

TOWN OF MONTAGUE, MASSACHUSETTS

PARKS & RECREATION
DEPARTMENT



***STRATEGIC PLAN
FISCAL YEAR 2021***



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

2020 was a year unlike any other, with the entire country (if not, world) in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic affected all walks of life, and the parks and recreation industry was certainly not spared. Not only were programs and events crippled, but we were also tasked with modifying the functionality of our parks and natural resources. Services like Tee Ball, Girls Softball, Adult Softball, Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza, Summer Camp, and most everything else were either canceled or were mere shells of their traditional framework. Parks and play spaces were shutdown fully for a number of weeks over the spring, with patronage recovering slowly over the summer. Unfortunately, programs and services continued to operate on limited basis in the fall and winter months. We hope to see recovery in the spring of 2021, but that is dependent upon key medical and social factors. Nevertheless, we will continue to serve our community as creatively as possible while we navigate through this challenge together. We appreciate the fortitude of our residents and patrons, and look forward to life returning to normal in 2021.

While we continue to face these significant challenges, the Montague Parks & Recreation Department and Parks & Recreation Commission are proud to offer you this valuable community resource. Our Strategic Plan is a dynamic tool, which provides an active strategy for addressing long and short term program and facility goals (1, 5, & 10 years), and is an evaluation of how successful the department has been in accomplishing those goals. The plan is reviewed, evaluated, and revised (if applicable) on an annual, fiscal year basis (July 1 - June 30). For example, any goals that were not completed in FY20 are to be carried over into FY21.

As you will observe in these next few pages, much of our focus has been devoted to facility improvements as they require significantly more planning and resources than programs. While the Town of Montague is very fortunate to have approximately 20 acres of parkland, it proves to be a considerable challenge for the department to maintain these parks and their respective amenities.

MPRD has four *Areas of Service*; Administration, Programs, Special Events, and Parks & Facilities. We have developed goals and objectives within each of these areas from data collected from the Town's current *Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)*. The OSRP (organized and administered through the Town's Planning & Conservation Department) is a seven-year action plan that is...*"a comprehensive inventory of the Town's natural, agricultural and recreational resources and a plan for their stewardship and protection. It contains an analysis of the Town's needs and goals and objectives designed to guide important decisions about the use, conservation and development of the town's land and resources."*

The Parks & Recreation Department utilizes the Open Space & Recreation Plan as a general framework to develop its own *specific* goals and objectives within our department, and from that a Strategic Plan is created. The goals and objectives from the OSRP (as they relate to the Parks & Recreation Department) are defined by residents who were surveyed during the needs assessment phase of that plan, and are as follows;

- *Maintain existing facilities and programs and the accessibility of these programs and facilities to all residents* (noted as the Town's highest recreation priority)
- *Develop new parks and programs.*
- *Improve opportunities for aquatic recreation.*

These directives are broad in nature, but we use the two plans, **and** our annual departmental financial study, as evaluation and planning tools for our department. As one may assume, some of our plans in FY20 were adversely affected by COVID-19, and were tabled to FY21. We will do our best to get back on track. Otherwise, we hope that we have adequately illustrated not only what we plan on doing, but also what we have accomplished.

Sincerely,

Parks & Recreation Staff

Jonathan J. Dobosz, CPRP, CPO
Director of Parks & Recreation
Jennifer L. Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Parks & Recreation Commission

Dennis Grader, Chairperson
Barbara Kuklewicz, Vice Chairperson
Albert Cummings, Secretary

Mission Statement

The Montague Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and the sense of community to the residents of the Town of Montague through the delivery of safe, healthy, diverse, accessible, quality, year-round leisure-time experiences, in addition to maintaining and preserving its parks and resources.

Vision Statement -

We will enrich the lives of our constituents and contribute to the cultural and economic fabric of our community through the combined efforts of programs, special events, parks and facilities, and effective administration (*Areas of Service*);

.....**PROGRAMS** – we will offer creative, accessible, and well-structured programs where community members will be able to experience physical, mental, and social benefits

.....**SPECIAL EVENTS** – we will help build a sense of community with events that attract and encourage social bonding amongst citizens of various backgrounds. These events will also provide a positive revenue source for our scholarship program.

.....**PARKS & FACILITIES** – we will provide clean, accessible, and safe parks and facilities which will be a source of pride for community members

.....**ADMINISTRATION** – we will display a high level of customer service, where administration will strive for continued efficiency in various organizational duties, in addition to properly training all staff and volunteers in departmental standards and practices

"Playful City USA" Community

Montague is designated as a *Playful City USA* Community. *Playful City USA* designation, funded by National non-profit KaBOOM!, honors cities and towns across the country for "putting the needs of families first so kids can learn, grow and develop important life skills. These communities are transforming ordinary places into playful spaces and using play as a solution to the challenges facing their residents." Approximately 258 communities from across the country make it "as easy as possible for kids to play". In total, these communities feature more than 14,000 safe and engaging playspaces that serve more than 4 million kids.

KaBOOM has recently disengaged from the annual application process and no longer issues new "Playful City USA" community designations. Therefore, MPRD is a "Playful City" in perpetuity and will forever be designated as such!



AREAS OF SERVICE

I & II: PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS

MPRD looks to expand our program spectrum on a constant basis. If we're able to create new programs, or enhance current ones at a moment's notice, we will take advantage of that opportunity.

III: PARKS & FACILITIES

MPRD will continue to utilize every financial outlet available to help cover the cost (or a portion thereof) of each project. These outlets range from the Recreation Revolving Fund, Capital Improvement Projects, fundraising campaigns, partnerships, or State, Federal and private grants. Some projects may even require a combination of more than one financial source. As always, we encourage and invite any Montague resident to provide us with their input to help make the goals in this plan a reality. Phase I construction of the Rutter's Park Improvement Project was completed during the summer of 2020, and the design phase of the Montague Center Park Improvement Project began during the summer as well.

UNITY PARK:

Current Status –

Unity Park is the most widely utilized outdoor recreation facility within the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Department, and *may* be the most widely used outdoor recreation facility in the entire town of Montague. Unity Park is made up of the Skrzypek Fieldhouse, two ballfields (Unity 1 & Unity 2), a playground, rain garden, basketball court, sand volleyball court, picnic area, and a 7,200 square foot skatepark. Unity Park is used for both organized and non-organized leisure pursuits. The majority of organized programs and events are sponsored, organized and funded through the Parks & Recreation Department. These programs and events include; the Summer Playground Program, Youth Soccer, Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza, Scarecrow Stuffing Party, Tee Ball, Rookie Baseball & Softball, the

Unity Park, continue:

Adult Co-Ed Softball League, and numerous program related meetings. Unity Park, as with all other town owned parks, is maintained by the Highway Department, which works on field maintenance, mowing, playground repairs, building repairs, and other duties.

Unity Park has regional appeal. We see many people who do not reside in Montague enjoying the park. The ability of Unity Park to attract individuals beyond the boundaries of Montague provides a very strong revenue generator for businesses and other attractions in downtown Turners Falls, which in turn, benefits the town as a whole.

During the summer of 2018, a group of local artists started the "Building Bridges Mural Project" on the west side of the Unity Park Fieldhouse. The mural depicts local, native and indigenous symbology, and after a brief project hiatus, the mural was completed in the fall of 2020.

Some items that were carried over from the last fiscal year included the re-painting of the playground area walkways, exploring sustainability efforts for the Fieldhouse, completing the landscaping around the Skatepark, and implementing plans to convert the Garage area into programming space.

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- Re-paint/re-seal Playground Area Walkways
- Re-paint/re-seal basketball court
- Continue to look at ways to best convert the current Fieldhouse Garage into programming space
- Continue to Explore Sustainability Efforts for the Fieldhouse
- Complete beautification efforts around the Skatepark

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- Replenish Sand Volleyball Court surfacing

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- No plans at this time

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- No plans at this time

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- Evaluate integrity of playground structures for possible replacement

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

HIGHLAND PARK:

Current Status -

Highland Park is the second most widely utilized park under the Parks & Recreation Department's authority. The facility currently includes a softball field (soccer in the fall), playground area, picnic area, park shed, and a parking area with a basketball hoop. The park is currently used by our Youth Soccer Program. The Gill-Montague Regional School District also brought their Summer Free Lunch Program to Highland Park, and has proven successful in its first year.

The playground has seen considerable improvements in the last ten to twelve years, with the installation of a slide, climbing structure, merry-go-round, and swingsets. There has also been a great surge in using

Highland Park, continued:

the park for adult soccer. Currently, the shed is used for Youth Soccer, and for restroom use for various programs and events. Our plans were to start the development of a master plan for the park by this year. However, due to current improvement projects with Rutter's and Montague Center, we will most likely need to push these plans back until we have the resources to focus on Highland.

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- No plans at this time

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- Pursue the development of a master plan.

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- Dependent upon the successful completion of a master plan, implement a design phase.

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- Dependent upon the successful completion of a design phase, move into construction.

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

MONTAGUE CENTER PARK:

Current Status -

The Montague Center Park Improvement Committee completed the master plan of the facility with the guidance and input from The Conway School of Landscape Design in late spring of 2019. The project committee is currently developing an in-house design phase that will address accessibility, various play spaces and conservation efforts.

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- Implement in-house design phase of facility-wide improvement project

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- Begin and complete Phase 1 Construction of facility-wide improvement project

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- Begin and complete Phase 2 Construction of facility-wide improvement project

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- Begin and complete Phase 3 Construction of facility-wide improvement project

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

Lake Pleasant:

RUTTER’S PARK – Montague Street

Current Status -

Phase I construction of the Rutter's Park Improvement Project was completed in the spring of 2020, with a new playground, picnic shelter, parking lot, and landscaping throughout the park. Bruce Hunter of the The Franklin County Housing & Rehabilitation Authority (FCHRA) administered the project, with Aqua-Turf, Inc. of Orange, Connecticut as the general contractor, and GZA Environmental Inc. of Springfield, Massachusetts being the design firm. A grand opening is tentatively planned for the spring of 2021, due to the pandemic. Phase II of the project (that includes the basketball court area) is currently not on the Town’s priority list, but hope that it is placed on the planning document soon.

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- Hold Grand Opening of completion of Phase 1
- Encourage Town officials the importance of prioritizing the implementation of Phase II

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- No plans at this time

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- No plans at this time

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- No plans at this time

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

NORMA’S PARK – Lake Pleasant Road

Current Status –

Norma’s Park is primarily a playground with a couple of picnic tables, swing set, and climbing structure. In the fall of 2008, we installed a new bench swing, and the First Calvary Church of Turners Falls donated and planted numerous flower bulbs, and installed flower beds along the fence which has greatly beautified the park. The Town of Montague currently leases the ballfield adjacent to Norma’s Park from Eversource. Neither area is actively used by the Parks & Recreation Department for programs or events.

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- Make minor “spot” improvements where needed

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- No plans at this time

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- No plans at this time

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- No plans at this time

Norma's Park, continued:

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

MONTAGUE CITY PROPERTY:

Current Status -

The Parks & Recreation Department has obtained a parcel of land at the corner of Masonic Ave. and Rod Shop Rd. in Montague City. The department has not taken any steps in studying the feasibility of developing that property into park space. The total parcel is approximately 100' x 135' (13,500 sq. ft.). The department hosted a public hearing to discuss possibilities and general interest of developing this parcel in July of 2009. However, from data collected through the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan surveys, Montague residents have prioritized the improvement of current playspaces and parks as opposed to developing new recreation areas. Nevertheless, MPRD hopes to pursue the idea of having a "presence" in Montague City, which is the only village in Montague without a park. We hope to look into this opportunity further once current park projects are complete.

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- No plans at this time

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- No plans at this time

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- Depending on the status of other park improvement projects, pursue the development of a playspace in Montague City.

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- No plans at this time

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2030

- No plans at this time

MONTAGUE CENTER TOWN HALL GYM:

Current Status –

The MCTH Gymnasium is located on the second floor of the town hall building. The gym includes a mini multi-use court that is 43' x 40' (a total of 1,720 square feet), two basketball hoops, a stage (15'x 43'; 645 sq. ft.), and balcony seating above the gym floor. The MCTH Gym is the only indoor space under the jurisdiction of the Parks & Recreation Department, and unfortunately, it cannot adequately support many programs or events due to its small size and lack of accessibility for those with mobility issues. While we rent out the space for parties and other small events, this space is primarily used for storage of Sawmill River 10k supplies and equipment.

Montague Center Town Hall Gym, continued:

Five Year Plan:

FY21 (To be completed by June 30, 2021)

- No plans at this time

FY22 (To be completed by June 30, 2022)

- No plans at this time

FY23 (To be completed by June 30, 2023)

- No plans at this time

FY24 (To be completed by June 30, 2024)

- No plans at this time

FY25 (To be completed by June 30, 2025)

- No plans at this time

Ten Year Plan: To be completed by June 30, 2031

- No plans at this time

HILLCREST GRAMMAR SCHOOL – OLD PLAY AREA

Current status -

New swings and safety surfacing were purchased and installed in FY10, and the unit was re-painted by employees from Greenfield Savings Bank with volunteer assistance.

IV: ADMINISTRATION -

- *Institute automatic payment options for registrations*

***Strategic Plan for FY20**

Items slated for completion by June 30, 2020

I. PROGRAMS -

- *On-going -*
 - *Continue to develop partnerships with local schools, non-profits, businesses and other town departments to diversify and enhance current programs in addition to developing new services*
 - *Research and apply to grants that enhance current programs and services*
 - *Continue to improve training for program volunteers*

II. SPECIAL EVENTS –

- *Continue to develop new special events which will broaden financial resources to support our Sponsor-A-Child Scholarship Program*

III. PARKS & FACILITIES -

Unity Park –

- *Re-paint/re-seal Playground Area Walkways*
- *Complete the replenishment of new infield mix on both ballfields*
- ✓ *Continue to look at ways to best convert the current Fieldhouse Garage into programming space.*
- *Implement and continue to explore sustainability efforts for the Fieldhouse*
- *Complete beautification efforts around the Skatepark*

Rutter's Park, Lake Pleasant -

- ✓ *Complete the construction of Phase I of the park's improvement project.*

Montague Center Park –

- ✓ *Pursue the design phase of the refurbishment project*

Highland Park –

- *No plans for this fiscal year*

Norma's Park -

- *No plans for this fiscal year*

IV. ADMINISTRATION –

- ✓ *Upgrade current registration software (Sportsman by Peak Software)*

**Priorities and projects may change due to unforeseen circumstances.*

***Strategic Plan for FY21**

Items slated for completion by June 30, 2021

I. PROGRAMS -

- *On-going -*
 - *Continue to develop partnerships with local schools, non-profits, businesses and other town departments to diversify and enhance current programs in addition to developing new services*
 - *Research and apply to grants that enhance current programs and services*
 - *Continue to improve training for program volunteers*

II. SPECIAL EVENTS –

- *Continue to develop new special events which will broaden financial resources to support our Sponsor-A-Child Scholarship Program*

III. PARKS & FACILITIES -

Unity Park –

- *Re-paint/re-seal Playground Area Walkways*
- *Re-paint/re-seal basketball court*
- *Complete the replenishment of new infield mix on Unity Ballfield #1*
- ✓ *Continue to look at ways to best convert the current Fieldhouse Garage into programming space.*
- ✓ *Paint the main room floor of the Fieldhouse*
- ✓ *Paint the Whale Spray Feature surface*
- *Implement and continue to explore sustainability efforts for the Fieldhouse*
- *Complete beautification efforts around the Skatepark*

Rutter's Park, Lake Pleasant -

- *Hold Grand Opening of completion of Phase 1*

Montague Center Park –

- *Implement in-house design phase of facility-wide improvement project*

Highland Park –

- *No plans for this fiscal year*

Norma's Park -

- *Make minor “spot” improvements where needed*

IV. ADMINISTRATION –

- *Institute automatic payment options for program registrations*