

### 3.15 Recreation and Open Space Resources

#### 3.15.1 Existing Recreation and Open Space Resources

Although the project site is in private ownership and the public is not specifically permitted to access the site, the area is frequently used by the community for active and passive recreation. ATV trails traverse the site, and the wetlands corridor on the eastern side of the property are known to be frequented by residents of the area. As the site is surrounded by a significant wooded buffer, there are no significant scenic views either into or out of the site.

The main park site for active recreational use in the community is the 12 acre Moriello Park. It is located in the Village and owned and managed by both the Village and the Town. Other Village parks include the Peace Park, John Vett Memorial Garden Park near Huguenot Street, the Huguenot Nature Path and Hasbrouck Park. The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, Minnewaska State Park and Mohonk Preserve are additional recreation resources in the area. Existing and proposed facilities at these parks are as follows:

Table 43 - Village of New Paltz Existing Parks and Proposed Improvements		
Park	Existing Facilities	Recommended Improvements
John Vett	1 bench, 2 tables	Install 7 benches from Huguenot St. to b/w gardens and the River. Erect scenic park sign and signs between park and gardens
Peace Park	5 benches, 2 tables	Landscape area by adding flower gardens
Wallkill Valley Rail Trail	12.2 mile linear park along the former ConRail right-of-way from the Town of Rosendale to the Town of Gardiner, railroad Station Park with 4 park benches (assumed 14+ acres) <sup>62</sup>	Develop a recent Village purchase of a 1.5 acre waterfront parcel on Water Street into a linkage with the rail Trail, install signage directing people to parking areas, install signage for parking areas, pave a strip near the railroad Station to provide for handicapped access, develop an exercise course (Par Course) along the Rail Trail.
Huguenot Nature Path	2 bridges over streams and educational markers	Install more educational markers, increase maintenance, extend path north along river, establish a sign to identify path, widen path and bridges to allow for handicapped use
Hasbrouck Park	Baseball field, water fountain, playground equipment, tennis courts 3.6 acres	Establish toddlers playground, modernize playground equipment, redesign tennis courts, develop volleyball court, construct band shell, provide landscaping
Moriello	Pool and pool house w/ restrooms, 2 basketball courts, playground, and 1 picnic table w/ 3 grills 12 acres	Rebuild Moriello dam when the opportunity arises, provide landscaping, develop a multi-purpose pavilion, a path around the restored lake, lighting and benches, basketball/volleyball courts, and acquisition of adjacent lands when they are available for additional recreational development

<sup>62</sup> A 12.2 mile corridor, 10 feet wide, is 14.8 acres.

In addition to the facilities provided by the Village and Town, residents may purchase permits to use college athletic facilities. The recreational facilities of the School District are also available for use with the District's permission.<sup>63</sup>

*Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*<sup>64</sup> was consulted to evaluate the variety, suitability and size of existing parks and recreational alternatives for Village residents.

Mini-Park – specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens; less than ½ mile radius, 1 acre or less, .25 to .50 acres per 1,000 population.

Existing: John Vett Park, Peace Park. Huguenot Nature Path.

With a population of just over 6,000<sup>65</sup> a minimum of 1.5 acres of mini-parkland is required to address this need, and it is believed that these three park areas provide adequate mini-parks for the population.

Community Park – An area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking, 1 to 2 mile radius, 25+ acres, 5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 population.

Existing: Hasbrouk Park, Moriello Park, Walkkill Valley Rail Trail, SUNY New Paltz facilities

With a population of just of 6,000, a minimum of 30 acres of Community Park is required to address this need. Hasbrouk Park and Moriello Park represent 15.6 acres. The addition of the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail includes another 14+ acres for a total of approximately 30 acres. As many residents of the Village of New Paltz attend or work at the university, and have access to the facilities on campus, more facilities and acreage than identified in the referenced guideline exist. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Project Sponsor that the community park need is met.

The New Paltz and Ulster County region area is rich with active and passive recreational opportunities including skiing, rock climbing and open space enjoyment throughout the nearby Catskill State Park. This listing only provides a sampling of the areas available for recreation within the Village; many more opportunities exist.

### **3.15.2 Potential Impacts to Recreation and Open Space**

Under the proposed project, approximately 37 acres of the Stoneleigh Woods @ New Paltz site are to be left undisturbed and available for inclusion in the Mill Brook Greenway. Existing trails which wind throughout the site, particularly in the area of the wetlands, and the existing setting are to remain as they are, and available for active and passive recreation by area residents. There may be some disturbance to the existing

<sup>63</sup> 1994 Village of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

<sup>64</sup> *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, Roger A. Lancaster, 1994, National Recreation and Park Association.

<sup>65</sup> <http://villageofnewpaltz.org>, from the 2000 census

trails in the area proposed for development, but access to the trail network is to be provided from within the Stoneleigh Woods site, and public access to the trails is intended to be consistent with the objectives of the Mill Brook Greenway. This will keep the project site consistent with the recommendations found in the Village Comprehensive Master Plan<sup>66</sup> to:

- Create greenways and linkages through the Village, with connections to the Town, for bike paths, walking, and jogging.
  - *The on-site paths currently link parcels both within the Village and within the Town. In addition, the area proposed for the Mill Brook Greenway establishes a central Greenway for the Village.*
- The Village should ensure that a continuous network of open space is established throughout the Erman lands when they are developed in the future.
  - *This parcel will be linked to the adjacent Bienstock property which is adjacent to the Erman lands (site of the proposed Woodland Ponds project). To the extent that the Village develops or ensures a connection to the Erman property across the Bienstock lands, a continuous open space network is maintained.*

The project is also consistent with the recommendations found in the Town Comprehensive Master Plan<sup>67</sup> to:

- Seek to connect residential areas to recreational areas with well-maintained trails and paths.
  - *The on-site paths currently link parcels both within the Village and within the Town. In addition, the area proposed for the Mill Brook Greenway establishes a central Greenway for the Village. Additionally, the project has the potential to be linked to the adjacent Erman lands, which will support the existing open space network identified in the Village Master Plan.*
- The specific approaches used to protect open space should be determined by the attributes of particular sites. Development should be prevented, or restricted in environmentally sensitive areas (floodplain, steep slopes, contiguous open space areas and wildlife corridors, wetlands, lakes, ponds and streams).
  - The proposed development plan maintains the wetlands and wetland buffers in the area designated for the proposed Mill Brook Greenway. An alternative has been provided that utilizes “conservation subdivision design.” This layout contains 114 single family lots, while disturbing 17.36 acres of the site.
  - The on-site wetlands have been avoided to the greatest extent possible

<sup>66</sup> Supra, Village of New Paltz, Chapter 6 Community Facilities.

<sup>67</sup> 1995 Town of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

in the development of the housing and roadway layout. Impacts will be minimized and, if necessary, a compensatory wetland mitigation program developed to replace any lost or compromised wetland functions. Any work within wetland areas will be completed according to USACOE requirements.

- Connective corridors between individual open spaces should be encouraged to insure an integrated ecosystem essential for the well being and survival of all species of plants and animals in our community.
  - The development of the project has taken this recommendation into consideration with the idea of a connecting corridor. Cumulative impacts on biodiversity due to development are also expected to be minimal since the interconnected wetlands offsite and onsite forms a buffered corridor which will remain undeveloped and allow for wildlife species and genetic pools to mix.
- Development of policies, which use creative problem solving techniques to accommodate development, located within scenic roads, vistas, and scenic districts. The scenic attributes and appropriate preservation mechanisms have been addressed in the scenic and historic plan. This means for minimizing visual and environmental impact involve planning actions which can be invoked during the site planning process. Requirements such as clustering and siting buildings to blend into the environment should be made a part of initial recommendations to developers in plan submission. Mechanisms for minimizing visual impact include siting buildings within existing trees, installing underground utilities, recommending colors which blend with the landscape, using the natural topography to locate buildings below major sight-lines, and adjusting setbacks from roadways where a significant siting improvement for a development can be accomplished, using appropriate landscaping with hardy and native species. In areas where portions of the site are better in terms of soil condition and drainage, shared septic systems can be used, reducing development costs and accommodating clustering.
  - The project has taken in account that protecting the natural environment by linking zoning regulations to site capability would be the best option for this development. The visual impacts of the project are expected to be visible only from select areas (See Section 3.6, Visual Resources). From these selected areas, only small portions of the development will be visible. The dwelling units or small sections of the dwelling units may be visible from these perspectives, although these views would be consistent with the surrounding residential and development.
  - Mitigation measures for potential visual impacts have been taken in account. A treed buffer would be incorporated in the site design to provide screening between the existing and proposed residences. All the units within the development will remain a muted earth tone (beige, tan and off-white).

- A conceptual landscape plan specifying proposed plant locations has been developed. The goal of the development is to retain as much native vegetation as possible, and to plant areas cleared for construction with hardy, native species that will provide a rapid cover and visual/noise barrier.

In addition, the project also supports the Town Comprehensive Master Plan in that the development will provide open space and recreation sites and facilities as a component of the development process, in the same way as roads and utilities.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the proposed plan has an on-site community center to help meet the recreational needs of residents. The community center will include a fitness center/exercise room, billiards room, great room, computer room, library, arts and crafts room, music/video room, kitchen and management office. Providing on-site recreational resources will not only benefit the residents', but will off-set the need to use the Village facilities. Upon a review of the Village's facilities, and a comparison of the Village of New Paltz population (before and after this development) with parks standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association,<sup>69</sup> it appears that New Paltz has sufficient parks, trails and open space to accommodate the residents of the proposed development.

While the impacts to the surrounding recreational facilities and open space will be minimal, the Village will greatly benefit from the increased tax revenues generated by the project.

The on-site central lawns and community garden areas further address the demand for mini-parks and therefore address the demand for this usage on site.

The development of the Mill Brook Greenway would provide a significant addition to an area meeting the above definition of a community park. The approximately 37 acres of land from the Stoneleigh Woods site is a major portion of the proposed Greenway and therefore significantly offsets any increased demand from the new residents of the project. As such, the Project Sponsor will request that the donation of land instead of additional money will meet the recreation requirements of the Village Zoning Code, as per Section 30.51(J)(2) of the code.

### **3.15.3 Recreation and Open Space Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation proposed for this project which will address any potential impacts on recreation and open space resources include the following:

- Leaving the 37 acres of wetlands and trails available for inclusion in the Mill Brook Greenway, and for public access consistent with the objectives of the Mill Brook Greenway;
- The project will include a community center for all residents of the development,

<sup>68</sup> 1995 Town of New Paltz Comprehensive Master Plan.

<sup>69</sup> Roger A. Lancaster, Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, National Recreation and Park Association, 1987.

- which would help offset demands on other Village facilities.
- The on-site community greens, and land preservation for inclusion in the Mill Brook Greenway further the ability of the Village to meet residents' demands for mini-park and community park facilities.
  - The proposed open space/recreation is consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the Town's and Village's Comprehensive Master Plans.
  - New Paltz has undertaken an open space study; however, the study has not yet been completed, and has not yet been made available for review<sup>70</sup>. The project area has been included in the inventory of open space in the Village. As the project provides for protection of the eastern 37 acres of property consistent with the Mill Brook Greenway, it is believed that the project will be consistent with the goals of Open Space study. However, until such time as that document may be fully ratified, any discussion of consistency may be premature.
  - The development incorporates design strategies such as the Mill Brook Greenway that encourages a more walkable community for the residences.
  - The proposed project will limit ATV access to the site, which is currently impacting the ability of others to enjoy passive recreational opportunities on the site, and potentially causing significant site erosion and mosquito breeding pools as identified in the Hudsonia Report<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Personal communication between Councilmember Michael Zierler and Jeff Kane of HDR|LMS on January 26, 2006.

<sup>71</sup> *Wetland Assessment of the Proposed Mill Brook Greenway*, Village and Town of New Paltz, Ulster County, New York; Erik Kiviat, Hudsonia, Ltd, December 14, 2003.