

*Youth baseball at  
Rideout Park &  
Playground*



# Existing Conditions

*(Where are we?)*





Rideout Park's multi-use courts are packed with pickleball players year round.

*Many voices,  
tools, and data  
informed a  
future recreation  
vision for the  
Town of Concord.*



## Analysis Summary

Taken together, this comprehensive set of studies unearthed what gaps may be present in Concord's current recreational offerings and what improvements may be necessary to support Concord's future recreational needs.

Analysis included:

- A desktop evaluation of use as determined by number of permits pulled per field, court, facility, etc.;
- Public outreach, both in person and through online survey to understand trends in existing use and community needs;

- A benchmarking study of how Concord compares in number of recreational assets to towns with similarly sized populations through the National Recreation and Parks Association standards;
- A comprehensive inventory of all active and passive recreational sites, and an assessment of twelve (12) existing or newly acquired recreational properties;

Below are high-level summary observations that resulted from this work.

### EXISTING PERMITTED USE

- Rectangular field sports are on the upward trend, and accommodations must be made to support increased use of these kinds of fields.
- Unprogrammed open space is in high demand for community events, performances and unstructured field play.
- Overall court use is increasing - basketball, tennis and pickleball.
- Permit information for interior meeting space was thin and thus challenging from an analysis perspective. More dedicated study on interior spaces is needed.

### COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclist was a repeated priority at public engagement events.
- More trails and walking loops within and between facilities, neighborhoods, and West Concord and Town Center were desired by folks.
- People want more ways to access and engage with Concord's wealth of waterways and ponds, including rowing, paddling, fishing, and swimming.
- Many favored more seating, shaded picnic tables, water fountains/bottle refill stations, etc throughout the sites.

### NPRA BENCHMARKING

- Concord has much more rectangular fields than its counterparts, but the current stock does not meet the incredible demand.
- Number of playgrounds and tot lots aligns with community feedback - there are not enough to support the need.
- Concord is in dire need of dedicated dog runs, which matches up with what we heard from community members.
- Similarly-sized communities have more indoor recreational facilities per capita, particularly those that offer multi-generational active and social recreation options.

### FACILITY EVALUATIONS

- Concord's outdoor recreation spaces are generally in good shape and have adapted well over time to new community needs and changing sports trends.
- Concord's few indoor recreation facilities are aging or underutilized and not meeting demand for indoor sports programming during winter.
- Outdoor courts are in poor and sometimes hazardous condition, yet demand for tennis, pickleball, and basketball remains high.
- Few sites are signposted. Concord needs a better system-wide approach to park signage with amenity symbols and wayfinding.

## Existing Uses

Studying how Concord's facilities are being used historically was an important exercise to provide context for this plan. Mapping trends over time can reveal reasons behind observed wear and tear of certain facilities over others, and drive decision-making over where to invest and when. Paired with site assessments, an analysis of the number of hours permitted across various facilities can uncover which of those are more popular than others. A study of this kind can also reveal which sports may be gaining in popularity and which may be on the downward trend; understanding trends help to make predictions about which kinds of facilities should be built in the future, and which may be up for removal or modification.

A few caveats on the data:

1. Given that this analysis was conducted in 2023, and Concord Recreation transferred to a new platform for collecting and tracking permit applications in 2020, the data available was only from 2021 and 2022, with some limited data from 2020.
2. The available permitting data occurred during a global pandemic when typical programming, sports, and indoor activities were largely canceled.
3. It should be acknowledged that not all facility use is made through permitting. Pick-up games, informal team play and scrimmages, play with family and friends are typically not tracked with a permit.



Winter Wonderland on the basketball courts at Emerson Park. Photo credit: Concord Recreation.

That said, each permit tracks the facility / amenity used, the number of hours required for the event, and the organization that pulled the permit. Summed together in various ways, a series of detailed bar graphs were created and are included in Appendix C. Thirty-two graphs in all, they include the following comparisons:

- Hourly play by sport, Concord-wide
- Town-wide field use by location (outdoor only)
- Town-wide indoor gymnasium use by organization (Hunt and Ripley comparison)
- A comparison between fields, town-wide, broken down by sport for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, football, ultimate frisbee, baseball, and softball
- A comparison between courts town-wide, broken down by sport for basketball, tennis



Kite flying at Rideout Park (photo courtesy of Concord Recreation)

- A comparison amongst fields, town-wide, for general use
- A bar graph of the Emerson's track use over the two year-period
- Field usage per field, comparing each organization's use of that field. Organizations run the gamut from adult sports leagues to high school programs to youth leagues to general community use. Fields included in the study are as follows:
  - Doug White Turf Complex: Field #1, Field #2, Upper Grass
  - Emerson Park: 90' Baseball Diamond, Track, Basketball Court #1, Basketball Court #2, Soccer Field #1, Soccer Field #2, Soccer Field #3, Tennis Courts, Softball #1, and Softball #2
  - Rideout Park & Playground: Overall Use, Baseball Field #1, Baseball Field #2, Pavilion, Soccer Field, Softball Field, and Tennis Courts
  - Cousins Field: Soccer Field
  - South Meadow: Fields 1 and 2
  - Hunt Recreation Center: Conference Room, Gymnasium, and the Multipurpose Room
  - Ripley School: Baseball Field, Soccer Fields, and the Gymnasium

From these comparisons, the summary of findings were collected and included at right. These findings, along with all others noted throughout this chapter, feed into the needs assessment included in the next chapter.



Concord Recreation's Annual Egg Hunt.  
Photo credit: Concord Recreation.

## Summary of Findings

- Soccer, baseball, and softball are most permitted; and on the upward trend.
- In 2022, Rideout Park's passive space was being used significantly more than other spaces (2,067.50 hours); Doug White Field #1, Doug White #2, and Emerson Park Soccer Field 2 also see significant use. (1,306, 1,230.50 and 1,230 hours, respectively).
- For soccer, Ripley School Soccer Fields are the most used and increasing (2,556 permitted hours in 2022). Next Doug White fields (youth soccer 2,266 permitted hours in 2022), then Emerson Park Soccer Field (1,803 permitted hour in 2022).
- Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Softball, and Football permitting are trending up. Baseball permitting is trending downward (apart from Rideout).
- The only outdoor basketball courts that are permitted are at Emerson. Indoor are at Hunt Recreation Center and Ripley School, but there is no current permit information for Hunt (either for pickleball or basketball).
- Tennis Courts are more popular at Emerson than Rideout and use is increasing.
- Doug White and Rideout are most used for events and special activities.
- Recreation activities and other programs held in the gymnasiums at Ripley School and Hunt Recreation Center are Town-organized. Very few non-Town organizations or youth sports organizations seek permits to use these indoor recreation facilities.
- Permitting of the Hunt Multipurpose Room is primarily by the Town. Permitting us very minimal by youth sports and non-Town organizations.

Respondents **wanted more** of these recreation amenities:

OUTDOOR INDOOR

pickleball (dedicated)	✓	✓
bocce	✓	
tennis (dedicated)	✓	✓
volleyball	✓	
basketball	✓	✓
swimming pool	✓	✓
splash pad	✓	
skating rink	✓	✓
playground	✓	✓
affordable classes		✓
climbing		✓
track		✓
affordable alternatives to the Beede Center		✓

Respondents **highly favored** more:



\* connectivity between facilities, neighborhoods and town centers



more land / property to expand the outdoor recreation facility system



more walking and biking trails



opportunities for public art at the parks

To be more **welcoming and inclusive**, accessibility improvements should focus on:



Improving / adding accessible restrooms.



Improving / adding accessible seating / picnic tables.



Improving graded paths, ramps, and curb cuts.

**54%** are visiting Concord's recreational facilities for **both active and passive** recreation needs.

**70%** visited **20+ times** in the last year.

**'Good'**



64% rated **active** recreation facilities rated as 'good'.

68% rated **passive** recreation facilities rated as 'good'.

**60%** feel their personal goals are being met today.

**Most respondents wanted to:**

- 1 Improve existing walking and biking trails.
- 2 Improve access to areas for swimming, fishing, and boating.
- 3 Add more amenities to existing facilities (pavilion, restrooms, seating, signage / wayfinding, water fountains, etc.)

\*Note: Comments were prolific for this particular idea.

## Community Priorities

Over the course of the engagement process, community members and park stakeholders identified a list of needs and wishes for Concord's recreational facilities. Themes and priorities emerged, that when coupled with the

other analysis included in this section, forms the basis for overarching recommendations found in the next chapter, Future Conditions.

What needs to be improved at each facility (highest rated in order are marked by A, B and C)

The most frequented recreation facilities are:

	Improve maintenance and upkeep (of grounds and buildings)	Improve accessibility (pathways, curb cuts, lighting, access, times available for use, etc.)	Add amenities (pavilion, restrooms, signage, water fountains, seating, etc.)	Add more active recreation amenities (sport courts and athletic fields)	Add more passive recreation amenities (trails, shade, seating)
1 Emerson Playground and Park	C	C	A	C	A
2 Rideout Playground and Park	B	A	B	A	B
3 Hunt Recreation Center	A			B	
4 Cousins Field					C
5 Doug White Turf Complex at Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS)					
6 Water Access Point at Warner's Pond		B			C
7 Ripley School Fields and Gymnasium			C		

Results from the online survey conducted in Spring 2023, above and opposite.

Online Survey

Themes identified in the online survey results are graphically depicted on the opposite page and above. Feedback in the blue bubbles is focused on existing recreational sites, whereas maroon bubbles focus on what might be possible in the future at existing or future recreational sites.

With 567 respondents, a range of perspectives weighed in. The following statistics represent the highest percentages in various categories, to give a sense of the general makeup of respondents:

- 81% were aged 40 and older
- 34% have lived in Concord for more than 20 years
- 67% of respondents identified as female
- 45% were Caucasian or white; 5.5% did not wish to provide a race; the remaining respondents represented 1% or less each (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian Indian / South Asian, Middle Eastern Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin)
- 53% work full time
- Most 2-person households were 65+ (61%); Most 1-person households were people aged 25 to 34 years old (73%)

## In-Person Events

Ideas and feedback collected from conversations and write-in cards are summarized below.

The water-based sites – Baker Avenue, Gerow, Warner’s Pond [written in as a wildcard] – seemed to strike participants’ interest and discussion.

Participants often voted for proposed recreation sites that were near their homes, referencing the map. Participants discussed living near the Gerow site (and Bruce Freeman Bike Trail, Concord Prison) and wishing to see that developed further.

Several participants knew about the Superfund Starmet site (2229 Main Street) and liked the idea of re-using it as a sport complex. One participant said she liked how “convenient” a sports complex as described on the board for 2229 Main Street site would be with everything at one location.

Quite a few participants remarked on the need for better connections, particularly via bicycle between West Concord and Concord (town center).

Several high-school and college-aged participants liked the addition of recreation amenities at the Concord-Carlisle Skate Park site near the high school, especially the disc golf course. Several mothers of teenagers remarked on the need for more gathering spaces and programming focused on healthy activities for teen-aged children in the evenings and weekends.

Participants were either interested in the large scale and diverse amenities offered in the 2229 Main Street conceptual design or the simplicity, light intervention, lower cost, and short-time frame for improvements to the Baker Avenue conceptual design.

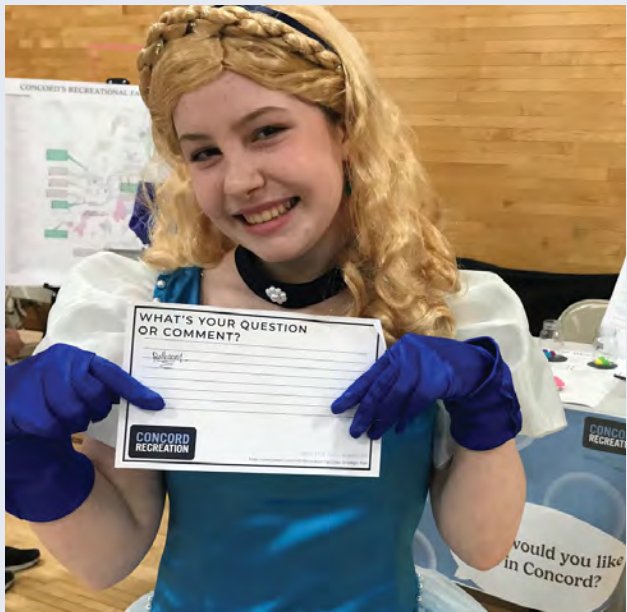
Participants indicated a need for trails and cycle path as a top preference, followed by adding more courts.



Pop up tent at the Summer Concert Series



Facilitated stations at the Open House



Pop up Table at the Stow Street Block Party



Pop up tent at the Summer Concert Series



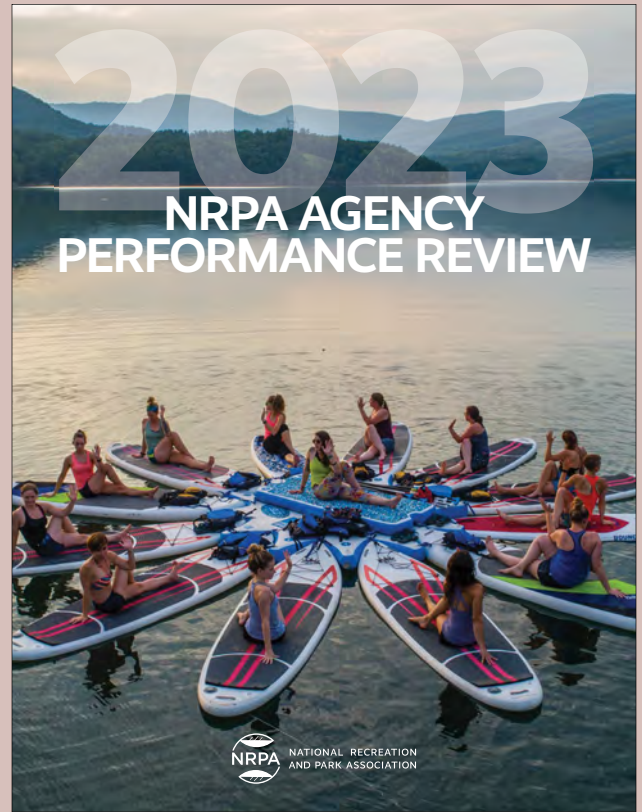
Pop up Table at the Stow Street Block Party

## Benchmarking against NRPA Standards

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) is a not-for-profit agency dedicated to fostering excellence in parks, recreation and community engagement since its founding in 1965. The NRPA collects data and works with local Parks and Recreation Departments to evaluate current park facilities, programming, local parks and rec responsibilities, staffing, parks budgets and funding, and policies for communities across the country.

The data collected by NRPA provides a valuable tool for communities like Concord to compare their current public space and recreational amenities to other communities of comparable size. Local governments can use this information to determine where they currently excel and where improvements can be made to their recreational offerings and services to ensure and maintain access to recreational facilities to constituents of all ages.

The 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review was used to understand where the Town's current recreational offerings stand as compared with towns of similar population. Included in the chart at right is a synopsis of the findings. It is worth noting that the seventeen (17) amenities listed represent those currently in Concord's inventory and / or amenities that were discussed repeatedly by the public. As a result, the findings from this benchmarking study move beyond statics to provide a realistic understanding of quantities needed per amenity to fill gaps and support future needs in Concord. More information on the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review can be found at [nrpa.org](http://nrpa.org).



## Outdoor Facilities

Amenity Metric <i>(Pops with Less Than 20,000 Residents)</i>	Recommended Quantity <i>(Based On Concord's Total Pop. 17,669)</i>	Concord's Current Inventory
<b>1 PLAYGROUND</b> typically serves 2,014 residents	5	3
<b>1 TOTLOT</b> typically serves 5,816 residents	3	2
<b>1 BASKETBALL COURT</b> typically serves 3,729 residents	5	4
<b>1 PICKLEBALL COURT</b> typically serves 3,252 residents	6	6
<b>1 TENNIS COURT</b> typically serves 5,860 residents	2	8
<b>1 BASEBALL FIELD</b> typically serves 3,114 residents	3	4
<b>1 SOFTBALL FIELD</b> typically serves 5,079 residents	2	3
<b>1 MULTIPURPOSE FIELD</b> typically serves 9,177 residents	2	13
<b>1 SWIMMING POOL</b> typically serves 9,745 residents	2	5
<b>1 DOG PARK</b> typically serves 11,100 residents	2	0

## Indoor Facilities

<b>1 RECREATION CENTER</b> typically serves 9,745 residents	2	1 Hunt Rec Center
<b>1 COMMUNITY CENTER</b> typically serves 8,829 residents	2	1 Harvey Wheeler
<b>1 SENIOR CENTER</b> typically serves 14,000 residents	1	1 Harvey Wheeler
<b>1 NATURE CENTER</b> typically serves 10,633 residents	1.6	0
<b>1 AQUATICS CENTER</b> typically serves 11,650 residents	1.5	1 Beede
<b>1 TEEN CENTER</b> typically serves 14,593 residents	1	0
<b>1 INDOOR ICE RINK</b> typically serves 8,000 residents	2	0

## Inventory and Assessment of Existing Recreational Sites

Boots-on-the-ground site visits at designated properties confirmed the existing conditions of facilities and amenities. The properties listed here were visited and assessed over two days. Each property was assessed using the same set of criteria; the results are included in the following pages, along with a page dedicated to every recreation site in the map on the opposite page. From each assessment, a list of recommendations for elements to be repaired, renovated, and / or constructed is also included within the following pages and incorporated into the overarching recommendations within the 'Future Conditions' section of this report. The forms themselves are available for review in Appendix B.

Additionally, a 'Comprehensive List of Properties,' was developed in collaboration with Town departments that achieves the following:

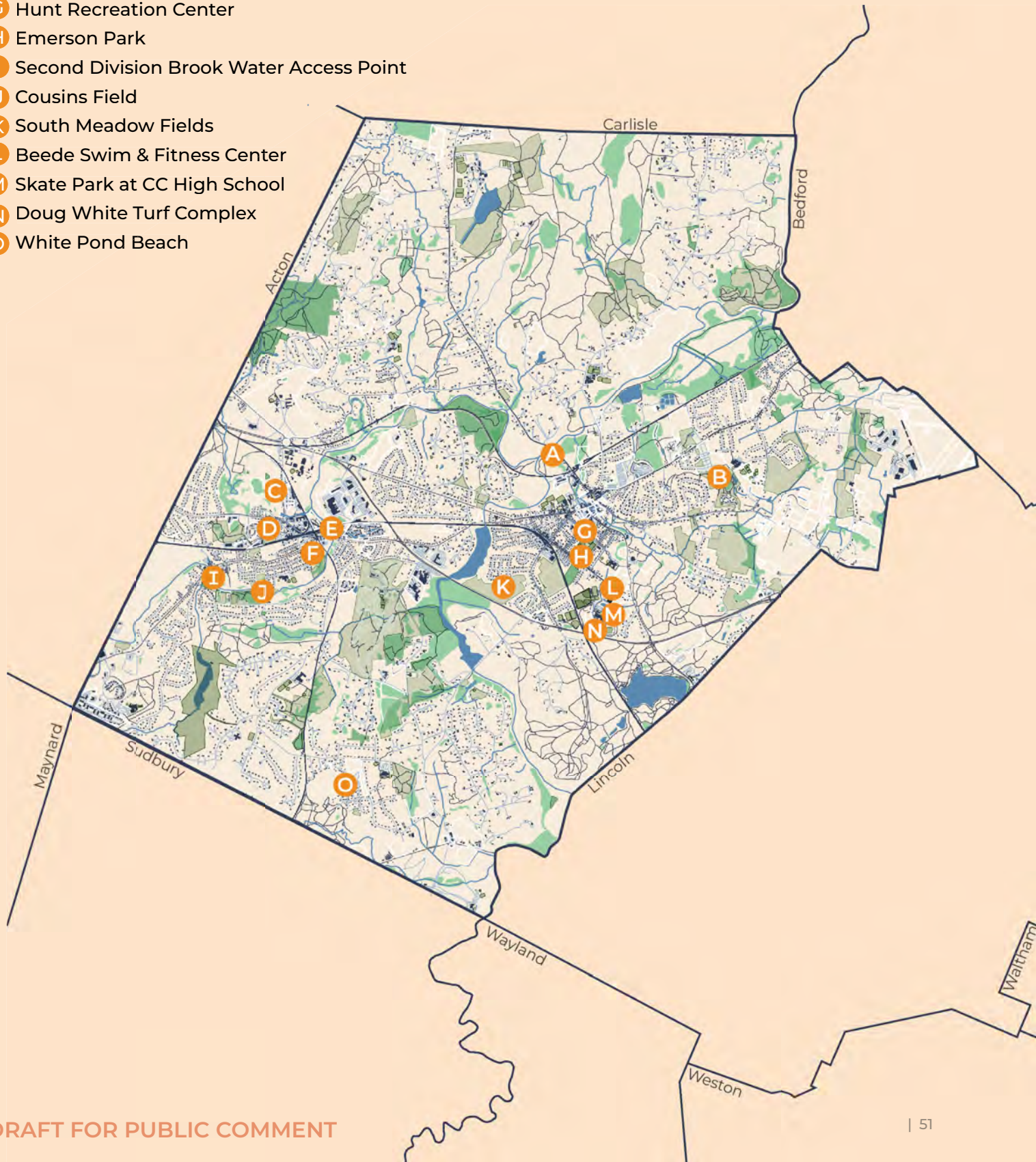
- Identifies all Town-owned properties, including address, acreage, map and parcel number references, and property ownership (i.e. the Board of Selectmen, Natural Resources, or Concord-Carlisle Regional Schools)
- Outlines major amenities at recreational sites, including dimensions and quantity where applicable
- Assigns prime responsible party by Town department (Concord Public Works, Natural Resources, Concord Recreation, etc.) under several categories, including
  - Paving, curbing and striping at parking lots and paved pathways (asphalt)
  - Court surfacing
  - Trail surfacing
  - Playground surfacing
  - Field mowing and landscape maintenance
  - Trash / recycling pickup and maintenance
  - Fencing
  - Site furnishings and vertical elements
  - Buildings and sheds
  - Restroom cleaning / maintenance
  - Park signage
  - Programming and permitting
  - Outdoor lighting

- Electrical amenities
- Water use billing
- Electric use billing
- Other maintenance not otherwise covered
- Identifies if a site and/amenity is rentable
- Generalizes overall ADA accessibility per site (note: a formal ADA accessibility assessment per site was not performed as part of this effort)
- Identifies current, recently completed, or upcoming projects, along with any grants received for these projects, or for the property
- Includes any additional notes not otherwise covered

This chart, included as Appendix A, is intended as a living and evolving document. As properties are improved and renovated, this chart should be updated to reflect new and adjusted amenities, roles and responsibilities amongst Town departments, etc. As properties are added or otherwise change ownership, this list should be updated.

## Recreation Sites

- A Lowell Road Water Access Point
- B Ripley School Fields
- C Warner's Pond Water Access Point
- D Rideout Park & Playground
- E Baker Avenue Water Access Point
- F Harvey Wheeler Community Center
- G Hunt Recreation Center
- H Emerson Park
- I Second Division Brook Water Access Point
- J Cousins Field
- K South Meadow Fields
- L Beede Swim & Fitness Center
- M Skate Park at CC High School
- N Doug White Turf Complex
- O White Pond Beach





LOCATION	20A Lowell Road
ACREAGE	.75a Launch area, 20.8a Pasture
ZONING	A'
PARCEL #	1677-1
USAGE LEVEL	High-to-Moderate
DEED RESTRICTION	Permanent Protection
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR) & Concord Public Works (CPW)

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Boat launch / public landing (gravel/ paved)
- Trailhead kiosk
- Marked trails

## Old Calf Pasture Water Access Point

The Old Calf Pasture Water Access Point is located just outside of Concord center at the confluence of the Assabet and Sudbury Rivers which merge at Old Calf Pasture, an adjacent meadow. Here the two rivers flow northeast to join the Concord River. According to the Concord Museum's website, the area was called Musketquid, or "grassy river" in Algonquin by the area's first peoples who used it seasonally for hunting and fishing. In more recent history, Lowell Road Water Access point is not far by river from the Old North Bridge, a wooden replica of the 1775 bridge where the first shots of the American Revolution were fired. Besides the water access point, the site hosts trails through conservation land. The site enjoys high to moderate use from spring through fall and is maintained by the Natural Resources Division (DNR). Group activities require a permit from DNR.

#### Today's Conditions

Presently, the Old Calf Pasture Water Access



Lowell Road Water Access Point Aerial View.

Point is a gravel road perpendicular to high traffic Lowell Road. A square canoe symbol sign helpfully designates the launch area off of

Lowell Road. Paddlers must unload their boat and move their car to the main road's shoulder. The site is surrounded by woodland and marsh, which contain some invasive species. The site's launch and trails flood during spring and fall. Otherwise the site is incredibly scenic.

### Community Thoughts

Like the other water access points, very few comments were made specifically about the Old Calf Pasture Water Access Point by respondents in the online survey. There were, however, many general comments about the desire for “easier access for boating on [the] river” as well as needing “better signage for river access points.” From Town staff commentary and desktop research conducted for the RFSP, the Old Calf Pasture Water Access point is very popular among paddlers exploring Concord's many rivers. Lowell Road is lined with vehicles in boating season. Also attesting to its popularity as a launch/landing site are the numerous blogs and websites referencing Old Calf pasture Water Access Point with photographs of the site in all seasons.

### Future Ideas

Paddling Concord's three rivers offers access into blue and green passive recreation spaces more natural and certainly less populated than parks and sports complexes in town. The Assabet, Sudbury and Concord rivers offer a chance to “time travel” as users navigate the same waterways as the region's first peoples and early traders who paddled lakes, rivers and streams for trade, travel, and everyday life.

Future ideas for Old Calf Pasture Road Water Access Point would build upon the many in-



Signage at entrance.

terpretative river guides created by the Town of Concord's DNR and organizations like The Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council. These guides help paddlers navigate Concord's river system and explore adjacent sites of interest. Adding educational information physically within the site (via kiosk, signage, etc.) and regular programming in such spaces acn also help the Town, local non-profit organizations, and river advocates to share the region's long history through low-impact water-based recreation opportunities.

Practically speaking, improvements to the access road, parking, and more obvious directional signage are necessary to ensure this launch is visible. Recognition of seasonal flooding should be considered with any improvements.



The site floods in spring but when waters recede, the launch/landing site is very popular with paddlers, according to the NRC.



LOCATION	120 Merium Road
ACREAGE	17.76a
ZONING	A'
PARCEL #	4187
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Concord-Carlisle Regional School; Concord Public Works; Concord Recreation; Concord Children's Center

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

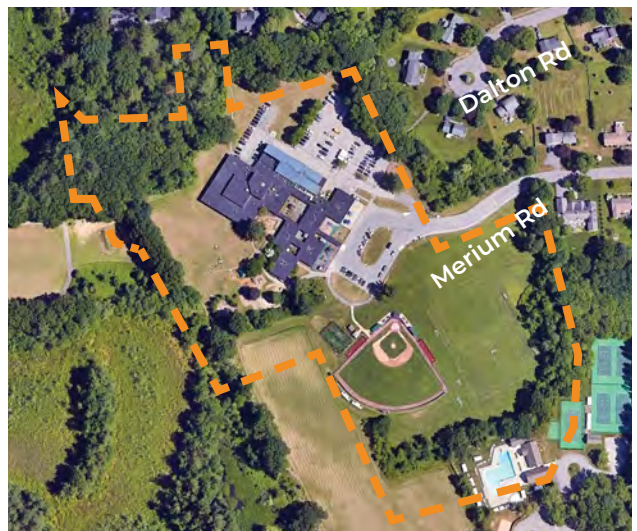
- Little League Baseball Field
- Bullpin / Batting Cage
- 5 Multiuse Fields
- 2 Playgrounds, 2-5 y and 5-12y
- Indoor gymnasium (3/4 size)
- Covered dugout with player benches
- Bleachers, benches
- 2 Bullpin/batting cages
- Scoreboard
- Concession stand
- Signage, water fountain
- Accessible path
- Dedicated parking (~22 spaces in closet lot)

## Ripley School Fields

Ripley School is an integrated public elementary school located in northeastern Concord. The campus contains the following educational groups: the Concord Integrated Preschool, the Concord-Carlisle Regional School (CCRS) administration offices and the Concord Children's Center (CCC), a non-profit preschool not run by the Town or CPS. The site exists in an agrarian context with a perimeter woodland and abuts some residential parcels. The school's playgrounds, sports fields, and gymnasium are publicly accessible during after-school hours. CCRS maintains the school building including the gymnasium, and Concord Public Works maintain the fields. Concord Recreation permits usage of the gymnasium and the fields. CCC maintain the Play Scape at Ripley School, a natural accessible playground space.

### Today's Conditions

Various playgrounds, multiuse fields, a baseball diamond with batting cages/bullpen, and an indoor gymnasium were evaluated as part of the Concord RFSP study. The Play Scape at Ripley, a nature-based playground with inclusive play equipment, is an ambitious al-



Ripley School Fields Aerial View.

ternative to other municipal playgrounds in Concord, however many elements such as the slide and swings had fallen into a state of disrepair. *This playground is privately owned and maintained by the CCC.* The other, more traditional playground situated against the Concord Integrated Preschool building was in better condition and very popular with the many school children enjoying it at recess. Only some "talk tubes," a play element which carries the voice over a distance to another



Accessible baseball diamond at Ripley School.

user in the playground, had been covered and taped with foam, a hazard given its location and height relative to the user's height.

The baseball diamond and multi-use fields were deemed in good condition with irrigation present. Some grading issues in the diamond and soccer fields were apparent. The Little League baseball diamond is accessible with curb cuts and connected walkways from the off-street parking lot at the front of the school to the high quality covered dugouts. However, the placement of concession stand and bleachers on the third base side of the diamond made an otherwise accessible path inaccessible. The bullpen/batting cage on the third base side also contains one fenced side that is too low at 4' high and presents a player safety issue.

In 2020, CPW replaced the infield clay at the baseball field to a professional-level infield skin mix. The warning track material was upgraded as well, to a color-matched crushed stone. Artificial turf was installed in the batting cages and bullpens in 2022.

The ~1,850 square foot indoor gymnasium is permitted by Concord Recreation for sports league play and educational programming such as STEM youth courses. It features basketball courts and a restroom. The floor in the gymnasium is starting to fail and should be replaced. The indoor bathrooms are not fully accessible and are very outdated.

In 2022, the baseball diamond was permitted for 507 hours, the multi-use fields for 2,589 hours, and the indoor gymnasium for 241 hours for a variety of programming including Girl and Cub Scout meetings, STEAM Innovation Lab program, and basketball practice (3,337 hours total).

### Community Thoughts

Many respondents to the online survey felt Ripley School Fields were not a priority for them or

their household, however some respondents to the survey suggested they thought this location could be a good site for future recreation development space. Others were adamant they did not want the open space / natural space to suffer from new amenities. Survey comments included the following amenity requests at Ripley School Fields:

- Renovate gym
- More indoor recreational programming
- Add indoor pickleball and outdoor tennis courts

### Future Ideas

Ripley School Fields and Gymnasium provide significant recreational and educational opportunities for children with a range of abilities and interests to learn, play, and enjoy sports together. This level of inclusiveness among young users should extend to all generations. By renovating the existing indoor gym, the Town could address the rising trend and resulting demand for more adult and senior programming by providing indoor pickleball and basketball, group fitness classes, and social community gatherings like dances, card game or craft nights at this site.

This location should also be considered for expanded winter recreation. Particularly, a temporary outdoor ice-skating rink could take up residence on Ripley's fields during the winter as a pilot study for a more permanent rink structure in town. This site could provide an alternative to Warner's Pond, where Concord residents have historically gone for wild skating. Future changes to the dam structure at Warner's Pond may reduce the pond's ability to adequately freeze for safe skating. Skating as a cross-generational social activity was well-supported in the online survey results and would serve to bring Concord residents together through a nostalgic, family-oriented pastime. If it becomes popular, then Concord Recreation could program skating events and activities in the same way it sponsors the Summer Concert Series and other annual events.



Upgrades to the existing gymnasium could enable more diverse programming for multi-generational users.



LOCATION	39A Commonwealth Avenue
ACREAGE	0.75a Launch site, 77a Pond & Wetlands
ZONING	C'
PARCEL #	2146-1
USAGE LEVEL	Moderate
DEED RESTRICTION	Permanent Protection
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR)

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Boat launch / public landing
- Trailhead kiosk
- Off-street parking (~6 vehicles)
- Soon to be access across the pond to Gerow Park and Bruce Freeman Rail Trail with restrooms, trails, pavilion, and additional dedicated parking

## Warner's Pond Water Access Point

The Warner's Pond Water Access point is located on the eastern side of Warner's Pond, accessible via Commonwealth Avenue between two residential lots in West Concord. The narrow wooded site is used for a variety of small watercraft in late spring / early summer and for ice skating in the winter. Historic and environmental interpretative information about Warner's pond is provided on a trailhead kiosk. The site is located close to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail multiuse path as well as the 7-acre Gerow Park site along the northern side of Warner's Pond which began construction in 2021 and remains under construction (Phase 1). This park will have water views and possible water access.

### Today's Conditions

According to the Town of Concord's website, Warner's Pond is in an "advanced state of eutrophication which has resulted in a number of undesirable conditions including decreased



Warner's Pond Water Access Point Aerial View.

water depths, widespread growths of aquatic invasive plants, and impaired recreational opportunities." Community meetings throughout 2023 were convened to discuss how to "restore ecological health and recreational opportunities of the Warner's Pond system." Both dredging and dam removal have been suggested as alternative ways to address the challenges at Warner's Pond. Dredging would remove sediments and debris from a portion

of the pond, allowing for better recreational access within some of the water body and to support aquatic life. Dredging can be done strategically in certain locations where recreational access is preferred and where it may improve the ecological health of the pond. Dam removal would restore the Nashoba Brook system to a free-flowing river and bordering wetland complex with some effects on such popular winter recreation as the wild ice skating that has historically taken place on Warner's Pond. An approximate 4.5-acre area of open water would likely remain adjacent to the Gerow Recreation Area where ice skating may still be possible. Such vast expansion to the stream channel and wetlands will undoubtedly enhance habitat for fish and wildlife. A Task Force is being created to study the best approach towards improvements at Warner's Pond, with a decision about dam removal not likely to go to Town vote until at least FY 2025, according to the Natural Resources Director.

Water-based use of the Warner's Pond Water Access Point is moderate, with highest use from late spring to early summer before invasive aquatic vegetation creates navigational challenges. The Concord Scout House, who own Scout Island in the middle of Warner's Pond, typically use the Water Access point to access the island. Natural Resource Division staff anticipate a more regional use of Warner's Pond with the dam removal alternative since it will expand river paddling opportunities.

There is on-site parking for six (6) vehicles at Warner's Pond Water Access site. The launch area is within close proximity to the parking space, which loading/unloading boats easy and straightforward for paddlers. There is no accessible path from the parking area to the pond for users with mobility constraints, however. A woodland and riparian buffer surround



Entrance to site between two private residences but is clearly marked by park and regulatory signage.

the site and pond's perimeter.

This site is maintained by Natural Resources Division (DNR) and group activities require a permit from DNR.

### Community Thoughts

With several high profile projects centered on Warner's Pond, participants at community engagement events and online survey respondents were well informed about the water access point and offered many thoughts about the site and general future of the pond. Some people asked for the Town to "clean Warner's Pond and make it accessible for swimming, boating etc." while others reflected that "if the Town takes out the dam at Warner's Pond, kayaking or canoeing on Nashoba Brook to the remaining Warner's Pond would be great." Another survey respondent "hoped that passive (walking and gathering areas) trails through marshes (if the pond goes away) will be built not just from Gerow, but also from Pond Street and Commonwealth Ave access [points]. Just an observation bench is not enough. And to cut Pond Street access off would be a loss to the West Concord community. I'd like the town to give West Concord as much love as it gives Concord Center."

Survey respondents identified "more amenities" such as benches or wayfinding signage as what they would like to see improved at the Warner's Pond Water Access Point. Some individuals made the following requests for specific amenities, apparently for the Gerow site:

- Boating access with rentals
- Swimming
- Trails
- Play equipment
- Potential site for concerts

### Future Ideas

The site's gradual grade change should be leveraged into Concord's first all-persons boat launch and landing. With some minimal design interventions such as an accessible route from a handicap-signed and paved parking space to an adaptive boat launch, the Warner's Pond Water Access Point could offer a safer and more accessible way for people in wheelchairs and those with disabilities to participate in paddling activities more fully. Equally a water access point with a boat launch and/or a fishing pier could be added at the Gerow recreation site.



<b>LOCATION</b>	61 Laws Brook Road
<b>ACREAGE</b>	11a
<b>ZONING</b>	Residential C
<b>PARCEL #</b>	2244
<b>USAGE LEVEL</b>	High
<b>DEED RESTRICTION</b>	No deed restriction for 10.94 acre of site; CR for 0.95a related to CCYS
<b>MANAGER</b>	Concord Public Works (CPW), Facilities, and Concord Recreation

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- 1 Multipurpose Field
- 1 Softball Diamond
- 2 Baseball Diamonds
- 1 Scoreboard
- 2 Batting Cages
- 3 Tennis / 6 Pickleball multi-use courts
- 2 Basketball Courts
- 6 Fitness Stations
- 1 Playground (2-12y)
- 1 Sandbox Totlot
- Perimeter Walking Loop
- Seasonal Restrooms & Storage Shed
- Covered Picnic Pavilion
- Flag pole, benches, picnic tables, water fountain, bike racks
- 2 dedicated off-street Parking Lots with ~55 spaces and an Electric Vehicle Charging Point

## Rideout Park & Playground

Rideout Park is a popular park located within a residential neighborhood of West Concord. Leafy and green with plenty of programmed and open space alike, Rideout Park is teeming with recreation opportunities for both young and old. It is heavily used throughout the year and is the second most permitted park in Concord's recreation system with over 4,000 hours of use permitted in 2022. It hosts numerous sporting events across multiple athletic fields and courts with high use by the Concord-Carlisle Youth Baseball and Softball League. Rideout Park hosts the most permitted community events at 2, like as the Rideout Summer Concert Series. The park provides passive and active recreation opportunities as well as planned and spontaneous usage for local residents. CPW maintains the field, Facilities cares for vertical site furnishings and structures, and Concord Recreation permits use.



Rideout Park & Playground Aerial View.

## Today's Conditions

Rideout Park is generally in good condition with several site improvements added in 2018 including an upgraded baseball diamond including backstop and benches, playground, pathways, parking facilities and reconfigured ADA accessible restrooms. A 13+ years Fitness Park of six (6) outdoor exercise stations was added in 2019. Despite these new recreational amenities, several beloved resources are in desperate need of repair, with hazardous cracks having formed at the multiuse tennis and pickleball courts and basketball courts. Similarly, other interventions to improve safety and accessibility are necessary at Rideout Park, including repairs to the perimeter path; the hazardous overlap of the little league baseball diamond near Conant Street entrance and the playground; aging infrastructure, lack of accessibility and poor dugout experience at the baseball and softball diamonds; and lack of park signage at all of the park's entries. The Conant Street parking lot, one of two dedicated parking lots for the park, is also deeply cracked and pitted.

## Community Thoughts

According to an online survey conducted for this strategic plan, Rideout Park is the second most frequented recreation facility in Concord. Survey respondents are most interested in improving accessibility and increasing active and passive recreation options at the park. They also want improved maintenance and upkeep, better restrooms, water fountains, signage, and seating.



Popular Summer Concert Series at Rideout Park.



The pickleball courts at Rideout are hugely popular and packed year round.



Multiuse field is regularly permitted for use by CCHS Ultimate Frisbee team and popular for pick-up games too.

The survey returned overwhelming requests for dedicated pickleball and tennis courts rather than multipurpose courts and there were many comments on the need for court resurfacing. Requests to improve playground offerings by adding more bucket swings for toddlers and adding a perimeter fence to protect playground users from roaming dogs was mentioned as well as widening existing paths and keeping them maintained for winter access.

Requests for addition amenities at Rideout in the survey included:

- Seasonal temporary ice skating rink, bonfire stations and event programming in winter
- Splash pad and more play options
- Fenced-in dog park
- Outdoor exercise equipment (different from the existing teen-focused fitness stations)
- Adding lights to courts to extend use time

## Future Ideas

The success of Rideout Park as a beloved recreation space and community gathering place in West Concord relies on continued strong maintenance and property protection improvements as well as the future implementation of enhancements identified through this strategic planning process. These long-term design opportunities should include:

- Dedicated pickleball courts on resurfaced existing courts
- Covered dugouts to enhance players' comfort during baseball and softball games
- Splash pad/Spray Deck
- More creative play options when the existing playground comes to the end of its useful life
- Fenced-in dog park



LOCATION	36A Baker Ave
ACREAGE	1.94a
ZONING	IPA'
PARCEL #	3792
USAGE LEVEL	Moderate
DEED RESTRICTION	Permanent Protection
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR) & Concord Public Works (CPW)

**TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES**

- Trails
- Boat launch/public landing
- Two (2) picnic areas with five (5) picnic tables total, including accessible table
- Pollinator garden with signage
- Wayfinding signage
- Dedicated off-street parking ( ~3-4 spaces)

## Baker Avenue Water Access Point

The Baker Avenue Water Access point is situated on a narrow parcel along the Assabet River. Upriver from the site, the river passes under a railroad bridge and down river, it passes under the Main Street bridge which leads into West Concord. Located off Baker Avenue along a short gravel road, the site provides a water access point for paddlers at the end of a wood chip trail through a wooded enclave. The site abuts commercial buildings with a stream along the northern edge. Baker Avenue Water Access Point is maintained by National Resources Division (DNR) and group activities require a permit from DNR.

### Today's Conditions

Nestled between commercial properties, Baker Avenue Water Access Point is an unexpected natural landscape hidden just off a busy corridor. Indeed, many participants in the community engagement process were not aware of



Baker Avenue Water Access Point Aerial View.

the site. Amenities include two picnic areas, a wood chip trail, a tagged pollinator garden, an informal boat launch area / public landing, and dedicated parking for approximately three to four (3-4) vehicles. The site is well maintained



Recycled plastic picnic tables at site.

by dedicated trail stewards and DNR staff as evidence in the tidy wood chip trail and newly planted and tagged native pollinator garden meant to attract birds, bees and butterflies to the site. Two picnic areas including one with a picnic table for users with disabilities exist within the site: one near the parking lot on a composite timber deck and the other re-using an existing concrete pad from a former industrial use at the site.

The site's informal boat launch area was flooded during the spring time when the site evaluation occurred, a seasonal and expected occurrence. The small recreation site on conservation land has been purposefully left unprogrammed yet its well maintained amenities in a woodland setting offer a small natural refuge for passive recreation activities.

### Community Thoughts

Very few comments were made specifically about Baker Avenue Water Access Point in the online survey, however many respondents felt they “need[ed] more kayak/canoe access points along the Assabet River.” Some respondents also commented that “access to and enjoyment of rivers and ponds in Concord seem[ed] under-emphasized.’ Like those found at other NRC water access points in Concord, this site might be better advertised with either a park sign or the traditional square canoe symbol positioned along Baker Avenue.

At the first public engagement event for the RFSP, participants suggested boat/kayak/paddle board rental be added as an amenity to this water access site. Such an resource might be more appropriate at a larger water site. As the most developed and maintained launch site in town, Baker Avenue Water Access Point also ranked among the top four sites (out of seven proposed sites) for possible conceptual design at the second public engagement event. A conceptual plan was developed and shared at a final public engagement event this site.

Many participants in the community engagement process liked the proposed design ideas for improving Baker Venue Water Access Point because they were low intervention with small price tags and short construction time frames. One participant, an avid paddler, felt that both the current out-and-back trail at Baker Avenue Water Access Point as well as the interventions in the proposed design were impractical. She deemed the path as too long to carry a kayak or other small watercraft from the parking lot to the canoe launch area. She also felt it was much easier to park at the water access point downstream at Dino's Restaurant where dedicated parking for paddlers is just a short walk from where the canoe launch is located. A revised conceptual plan for Baker Avenue Water Access Point based on these comments and further input from NRD and other Town leadership is described briefly below and available on pages 122-125.

### Future Ideas

Situated near businesses within a residential context, existing programming at Baker Avenue Water Access Point could be enhanced to encourage more visitation to this newly-acquired natural refuge. Adding simple rustic play pieces such as tree stumps and boughs for balancing and building could fulfill an identified need for more play spaces in Concord. Adding diversity to the existing pollinator garden will strengthen the area's native woodland ecology and provide educational opportunities for visitors. Finally, the clearing of winter debris from the canoe launch / public landing each spring will help users know where the preferred area is to launch or land their boats. And, of course, it goes without saying that kids of all ages will be able to dip their toes and organically explore the waterways that form two edges of this property. See pages 122-125 for other potential enhancements to this site.



Dedicated off-street parking lot.



LOCATION	1276 Main Street
ACREAGE	2.47a
ZONING	WCB
PARCEL #	2447
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	No

**TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES**

- Various services, including the Concord Council on Aging offices and event programming spaces
- Carousal preschool and shared playground
- Computer Lab
- Library
- Reservable rooms
- Off-street parking (~114 spaces)

## Harvey Wheeler Community Center

Harvey Wheeler is a 25,000-square foot community center in West Concord. The center services two distinct user groups in Concord: seniors and preschool students. Concord seniors use the spaces, senior care, and programming through the Concord Council on Aging (CCA). The center hosts classes and events for seniors, health clinics, and has an on-site library, computer lab, and auditorium space. An on-site preschool called Concord Carousel Preschool (CCP) provides half-day and, as of 2023, one class of full-day child care at Harvey Wheeler Community Center within four (4) classrooms. The Concord Carousel Playground also shares an outdoor 'creative play' playground with neighboring private non-profit childcare organization Concord Children's Center (CCC), which is located in an adjacent building on Town-owned land.

### Today's Conditions

The Harvey Wheeler Community Center has public meeting spaces and rooms that can



Harvey Wheeler Community Center Aerial View.

be reserved through the Concord Recreation website. In addition to use by the CCA and the preschool, these spaces are also booked by external community groups. For example, a quilting group frequently uses the large rooms available at the community center.

### Community Thoughts

Very few comments were made about Harvey Wheeler Community Center in the online survey or during the community engagement events.

### Future Ideas

Staff at the CCA would like additional space for their senior programming.

Staff managing CCP would like more frequent access to some of the existing spaces within the community center, including the meeting rooms and auditorium, which it currently uses one morning per week for supplemental learning such as musical or puppet performances. Needs also include the following:

- Additional storage space for supplies, equipment and toys; and,
- Dedicated adult meeting space for parent-teacher conferences and staff meetings.

The outdoor playground feels sufficient by preschool staff, despite it being shared with CCC and a portion of it being converted to a parking lot. An use schedule is coordinated between the two schools.

The CCP must limit their enrollment based on the existing space constraints at Harvey Wheeler Community Center. For the first time in 2023, the preschool offered full-day care and found the offering fully subscribed by families in Concord. This response suggests that there may be a demand for affordable childcare in Concord, which should be confirmed. If verified, additional, appropriate school space should be adapted to expand the preschool.



Children playing at Concord Carousel Preschool program at Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Photo credit: Concord Recreation website.



Senior exercise classes at Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Photo credit: Concord Council on Aging.



Concord-Carlisle seniors enjoy Ping Pong at Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Photo credit: Concord Council on Aging.



Concord Council on Aging organizes well-attended social gatherings for the many senior residents living in the area. Photo credit: Concord Council on Aging.



LOCATION	90 Stow Street
ACREAGE	0.62a
ZONING	C'
PARCEL #	0154
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Concord Recreation / Facilities

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Offices, small kitchen, welcome desk, accessible entrance and elevator
- Conference room
- Multipurpose room (Child-care, Camps)
- 2 Locker room with restrooms and showers
- 1 gender neutral restroom
- Gymnasium with indoor basketball courts, lined for pickleball, and storage for fitness equipment
- Hunt side lawn (outdoor event space)
- Entry plaza with facility signage and landscaping
- Water fountain, picnic tables, public sunscreen dispenser

## Hunt Recreation Center

Built between 1935-36, Hunt Recreation Center is the municipalities (excluding schools) only indoor recreation facility. It is located in the historic center of Concord and adjacent to Emerson Park /Playground. The ~10,000 square-foot facility is ADA compliant with ADA door openers, elevator, and accessible restrooms and offices. The Hunt Recreation Center provides indoor and outdoor amenities for active recreation, including group exercise programs and organized sports leagues such as youth and adult basketball, adult pickleball, and adult volleyball. Summer camps are held here as well as community events such as the Stow Street Block Party and family movie nights and the Community Yard Sale held outdoors in the Hunt Side Lawn (~15,000 square feet). The Hunt Recreation Center also houses the administrative office of Concord Recreation, a multi-purpose meeting room, and a large space for an after-school child care program. The indoor recreation center also includes locker rooms with showers and restrooms and a gender neutral single stall restroom. On street parking as well as a dedicated off-street parking lot for approximately 20 vehicles are available to users of this facility. This facility is maintained and permitted by the Recreation Department with support from Facilities.



Hunt Recreation Center Aerial View.

## Today's Conditions

Overall, the Hunt Recreation Center is in good condition with several amenities, including recently renovated restrooms. This facility is frequently used by park and playground users for restrooms and water. The landscaping in front of Hunt Recreation Center was installed in 2022 and maintained in late spring/early summer as part of CPW seasonal maintenance schedule, however improvements to the existing entry plaza and how it serves as a gateway into Emerson Park would create great better integration between the two recreation facilities. Painting of walls, baseboards and trim inside Hunt Recreation Center might also improve the building's interior as well as new carpeting.

Several space at the Hunt Recreation Center are permitted for us and include the conference room, multipurpose room and gymnasium. The gymnasium sees the most use with 332 hours in 2022 primarily by the early release day childcare program, power soccer practice and CCYB practice.

## Community Thoughts

Comments about Hunt Recreation Center from the online survey showed a variety of opinions about the indoor facility: from "really appreciate the Hunt building as a center for so many activities and summer camp" to wanting an "updated gym (Hunt) with indoor track or other indoor walking facilities to be used during winter/bad weather." Many respondents wanted more indoor basketball and pickleball courts and many comments centered around

the demand for programming outweighing the availability. It is important to note that the Hunt Recreation Center is the only indoor recreation space owned and maintained by the municipality and demand for the gym use is high. Specific requests for amenities at Hunt Recreation Center included:

- Add Air Conditioning in the gym!
- Update gym and replace surfacing/floor
- More indoor recreation spaces for play and walking such as an indoor track in winter
- Greater fitness programming options outside of nine to five on weekdays and more weekend classes
- More indoor basketball and pickleball courts

## Future Ideas

Increased adult participation in recreation offerings, current trends toward active and healthy lifestyles, flexible work schedules, and long New England winters all drive the demand for more indoor recreation programming and therefore, indoor space to house it. The Town should consider what existing indoor spaces--such as Ripley School gymnasium or Peabody Middle School--could be upgraded or creatively adapted to meet demand. Likewise, the Town should consider whether future projects like the recently approved new middle school could be designed in a way to allow for more Town permitted use. Alternatively, acquiring property such as the EPA Superfund site at 2229 Main Street might satisfy the growing need for more indoor recreation space in the long-term.



Freshly landscaped front to Hunt Recreation Center.



LOCATION	26 Stow Street
ACREAGE	6.4a
ZONING	C'
PARCEL #	0186
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Concord Public Works (CPW), Facilities, and Concord Recreation

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

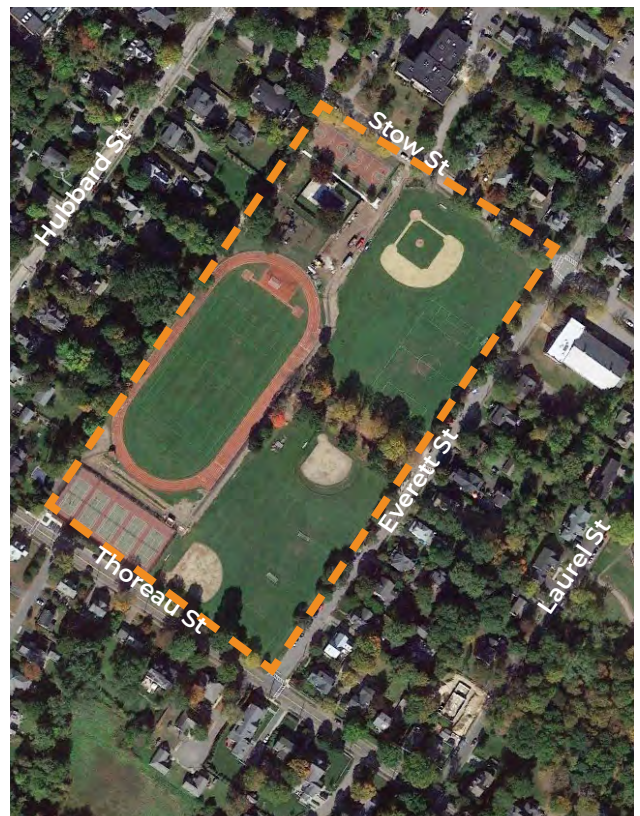
- 3 Soccer Fields
- 2 Softball Fields
- 1 Scoreboard
- 1 Baseball Field
- 5 Tennis Courts with 1 Bang/Backboard
- 2 Basketball Courts
- 1 Outdoor Pool
- 1 Track & 2 Field Events (Long Jump & High Jump)
- 1 Playground (2-12y)
- 1 Sandbox Totlot
- Accessible Park Pathway
- Flag pole, benches, picnic tables, 2 water fountains, bike racks, 2 storage sheds, dog waste bag receptacles
- 1 Mature Tree Allee
- 2 Park Information Boards

## Emerson Playground

Emerson Playground, often referred to as Emerson Park, is a signature park within the Town of Concord's recreation system. At nearly 100 years old, Emerson Playground is situated close to the historic town center within both commercial and residential contexts and serves as a natural gathering place for Concord residents. Town-owned and operated indoor Hunt Recreation Center sits on a neighboring parcel. Emerson Playground is rectilinear and organized into quadrants, which are further subdivided down by use. The Everett Street entrance features an allee of soaring mature maple trees planted by Concord's Garden club in the 1930s and various memorials line this important path, a nod to the park's significance within the community. CPW maintains the field, Facilities cares for vertical site furnishings and structures, and Concord Recreation permits use.

### Today's Conditions

With the exception of a pond and many shaded tree-lined pathways, little of the programming



Emerson Playground Aerial View.

conceived for the 1926 plan of Emerson Park has changed and users continue to enjoy many of the same recreational activities they did nearly a century ago. Emerson Park is one of Concord's most used parks with over 4,000 permitted use hours in 2022. Much informal and therefore undocumented passive recreation occurs at Emerson Playground; for example, the park's open expanse is hugely popular with the dog owners who exercise their pets and enjoy a sense of community here. Similarly, many older users have noted using the recently installed ADA compliant path network for gentle exercise, which are even plowed in winter allowing for all season use.

In 2021, new irrigation covers were installed in all of the ball field areas, lawns around the pool, playground, the field in the fenced track area, and the lawn directly adjacent to the Hunt Recreation Center. A new control system and an additional well were added, and three existing wells were reconditioned as part of this project. Additionally, a baseball/little league field was converted to softball to meet community needs, and it, along with the existing softball field, were installed with electricity and received new infield clay. The outfield was



The outdoor pool is used by Concord Recreation summer camp program.

brought in on the middle field by shrinking the skinned area and installing 10,000 square feet of new sod in fall of 2021.

### Community Thoughts

The survey returned many comments on the current offerings as well as suggestions for future amenities at Emerson Park. Many respondents commented on either the addition of a fenced dog park or banning dogs from the park's athletic fields. There were also many comments in equal measure about the existing tennis courts with opposing demands for adding and not adding pickleball striping or dedicated pickleball courts. Additional amenities requests for Emerson Park include:

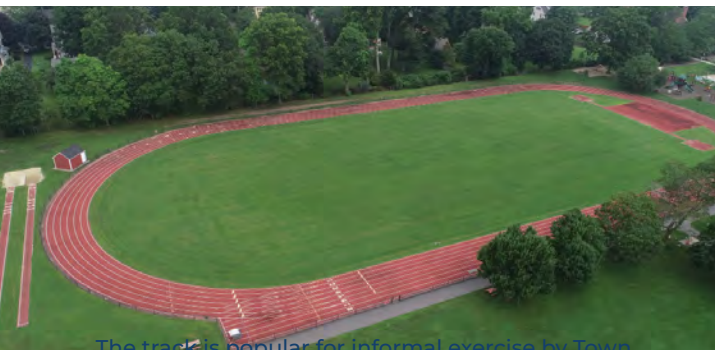
- Add new picnic tables, seating options and trash bins throughout the park
- Keep tennis nets up year-round
- Add bocce ball courts
- Add lighting to existing sports courts
- More creative / ambitious play options or splash pad
- Add more unprogrammed "natural" space
- Bring back the seasonal outdoor skating rink

### Future Ideas

At the heart of historic Concord with the park's initial parcel sold to the Town for a single dollar in 1887 by its most famous family, Emerson Park remains an important open space for community recreation. Future interventions at the park should continue to support ideals of inclusivity, universal access, equity and personal fitness among its users. To this end, Emerson Park would benefit from an overarching Master Plan and standardization of its site furnishings.



Playground at Emerson Park.



The track is popular for informal exercise by town residents as well as by permitted users including many school track teams and for sporting events such as Special Olympics.



LOCATION	173A Main Street*
ACREAGE	0.82a
ZONING	C'
PARCEL #	2693-1-1
USAGE LEVEL	Moderate
DEED RESTRICTION	Permanent Protection
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR)

**TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES**

- Public landing area
- Park and wayfinding signage
- Trail Markers and maintained trails
- Two (2) picnic tables
- Log bench
- Various wooden bridges to maintain trail connection to adjacent parcels

**Second Division Brook Water Access Point (Westvale-Harrington Park)**

The Second Division Brook Water Access Point is located along the Assabet River on a Town conservation parcel in West Concord. The site is a public boat landing and picnic area, with some users arriving by river, and others from trails within Westvale-Harrington Park. The picnic area contains two durable composite picnic tables, a log cut decoratively as a bench, wayfinding signage including a large map and trail markers indicating well maintained trails. Two park signs--one placed along the river's edge with infographics depicting amenities and one positioned along the road at Main Street--are on the site and fashioned from wood in the style of other NRC properties. The site is simple yet adequate as a comfortable place to pause for paddlers. The adjacent parcels provide interesting plank bridges to carry hikers along the riverbanks connecting the wooded site to Harrington Park. Directly across the river is a privately held but publicly accessible canoe launch site at the Westvale Meadows condominium complex. This canoe launch site



Second Division Brook Water Access Point Aerial View.

\*Second Division Brook is a parcel within Westvale-Harrington Park, 27 acres of Town lands with scenic trails through river floodplain and atop the Assabet River bluff. For the purpose of the study's assessment, only Parcel 2693-1-1 was assessed.



Views down river toward historic Damon Mill, which was used for textile production in the 19th century and once produced 50,000 yards of fabric for the U.S. Army in 1861.

has four (4) signed, designated off-street park spaces at the entry to the Westvale Meadow condominium complex. This area is primarily deciduous woodland, riparian buffer, and meadow.

### Today's Conditions

Second Division Brook is well maintained with likely moderate use during the summer months and perhaps in late spring and early fall. It is easily accessible from the river and trails from Harrington Park and the Rogers land community garden but a bit more challenging to access on foot from Main Street due to a guardrail along Main Street.

### Community Thoughts

Second Division Brook was not explicitly mentioned or included in the online survey. At the first public meeting for Concord RFSP, participants suggested kayak, paddle board or boat rental facilities be added to many of the water access points along the Assabet river.

### Future Ideas

Second Division Brook provides a quiet spot to pause when paddling along the Assabet River or exploring the conservation land on foot. The space also enjoys a visual connection to the architecturally interesting and historically significant Damon Mill building upstream, which has harnessed water from the river for various different industries since the founding of Concord. Consideration might be given to a series of temporary art installations located along the river and how they might tell the story of water power in Concord.



Site signage visible to paddlers along the Assabet River.



Various wooden plank bridges connect the adjacent parcels while also providing architectural interest.



Picnic area.



LOCATION	8 Brown Street
ACREAGE	4a field, 6.5a riverfront
ZONING	C'
PARCEL #	2498-1, 2498-2
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	Permanent Protection
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR) & Concord Public Works (CPW)

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Multiuse fields
- Trails
- Community garden and gardening amenities, water outlets
- Informal river access
- 6 benches, 1 picnic table, trash and recycling bins, bird houses
- Park signage
- No designated parking

## Cousins Field

Cousins Field is a scenic landscape located along the Assabet River in West Concord. Situated within a residential context, street trees provide a visual cue to the park's entry along Brown Street. Cousins Field contains large open fields, which are partially maintained for youth sports with some managed meadow. The park has a variety of trails along its riparian edge and perimeter woodland and larger mature trees provide character to this conservation parcel. A popular community garden with 25 plots that include Town water outlets are singular amenities within an otherwise natural landscape. This site is maintained by the Natural Resources Division (DNR) and permitted for use by DNR and Concord Recreation.

### Today's Conditions

Cousin Field is managed as conservation land, so the multiuse fields are unlined but permitting is required for league use of the three (3) double fields used for practice and games by pre-K to Grade 1 youth soccer. In 2022, these multiuse fields were permitted for 669 hours of



Cousins Field Aerial View.

use by Concord-Carlisle Youth Soccer, up from 462 hours in 2021 attesting to soccer's popularity as a youth sport in Concord and the in 2022. The field is considered to be in poor condition, needing re-grading and re-seeding. In addition to the Community Garden plots, Cousins Field has been permitted for some community events such as a Bike Rodeo, which teaches youth bicycle riding skills and road safety.

Cousins Field enjoys a wooden park sign typical of conservation land in Concord however it is difficult for users to determine which parts of the park are public, when several private residential backyards back directly onto the park with no tree buffer or fencing.

### Community Thoughts

The site has been observed to be popular with dog walkers as the primary daily user group as well as residents from the nearby neighborhood engaging in gentle exercise. In fact, many participants in the community engagement events queried where Cousins Fields was located in Concord while others spoke about it as a well-guarded local secret to the West Concord neighborhood! Furthermore, one participant from the third community engagement event wrote that Cousins Field was "nice as it is" and "not sure it needs more."

The online survey yielded many specific comments about Cousins Field. One respondent recommended: "a better canoe launch at Cousins Field would provide easier access to enjoy the river." Another respondent commented: "I think there is a real opportunity to develop Cousins Field into a nice little park. ... This would require some investment from the town, but this is a densely populated area, and a well thought out park would be heavily used and appreciated." Finally, another respondent offered a bold suggestion: "a pedestrian bridge over the Assabet River connecting Cousins and Harrington Parks would be fabulous. Also connecting Cousins to the new Assabet Bluff by a trail through the Thoreau School property along the Assabet [river] would be great." The online survey yielded a few other requests for amenities at Cousins Field including:

- Improvements to and maintenance along waterfront for trails and passive recreation
- Management of invasive species along river
- Provide more seating
- Potential site for a dog park
- Temporary winter skating rink



No designated parking.



Limited Seating/ benches.



Existing Signage.

### Future Ideas

Nestled within a West Concord neighborhood, enhancements to the park's existing features would make this well-loved neighborhood park even better. The field itself should be regraded; stormwater test pits are recommended to ensure proper drainage. Additionally, a small gathering area at the community gardens would support gardening activities and small events. The park also abuts the Assabet River, although significant grade change from the field level to the water prohibits an accessible launch. A small seating area overlooking the river would be a minimal intervention that could connect people to the waterway. Existing trails should be redefined and marked. Moments of play and relaxation, such as spots to hang a hammock, can dot the trail for interest and activation. On pages 126-130 of this report, a conceptual plan attempts to enrich Cousin Fields with new ways for residents and visitors to play, relax, and socialize as a community.



LOCATION	10 Riverdale Circle
ACREAGE	22.5a
ZONING	B'
PARCEL #	4187
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Natural Resources Division (DNR) & Concord Public Works (CPW)

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Informal Trails
- Multipurpose Field
- Water Bottle Refilling Station

## South Meadow Fields

South Meadow Field is conservation land with an open play field and an enclosed woodland perimeter. It is located in a West Concord residential neighborhood near Route 2. No park signage is present and access to the park is via Pilgrim Road despite the parcel address and online mapping sources. The multipurpose field is used for lacrosse and soccer games. The site also hosts informal trails within the woodland buffer. This site is managed by Natural Resources Division and Concord Public Works and permitted by Concord Recreation for use.

#### Today's Conditions

The multipurpose field's turf is in poor condition with no irrigation and undulating grades and divots. The informal trails within the perimeter woodland were muddy during the time of evaluation. There are no physical structures or other on site amenities beyond the field and a water bottle refilling station. Daily, the space is popular with neighbors walking their dogs and depending on the season, the central open field is striped for either two (2) fields of boys lacrosse or 7v7 soccer. Concord-Carlisle Youth



South Meadow Fields Aerial View.

Soccer league was a top permitted user of South Meadow Fields in 2022, and 930 hours of total permitted hours for all sports practices,

games and other community events were recorded for this site that year too.

### Community Thoughts

South Meadow Fields were deemed a low priority for many survey respondents and their households when compared to other Town-owned recreation sites across Concord. One participant at the first RFSP public engagement event queried where the site was located and whether it should be advertised better. One survey respondent called the site “under utilized today.” Another also thought better utilization of South Meadow Fields was needed, however “it shouldn’t get overdeveloped, but perhaps dedicating it to one sport ... and putting some benches along the trails, along the sides of the fields.” Other survey respondents made the following requests for amenities at South Meadow Fields including:

- Adding a playground
- Potential site for dedicated pickleball courts

### Future Ideas

Given the permitted field use by local youth sports leagues, test pits are recommended to better understand the subgrade conditions on the field with the aim of ultimately re-grade, re-seed and increasing seasonal turf management. A small rustic play space made from simple natural materials with play value like balancing, swinging, manipulating, or pretending would benefit this conservation land and help fulfill an identified need for more creative play spaces. Families with a child playing a sport, and another watching, would easily make use of a small playground. The existing trails would benefit from a small kiosk with trail mapping indicating mileage and routes, along with trail markers should be incorporated, along with improved park signage. More information is available on pages 126-130.



A sign at the end of nearby Riverdale Circle refers park users to the park entrance on Pilgrim Street as online maps indicate an incorrect park entrance.



Existing trail covered in winter frost at South Meadows.



Simple regulatory signage, trash and recycling bins at the entrance.



Large open multipurpose field space is popular with dog owners.



LOCATION	498 Walden Street
ACREAGE	35,000 SF
ZONING	A'
PARCEL #	0298
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Concord-Carlisle Regional School (CCRS) & Beede Enterprise

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Eight (8) - lane lap pool and shallow lanes
- Water therapy pool
- Children's pool
- Dive well
- Outdoor fitness patio
- Weight and cardio fitness Rooms
- Locker rooms and restrooms
- Dedicated off-street parking (~150 spaces)

## Beede Swim and Fitness Center

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center is an indoor recreation facility on the Concord-Carlisle High School campus near Concord's historic town center. Beede opened in 2006 through many generous community donations. Concord Recreation runs Beede as an enterprise fund in accordance with Article 30 of the 2005 Annual Town Meeting. The center is financially self-sufficient, balancing recreational needs of the community with an obligation to run a financially self-supporting program without taxpayer support. The center requires membership to access its facilities. It is managed by Concord Public Works and permitted by Concord Recreation for use.

### Today's Conditions

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center is specifically focused on fitness and swimming. The center includes an 8-lane lap pool, a warm water pool, a children's pool, a diving well, and plentiful pool-side spectator seating. There are two 1,600-square-foot fitness rooms; one



Beede Swim and Fitness Center Aerial View.

for weight training and one for cardiovascular exercise. In addition, the facility includes men's and women's locker/shower rooms, inclusive changing rooms, and staff office space. The facility is open approximately 100 hours each week throughout the year welcoming an average of 250 members per day. Beede hosts numerous fitness and swimming lessons and other community classes programming, such as Swim with Santa, Mermaid Swim Night, and Beede and Books: Read and Swim!

## Community Thoughts

Feedback from the community was focused on the cost of membership as a deterrent to access this facility. Survey respondents also found the Beede center to be too small and equipment in decline. One respondent said that “Beede is an asset to Concord, but repairs and general upkeep have fallen behind. Pools are closed far too often.”

Some feedback suggested there is a desire for a more family-friendly children’s pool. Lap pool users liked the ability to reserve lanes (which became available during the pandemic). Others suggested more exercise equipment options and more diverse fitness class offerings. Multiple respondents commented on not liking or being offended by the music played at this facility.

## Future Ideas

The Beede Swim and Fitness Center was not evaluated as part of the RFSP. No future ideas for this facilities have been included in this report.



Children enjoy swim time during the Beede December Vacation Program. Photo credit: Concord Recreation.



Beede Fit for senior users and other exercise programming is available at Beede Center. Photo credit: Concord Recreation website.



Mermaid Swim event. Photo credit: Concord Recreation.



<b>LOCATION</b>	500 Walden Street
<b>ACREAGE</b>	93.6a CCHS campus (~7,500 SF)
<b>ZONING</b>	A'
<b>PARCEL #</b>	0298
<b>USAGE LEVEL</b>	Moderate
<b>DEED RESTRICTION</b>	P/ No Deed Restriction
<b>MANAGER</b>	Concord-Carlisle Regional School (CCRS) / Concord Public Works (CPW) / Facilities

**TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES**

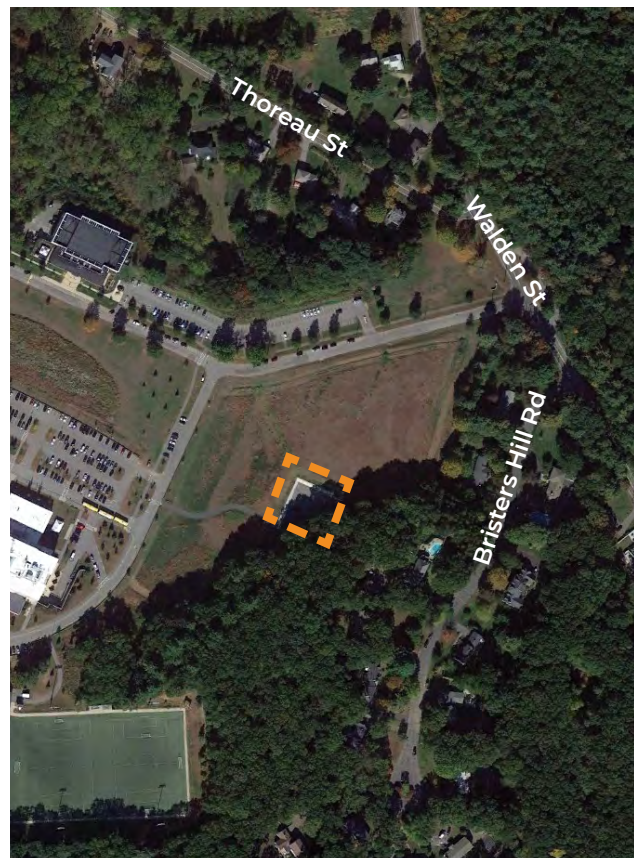
- Woodward built with Skatelite
- Kicker
- Funbox
- Rail
- Box
- 2 Quarter Pipes
- Mini Half Pipe
- Accessible Path
- Park Signage
- Picnic Table
- Parking available after school hours

## Skate Park at Concord-Carlisle High School

The Skate Park at Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS) is set away from the school on the west side of the campus in a large grass field bordered by the perimeter woodland buffer. This recreational facility is one of many on site and is accessible. The skate park's surface is asphalt with fixed concrete ramps and other equipment. Circa 2004, it was funded by the Rotary Club of Concord, the Alliance for Teen Safety, Inc., the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest Cornerstone Alliance Fund, the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District (CCRS) and many other organizations, businesses, and individuals. Records of when it opened have not been found that record the skate Park's official opening. Facilities maintains the Skate Park and it is not permitted for use.

### Today's Conditions

The fixed skate park elements, surfacing, ramped walkway entrance, and seat walls appear in good condition and colonized by the park's users in the typical way these rec-



Skate Park at Concord-Carlisle High School Aerial View.



Quarter pipe at skatepark.

recreation facilities are: through graffiti and stickers. The original plaque-signage is missing and damaged receptacles on site suggest either users who a lack of regular maintenance.

### Community Thoughts

The majority of survey respondents seemed to feel ambivalent about the Skate Park at CCHS. It was the least visited recreation facility among those listed within the survey and some 89% of respondents felt it was not a priority site for them or their household. Yet, nearly 30% of survey respondents “favored” or “highly favored” improvements to the existing Skate Park to include other extreme sports such as a BMX track or parkour. Several comments from the survey also suggested ideas for enhancing the land around the Skate Park, such as adding a “pump track to the grassy area near [the] skate park.”

Conversations held at in-person public engagement events suggested many residents did not know Concord had a skate park. One participant at the first public engagement event suggested the site needed “more visibility from the road.” Conversely, at the RFSP’s third community engagement event, the skate park was endorsed by a self-identified mother to teenagers in Concord, who said that hang-out spaces like the skate park were needed for this age group as well as additional programming targeting teenagers. Needing more non-sport recreational opportunities for tween and teen-aged children in town was also a prevalent comment made by survey respondents.

### Future Ideas

The RFSP’s community engagement process revealed the need for more activities tailored for teenagers in Town and the desire for additional ways to gather as a community outdoors in a post-pandemic world. Given its proximity to Concord’s town center and location across from Beede Swim & Fitness Center, this underutilized piece of land on the CCHS property could serve both of these desires. Imagined for

this space are active recreation amenities arranged around a central open lawn that can support small to mid-sized town-wide and school events and performances, providing the Town with an alternative location that relieves pressure from the overextended Doug White Complex and Rideout Park locations. A stage would anchor this space and serve as an everyday teen hangout spot and picnic area. The performing arts lawn could be sized to provide an additional rectangular multi-use field, which would augment the Town’s existing field resources while addressing increasing popularity of soccer in Concord.

Active recreation opportunities are endless here; ideas play off of the skate park that exists here currently, with suggestions for improvements to make it more attractive for use, such as adding a new pump track for bikes, disc golf course through woodland and open field, and basketball courts – all identified recreation needs. During off-hours in the school year and in summer, the school’s adjacent parking lot could be utilized as parking for visitors of this new space. A concept plan for the Skate Park at CCHS is available on pages 132-136 of this report.

CCRS will also have its own ideas for improving this space. Collaboration and coordination between Town departments will be key to meeting the recreation needs of both Concord residents and CCRS students.



Removable steps and jumps.



<b>LOCATION</b>	500 Walden Street
<b>ACREAGE</b>	93.6a campus (~6.5a turf complex)
<b>ZONING</b>	A'
<b>PARCEL #</b>	0298
<b>USAGE LEVEL</b>	High
<b>DEED RESTRICTION</b>	P/ No Deed Restriction
<b>MANAGER</b>	Concord-Carlisle Regional School / Concord Public Works (CPW) / Facilities

**TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES**

- Doug White Turf 1 lined for football, boys lacrosse, soccer, and field hockey
- Dough White Turf 2 lined for girls lacross, soccer, youth soccer and field hockey
- Upper Grass Field
- Scoreboard (2)
- Seasonal restrooms (ADA accessible)
- Lighting (MUSCO system)
- Water fountains, player mister, bleachers, player benches, trash bins, flag, and memorial stone
- Storage sheds
- Accessible entrance/paths
- Park and regulatory signage
- Designated parking

## Doug White Turf Complex

Doug White Turf Complex is located at Concord-Carlisle High School adjacent to several of Concord's other recreational facilities. The Town-owned complex consists of two full-size multipurpose synthetic turf sports fields striped for boys lacrosse (blue), football (white), soccer (yellow), and field hockey (red). One field is also painted annually for girls lacrosse (red). The synthetic turf fields, restroom and spectator bleachers are ADA accessible and flanked by two wooded and lawn earth berms, a wooded slope and fenced entrance which connects to a campus parking lot with four (4) dedicated parking spaces. There are misting stations, a scoreboard, flag pole, and sports lighting located at the fields for nighttime use. The natural grass multiuse field is adjacent to the parking lot and is used largely for soccer. CPW maintains the fields, Facilities cares for vertical site furnishings and structures, and Concord Recreation permits use. A Friends of Concord-Carlisle Fields group manages an account to bill permitted users for power and lighting usage while using Doug White Turf Complex that helps cover maintenance costs.



Doug White Turf Complex Aerial View

## Today's Conditions

The synthetic turf fields had their surfacing replaced in 2010. A maintenance regime is performed by CPW throughout the year as the complex never formally closes, although it may be rendered temporarily unusable due to snow cover. CPW can remove snowfall on the synthetic turf fields during the winter months for extended season use, depending on the snowfall and lead times.

Several times per week, CPW conducts a litter pick-up and once a month, CPW blows for leaves, grooms the synthetic turf with brushing equipment, and inspects for any defects along the seams as well as responds to maintenance issues identified by users. Annually, CPW paints the line work for girls lacrosse and an external contractor is hired to address compaction issues on the fields. The Facilities department, which is due to be included under CPW's leadership within the year, maintains and repairs the complex's restrooms, storage sheds, fencing, misters and other vertical structures.

CCHS Athletic Director noted that the school permits for use the Doug White Turf Complex from 3:30-6:00pm Monday through Friday in the spring and fall seasons, creating at least 400 hours of use time per year by CCHS student athletics after school. According to the Concord Recreation Permit Usage Report, the site was permitted for additional use after 6:00pm on weekdays and at the weekends for a total of 3,763 hours in 2022.

## Community Thoughts

Very few specific comments were made about Doug White Turf Complex in the online survey or at tabling at community engagement events. Eighty percent of survey respondents thought active recreation facilities in Concord, like this site, were in "good" or "excellent" condition, and more than half of all respondents felt "neutral" about improving existing athletic fields and diamonds. Indeed nearly 66% of survey respondents felt Doug White Turf Complex was not a priority for them or their household. A few comments sought to discourage the Town from any further artificial fields, and there is a Town-wide moratorium on the construction of synthetic turf fields, except on private land or at the Doug White Turf Complex or CCHS stadium until May 2027.

## Future Ideas

The fields and amenities at Doug White Turf Complex are in good condition. Usually, synthetic fields need to be replaced every 12-13



Two artificial turf fields are stripped for multiple sports, including football, soccer, lacross nad field hockey.



Bleacher seating includes spaces for spectators in wheelchairs or with strollers.



Sythetic turf, MUSCO sports lighting, and electronic scoreboard allow for evening and four-season use.

years, depending on use. The current synthetic fields were replaced 13 years ago, so replacement should be considered in the next two years. The only recommendations for future enhancements at Doug White Turf Complex comes from CPW. CPW suggests ball safety netting be installed along the southern length (Route 2/Concord Turnpike side) of the two fields. The netting will reduce balls/users from entering the slope, which is maintained as a pollinator meadow. CPW also recommends the replacement of several concrete sidewalk panels, which have begun to spall.



LOCATION	116 Shore Drive
ACREAGE	10.1a
ZONING	A
PARCEL #	3412-1
USAGE LEVEL	High
DEED RESTRICTION	P/ No Deed Restriction
MANAGER	Facilities and Concord Recreation

#### TODAY'S SITE AMENITIES

- Sand beach for swimming and fishing
- Swim Dock / Boat Launch
- Accessible paths
- Timber deck platform for group fitness classes and other events
- Seasonal programming
- Picnic tables, benches, and trash bins
- Bike rack
- Storage area
- Seasonal restrooms
- Lifeguard office
- Dedicated off-street parking (~50 spaces)

## White Pond Beach

As a 43-acre kettle pond, White Pond has a shoreline that forms an irregular main basin with only minor coves and one larger cove, known locally as Sachem's Cove, where it forms a nearly separate 1.5-acre basin at the southwest limits of the pond. Most of the shoreline and its approximately 113-acre watershed is occupied by year-round residences and large parcels of forested land. There is a state-run boat launch at White Pond. The town-owned parcel called White Pond Beach is located at the eastern end of the pond. White Pond Beach is operated by Concord Recreation and is a membership-based outdoor swimming facility. The sandy beach is accessible for seasonal use and hosts swimming lessons for children during seasonal hours. The site is maintained by Facilities and daily operations in season are managed by Concord Recreation. A town park space, White Pond Beach is open year round but swimming is only allowed when lifeguards are on duty.



White Pond Beach Aerial View.

## Today's Conditions

Starting in 2019, access to the beach area at White Pond underwent major renovation to provide universal access across the nearly 50 feet of elevation change from the parking area at Plainfield Road to the beach area, boat launch improvements, stormwater management and water quality treatments, and vegetation management. A seasonal restroom trailer and picnic area have been added and are owned by Concord Recreation. The pond itself experiences algae and cyanobacteria blooms. The Town of Concord has programs attempting to mitigate these blooms that have been successful in recent summers including implementing the A-pod technology.

Programming such as swimming lessons, paddleboard yoga and regular yoga were available during summer 2023 through Concord Recreation.



Yoga on new timber decking platform.

## Community Thoughts

Many respondents to the online survey have commented on White Pond Beach celebrating the new accessibility improvements. Others felt ‘simple, practical facilities are [better]’ and “patrons are generally very appreciative of the open-endedness of a clean, well-maintained, well-lifeguarded beach that offers a chance to relax and unwind.” Survey respondents and participants from the first public meeting for the Concord RFSP suggested the following amenities be added to White Pond Beach, including:

- Shower / fresh water to rinse feet
- Drinking fountain
- Sailing or rowing clubs, sailing lessons, whitewater canoeing training programs
- Kayak/paddleboard/boat rental



Dock Opera at White Pond Beach. Photo Credit: Preserve White Pond.



Current accessible path to beach.