



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Purpose of the Assessment

The *City of Dover 2015 Recreation Needs Assessment* is intended as a way to assess and prioritize what Dover residents have articulated as their outdoor recreation needs. The *Recreation Needs Assessment* will guide the City as we make investments in our park systems to ensure that capital investments support the articulated needs of the community. Public dollars are stretched thin, and as stewards of public land and public dollars, the City needs to ensure that the limited funds are invested in a way that best meet the needs of Dover's diverse community. Through looking at the locations of parks in relation to population and the articulated needs of residents and park users, the City can ensure that we continue to offer a quality system of parks and variety of recreation programs in an effective and efficient manner.



Parks and Recreation Services

The City of Dover Parks and Recreation Department provides a comprehensive recreational program to meet the needs of all citizens, along with a citywide park system. Programming includes special events such as the Spring/Summer Performing Arts Series, Dover Days, Youth Government Day, fitness and enrichment programs, and athletic programs/leagues. The City's athletic programs and leagues encompass softball, basketball, women's lacrosse, soccer, field hockey, volleyball, and football.

The City operates twenty-seven (27) City parks, ranging from passive planted areas to community playgrounds to larger regional parks. A full listing of City Parks and their amenities is provided in Appendix A.

While the City is a municipal recreation service provider, many of our programs and parks attract visitors from the larger Kent County region. The multi-purpose fields at Schutte Park provide a home for regional soccer and girls lacrosse programs. Silver Lake Park has served as home to many charity 5K run/walk events that draw from the larger region. Continuing to function as a regional provider while focusing primarily on addressing the recreation needs and priorities for Dover residents is important for the Parks and Recreation Department.

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment



Providing quality affordable recreation and leisure services that promote healthy lifestyles for residents of Dover and its surrounding communities continues to be the goal of our staff. Our sports programming consists of sports leagues, clinics, and conditioning clinics. Basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, volleyball, softball, and tennis are the most popular leagues and sports that we offer throughout the year. Fitness classes employing today's most popular fitness routines take shape in the John W. Pitts Recreation Center and at the Dover Public Library. Leisure time classes are pleasing a variety of ages with card/craft making, cookie decorating, family movies and fun nights. Our line-up of day trips has included fishing on the Delaware Bay, the Philadelphia Flower Show and New York City for the sites and sounds. Most recently, the City has added a number of bicycle programs to promote bicycling and bicycle safety within the City.

These include Bike to Work Day and the Ride of Silence.

Our Youth Connections after school program offers elementary school children a safe haven to receive tutoring, mentoring, life skill development, meet new friends, while feeling safe in the supervised environment. Summer camps held in Schutte Park and on the Delaware State University Campus offer families affordable summer options for the working parent and to give children a fun summer experience with guidance and supervision.

Operationally, the Parks and Recreation Department merged into the Department of Planning & Inspections in 2012 following the retirement of the former Parks and Recreation Director. When this organizational change was implemented, the staff offices were moved from the old recreation center at Dover Park to the John W. Pitts Recreation Center. The use of the Dover Park recreation center had declined over time, especially following the opening of the John W. Pitts Center in 2008. Functionally, the building no longer met the programming needs. Additionally, locating all department staff in one building helped to improve staff safety and the efficiency of the operations.

The Parks and Recreation staff are responsible for the recreation programming and the management of facility reservations and schedules. The Public Works Department, Grounds Division is responsible for maintenance of parks, grounds and fields. Strong collaboration is required between the two departments to ensure that park management is seamless and meets the needs of our visitors and users.

The City of Dover Comprehensive Plan has called for a citywide parks and open space plan since 1996, and while individual park plans have been developed, the City has not completed a system-wide plan. The demolition of the recreation center at Dover Park focused attention of assessing the citywide recreation needs and making capital investments in our parks to meet these identified needs. There was concern raised by the community and members of City

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment



Council that the City neglected the needs of residents on the east side of U.S. Route 13 through its park investments in recent years. This concern brought forward the need to fully assess the citywide recreation needs and to make the capital investments in our parks in

accordance with these identified needs.

Our Anchor Parks

Dover Park

Dover Park is located on White Oak Road between U.S. Route 13 and Delaware Route 1. The park is 28.2 acres and while largely wooded, includes softball fields, a playground, pavilions, basketball courts, tennis courts, disc golf, and more. This is also the location of the former recreation center building. The recreation center building was constructed in the 1970's and became functionally obsolete over time. There was some deterioration of the building and water penetration, which ultimately contributed to the decision to demolish the structure. The outdoor amenities are well-utilized, but park patrons have raised the concerns about safety, especially as it relates to the heavily vegetated areas and lighting within the park.

Of the 506 people who completed the City's Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, 42 percent indicated that they use Dover Park. Over 56 percent of the 239 respondents to the question of the purpose of their visit to Dover Park indicated that they use the park for walking or jogging. Other popular activities identified in the response include league activities and playground use.

Schutte Park

Schutte Park functions as a regional athletic center, home to multipurpose fields used for soccer, field hockey, and girls lacrosse; lighted softball fields; and the Dover Little League Park which is leased and managed by the Dover Little League.



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Schutte Park is also home to the John W. Pitts Recreation Center, the City's indoor recreation center that opened in 2008, which includes a gymnasium and multi-purpose room. This park and the John W. Pitts Recreation Center in particular, serves as the hub for the City's recreation programming.

Of the 506 responses to the City's Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, 68 percent indicated that they visit Schutte Park. The top reason that people indicated that they visit Schutte Park is league play, followed by trail use and playground use. Forty-four percent of the 506 survey respondents indicated that they use the John W. Pitts Recreation Center. Primary purposes for visiting the John W. Pitts Recreation Center includes sports leagues, fitness classes, the walking track, and open gym.

Silver Lake Park

Silver Lake Park is a major recreation area for Dover and Central Delaware. The lake itself provides both passive and active recreational activities for all ages. Activities include fishing, waterskiing, and boating. Most of Silver Lake Park is located below the dam, and therefore along the St. Jones River. This park is a hub of activity for families, joggers, walkers, and many others. The park includes a multi-use path that now connects with the Capital City Trail, a trail system that begins along Park Drive and continues to the intersection of U.S. Route 13 and Public Safety Boulevard. Many regional walk and run events begin and end at Silver Lake Park, bringing in visitors from far beyond Dover. In coordination with DNREC and the Silver Lake Commission, the City has developed plans for a "Silver Lake Revitalization" project. The project is designed to improve water quality of the lake and the St. Jones River by providing buffers to the stream with natural vegetation and to create a management plan for the lake and St. Jones River. This project has resulted in a number of vegetated buffer plantings in Silver Lake Park and in Memorial Park along the St. Jones River.



Concerted efforts of the Silver Lake Commission for bringing awareness and educating younger generations of the value and importance of our watersheds is demonstrated with bi-annual clean up events hosted at Silver Lake Park and Mirror Lake area along Park Drive. Clean up events include soliciting youth from local schools, churches, and organizations such as the Hugh O'Brien Youth group, in addition to inviting the public to bring out their gloves, rakes & shovels. Many of the clean up events have included educational displays presented by DRNEC showing the value of the watershed and its importance. As recently as June 6, 2015, the Spring Clean Up day was held with approximately 60 HOBY youth assisting in the removal of weeds, debris/trash and invasive growth along the Park Drive area. These volunteers also spread several loads of mulch along the selected project area adding to the protection of this waterway. We will continue these efforts, while enhancing our outreach for more involvement

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

and educational components from our partners to garner an increased in community awareness and participation.

Of the 506 respondents to the City's recreation needs assessment survey, 65 percent reported that they visit Silver Lake Park. By far, the top reason for visiting the park (75 percent of 337 respondents) is for walking and jogging. Other popular reasons for visiting Silver Lake Park include picnicking, birdwatching, and fishing.

Neighborhood Parks

In addition to the anchor parks, the many neighborhood parks located throughout Dover provide close-to-home opportunities for residents to enjoy the open space, climb on playground equipment, walk their dogs, or just find some peace and quiet. These parks are a valuable component to the City's park network.



Other Recreation Service Providers

In addition to the parks and recreation programs provided by the City of Dover, other organizations provide a variety of recreation services in and around Dover that help to support the recreation needs of Dover residents. The City of Dover partners with some of these other providers to help coordinate resources in an efficient and effective way.

Kent County Parks and Recreation

While Kent County does not operate parks inside the City of Dover, there are several parks that are near the City boundary and serve City residents. Brecknock Park is located just south of Rodney Village in Camden and offers a variety of facilities, including a large playground, horseshoe pits, a picnic pavilion, ballfields, and a walking trail. Kent County is also constructing a new park and recreation center off New Burton Road just south of the City of Dover. The recreation center will also include an area for programming offered by the Boys and Girls Club. The Isaacs Branch segment of the St. Jones Greenway connects with Dover's newly constructed Capital City Trail and is managed by Kent County, connecting U.S. Route 13 to Delaware Route 10. While there has been little collaboration between the City of Dover and Kent County in the area of recreation, the addition of these new facilities draws attention to the need for collaboration and partnership between the two agencies.

YMCA of Dover

The Dover YMCA operates a branch in Dover that includes a fitness room, fitness studios, two indoor pools, and a gymnasium. The Dover YMCA also recently purchased the Kent Swim Club, an outdoor pool on an 18-acre site that is largely wooded. This site is surrounded by neighborhoods and has served as a popular outdoor pool for many years. Under the YMCA's

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

management and ownership, the role of this site in meeting the areas recreation needs will be expanded. The City of Dover participates on a committee to develop a long-range plan for the Kent Swim Club property, which could include additional recreation amenities beyond the pool and pavilions that currently exist. Additionally the YMCA has participated as a sponsor for the City's Concerts on The Green and has worked through grant funds to provide swim lessons to participants in Dover's summer day camps. Continued collaboration with the YMCA will ensure that resources are efficiently utilized to meet the needs of Dover's population.

Capital School District

The City of Dover has a long-standing collaboration with the Capital School District in the area of recreation. The Capital School District and the City of Dover have a large geographical overlap, and therefore serve many of the same constituents. The City operates an afterschool program at Towne Point Elementary School. The City of Dover's athletic leagues and sports programs often coordinate closely with the Capital School District to offer programs to youth in Dover's schools and to share field space.

Specialized Providers

The City of Dover works closely with the Delaware Special Olympics and the Delaware Senior Olympics to provide programming and opportunities that meet the needs of these more specialized constituencies.

Colleges and Universities

The City of Dover has longstanding partnerships with Delaware State University and Wesley College on programs such as athletic leagues, summer camps, and other programming. Delaware State University and Wesley College have both had college interns work with the Parks and Recreation Department to help them gain practical experience in recreation and sports management, and to help the City to offer quality affordable programming.

Outside Leagues

There are a number of outside leagues that utilize City field space to support their programming. These include the Delaware Diamonds Ladies Youth Lacrosse program, Calvary Christian Academy's soccer program, and the Delaware Union soccer program. These leagues are most frequently more regional in nature than just the City of Dover, and the City needs to balance their needs with the City's programs which are aimed principally at Dover residents.

Paying for Parks and Recreation Services

Parks and Recreation services are a general fund expense for the City of Dover. The City's recreation programs and park operations are supported through a combination of user fees and other general revenue sources. The FY 2015 operating budget for the Parks and Recreation Department is \$706,400.



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

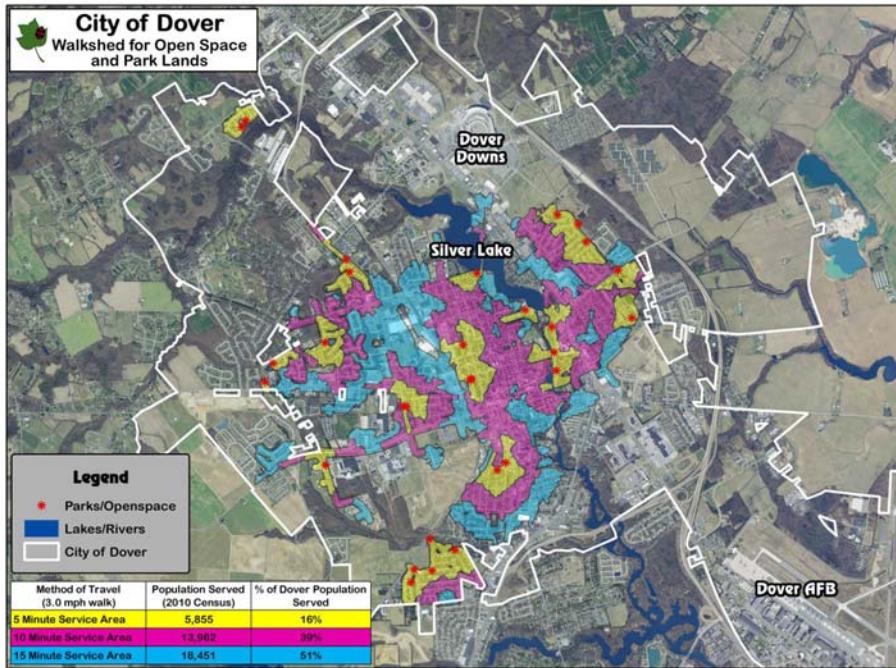
Since the Grounds Division is responsible for lawn mowing, litter pick-up, field maintenance, and other maintenance within the City's parks, a portion of the City's \$1,191,900 Grounds Division budget for FY 2015 could also be attributed to support of the park system. The annual revenue associated with the Parks and Recreation Department is approximately \$150,000. Approximately 21 percent of the Parks and Recreation operating budget is supported by the department's revenue. If the operating budget of the Grounds Division is included as a parks and recreation cost, only about 8 percent of the City's parks and recreation costs are supported by the department's revenue.

Capital improvements to the City's parks are funded through a combination of general fund sources, funds from the City's Parkland Reserve, and grant funds. The City works to utilize grant funds when they are available to supplement the City's capital investments. The City has utilized grant funds through the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund program, administered by the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, to expand and improve our park system. The City's Parkland Reserve is funded primarily through payments from developers in lieu of providing recreation amenities within their residential developments. The Parkland Reserve has no reliable or steady stream of funding to sustain it over a long period of time.

Process for Developing Needs Assessment

Walksheds for Open Space and Parkland

In preparing the Recreation Needs Assessment, the City of Dover coordinated with the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation, who maintains a statewide recreation and open space database. The Division has developed tools to help communities better analyze public recreation service levels and identify areas that are underserved by public parks. This is done primarily by mapping park locations and determining what areas are within a 15-minute walk of public parkland. The analysis does not consider private, homeowner association managed open space.



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Using this tool, several areas have been identified as underserved. These include neighborhoods such as Fox Hall, Fox Hall West, the Village of Westover, the Village of Cannon Mills, Hidden Creek, Morris Estates, Schoolview, Acorn Farms, Persimmon Park Place, Wild Meadows, the Meadows, and several other smaller neighborhoods. In several cases, the communities are served by privately owned open space, such as homeowners association amenities, or in some cases the Maple Dale Country Club. In other cases, this analysis identifies areas where additional investments should be made in recreation access (such as multi-use trails or additional parks). Appendix B includes a series of maps provided by the State of Delaware, including all public open space within the City (based on their Outdoor Recreation Inventory), underserved areas, and park walksheds.

Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

The City Department of Parks and Recreation utilized Survey Monkey to do gather information from the public for the Recreation Needs Assessment. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix C to this document, along with a detailed summary of survey responses. Our survey process was comprised of several steps to provide a holistic picture of the recreational needs of the Dover community. Planning and design, advertising and marketing, public workshops, and methods data collection were among the main focus of the survey process. Another step in the process included our industry partners and organizations for crafting the questions and survey distribution assistance. We outlined and finalized the survey that was then distributed using multiple media formats.



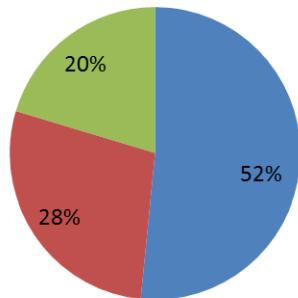
Bringing in our industry partners proved to be a valuable step in the process. The survey questions were brought to meetings of the Central Delaware Recreational Committee, Silver Lake Commission and the Bicycle Pedestrian Subcommittee to name a few. The YMCA of Dover, Delaware Special Olympics, Delaware Sports Tourism, City of Newark, Delaware Senior Olympics, Delaware State University, and Wesley College represent most of the committee members. The Parks and Recreation staff solicited input from their colleagues as well as shared their own professional knowledge to bring a complete picture of our current park system and what we may need to offer for to our citizens.

The planning and design stage of the survey focused on ensuring the reader could quickly and easily understand and respond to the question and to offer a chance to tell us something we may have missed in our response options. Keeping the survey to a user friendly and short time requirement played a role in the number of questions and how they were presented.

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Respondent Residency

■ City Resident ■ Non-Resident
■ Did Not Answer



Advertising and marketing of the survey was multifaceted. The survey was posted online on various websites such as the Dover/Kent County MPO and Delaware Senior Olympics, in addition to the City of Dover postings. Multiple public services announcements were listed in the local print media, the survey link was posted on the City of Dover Verizon channel and multiple Facebook postings. Our partner organizations encouraged their memberships to participate either in hard copy or online.

Public workshops were held to offer citizens a chance to see a complete picture of the park system.

With display boards and surveys in hand, workshops were held at Towne Point Elementary School, Dover Public Library, and the John W. Pitts Recreation Center. The first two meetings were poorly attended; however, through a more concerted media outreach, the third meeting was well-attended.

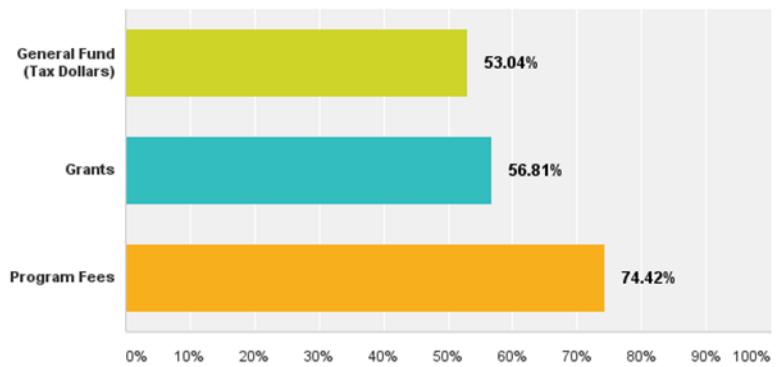
Surveys were available online and links to the survey were on our partner websites as well. Hard copies of the survey were available at the public workshops, the Dover Public Library, Department of Customer Services at Reed Street, and the John W. Pitts Recreation Center. All of the hard copy submissions were manually keyed and comments were entered as submitted. Data collection from all surveys completed was combined for offering the final results.

The survey included general questions, as well as focused questions on each of the three anchor parks and sections on Dover/New Street Park and Williams Park.

A total of 506 surveys were completed. Of these 52 percent were City of Dover residents; 28 percent were non-residents of Dover, and 20 percent did not answer the question of residence. While the survey methodology includes a self-selected sample and not a completely random sample of Dover residents, the number of surveys completed and the portion completed by Dover residents is helpful in discerning the priorities of Dover residents as they relate to recreation.

Q3 How do you feel recreational programs should be funded?

Answered: 477 Skipped: 29



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Based on all of the surveys completed (506 surveys), the following needs were ranked most highly ($\geq 25\%$):

Silver Lake Park	Indoor Restrooms	39.9%
Schutte Park	Expansion of Trail System	38.3%
Dover Park	Indoor Restrooms	32.0%
Schutte Park	Benches	29.6%
Dover Park	Paved Trail System (loop)	26.5%
JWP Center	Weight Room	26.3%
Silver Lake Park	Benches	26.3%
Schutte Park	Fitness Stations Along Trail	26.1%
Dover Park	Indoor Recreation Center	25.7%

People seem generally supportive that programs should be supported by a mix of fees, grants and taxes. Respondents also indicated that fundraising and seeking business sponsorships should be sought to support programs. There is also significant support for City residents paying a lower fee for programs than non-residents of Dover.

The City has discussed the need for a splash pad and a skate park for several years. Based on the survey responses, a skate park seems best suited for Schutte Park and/or Dover Park, a splash pad seems best suited for Dover Park and/or Silver Lake Park. While not highly indicated through the numerical survey responses, the comments provided on the surveys and through other outreach indicated strong support for pickle ball (particularly among seniors) and a dog park.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The State of Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation develops a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. This plan helps the State to prioritize grant funding and other investments in outdoor recreation to meet the needs identified by State residents. In developing the SCORP, the State performs a random telephone survey to assess recreation participation patterns and identify needs. In performing the survey and analyzing the data, the State is divided into five regions. Kent County is identified as Region 3. In performing the survey, the State oversamples larger municipalities, including Dover, to provide meaningful data to the local recreation providers. This information can be viewed in combination with the City's survey data to develop a more comprehensive picture of recreation participation patterns and needs.

The City's survey focused principally on use of the City's park system and needs specific to the park system. The State's information can supplement this to give us a more comprehensive picture of the recreation needs in Dover.

In reviewing the data collected in the State's survey, 61% of the 267 respondents in Dover indicated that outdoor recreation in Delaware is very important to them personally. Sixty-one

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

percent of Dover respondents also indicated that the principal reason for their participation in outdoor recreation is for fitness. Seventy percent of respondents indicated that they choose their locations for outdoor recreation because they live near the facility, and 57 percent indicated that they would participate more in outdoor recreation if there were areas closer to where they live.

In response to the question of what facilities would survey respondents like to see added to a park in their community, responses included:

- Improved Amenities (17%)
- Outdoor Public Swimming Pools (17%)
- Indoor Recreation Facilities (14%)
- Playgrounds (12%)
- Bike Paths (8%)
- Hiking/Walking Trails (7%)
- Paved Walkways (6%)
- Restrooms (6%)
- Football Fields (5%)

Summary of Data and Process

In looking together at all of the sources of data that help us to form a picture of recreation patterns and needs within the City, we are able to develop a plan that focuses on meeting these needs. In looking at the walksheds and seeing through the State's survey that proximity to recreation areas affects residents' participation in recreation, we are able to determine where we may need to look for opportunities to provide outdoor recreation in these areas. This could be achieved by adding a new park or by partnering with other providers who may already have facilities in the area to make their facilities more publicly accessible. The confluence of walksheds, proximity to recreation areas, the prevalence of walking and jogging as a desired recreation activity, and the connection between outdoor recreation and fitness support the need to continue to improve the pedestrian infrastructure within the City to ensure that residents have safe locations to walk or jog. Much of the area that is outside of a 15-minute walk to a park also has poor pedestrian connectivity. For example, Kenton Road lacks sidewalks, so opportunities to walk or jog safely are limited to streets within subdivision, which also lack sidewalks but experience lower traffic volumes and traffic speeds.

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Implementation Strategies

As stated previously, one of the principal purposes of this assessment is to ensure that limited dollars are invested in a way that best meets the needs of Dover's residents. To that end, the following strategies will guide the City as we plan for capital investments in our recreation infrastructure and as we work to provide the quality programming our residents have come to enjoy.

- Develop master plans for the anchor parks. Dover's anchor parks serve as regional hubs for recreation within the City of Dover. Appropriate planning for improvements to these parks needs to involve the public, and the plans for improvement to these parks will drive the City's capital plan as it relates to parks and recreation.
 - Dover Park

As previously stated, this 28-acre park was home to the City's first indoor recreation center. Due to its functional obsolescence, deterioration over the years, and lack of successful programming following the opening of the John W. Pitts Recreation Center, this recreation center building was demolished in 2014. During the debate over the center's demolition, there was significant discussion of the importance of addressing the recreation needs of residents on the east side of U.S. Route 13 and the concern that with the investments in Schutte Park and the John W. Pitts Recreation Center, the City failed to provide for residents east of U.S. Route 13 who may not be able to access the new amenities at Schutte Park. Additionally during this discussion, concerns of safety and lighting within the park arose. A master plan for Dover Park needs to address these challenges.

As it relates to the Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, the following amenities need to be addressed within a master plan for Dover Park:

- Indoor Restrooms
- Paved Loop Trail System
- Fitness Stations along the Paved Trail System
- Skate Park
- Splash Pad
- Bicycle Racks



City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

Additionally, the master plan needs to reserve space in the event that an indoor recreation center is needed in the future. Of the total 506 survey respondents, 25.7 percent indicated that this was a priority. While other priorities for improvements to the parks system were identified as higher priorities, it is important to provide a location of an indoor facility within Dover Park for some point in the future as our needs for indoor recreation increase. The SCORP survey did identify indoor recreation facilities as one of the more highly ranked needs in the City of Dover.

- Schutte Park

Schutte Park has served as the hub for Dover's athletic leagues and active recreation programming. In 2004, with the development of Nottingham Meadows land was donated for the expansion Schutte Park. This land had been separated from the park by Wyoming Mill Road, but with the realignment of Wyoming Mill Road in 2013, this land is now contiguous to the remainder of the park. In 2014, the City had a land survey completed of the entire Schutte Park, including the Dover Little League Park and the areas of the park utilized by the Public Works Department. The City will utilize in-house engineering staff to create a master plan for this park that includes expansion of the multi-purpose athletic fields and the parking necessary to support the field expansion and other park amenities. The master plan will also include expansion of the paved path to create a loop. Based on the feedback received through the Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, the plan might also include the addition of benches, fitness stations along the loop trail, tennis courts, and a skate park. This plan also needs to account for the potential expansion of the John W. Pitts Recreation Center in the future, as the demand for indoor recreation space increases.

Schutte Park is impacted by the Source Water Protection Overlay Zone (SWPOZ), a zoning overlay intended to protect water quality through protecting recharge areas and areas around municipal wells. Schutte Park contains both an Excellent Recharge Area and a municipal well, so the park master plan will need to ensure that these resources are protected as the park is improved to meet the population's recreation needs.

- Silver Lake Park

Silver Lake Park is centered on the St. Jones River, including the shoreline of Silver Lake just upstream of the dam and the St. Jones River below the dam. It is a popular location for community walks and 5K run events, as well as fishing, picnicking, playing, or just relaxing. Planning for Silver Lake Park needs to account for the sensitive natural resources, including the stream bank, floodplain, and the flora and fauna that depend on the St. Jones River. There have been a number of projects in recent years to improve water quality in Silver Lake and the St. Jones River, including a bank restoration project along the St. Jones River within the park. The City of Dover has worked closely with the Silver Lake Commission and DNREC on

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

efforts to improve the park. Any future plans for the park need to include close coordination with the Silver Lake Commission and DNREC as well. The northwest corner of the park near the parking lot off Washington Street also includes an old African American cemetery that is threatened by erosion. Planning efforts for Silver Lake Park need to include efforts to survey the extent of the cemetery and develop a plan to protect it. Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office will be necessary in this regard.

In addition to these issues that would need to be addressed in a plan for Silver Lake Park, the Recreation Needs Assessment Survey indicates a very high priority for restrooms at this park. Other amenities to be evaluated during a park master plan would include additional benches and bike racks in the park and a splash pad.

- Continue to develop and implement improvement plans for neighborhood parks. The Statewide survey completed for the SCORP indicates both statewide and in Dover that respondents would be more likely to participate in outdoor recreation if opportunities were available closer to where they live. Seventy percent of the respondents in Dover indicated that they chose locations for outdoor recreation based on proximity to where they live. Neighborhood parks play an important role in quality of life for Dover residents, providing opportunities for daily activity. The City's capital investments in our park system need to include regular upgrades to amenities in local parks. Upgrades to existing parks should always include a process to gather inputs from the residents who live nearest to the parks to ensure that improvements are in line with residents' priorities.
- Determine appropriate location for dog park. Work with the public to design a dog park that meets the needs of the community.
- Develop a reliable and consistent stream of funding for the Parkland Reserve. Currently, the Parkland Reserve has no consistent stream of revenue. Cash-in-lieu of active recreation area is permitted in the *Zoning Ordinance* only if the Planning Commission determines that providing active recreation area within a residential development is impractical or infeasible. The need for active recreation space within residential developments is currently addressed through the requirement that developers set aside area and develop it with active recreation amenities to be maintained by the homeowners association or other private entity. Unfortunately, homeowners associations are frequently ill-equipped to manage these areas, and these areas are intended only for the use of residents within the specific community. The following

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

mechanisms should be evaluated as ways to provide a regular funding stream to the Parkland Reserve:

- Amend the *Zoning Ordinance* to eliminate the requirement for active recreation area in residential developments. Replace this requirement with a surcharge on building permits that would fund the Parkland Reserve.
- Explore other mechanisms to provide funding for the Parkland Reserve
- Work with residents and recreation partners to ensure availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for those areas that have been identified as outside of the walkshed to recreation areas.
 - Host public meetings in the neighborhoods and park areas identified for constituent feedback
 - Include industry partners such as the Dover/Kent County MPO, DelDOT, and DNREC to assist in ensuring opportunities to fill gaps while complimenting pathway/trail plans.
- Continue to build upon and develop partnerships with other agencies to expand recreational offerings within the City.
 - Keep current relationships fresh and viable while exploring the opportunity to find new partners in the area to keep focus on City of Dover recreational programming needs
 - Determine preventative measures ensure duplication of services remains limited.
 - Focus on providing Dover residents avenues to participate in our programs.
 - Develop a stronger collaboration with Kent County to ensure that we are collectively meeting the needs of residents in a way that provides value to taxpayers.
 - Explore other funding mechanisms, including corporate sponsorships, to augment revenue streams.

City of Dover Recreation Needs Assessment

- Assign staff to seek corporate and foundation funding resources and grants for promoting healthy lifestyles, park amenities and services
- Develop fee differential for residents and non-residents for participation in recreation programs.
 - Consult with other recreation providers in Delaware who employ a variable rate for residents versus non-residents
 - Use data to create and implement a plan for which City of Dover residents pay a reduced participation rate, either through a non-resident surcharge or a separate fee for residents and non-residents.
- Address park maintenance needs. As new amenities are added to the City's park system, these amenities need to be maintained. In planning for amenities, maintenance needs must be taken into consideration and addressed in the planning process.

