

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Comments:

1. What are the criteria to be used to prioritize each of the concepts?
Each concept and improvement will be prioritized utilizing the following criteria: Cost (low, moderate, high), Timing (near-term, mid-term, long-term, as opportunity arises), Ability to Meet Needs of Town (based citizen input, future demand), Staffing Impact (low, moderate, high), and Facility Impact (New, Renovation, Addition/ Reduction).
2. What is the overall shift in fields and park space within the Town?
Overall there is generally a net gain of rectangular field space (Ox Ridge Property) and a loss of diamond fields (if Town Hall Concept B is adopted).
3. Can sidewalks be added along Town roads connecting to the parks (ie. Brookside Road from the Pembroke Area to Cherry Lawn Park, Pear Tree Point Road)?
Improving multi-modal connections throughout Town and to the parks is recommended, however improvements beyond the park area is beyond the scope of this master plan and the purview of the Parks & Recreation Commission. However, any comments for additional improvements will be provided to the respective Commission and Town Department.
4. Did the survey question ask that the Town preserve Open Space or pay high attention to Land Acquisition? Or both?
The survey question stated: "What are the most important needs for the Town of Darien to address over the next 5 to 10 years? (Rate level of importance from 1 to 5). Preserve open space/land acquisition". There is limited available open space so in an effort to maintain the current level of service for open space the Town should maintain current open space and look to acquire where appropriate if it becomes available.
5. The survey results highlight the need to preserve open space as a number one priority. Can you provide the data that shows the current usage of fields and the lack of availability that would dictate the need for more athletic fields?
Based on feedback during the stakeholder input sessions from multiple athletic organizations, and confirmed by Town staff, most fields are currently used a majority of the time, particularly during peak use periods (ie. 3 to 6 pm weekdays, and 8am to 2pm weekends) for Town recreation programs. Based on current usage of fields there is limited opportunity for new sports to be introduced such as ultimate frisbee, and other trending sports.
6. Where could a seasonal ice rink be located within Town to meet the growing demand for Darien Youth Hockey Association (DYHA)?
There has been a growing interest in providing a seasonal or permanent ice rink within the Town, however defining the requirements and operation of the facility need to be established. DYHA has expressed a willingness to have a public/private partnership with the Town. These specifics will be further explored prior to the final report being submitted.
7. Will there be costs associated with each concept? If so, when?
Yes, following the public hearing and once the concepts are further refined, preliminary estimates will be prepared for each of the concepts.

8. How was the parking decided at various spaces at each park?
Each conceptual plan was developed based on existing park use, and anticipated use with the consideration of periods of use and potential programming.
9. How much acreage should be provided for a fenced or unfenced off-leash dog runs?
The size of dog runs is dependent upon the particular park area, available land, and proximity to other activities or uses. In general, a fenced dog run varies between ½ to 1 acre, with separation between large and small dogs. An unfenced dog run does not have a size limitation, but rather proximity to other activities (athletic fields, playgrounds) and resources (roadways, parking areas, residences) is of greater consideration.
10. How are fields dedicated, what does the dedication mean for usage and will the field need to be replaced elsewhere in town by dedicated parkland should the Commission choose one of these plans?
The goal of the plan at a minimum is to create a net neutral outcome for athletic. Staff has been in contact with the Town Attorney to provide additional information regarding park areas or fields that may have been dedicated in the past.

Aquatic Facilities:

11. Did the survey show a need more for a seasonal pool or an indoor pool?
The survey results indicate the need for an aquatics facility/ swimming pool. Most respondents indicated the need for a community pool and were split between seasonal and indoor facility.
12. Which locations were considered and recommended for consideration for an aquatic facility?
Each of the park facilities were evaluated for a potential aquatics facility. Those sites which were determined for consideration to meet the programming needs were Cherry Lawn Park, Weed Beach, and Town Hall. A concept for the Edgerton Property has been developed, noting that overflow parking would need to be accommodated at the Middle School Site.

Edgerton Property:

13. Was the soccer field adjacent to the Edgerton Center considered for improvements?
The project team explored the possibility of utilizing the soccer field adjacent to the Edgerton Center, however this property is School property and therefore not under the control of Parks and Recreation Commission.
14. Can the Edgerton property accommodate a pool facility?
Yes, a concept for an outdoor pool facility has been prepared for the Edgerton property. Due to the size of the parcel and topography, an indoor facility could not physically or economically be accommodated at this location within the Edgerton property.
15. Could the Edgerton property accommodate a seasonal ice rink?
The Edgerton Property could accommodate a seasonal ice rink (85' x 200'), however accommodating sufficient parking is a challenge. Additional economic analysis for this alternative is recommended to determine if this is an economical solution or best use for this property.
16. Did the survey indicate need for another Paddle facility?
The survey indicated there was a moderate need for additional paddle facilities. Additional courts were proposed to meet projected paddle demand.
17. Why did the Edgerton plan include 75 parking spots for four paddle courts?
Concept A for the Edgerton Property includes 75 parking stalls, most of which currently exist from the previous Edgerton Senior Center. In addition, this area provides parking for the adjacent athletic field.

Town Hall Fields:

18. Is there a concern about the amount of water that can flood the Town Hall fields during heavy rains?
The concepts considered the frequency of flooding as a factor within the Town Hall fields. Stormwater management and flood mitigation measures would be further analyzed during the design process.
19. What will happen to the youth soccer fields and the two ballfields at the Town Hall site if a pool is proposed there?
If an aquatic facility were located at the Town Hall fields, the rectangular and diamond fields would be displaced. The current concepts for Ox Ridge include additional rectangular fields, and based on current usage, the diamond fields could be accommodated through program adjustments among the other existing diamond fields throughout Town.
20. Can a seasonal pool be installed at Town Hall fields rather than an indoor pool?
Yes, a seasonal outdoor pool could be accommodated at the Town Hall Fields. However, this is the only feasible alternative location for an indoor aquatics facility, based on available land area and proximity to Town resources year around.

Cherry Lawn Park:

21. Where are you going to move all those sports events if you take this area for dogs and/ or a pool at Cherry Lawn?
The concepts for Ox Ridge currently include space for multiple rectangular fields, which would relieve Cherry Lawn.
22. Was the current traffic and stress within Cherry Lawn considered? What mitigation measures were considered?
Overall Cherry Lawn is a highly-utilized park and by removing some programming and facilities within the park will help relieve the stress. During the refinement of concepts in the Master Planning process additional mitigation measures and entrances are being considered.
23. Could a fenced dog park be located between the existing soccer field and pond?
Yes, the space adjacent to the soccer field or tennis courts and pond could fit a dog park, however placing a dog park behind the goals of a soccer field or parallel to a tennis court are not recommended.

Woodland Park:

24. Can Woodland Park include a dedicated dog run?
The project team has consulted with Town Planning and Zoning staff, and confirmed that there are no restrictions about putting a dog run in Woodland Park.
25. The Town is formally transferring Hazel Street over to the adjoining landowner(s).
It has been brought to our attention that Hazel Street is being conveyed back to the adjacent property, therefore an entry to Woodland Park from Hazel Street is not be considered as a part of this master plan.

Pear Tree Park:

26. Why is the current bathroom and concession building being expanded?
Concepts A & B both recommend that either the current bathroom and concession building be renovated or reconstructed to meet the current needs of the Town of Darien. A renovated facility would increase the efficiency and long-term sustainability of these park structures for years to come.
27. Why do each of the concepts proposed pathways adjacent to Pear Tree Point Road?
Based on current usage and public feedback, safer walking and biking accommodations are needed along Pear Tree Point Road within park lands.

Ox Ridge Property:

28. Could an entrance to the recently acquired Town lands at Ox Ridge be provided off of Saddle Ridge Road?
Unfortunately, the Town acquired lands do not abut Saddle Ridge Road, therefore at the current time a connection at this location is not feasible.
29. Could the parking area be located adjacent to the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property line and preserve the view shed of the open space from Middlesex Road?
An additional concept for Ox Ridge has been prepared, locating the parking adjacent to the Ox Ridge Hunt Club property to maintain the views of the open space.
30. What type of sports fields are being proposed at the Ox Ridge Property?
The rectangular fields at Ox Ridge are proposed to be multi-sport (soccer, lacrosse, and etc.) with no permanent athletic structures and improvements that are in compliance with the restrictions on this parcel.
31. Could the rectangular fields proposed at Ox Ridge accommodate various small sided sizes to meet the most current US Soccer regulations?
Yes, the rectangular fields at Ox Ridge are proposed to be flexible to accommodate various age groups and sports requiring varying field dimensions depending on Town needs.
32. Was a dog park considered for the Ox Ridge Property?
A dog run was considered for the Ox Ridge Property, however due to the property restrictions limiting permanent improvements, an un-fenced dog run is not recommended adjacent to athletic events and therefore is not recommended if rectangular fields are considered at the Ox Ridge Property.

Weed Beach:

33. Could the fishing be allowed along the western shore of Weed Beach?
Per current Town Rules and Regulation, fishing is permitted along the western shore of Weed Beach.
34. Why is there not a boat house to support Darien Junior Sailing Team (DJST) in the concept plans for Weed Beach?
Based on limited feedback and interest for a boat house at Weed Beach for DJST during the public input process, a boat house has not been proposed in the current concepts. However, a boat house would be a great addition to Weed Beach for DJST and other future Park & Recreation Department programming (ie. Learn to Sail, small craft rentals).
35. Could a boat storage area be provided at Weed Beach to store the DJST boats?
Both concepts include a seasonal boat storage area at Weed Beach, however during the off-season, boats would need to be stored at another location. A partnering agreement between the Town and DJST to determine a funding arrangement is recommended to offset anticipated expenses or improvements to store boats off season.
36. Can additional moorings at Weed Beach be proposed?
Providing additional moorings at Weed Beach is a great suggestion, however these improvements would fall under the purview of the Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters. However, any comments for additional improvements beyond the purview of the Parks & Recreation Commission will be provided to the respective Commission and Town Department.

Frate Park:

37. Could trees for dedication or gardens be created within Frate Park?
Yes, this is a great location for dedications of trees or creating a garden in collaboration with the Garden Club of Darien so that as town citizens drive by there is more of a feature.

Pear Tree:

38. Would a new facility or deck be at a similar storm risk as when the Boat Club did their deck?
Any improvements within the flood hazard area would need to comply with the current flood zone requirements.
39. Could the jetty be rebuilt with flat rocks (similar to Roton Point Club) instead of a fishing pier, without obstructing the view?
Yes, the jetty could be rebuilt with flat rocks, assuming it meets the engineering intent and requirements, which would need to be further analyzed beyond the scope of this Master Plan.
40. Could umbrella rentals be considered as a part of this Master Plan?
Yes, great suggestion. Umbrella rentals and additional chair rentals are recommended at both Pear Tree and Weed Beaches.
41. The slope of the boat ramp is too flat. Does the Master Plan consider resolving the boat ramp?
Both Concept A & B recommend resolving the existing boat ramp issues.

Tilley Pond Park:

42. Could a seasonal stage or amphitheater with temporary seating for cultural events and concerts be considered at Tilley Pond Park?
Yes, a summer stage at Tilley Pond Park is a great location due to connectivity to the center of Town.

Diller:

43. Could a natural tree buffer along the property line adjacent to the residences along Holly Lane be considered?
Yes, additional tree plantings can be considered within the Diller Property along the property lines adjacent to the Holly Lane residences.
44. If the property is made more easily accessible, is there a concern for additional litter and trash?
There is no perfect solution for eliminating illicit use/ behaviors and littering within park spaces, however by activating public spaces encourages greater attention for surveillance and patrolling, thus increasing the presence of the Town in this public space.