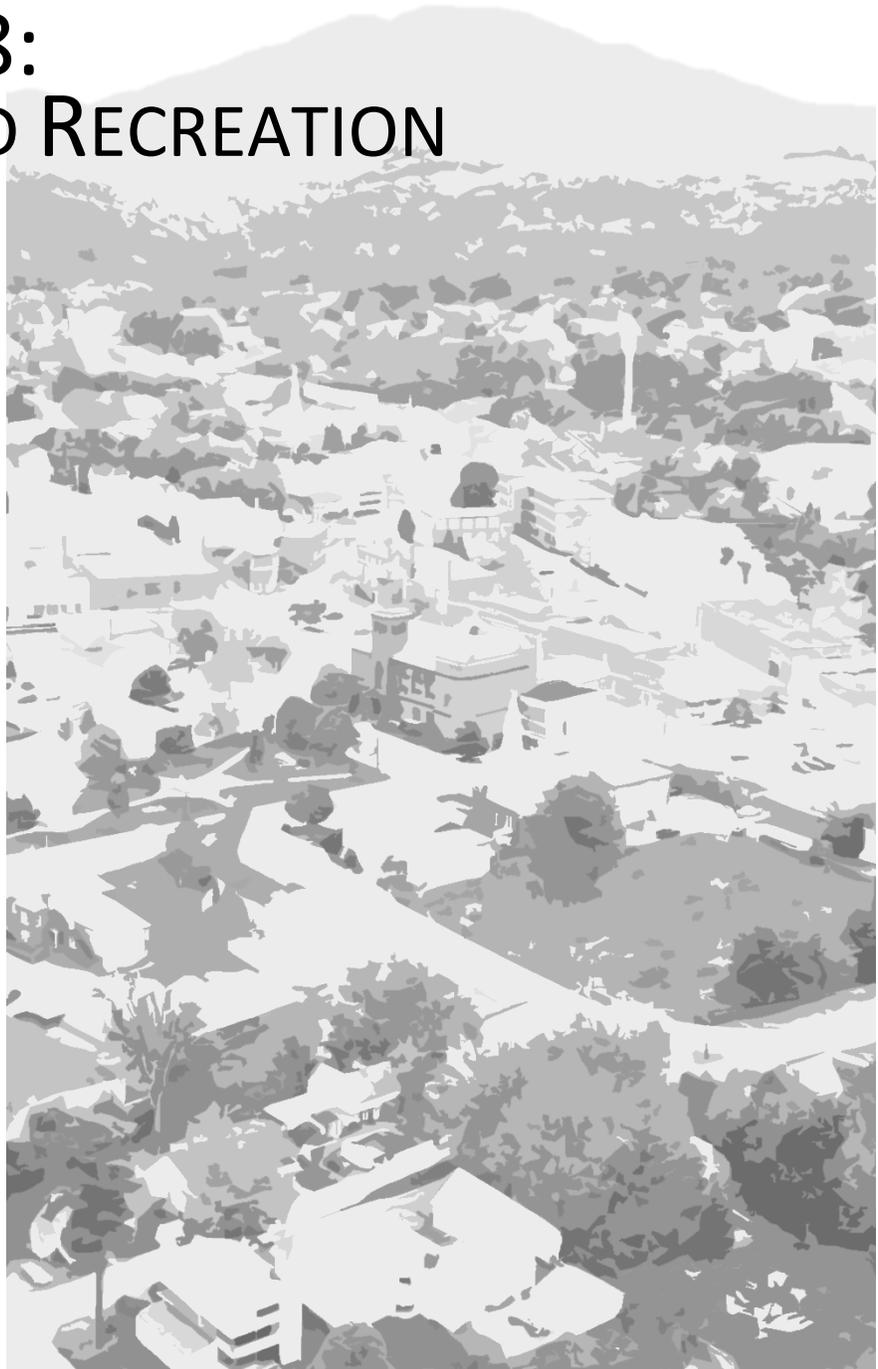


CITY OF CLAREMONT MASTER PLAN 2017

CHAPTER 8: PARKS AND RECREATION



Prepared by the
Claremont Planning Board
and the
Claremont Planning and
Development Department

Chapter 8: Parks and Recreation

Vision

Recreation and culture in Claremont, NH will fill the vital role of improving community health, enhancing quality of life, promoting personal enrichment, preserving natural resources, providing access for all socio-economic groups, and encouraging economic growth. At the heart of recreation in Claremont is the Claremont Parks and Recreation Department, including an expansive offering of programs, facilities, parks, and amenities. The community has repeatedly expressed how vitally important it is to maintain and expand our assets: natural resources and park system, rail trail, Claremont Savings Bank Community Center, Parks and Recreation programs, cultural activities, public art, and athletic courts and fields.

Our Recreation Goals

- Promote Health and Wellness
- Expand and enhance recreational facilities, parks, trails, and bike paths
- Create and implement improved maintenance plans with adequate funding
- Enhance recreational and cultural programming
- Build strong and effective community partnerships



Facilities Inventory

Broad Street Park

The Broad Street Park, located on Broad Street adjacent to City Hall, provides an attractive 0.65-acre of green space adjacent to the central business district. It is also a key feature in the Historic District. The park facility also stretches up Broad Street to South Street and includes all the green space between the sidewalk and roadway curbing. The park includes historic community structures like the andstand, war monuments for veterans, and the Freedom Garden Memorial dedicated to the victims and families of September 11th. The park also features seasonal decorations, serves as a community green near City Hall, and is the site of various community events.

Community survey analysis: It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park, including installation of suitable lighting, fencing and landscaping. Prevention of vandalism and promoting safety should be priorities. The process of reconfiguring and improving the park initiated by the Parks Department should be encouraged and continued. The City-owned parcel on Barber Street, formerly part of the Goodwin Community Center parcel, should be incorporated into the parks system and utilized

more extensively for recreational purposes. Various City-owned parcels in and around the downtown core should be considered for development as “pocket parks”.

Factory Street Park

This small neighborhood park is open to the public with green space and a view of the Sugar River. The Factory Street Park was established in 1978 and is a 0.35-acre parcel at the corner South Main Street and Factory Street. This park contains benches and landscaping and is located at one of the main gateways into the city.

Community survey analysis: The Parks Department should initiate and guide a community driven planning process to envision and realize the optimal use of this park. The City-owned parcel across Factory Street from this park should be incorporated.

Veterans Park

Veterans Park consists of 18 acres situated along Veterans Park Road and is the site of green space, the lighted and newly renovated Bill Baril Memorial Softball Field, playground, and horseshoe pits. It formerly was the home of the John McLane Clark outdoor pool and related facilities.

Community survey analysis: The City-owned parcel immediately east of the park should be incorporated and developed, including trail creation and improvement. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the park should be improved. Sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park must be allocated. Restroom facilities, expanded and improved parking and a connection to the existing trail network should be constructed. It is recommended that “splash pads” and other similar outdoor water features be installed here and at other appropriate neighborhood park locations. Review the financial and staffing relationship between the Parks Department and the school system.

LaCasse Park

LaCasse Park was dedicated to the memory of local veteran Oliver LaCasse and the soldiers who fought and died in World War I. This small neighborhood park was originally located on the Sugar River at the end of Lower Cul de Sac Place off the intersection of Broad and North Streets. It is now located at the corner of North Street and Lincoln Heights. The Memorial Anti-Tank Gun is in need of restoration. The PAK-40 75MM Anti-Tank Gun was made by Panzer Abwehr Kanor and has been determined to be a historical piece of armor built in Germany. It was captured by American forces and returned to the United States. Date and time is unknown.

Community survey analysis: The original location should be redeveloped and incorporated into the Visitor Center parcel. The area around the cannon should be enhanced with seating, lighting, shelter, signage and landscaping.

Visitor Center Green

Visitor Center Green is located along the Sugar River near the Claremont Visitor Center at 14 North Street. This property is approximately 7 acres with nearly 1,400 feet of Sugar River



shoreline and ample parking. Included are an expansive river overlook, pedestrian facilities, open space, and pedestrian connections across the Sugar River to the Mill District and downtown, North Street, and Spring Street. The green space is currently used for passive recreation, hosts many special community events and functions and is the home of Our Hands Then and Now, a sculpture commemorating the 250th anniversary of Claremont. The City obtained an exemption for this stretch of river from the provisions of the

Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (NH RSA 483-B), allowing for more efficient development of the Sugar River water front in the down town core.

Community survey analysis: Improved lighting, electrical power, restrooms and a water supply should be provided. This area is becoming a venue for public art, concerts, community festivals and cultural events. This “identity” should be encouraged and supported with proper planning, improvements, maintenance and allocation of resources. It is recommended that a partnership with the Fiske Free Library be initiated regarding this park. Administrative jurisdiction over the Green and the Visitors Center should be clarified. Safety and security must be priorities for improvements. The adjacent “gas company” and original Lacasse Park properties should be incorporated into the Green. A permanent band shell and/or stage should be constructed at an appropriate location within the expanded Green. Construct walking/bicycle paths throughout the parcel. Address invasive plant species throughout this parcel.

Sarah B.H. Smith Riverside Park

The Sara B.H. Smith Riverside Park is located adjacent to the Washington Street/North Street intersection near the downtown. This park is approximately 2.6 acres in size with 470 linear feet of Sugar River shoreline. The park facilities include a skate park, the Jason W. Hagerman Memorial Pavilion and open space for passive recreation.

Community survey analysis: It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park. Create better pedestrian and bicycle access to the park.

Moody Park

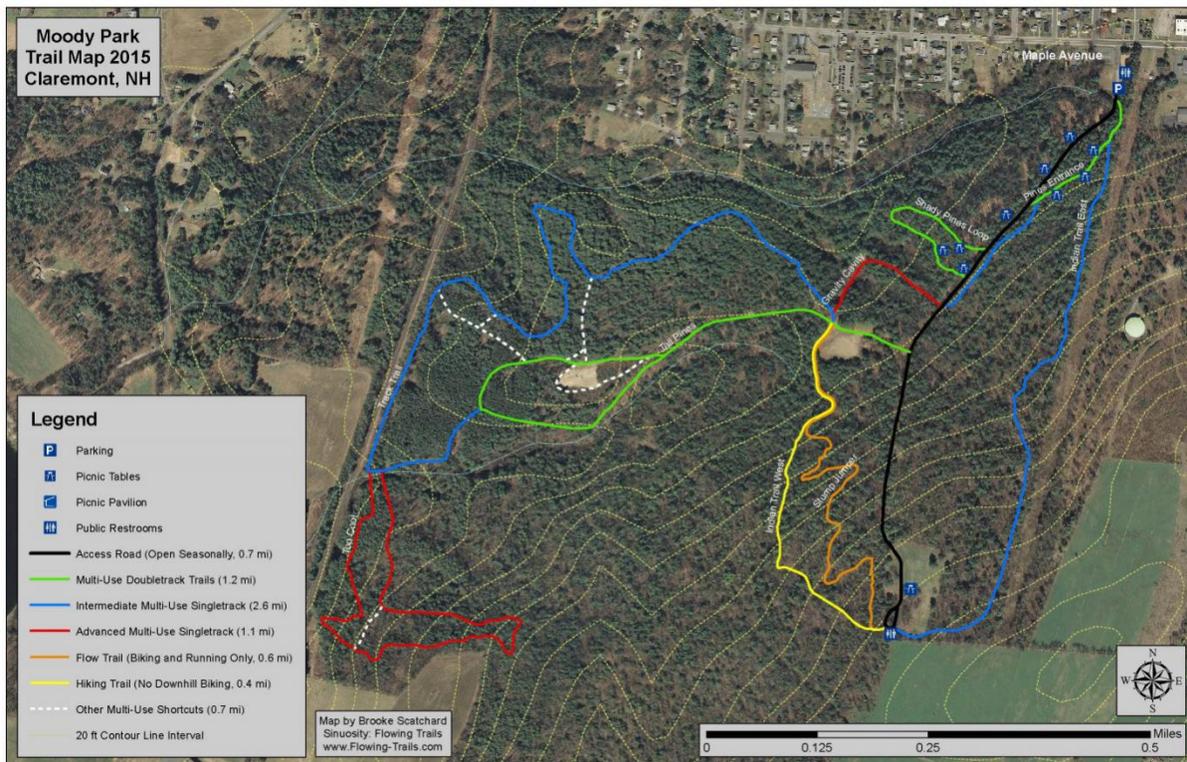
In March of 1916, William H.H. Moody, a retired Claremont businessman, donated the land known as Moody Park. Moody’s gift to the City was described at the time as “a donation, for use as a public park and recreation ground, to be [enjoyed] for free by the people of Claremont.” The Moody Park property offers spectacular views, picnic areas and a pavilion, a playground, tennis courts, a seasonal ice skating rink, a gravel road, and an extensive hiking, running and biking trail network. The park is open to vehicular traffic Memorial Day to Columbus Day (only on weekends after Labor Day) and is open only to hiking, biking, and skiing during the winter. In the late 1800’s, Mr. Moody built and operated a horse racing facility

adjacent to Moody Park on land which now contains Maple Avenue School and surrounding housing. This facility hosted Stevens High School track meets as well as motorcycle and automobile racing.

With the recent inclusion of an adjacent City-owned parcel, Moody Park is approximately 229 acres of City-owned open space available for outdoor recreation opportunities. Figure [1].

Extensive forest management has been conducted throughout the park resulting in a much healthier forest and improved visitor experience. The funds generated by the logging allowed for the construction of the initial phase of a comprehensive trail network.

Figure 1: Overall Facilities Map for Moody Park



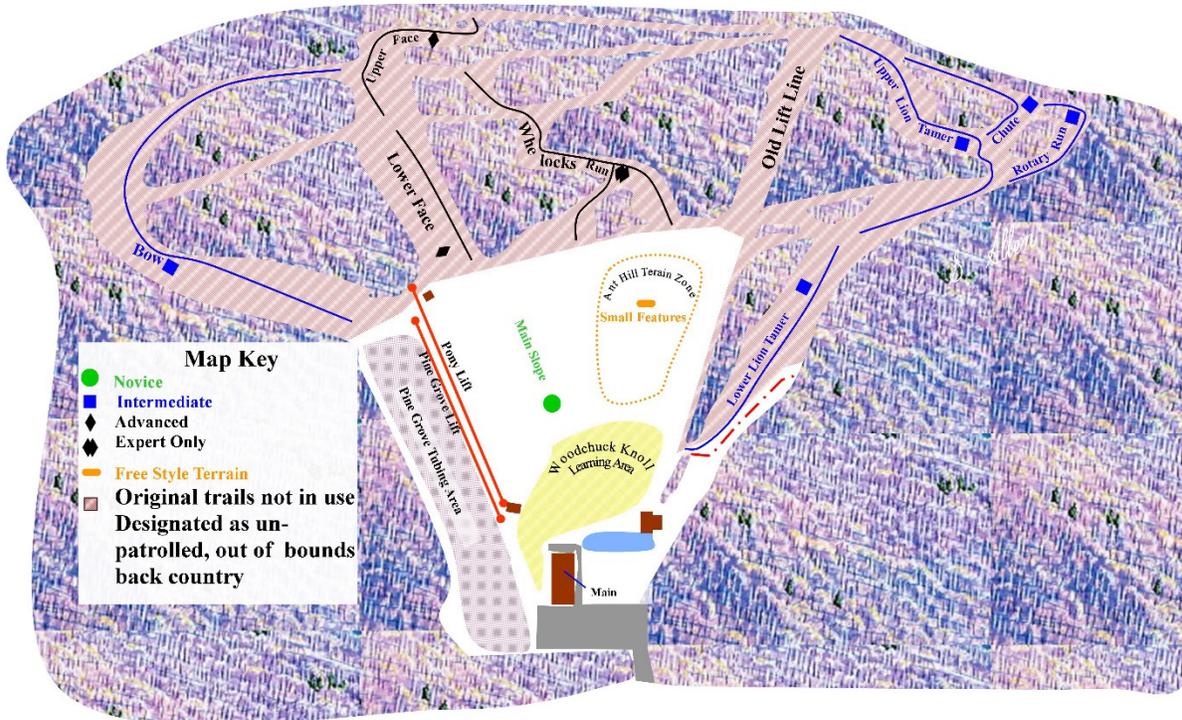
Community survey analysis: Continue to create, improve and maintain the pedestrian/bicycle trail network. Address invasive plant species throughout this parcel. It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park. Address any issues necessary to allow year-round vehicular access to the park.

Arrowhead Recreation Area

The Arrowhead Recreation Area is a 204-acre parcel with access from South Street along Robert Easter Way. This parcel is the site for many Parks & Recreation Department programs. This site abuts the Claremont Middle School and the Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center and is across the street from the Community Center.

The Arrowhead Recreation Area also hosts ski, snowboard, and snow tube slopes with rope tow service and snow making capacity. The Arrowhead Recreation Club (<http://www.arrowheadnh.com/>) manages these winter operations. The ski slopes opened in 1962 named King's Arrow, in association with a local hotel. From approximately 1979 to 1990 the facility was leased to and operated by the Kiwanis Club. In 2001 the Arrowhead Recreation Club was founded and the facility has been operational in many forms since that time. Figure [3] illustrates the current open and out-of-bounds trails for the ski area.

Figure 2: Current Open and Out of Bounds Trails, Arrowhead Ski Area



Community survey analysis: Encourage and support a strong volunteer effort. Improve marketing, promotion and community awareness of the facility. Create and support year-round, sustainable programming. It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park.

Barnes Park

Barnes Park is located on North Street near the intersection of Elm Street. It is home to many high school and other sporting events. The parcel is approximately 7.4 acres including lighted playing fields, a playground, two lighted basketball courts, and bleachers that also house the existing Parks & Recreation Department equipment. During winter months, there is a skating rink and warming hut in the park. This facility serves as a neighborhood park and a significant community recreation resource for year-round activities.

Community survey analysis: Improve and construct restroom facilities. Review the financial and staffing relationship between the Parks Department and the school system. Install

bleachers on “the Hill”. Incorporate surrounding City-owned parcels into accessory use for Barnes Park. Consider this park as a location for a splash pad or other water feature. Address the need for repair and improvement to the grandstand, including the need for team dressing rooms and related facilities. Improve the parking lot.

Monadnock Park

Monadnock Park is located close to downtown with access from Broad Street and Chestnut Street. The parcel is approximately 21 acres with 2.75 acres of city-owned wetlands abutting the parcel. The Monadnock Park abuts the city-owned rail trail that connects with other local



and regional trail systems. The park facilities include playground equipment, tennis courts, a storage building, and a wide range of playing fields including football, regulation and little league baseball fields, a rubberized surface track and field complex (constructed through private donations), a multi-purpose field, and a softball field. Like other City Parks, Monadnock Park is the site of Claremont School District athletic program practices and competitions.

Community survey analysis: Review the financial and staffing relationship between the Parks Department and the Claremont School District. Improve and construct restroom facilities. It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this park. Complete the process of incorporating a portion of the adjacent farm field into the park and developing connections to the rail trail. Demolish and either reconstruct or relocate the tennis courts. Replace and relocate the play structure. Address invasive plant species throughout this parcel. The rubberized track surface is in need of replacement. Consider this park as a location for a splash pad or other water feature.

Ashley’s Landing

The Col. Ashley Ferry Boat Landing, at the end of Ferry Landing Road, which is off of River Road in western Claremont, provides the only public access to the Connecticut River in the City. Facilities on the 2.1-acre site include a boat ramp, parking area, and opportunities for passive recreation. The parcel has approximately 940 linear feet of Connecticut River shoreline.

Community survey analysis: The Parks Department should establish a comprehensive relationship of collaboration regarding this venue with the relevant state or federal agencies having jurisdiction over this area.

Claremont Savings Bank Community Center

The Claremont Savings Bank Community Center (CSBCC) opened its doors in March of 2013 to replace the aging Goodwin Community Center that was established in 1942. The CSBCC is located at 152 South Street across the street from the Claremont Middle School, the Sugar River Technical Center and Arrowhead Recreation Area. The property abuts the rail trail that runs behind the building and connects to Monadnock Park, which is just a short walk from the building. The CSBCC supports itself primarily with revenue from facility rentals and program and user fees supplemented by taxpayer funds.



The CSBCC is a 52,000-square foot, state of the art building. It houses a gymnasium with 1 full size basketball/futsal court that divides into 2 small sided basketball courts, has 6 adjustable hoops, 2 volleyball and 3 pickle ball courts. The Fitness/Wellness center has a full line of cardiovascular machines and free weights in addition to specialized equipment with total access features. The aerobics room is part of the grand function community room space with a rubber sports flooring. The indoor walking/jogging track has 3 lanes for exercise where 14 laps equal one mile. The aquatic center includes an 8-lane, 25-yard competition pool and a small lesson/exercise pool that goes from 2 feet deep to 4 feet deep. This facility includes both a men's and women's locker room facility that includes lockers and showers. The CSBCC also has multi-function rooms. The one on the main floor can either be 2 smaller rooms or one large room and there is a room off of the pool that hosts a number of various activities. Since its opening, usage has steadily increased each year.

Community survey analysis: Continue to develop non-sports related programming for all ages. Improve access to expanded parking, including lighting, crosswalks and safety measures. The City should consider adding staff positions at the CSBCC to properly respond to the growing demand for programming and activities. It is recommended that the City allocate sufficient resources to properly maintain and improve this facility. Create a formal connection to the rail trail from the rear of the building. Expand and encourage the volunteer base. Create, enhance



and develop promotional activities, marketing and a social media presence, including the creation of a paid staff position for this purpose. Develop and expand after-school activities and a formal programming relationship with the-. Develop programming and initiatives to attract and include economically disadvantaged residents. It is recommended that a formal partnership with the Fiske Free Library be developed focusing on shared recreational opportunities.

Table 1: Park/Facilities Amenities

Amenities	CSBCC	Broad Street Park	Veterans Park	Arrowhead	Monadnock Park	Riverside Park	Barnes Park	Visitor Center Green	Factory Street Park	LaCasse Park	Moody Park
Lodge				X							
Skiing/tubing				X							
Grandstand/bleachers	X		X		X		X				
Indoor Gymnasium	X										
Indoor Pool	X										
Fitness room	X										
Aerobic room	X										
Multipurpose room / meeting room	X			X							
Outdoor Pool											
Neighborhood Park		X	X	X	X	X	X	?	X	X	X
Historic Features		X			X		X	X		X	
Basketball Courts							X				
Tennis Courts					X						X
Lighted Courts						X	X				
Picnic Areas				X	X	X					X
Parking	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Pavilion						X					X
Playground					X		X				X
Trails	X			X	X						X
Skate Park						X					
Ice Skating				X			X				X
Running Track					X						
Football Field					X		X				
Baseball field's					X		X				
Soccer field					X		X				
Softball Field			X		X						
Lighted Field(s)			X				X				
Boat Ramp											
Horseshoe Pits			X								
Restroom facilities	X			X	X		X				
Locker-room/changing room	X										
Bandstand		X									

Rail Trail

The City of Claremont acquired a portion of the abandoned Boston and Maine railroad bed in 1998, running from Pleasant Street across from LaValley Building Supply to Broad Street to Chestnut Street to Washington Street and ending at the metal gate approximately one quarter mile east of Home Depot. The Rail Trail from that point east to Newport is owned and maintained by the state. The City-owned corridor is approximately 70 to 80 feet wide according to the railroad valuation survey map. It is recognized that rail trail assets should be considered and utilized to be long, narrow trails.

Community survey analysis: Encourage collaboration between the Conservation Commission, which manages the trail, and the Parks and Recreation Commission and other interested trail users.

Community Attitudes

The Recreation Department conducted a Needs Assessment Study for its facility planning in 2001 and the City of Claremont conducted a broader Community Attitude Survey in 2008 as part of the master planning effort. The following tables summarize the community responses to these surveys.

2001 Recreation Needs Assessment Study

The City Recreation Department conducted this survey to help determine citizen usage, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The scope of this survey ranged from perceived quality of recreation facilities in the City to stated needs and preferences for new or renovated facilities. The following bullets summarize community attitudes about existing facilities at the time of the survey.

- Half of the responding households participating in recreational programs. 89% of the participating programs responded that the programs were Excellent (32%) or Good (57%).
- 78% of responding households stated that they had visited a park in the last year. 75% of those respondents rated parks as Excellent (20%) or Good (55%).
- The most popular programs included Art/Theater/Outdoor Concerts, Recreational Swimming, Special Events, Youth Basketball & Baseball, Youth Swim Lessons, and Walking Programs.
- The most popular facilities included trails, neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and indoor facilities.

2008 Community Attitude Survey

The City's Community Attitude Survey addressed a broad range of City services, facilities, and regulations. The survey also requested opinions regarding future land use and funding options. The following tables summarize survey responses relevant to recreational facilities.

Figure 3: Public Opinion - Importance of City Attributes

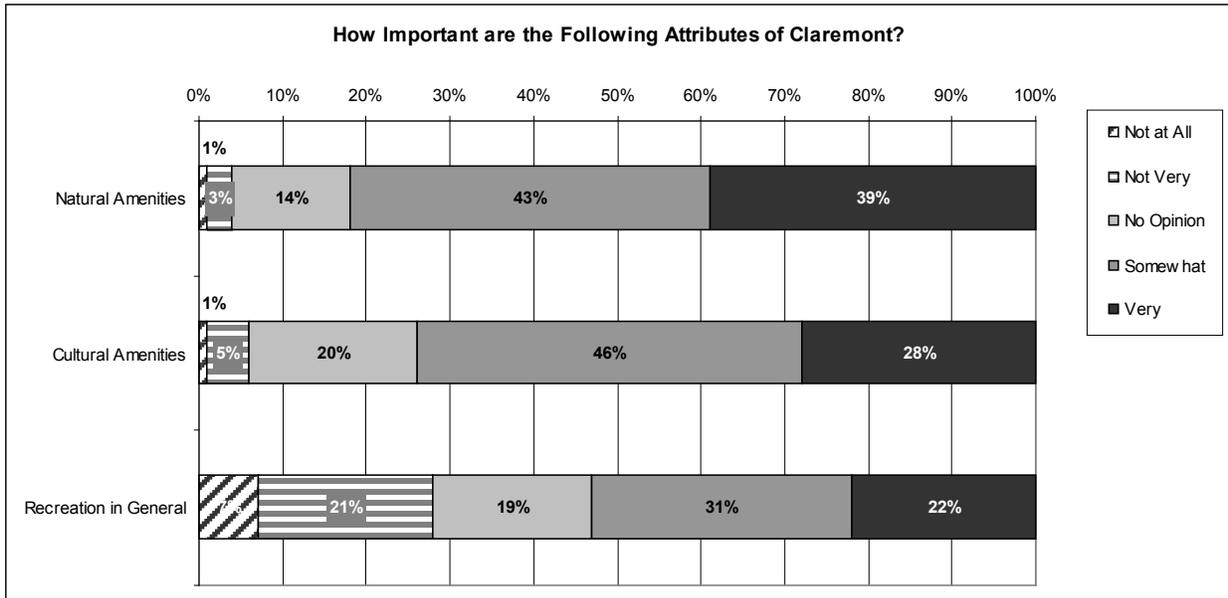
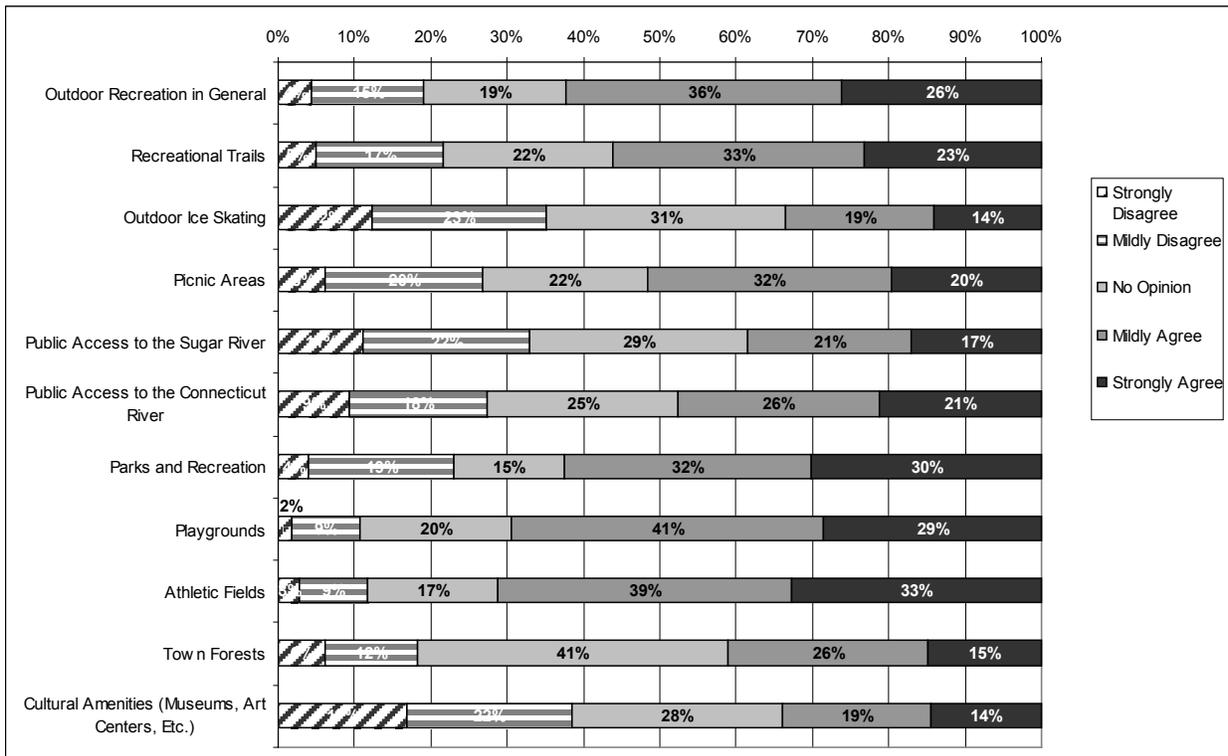


Figure 4: Public Opinion - Sufficiency of Funding for Recreational Facilities and Programs



2016 Master Plan survey

Survey work conducted in connection with the 2016/17 master plan revisions reaffirmed the strong community support in Claremont for recreation and culture.

- The Claremont Savings Bank Community Center was identified as one of the top reasons citizens “like living in Claremont.”
- Enhancing arts and culture was identified as one of the top areas citizens “would like to change about Claremont.”
- The vast majority of respondents have personally utilized park facilities and rate the condition as either fair, good or excellent. Security and restroom facilities were identified as priorities for improvement.
- Pedestrian and bike access and safety were identified as areas needing improvement.

Goals

Goal 1: Promote Health and Wellness in our community

1. Take the steps necessary to again become a Tree City.
<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/about.cfm>
2. Take the steps necessary to make Claremont, especially the downtown core, a pedestrian and bicycle friendly community, including the maintenance, improvement and creation of biking and walking trails.
3. Prevention of vandalism and promoting safety should be priorities.
4. Maintain and improve pedestrian and bicycle access to all parks and facilities.
5. Address invasive plant species throughout the park system.
6. Enhance public spaces with public art that will delight, engage, and inspire
7. Develop a mission statement for community wellness as part of the Parks and Recreation Department planning process.

Goal 2: Expand and enhance recreational facilities, parks, trails, and bike paths to encourage additional use opportunities

1. Develop “pocket parks” in appropriate City-owned lots.
2. Construct and properly maintain splash pads and other water features at appropriate venues around the city.
3. install suitable lighting, fencing, landscaping and comfort facilities as appropriate throughout the parks system.
4. The process of reconfiguring and improving Broad Street Park initiated by the Parks Department should be encouraged and continued.
5. Appropriate available property adjacent to any park should be considered for possible addition to the park system.
6. Visitor Center Green
 - a. Installation of lighting, electrical power, restrooms and a water supply.
 - b. This area is becoming a venue for public art, concerts, community festivals and cultural events. This “identity” should be encouraged and supported with proper planning, improvements, maintenance and allocation of resources.
 - c. Clarify administrative jurisdiction over the Green and the Visitors Center.

- d. Improve safety and security.
 - e. Construct a permanent band shell and/or stage at an appropriate location within the expanded Green.
 - f. Incorporate the adjacent “gas company” property and the original Lacasse Park into the Green.
 - g. Construct walking/bicycle paths throughout the parcel.
7. Improve the access to parking throughout the parks system, including lighting, crosswalks and safety measures.
8. Rail Trail
- a. Encourage collaboration between the Conservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Committee and other interested trail users in the creation and implementation of the rail trail master plan whose purpose will be to discern, promote, and develop the full potential of the multi-user recreation trail. We envision the rail trail becoming a greater recreational asset for the community.

Reference is also made to open urban space in the Natural Resource chapter of this Master Plan section 3.3.1 Open Space.

Goal 3: Create and implement improved maintenance plans with adequate funding that will protect our assets for long term community use

- 1. It is expected that the City will analyze regularly and effectively allocate sufficient staff and resources to properly maintain and improve recreational programming, facilities, parks and the community center.
- 2. Resurface the rubberized track surface in Monadnock Park.

Goal 4: Enhance recreation and cultural programming to meet the needs of the residents of Claremont and surrounding communities

- 1. Create, develop and support year-round, sustainable programming for all ages, including non-sports related programming.
- 2. Develop and expand after school activities and a formal programming relationship with the school district.
- 3. Develop programming and initiatives to attract and include economically disadvantaged residents.
- 4. Allocate sufficient staffing and resources to meet this programming goal.
- 5. Recognize and develop the role culture (especially art, music and literacy) has within the larger recreational context through programming and activities.
- 6. Fund, develop and properly staff a marketing, promotional and public awareness strategy, including the use of social media.

Goal 5: Build strong partnerships that further the high standards needed for Claremont programs and facilities

- 1. The Parks Department should initiate and guide a community-driven planning process to envision and realize the optimal use of Moody Park, Visitors Center Green, Factory Street Park and the City-owned parcel behind the old community center.

2. The Parks Department will collaborate with the Historic District Commission when considering future changes or improvements to Broad Street Park.
3. Explore ways to engage and promote community involvement with developing and improving specific Parks Department facilities.
4. Develop, encourage and support a strong volunteer effort throughout the entire parks and recreation system.
5. Review the financial and staffing relationship between the Parks Department and the school system.
6. Develop a formal, collaborative relationship with the Fiske Free Library focused on co-developing suitable programming within the larger recreational context.
7. The Parks Department should establish a comprehensive relationship of collaboration regarding Ashley's Landing with the relevant state or federal agencies having jurisdiction over this area.
8. The Parks Department and the Claremont School system should develop a comprehensive, formal relationship regarding programming, facilities, staffing and shared resources.