

# 9. RECREATION

Recreation in Hooksett spans a broad spectrum, encompassing passive recreation areas and activities as well as active recreation areas and facilities. Certain aspects of passive recreation have been addressed in the Conservation chapter of the Master Plan.

## 1. Existing Facilities and Services

There are about forty-seven (47) acres of Town-owned park and recreation facilities (see Map 9-1). These include: Donati Park—twenty-eight (28) acres (the parcel with the football field/softball and baseball fields is state-owned and leased to the Town); Fraser Park—three (3) acres; Riverside Park—ten (10) acres; Peter Brook Park—six (6) acres. These four parks combined include two outdoor basketball courts, four tennis courts, four baseball fields and a batting cage, one softball field, three soccer fields, one football field, a single 1/6<sup>th</sup> mile running track, three playgrounds, one picnic area with tables, one boat launch, one outdoor ice/rollerblade rink, and two clubhouses. These facilities are owned and operated by the Town and all four are considered *active* recreation areas. At these facilities, there are no indoor basketball courts, and no area for public swimming. A skateboard park has recently been built on Legends Drive across from the Safety Center. Now that the Town has use of the former Village School, those facilities, including a gym and ball fields, are available for public use.

The Hooksett School District (SAU #15) and the Parks and Recreation Department maintain the *active* recreation facilities at the three school sites—Underhill, Memorial, and Cawley—comprising a combined total of approximately fourteen (14) acres. Since May DRAFT 2016, the Town has taken over the responsibilities of the active recreational facilities at the former Village School. All of these school facilities include two full- and two half-sized indoor gymnasiums, one outdoor basketball court, one full- and two half-sized indoor basketball courts, one baseball field, one softball field, two soccer fields, and one playground.

There are another five (5) acres of Town-owned land at Lambert Park. The Town of Hooksett has provided an easement to the State for a state-developed boat ramp; this is also a picnic area. A state historic marker identifies this area as an historic location of the NH Canal Transportation System. In addition, the Town owns Jacobs Square, a one-acre war memorial also known as Veterans Park. These facilities are owned and maintained by the Town and both are considered *passive* recreation areas.

### A. *Donati Park*

The Parks and Recreation Department's cornerstone facility continues to be the 28-acre Donati Field area (the southern half of the park is owned by the State of New Hampshire

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## Recreation

Department of Transportation with a 99-year lease). Located just off Route 3 (Hooksett Road) on Main Street in The Village, the park (along with the former Village School facilities) provides the majority of the Town's athletic fields and facilities. The soccer/football field and the baseball field are lighted for night use, and the park includes the "Kids Kaboose", the playground of choice in town. However, this playground is dated, does not meet current code, and is not fully handicapped accessible. Steps are being taken to bring this playground up to code standards. The Donati Field is considered to be essentially built-out at this point. Overuse has also placed maintenance and scheduling strains on many of the fields.

### *B. Fraser Park*

This is the smallest residential park—approximately three (3) acres on K Avenue in the southern part of town. It has a basketball court, two tennis courts, and a small playground. These facilities are not lighted. There is currently no room to expand the size or number of facilities in this park, except for additional playground equipment. Parking is limited.

### *C. Riverside Park*

Riverside Park is a long, narrow, approximately 10-acre site on Merrimack Street just north of the PSNH power plant on the grounds of town-owned property leased to the Merrimack District Court. The south end of the property features an undeveloped overlook of the Merrimack River—one can view the picturesque island and the old railroad bridge abutments of the former Portsmouth to Concord Railroad, and one can look downstream to the Hooksett Falls dam. This area could be better utilized as a picnic area. The middle portion is grassed with a full view of the river, and has a short path to a sitting area. The northern part of the park is reached by a paved road leading past the ice-rollerblade rink to the boathouse of the Amoskeag Rowing Club, which leases space from the Town to store their sculls. The rowing club and others use the paved boat ramp at this site for recreational pursuits on the river. This facility is minimally developed.

### *D. Peter Brook Park*

Manchester Sand and Gravel Company recently donated this park to the Town of Hooksett. It is a 6-acre site that has been developed into two soccer fields. These fields were opened for play in the fall of 2003.

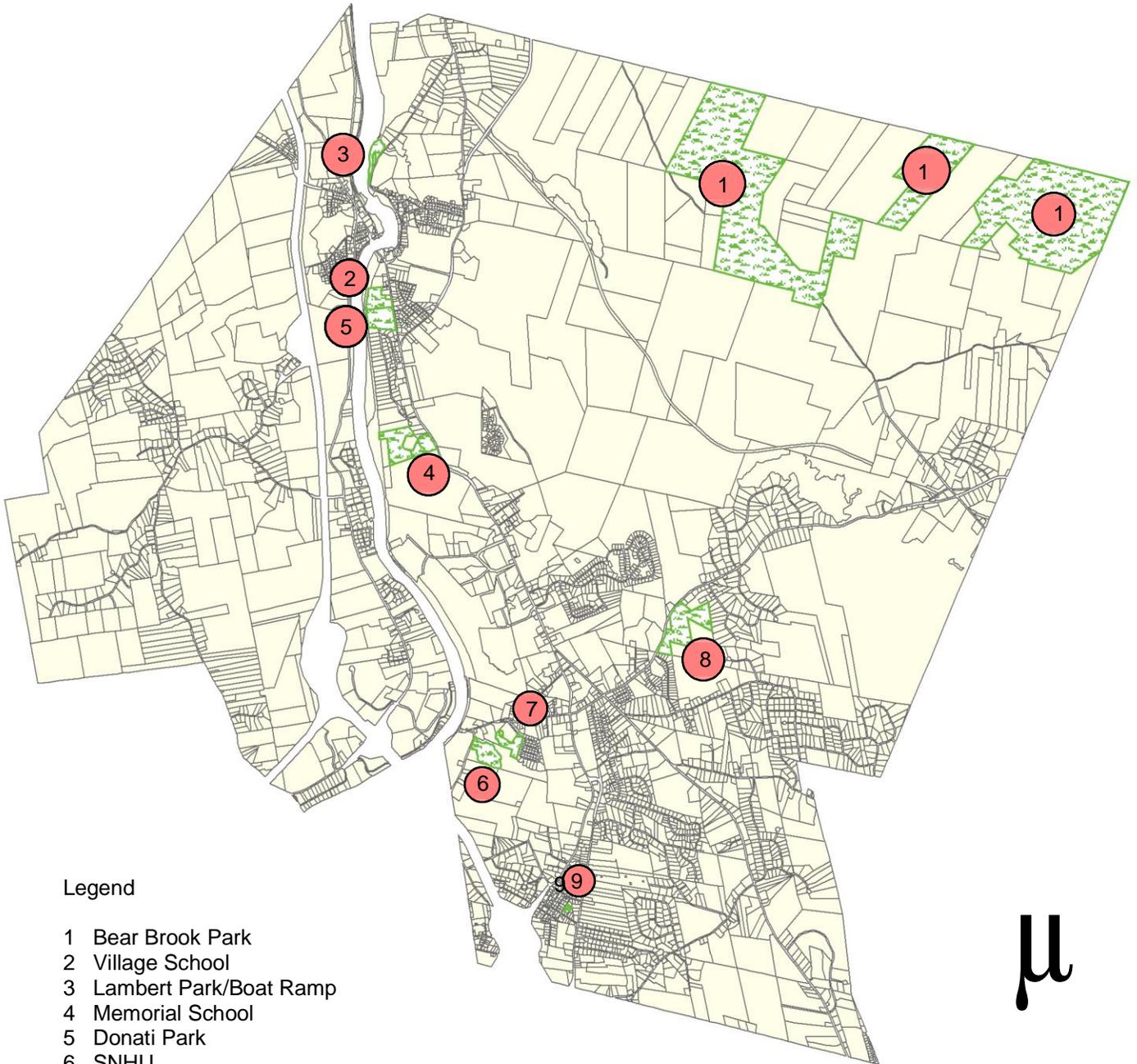
### *E. Bear Brook State Park*

Nearly the entire developed portion of Bear Brook State Park is just north of Hooksett in Allentown, but about 900 acres of the park are located within the northeast corner of



# Town of Hooksett Master Plan

## Public Recreation Land



### Legend

- 1 Bear Brook Park
- 2 Village School
- 3 Lambert Park/Boat Ramp
- 4 Memorial School
- 5 Donati Park
- 6 SNHU
- 7 Underhill School
- 8 Cawley School
- 9 Fraser Park



Source:

Prepared by the Hooksett  
Community Development  
Department for the  
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Town of Hooksett Master  
Plan.  
Town of Hooksett

1 inch equals  
6,000 feet

March DRAFT 2016

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Hooksett. The entrance to the park is in Allenstown off Route 28; there is no legal or authorized access to the park from Hooksett. This regional recreational facility provides a variety of opportunities for outdoor activities.

*F. Hooksett Youth Athletic Association (HYAA)*

Hooksett is fortunate to have an active group of volunteers organized to provide recreational opportunities for its young people, age K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. The HYAA provides year-round recreational sports programs. Sports include: 1) the Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading fall program (regional—for Hooksett, Allenstown, Pembroke, Suncook, and Epsom)—approximately 185 youth annually; 2) a youth soccer program (fall with some spring)—approximately 800 youth annually; 3) Lacrosse in the spring—approximately 75 youth annually; 4) Little League baseball/softball—approximately 400 youth annually; and 5) winter basketball—approximately 460 youth annually.

*G. Commercial Recreation (as of Feb DRAFT 2016)*

The following commercial recreational facilities currently operate in Hooksett:

<b>Arcade/Game (indoor):</b>	Space Center, 51 Zapora Drive;
<b>Cinemas:</b>	Regal (Hoyt's): 8 movie theaters at Central Park of NH on West River Road (Route 3-A) near Exit 10;
<b>Golf:</b>	Legends Golf and Family Recreation: Miniature Golf, Driving Range, Batting Cages, 18 Legends Drive off Hooksett Road (Route 3); Johnny Nine Iron: indoor golf on Londonderry Turnpike (Route Bypass 28);
<b>Ice Rinks:</b>	Tri-Town Ice Arena, 311 West River Road (Route 3-A): two NHL-sized hockey rinks (85 by 100 feet); Ice Den Arena at 600 Quality Drive; and
<b>Shooting Range:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> Skeet & Sportsman's Club (skeet/sporting clays), 100 Goffstown Road.

## 2. Impact Fees

The rapid pace of development that Hooksett is currently experiencing has placed a tremendous strain on the programs as well as the facilities and the volunteers that support them. The town recently (Fall 2002) developed an Impact Fee Schedule for recreation. This means that at the time a residential building permit is applied for, the applicant is invoiced for the following fees—to be paid before issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy: \$695 per each single-family detached home; \$567 per each townhouse unit; \$667 per each duplex (two-family) unit; \$579 per each multi-family unit; and \$479 per each manufactured housing unit. These fees may change at the discretion of the Town Council. The fees are utilized for the provision of recreational facilities occasioned by

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new growth. The amount of the fee for each use should be considered annually by the Council.

### 3. Recommendations

#### A. *Community Center*

A recent survey of residents supports the need for a community center where recreation programs can be held. Currently there are no organized recreation programs for pre-school age or senior citizens. The former Village School has been transferred to the Town and has sufficient space for the provision of recreational activities. The Town should make the necessary arrangements for the administration of this potential community center.

#### B. *Town Beach*

As part of a pending proposal to be brought before the Planning Board in conjunction with the development of the so-called “Head’s Pond” residential and golf course project, the Manchester Sand and Gravel Company may deed to the Town of Hooksett approximately 145 acres of land in the north central part of Hooksett. This land may include a 30-acre pond and accompanying beach frontage as well as approximately 115 acres of upland forest. This parcel is adjacent to about 70 acres of land that may be dedicated as “conservation” land by the developer of the Southern NH University’s former North Campus site. The Parks and Recreation Department, with advice from the townspeople, should develop a plan for access, parking, club- and/or bathhouse, and related beach facilities; the plan should also contemplate active and passive recreational activities on the upland portion. There are several different types of activities for which this parcel has potential, including but not limited to swimming, fishing, non-motorized boating, picnicking, hiking/nature trails, etc. This facility has the added potential to become tied by a trail system to the statewide Heritage Trail System. Upon accepting the deed to this parcel, the Town of Hooksett will have an opportunity to develop it into an unparalleled asset for the use of Hooksett residents for many generations to come. At the writing of this document, preliminary discussions are taking place related to the development of this area.

#### C. *Heritage Trail*

The Hooksett Heritage Trail Committee was formed originally in about 1990 and a significant amount of work was done to outline the trail; it was designed to begin at the Southern NH University where the northern segment of the trail in the City of Manchester terminates. It is the Committee’s plan to locate the trail on the east side of the Merrimack River, and east of the Boston & Maine Railroad, from Southern NH

University north to Robie's Store in the Village. Robie's Store has been recently designated as a National Historic Register site; this would be one of the many attractions along the trail. It is part of the Heritage Trail Plan to restore the "Lilac Bridge" as a river crossing of the trail over to Veteran's Memorial Park on the west side of the river. From there it would likely proceed north to the boundary of the Town of Bow along the west side of the river. Several spurs are contemplated to extend off the Heritage Trail to points of cultural, historical, and recreational interest. This is an effort on the part of the people of Hooksett to include our 7-mile portion of the 230-mile trail that is planned to eventually run from the Massachusetts border in Salem northward into Canada.

*D. Quimby Mountain Area*

The Town recently acquired ownership of this scenic property—approximately 80 acres of upland along the western boundary near the meeting of Bow and Dunbarton. One of the attributes that makes this land valuable for conservation and/or recreation use is the elevation; the land is adjacent to the highest point in Hooksett, approximately 900 feet in elevation. The Town's Park and Recreation Advisory Committee should develop a plan for the use of this area and present findings to the Town Council.

*E. The Pinnacle*

This unique rock formation is on private land owned by resident Arthur Locke. The area comprises approximately 34 acres and has the potential to provide passive recreation opportunities. The owner has already made provision with the Hooksett Village Water Precinct Commission to preserve the land; this provides an added benefit of keeping the wells at Pinnacle Pond from contamination. The Town of Hooksett should work cooperatively with the owner of the property to provide limited public access for passive recreation.

*F. Bike Lanes*

A trails-bicycle-sidewalk plan should be developed to plan for and provide areas within the community for the installation of marked bike routes (lanes along the highway) to permit citizens and visitors to safely bike, walk, jog, and/or rollerblade for recreation as well as transportation from place to place.

*G. Museums*

Hooksett does not have a museum at present. Robie's Country Store Historic Preservation Corporation is currently working to make a living museum of this unique old country store on the western bank of the Merrimack River in the Village. The store is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*H. Impact Fees*

The Town should consider developing a list of recreational needs to meet any existing deficiencies. Once any known deficiency is addressed, the impact fee revenue may be expended on those facilities that meet the needs of new residential growth.

*I. Kids Kaboose*

The Town should insure that the Kids Kaboose recreation area is rebuilt for the use of the children of Hooksett.



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