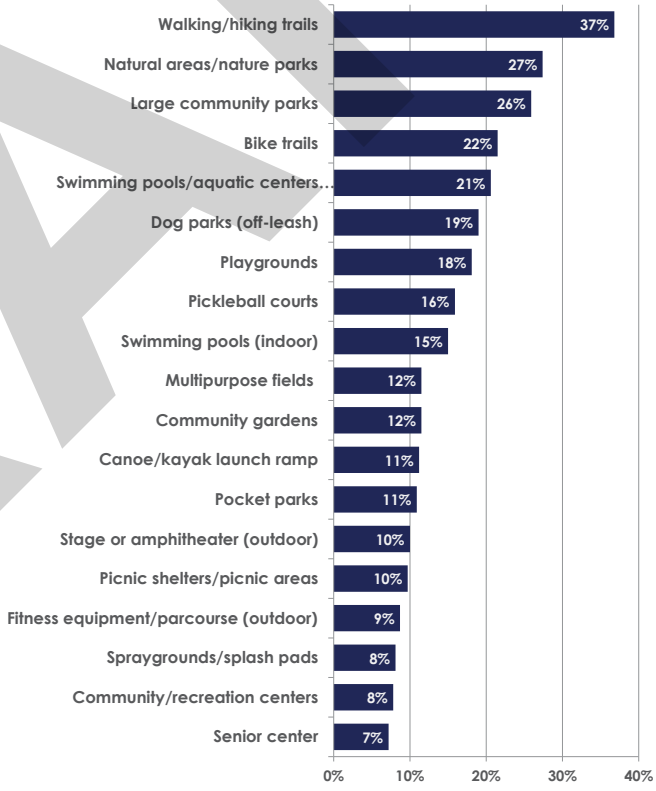
Figure 3.10: Programs Used or Would Like Use



Adult fitness and wellness, nature programs, and movies were all desired by about a third or more of households responding to both surveys. Over a third of Web Survey respondents also indicated a desire for youth sports programs and summer camp programs, youth art programs. Households were also asked to select their three most important program categories. The results, shown in Figure 3.11, emphasize the same types of programs.

When asked to indicate the type of investment they would like to see for each type of program, the results were similar to the previous findings. The results shown in Figure 3.12 indicate that nearly half of households would like the department to offer more concerts and performances with most requesting added variety. In most cases, households would like more variety of programs in each category; however, for age 50+ programs, preschool programs, and Odyssey of the Mind, households indicated more interest in adding to the days or times of programs.

Figure 3.11: Most Important Programs (Mail Survey Only)



Based on these finding, the **highest priority program categories for investment** are:

1. **Concerts/art performances**
2. **Fitness & wellness programs (adult)**
3. **Nature programs**
4. **Special events**
5. **Movies (outdoor)**

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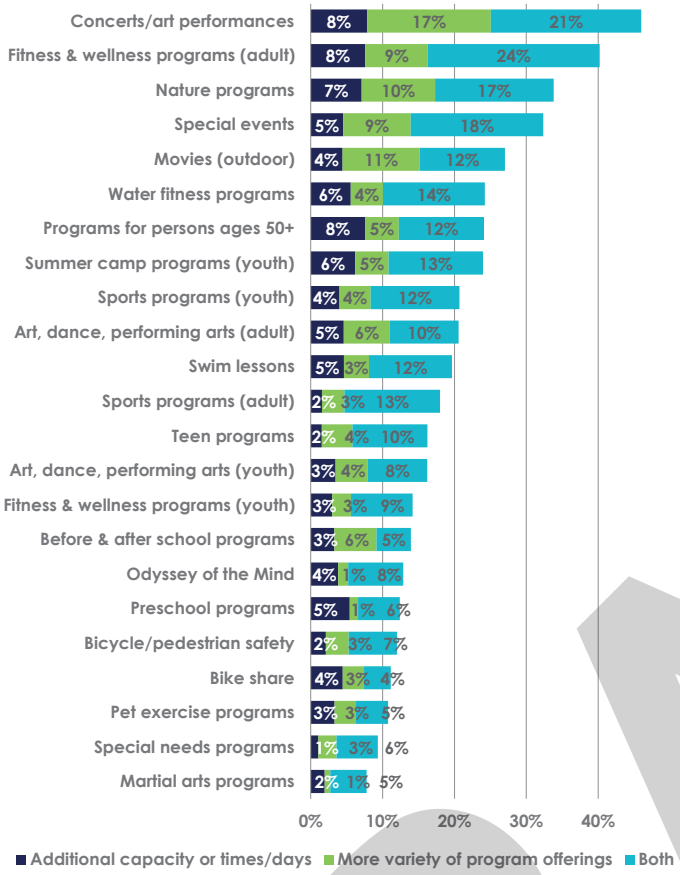
Figure 3.12: Desire for Investment in Programs (Mail Survey Only)



3.5.8 What Would Encourage More Visitation and Usage

Respondents to both surveys were asked what would encourage them to use Collingswood's recreation offerings in Figure 3.13. Households would most like to see improvements to existing facilities and more or improved restrooms. The development of needed facilities and addition of desired programs round out the top four reasons chosen. Web Survey respondents indicated a much stronger desire for added programs, hours/days of operation, and marketing.

3.5.9 Results – Preferred Method of Learning about Programs and Activities

Households were asked to indicate their preferred methods of learning about recreation facilities, programs, and events. Then results in Figure 3.14 show clear preferences for the borough website, email/text notifications, the borough newsletter, and social networking. Mail Survey households were more likely to prefer the newsletter, while Web Survey respondents preferred social media.

The borough already use most of these methods, and the Recreation Department has its own website that contains program & park information. However, expanding social media efforts may also be important to increasing awareness of program and facility offerings.

Figure 3.13: What Would Encourage You to Use Collingswood's Facilities

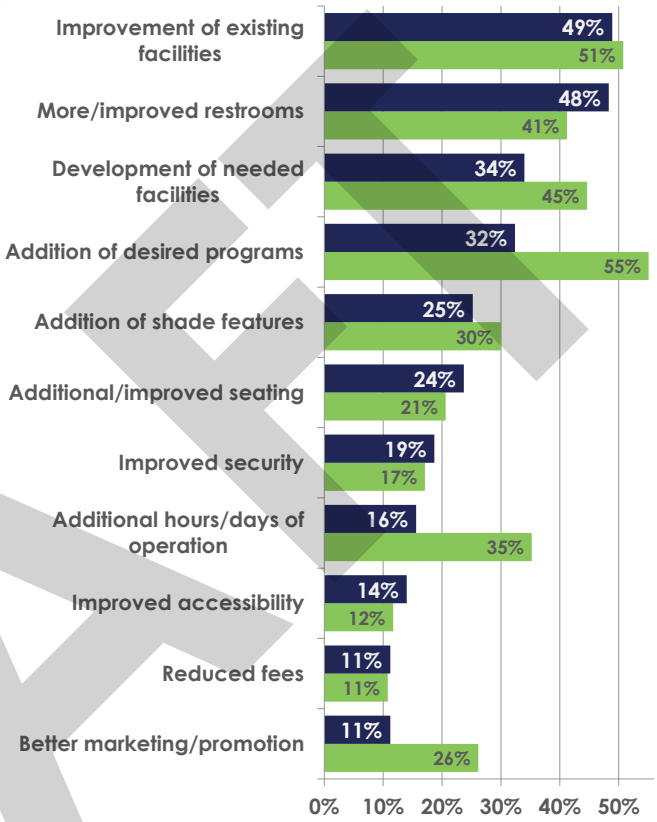
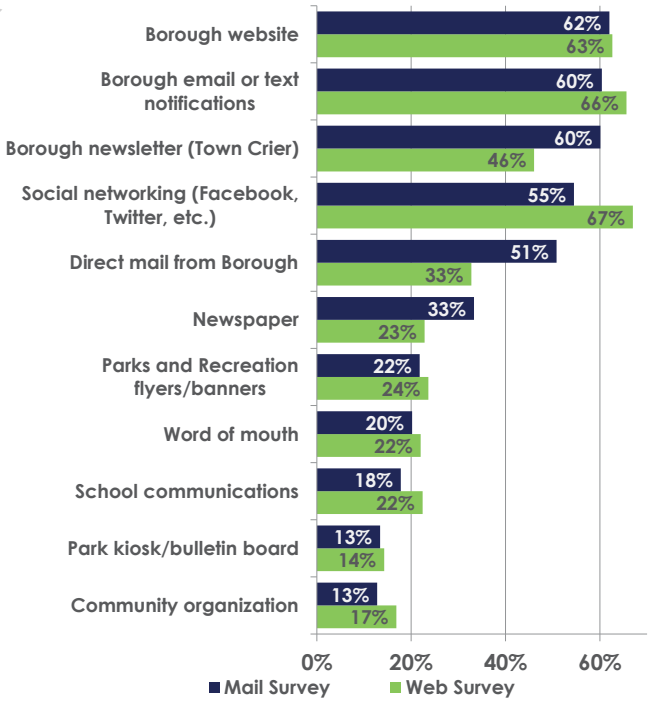


Figure 3.14: Preferred Method of Learning



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3.5.10 Results – Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation

Mail Survey households were asked to rate their level of support for a series of actions the borough could take to improve parks and recreation, and all actions received over 60% support (either very or somewhat supportive). As shown in Figure 3.15, Collingswood households most strongly support upgrading existing parks and facilities, preserving open space and natural areas, and developing trail.

These results are consistent with earlier results of these surveys; however, 97% of households supporting upgrades to existing facilities and preservation of open space is incredible for a random sample survey. **These results indicate near universal support for improvements to parks and recreation in Collingswood.**

3.5.11 Results – Allocation of Funds

Mail Survey households were asked how they would allocate $100 towards parks and recreation improvements. Figure 3.16 shows that respondent households indicated the highest priority for upgrading Knight Park amenities and building new walking and biking trails. Upgrades to the school athletic fields were third, emphasizing the overall desire to improve existing features.

Figure 3.16: Support for Actions to Improve Parks and Recreation (Mail Survey Only)

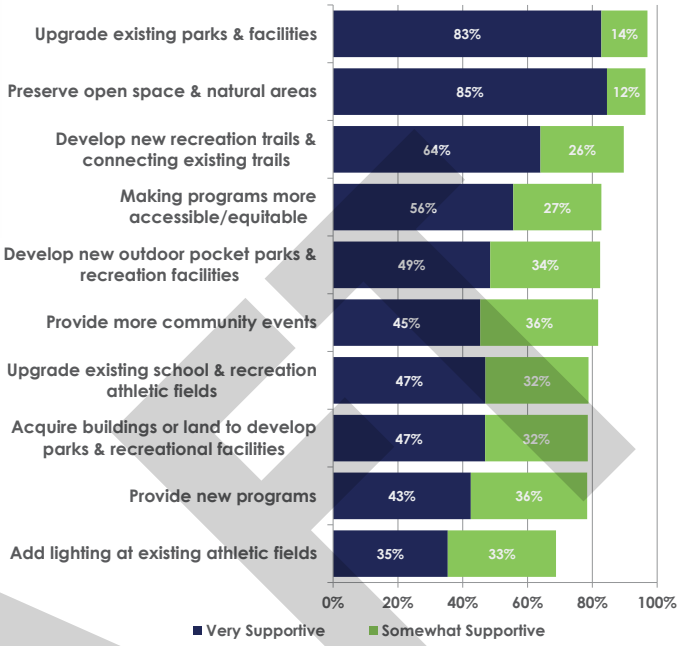
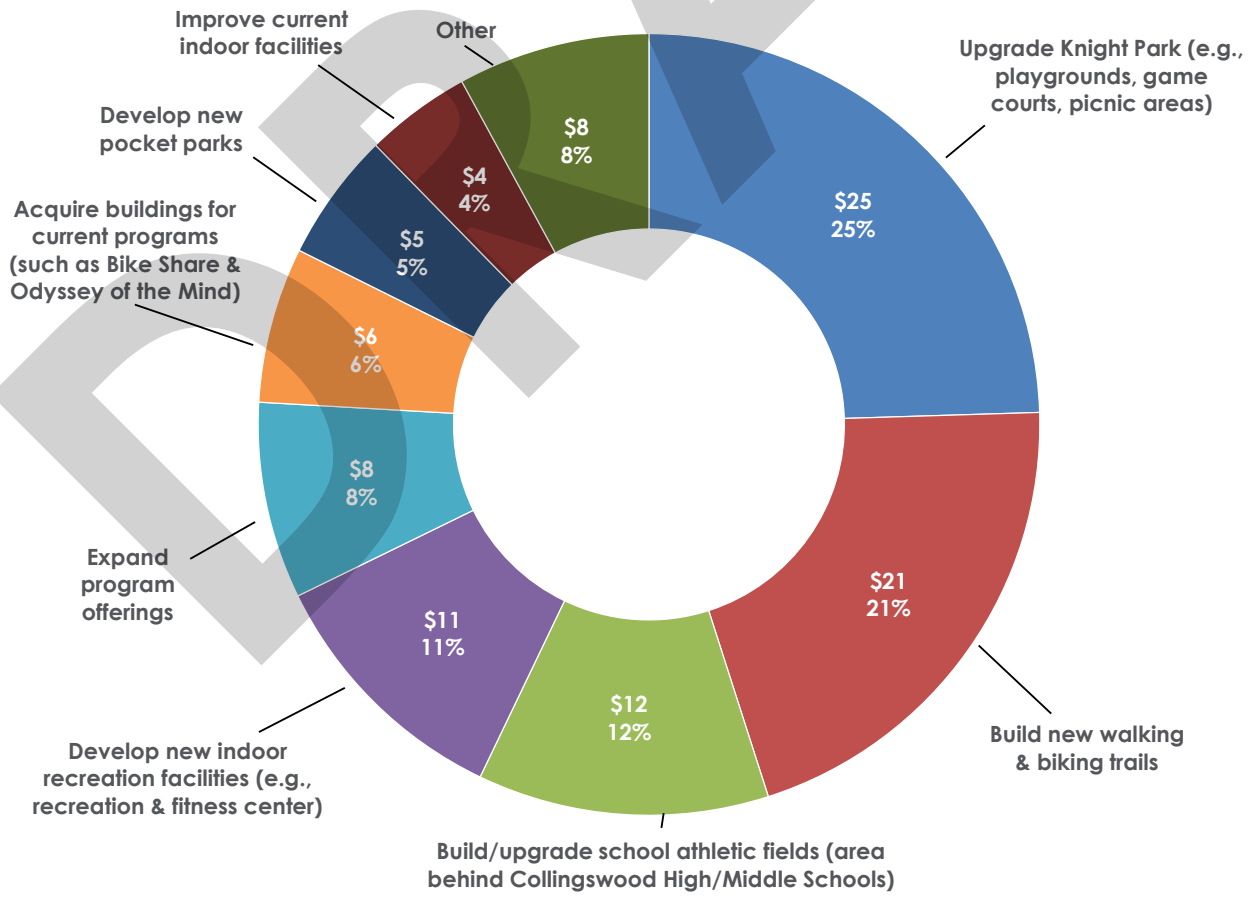


Figure 3.15: Allocation of $100 to Fund Parks and Recreation Improvements (Mail Survey Only)



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3.5.12 Support for a Tax or Bond for Parks & Facilities

In addition to allocating funds, respondent households were also asked if they would support a tax to improve parks and recreation facilities and the level of tax supported. **Almost two-thirds of respondents (62%) to the random sample survey indicated support for a tax specific for parks and recreation** facilities (24% strongly and 38% moderately).

As a follow-up question, respondents were asked what amount of increase they'd be willing to support from this tax. Figure 3.18 shows a quarter of respondents chose $25 per year (25%) and another quarter chose $50 per year (26%). Another fairly large percentage of respondents chose $100 per year (19%).

Collectively, 57% of households indicated support for a tax of $50 per year with only 18% indicating no support at all. These supportive survey results indicate a tax for parks and recreation improvements would have a strong chance of passage in the borough.

Figure 3.17: Support for a Tax to Improve Parks and Recreation (Mail Survey Only)

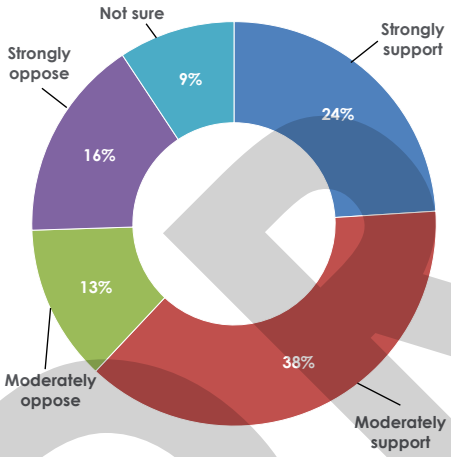
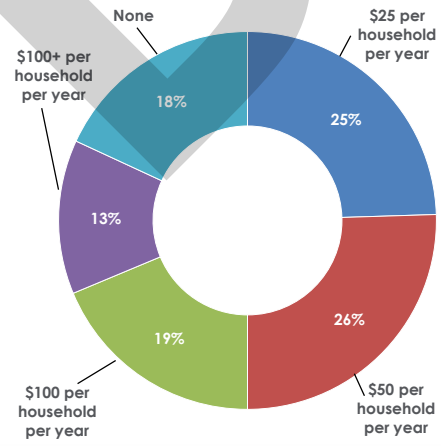


Figure 3.18: Level of Tax Increase Supported to Expand These Services (Mail Survey Only)



3.5.13 Demographics of those Represented by Survey Households

Figure 3.19 compares the age ranges of those represented by respondent households with Collingswood's population. Compared to the overall population of Collingswood, the age 35-44 and age 0-14 years old cohorts – likely parents with children – were overrepresented in the Web Survey. The oldest age group was overrepresented in the Mail Survey. Those in the 25-34 age range were the most underrepresented. As would be expected by a random sample, the Mail Survey age demographics are closer to the actual representation of the borough.

Figure 3.19: Age Comparison

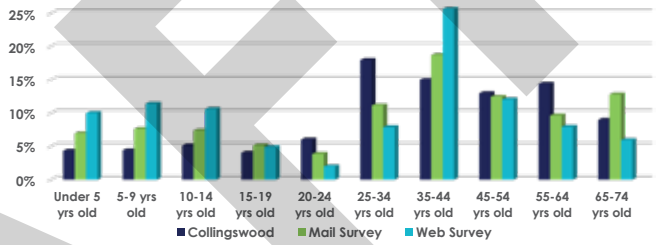


Figure 3.20 shows Collingswood's income levels for the borough as a whole and for the households who responded to both surveys. Those making over $75,000 per year were overrepresented in both surveys, but the difference was much more pronounced for the Web Survey. The Mail Survey slightly overrepresented those making $75,000-$99,000; however, the highest income category was substantially overreacted in the Web Survey. Households with the lowest income levels were underrepresented and tend to respond to surveys at a lower rate.

Figure 3.21 shows a slight overrepresentation of respondents who identify as white (non-Hispanic) and an under representation of the Hispanic population. These results indicate that the borough should make additional efforts to reach this population.

Figure 3.20: Income Comparison (Mail Survey Only)

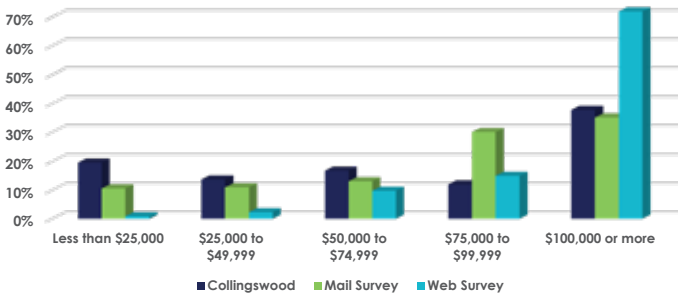


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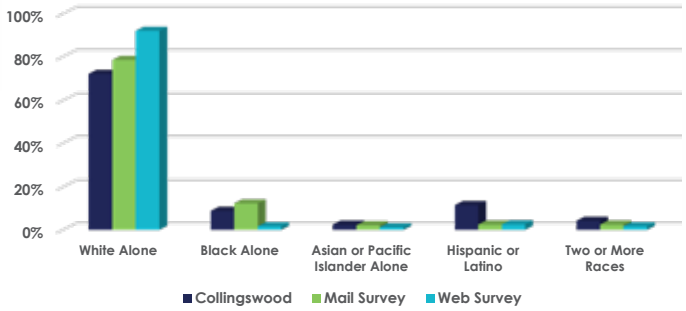
Figure 3.21: Race/Ethnicity Comparison (Mail Survey Only)



3.6 Conclusion

On the whole, the public engagement process provided an abundance of information about the needs and desires of Collingswood residents. While a variety of methods were used to collect data, some trends do emerge with residents desiring:

- Upgrades and improvements to existing parks and facilities
  - Improved maintenance
  - Additional shade features
  - Restrooms
  - Additional playground access
- Athletic field improvements
  - Diamond field improvements (grading, lighting, dugouts etc.)
  - Multipurpose rectangular field improvements (grading, lighting, restrooms, etc.)
- New facilities
  - Pickleball courts
  - Splash pads
  - Amphitheater
  - Dog park
- Additional indoor space
  - Space for Odyssey of the Mind
  - Basketball gym space
  - Program space (teen, art, etc.)
- New programs & improvements to existing programs
  - Concerts & movies
  - Nature programs
  - Age 50+ programs
  - Adult classes – fitness and wellness, art, cooking, etc.
  - Youth sports and youth programs – improved operations
  - Summer camps
  - Water fitness programs
  - Arts and cultural programs

The word cloud image below (Figure 3.22) uses font size to show how frequently a word appears in the survey results. While positive or negative value is not applied to a word, the graphic is valuable because it illustrates the elements of parks and recreation in Collingswood that are most important to the community. This image is provided in conclusion to reinforce the myriad comments, suggestions, and requests heard during the multifaceted public engagement phase.

Figure 3.22: Public Input Word Cloud

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4

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

4.1 Introduction

The Collingswood parks and recreation system is unique with a combination of entities contributing to collectively provide opportunities for residents. This *Collingswood Plan to Play Recreation Plan* provides a series of recommendations that will help guide parks and recreational opportunities for the Borough of Collingswood, the Knight Park Board of Trustees, and Collingswood Public Schools in in the future. Continued partnerships between these agencies and others in the community will be critical to the success of this plan as the Collingswood Recreation Department cannot accomplish everything in this Master Plan alone.

This plan represents a collective imagination of the future. While the action plan component (Chapter 5) is a detailed account of all the recommendations developed – both operational and capital – to guide investment priorities, the strategic plan component in this chapter is intended to provide the department with a clearly defined purpose and underlying motivation for tackling those action items.

4.2 Strategic Plan

Developed from all the input gathered during the engagement and evaluation phases, and approved by the steering committee, this strategic plan articulates a freshly inspired vision, mission, and set of defining values. These strategic elements will help pilot implementation of actions identified in this Master Plan, and thereby shape the future of parks and recreation in Collingswood. Also included at the end of this chapter are goals and objectives. These are incorporated later in the master plan to categorize and better define the wide range of recommendations in the action plan.

4.2.1 Vision

A vision describes a unique horizon, an intended outcome. It defines a clear standard of accomplishment and in so doing, helps unify effort. A vision should:

1. Provide clear direction
2. Focus effort
3. Guide long-term action
4. Illustrate the department's purpose
5. Inspire and motivate
6. Visualize an ideal

New Vision for Collingswood Recreation

Fully informed by the values and visioning input generated by the steering committee, and with their support and approval, the following vision statement was crafted for Collingswood Recreation:

We envision a thriving community with abundant opportunities for everyone to engage and connect

4.2.2 Mission

A mission defines the daily work and an enduring purpose. More specifically, a mission should answer questions like what the department does as well as how and why it does it. The mission is an action-oriented statement that informs day-to-day action.

Like the vision statement, the mission should be easy to remember and to share with others. It should be the foundation of all departmental decision-making.

New Mission for Collingswood Parks and Recreation

Building from the foundational visioning exercise conducted with the Master Plan steering committee, the previous mission statement, and in consideration of the factors described above, the following is the proposed mission statement for Collingswood Recreation moving forward:

Offer enriching activities and amenities that are adaptive to change and promote wellness and community spirit

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4.2.3 Values for Collingswood Recreation

The organization's values serve as a "lighthouse" of guiding principles, informed by personal and organizational beliefs. These values are straightforward phrases or words that:

1. Direct staff conduct
2. Express department ideals
3. Reflect department personality
4. Complement community aspirations
5. Communicate what is important
6. Ensure quality staff experience
7. Instill positive focus system-wide

Core Values

Core values should be unique to the department and indicative of the attitudes, ambitions, and focus shared by the department and the community. Using insights from the steering committee discussions, and feedback generated through public engagement, the following are offered as foundational values for guiding the future work of the department:

Fun – We invite the community to experience joy while improving health and wellness.

Community – We create opportunities for engagement, cooperation, and connections.

Accessibility – We provide equitable experiences for everyone in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Responsibility – We innovate to maximize investment and advance fiscal and environmental sustainability.

4.2.4 Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives identify areas of strategic priority that provide broad, overarching organization for actions. Together, these goals and objectives:

1. Provide focus for actions and aspirations
2. Shape a designated timeframe for improvements
3. Create direction for investments of time, skills, and resources
4. Clarify what the department will and will not do

Generally, goals describe elements of the vision, defining what is achievable through the daily execution of the mission. Objectives – and therefore specific strategies or recommendations – fit within the scope of each goal.

Goals:

1. Overarching areas of strategic priority
2. Broad descriptions of intent
3. Rooted in outcome, rather than specific activity
4. Longest timeframe (i.e., as long as it takes to accomplish the vision)

Objectives:

1. Frame individual actions
2. More detailed description of what needs to be done
3. Measurable metrics (e.g., "increase," "reduce," "consolidate," "improve," "distribute," etc.)
4. Variable timeframes (0-2, 3-5, 5-10 years)

Goals and Objectives for Parks and Recreation in Collingswood

The following goals and objectives are intended to help guide improvements, operations, and services in parks and recreation in Collingswood over the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Inclusive and Accessible Spaces

Provide inviting parks and amenities that improve quality of life for everyone

Objective 1.1 – **Welcoming Parks:** Provide engaging spaces that inspire community enjoyment and provide abundant space for programming

Objective 1.2 – **Attractive Amenities:** Pursue continuous improvement and replacement of features

Objective 1.3 – **Responsive Development:** Increase parks and recreational participation through carefully planned facility development

Goal 2: Engaging and Inviting Activities

Provide well-rounded programs and events that serve all and inspire community inclusivity

Objective 2.1 – **Quality Athletics:** Offer ample access to engaging sports opportunities

Objective 2.2 – **Diverse Programs:** Encourage a variety of welcoming opportunities that promote discovery, wellness, and enjoyment

Objective 2.3 – **Inviting Community Events:** Provide welcoming and appealing opportunities for community interaction

Goal 3: Consistent and Effective Communication

Emphasize ongoing communication between agencies, partners, and participants to increase awareness of needs and availability of opportunities

Objective 3.1 – **Clear Marketing and Promotional Strategies:** Increase program participation and park usage with improved efforts to reach the entire community

Objective 3.2 – **Continuous Engagement:** Seek consistent and ongoing public involvement to respond to evolving needs and attract volunteers

Objective 3.3 – **Strong Partnerships:** Build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships that explore creative ways to address community priorities

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Goal 4: Cohesive Structure

Streamline operations, budgeting, maintenance, and planning for efficient management

Objective 4.1 – **Centralized and Coordinated Operations:** Optimize services for efficient management of staff and volunteers and to better monitor the use of resources

Objective 4.2 – **Reliable Funding:** Explore creative strategies to obtain needed funding for operation and capital improvements

Objective 4.3 – **Proactive Management:** Implement best practices for maintenance that advance quality, efficiency, consistency, and sustainability

4.2.5 Strategies

Specific strategies are provided for each of the objectives listed in the Action Plan (Chapter 5) with timeframes, responsible parties, and potential funding sources.

4.3 Systemwide Recommendations Summary

To meet the new vision defined in this chapter, the borough needs to make improvements to parks and recreation. High level key recommendations are provided below and are described in more detail throughout the rest of this chapter.

1. **Centralize operations** of the Recreation Department and park maintenance in Collingswood
2. Improve ADA access throughout the system
3. Add **support features** (e.g., seating, shade structures, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, Wi-Fi, bike racks) throughout the park system to **improve experiences and extend visits**
4. Improve connectivity throughout the borough with **better bike and pedestrian access** to parks and other destinations
5. **Add indoor space** for borough programs (Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, bike share, etc.)
6. **Upgrade fields** at Knight Park & Collingswood Middle/High School complex
7. Expand **opportunities at Knight Park for all ages**, including non-sports activities
8. **Better utilize existing spaces**, especially Knight Park and school complex
9. Partner with Collingswood Public Schools to allow **access to school yards** outside of school hours
10. **Adjust event and program offerings** in response to community feedback and changing needs
11. **Continuously engage the community** throughout implementation of this Master Plan
12. **Improve marketing/promotion** to make sure residents are aware of what is available
13. Continue to seek and utilize **partnerships** and **sponsorships** to maximize offerings, avoid duplication, and reduce costs
14. Find **additional/alternative funding** – voter-approved funds, grants, fundraising

4.4 Capital Improvements

4.4.1 Knight Park

Knight Park is the borough's largest park, located in the heart of Collingswood. Improvements to this park are, of course, key to meeting the needs of residents and the success of this plan. Although there are many amenities present in the park, there are many opportunities to add recreational opportunities without detracting from the character of the site. In fact, the concepts in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show that amenities can be added while enhancing the passive nature of the park. According to the random sample survey, most households in Collingswood desire improvements to community parks and natural areas.

The first concept maintains the current traffic flow and parking throughout the park. The second concept limits vehicles to the outside of the park, making the interior much more pedestrian friendly while improving safety and reducing traffic noise. Both concepts include better access to the pond, picnic shelters, perimeter trails, and fitness areas in response to public engagement.

Knight Park Pond

Both concepts show much needed improvements to the athletic fields at the park. Most of the fields need irrigation, turf, and backstop/fencing improvements. All fields need accessibility improvements for participants and spectators. These improvements would not increase the number of fields at Knight Park, but they would greatly improve their appearance and usability. Additionally, if traffic is reduced in the park, residents will be able to visit any day of the week without conflict with cars, and residents may reconsider the ban on sports on Sunday which would help alleviate the demand for more fields.

Concept 2 represents a larger change to the park with a focus on pedestrian access. The concept still provides about 340 parking spaces (including about 50 on the park

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road along Collings Avenue), which should be adequate if just a small percentage of residents choose to walk to the park following access improvements. It should also reduce road maintenance, improve aesthetics, and allow for more tree planting.

Both concepts address a need for more community gathering space with improvements to the southeast portion of the park. Concept 1 focuses on the existing gazebo and access improvements to the space. Concept 2 provides a community focused plaza space that could potentially offer a water feature and host community events.

Regardless of the direction chosen for Knight Park, the next step for the borough and the Knight Park Board is to develop a long-term vision for the park with engagement from the community. These concepts could function as a starting point to help the community consider what is possible. Other elements to consider include arboretum signage, replacement of the bridge, and expansion of the playground. The borough might also want to consider food truck infrastructure (along Collings Ave outside of park) to allow local businesses to provide food and drink options to visitors attending all day events at the park or the school complex across the street. Both concepts address a need for more community gathering space with improvements to the southeast portion of the park. Concept 1 focuses on the existing gazebo and access improvements to the space. Concept 2 provides a community focused plaza space that could potentially offer a water feature and host community events.

Regardless of the direction chosen for Knight Park, the next step for the borough and the Knight Board is to develop a long-term vision for the park with engagement from the community. These concepts could function as a starting point to help the community consider what is possible. Other elements to consider include arboretum signage, replacement of the bridge, and expansion of the playground. The borough might also want to consider food truck infrastructure (along Collings Ave outside of park) to allow local businesses to provide food and drink options to visitors attending all day events at the park or the school complex across the street.

4.4.2 Collingswood Borough Parks

The borough's other parks are also in need of improvements to continue to meet the needs of residents. Scottish Rite Auditorium needs capital maintenance improvements to continue operating, and there is potential to make better use of the property for small community events by adding an outdoor performance space. The community center ballroom needs a new audio-visual system.

There are several community needs that potentially require indoor space beyond the existing community center. Engagement efforts found that additional space was needed for Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, and more. The borough should seek opportunities to meet thing needs, including reuse of existing buildings.

Nearly 40% of households indicated a desire for improvements to swimming pools in Collingwood. The wading pool at Roberts Pool was recently renovated, indicating that improvements are desired to the larger bodies of water. The borough should consider adding additional features common at other family aquatic centers in the region, including waterslides, climbing walls, play areas, and more shade.

Roberts Pool

Currently all of the park features are inside the pool fence, so residents not only have to pay to use them but they are closed when the pool is closed. Moving part of the property, including the playground outside of the fence would allow for a year-round neighborhood park in the northern part of the borough. In addition to the playground, the park could feature a basketball half court, a picnic shelter, and more, including a feature determined by the neighborhood.

New Woodlawn Ave pocket park rendering

There is a pocket park currently in progress on Woodlawn Avenue near Haddon Avenue. This small park is focused on placemaking and will feature a plaza space with seating and a small stage as well as some public art. The park has the potential to host small programs, such as a farmers market and concerts. Additional new pocket parks would help improve access in underserved parts of the borough.

4.4.3 Schools

Collingswood already partners with the schools for public use of facilities, including the tennis and basketball courts at the school complex. There is great potential to grow this partnership to include more sites and amenities.

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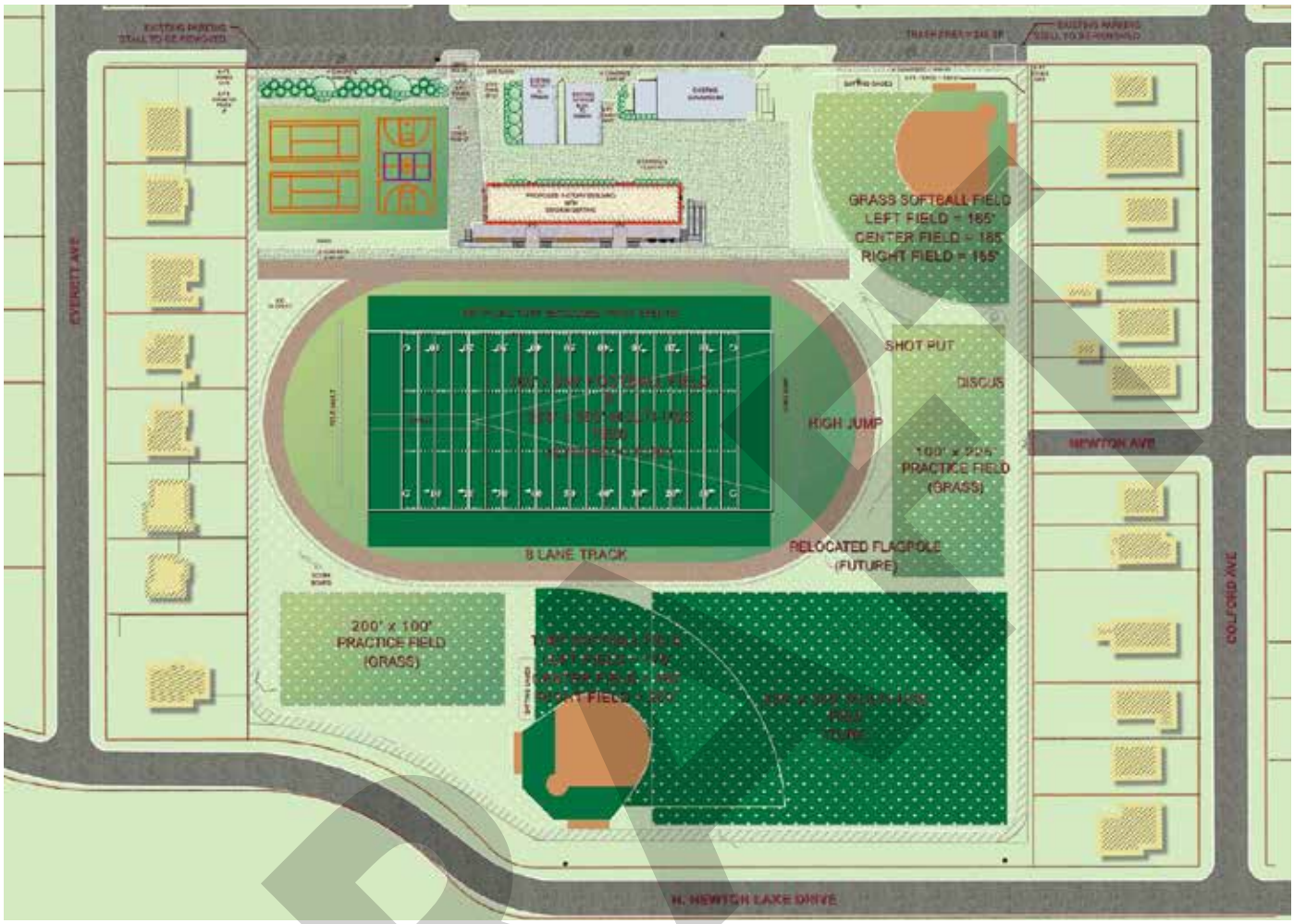
Figure 4.1: Knight Park Concept 1

Figure 4.2: Knight Park Concept 2

Figure 4.3: Collingswood Public Schools Athletic Fields Site Improvement Plan



Adding access to the elementary schools, for example,would provide walkable access to about 2,300 additional borough residents, providing 10-minute walking access to about 98% of the population (including Camden County Parks and upgrading Roberts Pool to offer a neighborhood park). The borough should seek a formal agreement with Collingswood Public Schools to open them to the public outside of school hours with signage noting availability.

Photo: USA Pickleball Association

Pickleball Tournament

The schools are seeking a bond referendum to fund the implementation of the Stadium Plan and upgrades to the schools. The Stadium Plan (Figure 4.3) includes upgrades to all of the fields at the school complex and would address many of the needs identified through public engagement.

There are additional opportunities for the schools to make their properties even more accessible to the residents of Collinswood. For example, pickleball courts were highly requested throughout all types of public engagement. As noted previously, the schools offer the only tennis courts in the borough, and adding pickleball lines to some of these courts would be a great opportunity to begin to address the needs for this fast-growing sport in the short-term.

Other potential projects at the school properties include a skate park or pump track and a parkour or ninja course, as both features appeal to teenagers. Adding amenities to the school properties would make them attractive to more users and seem more a part of the parks and recreation system.

4.4.4 County Parks

Camden County Parks are another important partner to the overall availability of parks and facilities in Collingswood.

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Continued communication and partnership with the county will be essential to meeting the changing needs of residents. The borough should continue to coordinate with the county as improvements are made to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that the best location is selected for improvements. One notable potential facility need that might be met by Camden County is for a dog park. The existing Cooper River Park dog park is beyond a 5-minute drive to many residents in the southern part of Collingswood. A second dog park at Newton Lake would provide easy access for these residents.

4.4.5 Trails and Connectivity

According to the benchmarking in Chapter 2, the borough does not currently manage any trails, compared to the benchmark median of 2.2 miles of trail per 10,000 population. The county does offer trails at Cooper River Park and Newton Lake Park, but there are no trail connections to the parks and no trail in the center of the borough.

Trails consistently emerge at the top for desired improvements all over the country, even in jurisdictions with extensive networks of trails or popular and extensive trails.

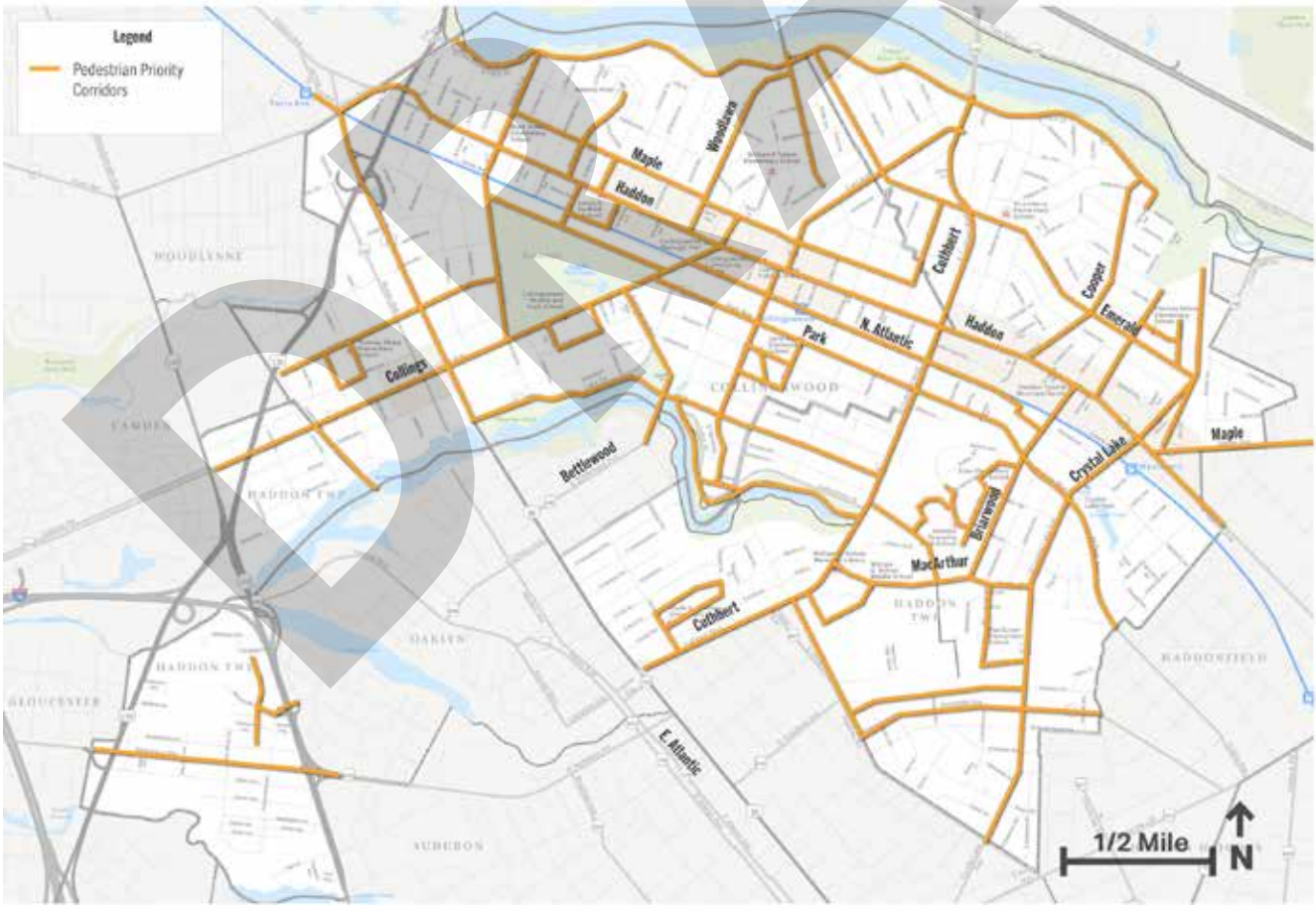
Collingswood is no different as clearly communicated by resident requests for more trails within and outside of parks. More than two-thirds (68%) of households indicated thatthey wanted the borough to invest in walking and hiking trails, and just under half want improved bike trails.

The recently completed Connect 2020 Collingswood and Haddon Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan[1] provides a series of recommendation to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in the borough. Improvements to the pedestrian network include creating a network or priority corridors (Figure 4.4), improvements to intersection crossings, and improve access to schools.

The proposed Camden Cross County Trail would provide a link between the trails at Cooper River and Newton Lake and connection to Knight Park. The plan also recommends priority connections to provide safe bicycle access to these trails. Implementation of these improvements to pedestrian and bike access will improve connectivity throughout the borough and to the parks.

The effort to expand the trail system and improve bike and pedestrian safety coincides with the "10-Minute Walk Campaign" led by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), Trust for Public Land (TPL), and Urban Land Institute – a national movement supported by hundreds of communities across the country to ensure

Figure 4.4: Pedestrian Priority Corridors (from Connect 2020)



[1] Connect 2020 Collingswood and Haddon Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, https://www.connect2020sj.com/

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everyone has walkable access to parks and trails.[2] The proposed connectivity improvements in Collingswood will establish safe routes, encourage alternate modes of transportation, and contribute to an overall sense of community cohesion. The borough is almost to the target and could potentially reach it with the improvements in this Master Plan along with the Connect 2020 plan.

4.4.6 Other Capital Improvements

Support Features

Engagement indicates a strong desire for more and improved support features throughout the system. These features, including restrooms, drinking fountains, security cameras, lighting, and site furnishing (e.g., trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste stations/benches), improve user experiences and allow for extended visits. The borough should prioritize these improvements to make the parks more inviting to all users.

ADA Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires parks and recreation departments to make reasonable accommodations to facilities and programs to serve those with disabilities. The 2010 revision specifically mentions additional parks and recreation amenities, now including sports facilities, boating facilities, exercise equipment, fishing piers, play areas, and swimming pools as requiring accommodation.

The ADA requires agencies to develop an ADA transition plan to define a strategy to eliminate barriers to accessibility. Collingswood Recreation (or the Kight Park Board), like many agencies, has not yet prepared such a plan. An accessibility audit, also required as of 1993, should identify barriers and set a timeline to remove them.

As noted through the site assessments and the public input, many of the parks in Collingswood need accessibility improvements. Several playgrounds, seating areas, and fields lack accessible paths. Dugouts and spectator seating areas, for example, need to be accessible by wheelchair or other mobility device.

The borough should conduct an ADA accessibility audit, in conjunction with a transition plan, to function as a guide for their efforts to improve access throughout the system. The plan will show a "good faith" effort to bring the system into compliance.[3]

4.4.7 Recommendations

Knight Park

1. Develop a Master Plan with a long-term vision for Knight Park with engagement from the community
2. Upgrade irrigation, turf, backstop/fencing, and accessibility of the athletic fields at Knight Park to improve their appearance and usability
3. Provide better access to the pond, picnic shelters, perimeter trails, and fitness areas at Knight Park in response to public engagement
4. Consider limiting vehicles to the outside of Knight Park to make the interior more pedestrian friendly while improving safety and reducing traffic noise
5. Reconsider the ban on sports on Sunday to help alleviate the demand for more fields, especially if traffic is reduced within the park
6. Establish a plaza space, potentially with a water feature, at Knight Park to encourage community gathering and additional events
7. Replace the bridge, expand the playground, and consider arboretum signage when upgrading Knight Park

Collingswood Borough Parks

1. Complete needed capital maintenance improvements at the Scottish Rite Auditorium to ensure continued operations
2. Consider adding an outdoor performance space at the Scottish Rite property to make better use of the property for small community events
3. Replace the audio-visual system at the community center ballroom
4. Seek additional indoor space, including reuse of existing buildings, for Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, and more
5. Evaluate demand for additional features to Roberts Pool common at other family aquatic centers in the region, including waterslides, climbing walls, play area, and more shade
6. Utilize a portion of the Roberts Pools property, following community engagement, as a neighborhood park for the northern part of the borough with features such as a playground, a basketball half court, and a picnic shelter
7. Continue to develop the pocket park currently in progress on Woodlawn Avenue near Haddon Avenue and utilize the plaza to host community programs
8. Seek opportunities for additional pocket parks to improve access in underserved parts of the borough

Schools

1. Coordinate with Collingswood Schools to grow the existing partnership to include more sites and amenities
2. Seek a formal agreement with Collingswood Public Schools to open them to the public outside of school hours with signage noting availability
3. Partner with the schools to add pickleball lines to some of the school tennis courts to begin to address the needs for this fast-growing sport in the short-term

[2] NRPA, TFPL, and ULI's 10-Minute Walk campaign: https://10minutewalk.org/

[3] National Recreation and Park Association, "Recreation and the Americans with Disabilities Act," https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2016/august/recreation-and-the-americans-with-disabilities-act/

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4. Partner with Collingswood Schools to include community amenities during construction, especially features that appeal to teenagers, as part of improvements to school properties to better integrate them into the parks and recreation system

County Parks

1. Continue to coordinate with Camden County Parks as improvements are made to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that the best location is selected for improvements
2. Seek a partnership with Camden County Parks to add a dog park at Cooper River Park to improve access for residents in the southern part of Collingswood

Trails and Connectivity

1. Continue implementation of the recently completed Connect 2020 Collingswood and Haddon Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in the borough, including access to parks
2. Coordinate with the county to develop the proposed Camden Cross County Trail to provide a link between the trails at Cooper River and Newton Lake and connection to Knight Park
3. Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the city's commitment to connectivity and access to parks

Other Capital Improvements

1. Prioritize improvements to support features throughout the system, including restrooms, drinking fountains, security cameras, lighting, and site furnishing (e.g., trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste stations/benches), to improve user experiences and allow for extended visits.
2. Prepare and implement an ADA transition plan, following an accessibility audit of all facilities, programs, and communications
   - Provide accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas
3. Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see trends discussion in Chapter 2)

4.5 Operations and Programming

Collingswood Recreation currently has a small staff and programs are primarily offered through partnerships with youth sports organizations. Public input indicates desire for additional programs beyond those that are currently available. Some deficiencies result from the lack of facilities, but lack of resources and staffing also play a role.

The total operating budget for Recreation in Collingswood for 2023 was about $0.5 million with a per capita operating expenditure of $34, well below the benchmark median of $60. Proposed facility and program development would obviously have an impact on the overall budget of the department, and the borough should be prepared for these additional budgetary (and staffing) demands when expanding or developing new facilities.

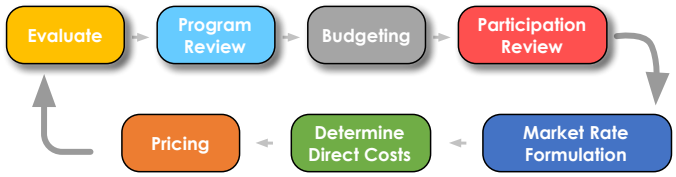
4.5.1 Centralized Operations

The need for centralized operations of parks and recreation was a recurring theme of the analysis of operation and the stakeholder group engagement. For example, the borough, the schools, and various athletic organizations all maintain portions of Knight Park. The borough maintains the other public parks and the schools maintain their grounds. Additionally, Camden County has separate staff that maintain their two parks.

One organization should be established to manage and maintain facilities in the borough or at least coordinate the efforts of the various groups that use and maintain fields and spaces. Centralized management would provide more consistent maintenance and more efficient use of resources, especially if management includes properties by multiple providers in Collinswood, including the borough, Knight Park, the schools, and even Camden County. Centralized operations should extend to field allocation, rentals, and program registration.

As operations are centralized, changed, or expanded, the creation of an annual plan for operations will become essential. An annual plan will allow the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming). Figure 4.5 illustrates the ongoing evolution of a typical parks and recreation agency's working operations. Each cycle begins with an annual plan and ends with evaluation. An annual operations plan is helpful for establishing pricing and costs, as well as for defining more specifically the ways which the agency will benefit the community; a yearly evaluation is critically important to ensure efficiency, appropriateness, and vitality.

Figure 4.5: Ongoing Annual Operation Plan Diagram



4.5.2 Staffing

The success of future development hinges equally on funding and staffing capacity. It is likely that additional staff will be needed as facilities are developed and programs are added to the system. It is important that the department have the staff needed to maintain and operate the system as it evolves. This requirement is related to both the number of staff and their skills and qualifications. Different programs and facilities may require different and often more staff than are currently employed by the department. It is essential for the department to have the staff needed to manage the park system of the present (not the past) and the future when it arrives.

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4.5.3 Maintenance

Overall, residents indicated a strong desire for upgrades to existing parks features, and the site assessments revealed many facilities near or at the end of their useful lives or in need of other repairs. Households were almost universally supportive of upgrading existing parks and facilities, according to the Mail Survey. These findings indicate that the system's maintenance challenges are related to both long-term capital maintenance and replacement and day-to-day maintenance.

Maintenance Standards

The centralized operations outlined above are a critical aspect of improved maintenance, but clearly defined maintenance standards are necessary to improve efficiency and consistency throughout the system. First, maintenance requirements should be measurable. Each element of park maintenance needs a standard. For example:

- Level 1,2,3,4 or 5 turf – standards set by the department
- Restroom cleaning (e.g., daily, twice daily, etc.) – standards set by the department
- Capital replacement (e.g., roofs, HVAC systems, etc.) requires items to be placed on a list with an "expiration date" based on the general length of time an item lasts in good condition. Costs should be determined and provided to the borough's budgetary administration years in advance to ensure the borough is prepared for necessary appropriations.
- Painting schedule (e.g., number of years between re-painting, per item) – standards set by the department; painted items should be included on a multi-year list for funding
- Maintenance equipment replacement (e.g., lawn mowers, trucks, irrigation systems, etc.) – standards set by the department in collaboration with the borough
- Coordination with maintenance staff during park and facility design process; essential to ensuring that staff understand how to maintain what is developed and improves efficiency by ensuring compatibility with maintenance equipment and practices

Recreation should decide the level of maintenance service to provide at each park or portion of all parks in the system. This decision should be a proactive exercise where funding is put in place in accordance with what level of maintenance service is desired. The above process will also help to address equipment needs proactively rather than reactively.

Turf Maintenance Levels

1 State of the Art Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
  - High quality diverse landscapes
  - Urban plazas
  - High visitation parks
  - Athletic game fields
  - Manicured grounds
- Maintenance Standards
  - Mow every 5 days
  - Irrigate
  - Fertilize
  - <1% weeds
  - Daily inspection
  - Aerate

2 High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
  - Well-developed park areas
  - Reasonably high visitation
  - Athletic practice fields
- Maintenance Standards
  - Mow every week
  - Fertilize, aerate regularly
  - <5% weeds
  - Daily inspection

3 High Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
  - Moderate to low level of development and visitation
  - Non-playing field areas in developed parks
- Maintenance Standards
  - Mow every 10 days
  - Fertilize if needed
  - No irrigation
  - Weekly inspection

4 Moderately Low-Level Maintenance

- Park/Land Categories
  - Moderate to low level of development and visitation
  - Non-playing field areas in developed parks
- Maintenance Standards
  - Mow every 10 days
  - Fertilize if needed
  - No irrigation
  - Weekly inspection

5 High Visitation Natural Areas

- Park/Land Categories
  - Natural areas of high visitation
  - Nature parks
- Maintenance Standards
  - No mowing
  - Annual bush hogging, monthly inspection (prairie/meadow areas)

6 Minimum Maintenance Level

- Park/Land Categories
  - Undeveloped parks
- Maintenance Standards
  - No mowing
  - Occasional bush hogging, monthly inspection

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Parks and recreation agencies are increasingly focusing on preservation and restoration of natural resources. Natural areas provide numerous benefits to the health and wellness of a community, including opportunities for all residents. Studies indicate that a connection to nature can relieve stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and improve mental health.[4] Because they are typically one of the largest landowners in their jurisdictions, park and recreation departments have the opportunity to lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs), efforts that can double as engagement and educational opportunities.

4.5.4 Programs

As noted previously, specific programming deficiencies were revealed through the public input process. About a third of households (32%) indicated through the Mail Survey that additional programs would have the greatest impact on participation in Recreation in Collingswood. Web Survey respondents – those who are most likely to already take advantage of parks and programs – rated the addition of desired programs as the top change that would increase participation (55% selected).

Overall, residents indicate desire for more activities for all ages and activities that bring the community together such as concerts, movies, and special events. They also desire more opportunities to engage with nature. Open house attendees indicated that pickleball courts were a key improvement they would like to see, and likely desire programs, including leagues and classes, to utilize those courts. The ability to address these potential growing needs is limited without additional resources. Additional facilities and staff would help meet many of the program requests of residents.

The following program categories were identified as key needs through the public input:

- Concerts & movies
- Special events
- Nature programs
- Age 50+ programs
- Adult classes – fitness and wellness, art, cooking, etc.
- Youth sports and youth programs – improved operations
- Summer camps
- Water fitness programs
- Swim lessons
- Arts and cultural programs
- Teen programs

Most of the unmet program needs either require or would benefit from facilities recommended in this Master Plan, especially concerts, special events, nature programs, adult classes, and youth sports. Recreation does not offer most of these desired programs – or offers few of them – due to the lack of the resources. The development of an event plaza at Knight Park and an outdoor performance space at Scottish Rite would allow for the addition of many types of concerts and events and other facility upgrades would accommodate the rest, along with staff to organize and manage the programs.

New and existing program offerings require a process to evaluate the success of each program. Programs offered by vendors should be cost neutral to the borough with any revenue used to support future programs or scholarships for those who cannot afford a program. It is also important to continually adjust event and program offerings in response to community feedback and changing needs.

4.5.5 Promotion and Engagement

Better promotion of existing opportunities, including those by partner groups, would improve awareness of existing programs and help meet some of the unmet needs in the community without adding programs just by making sure the community is aware of what is already available.

It will be especially important to coordinate and promote programming opportunities as they are added whether by Collingswood Recreation or partner agencies. Fortunately, the Recreation Department already has a dedicated website, and over 60% of households indicated the website as the preferred method of learning about facilities and activities. The information on the website is currently somewhat limited, however.

The website has great potential to improve awareness of parks, facilities, and programs by the borough and partners and should be continuously updated to add new programs and park features in the community. The Recreation Department should also either manage their own social media pages or work with the borough to keep content fresh.

Ongoing engagement engage of the community is important as the borough implements this Master Plan. While this document is a guide, it should be flexible to the specific needs of neighborhoods and the changing needs of residents.

4.5.6 Partnerships

As noted throughout this chapter, collaborative partnerships will continue to play a critical role in the future of parks and recreation in Collingswood. Through strategic and transparent partnerships, the department can both reduce costs and generate additional revenue while potentially adding offerings. In stakeholder conversations, the need for partnership and collaboration emerged repeatedly.

Collingwood already has several partnerships (formal and informal) – including with the Knight Park Foundations, Collingswood Schools, Collingswood Public Library, Camden County Parks, sports leagues, Collingswood

[4] National Recreation and Park Association, "Health and Wellness," http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Healthand-Wellness/

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Youth Theatre, Perkins Center for the Arts, and more – but there are many additional potential opportunities. These partnerships will be critical to the success of this plan and will also benefit from centralized operations.

Many new facilities and programs may only be possible through partnerships with other organizations to cover both capital and operating costs. Any partnership the department pursues must be mutually beneficial, and terms clearly stated for all parties.

Consistent communication is key, and the department should consider hosting quarterly or semiannual meetings with all partners to plan for coordination and mutual promotion. Each agency should convey its priorities and objectives, helping clarify services provided to ensure facilities and programs are provided while avoiding inefficient duplication of effort from all entities.

4.5.7 Potential Funding and Revenue Sources

Parks and recreation projects can be funded in many ways, including maintenance endowment funds, conservation districts, license tags, transient occupancy taxes, income taxes, lease backs, real-estate transfer fees, land dedication and/or park impact fees, and park authorities. The strategies below are the best options for an immediate impact on the operations and capital improvements of Collingswood Recreation.

Fundraising and Volunteers

Fortunately, a foundation already exists that could accept donations to support park improvements in Collingswood, at least for Knight Park. The Board of Trustees has already established a 501c3 organization dedicated to funding improvements to the park, and it enables them to receive philanthropic funds. It currently accepts donations and recruits volunteers.

Successful fundraising requires a concerted effort to accomplish a defined goal. Currently, there is no vision for the future of Knight Park. The park needs a master plan that outlines how to make the park better for everyone and what that vision might look like. When presented with this vision, donors may desire to make it a reality. The concepts in this plan could be a starting point for the plan for the park.

Collingswood could also take advantage of sponsorships in parks, including selling naming rights to park amenities, programs, or events. Donor bench and picnic table programs are popular and can help fund small upgrades to parks, like the existing memorial tree program.

4.5.8 Rentals

Many of the improvements recommended in this plan, including picnic shelters, stages, and indoor spaces, have potential for rental usage and revenue. When any of these amenities are developed, they should be added to the rental inventory, and fees should be reevaluated on a recurring basis to ensure they match what the public is able and willing to pay.

Rentals are currently limited in Collingswood parks. The ballroom and other rooms are reservable at the Community Center and can be rented through the borough website. The shelter and gazebo at Knight Park can be reserved through a permit process on the Knight Park website. Neither reservation process offers a calendar or prices. Users must call or email for information. Information for rentals is not available on the Recreation Department website.

Adding online and centralized reservation for all rentals would potentially increase rentals and reduce staff workload while simplifying registration, even if some rentals require follow-up confirmation. Additionally, it is recommended that picnic shelters be rented for half days (or hourly) with an hour between reservations to allow more use of facilities and increased revenue. Daily rentals should still be available if needed, but most gatherings are two hours or less. This reservation structure may require emptying trash receptacles between rental sessions and other tasks to maintain expected service levels. If department staff are unavailable, this service may be outsourced with the cost included in the rental fee.

Borough officials should also consider creating a fund to send rental fees back to Recreation to fund facility improvements and maintenance. The resulting fund would allow for improved capital maintenance of facilities and users would be more willing to pay, knowing that the funds would be used to improve the facilities.

4.5.9 Grants and Application for Funding

Collingswood is experienced in applying for and receiving grants for facility improvements. Collingswood previously received grants for improvements at Knight Park from the Camden County Open Space Preservation Trust Fund. The borough also recently received several grants for pedestrian safety improvements.

Collingswood Recreation should continue to be on the lookout for grants that will enhance the park system. Applying to established foundations is often easier and has a higher acceptance rate. There are sometimes local foundations that are more amenable to giving locally. In all, grants can come from the federal government, state sources, and sometimes local entities.

Example grant sources:

- National Recreation Trails Program
- Resilient Communities Program (NFWF)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program
- America The Beautiful (U.S. Department of the Interior)
- Conservation Reserve Fund

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- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Federal)
- Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants (FEMA)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Grants (USDA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
- AARP Community Challenge

4.5.10 Tax Funding

In an outstanding show of support for the department's parks and recreation services, nearly two-thirds (62%) of households (Mail Survey) would favor a potential bond referendum; just 29% of the representative random sample would actively oppose the measure. The amount approved would likely depend heavily on the specific improvements included, but 58% of households indicated support for a bond of at least $50 per year without any specific information.

This bond program would enable the department to replace or upgrade aging infrastructure and fund some of the high capital cost items, such as Knight Park improvements and indoor facilities. If the borough decides to move forward with this initiative, the public will need to be provided with tangible specifics about future improvements. It is vital for taxpayers to understand where their dollars will be directed.

Additionally, a successful bond campaign should clearly present what will be funded and should include images that present what is proposed. Rather than just funding a single facility, the bond should fund a wide variety of projects, ensuring that there are benefits for everyone in the community. This Master Plan should be directly referenced in the marketing for any campaign.

4.5.11 Recommendations

Operations

1. Establish a single organization to manage and maintain facilities in the borough or to coordinate the efforts of the various groups that use and maintain fields and spaces
2. Utilize centralize management to provide consistent maintenance and efficient use of resources, of properties by multiple providers in Collingswood who choose to participate
    - Extend centralized operations to include field allocation, rentals, and program registration
3. Create an annual plan for operations to allow the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming).
4. Utilize the annual operations plan to help establish pricing and costs of services
5. Ensure that Recreation has the staff needed to maintain and operate the system as it evolves

Maintenance

1. Develop clearly defined, measurable maintenance standards for park elements to improve efficiency and consistency throughout the system
2. Determine the level of maintenance service to provide at each park or portion of all parks in the system
3. Lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs)and use those efforts as engagement and educational opportunities

Programs

1. Continuously respond to residents' desire for more activities for all ages and activities that bring the community together such as concerts, movies, and special events
    - Provide more opportunities to engage with nature
    - Add pickleball programs, including leagues and classes, once courts are added
2. Seek opportunities and partnerships to address key program needs identified through the public input, including age 50+ programs, adult classes, youth programs (not limited to sports), water fitness programs, swim lessons, arts and cultural programs, and teen programs
3. Utilize park and facility improvements to meet unmet program needs, including the proposed event plaza at Knight Park and outdoor performance space at Scottish Rite
4. Establish process to evaluate the success of each program
5. Ensure that programs offered by vendors are cost neutral to the borough with any revenue used to support future programs or scholarships for those who cannot afford a program
6. Continually adjust event and program offerings in response to community feedback and changing needs

Promotion and Engagement

1. Improve promotion of existing opportunities, including those by partner groups, to increase awareness of existing programs and address unmet needs in the community without adding services
2. Coordinate and promote programming opportunities as they are added whether by Collingswood Recreation or partner agencies
3. Take better advantage of the existing Recreation website to improve awareness of parks, facilities, and programs by the borough and partners
4. Continuously update department website to add new programs and park features in the community

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5. Improve the department social media presence by managing dedicated social media pages or increase coordination with the borough main page to keep content fresh
6. Employ ongoing engagement of the community as the borough implements this Master Plan to ensure that this document is flexible to the specific needs of neighborhoods and the changing needs of residents

Partnerships

1. Use strategic and transparent partnerships to reduce costs, generate additional revenue, and expand offerings
2. Seek additional potential partnerships for new facilities and programs that may only be possible through partnerships with other organizations to cover both capital and operating costs.
3. Pursue only partnerships that are mutually beneficial with terms clearly stated for all parties
4. Review the current MOUs with all sport leagues who use park fields and provide a consistent template for all
5. Host quarterly or semiannual meetings with all partners to plan for coordination and mutual promotion
6. Utilize the existing Knight Park foundation to accept donations and apply for grants to support park improvements in Collingswood
    - Encourage the foundation to promote this Master Plan and its goals
    - Seek philanthropists in the community to support parks and recreation
7. Create and implement a new vision for Knight Park showing a better for everyone and use it to generate interest and encourage donations
8. Continue to seek and utilize partnerships and sponsorships to maximize offerings, avoid duplication, and reduce costs

Rentals

1. Add new and upgraded facilities that have potential for rental usage and revenue to the rental inventory as they are developed, including picnic shelters, stages, and indoor spaces
2. Reevaluate rental fees on a recurring basis to ensure they match what the public is able and willing to pay
3. Add online and centralized reservation for all rentals to increase use and reduce staff workload
4. Allow reservation of picnic shelters for half days (or hourly) with an hour between reservations to allow more use of facilities and increased revenue
5. Create a fund to send rental fees back to Recreation to fund facility improvements and maintenance

Funding

1. Continue to seek grants that will enhance the park system
2. Consider a voter approved bond program to enable the department to replace or upgrade aging infrastructure and fund capital improvement costs identified in this Master Plan
3. Provide the public with tangible specifics about future improvements to be funded by any request for tax dollars or donations
4. Reference this Master Plan directly in the marketing of any funding campaign

4.6 Estimated Capital Improvements Costs by Park

This section provides recommendations for individual park improvements including proposed new facilities and upgrades to existing parks. These recommendations are presented as a starting point for future discussions with users, neighbors, partners, and the community at large. Before pursuing development, each park site will need a deeper investigation into capacity and precise details like placement, materials used, and maintenance considerations.

Improvements for each park are presented in Table 4.1. Improvements that apply to the whole system and those without a specific location are listed at the top of the table. These improvements should be reevaluated prior to new development and after any follow-up planning studies. All costs in the table are estimated in 2024 dollars and will need to be evaluated for potential escalation at the time of development. The master planning process completed before large-scale improvements should include a detailed estimate of the costs for the improvements at each park.

Grant opportunities exist and should be explored for many of these improvements, particularly trail system development, helping to reduce the required contributions by Collingswood. Additionally, partnerships, including for fundraising efforts, should be considered as part of any improvement, particularly those with substantial capital costs.

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Table 4.1: Capital Improvements by Park

	Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
Systemwide						
1	ADA accessibility assessment	Short	$50,000	$0	$0	$50,000
2	Consistent signage at all park entrances	Short	$70,000	$0	$0	$70,000
3	Recreation center/program spaces (potential building reuse) for Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, etc.	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
4	Bike share space (find new location)	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
5	New pocket parks	Medium/Long		$700,000	$700,000	$1,400,000
6	Drinking fountains/bottle fillers/dog bowls throughout system	Ongoing	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$60,000
7	Security cameras & lighting throughout system	Ongoing	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$60,000
8	Dog park (potential partnership w/ Camden County at Newton Lake)	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
9	Site furnishing upgrades at all existing parks (trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste stations/benches)	Ongoing	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$300,000
10	Wi-Fi hotspots	Ongoing	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$150,000
	Systemwide Total		**$310,000**	**$890,000**	**$890,000**	**$2,090,000**
Knight Park (based on Alternative 2)						
1	Park master plan	Short	$50,000	$0	$0	$50,000
2	ADA walkways - 6' wide (to amenities and along perimeter)	Short	$300,000	$0	$0	$300,000
3	Field improvements - field hockey/lacrosse (irrigation, regrading, turf, accessibility)	Short	$70,000	$0	$0	$70,000
4	Field improvements - HS baseball (backstop, bleachers, covered dugouts, fencing, irrigation, regrading, turf, accessibility)	Short	$700,000	$0	$0	$700,000
4	Field improvements - NE diamonds	Short	$300,000	$0	$0	$300,000
5	Field improvements - Little League (accessibility)	Short	$30,000	$0	$0	$30,000
6	Field improvements - NW area (covered dugouts, backstop, irrigation, regrading, turf, accessibility)	Short	$600,000	$0	$0	$600,000
7	Pond dredging	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
8	Trail - new - 10' wide (0.25-mile)	Short/Medium	$100,000	$100,000	$0	$200,000
9	Arboretum signage	Medium	$0	$30,000	$0	$30,000
10	Bridge replacement	Medium	$0	$440,000	$0	$440,000
11	Fishing piers w/ canoe/kayak launch	Medium	$0	$220,000	$0	$220,000
12	Fitness area	Medium	$0	$150,000	$0	$150,000
13	Food truck pads/infrastructure (along Collings Ave outside of park)	Medium	$0	$40,000	$0	$40,000
14	Gazebo upgrades/relocation	Medium	$0	$20,000	$0	$20,000
15	Parking lot 1 (131 spaces) w/ entrance roads	Medium	$0	$840,000	$0	$840,000
16	Parking lot 2 (63 spaces) w/ entrance roads	Medium	$0	$400,000	$0	$400,000
17	Parking lot 3 (61 spaces) w/ entrance roads	Medium	$0	$630,000	$0	$630,000
18	Parking lot 4 (34 spaces) w/ entrance roads	Medium	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
19	Picnic shelter upgrades (paint, new tables, ramp)	Medium	$0	$70,000	$0	$70,000
20	Plaza/concert/event space/interactive fountain	Medium	$0	$1,100,000	$0	$1,100,000
21	Road/trail resurfacing	Medium	$0	$500,000	$0	$500,000
22	Picnic shelters - new (3)	Medium/Long	$0	$150,000	$300,000	$450,000
23	Playground expansion - shade, nature play features	Long	$0	$0	$300,000	$300,000
	Project Total		**$2,150,000**	**$4,990,000**	**$600,000**	**$7,740,000**
Collingswood Parks						
Collingswood Community Center						
1	New AV system	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	Project Total		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**

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Table 4.1: Capital Improvements by Park (Continued)

Park Name	Term	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	Total
Roberts Pool					
1 Park master plan	Short	$40,000	$0	$0	$40,000
2 Fence relocation - playground outside of pool area	Short	$40,000	$0	$0	$40,000
3 Basketball half court	Medium	$0	$60,000	$0	$60,000
4 Food truck pads/infrastructure	Medium	$0	$20,000	$0	$20,000
5 Neighborhood determined/placemaking feature	Medium	$0	$150,000	$0	$150,000
6 Pool upgrades/modernization	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Project Total		**$80,000**	**$230,000**	**$0**	**$310,000**
Scottish Rite Auditorium					
1 Necessary improvements to maintain operation	Short/Medium	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
2 Performance gazebo (outdoor)	Long	$300,000	$0	$0	$300,000
Project Total		**$300,000**	**$0**	**$0**	**$300,000**
School Parks					
Collingswood Middle/High School (Pending Bond Referendum Proposed by School Board)					
1 Stadium Plan implementation/update	Ongoing	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
2 Pickleball courts w/ lights	Short	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
3 Skate park/pump track	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
4 Parkour/ninja course	Long	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Garfield School					
1 Open to public outside of school hours w/ signage	Short	$3,000	$0	$0	$3,000
2 Playground replacement	Medium	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
3 Basketball court/school yard resurfacing	Long	$0	$0	$160,000	$160,000
Project Total		**$3,000**	**$300,000**	**$160,000**	**$463,000**
Newbie Elementary					
1 Open to public outside of school hours w/ signage	Short	$3,000	$0	$0	$3,000
2 Playground replacement	Medium	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
3 Basketball court/school yard resurfacing	Long	$0	$0	$150,000	$150,000
Project Total		**$3,000**	**$300,000**	**$150,000**	**$453,000**
Sharp Elementary					
1 Open to public outside of school hours w/ signage	Short	$3,000	$0	$0	$3,000
2 Playground replacement	Long	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
3 Basketball court/school yard resurfacing	Long	$0	$0	$150,000	$150,000
Project Total		**$3,000**	**$300,000**	**$150,000**	**$453,000**
Zane North Elementary					
1 Open to public outside of school hours w/ signage	Short	$3,000	$0	$0	$3,000
2 Playground replacement	Medium	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
3 Basketball court/school yard resurfacing	Medium	$0	$180,000	$0	$180,000
Project Total		**$3,000**	**$480,000**	**$0**	**$483,000**
Tatem Elementary					
1 Open to public outside of school hours w/ signage	Short	$3,000	$0	$0	$3,000
2 Playground replacement	Medium	$0	$300,000	$0	$300,000
3 Basketball court/school yard resurfacing	Long	$0	$80,000	$0	$80,000
Project Total		**$3,000**	**$380,000**	**$0**	**$383,000**
TOTAL PARKS		**$2,855,000**	**$7,870,000**	**$1,950,000**	**$12,675,000**

*Values include 10% contingency and 12% for design, engineering, bidding, construction administration, etc. (except non-construction items)

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5 ACTION PLAN

5.1 Introduction

The Action Plan table on the following pages (Table 5.1) provides a detailed list of recommendations for the Collingswood Plan to Play Recreation Master Plan. These strategies represent specific actions for the Recreation Department and the Borough of Collingswood to complete to implement this plan.

5.2 Action Plan Strategies

These strategies are listed under the four goals and 13 objectives presented in Chapter 4 with the new vision, mission, and core values. The legend at the top of the table identifies the abbreviations used throughout the table. Checkmarks indicate the timeframe for the completion of each strategy within the time periods of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, or 6-10 years. Some strategies are indicated as "ongoing," because they apply to all timeframes or represent more general actions that should always be considered. A total count of strategies by timeframe is located at the end of the table in the corresponding columns.

The other columns provide information regarding the implementation of each strategy. "Category" describes the type of action within the following four options: capital (capital improvements); policy (guidelines for the borough and Recreation Department, possibly including legislation); planning (long-term parks outlook, which includes conducting studies); or operations.

The column for "Agency" indicates who is expected to implement the strategy, not only the Collingswood Recreation Department or borough officials but partners as well. "Funding Source" indicates how the strategy should be funded, or the type of funds used (operating or capital funds). "Section Reference" indicates which section of the Master Plan document to find the narrative for the recommendation.

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ACTION PLAN - Collingswood Plan to Play Recreation Master Plan

Legend of Abbreviations/Organizations

Rec = Collingswood Recreation (including the proposed centralized structure)	OP = Recreation Operating Budget
Borough = Mayor and Commissioners, Other Borough Departments	CIP = Capital Improvement Budget
Partners = Other Organizations (Knight Park Board, county/state, private agencies, schools, state/federal grants, etc.)	Revenue = Items that Generate Additional Revenue

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies	Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section Reference
Goal 1: Inclusive and Accessible Spaces							
Objective 1.1 – Welcoming Parks: Provide engaging spaces that inspire community enjoyment and provide abundant space for programming							
Strategy 1.1.1: Develop a Master Plan with a long-term vision for Knight Park with engagement from the community	✓			Planning	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 1.1.2: Provide better access to the pond, picnic shelters, perimeter trails, and fitness areas at Knight Park in response to public engagement		✓		Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 1.1.3: Consider limiting vehicles to the outside of Knight Park to make the interior more pedestrian friendly while improving safety and reducing traffic noise	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 1.1.4: Establish a plaza space, potentially with a water feature, at Knight Park to encourage community gathering and additional events		✓	✓	Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 1.1.5: Replace the bridge, expand the playground, and consider arboretum signage when upgrading Knight Park			✓	Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 1.1.6: Consider adding an outdoor performance space at the Scottish Rite property to make better use of the property for small community events			✓	Planning/ Capital	Rec	CP	4.4.2
Objective 1.2 – Attractive Amenities: Pursue continuous improvement and replacement of features							
Strategy 1.2.1: Continue to develop the pocket park currently in progress on Woodlawn Avenue near Haddon Avenue and utilize the plaza to host community programs (in progress)	✓			Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2
Strategy 1.2.2: Prioritize improvements to support features throughout the system, including drinking fountains, security cameras, lighting, and site furnishing (e.g., restrooms, trash & recycling receptacles/bike racks/pet waste stations/benches), to improve user experiences and allow for extended visits	✓			Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.6
Strategy 1.2.3: Prepare and implement an ADA transition plan, following an accessibility audit of all facilities, programs, and communications	✓			Planning/ Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.6
Strategy 1.2.4: Provide accessible walkways to all facilities and seating areas	*Ongoing*			Capital	Rec	CP	4.4.6
Strategy 1.2.5: Upgrade and utilize technology in parks for the benefit of both patrons and staff (see trends discussion in Chapter 2)	*Ongoing*			Planning/ Capital	Rec	CP	4.4.6
Objective 1.3 – Responsive Development: Increase parks and recreational participation through carefully planned facility development							
Strategy 1.3.1: Complete needed capital maintenance improvements at the Scottish Rite Auditorium to ensure continued operations	✓	✓		Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2
Strategy 1.3.2: Replace the audio-visual system at the community center ballroom	✓			Capital	Rec	CP	4.4.2
Strategy 1.3.3: Seek additional indoor space, including reuse of existing buildings, for Odessey of the Mind, teen programs, basketball, camps, art programs, and more	*Ongoing*			Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP/ Partners	4.4.2
Strategy 1.3.4: Utilize a portion of the Roberts Pools property, following community engagement, as a neighborhood park for the northern part of the borough with features such as a playground, a basketball half court, and a picnic	✓	✓		Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2
Strategy 1.3.5: Seek opportunities for additional pocket parks to improve access in underserved parts of the borough	*Ongoing*			Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2
Strategy 1.3.6: Continue implementation of the recently completed *Connect 2020 Collingswood and Haddon Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in the borough, including	*Ongoing*			Capital	Borough	CP/ Partners	4.4.5

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Table 5.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section Reference
Strategy 1.3.7:	Consider signing on to the 10-Minute Walk Mission by the TPL and NRPA to show the borough's commitment to connectivity and access to parks	✓			Capital	Borough	OP	4.4.5
Strategy 1.3.8:	Coordinate with the county to develop the proposed Camden Cross County Trail to provide a link between the trails at Cooper River and Newton Lake and connection to Knight Park	*Ongoing*			Capital	Borough	CP/ Partners	4.4.5
Strategy 1.3.9:	Evaluate demand for additional features to Roberts Pool common at other family aquatic centers in the region, including waterslides, climbing walls, play area, and more shade			✓	Capital	Rec/ Borough	CP	4.4.2
Goal 2: Engaging and Inviting Activities								
Objective 2.1 – Quality Athletics: Offer ample access to engaging sports opportunities								
Strategy 2.1.1:	Upgrade irrigation, turf, backstop/fencing, and accessibility of the athletic fields at Knight Park to improve their appearance and usability	✓			Capital	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.1
Strategy 2.1.2:	Partner with the schools to add pickleball lines to some of the school tennis courts to begin to address the needs for this fast-growing sport in the short-term	✓			Capital	Rec/ Partners	Partners	4.4.3
Strategy 2.1.3:	Add pickleball programs, including leagues and classes, once courts are added	✓	✓		Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.1.4:	Reconsider the ban on sports on Sunday to help alleviate the demand for more fields, especially if traffic is reduced within the park	*Ongoing*			Policy	Partners	N/A	4.4.1
Objective 2.2 – Diverse Programs: Encourage a variety of welcoming opportunities that promote discovery, wellness, and enjoyment								
Strategy 2.2.1:	Establish process to evaluate the success of each program	✓			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.2.2:	Provide more opportunities to engage with nature	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.2.3:	Seek opportunities and partnerships to address key program needs identified through the public input, including age 50+ programs, adult classes, youth programs (not limited to sports), water fitness programs, swim lessons, arts and cultural programs, and teen programs	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.2.4:	Ensure that programs offered by vendors are cost neutral to the borough with any revenue used to support future programs or scholarships for those who cannot afford a program	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.4
Objective 2.3 – Inviting Community Events: Provide welcoming and appealing opportunities for community interaction								
Strategy 2.3.1:	Continually adjust event and program offerings in response to community feedback and changing needs	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.2.2:	Continuously respond to residents' desire for more activities for all ages and activities that bring the community together such as concerts, movies, and special events	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.4
Strategy 2.2.3:	Utilize park and facility improvements to meet unmet program needs, including the proposed event plaza at Knight Park and outdoor performance space at Scottish Rite		✓	✓	Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.4
Goal 3: Consistent and Effective Communication								
Objective 3.1 – Clear Marketing and Promotional Strategies: Increase program participation and park usage with improved efforts to reach the entire community								
Strategy 3.1.1:	Improve promotion of existing opportunities, including those by partner groups, to increase awareness of existing programs and address unmet needs in the community without adding services	✓			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.5
Strategy 3.1.2:	Improve the department social media presence by managing dedicated social media pages or increase coordination with the borough main page to keep content fresh	✓			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.5
Strategy 3.1.3:	Coordinate and promote programming opportunities as they are added whether by Collingswood Recreation or partner agencies	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.5
Strategy 3.1.4:	Take better advantage of the existing Recreation website to improve awareness of parks, facilities, and programs by the borough and partners	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.5
Strategy 3.1.5:	Continuously update department website to add new programs and park features in the community	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.5

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Table 5.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section Reference
Objective 3.2 – Continuous Engagement: Seek consistent and ongoing public involvement to respond to evolving needs and attract volunteers								
Strategy 3.2.1:	Create and implement a new vision for Knight Park showing a better for everyone and use it to generate interest and encourage donations	✓			Planning	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Revenue	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.2:	Encourage the Knight Park foundation to promote this Master Plan and its goals	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.3:	Employ ongoing engagement of the community as the borough implements this Master Plan to ensure that this document is flexible to the specific needs of neighborhoods and the changing needs of residents	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec	OP	4.5.5
Strategy 3.3.4:	Host quarterly or semiannual meetings with all partners to plan for coordination and mutual promotion	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	OP	4.5.6
Objective 3.3 – Strong Partnerships: Build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships that explore creative ways to address community priorities								
Strategy 3.3.1:	Use strategic and transparent partnerships to reduce costs, generate additional revenue, and expand offerings	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.2:	Continue to seek and utilize partnerships and sponsorships to maximize offerings, avoid duplication, and reduce costs	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.3:	Seek a formal agreement with Collingswood Public Schools to open the school yards to the public outside of school hours with signage noting availability	✓			Policy	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.4.3
Strategy 3.3.4:	Partner with Collingswood Schools to include community amenities during construction, especially features that appeal to teenagers, as part of improvements to school properties to better integrate them into the parks and recreation system	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.4.3
Strategy 3.3.5:	Continue to coordinate with Camden County Parks as improvements are made to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that the best location is selected for improvements	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.4.4
Strategy 3.3.6:	Seek additional potential partnerships for new facilities and programs that may only be possible through partnerships with other organizations to cover both capital and operating costs	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.7:	Review the current MOUs with all sport leagues who use park fields and provide a consistent template for all	✓			Operation	Rec	OP	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.8:	Pursue only partnerships that are mutually beneficial with terms clearly stated for all parties	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec	OP	4.5.6
Strategy 3.3.9:	Seek a partnership with Camden County Parks to add a dog park at Cooper River Park to improve access for residents in the southern part of Collingswood	*Ongoing*			Operation	Rec/ Partners	CP/ Partners	4.4.4
Goal 4: Cohesive Structure								
Objective 4.1 – Centralized and Coordinated Operations: Optimize services for efficient management of staff and volunteers and to better monitor the use of resources								
Strategy 4.1.1:	Develop a Master Plan Implementation Committee (may include members of plan steering committee) to facilitate, market, and guide the implementation of the Action Plan	✓			Planning/ Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP	
Strategy 4.1.2:	Establish a single organization to manage and maintain facilities in the borough or to coordinate the efforts of the various groups that use and maintain fields and spaces	✓			Policy	Borough/ Partners	OP	4.5.1
Strategy 4.1.3:	Extend centralized operations to include field allocation, rentals, and program registration	✓			Policy	Borough/ Partners	OP	4.5.1
Strategy 4.1.4:	Add online and centralized reservation for all rentals to increase use and reduce staff workload	✓			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.8
Strategy 4.1.5:	Create an annual plan for operations to allow the department to establish goals for both internal operations and external performance (i.e., programming)	✓			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.1
Strategy 4.1.6:	Utilize the annual operations plan to help establish pricing and costs of services	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.1
Strategy 3.1.7:	Ensure that Recreation has the staff needed to maintain and operate the system as it evolves	*Ongoing*			Operations	Borough	OP	4.5.2

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Table 5.1: Action Plan (Continued)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies		Timeframe (Years) 0-2	3-5	6-10	Category	Agency	Funding Source	Section Reference
Objective 4.2 – Reliable Funding: Explore creative strategies to obtain needed funding for operation and capital improvements								
Strategy 4.2.1:	Utilize the existing Knight Park foundation to accept donations and apply for grants to support park improvements in Collingswood	✓			Operations	Partners/ Rec	Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 4.2.2:	Reference this Master Plan directly in the marketing of any funding campaign	*Ongoing*			Policy/ Planning	Partners	Partners	4.5.10, 4.5.7
Strategy 4.2.3:	Provide the public with tangible specifics about future improvements to be funded by any request for tax dollars or donations	*Ongoing*			Policy	Borough	OP	4.5.10
Strategy 4.2.4:	Continue to seek grants that will enhance the park system	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP/ Revenue	4.5.9
Strategy 4.2.5:	Seek philanthropists in the community to support parks and recreation	*Ongoing*			Operations	Partners/ Rec	OP/ Partners	4.5.6
Strategy 4.2.6:	Consider a voter approved bond program to enable the department to replace or upgrade aging infrastructure and fund capital improvement costs identified in this Master Plan	✓	✓		Policy	Borough	Revenue	4.5.10
Strategy 4.2.7:	Add new and upgraded facilities that have potential for rental usage and revenue to the rental inventory as they are developed, including picnic shelters, stages, and indoor spaces	*Ongoing*			Policy	Rec	Revenue	4.5.8
Strategy 4.2.8:	Allow reservation of picnic shelters for half days (or hourly) with an hour between reservations to allow more use of facilities and increased revenue	✓	✓		Policy	Rec	Revenue	4.5.8
Strategy 4.2.9:	Create a fund to send rental fees back to Recreation to fund facility improvements and maintenance	✓	✓		Policy	Borough	N/A	4.5.8
Strategy 4.2.10:	Reevaluate rental fees on a recurring basis to ensure they match what the public is able and willing to pay	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec	OP	4.5.8
Objective 4.3 – Proactive Management: Implement best practices for maintenance that advance quality, efficiency, consistency, and sustainability								
Strategy 4.3.1:	Develop clearly defined, measurable maintenance standards for park elements to improve efficiency and consistency throughout the system	✓			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.3
Strategy 4.3.2:	Determine the level of maintenance service to provide at each park or portion of all parks in the system	✓			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.3
Strategy 4.3.3:	Lead in the implementation of sustainability or best management practices (BMPs) and use those efforts as engagement and educational opportunities	*Ongoing*			Operations	Rec/ Partners	OP/ Partners	4.5.3
Totals by Timeframe	**Ongoing =**	**28**	**9**	**5**				

Total Number of Strategies = 69

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