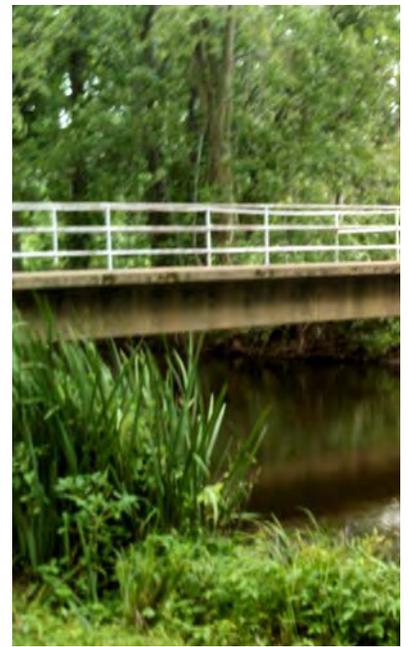


Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan



October 2013

Town of Middletown
Parks & Recreation Department



Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan | October 2013

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	Page 1
Introduction Executive Summary	Page 2
Project Background	Page 4
Community Participation	Page 5
Existing Conditions	Page 6
Preferred Master Plan Recommendations	Page 12
Budgets and Phasing	Page 18
Funding	Page 20

Charts

Public Input Meeting Schedule	Page 5
Budget	Page 18
Phasing	Page 19

Plans

Preferred Improvements Plan Excerpt	Page 3
Existing Conditions Aerial Image	Page 4
Existing Conditions Analysis Plan Excerpt	Page 11
Preferred Improvements Plan Excerpt	Page 13

Appendix

Preferred Improvements Plan	
Various Presentation Boards from Public Meetings	

Acknowledgements

We gratefully recognize the residents of the Town of Middletown, especially those residing within the neighborhood surrounding Veteran’s Memorial Park, whose continued stewardship of this important open space will remain critical to the success of this Master Plan. The recommendations and priorities that are established within this document address directly the expressed hopes, concerns, needs and ideas of park stakeholders. Solutions are also pragmatic, and recognize the basic fact that municipal governments like Middletown, must continue to provide a high level of service in a time of great financial uncertainty. To this end it becomes essential that Middletown residents who enjoy the benefits of this great place continue to advocate on its behalf and continue to be diligent custodians in a way that helps to encourage maximum appropriate use and by default discourages abuse by others.

Veteran’s Memorial Park is a critically important park and open space resource and we believe that this Master Plan strikes the right balance between protecting and enhancing what is best about the park (facilities, landscape and historical/social assets) while providing an achievable strategy for dramatically enhancing both passive and active recreational amenities. The future Veteran’s Memorial Park will be filled with park patrons of all ages engaged in positive activities that help to maintain good health, good will and good cheer within our society.

We wish to express our appreciation to members of the Veteran’s Memorial Park Renovation Committee, Connecticut Trees of Honor Memorial Committee, Local Vietnam Vets, City of Middletown Public Works, City of Middletown Police Department, Greater Middletown Military Museum, Middletown Town Manager’s Office, Middletown Department of Parks and Recreation, Middletown City Council and other committed public and private servants who contributed in so many ways to the development of this Master Plan.

Thank you,

The Weston & Sampson Project Team



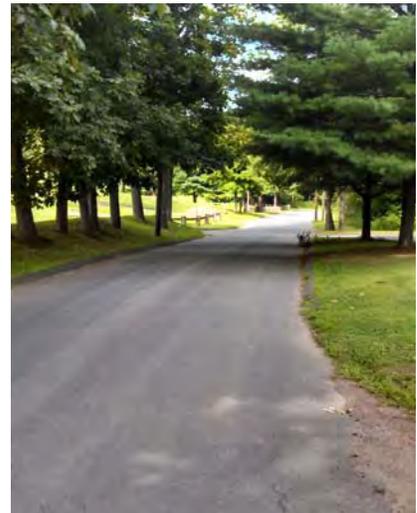
Governor Dannel P. Malloy announces his support for the creation of the Connecticut Trees of Honor Memorial planting at Veterans' Memorial Park in Middletown.

In the spring of 2013, the City of Middletown through its Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments commissioned Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. (Weston & Sampson) to develop a comprehensive master plan for Veterans Memorial Park. In April 2013, the City of Middletown created a Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee which represented various stakeholders for the park. Weston & Sampson attended two consultations with the Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee and a field site visit and reconnaissance effort to determine what needs, preferences, priorities, and potential future improvements were required for the Veterans Memorial Park.

Based on information obtained during the initial meetings with the Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee, a conceptual master plan was presented to the public at the Middletown City Library on August 28, 2013, where approximately 50 to 60 individuals were in attendance. Throughout all the meetings, many opinions were voiced on a wide range of topics including keeping the park active year round, security in the park, relocating the Veterans Military Museum closer to the Trees of Honor Memorial, and making improvements to the existing pool.

The Final Master Plan, as represented in this document, was presented to the Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee during their October meeting. The plan represents the preferred alternative, but might also be called the “consensus plan” as it matches the goals and aspirations of the majority of the individuals that participated in the planning process. It is understood that the plan will be implemented over a period of time and when improvements are fully realized it will have achieved a number of primary community objectives including:

- The integration of the Trees of Honor installation and the future Veterans Museum
- Improved recreational facilities
- Improved aesthetics throughout the site
- A comfortable balance between active and passive recreation facilities
- New facilities that foster community interaction
- A cleaner, safer park
- A “greener” park
- Improved access and circulation
- A setting that is multi-generational and ADA compliant
- A plan that recognized the important historical and cultural connections between this park and the town
- Improved entrances and park identification



The preferred Master Plan, which is described in detail later in this report, includes numerous big ideas that represent significant changes when compared to current conditions. These big ideas or major themes of the preferred plan are summarized in quick form below (refer to a more complete explanation of each element beginning on Page 12).

- **Playground-** will be created by a series of age-appropriate play spaces are established within a centralized area, at the east end of the park.
- **Trees of Honor-** is located centrally within the site and construction is expected in the very near term for this site feature.

scope of improvements will generally follow the recommendations contained in this report, but they will be refined or adjusted in order to meet actual site conditions and funding nuances.

Project Background

This master plan was undertaken by the Middletown Departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation on behalf of the residents of Middletown and was completed by our core team of landscape architects and park planners. The specific tasks that were accomplished included:

- Inventory of all existing site facilities, features and conditions
- Participation in an outreach process through the hosting of a series of meetings and stakeholder interactions
- Development of preliminary and final master planning documents
- Presentation of the finished master plan to the City

The Master Plan addresses the entire Veterans Memorial Park property, which has more than 40 acres of wooded land, featuring trails, picnic areas, pavilions and an outdoor swimming pool. Local schools use the park for track events as well as soccer and baseball practice. The nearby Coginchaug River is open for fishing, and a pedestrian bridge connects this park to Palmer Field Stadium.

Veteran’s Memorial Park - Major Features
Wooded Cross Country Trails
Picnic Areas and Pavilions
Walnut Grove Road
Lawn Areas for Informal Use
Gravel Parking Areas
Municipal Pool Complex
Children’s Playground
Coginchaug River

This aerial image shows the primary facilities and the current configuration of the site.



Community Participation

In order to develop a master plan that meets the future needs of Veterans Memorial Park a variety of community organizations were involved. The City of Middletown created a Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee who is responsible for preparing and approving the master plan for presentation to the City Council. Members of the Veterans Military Museum and the Trees of Honor Committee had invaluable input into the master plan as well since the Military Museum and the Trees of Honor Memorial are impetus for revitalizing Veterans Memorial Park. Once the community organizations agreed upon a conceptual master plan it was presented to the public for their comments, questions, and concerns.

Public Input Meetings		
Date	Public Hearing Location	Meeting Purpose / Participants
June 5, 2013	City Hall	Introduction to the master planning process, presentations from the Trees of Honor Representative and the Military Museum
August 7, 2013	Veterans Park	Site visit and reconnaissance effort with Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee
August 28, 2013	Middletown Library	Presentation of Conceptual Master Plan to Public
September 18, 2013	City Hall	Discuss Public Hearing reactions and finalize the specific needs and priorities of Veterans Memorial Park
October 16, 2013	City Hall	Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee Meeting to confirm final master plan configuration

It is important to note that items discussed touched on a wide range of topics. A very comfortable and open atmosphere prevailed during the meetings and attendees of three generations were able to express their thoughts and concerns and aspirations for this important public open space. Attendees primarily represented the following groups:

- Veterans Memorial Park abutters
- Trees of Honor Committee
- Veterans Memorial Park Renovation Committee
- Elected and appointed officials

The Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan attempts to bridge differences expressed by various stakeholders and reach that common middle ground that allows significant improvements to be identified in a way that provides maximum benefit to the largest number of stakeholders. In the end, the master plan represents a balance between active and passive recreation, natural and developed landscapes, formal and informal community spaces, form (aesthetics) and function.

Existing Conditions

During the early stages of the project, representatives of Weston & Sampson gathered all available mapping and plan information to support the master planning study and development efforts. The City provided GIS mapping for the property and aerial photography was obtained for the development of all conceptual master plans and drawings.

Weston & Sampson representatives also undertook a considerable amount of field reconnaissance work to observe how facilities are used, better understand the physical characteristics of the site and to record the conditions of all natural and man-made features at the property. The following is a summary of our findings.

Topography

The overall site topography is mostly informed by the Cuginchaug River that runs along the southern edge of the property. From the western edge of the site, there is a much as 50' of grade change moving west to east. There are a few flat areas that currently accommodate parking and the pool complex. The middle of the site also includes a flat knoll that was identified early on as a unique moment within the park, and is currently undeveloped.

Inherent to the proximity of the river, renovation within floodplains is tightly controlled to ensure that future developments at the park do not worsen storm water conditions during major storm events. As actual improvement projects are outlined and implemented, permits will be required through the Middletown Conservation Commission. In essence, no net loss of floodplain area within the Veterans Memorial Park property will be permitted. To this end, if a new project requires a certain amount of fill and a corresponding rise in the ground elevation, there will be a net loss of storage and seasonal flooding problems could be worsened. As a result, an equal amount of excavation would be required to create new storm drainage storage in order to offset any filling needed at other locations.



The image above shows the Cuginchaug River and the current condition of the banks.

Vegetation

Existing vegetation at the Veteran's Memorial Park property is characterized and summarized as follows:

- Mostly deciduous shade trees made up of Maples (Norway, Red and Sycamore), with some Oak, Horse Chestnut and Ash.
- Limited evergreen sporadically appear across the site.
- A significant number of mature or over-mature shade trees that are in a serious state of decline.
- A general lack of new shade tree plantings to take the place of those trees that have been removed in recent years and that will continue to die off in future years.

Some large trees located at the property are in particularly poor condition and in danger of being damaged in storms.

As future projects are planned, it will be essential to include major tree planting components in order to provide an attractive park landscape for future generations. Tree plantings are critical elements in any park setting as they provide:

- Shade for those seeking relief from the hot summer sun
- A place for a picnic or social gathering
- Aesthetic qualities that benefit a neighborhood
- Refuge for birds/wildlife
- Visual screening to reduce impacts of various park activities to surrounding properties



Deciduous shade trees make up most of the wooded area throughout the park. Some of the mature trees are in a state of declining health and new tree plantings need to be planned to ensure continuity within the park landscape.

Neighborhood Setting



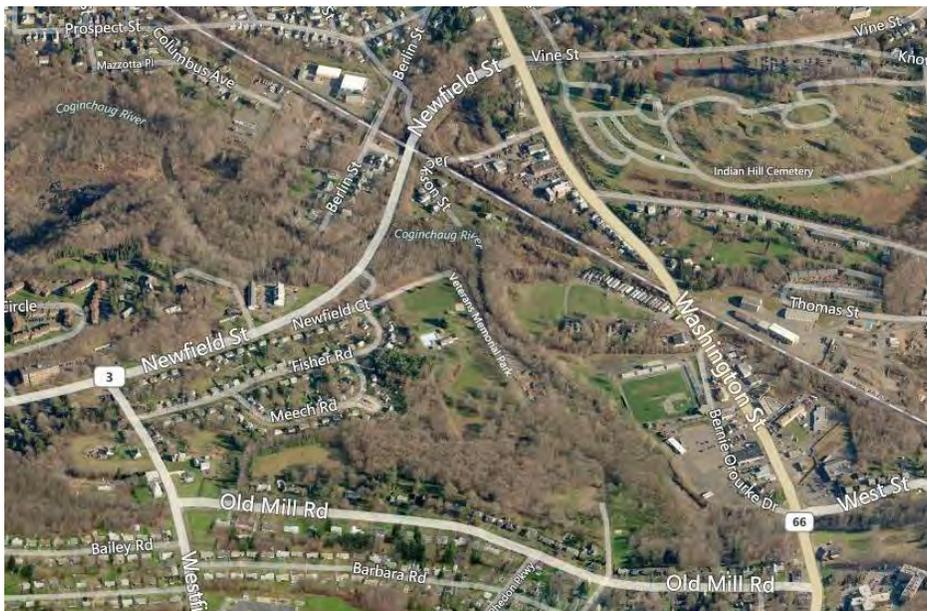
The aerial image on the previous page is looking east and it gives a good overview of neighborhood context surrounding Veteran’s Memorial Park. Recreational uses (ball fields) and mixed residential are dominant in this area of the City.

Veteran’s Memorial Park is located less than a mile and a half to the west of City Hall and the major downtown area. Surrounding thoroughfares include:

Newfield Street- a busy roadway with a bridged crossing of the river and access to Route 66.

Old Mill Road- which runs north to south with single family residential dwellings on both sides of the road.

Route 66 / Washington Street – is a major connector between Route 91 and the downtown area.



Parking, Access and Park Circulation

Within the actual confines of the park, parking is accommodated through both paved asphalt and informal gravel parking lot areas. Additional parking often takes place along Walnut Grove Road although this limits accessibility on the road itself and creates unsafe crossing for pedestrians who are moving through the park on foot. The parking area up behind the pool is in good repair and heavily used during the summer season and also in winter to take advantage of sledding on the eastern hill.

Some residents expressed concern that parking might be at a premium during peak periods of use, particularly with the potential for a new pool facility coming on line in the future. It was recognized that the peak use period for the pool complex will need to be coordinated with other peak periods of use for the park, which will include commemorative activities for the Trees of Honor and of the future Veteran’s Museum. Other park uses are expected to be more evenly distributed throughout the weekdays with an increase on weekends and holidays.

Pedestrian access into Veteran’s Memorial Park is available mainly from either end of Walnut Grove Road, though footpaths have been observed around the more remote areas of the property perimeter.

Park Entrances & Edges



At community meetings it was noted that many of the park edges lack character and definition. In places, old shade trees help to form the park edge which yields more positive feelings. Along many other edges, a lack of definition at park entrance locations and deteriorated fencing systems give an appearance that is less pleasing. In order to clarify park entrance points, improve park aesthetics and neighborhood aesthetics community members seek to include park entrance and edge improvements to elevate the presence of the park within the community and provide more visual connections.

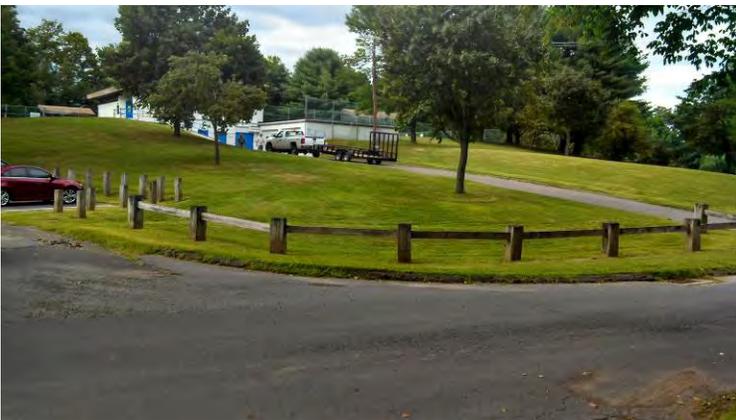
Recreation Facilities

The chart below identifies conditions summaries for the major facilities and features that are located at Veterans Memorial Park. In general, conditions of most park facilities are fair, and suffer from a lack of recent capital improvements and deterioration that is beyond what can be corrected through on-going maintenance efforts by city parks forces. The children’s playground and pool facility were noted to be in the poor condition and as a result use of these features by local residents is limited.

Facility	Condition Assessment
Multi-purpose Field	The multi-purpose field is used for a number of informal and permitted sports league play and it is located to the central eastern portion of the site. The turf conditions are fair to good but the fields suffer from irregular grading and poor drainage.
Playground	The children’s playground has been recently improved with very simple play structure and swings. While relatively new, the play features are limited and do not draw a large Playground edging, surfaces and furnishings are also in poor condition and the City already has announced plans to significantly upgrade children’s play facilities.
Pedestrian Circulation Network	Most pathways are gravel or dirt and do not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. While worn paths through the grass and wooded areas are enjoyable to traverse, they are not serving the full cross section of the community or providing

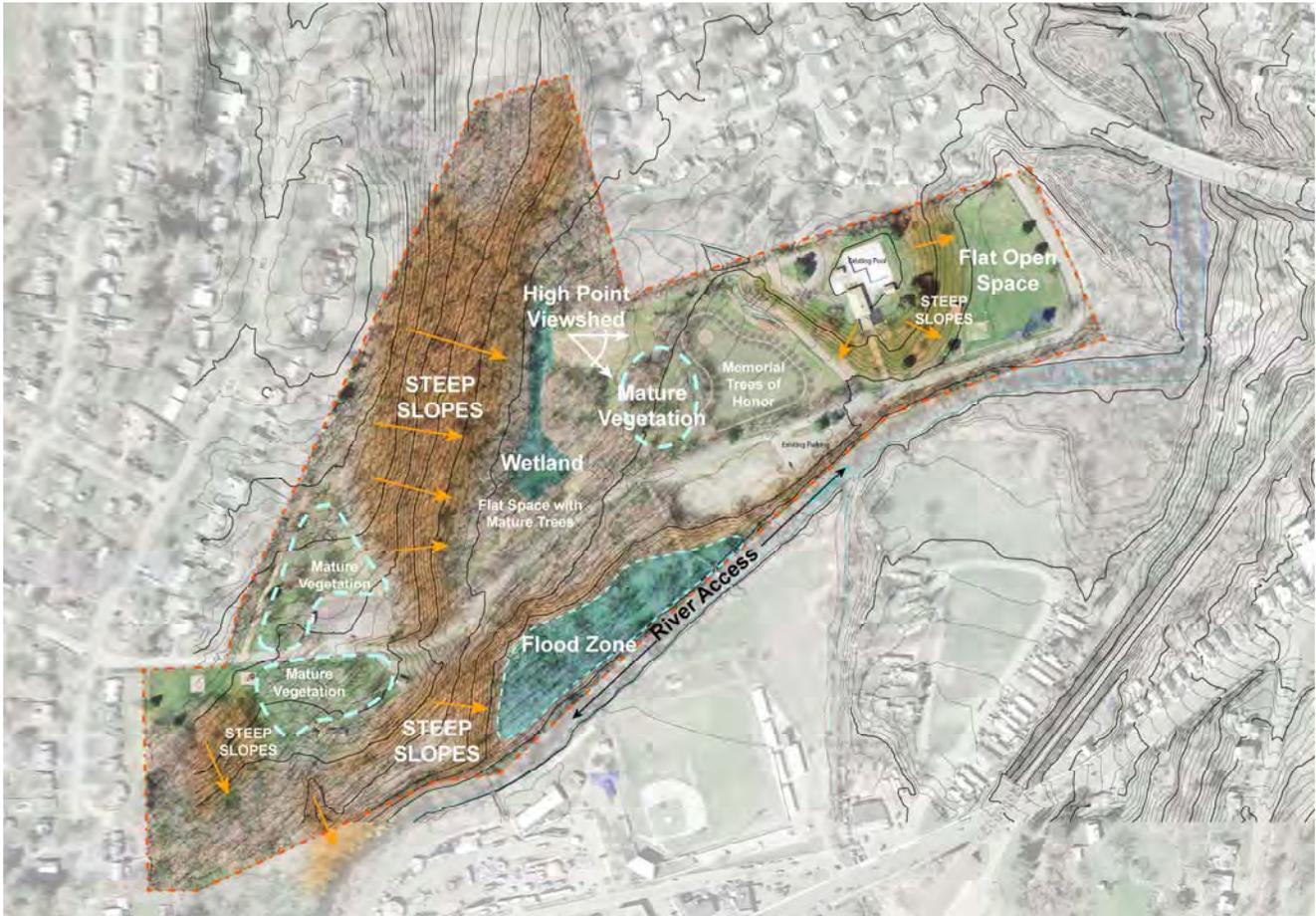
	universal access for all.
Pool Complex	This popular facility serves the city as a place to cool off, learn the important life skill of swimming and to convene as a community in the summer months. The pool itself is nearing the end of its useful life and is in need of renovation for compliance with current codes and accessibility requirements. At present, swim meets cannot be held due to inadequate facilities. The bathhouse and filtration room are also in need of upgrades to better serve the community's aquatic recreation program. Much discussion centered around the inclusion of other community functions to be supported by this building.
Site Furnishings	Benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, fences and other site furnishings vary in condition from generally good to poor and in need of removal and replacement. Additional site furnishings are desirable in order to support daily use and special events at the park.

Following are a series of photographs that serve to document the existing conditions of various park facilities and furnishings.



Veterans Park Master Plan

Existing Conditions



The diagram above illustrates the site features, opportunities and constraints for consideration in future improvements. The panorama below shows a view up to the “high point / view shed” area on the plan.



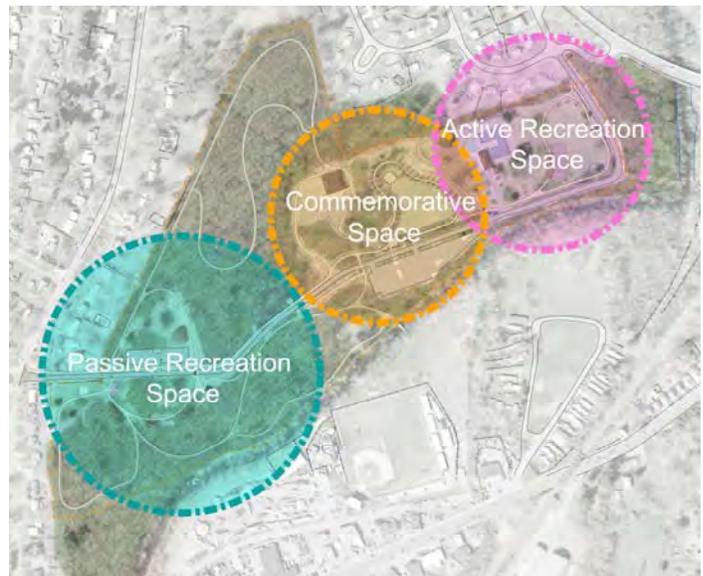
Preferred Master Plan Recommendations

There is a great opportunity to improve passive and recreational facilities and other site features at Veterans Memorial Park so that the neighborhood and the city as a whole can benefit and be better served. This section of the master plan identifies the basic scope of recommended park improvements. It is important to note that the range of these improvements has been validated by interaction and comment from the public engagement process.

Basic themes for improvements are summarized below and generally respond to:

- The need to reach a balance between commemorative veterans space, active and passive recreation and the right mix of developed and undeveloped space within the park landscape
- A basic desire to upgrade overall aesthetics and multi-generational appeal
- A desire to provide meaningful commemorative spaces for the Trees of Honor and Veterans Museum
- A goal to provide new children's play facilities
- A desire for an off-leash recreation area for dog owners
- A desire to provide improvements and potential splash pad expansion to the existing pool facility
- A need to provide new and improved/expanded outdoor and covered pavilion gathering spaces to support the full range of desired community events and activities with added security
- Park edges in need of improvement
- Park entrances in need of greater visual articulation and improvement
- A pedestrian pathway system that requires upgrade including wooded trails and perimeter loop paths
- Parking that is safe, easily maintained and fully accessible appropriately distributed throughout the park
- A critical need to design all future facilities in a way that recognized the city's ever evolving ability to provide strategic and specifically targeted maintenance and upkeep services

The overall site organization, shown at the right, was developed to distribute the diverse desires for this one parcel in an appropriate manner. This spacing gives each need a defined zone in which to reach full potential without unwanted interference from other uses.



Everyone that participated in the master planning process recognizes that the costs associated with major renovation of all park areas is well beyond the financial means of the city at this time, and that under the best of scenarios improvements must be prioritized and implemented under strategic phases.

Specific Site Improvements

The narratives that follow describe the basic scope of improvements to be undertaken within the Veterans Memorial Park property. It is important to note that the potential scope of improvements has been presented to the public and that a great deal of comment has been received. The Master Plan itself represents a good-faith attempt to provide both new site features and renovated facilities in a manner that improves conditions

for park users and residential abutters alike. The narratives that follow are intended to describe and support graphic plan images that are included throughout this section. These plans are conceptual in nature and likely to be refined and expanded upon during future, actual final design and implementation phases of work.

The overall Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan is presented on the following page. The plan shows the preferred and recommended range of improvements for the entire property. We then use excerpts from that plan to identify and describe in more detail the full range of intended improvements. An 8 ½ X 11 inch version of this plan is contained in the Appendix.



The plan above represents the final, preferred master plan with a range of improvements that best meets the wants, needs and aspirations of the Veterans Memorial Park community and the city as a whole.

Veterans Museum & Trees of Honor Memorial

While originally planned to be placed at the western entrance of the park, meaningful community dialog produced new thinking about the appropriate location for this site feature. With the Trees of Honor Memorial site being established based on site topography, it made sense to locate the museum in close proximity. This offers a continuity of commemorative space, as well as an indoor and outdoor experience for visitors from all over the state and beyond. A large parking area will provide a venue for visitors to park as well as tour busses and special events.





The photo above identifies the area currently proposed for the Veterans Museum.



The photo above identifies the area currently proposed for the Off-leash Dog Recreation Area.

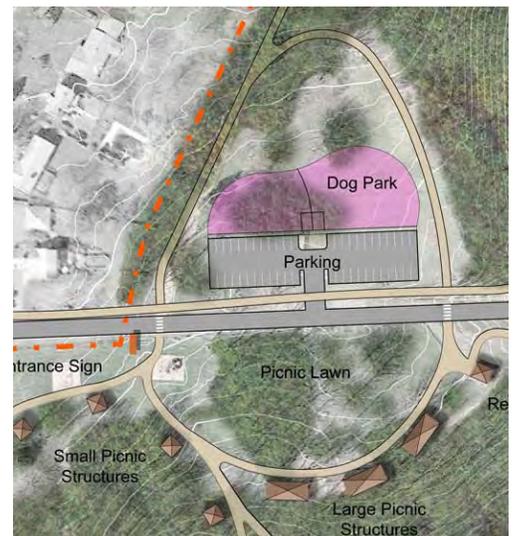
Passive Recreation | Off-leash Dog Recreation Area

There is a community need to implement an off-leash dog area for dog owners to comfortably and safely enjoy Middletown’s open space with their canine friends. Basic goals will include the following:

- The establishment of an aesthetically appropriate off-leash area that will provide active yet contained play space for dogs
- Division of the space into two zones; one for larger dogs and one for smaller dogs to ensure proper socialization of the dogs while limiting aggressive behavior
- Incorporation of bags and receptacles for pet waste, lighting for safe early morning and evening use, and fencing / signage that compliments the overall park
- Establishment of tree plantings, site furnishings to offer comfortable seating and gathering spaces of various sizes, shade shelters and other park furnishings that support the socializing of owners
- A parking area that will not only support the dog park area but also the adjacent picnic structures

Passive Recreation | Picnic Structures

Building upon the success of the existing pavilion with outdoor grills, additional picnic pavilions of varying sizes will be integrated into the passive recreation end of the park. These facilities will support small informal gatherings but also be used for larger community organizations, and school field trips.



Active Recreation | Swimming Pool & Splash Pad

The existing pool facility is an important component to Veterans Memorial Park. Modifications to the pool itself will improve operations and maintenance as well as facilitate optimal programming capacity. The addition of a splash pad will allow for multi-generational access to water play for people of all abilities. Shade shelters and improvements to the bathhouse and filter building will be integrated to this process.



Active Recreation | Children's Play Area

There was strong support for the centralization and relocation of children's play within the park. The proposed location is at the base of the eastern slope creating the knoll where the pool is currently located. This play area will offer a range of age appropriate structures, accessible safety surfacing and individual play opportunities as directed through the public engagement process and final design. Shade, plantings, site furnishings, fencing and other considerations will also be more thoroughly defined in future phase development.

Other Park Improvements | Gathering Spaces

Inherent to any successful park space are gathering areas that help to support a wide range of park activities and community events and that foster social interaction and camaraderie among park stakeholders. Similar to the concept for an expanded and refined pathway network, the preferred master plan establishes a number of potential gathering spaces.

Specific improvements within community gathering spaces are likely to include the following:

- Special pavement treatments
- Furnishings such as benches, tables and other picnic amenities
- Arbors, pergolas, shade shelters
- Interpretive signage
- Electrical system hook-ups
- Water system hook-ups
- Shade tree plantings

Other Park Improvements | Entrances

As part of park improvement undertakings it is recommended that park entrances be upgraded to be more visible, more attractive and logically situated to provide safe, convenient and ADA compliant access to all park locations and facilities. The preferred master plan identifies the need for primary entrances at the two ends of Walnut Grove Road as well as pedestrian connections to the north and south to abutting properties.

Improvements at primary entrance locations might typically include:

- New pavements

- New park signage
- New gateway features (piers, columns, arbors etc)
- Tree plantings
- Benches
- Other landscape enhancements

Other Park Improvements | Edges

At present, park edges are quite varied. In places, they are somewhat undefined with no fencing and informal shade tree growth. In conjunction with recommendations to improve entrances into the park, it is similarly suggested that a more thoughtful, consistent approach to upgrading the four park edges be employed. Work at these locations would include:

- Suitable fencing or wood guardrail
- Shade tree plantings
- Evergreen tree plantings
- Lawn/turf improvements
- Interior trail network that creates more permeable edges for pedestrian access

Other Park Improvements | Pathway Systems

Interior Paths- at present, Veterans Memorial Park has several Walnut Grove Road and informal walking paths that meander through the wooded landscape and connect the park to surrounding neighborhood resources. Recommendations contained on the preferred master plan include the establishment of additional pathways to connect to important park facilities, expand existing wooded trails and to provide improved ADA compliance. The plan also suggests that existing pathways be upgraded to include increased widths and shade tree and park bench installations to improve park aesthetics and the enjoyment of park patrons. A two-tiered hierarchy of pathways is envisioned with the added width and amenities typical along the two main, primary pathways and narrower, unembellished pathways serving as secondary connectors.

Other Park Improvements | Parking

Providing and maintaining sufficient parking facilities within Veterans Memorial Park is important to local residents, as during peak periods of park use it can be difficult to obtain a parking space. At present, there are approximately 12 parking spaces associated with the pool building and an additional 50 cars can fit in the existing gravel parking area at the center of the site. Under the proposed plan, approximately 15 spaces are maintained at the pool complex, an additional 10 can be placed near the play area, 90 will be added in a safe, organized and paved parking area central to the site. An additional 45 spaces will be located in a lot dedicated to the dog park and picnic areas. By shifting the primary interior parking areas into consolidated parking lots uninterrupted pedestrian circulation and access is provided between the rest of the site and will limit the need for on street parking except in the case of highly attended events.

Other Park Improvements | Landscape Enhancements

While major master plan recommendations are discussed in more elaborate detail above, there are other miscellaneous improvements that if incorporated into larger park improvement initiatives would help to dramatically transform the overall look, feel and function of Veterans Memorial Park. These improvements include:

- Installation of new shade trees to replace and supplement the large number of trees that are mature, damaged or diseased
- Installation of new park furnishings including benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, bike racks, fences and informational signage
- Installation of interpretive signage to convey the unique cultural, social and historical aspects of the property

Summary

Through the community process it became evident that:

- Veterans Memorial Park is much-loved by the community that lives in the surrounding neighborhoods
- There are many individuals (stakeholders) that are committed to the continued upkeep and improvement of this important public park and open space resource
- The veterans have initiated new improvements through the Trees of Honor and Veterans Museum projects
- The city is committed to upgrading the park through a series of park improvement programs
- Improvements will help to establish or reestablish a wide range of passive and active recreational amenities that meet the hopes and needs of the community, for both daily use and special events
- The full renovation of the park will take many phases and many years to be fully realized
- Community stakeholders must continue to be vigilant in protecting their park as improvements begin to shape

Veterans Memorial Park will continue to be a busy and vibrant park with facilities and programs that contribute in a very positive way to the daily lives of so many of Middletown's residents. It was agreed by all, that a park that hosts activities for residents aged 1 to 101 is the type of place that is desired and that the appropriate uses that are intended within this great park setting are what will tend to discourage inappropriate use and help to ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment for generations to come.

Budgets and Phasing

The Budget Summary included below identifies the initial breakdown of costs associated with the various improvement programs. All costs are estimated in current (2013) dollars, have been rounded and are estimated based on the preferred master plan designs that has been endorsed by the community.

Park Improvement Element	Budget Cost	Notes
Contractor's General Conditions	\$300,000	Bonds, insurance, project management
Demolition and Site Preparation	\$230,000	Removal of existing site elements
Specialty Pavement areas	\$140,000	
Path Systems	\$150,000	
New Parking Areas	\$300,000	
Pool and Bathhouse Upgrades	\$800,000	
Performance Pavilion	\$240,000	
Arbor and Picnic Shelter Structures	\$120,000	
Children's Play Areas	\$250,000	8,000 SF* Total (combination of safety surface & planting and other lawn areas)
Benches, Trash Receptacles, Bike Racks and Signage	\$100,000	
Perimeter Guardrail	\$110,000	(2,800 LF- wood guardrail)
Pedestrian Lighting	\$400,000	(40 light poles incl. trenching and wiring)
Utility Services	\$80,000	Upgraded electric service for lighting systems
Landscaping and Misc. Elements	\$240,000	(Inc. loam & seed disturbed areas)
Subtotal	\$3,460,000	
Contingency (20%)	\$692,000	
Grand Total	\$4,152,000	

Given such a large dollar value associated with the total potential improvement program, it is critical to establish basic priorities so that the most critically needed improvements are undertaken as part of the earliest initiatives. To this end, the city has already earmarked funding for a first round of playground improvements. This work is identified as Phase 1, below.

To be provided by City.

Funding Considerations

There are many potential sources of funding from both public and private entities that could help to pay for potential improvements to Veterans Memorial Park. Donations, both large and small, can be lumped together to create the financing needed to undertake meaningful improvements. The Middletown Department of Parks and Recreation as well as the Public Works Department will aggressively pursue a variety of funding and implementation strategies that could include:

- **Traditional Public Bidding-** Develop plans, specifications and estimates for the desired improvements, publicly advertise, receive bids and award a construction contract to the lowest qualified bidder. Projects typically range from small (say \$50,000 or so) to very large (many hundreds of thousands of dollars).
- **In-kind Services-** Implement improvements making use of city labor forces, materials and equipment. This method is typically appropriate for projects that are limited in scope, such as the construction of a parking area or driveway, or refurbishment of adjacent city sidewalks. As funding, material, equipment and human resources permit, other minor improvement efforts can be planned and undertaken. The removal of dead or diseased trees, pruning of healthy trees, and the installation of other limited site or utility elements are examples of work efforts that can sometimes be completed by using city forces and materials.
- **Donations / Corporate Sponsorships / Community Build-** Implement improvements for projects through a variety of means that might include, construction of a children's playground by a corporation or community group or construction of a park feature or facility with funding generated through linkage or mitigation arrangements (often originating from the approval of a large area development). In certain cases, improvements can also be undertaken by contractors looking to donate their services.

For consideration, a number of potential funding sources and mechanisms have been identified. Many of the governmental sources identified allocate millions of dollars per year for parks, open space and athletic facility improvement programs, but competition is intense. The actual improvements are then implemented through a public design, bid and construct process.

Partnerships

Partnerships can also play an important role in the overall plan to improve, manage and maintain various park properties. As an example, there are many privately managed sports leagues in Middletown with a history of supporting certain maintenance and capital improvement initiatives. City's and Town's are increasingly relying on these types of public/private partnerships to create the types of facilities and related playing conditions that are needed to support sports programming.

The City might also consider partnerships with such entities as Wesleyan University with its close proximity to the resources of Veterans Memorial Park.

State of Connecticut -

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). RTP is administered through the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP). Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for:

- All Rec Symbols Construction of new trails (motorized and non-motorized).
- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails (motorized and non-motorized).

- Access to trails by persons with disabilities.
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Acquisition of land or easements for a trail, or for trail corridors.
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection as related to recreational trails.

DEEP may award grants to private organizations; municipalities; federal, state and regional agencies and other government entities such as tribal. Sponsors may submit proposals for any of the permitted uses as listed. Grant amounts vary.

CT DEP State Parks Division Guidance for Recreational Trail Grants

Typical RTP-funded projects from one state showing the diversity of trails and they types of trails work seen as important for funding. From Connecticut DEP State Parks Division

Eligible Projects : Proposals must be submitted so that the RTAC will be able to consider the whole project from beginning to end. Applicants may submit scope of work and budgets that target a phase or phases of the whole project. A "phase" should be a "stand-alone" project that can be utilized successfully independent of the whole project. Please note that the CT RPT annual budget is typically less than 1 million dollars and that the RTAC prefers to fund more than one project annually.

Funding Level Targets

- Small projects - No more than 20% of available funds will be spent on projects with total cost less than \$5,000.00.

National Recreational Trails Program (aka RTP or Symms Act)

Funded through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and passed through to the states to administer, these funds can be used for construction of new trails, maintenance and restoration of existing trails, purchase or lease of equipment, acquisition of trail easements, and developing trail access for people with disabilities. Connecticut will receive about \$900,000 per year for these grants. The cost share is up to 80% federal funds. Eligible applicants include municipal, county, state, or federal agencies and private organizations. Grant applications are evaluated by a committee. Grant periods follow the federal fiscal cycle, beginning in October of each year. RFPs generally go out each

June. Contact: Laurie Giannotti, DEEP, (860) 424-3578 (860) 424-3578 FREE .

Long Island Sound License Plate Grant Program

Using money generated by the sale of Long Island Sound license plates, this program makes grant awards in four categories: Education and Outreach; Public Access; Habitat Restoration; and Research. Projects should be directly related to Long Island Sound or its tributaries including its coves, embayments, harbors, tidal rivers and their associated habitats. Proposals received will be reviewed and ranked by the DEEP and the Long Island Sound Fund Advisory Committee. The suggested upper limit for projects is \$25,000. Contact: Kate Brown, LIS

Fund Coordinator, DEEP, (860) 424-3034 (860) 424-3034 FREE .

America the Beautiful Grants:

Each year, the Urban Forestry Program makes available federal grant money to towns, cities and non-profits in the state, to further the advance of urban forestry in Connecticut. The funds have gone to such diverse

projects as tree planting, street tree inventories, tree maintenance programs and the design of tree guidebooks.

CT DEEP Nonpoint Source Program (aka 319)

Nonpoint source pollution is caused by diffuse sources not regulated as point sources and is normally associated with precipitation and runoff from the land or percolation. In Connecticut, the §319 program is administered by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse. Each year the department issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) for competitive projects to be funded under §319.

National Parks Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

NPS staff provide technical assistance during one-year commitments, for up to three years. Projects typically involve trail corridors, gateways connecting trails to Main Streets, riverfront greenways, and land conservation. Request for assistance letters must address four issues: resource significance, tangible results, public support, and clear roles for NPS and its partner. Partners include informal groups, private non-profit organizations, and local governments. Several Connecticut greenway projects have received valuable technical assistance through this program. Requests for assistance are evaluated during late summer for start-up in October. Contact: John

Monroe, Director of Connecticut Programs, (617) 223-5049 (617) 223-5049 FREE .

American Greenway/Kodak Grants, The Conservation Fund

This is a small grant program aimed at nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and community groups to promote action oriented greenway projects. The grants are made possible through the American Greenways Kodak Awards Program sponsored by the Conservation Fund, the Eastman Kodak Company, and the National Geographic Society. The \$500 to \$2500 grants are awarded for a wide variety of planning, design, implementation, and educational projects. The application period is from March 1 to June 1, with awards announced in the fall. Applications and guidelines are available. Contact: The Conservation Fund, (703) 525-6300 (703) 525-6300 FREE .

Bikes Belong

The Bikes Belong Coalition is sponsored by members of the American Bicycle Industry. The goal is putting more people on bikes more often. They seek to assist local organizations, agencies, and citizens in developing bicycle facilities projects that will be funded by Federal Highway Administration Enhancement Grants.

Bikes Belong Coalition will accept applications for grants of up to \$10,000 each, and will consider successor grants for continuing projects. Funding decisions will be made on a rolling basis. Applications and proposals will be reviewed under the auspices of the Bikes Belong Coalition's Executive Director and presented to the Board of Directors for approval, rejection, or resubmission. For more information, contact



The LWCF Program provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies). The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

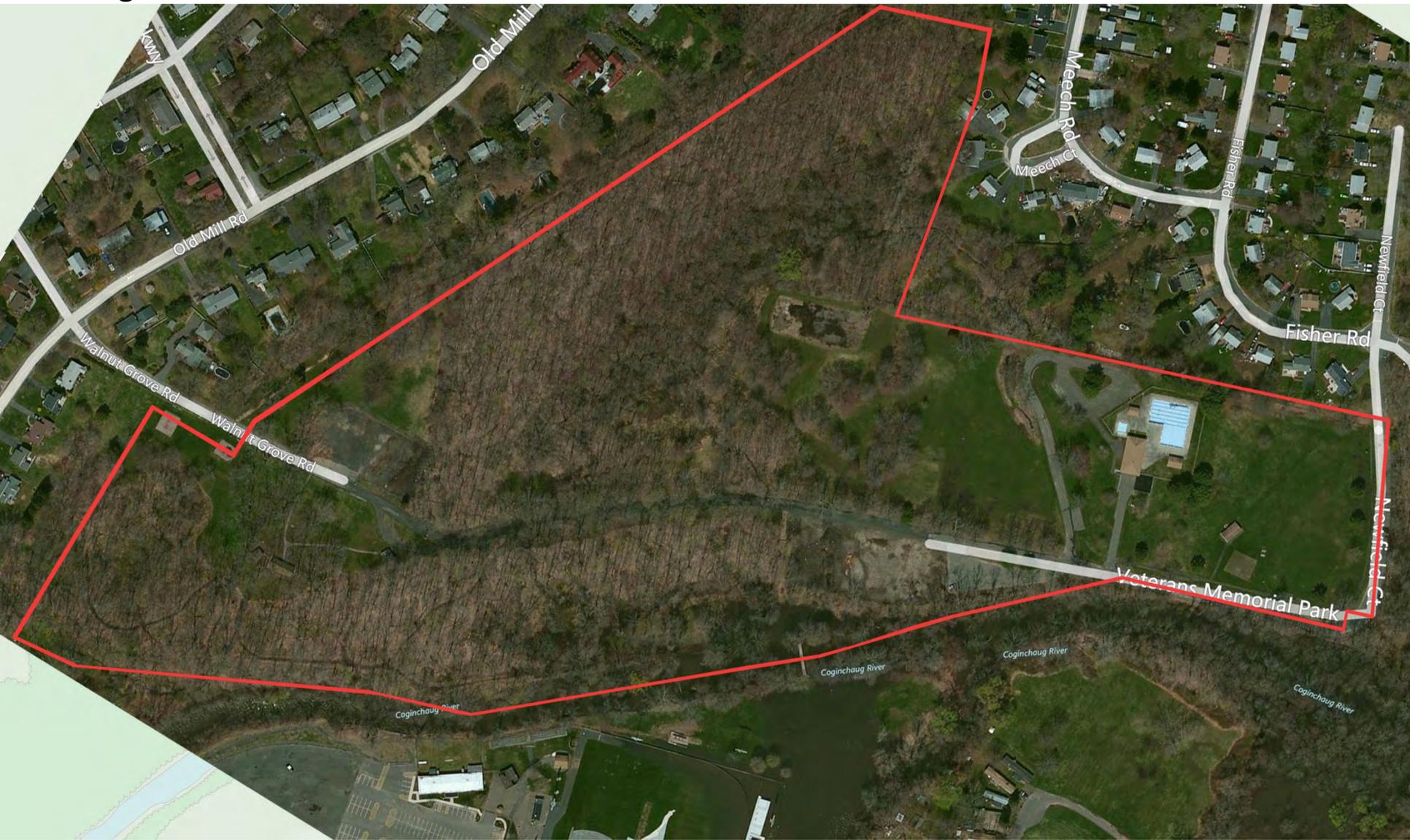
Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan

APPENDIX



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Existing Conditions Aerial



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Improvements Scheduled/ In-Progress



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT





Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



**Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project
Middletown, CT**





Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT





Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Local Park Precedents: Peckham Park- Middlefield, CT (26 Acres)



- playground
- baseball
- softball
- basketball
- soccer
- football
- tennis
- skateboarding
- pool/ waterplay
- boating/ canoeing
- pavilion
- picnic
- camping
- walking paths
- fitness equipment
- hiking trails
- dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Local Park Precedents: Elm Ridge Park- Rocky Hill, CT (101 Acres)



playground

baseball

softball

basketball

soccer

football

tennis

skateboarding

pool/ waterplay

boating/ canoeing

pavilion

picnic

camping

walking paths

fitness equipment

hiking trails

dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Regional Precedents: Cushing Park- Framingham, MA (57 Acres)



playground

baseball

softball

basketball

soccer

football

tennis

skateboarding

pool/ waterplay

boating/ canoeing

pavilion

picnic

camping

walking paths

fitness equipment

hiking trails

dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Regional Precedents: Crompton Park- Worcester, MA (12 Acres)



- playground
- baseball
- softball
- basketball
- soccer
- football
- tennis
- skateboarding
- pool/ waterplay
- boating/ canoeing
- pavilion
- picnic
- camping
- walking paths
- fitness equipment
- hiking trails
- dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Regional Precedents: Hedges Pond- Plymouth, MA (30 Acres)



- playground
- baseball
- softball
- basketball
- soccer
- football
- tennis
- skateboarding
- pool/ waterplay
- boating/ canoeing
- pavilion
- picnic
- camping
- walking paths
- fitness equipment
- hiking trails
- dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Regional Precedents: Red Hook Park- Red Hook, NY (30 Acres)



- playground
- baseball
- softball
- basketball
- soccer
- football
- tennis
- skateboarding
- pool/ waterplay
- boating/ canoeing
- pavilion
- picnic
- camping
- walking paths
- fitness equipment
- hiking trails
- dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Regional Precedents: Greenwood Park- Worcester, MA (14 Acres)



playground

baseball

softball

basketball

soccer

football

tennis

skateboarding

pool/ waterplay

boating/ canoeing

pavilion

picnic

camping

walking paths

fitness equipment

hiking trails

dog park



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Preferred Program at Veteran's Memorial Park (66 Acres)



- playground
- baseball
- softball
- basketball
- soccer
- football
- tennis
- skateboarding
- pool/ water play
- boating/ canoeing
- pavilion
- picnic
- camping
- walking paths
- fitness equipment
- hiking trails
- dog park

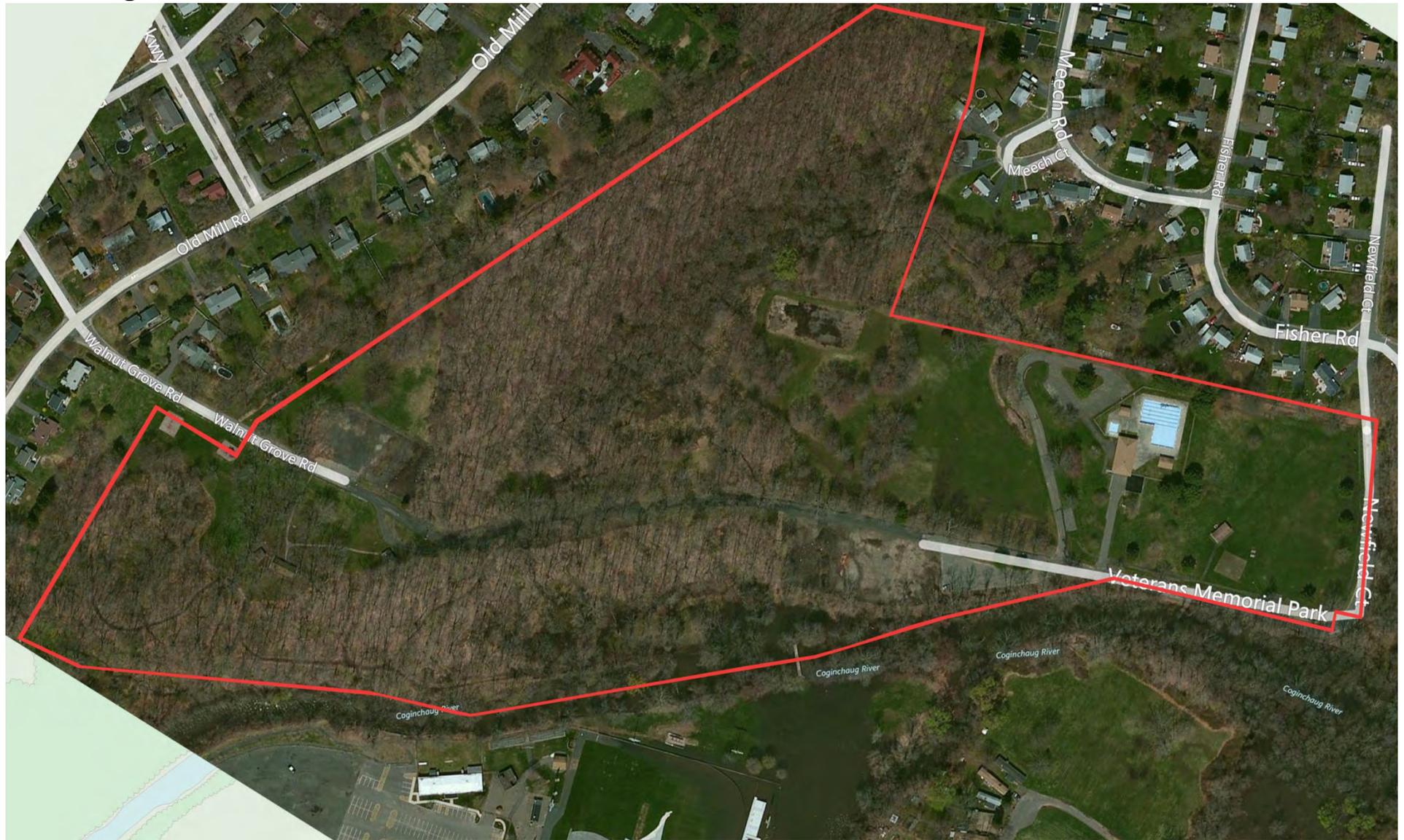


Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Existing Conditions Aerial



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Local Park Precedents: Peckham Park- Middlefield, CT (26 Acres)



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Local Park Precedents: Elm Ridge Park- Rocky Hill, CT (101 Acres)



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Regional Precedents: Cushing Park- Framingham, MA (57 Acres)



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT



Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT





Veteran's Memorial Park Improvement Project Middletown, CT

Master Plan Approved by Middletown Parks Commission
October 16, 2013

City of Middletown Department of Parks and Recreation

Weston&Sampson[®]
environmental/infrastructure consultants