

## 9.0 Parks and Recreation

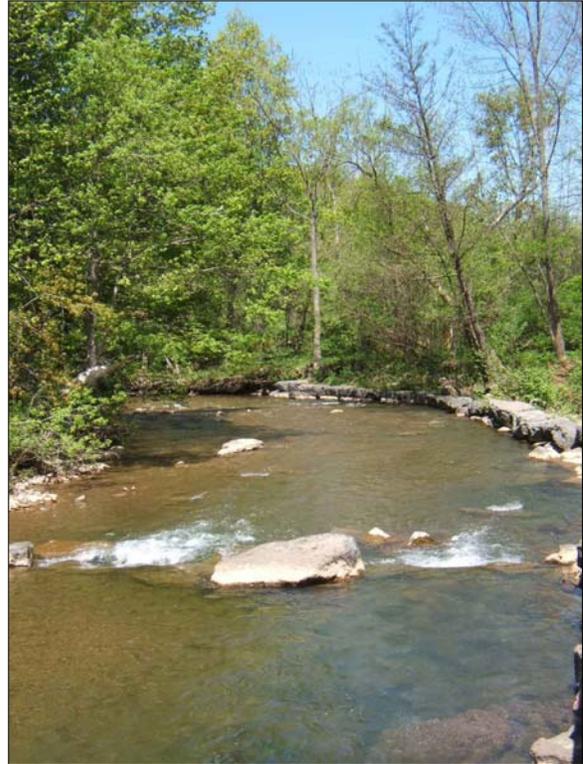
Parks provide a community with recreation space as well a place to go for relaxation and scenery. The amount and quality of the parks within a community has an influence on the quality of life. Parks can be a draw for residential development and raise the property values of existing residential areas. A park with a regional draw can also promote commercial development. The following is an inventory of the parks and recreation facilities in the Town of New Hartford.

### 9.1 Parks Inventory

There are four town maintained parks in the Town of New Hartford that provide 244 acres of developed parkland.

#### 9.1.1 Sherrill Brook Park

Sherrill Brook Park, the Town's largest park, is a 201-acre major community park that provides opportunities for passive and active recreation. Amenities include: two softball fields, two football fields, two tennis courts, one basketball court, one soccer field, picnic grills and sites, pavilions, a gazebo, modular playground, ski warming room, nature exhibits, three handicapped accessible restrooms and a network of woodland trails for hiking, skiing and mountain biking. In addition to large expanses of open rolling lawn, this park also has approximately 120 acres of natural woodland. Sherrill Brook Park is open during the winter months and is used by hikers, skiers and dog walkers. The administrative offices of the New Hartford Parks Department are located within the park.



*Sauquoit Creek in Washington Mills Athletic Park*

#### 9.1.2 Washington Mills Athletic Park

Washington Mills Athletic Park is a community playfield that is located in the hamlet of Washington Mills at 3695 Oneida Street. This sports park is approximately 21 acres in size and provides three multi-use fields (softball/soccer fields), a batting cage, one pavilion, four picnic sites with grills, a hiking trail, playground, handicapped accessible restrooms and a 60-foot handicapped accessible fishing boardwalk. The southwest portion of the park is undeveloped woodland while the northern portion of the park is jurisdictional wetland. The park is open every day, from 8 a.m. to dusk, from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>.

### 9.1.3 Donovan Memorial (Chadwicks) Park

Donovan Memorial Park is located on Elm Street in the Hamlet of Chadwicks. This 17-acre facility is classified as a community playfield. An active railroad track runs along its west edge and a residential area is situated along its south and east boundaries. Park amenities include one small picnic shelter, one group use pavilion, 9 picnic sites, one baseball field, two tennis courts, one basketball court, a modular playground system, a splash pad and handicapped accessible restrooms.

### 9.1.4 Sanger Building (Highway Department)

The Sanger Building is located on Campion Road and it is classified as a community playfield and occupies a 5-acre land area. Amenities at the site consist of two soccer fields with limited use by permit only.

## 9.2 Undeveloped Publicly Owned Parcels

Two publicly owned parcels that could be developed as parks and/or recreational facilities in the future are:

- Burrstone Road (32 acres)
- Middle Settlement Road (31 acres)

## 9.3 Recreation Facilities Inventory

Town of New Hartford residents have access to recreational facilities that are owned by the Town as well as facilities that are owned by local religious organizations, the School Board and neighboring municipalities.

### 9.3.1 Town Owned Facilities



New Hartford Recreation Center

#### New Hartford Recreation Center

The New Hartford Recreation Center is situated on approximately 8 acres at 1 Mill Street in the Village of New Hartford. The facility is handicapped accessible and has been expanded several times since its construction in 1980. The indoor ice-skating complex houses a full-sized ice rink, seating for 1,400 spectators, concession area, pro shop, several locker rooms, a second lobby with concessions, offices and restrooms. There is no cost to use the facility on weekdays, but there is a nominal fee on weekends and holidays.

The ice-skating facility hosts a variety of recreational skating activities including, sports leagues (hockey and figure skating) and public ice-skating between the months of September and April. During the summer months, the ice is removed and the facility hosts a variety of activities including major concerts, trade shows, and dances.

A partially lighted soccer field and children’s play area are also located at the Recreation Center. The play area is shared with an adjacent school and two village-owned tennis courts are also connected to the facility.

**Non Town-Owned Facilities**

The table that follows identifies facilities that are used for recreational programs but are owned by entities other than the Town.

**Table 9-1 Non Town-Owned Facilities Used for Town Programs**

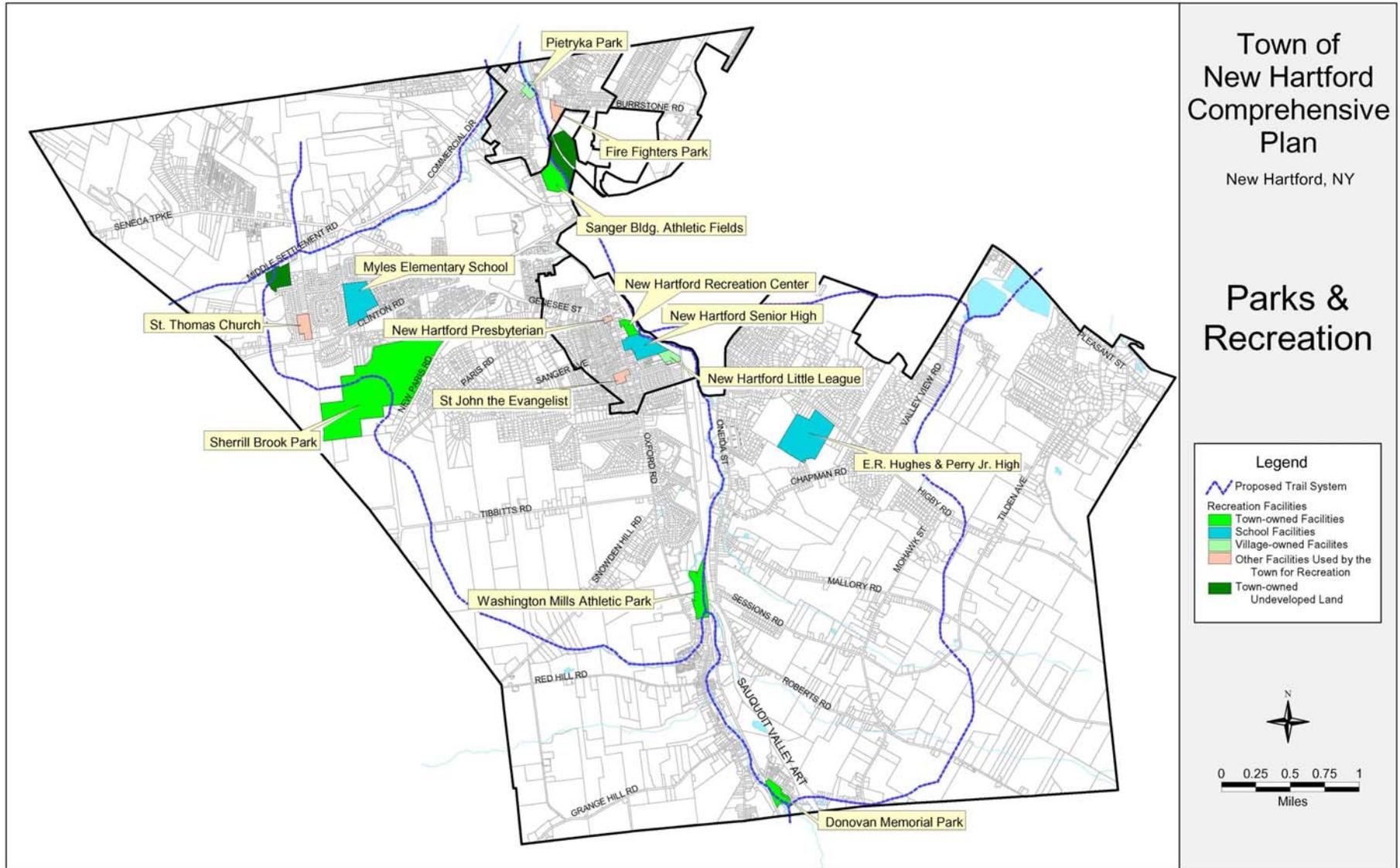
*Town of New Hartford*

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Area Used</b>
New Hartford School District	Robert E. Myles Elementary	Basketball court
		Gym
		Playground
		Soccer/Softball field
	E.R. Hughes Elementary	Basketball Court
		Gym
		Playground
	Robert Bradley Elementary	Basketball court
		Gym
	Ralph Perry Junior High	Football field
		Gym
		Indoor pool
		Soccer field (2)
		Softball field
		Weight room
	New Hartford Senior High	Auditorium
		Baseball field
		Basketball court
		Field hockey field
		Football field (lighted)
Gym		
Indoor pool		
Tennis Courts (7)		
Track (6-lane)		

**Strengthening New Hartford's Neighborhoods**

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Area Used</b>
St. John the Evangelist Church		Softball field
	Former St. John's School	New Hartford Adult Dining and Activity Center
St. Thomas Church		Softball field
New Hartford Presbyterian Church		Village Greens and gazebo
St. George's Episcopal Church		Parking lot near Donovan Park
Village of New Hartford		Tennis courts
		Play equipment
	Little League Field	Baseball field
Village of New York Mills	Pietryka Park	Basketball court
		Picnic shelter
		Play equipment
		Tennis courts (2)
	Little League Field	Baseball field with scoreboard
Fire District	Fire Fighter's Park	Open lawn

Source: Town of New Hartford Parks and Recreation Department



The tables that follow summarize the types of recreation programs that are available to Town residents, the segment of the population that is served and associated costs. Most Town programs are open to non-residents at a slightly higher fee.

**Table 9-2 Town Sponsored Recreational Programs**  
*Town of New Hartford*

Program	Age of Participants	Season			Fees
		Fall – F	Winter – W	Participation	
		Spring – Sp			
		Summer - S			
Adult and Senior Swim	18 and up	Sp, S, F, W	10-15/session	\$1-\$2/session	
Adult Basketball League	Over 18	S	80	\$30-\$60	
Adult Co-ed Soccer	Over 25	S	20/session		
Adult Pickup Basketball	18 and up	W	15-20/session	No fee	
Coed Adult Softball	18 and up	S, F	25/30/night	No fee	
Family Fun Fest	All ages	F	2500-3000		
Gym and Swim	5 to 17	W, Sp	10-75/session	No fee	
Ice Cream Social	All ages	S			
Ice Skating – Recreational	2 and up	F, W, Sp	Up to 200/session	Free weekdays and \$3 weekends	
Playground Program	7 to 13	S	30-100/day/site	No fee	
Recreational Swim	2 and up	Sp, S, F, W	20-25/ session	\$1-\$2/session	
St. John's/New Hartford Youth Basketball	7 to12	S	160	\$20-\$40 max/family	
Summer Concerts	All ages	S			
Summer Reading	18 months to grade 5	S			
Summer Theatre	8 to 14	S	24	No fee	
Summer Youth Basketball	11 to 15	S	35	\$15-\$30	
Swimming Lessons	3 to12	S	350	\$30-\$90	
Teen Activities at the Library	11 and up			No fee	
Tennis Instruction	7 to 15	S	74	\$15-\$40	
Water Workout			24	\$35	
Yoga for Kids	5 to 11	S	15	\$28	
Youth Employment	14 to 19	W	20		

Source: Town of New Hartford Parks and Recreation Department

Table 9-3 Private Recreation Programs

*Town of New Hartford*

Organization	Ages	Season Fall – F Winter – W Spring – Sp Summer – S	Number of Participants 2005	Fees	Facilities Used
New Hartford Youth Football	6 – 13	F	175	\$35/ person or \$65/family	Sherill Brook Park and New Hartford HS
New Hartford Babe Ruth	13 – 15	S	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Hartford Girls Softball Association	7 – 19	S	135	\$50/person or \$100/family	Washington Mills Athletic Park and Sherill Brook Park
New Hartford Little League	5 – 12	Sp	325-385	\$60/person	New Hartford Little League Field Chadwick Park and Washington Mills Park
New Hartford Youth Hockey Association	4 – 18	F, W,	200	\$100-\$400	New Hartford Recreation Center
New Hartford Youth Soccer	4 – 18	F, Sp	702	\$45/yr	Washington Mills Park, Sanger Building, New Hartford Recreation Center, Sherill Brook Park, and Perry JHS Field
Skating Club of New Hartford	2 – Adult	F,W	150-160	\$120/session	New Hartford Recreation Center

Source: Town of New Hartford Youth Recreation Organizations

## 9.4 Facilities Analysis

### 9.4.1 Parks

Communities often use baseline service provision standards prepared by the National Recreation and Park Association as a guide in developing their parks and recreation strategies. In recent years, NRPA has recommended that its standards be applied more as guidelines and not strictly adhered to without additional analysis. It suggests that the following factors be incorporated into a community's parks and recreation strategy:

- Changing Demographics
- Public Input
- Trends Analysis

- Municipal Goals for Economic and Community Development

Trends that impact the influence of parks, recreation and open space planning include:

- Environmental trends, such as increased environmental sensitivity in transportation (walking, biking) and increased value of aesthetics
- Social trends, such as an increased awareness and importance of wellness
- Economic trends, such as recognition of the value of public amenities like infrastructure and parks
- Demographic trends, such as the aging of society
- Technological trends, such as increases in public access and computerization, as well as advances in transportation technology
- Urban patterns, such as increased sprawl and pressure for growth management

The Town of New Hartford has 41 acres of community playfields, a 216-acre major community park and 67 acres of urban greenspace/open space. Playground facilities generally provided in neighborhood playgrounds and parks are available in the community playfields and major community park, which are well dispersed throughout the community, as well as at the schools throughout the Town, which are available for use by residents.

Using the higher figure of the range provided in the NRPA's parks standards, the Town was found to have a one acre deficit in community playfield, a 48-acre surplus in the community park type and a 46-acre surplus in greenspace/open space park type.

The 1995 Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan as well as the 2001 New Hartford Parks and Recreation Master recommended that the Town develop a comprehensive trail system. Residents indicated support for a comprehensive trail system through the community survey that was executed for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Additionally, provision of a comprehensive trails system is generally recommended by the NRPA. A comprehensive trail system in the Town would:

- Provide alternative transportation routes for commuters
- Increase overall open space in the town
- Link existing and future parks and open space amenities
- Provide additional passive recreation space in the Town
- Respond to preferences and needs expressed by the public during the Parks and Recreation Master Planning process
- Provide opportunities to increase wellness and reverse trends towards sedentary lifestyles

- Minimize trail conflicts by providing more trails

A trail system would also have the following benefits:

- Improving the quality of life
- Increasing the ability to attract and retain a high quality residential base and workforce; and
- Enhancing the town as a destination for leisure- and business-related visitation.

Development of a trail system is consistent with national trends in exercise and fitness. In its 2001 survey, the National Survey on recreation and the Environment (NSRE) found that walking for pleasure was the most-participated in outdoor recreational activity. This result mirrors the US Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the United States, which found that in 2002, exercise walking was the most-participated-in activity. The NSRE also found that residents of the northeast lead the nation in the popularity of walking with 86 percent participating compared with 83 percent for the nation as a whole. In New Hartford, walking and hiking were the two top participated in activities among respondents to the survey executed for the parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Trail system development is consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which expresses a vision of a statewide network of connected trails linking parks, open spaces, historic sites, etc. The system would be comprised of local trails as well as state and federal trails.

A comprehensive trail system in New Hartford would fill a gap in service provision for parks and open space. While Sherrill Brook Park has its own extensive trail system, a Town-wide system would enhance the Town's parks and open space offerings. Easements can be sought for land for trails and where necessary, the system can follow existing roadways. Throughout the system, the trails will need to be clearly signed, their intended uses enforced and be well maintained.

As indicated in the Town's 1995 Comprehensive Plan, recreation often takes a back seat to demands for essential Town services such as police protection and infrastructure needs during times of financial constraint. The 1995 Plan suggested that Town Law 277, which allows municipalities to collect fees in lieu of park land when approving new subdivisions, be applied in New Hartford in order to recoup a portion of the costs associated with providing parks and recreational services. This continues to be an option available to the Town.

#### 9.4.2 Recreation

The 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan also contained a variety of recommendations for recreation facilities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan noted that the Town of New Hartford appeared to be well within the NRPA guidelines for parks and recreation facilities with the following exceptions:

- At least one more volleyball court is needed to meet the current population
- A lighted baseball field should be provided
- An outdoor swimming pool should be provided

The Plan made the following recommendations regarding parks facilities that could be considered in order to meet changing community needs. These included:

- Develop a comprehensive trail system
- Conduct a feasibility study for a new arena/community center
- Conduct a feasibility study on an outdoor pool
- Develop additional park facilities:
  - Sledding
  - Skateboard Park
  - Lacrosse fields

Other issues and needs have also been identified based on public input for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as well as interviews that have taken place since, including:

- Basketball participation in New Hartford is quadruple that of neighboring communities
- Conflicts among trail users exist at Sherrill Brook Park
- Passive or unprogrammed space is needed in the Town's parks
- Conflicts among users of shared fields
- Football and Soccer practice fields are needed
- Among these, the Town has addressed the need for football practice fields and trails in Sherrill Brook Park have been renovated.

- Local and national trends that influence parks and recreation facilities provision include:
- A demand for outdoor recreational facilities and open space that outstrips all models that have been constructed to predict this use
- Sports are expanding through seasons so that traditional fall sports, such as soccer are now played during the spring and summer in addition to fall, increasing competition for multi-use fields
- Baseball, Soccer and Softball are all popular sports in the Town and all rely on multi-use fields
- New Hartford’s population is not projected to grow; however it is aging and older residents have different needs than younger residents

Based upon these facts, the following provision standards are recommended for the Town of New Hartford Parks and Recreation facilities.

Table 9-4 Recreation Facilities Standards

Source: NRPA and peter j. smith & company

Activity/ Facility	NRPA Units Per Population (2001 Plan)	Service Radius	Location Notes	Recommended New Hartford Standard 2005	New Hartford Need	New Hartford Provision	Surplus/ (Shortage)
<b>FIELDS PROGRAMMED PRIMARY USES</b>							
Baseball	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball) Lighted 1 per 30,000	¼ - ½ mile	Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.	1 per 3,000	7	3	(4)
Football	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Same as field hockey.	1 per 7,000	3	3	0
Soccer	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.	1 per 2,500	8	11	3
Softball	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball)	¼ - ½ mile	Slight differences in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.	1 per 2,000	10	8	(2)

**Strengthening New Hartford's Neighborhoods**

Activity/ Facility	NRPA Units Per Population (2001 Plan)	Service Radius	Location Notes	Recommended New Hartford Standard 2005	New Hartford Need	New Hartford Provision	Surplus/ (Shortage)
<b>FIELDS PROGRAMMED SECONDARY USES</b>							
Field Hockey	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.	1 per 20,000	1	0	(1)
Lacrosse	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel time	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.	1 per 20,000	1	0	(1)
<b>FIELDS MUTLI-USE NOT PROGRAMMED</b>							
Mixed Field Use including soccer lacrosse, baseball, football, field hockey	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 per 3,000	7	5	(2)
<b>COURT SPORTS</b>							
Basketball	1 per 5,000	¼ - ½ mile	Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.	1 per 2,000	10	7	(3)
Tennis	1 court per 2,000	¼-½ mile	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/ community park or adjacent to school	1 per 2,000	10	15	5
Multiple Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles.		1 per 10,000	2	0	(2)
<b>OTHER</b>							
Trails	1 system per region	N/A		1		1	1
Skate Park	1 per 50,000 population	2 - 3 mile service radius	In community or regional parks	1 per 50,000	1	0	(1)
Archery Range	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time	Part of regional or metro park complex.	0	0	0	0

**Town of New Hartford Comprehensive Plan Update**

<b>Activity/ Facility</b>	<b>NRPA Units Per Population (2001 Plan)</b>	<b>Service Radius</b>	<b>Location Notes</b>	<b>Recommended New Hartford Standard 2005</b>	<b>New Hartford Need</b>	<b>New Hartford Provision</b>	<b>Surplus/ (Shortage)</b>
Combination Skeet and Trap Field (8 Stations)	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel time	Part of regional/metro park complex	0	0	0	0
<b>WATER, WATER SPORTS</b>							
Swimming Pools	1 per 20,000	15 to 30 minutes travel time	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.	1 per 20,000	1	0	(1)
Beach Areas	N/A	N/A	Should have sand bottom with slope maximum of 5 % (flat preferable). Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas.			0	0
<b>WINTER SPORTS AREAS</b>							
Ice Hockey	Indoor - 1 per 100,000	½ - 1 hour travel time	Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multi-purpose facility.	Indoor - 1 per 100,000	1	1	0
Natural Skating Areas	Outdoor - 1 per 2,500	N/A		Outdoor - 1 per 10,000	2	0	(2)

Based upon the preceding analysis, the following differ from the 2001 Plan:

**Baseball** – The standard has been revised to 1 per 3,000 of population because of continuing increase in rates of participation. Based upon this standard the Town should offer four additional baseball fields. One of these fields should be lighted.

**Football** – The standard has been adjusted to 1 per 7,000 to reflect the current provision. With two new practice fields, the Town should now have sufficient facilities for football.

**Soccer** – The standard has been adjusted to more accurately reflect the popularity of this sport, from 1 per 10,000 to 1 per 3,000 population. This still would indicate that the Town has a surplus of three soccer fields. Surplus soccer fields can be redeveloped as multi-use fields.

**Softball** – The standard has been adjusted to 1 per 2,500 to more accurately reflect the current rate of provision. No additional development is currently needed.

**Multi-Use** – The Town should not rely on multi-use fields to provide space for organized or league play. Multi-use fields are an important part of the Town's facilities, particularly for unorganized or pick-up games and to provide opportunities to close other fields for brief periods for renovations and rehabilitation. Based upon a standard of 1 per 3,000 of population, there should be two additional multi-use fields. **Field Hockey** and **Lacrosse** could be accommodated on the multi-use fields.

**Basketball** – Based upon the popularity of basketball, three additional courts could be established, on a standard of 1 per 2,000 population, a more accurate reflection of the rate of participation.

**Tennis** – Based upon the standard for tennis of 1 per 2,000 population, the Town has five more tennis court than needed. The public input process did not indicate a high demand for courts. Some of the surplus courts could be redeveloped as multi-use courts.

**Multi-Use Courts** – Based upon a standard of one per 10,000, two such courts need to be developed.

**Skate Park** – The Town should consider developing a skate park as recommended by the 2001 Plan.

**Archery and Skeet** – No recommendation for development.

**Swimming Pool** – The Town should consider developing an outdoor pool as recommended by the 2001 Plan based upon a standard of 1 per 20,000 population.

**Beach Areas** – No current standard exists. If development of an outdoor swimming pool is cost-prohibitive, perhaps discussions regarding use of the Mohawk Valley Water Authority's decommissioned reservoirs or other open water for outdoor swimming could be pursued.

**Indoor Ice Arena** – New Hartford currently has one arena. The population standard for ice arenas, 1 per 100,000 population, would seem to indicate no such facility is needed. However, the popularity of hockey and figure skating indicates there may potentially be a need for a twin ice sheet, as recommended by the 2001 Plan. If this development is cost-prohibitive, the Town may consider implementing outdoor skating areas. At a standard of 1 per 10,000 population, two such areas could be supported.

## 9.5 Parks & Recreation Findings

- The Town has an adequate supply of park acreage that is dispersed throughout the Town
- Additional athletic fields and courts are recommended to address conflicts among users
- Provision of a Town-wide trail system is supported by national and local trends as well as local residents

## 9.6 Parks & Recreation Policies

Policy 1 - Healthy active lifestyles for New Hartford's residents should be encouraged through an array of recreational facilities and programs

Policy 2 - The Town should continue to pursue the development of an interconnected system of trails and open spaces; this system can link New Hartford's neighborhoods together and link neighborhoods with employment centers

Policy 3 - New Hartford should continue to actively pursue development of recreational facilities that will serve current and future populations

Policy 4 - Opportunities to acquire land for parks and open space should be identified