

# CHAPTER 6

## PARKS AND RECREATION

EXETER MASTER PLAN  
2002 UPDATE



OCTOBER, 2002

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# Parks and Recreation

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## 1. Introduction

Exeter supports numerous parks and recreation programs for a variety of its residents. A recreation program includes active and passive year-round recreation activities run by public and private entities. Refer to Table PR-1 for a summary of available activities in public and private facilities.

The Town maintains a total of fifty-nine parks, cemeteries, and commons. The Town's public recreation program, sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, is varied, ranging from summer concerts and youth sports programs to ceramics classes and senior citizen activities. The popularity of the Town's recreation programs is reflected by the estimated 50% participation rate of Exeter residents in one or more of the programs or activities.

The 2002 Master Plan Visioning Sessions generated many ideas on how to further strengthen the town's parks and recreational facilities and programs. The recommendations fall under four major goals:

- (1) Improve public awareness of and access to facilities
- (2) Provide increased opportunities for lifelong recreation
- (3) Improve the utilization of existing indoor and outdoor facilities
- (4) Continue to preserve and enhance a sense of community

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## 2. Major Recreation Facilities

The Town of Exeter has a diverse set of facilities administered by private groups, the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD) and by the School districts (Exeter Elementary School District and Cooperative Regional School District). This section reviews major active (i.e. sports oriented) and passive (i.e. picnicking, walking) facilities in the Town.

Major recreation facilities areas in Exeter are shown in **Map PR-1**. The EPRD maintains a number of parks and public lands that provide active and passive recreational opportunities for Exeter residents. All together, the EPRD maintains fifty-nine parks, cemeteries, and commons.

Recreation Facility Activity Summary  
Town of Exeter  
2002 Master Plan

Facility	Baseball	Softball	Football	Soccer	Field Hockey / Lacrosse	Tennis	Golf	Skateboarding / Rollerblading	Basketball (outdoor)	Basketball (indoor)	Multi-use (indoor)	Bowling	Bicycle Paths	Playground	Walking / Hiking Paths	Gardens / Flowers	Picnic Area	Boating / Canoeing / Kayaking	Fishing (warm weather)	Ice Fishing	Swimming (outdoors)	Swimming (indoors)	X-Country Skiing	Stedding	Ice Skating (outdoors)	Ice Skating (indoors)
<b>Town Recreation Facilities</b>																										
Recreation Park	X	X		X		X			X					X			X				X					
Brickyard Park	X	X		X					X					X												
Kid's Park									X					X												
* Gilman Park									X					X												
+ Henderson Swasey Town Forest									X					X												
+ Oakland's Town Forest									X					X												
Littlefield Skate Board Park								X																		
Stewart Park Boat Launch																	X			X						
Senior Center																										
<b>School Recreation Facilities</b>																										
Lincoln / Main Street Schools	X	X							X	X	X			X												
Cooperative Middle School	X	X		X	X				X	X	X			X												
Exeter High School and HS Annex	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X			X												
# Phillips Exeter Academy	X	X	X	X	X					X	X										X					X
<b>Private Recreational Facilities</b>																										
Synergy Health and Fitness																										
Exeter Bowling Lanes												X														
Exeter Country Club																										
Gymnastics																										
Osram Sylvania Field	X	X		X	X																					X
The Rinks at Exeter																										
Results Swim and Fitness																										
<b>Major Park Facilities in Town</b>																										
Bandstand																										
Gale Park																										
Founders Park													X													
Park Street Common	X	X												X												
Powder House																										
Stewart Park																										
* Swasey Park																										
Town House Common																										
<b>Other Park / Recreational Facilities</b>																										
Brickyard Pond																	X									X
Colcord Pond																										X
Exeter Sportsmen's Club																										
+ Jolly Rarrd Historical Trail																										
Pickpocket Dam																										
Squamscott River																										
Waterworks Pond																										

\* Privately owned and administered property that may be used by the public  
 + Publicly owned facility administered by the Conservation Commission that may be used by the public  
 # Privately run secondary school that will rent selected facilities on a reserved space available basis to organized programs

**Town Recreational Facilities**

**Recreation Park / Planet Playground** – Located on Hampton Road, this 22 acre outdoor park is currently the largest and most heavily used town recreational facility.

Outdoor Pool - The park contains an “L” shaped 25 yard pool, kiddy pool, and bath house. The pool is used from sun up to sun down. Starting early in the morning, the Exeter Swim Team rents the pool for use as its summer practice facility. Later in the morning the EPRD conducts Red Cross Swim Lessons. In the afternoon and evening, the pool is available for open swim. The pool averages more than 19,000 paid admissions for open swim each summer.

*The pool averages more than 19,000 paid admissions for open swim each summer.*

Tennis Courts - The park also contains eight tennis courts that host EPRD-sponsored youth and adult lessons, open court play for all ages, and competitive tennis for the boys and girls high school tennis teams. Each season there are more than 800 paid registrations to the youth and adult tennis lesson program sponsored by the EPRD and conducted by KL Tennis. As of 2002, the tennis courts are cracked and in severe need for resurfacing. The Townspeople have voted to approve half of the money for resurfacing in 2002, and will be asked to approve the other half in 2003.

Playing fields consist of an adult softball field and two youth fields. The adult softball field hosts games for Co-ed Adult Softball League. The two youth fields serve to host EPRD Youth (ages 5-12) baseball and softball in the spring and EPRD Youth soccer (ages 5-12) in the fall.

During the summer, the facility hosts EPRD-run Play Camp, a popular daytime sports camp for ages 6-12. The eight-week session attracts 150 students per week or 1200 registrants annually. The Recreation Park also hosts several youth soccer clinics and special events during the summer.

Other facilities at the Recreation Park include two outdoor basketball courts, a fitness trail, and a 100-car parking lot. At peak activity times the parking lot is routinely filled to capacity and beyond.

Lighting - The Recreation Park is limited to daylight activities because it has no lighting. Users of the Recreation Park would prefer to be able to use the facilities more into the early evening. Any facility lighting must take into account that there are residential abutters to the Recreation Park, including the SunRise of Exeter nursing home.

*The Recreation Park is limited to daylight activities because it has no lighting.*

*The EPRD should seek to develop winter sports capabilities at Recreation Park, such as ice skating or cross country skiing tracks.*

Planet Playground - Planet Playground is a volunteer designed, volunteer funded and volunteer built playground structure that is very popular with younger families. Built in 1998, Planet Playground has been turned over to the Town and is maintained by the EPRD. In addition to Planet Playground, the Recreation Park contains an additional playground and numerous other pieces of playground equipment.

During the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session, the Lincoln Street School Student Council gave its highest priority to making Recreation Park improvements such as a bigger water slide, mountain bike trails, and new playground equipment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD must resurface the tennis courts in 2003 or risk having the courts becoming unsafe for play.
2. The EPRD should install lights on the outdoor tennis courts, basketball courts, outdoor pool and playing fields at the Recreation Park to encourage better utilization of town-owned facilities. The lights should be installed to minimize impact to abutters.
3. The EPRD should try to increase the length of the pool season through Labor Day and increase the hours of operation of the pool to better meet public demand.
4. The EPRD should continue to upgrade the Recreation Park facilities so that it will continue to be the facility of choice for youths seeking active recreation opportunities.
5. The EPRD should seek to develop winter sports capabilities at Recreation Park, such as ice skating or cross country skiing tracks.
6. The EPRD should attempt to expand the Recreation Park by purchasing abutting land.

*At the 2002 Master Plan visioning session, residents expressed a strong desire to have bicycle and walking paths connecting Brickyard Park to the center of town so that many park users could reach the park without having to drive a car.*

**Brickyard Park** – Located on Kingston Road, this 12.75 acre park contains a field for youth baseball, a field for youth softball, playground area and a 40 car parking lot. During the spring the fields are used for EPRD Youth baseball and softball (ages 5-12). In the fall, the two fields are converted to a single youth soccer field for use by the EPRD Youth Soccer program (ages 5-12).

At the 2002 Master Plan visioning session, residents expressed a strong desire to have bicycle and walking paths connecting Brickyard Park to the center of town so that many park users could reach the park without having to drive a car.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Public Works Department should extend bike paths and/or sidewalks to connect the center of town, Brickyard Park, and the neighborhoods immediately west of the park. This will encourage walking and the use of bicycles to access Brickyard Park.
2. The Town should install lights on the playing fields at Brickyard Park to extend usage of the fields into the early evening.

**Kid's Park** – The ¾ acre park on Front Street has a playground, benches, basketball backboard and grass area for activities.

**Gilman Park** – Located on Bell Avenue, is privately-owned and administered by the Gilman Park Trustees. The Trustees have voted to make the Park available to the Town of Exeter for recreational use. The EPRD funds and performs routine park maintenance. This 15 acre park contains a boat launch, playground area, picnic area, basketball court, and two youth baseball fields. The EPRD uses the baseball fields for its Youth Baseball program (ages 5-12). An on-site parking lot provides ample parking.

During the summer of 2001, the Gilman Park Trustees invited the townspeople to complete a survey about their usage of the park and to share their ideas for future use. Twenty-seven responses were received, the majority of which expressed a need for restrooms and envisioned the park as a natural woodland rather than a more formal urban park. Residents also expressed concern regarding the amount of rubbish being dumped in the park.

**Henderson Swasey Town Forest** - Administered by the Conservation Commission, the Town Forest contains numerous jogging and mountain biking trails. Primary access to the Town Forest is located on Newfields Road immediately north of the railroad bridge underpass. Each fall the Henderson Swasey Town Forest is the site of the privately-run “Mud In Your Eye 500” mountain bike race. The Seacoast NH Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association helps to maintain the mountain biking trails. A more thorough description of the Town Forest is found in the “Conservation and Preservation” section of the Master Plan.

**Oaklands Town Forest** – Administered by the Conservation commission the Oaklands Town Forest contains numerous jogging and mountain biking trails. Primary access to the Town Forest is located on Newfields Road immediately north of the Rt. 101 overpass. A tunnel under Rt. 101

*Each fall the Henderson Swasey Town Forest is the site of the privately-run “Mud In Your Eye 500” mountain bike race.*

connects the Oaklands and Henderson Swasey Town Forests. A more thorough description of the Town Forest is found in the “Conservation and Preservation” section of the Master Plan.

**Littlefield Skate Board Park** – This one acre park on Court Street is an outdoor skate board park that was built by volunteers in 1999 and turned over to the EPRD for maintenance. The park is designed to attract skate board enthusiasts from beginners to experienced intermediate riders, (ages youth through high school).

**Stewart Park Boat Launch** – Located within Stewart Park on Water Street, the public boat launch is used to launch boats, canoes and kayaks into the Swampscott River, and is used to launch fishing huts onto the frozen river when conditions permit in the winter months.

**Senior Center** - Located on Court Street, the Senior Center houses a variety of senior groups and activities, including the Bridge Club and Walking Club. Since 2002 computer classes for seniors have been offered in the Senior Center. The Senior Center provides mid-day meals and Meals on Wheels service for Exeter Residents. Usage of the Senior Center is scheduled through the EPRD Office.

For a more complete description of the Senior Center, see the Facilities and Equipment section of this chapter.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Public Works Department should continue its new sidewalk construction program. Special emphasis should be on constructing bicycle paths and sidewalks that will connect residential areas, public spaces, and parks. This will encourage the use of bicycles and walking to access town facilities rather than the use of cars.
2. The EPRD and Public Works Department should work together to develop formal, signed bicycle path loops within the town and perhaps paths that connect to adjoining towns.
3. The EPRD should create a process to capture and document possible usage of impact fees for each public recreation area and park.



**School Recreational Facilities**

**Lincoln & Main Street Schools Playing Fields, Playgrounds and Gymnasiums** – The Lincoln Street School (grades 3-5) and Main Street School (grade K-2) are the two primary elementary primary schools for Exeter residents. Although the schools reside on Lincoln and Main Streets, respectively, they back up to each other and effectively share a common outdoor recreation area. The school facilities are funded, administered, and maintained by the SAU16 School District.

Main Street School has one indoor multi-purpose court that is used by the EPRD in the winter for its Youth Basketball Program (ages 5-12).

Lincoln Street School has a larger multi-purpose indoor court that can accommodate two youth basketball games or a single middle school, high school or adult level game. The EPRD uses the indoor courts for Youth Basketball (ages 5-12), Middle School (grades 6-8) Intramural Basketball and High School (grades 9-12) Intramural Basketball programs. The EPRD also conducts supervised Open Gym times at the Lincoln Street School gym during Christmas and Winter vacation weeks.

Each school has an outdoor playground designed to be age-appropriate for its students. The Main Street School playground and Lincoln Street School playground equipment are both in need of update. The Lincoln Street Parent Teacher Organization and School Board is currently working together to develop a plan to improve the playground.

Located between the two schools are two youth baseball / softball fields (Currier Field and Walsh Field). Currier and Walsh Fields are used extensively by the privately-run Cal Ripken Baseball program (ages 9-12). The Exeter High School freshmen and junior varsity girls' softball teams also use Currier Field during the spring sports season.

At the 2002 Visioning Session the townspeople expressed a desire to generally upgrade the outdoor facilities behind the two schools. Student attendees in particular expressed a desire to remove some trees, do a general leveling, and create a grassy area. Students want to, for example, safely play pick-up games during recess and after school without worrying about running into trees, stepping in uneven areas, or playing on bare dirt or asphalt.

*The Main Street School playground and Lincoln Street School playground equipment are both in need of update.*

*Students want to, for example, safely play pick-up games during recess and after school without worrying about running into trees, stepping in uneven areas, or playing on bare dirt or asphalt.*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Town of Exeter should support the efforts of regional and local school entities to work together in upgrading the Lincoln and Main

Street School playgrounds and fields into a suitable youth recreation area.

*At the Cooperative Middle School, during the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 954 students participated on 38 athletic teams in ten different sports.*

**Cooperative Middle School fields and gymnasium** – The Cooperative Middle School serves students in grades 6-8 from all six towns in the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District (Brentwood, East Kingston, Exeter, Kensington, Newfields and Stratham). Exeter students make up approximately 50% of the school population. Although the Cooperative Middle School is actually located off of Guinea road in Stratham, it is located just over the Exeter border. It is included in this chapter because its facilities are an integral part of the active recreation facilities available to Exeter residents.

The school facilities are funded, administered, and maintained by the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District. The Cooperative Middle School facility includes two multi-purpose indoor basketball courts, a baseball field, a softball field, and three multi-purpose athletic fields. During the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 954 students participated on 38 athletic teams in ten different sports.

The EPRD also uses the indoor courts for “men’s over 35” pickup basketball and the end-of-season Ted Seabrooke basketball tournament for Youth Basketball program (ages 10-12). The EPRD also uses the outdoor fields for summer youth lacrosse camps.

*Did you know Exeter High School is the only Class L High School in the state without any lighted fields?*

**Exeter High School and High School Annex** – located adjacent to one another on Linden Street, the High School and High School Annex (the Annex is also known as the old Junior High School) serves students from all six towns in the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District. The school facilities are funded, administered, and maintained by the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District.

The current facilities offer three multi-purpose indoor basketball courts, a combination baseball / football field, a football practice field, three multi-purpose fields and a softball field. Many of the fields overlay each other so, for example, when a baseball game is being played it ties up the combination baseball / football field, a multi-purpose field and the softball field. During the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 1179 students participated on 54 teams in 17 sports.

There is a significant shortage of athletic facilities at the High School. At the 2002 Visioning Session, the single highest importance was attached to the long overdue renovation of the high school and fields.

The high school athletic program tries to compensate for facility shortages by renting fields, indoor cage, swimming pool, and track on a space available basis from Philips Exeter Academy. The High School also rents ice time from the privately run Rinks at Exeter for use by its hockey teams and uses the Exeter Country Club for its golf teams and

uses Currier Field at Lincoln Street School for freshmen and JV girls softball.

The rental of additional facilities, though, barely meets the minimum for space demands. Significant needs exist for more intramural or recreational programs for high school students who are not involved in competitive sports.

The Exeter Youth Soccer Association uses the outdoor fields at the High School and Osram Sylvania for its youth soccer program throughout the year.

During the summer the EPRD utilizes the High School facilities for a number of youth sports camps and activities, including basketball and football. The High School Annex gym also serves as headquarters for the EPRD Play Camp in case of inclement weather.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Town should support the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District's plans to develop suitable high school athletic facilities, including additional fields, lighted fields and an outdoor track.

**Phillips Exeter Academy Ice Arena, Athletic Fields, and Pool** – Phillips Exeter Academy (PEA) provides athletic facilities for its students and staff. Located on Court Street, selected facilities may be rented on a reserved, space available basis for use by organized programs through the PEA Athletic Office. As a privately run secondary school, the Academy otherwise does not generally make its athletic facilities open to the public. Some current (2002) examples of groups that utilize PEA facilities follow.

The PEA outdoor track, the only outdoor track in Exeter, is used by the EPRD Hershey Track & Field program, the Cooperative Middle School track team, and the Exeter High School track team. The Exeter High School field hockey and lacrosse teams use the PEA athletic fields on a regular basis due to lack of facilities at Exeter High School. The EPRD Co-ed Adult Softball program rents the PEA outdoor softball field for scheduled games due to lack of capacity at the Recreation Park.

The privately run New Hampshire East Youth hockey program currently uses the PEA ice arena. The PEA pool, the only regulation indoor pool in Exeter, is used by the privately-run Exeter Swim Team and by the Exeter High School Swim Team.

*During the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 1179 students participated on 54 teams in 17 sports.*

*Did you know Exeter High School is the only public school in Class L that does not have a track?*

Each of these groups contract and schedule facility use directly with the PEA Athletic Office.

### **Private Recreational Facilities:**

This section summarizes some of the major private recreation facilities available to townspeople. Information on these facilities is provided for information only and no recommendations are made.

**Synergy Health and Fitness** – Located on the campus of Exeter Hospital, Synergy Health and Fitness offers a full array of medically-based fitness programs including weight training, aerobics, swim and massage. As a part of Exeter Health Resources, Synergy also provides exercise programs for individuals with specific health concerns, such as diabetes, asthma, osteoarthritis, and cancer wellness. Exeter residents may also participate in Synergy’s Motherwell exercise program for pre and post-natal women.

**Exeter Bowling Lanes** – Exeter Bowling Lanes has 12 candle pin lanes, as well as a video and pinball arcade. It is home to approximately 20 different bowling leagues for children and adults, including a Senior Citizen League for individuals 50 years of age and older. In conjunction with the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department leagues for 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades are available. (Shooter’s Pub, located next to the bowling lanes, has 10 dart boards and 2 pool tables, open to adults over 21 years of age. Several dart and pool leagues utilize this facility).

**Exeter Country Club** – This is a 9 hole semi-private golf course, with a newly expanded driving range, pro-shop and restaurant. Originally built in 1889, it has been listed by the USGA as one of the first 100 clubs established in the U.S. Approximately 25,000 rounds of golf are played annually. It is also utilized by the Exeter High School Golf Team and various leagues. Children’s golf clinics are offered in the summer.

**Gymrobics** – A gymnastic facility located on Industrial Drive offers gymnastics for children 2 – 18 years of age, as well as a cheerleading program for 6 – 16 year olds.

**Osram Sylvania** – Located off of Portsmouth Avenue has one large field with a baseball diamond that may be reserved by local leagues on a first come, first served basis. Users are required to present certification of insurance. Currently, the field is primarily utilized by the Exeter Youth Soccer Organization.

**The Rinks at Exeter** – This twin rink facility opened in 1998, with a full service pro-shop, café and arcade. It is the home rink for Exeter, Winnacunnet and Portsmouth High School hockey teams, as well as 4 travel teams for youths 6 – 18 years of age. The Rinks also has several house hockey leagues for adults (men, women, co-ed and over 35) and youth (6 – 18 years old), as well as Learn to Play Hockey Programs (5 – 9 years of age). The rinks offers the largest learn to skate program in NH, beginning at 3 years of age, and is home to the Ice Skating Club of Exeter.

**Results Swim and Fitness\*** - a complete fitness facility, including weight training and cardio equipment, pool and massage for adult members. Various fitness programs are offered. Adolescents may use the facility with a parent and a family swim is offered on Friday evenings. The pool is leased by CannonBall Swim Program which offers year round lessons for children 3 and older.

**\*Results Swim and Fitness center is no longer in business; moreover, the facility was demolished around 2008.**

**Major Park Facilities in Town:**

Some of the major park facilities that are utilized by town residents are listed below. Specific recommendations about a particular park appear directly after the description of the park. General recommendations about parks are provided at the end of this section.

*The bandstand also serves as the center of many other town events.*

**Bandstand** – The Bandstand (Swasey Pavilion) was given to the town by Ambrose Swasey in 1916. Henry Bacon, architect of the Lincoln Memorial, designed this historic landmark in the center of town. The Exeter Brass Band performed weekly summer concerts at the Bandstand. The bandstand also serves as the center of many other town events. The Exeter Gardening Club performs landscaping around the Bandstand.

**Gale Park** – This ¾ acre park at the corner of Front Street and Linden Street features a war monument, benches, flower gardens, and grass area. The war memorial was designed by Daniel Chester French, designer of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. In 1976, a time capsule was buried with the understanding it would be unearthed in 2076. Gale Park was the beneficiary of several key renovations initiated by the Parks Advisory Committee in 2000 and 2001.

*Gale Park was the beneficiary of several key renovations initiated by the Parks Advisory Committee in 2000 and 2001.*

**Founders Park** – located on Pleasant Street, this .3-acre park provides a green space link along the river between Water Street and the Town Library. Founder’s Park features a founder’s monument (commissioned by the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee in 1988), benches, picnic area, grass area and a walkway along the river.

*At the 2002 Visioning Session, residents expressed a strong desire to have a well maintained walking path along the Squamscott River.*

**Park Street Common** – Located on Park Street, this 1.3-acre park features a large grass area, playground, picnic area, and backstop. The backstop is not currently used for any organized baseball, as it is generally too small and close to the road. In addition, the backstop faces the sun in the early evening. There are no current plans to modify the field orientation due to the space constraints at the park.

**Powder House** – Exeter’s historic Powder House, located along the Squamscott River is accessible by a short walking trail. Some of the powder captured from Fort William and Mary in 1774, the first overt hostile act of the Revolution, was stored at the Powder House. A small kiosk describes its historic significance. The roof and masonry of the Powder House was restored in 2000. The Public Works Department maintains the Powder House.

The walking trail contains a 1/3 mile loop circuit around a lagoon, which is a popular walking circuit for townspeople and dogs. A secondary trail starts from the Powder House and parallels the river for approximately 1/4 mile until it dead ends. This trail can be traversed but is in need of repair.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD), Conservation Commission and Public Works Department should work together to create a walking path along the Squamscott River from the center of town to the end of the Exeter Country Club property.

*Stewart Park is a popular spot to sit outside and eat lunch.*

**Stewart Park** – this 1 acre waterfront park is accessed from Water Street and features a boat launch, boat dock, boardwalk, grass area, and benches. Because of its close proximity to downtown and picturesque setting, Stewart Park is a popular spot to sit outside and eat lunch. The boardwalk serves to connect the downtown river front with Swasey Parkway.

**Swasey Park** – Located on Swasey Parkway, this river front park is privately owned and administered by the Swasey Park Trustees. The Trustees have voted to make the Park available to the Town of Exeter for recreational use. The Swasey Park endowment funds pay for routine park maintenance and improvements. The Swasey Park Trustees developed and oversaw significant improvements over the past few years including seawall reconstruction, landscaping improvements, and repaving.

The six-acre Swasey Park features a large grass area, benches, picnic area, stage, and a walking path along the river. Swasey Park serves as the focal point for most major outside town gatherings such as Farmer’s Market, parades, fireworks celebrations, Winter Carnival, Revolutionary War Festival and summer band concerts.

*Swasey Parkway serves as the focal point for most major outside town gatherings.*

At the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session, Townspeople expressed a desire for the Town to explore ways to continue to develop Swasey Park as the center for river front beauty and culture. Specific ideas included an outside amphitheater with seating, covered pavilion and continued flower bed and landscaping improvements.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The EPRD and Public Works Department should work with Swasey Park Trustees to develop a plan to better utilize Swasey Park as a center of beauty and culture for the Exeter river front.

**Town House Common** – This .85 acre park at the corner of Court Street and Bow Street serves as scarce green space at the center of town. The Common features grass area, flower gardens, benches, and picnic area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Board of Selectmen and Townspeople should continue to support and fund the recommendations of the Park Study Committee in order to adequately fund maintenance and improvement for existing town parks.
2. The Planning Department and EPRD should work together develop a program to increase green space and gardens in the immediate downtown area.
3. Based on feedback from the 2002 Visioning Session the EPRD should develop a dedicated space to be used as a “dog park.” The dog park would include a fenced in area for dogs to run and waste containers for refuse.
4. The EPRD should develop and administer a public garden preferably within walking distance of the town center, where residents can reserve a patch of land and cultivate their own gardens in a community setting.
5. The EPRD should further promote and expand the “Volunteers Brighten Lives” program that aligns a business or community group with the upkeep of a public space.

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**Other Park / Recreational Facilities:**

**Brickyard Pond** – Located on Kingston Road across from Brickyard Park, the seven-acre Brickyard Pond area consists of a picnic area and a pond that features fishing in the spring, summer and fall and ice skating in the winter. The EPRD stocks the pond and holds its annual Youth Fishing Derby in the spring. Conditions permitting, the public uses the pond in winter for outdoor ice skating.

Parking for Brickyard Pond is available at Brickyard Park, although again residents expressed a desire to be able to walk or bicycle to the pond from the center of town.

**Colcord Pond** - Located on Brentwood Road, Colcord Pond features fishing in the spring, summer and fall and ice skating in the winter.

**Exeter Sportsmen’s Club** – located off of Portsmouth Avenue, this privately-run club is operated on land leased from the Town of Exeter. It features a shooting range and fishing pond. Future water treatment plant expansion planned by the Town of Exeter may cause the club to relocate.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Planning Department and Conservation Commission will need to work with the Exeter Sportsmen’s Club on alternative locations for the Club within the Town.

*Believed to be an old stage coach road which was once used by soldiers during the Revolutionary War, Jolly Rand Road has become a recreational retreat for residents who enjoy hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing.*

**Jolly Rand Historical Trail** – The Jolly Rand Road is a 200-year old narrow, unpaved walking trail a little less than two miles long. The trail is still flanked by the original stone walls. Believed to be an old stage coach road which was once used by soldiers during the Revolutionary War, Jolly Rand Road has become a recreational retreat for residents who enjoy hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing or walking. The trail has entrances on Rt. 111A and on Pickpocket Road.

**Pickpocket Dam Fishing** – Located near the intersection of Pickpocket Road and Cross Road, the small grass area around the dam provides an area for fishing.

**Squamscott River Ice Fishing** – weather permitting, a popular winter activity for residents is ice fishing on the Squamscott River. At peak times of the year, scores of ice fishing shacks will be launched out on the river from the Stewart Park Boat Launch.

**Waterworks Pond** – Located off of Portsmouth Avenue, Waterworks Pond is the main town water supply. The pond may be used for fishing in the spring, summer and fall months.



**Cemeteries** - The Parks and Recreation Department maintains five historic Cemeteries located throughout town at Winter Street, Guinea Road, Exeter/Newfields Town Line Oaklands (Newfields Road), Folsom Street and Water Street. A more complete description of cemeteries and cemetery oversight is found in the “Community Facilities and Civic Life” chapter of the Master Plan.

**The Exeter Conservation Commission** - A twelve member board appointed by the Selectmen and established under RSA 36-A is tasked with the acquisition and management of lands to preserve and protect land and water, natural resources and natural history. Many of these properties are available to the public for passive recreational use. *Please see the “Conservation and Preservation” section of the Master Plan for a more complete description of these resources.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Better inform the public regarding areas for passive recreation, especially trails, and the appropriate uses allowed.
2. Improve communication between the Parks and Recreation Department and Conservation Commission regarding acquisition of new lands, their availability for public use and any restrictions that may be in place.

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**3. Recreation Programs**

The Town of Exeter provides a wide range of recreation programs and activities for its residents. An overview of these programs is provided below:

**Senior Citizens**

In 1973 the Council on Aging was formed by the Board of Selectman to act as a sounding board for the needs, activities and goals of Exeter’s seniors. Almost 30 years later, there are numerous recreation activities available for the 2,300 plus senior citizens (aged 65 and over) in Exeter.

Town-sponsored senior citizen recreation activities are centered in the 7,300 square foot Senior Center located at 30 Court Street. These activities include a walking program, line dancing, computer classes, bridge club and day trips for a variety of cultural events and sightseeing tours.

The OASIS program, a privately-run senior program based at Exeter Hospital, provides services for its members who pay a small membership fee. OASIS provides sightseeing tours, cultural events, health screenings, social events, and other services geared towards its senior members.

*Seniors and adults alike also enjoy the summer Concerts in the Park series at Swasey Parkway.*

The various public and private senior living centers in Exeter all provide a number of social and recreational activities for their residents.

### **Adult**

Recreation programs available for Exeter's adult population include co-ed softball, basketball, tennis, karate, recreational volleyball, and competitive volleyball. In addition to these sports related programs, there are a number of ongoing non-sports programs and activities such as ceramics, art, and yoga classes, day trips and multi-day trips to sporting and cultural events. Seniors and adults alike also enjoy the summer Concerts in the Park series at Swasey Parkway. There are also numerous non-sport activities offered through the Exeter Public Library such as computer classes, lectures, and writing workshops. See Community Facilities Chapter for other information on the Public Library.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Based on the 2002 Visioning Session, the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD) should facilitate the development of a kayaking and canoeing club to be based at Stewart Park that will feature organized adult water-based activities on the Squamscott river.
2. The EPRD should explore additional young adult (ages 19 – 35) recreational activities including soccer, men's softball, and basketball.

### **Teen:**

Recreational activities available to teens are either competitive-based or recreational-based.

### **Teen Competitive:**

The most prevalent recreational activities available to teens are the competitive athletic sports offered at the Cooperative Middle School and Exeter High School. At the Cooperative Middle School in the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 954 students participated on 38 athletic teams in ten different sports. At Exeter High School in the 2000-2001 school year, a total of 1179 students participated on 54 teams in 17 sports. These participants also have a variety of privately-run sports teams on which to participate including (but not limited to) Babe Ruth, Senior Babe Ruth and American Legion baseball, AAU basketball, Seacoast United Soccer and Field Hockey, and Exeter Swim Team.

### **Teen Recreational:**

Each winter the EPRD offers intramural basketball programs at the High School and Middle School level. Teens may use the Littlefield Skate

*At the 2002 Visioning Session, many residents expressed support for increasing the organized recreational activities available to teens.*

Board Park and participate in the EPRD tennis program offered in the spring, summer and fall. The EPRD offers a number of individual events available to teens including 3 on 3 basketball tournament, Punt Pass & Kick and karate. A number of summer sports camps are also available to teens.

The New Outlook Teen Center organizes a number of social and passive recreation for teens. See the Community Facilities and Civic Life Chapter for a more complete description of the New Outlook Teen Center.

At the 2002 Visioning Session, many residents expressed support for increasing the organized recreational activities available to teens. Possible programs include flag football, whiffleball and softball.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The EPRD, the School District Athletic Department and area teens should develop additional recreational-level recreational activities for teens that may not be involved in competitive sports.

**Youth (Ages 5 through 12):**

Perhaps the largest groups of residents directly served by the Town's recreation programs are youth between the ages of 5 and 12. The EPRD provides the following sports programs for the youth of Exeter: tee-ball, baseball, girls softball, soccer, basketball, tennis, cheerleading, field hockey, lacrosse, volleyball, archery, karate, kayaking, swimming lessons and summer Play Camp. In 2000 the United States Tennis Association announced that the of Town that Exeter had the largest municipally-run tennis program in New England (800-900 registrants that year).

Summer camps in baseball, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, football, karate, cheerleading and tennis attract over 1500 registrations each summer. In addition to these sports programs, the Parks and Recreation Department offers youth classes in ceramics, art, personal etiquette and music as well as sports and cultural trips. The outdoor town pool, located at the Recreation Park, hosts 19,000 visits per year between June and August, including two four-week Red Cross Learn to Swim programs.

In addition to the programs described above, there are other seasonal activities offered by the Town for youth including special events during vacations and holiday periods, such as parades and contests. In the winter the EPRD offers ski and snowboard lessons at a nearby ski area. Privately-sponsored programs include Learn to Skate (Rinks at Exeter) and Learn to Swim (Results Swim & fitness).

There are a number of after school enrichment clubs offered at Main Street School and Lincoln Street School for a small registration fee. The

clubs typically meet from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM after school. There are a wide variety of activities available including foreign language, cooking, dance, drama, sports, Legos, jump roping, arts and crafts. However, due to the large number of working parents in town, there is a need for more structured and extensive after school programs.

### Privately-run youth sports programs

*Opportunities exist to coordinate program offerings to better develop and utilize facilities and to eliminate programs that unnecessarily duplicate each other.*

**Cal Ripken Baseball** – Serves youth from 9 – 12 years of age from Exeter, Kingston and Newfields, through two leagues and multiple teams. Games are held at the Lincoln Street School Fields.

**Exeter Seahawks football** – Serves students in 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades within the Cooperative School District. Beginning in 2002, fields in Stratham will be utilized.

**Exeter Youth Soccer Association** – A travel program that serves boys and girls between 8 and 14 years of age who reside in Exeter or other towns within the SAU 16 District who do not have a travel team available. Approximately 200 children participate in the program. U – 10 is a recreational league, while U-11 – U 14 participate in standings and play-offs. The Exeter Youth Soccer Association is a member of the Seacoast NH Youth Soccer League and NH Soccer Association. Local games are held at the Exeter High School and Osram Sylvania fields.

**Travel Basketball program** – Serves children in the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Exeter Swim Team** - A private, non-profit swim team available to children residing in all towns. EST offers a year round swim program with competitive programs in the winter and summer, as well as fall and spring pre-team clinics for youngsters not yet ready for a competitive team. Children aged 5 and over may participate. EST rents the PEA pool, except during the summer months when EPRD pool is rented.

*The dispersion of facilities around town and the unique demands of the citizens of Exeter were considered in determining additional needs.*

All of these youth sport organizations share the common goal of providing recreational opportunities to the youth of Exeter. All of the youth sports programs have issues regarding registration, scheduling, volunteer recruitment and facility availability. Opportunities exist to coordinate program offerings to better develop and utilize facilities and to eliminate programs that unnecessarily duplicate each other. EPRD sports offerings should augment, not duplicate, offerings made by private groups.

The Exeter Parks and Recreation Department should take the lead in analyzing community needs and comparing program offerings to best match community needs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD website should be updated and maintained to be a more contemporary and definitive source of information for all Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.
2. The EPRD should work jointly with private Exeter-based youth sports organizations to coordinate new facility development and utilization and coordinate program offerings to minimize conflict for town residents.
3. Based on the result of community needs analysis, the EPRD should continue to expand its program offerings for all ages and all seasons as new areas of interest emerge.
4. The Exeter School District, EPRD, special interest groups, clubs and local businesses should work together to examine the opportunity to offer more structured and extensive after school programs due to the large number of working parents in town.

**Tots (Ages five and under)** EPRD offers the Wee Swim program and Tots tennis lessons. EPRD also offers numerous special events geared around seasonal themes such as Halloween, Christmas, Easter, school vacations, and summer water activities. The Exeter Public Library offers several Preschool Story Times and art activities.

*At the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session, the second highest-ranked need identified was the establishment of a multi-use community center.*

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**4. Recreation Needs**

While the Town of Exeter supports an exemplary recreation program, there are several areas in which there is a need for additional facilities. For this section, the public standards suggested by the Office of State Planning (Source: New Hampshire Outdoors: 1994-1999; State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; prepared by the Office of State Planning, 1994) is used as one suggestion for the number of facilities needed. Just as important, the dispersion of facilities around town and the unique demands of the citizens of Exeter were considered in determining additional needs.

*The Town should do more to support the use of bicycles in town.*

**Community Center:** At the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session, the second highest-ranked need identified (only after improving the high school) was the establishment of a multi-use community center that would feature multi-use indoor recreation space, indoor pool, and public meeting rooms. A volunteer group has been working on developing a program and finding suitable space and funding for a community center. The townspeople have expressed their strong support for the idea and the town government should actively support its development.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*The Public Works Department should extend bike paths and/or sidewalks to connect the center of town, Brickyard Park, and the neighborhoods immediately west of the park.*

1. The Board of Selectmen should establish a Study Committee for the purpose of planning and developing a public fitness/multi-use indoor recreational facility (a.k.a. "Community Center").

**Bicycle and walking paths** - At the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session participants expressed a series of ideas that suggested that the Town should do more to support the use of bicycles in town. The participants ranked these ideas as the third highest in this chapter. Specific suggestions included providing more bike paths and sidewalks to connect public space, parks, and major developments, more trails and appropriate signage and safety measures that would promote the use of bikes both for exercise and as an alternative means to the automobile.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Public Works Department should extend bike paths and/or sidewalks to connect the center of town, Brickyard Park, and the neighborhoods immediately west of the park. This will encourage walking and the use of bicycles to access Brickyard Park rather than the use of cars.
2. The Public Works Department should continue its new sidewalk construction program. Special emphasis should be on constructing bicycle paths and sidewalks that will connect residential areas, public spaces, and parks. This will encourage the use of bicycles and walking to access town facilities rather than the use of cars.
3. The EPRD and Public Works Department should work together to develop formal, signed bicycle path loops within the town and perhaps paths that connect to adjoining towns.

*Due to the lack of lights, many adult softball games are limited to 60 minutes in duration, in order to get two games in before dark.*

**Baseball and softball fields** - Currently the Town makes use of 13 ballfields, seven of which are Town owned (including tee-ball field); two at Lincoln Street School are used by the privately-run Cal Ripken League by permission of SAU16. None of these fields are regulation, full-sized baseball fields.

*There is a need for 2-3 additional ball fields.*

In terms of adult fields, the only regulation softball field owned by the Town is located at the Recreation Complex on Hampton Road. In addition to this field, the Town rents a single field from Phillips Exeter Academy for its adult softball program. It should be pointed out that use of these fields is further limited because none of the fields are lighted. Due to the lack of lights, many adult softball games are limited to 60 minutes in duration, in order to get two games in before dark.

Based upon the number of baseball fields that the Town currently makes use of, there is a need for 2-3 additional ballfields, especially additional lighted adult softball fields. One possible location for these fields is in Simpson Recreation Area, a 31 acres parcel donated to the town and shown in **Map PR-2**.

*One possible location for additional fields is in Simpson Recreation Area, a 31 acres parcel donated to the town and shown in Map PR-2.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD should create a plan to develop additional recreation fields at the Simpson Recreation Area on Kingston Road.
2. The EPRD should install lights on the outdoor ballfields at the Recreation Park and Brickyard Park to encourage better utilization of the public facilities. The lights should be installed to minimize impact to abutters.

**Basketball courts** – Currently Exeter has three outdoor courts and eight indoor courts. The school department administers all of the indoor courts. The residents of all six towns in the Cooperative School District share five of these eight courts. There are insufficient indoor courts in town to handle demand of youth and adult recreational basketball programs. For example, the EPRD Youth programs may not start until after 6:00 PM due to demands by the host schools. The EPRD Over-35 Men’s Recreational Basketball program must start as late as 8:45 due to lack of court space earlier in the evening.

*The Town should construct two additional indoor basketball courts as part of a Community Center.*

An additional two indoor courts built as part of a community center would help alleviate the shortage. In addition, lighting of the outdoor basketball courts would increase usage by residents.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Town should construct two additional indoor basketball courts as part of a Community Center.
2. The EPRD should light the outdoor courts at Recreation Park to increase the hours of availability.

**Soccer, lacrosse and field hockey fields** – With a total of 6 existing fields, one might be tempted to think there are ample number of fields in town. However, three of the fields are used by all six towns in the Cooperative School District and are used for soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey. The other three fields overlay baseball fields, which significantly limits their availability. With the outdoor season now stretching from late March through early November, field availability is further limited by bad field conditions and lack of daylight.

Based on the demand and availability, there is a need for an additional 2-3 fields in town. Of these additional fields, at least one field should be in the immediately vicinity of Exeter High School to meet the

demand of high school sports teams. To better match the duration of the sports seasons, this field should be lighted and have artificial turf so that it could be used earlier in the spring and later in the fall.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD should work with the Conservation Commission and private sports groups to locate and develop at least two additional multi-use fields, preferably somewhere on the west side of town.
2. Exeter High School should develop an additional, lighted multi-use field with artificial turf for use by high school athletic teams.

*At the 2002 Visioning session, residents expressed a desire for more formalized boating, canoeing, or kayaking programs and clubs.*

**Boating, Canoeing, and Kayaking** - Currently, there are four public access points for boaters to launch. The Stewart Park Boat Launch has a boat ramp and floating boat dock. The Robert H. Elms Campground off Court Street also has a boat ramp and floating boat dock. The Elms Campground also offers canoe rentals. Augmenting these access points are a total of (18) possible mooring locations in close proximity to Stewart Park. Given the existence of these public access points, the close proximity of the ocean and nearby lakes, and the absence of any pressing need identified at the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session, there is no need for new boat access points. The location of existing boat access point should, however, be well publicized in order to insure their maximum usage.

The EPRD offers kayaking lessons in the summer. At the 2002 Visioning session, residents expressed a desire for more formalized boating, canoeing, or kayaking programs and clubs.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The EPRD should facilitate the development of a formalized boating, canoeing, and kayaking club based at Stewart Park.

*The EPRD should identify areas to create safe outdoor ice skating in a variety of Exeter's neighborhoods.*

**Ice Skating** – The two indoor rinks at the Rinks at Exeter provide ample opportunity for fee-based public skating, ice hockey and figure skating programs. Conditions permitting, Exeter residents may also skate outside on either Brickyard Pond, Colcord Pond or on the Exeter River at Gilman Park. Due to the safety concerns at the existing outdoor skating areas, EPRD should create safe, shallow outdoor ice skating areas in a variety of neighborhoods by flooding parking areas, parks lawns or other flat areas. This would provide for safer and more predictable outdoor ice skating.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD should identify areas to create safe outdoor ice skating in a variety of Exeter's neighborhoods. Options should include the Park Street Common, Recreation Park and Swasey Park.



2. The EPRD should purchase equipment so that the rinks can be maintained to maximize usage.

**Community Parks** - Currently, Exeter had dedicated a total of 81 acres of land devoted to community parks. While no specific recommendation is being made for additional park land, special emphasis on adding additional park land to the Town’s inventory should be on park land located on the western portion of the Town, in order to better serve the population based there.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD should broaden the “Volunteers Brighten Lives” program to create more widespread volunteer adoption and maintenance of park spots throughout town.
2. The EPRD should institute a town-wide community day in which individuals, groups, and businesses can participate in litter control, beautification and planting in town park areas.

**Tennis Courts** – Exeter currently has eight existing outdoor public courts. The courts are heavily used from early morning to dusk. As of 2002, the courts are cracked and in urgent need of resurfacing. The Town has voted one-half of the money needed for resurfacing. If the other half is approved early in 2003, the EPRD plans to resurface the courts late in 2003. Due to the number of private courts in town, and the existence of private, indoor tennis courts in Newmarket, North Hampton and Hampton, the existing courts satisfy the demand generated by Exeter residents. However, the townspeople voiced strong support at the 2002 Master Plan Visioning Session to have additional courts located somewhere on the west end of town. In addition, lighting of the existing courts would increase utilization.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The EPRD must resurface the tennis courts in 2003 or risk the chance that the courts will be unsafe for play.
2. The EPRD should construct lights on the outdoor tennis courts at the Recreation Park to encourage more utilization of its facilities. The lights should be constructed to minimize impact on abutters.

*In 2000 the United States Tennis Association announced the Town that Exeter had the largest municipally-run tennis program in New England (800-900 registrants that year).*

**Hiking Trails** - The State standard for hiking trails for Exeter totals 24-25 miles. The total length of trails in Exeter is currently unknown. In 2002, the Conservation Commission has set a goal of documenting and mapping all of the known trails in Town. **(See Map PR-3)**

The three largest existing trail systems are the Henderson Swasey Town Forest, Oaklands Town Forest, and the Jolly Rand Historic Trail. The Conservation Commission will continue to define and acquire more

*The Conservation Commission has set a goal of documenting and mapping all of the known trails in Town.*

conservation land. One of the goals of increased land acquisition will be the further development of contiguous trail systems.

At the 2002 Visioning Session, the public expressed that there a lack of adequate published information about the existence of trails and the rules for their usage. The Conservation Commission should complete the mapping of its trail system and the Town needs to support map dissemination by printing copies fro distribution and by publishing the maps on the Town's web site.

At the 2002 Visioning Session many townspeople also expressed a desire for a more developed walking path/loop along the Swampscott River and a dedicated "dog park" in town. A small walking loop currently exists around the Powder House but a longer, scenic trail could be developed from the Powder House to the Exeter Country Club.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

*Also at the 2002 Visioning Session many townspeople expressed a desire for a more developed walking path/loop along the Swampscott River and a dedicated "dog park" in town.*

1. The EPRD and the Conservation Commission should work together with the RPC to publish a comprehensive map and guide to Exeter's parks, trails and other areas of interest, and to make it widely available through the town website, town facilities, and downtown businesses.
2. The Conservation Commission should provide for ample parking at the entrance to passive recreation areas and trails, and improve signage stating clear rules regarding usage.
3. The EPRD and the Conservation Commission should work together to develop a mixed active and passive recreation site on the west end of town.
4. Representatives of the Planning Board, EPRD, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Friends of Recreation, and Conservation Commission should meet at least semi-annually to determine the best use of present and future impact fees which have been or will be paid by developers.
5. The Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD), Conservation Commission and Public Works Department should work together to create a walking path along the Squamscott River from the center of town to the end of the Exeter Country Club property.

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## **5. Parks and Recreation Department Oversight**

**Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD)** – The EPRD oversees town-sponsored recreation programs and activities. The department is staffed by a director, an assistant director, a maintenance supervisor, a

laborer, a Clerical Supervisor, and a part-time secretary. Part-time summer employees consist of eight lifeguards, nineteen play camp staff, three concession workers, eight swim instructors, and four maintenance personnel. In addition to its paid staff, EPRD relies upon 350 – 400 volunteers to help administer the various recreation programs that it sponsors. The EPRD also works with several committees that guide the department in how to best meet the diverse parks and recreational needs of the community. See Figure PR-1 Exeter Parks and Recreation Program and Facility Management Flow Chart.

**Parks Advisory Committee** - In 1998, the Board of Selectmen appointed a six member “Parks Advisory Committee” to develop and oversee a five-year plan to improve and maintain the town’s parks.

The Park Advisory Committee initial report, issued in 1999, created an effective five-year plan for adequately prioritizing and funding maintenance and improvements for town parks. Examples of improvements suggested by the Park Advisory Committee include renovations of Gale Park and Winter Street Cemetery, irrigation of Brickyard Park and upgrades made at Stewart Park.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Board of Selectmen and Townspeople should continue to support and fund the recommendations of the Park Advisory Committee in order to adequately fund maintenance and improvement for existing town parks.

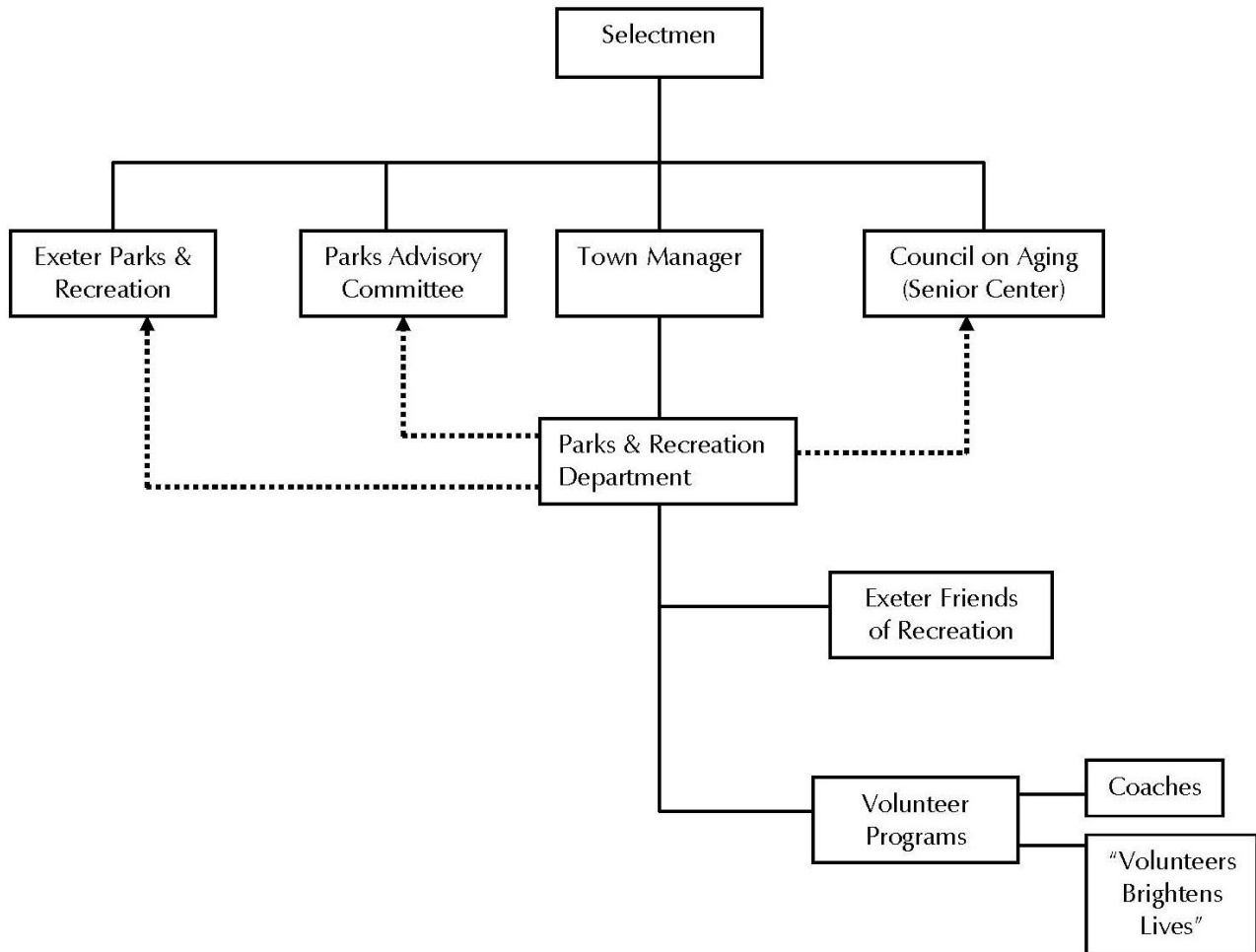
**Exeter Parks and Recreation Advisory Board** - A six person “Exeter Parks and Recreation Advisory Board,” made up of community members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, provides input on a regular basis to the EPRD on program offerings, departmental practices and other recreation related needs. The Board also assists the department in conducting events such as the annual Ted Seabrooke Basketball tournament, Halloween activities, and youth sports coaches certification.

**Friends of Recreation** - Funding for a number of Town sponsored special recreation activities is provided by a group know as “Friends of Recreation.” In the past, this group has raised funds for the purchase of playground equipment, a coach bus, as well as for sponsorship of special events run by EPRD.

**Other Funding Sources** - Significant additional funds for Parks and Recreation improvements such as additional playground equipment have come from lot fees paid by developers of new properties in town.

FIGURE PR-1

Exeter Parks and Recreation Program and Facility Management



## **6. Facilities and Equipment**

### **Public Buildings**

**Exeter Parks and Recreation Department Office** - The Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (EPRD) office is located at 32 Court Street in a 7,344 square foot two story building, built in 1888. The building was significantly renovated in 2000.

This building serves as the headquarters for all department functions and operations. It contains an office for the local Disabled American Veterans chapter and three meeting rooms for use by civic groups and indoor recreation programs.

**Senior Center** - The Senior Center is a 7,300 square foot building that is located adjacent to the Parks and Recreation Office, at 30 Court Street. The Senior Center was originally built to house the Exeter Fire Department. The building was renovated to serve as a Senior Center in 1985.

The Senior Center houses a variety of senior groups and activities, including the Bridge Club and Walking Club. Since 2002 computer classes for seniors have been offered in the Senior Center. The Senior Center provides mid-day meals and Meals on Wheels service for Exeter Residents.

The EPRD office handles the scheduling function for the Senior Center and EPRD office meeting rooms. Both facilities are fairly well utilized for meetings and non-recreational activities, but not to capacity.

See the Community Facilities and Civic Life Chapter for a discussion of other public buildings in the Town of Exeter.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. The Public Works Department should complete planned renovations to the Senior Center building scheduled for 2003.

**Town Vehicle Inventory**

A record of vehicles owned and maintained by the EPRD is found in Table PR-1.

**TABLE PR-2  
EXETER PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
VEHICLE INVENTORY**

<u>VEHICLE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>REPLACEMENT COST</u>	<u>REPLACEMENT DATE</u>
MCI Bus	1984	\$40,000-\$55,000	2007
Ford Aerostar Van	1995	\$20,000	2005
Chev. Dump Truck	2001	\$30,000	2010
Ford Pickup Truck	1996	\$30,000	2003

**APPENDIX A**  
**VISIONING SESSION RESULTS**

Master Plan Visioning Session, January 2002  
Parks and Recreation – Condensed Summary of Comments

Votes	Parks	Votes	Recreation
	<b>General Parks and Rec. Information</b>		<b>Schools</b>
17	<i>Kiosks/maps at selected parks and areas of interest (advertisement \$ from local businesses) to promote parks</i>	12	More High School support for club sports (ie intramural)
3	<i>Improved website for Park &amp; Rec Dept</i>	10	Need a track and improved fields at the High School
1	Need a map of Oakland Town Forest	4	Improve Lincoln Street School playground
-	Need more promotion/information on P & R programs, activities, types of activities at each park (i.e. where to fish, where to XC ski)		
			<b>Rec Park</b>
	<b>General and Park Specific</b>	19	Need lighted fields, tennis courts, basketball courts
5	<i>More flower plantings in parks Additional greenspace around bandstand..</i>	10	<i>Better maintenance of tennis courts (courts are currently a source of revenue) (See CF)</i>
4	Gilman Park: general upgrades, lighted picnic pavilion at Gilman Park	7	Increase pool hours and length of season (later into summer)
1	Park Street Common: Remove bushes	2	Improve restrooms at Planet Playground/pool
1	Need general improvements to existing parks		
			<b>Trails (See P&amp;R and LU)</b>
	<b>Swasey Parkway (See Community Facilities)</b>	14	Bike/hiking trails: Need expanded hiking/bike trail facilities especially on west side, need cross-country trails.
21	<i>Swasey park improvements: better utilization, outdoor amphitheater with seating, covered pavilion, flower/landscaping improvements</i>	2	<i>Develop formal river walking path/loop</i>
17	<i>Close Swazey Pkwy to motorized traffic (ie allow only bikes/pedestrians)</i>		
			<b>Bikes and Access (See P&amp;R and LU)</b>
	<b>Land Acquisition</b>	24	<i>Bike paths: bike paths to connect parks(ie. Brickyard), improve bike path safety, bike path connection to other towns.</i>
5	<i>Transfer state-owned land to the town (Conner Farm)</i>		
4	Acquire City Concrete property and move Rec office there		<b>Other Outdoor</b>
2	<i>Acquire land around Dearborn Reservoir for park use and to protect water resource. (See LU)</i>	11	Town canoe/rowing/kayaking club or program
		13	<i>More sports fields including fields for open use, ie. Non-dedicated fields open to the public for pick-up games, "sandlot". Also west-end sports facilities and parks (ie. Epping Rd)</i>
	<b>Other Comments</b>	6	<i>Need outdoor ice-skating rink (See CF)</i>
2	<i>Town Hall: Need elevator access (for art shows)(See CF)</i>	1	<i>Need additional public boat launch and marina</i>
1	More community projects like Planet Playground		
1	<i>Shuttle bus to the outdoor pool and other parks (for those unable to drive)(See CF &amp; LU)</i>		<b>Community Center</b>
-	Move the dam to create a freshwater "lake" out of the Squamscott River	46	<i>Need public fitness/multi-use facility (ie. YMCA) with pool, basketball courts, meeting rooms, etc. (See CF)</i>



Parks and Recreation – Summary of final voting

			<b>Policies/Info</b>
	<b>Policies</b>	3	Need adequate maintenance of existing sports fields (Town and Schools)
16	Need dog park w/waste containers, bags	1	Need more instructional programs through P & R (rather than competitive)
11	Need dedicated Town support for Outlook Center (\$ and other)	-	Need summer rec programs in neighborhood parks.
3	Reconsider issue of hunting in Town forests (Hunting now allowed, but the increase in hiking/cycling warrants review of hunting policies)	-	Need to finance our recreation needs
1	Create civic organization to do Adopt-A-Spot or spot flower plantings (instead of using Town funds)	-	Need to better accommodate non-school, non-town sports organizations / field demand
		-	New activities through Parks & Rec Dept. (ie lacrosse)

Note: *Italicized font indicates the topic was mentioned in one or other topic session.*