



Recreation

Community Goal:

Encourage implementation of the most recent Town recreation plan to address the growing demand for services and facilities.

Objectives:

- Encourage greater utilization of existing recreational facilities.
- Expand recreational facilities and programs to meet demand as the Town grows.

The Town of Lloyd has a very active Recreation Commission that has done considerable work in recent years to enhance recreational opportunities in the Town. In 1999, the Recreation Commission prepared a comprehensive five-year strategic plan for improving the quality of life in Lloyd by expanding and enhancing recreational facilities. The recreation plan was based on a Community Survey, combined meetings with Recreation Commission and the Town Board, and numerous committee meetings. The mission that developed from this planning process is *“to provide year-round, high-quality active and passive recreational programs utilizing*

the Town of Lloyd resources to improve the quality of life for individuals of all ages.”

The Recreation Commission has developed nine strategies to fulfill this mission. These strategies are:

1. To develop and evaluate affordable programs and services.
2. To collaborate with other recreation organizations to provide integrated leisure services.
3. To complete construction and plan for expansion of existing facilities
4. To utilize community facilities including schools, churches, fire houses, etc. for recreation programs.

CHAPTER 11: RECREATION

5. To investigate additional properties for new programs and secure funding for these acquisitions.
6. To promote the Town programs through the local media and other Town organizations.
7. To survey Town of Lloyd residents for specific recreation programs and services to be offered and seek evaluations of programs provided.
8. To formulate a unique, recreational aspect of the Town of Lloyd and promote this focus throughout the business and residential community.
9. To enhance the Town of Lloyd's natural resources within local, state and national environmental regulations for outdoor appreciation and activities.

Specific tasks to implement these strategies, as developed by the Town's Recreation Commission, are included in the supplementary volume of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Readers are encouraged to consult the recreation plan for a full understanding of all of its recommendations. This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* highlights a few of the recommendations from the recreation plan, and presents some suggestions to assist the Town in attaining its identified recreational goals.

11.1 ENCOURAGE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

The recreation plan identifies Johnson-Iorio Memorial Park as the most important property for marketing Lloyd's recreational opportunities. The park is located at the foot of Haviland Road adjacent to the Mid-Hudson Bridge. Thousands of cars pass the park daily as they cross the Bridge, making Johnson-Iorio Park an important gateway into the Town. The park is currently the only existing public property that offers opportunities for passive recreational enjoyment of the Hudson River. It is designed as a scenic overlook of the River and the Mid-Hudson Bridge, but vistas are partially blocked by vegetation that is intended to screen the residences below. The park is set into the bluff and consequently has no river access. However, recent improvements have connected the park to the Mid-Hudson Bridge's pedestrian walkway. In the past, security at the park and in the vicinity has been a problem. An evening curfew for the park was instituted to curb abuse, but effective enforcement is difficult to maintain. The park has been underutilized due to its remote location and reputation as an unsafe place in the evenings.

CHAPTER 11: RECREATION

However, the Town recently received a \$6,500 state grant to make improvements to the park, including more benches and an information kiosk that will highlight attractions in the Town and promote local lodging facilities. The Town has also received a TEA-21 grant to construct a bike path along the edge of Haviland Road leading up to the park. These features will encourage greater use of the park, which in turn should improve security. The Town should continue to pursue funding to rebuild the dismantled bridge over Vineyard Avenue, and should work with the NYS DOT to create an underpass through Route 9W to Haviland Road, which will enable walkers and bicycles to access the Hudson Valley Rail Trail from the Haviland Road bike path. Creating connections between existing and proposed trails throughout the Town will expand recreational opportunities in Lloyd and encourage alternative modes of transportation and tourism.

Proposals to improve the Town's largest park, Tony Williams Park, include enhanced landscaping, redesigned parking for the Rail Trail, lights, ice-skating, bocce courts, new playground equipment, and picnic facilities. Proposed improvements to Berean Park include construction of a small concert shell, enlarging the beach area, and the addition of paddleboats, waterslides, a pool, basketball courts, a nature fitness trail and walking paths, and ice-skating. The Village Field is the most under-utilized site in the Town. To encourage greater use, proposed improvements include redesigning the layout of the fields, provision of an area for concerts and festivals, and improved lighting, landscaping and seating. Its location makes Village Field ideally suited for community activities and as a meeting point for extended hikes on the Rail Trail. Enhancing Village Field with an eye towards tourism by installing an information kiosk and promoting its proximity to the Rail Trail may foster economic growth in Highland.

11.2 EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

As Lloyd continues to grow, it will be necessary to expand its recreational facilities to accommodate the needs of present and anticipated future residents. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends an expansion of parks and recreation programs and greater coordination between the Town and the school district. Developing a recreational center for seniors will make Lloyd attractive as a seniors' retirement location. Improving pedestrian facilities throughout the Town, particularly in Highland, and establishing bike trails, such as along the Route 299 right-of-way, will encourage these popular forms of recreation. As discussed in Chapter 7, emphasis should also be given to developing the Ridge Trail along the Hudson River shoreline, along with a Greenway Trail on Illinois Mountain, and to preserving a network of open space throughout the Town during the subdivision review process for future

trails. With a growing population, special emphasis should be given to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and the proposed Highland Landing waterfront park.

11.2.1 Hudson Valley Rail Trail

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is Lloyd's most unique recreational asset and, when fully developed, will form the centerpiece of a system of trails extending throughout the mid-Hudson Valley. In addition to providing a variety of local recreational uses, the rail trail links the hamlet of Highland with nearby natural and recreational resources, such as the Black Creek water trail, Illinois Mountain, the Hudson River overlook at Johnson-Iorio Memorial Park, and the recreational facilities at Tony Williams Park. The trail provides alternative transportation linkages from the hamlet and nearby neighborhoods to the businesses along the Route 9W corridor, to local schools, and even to downtown Poughkeepsie via the Mid-Hudson Bridge. In addition to local linkages, the trail offers potential future linkages throughout the region, including those to New Paltz and the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, to the proposed Walkway Over the Hudson atop the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, and to the proposed rail-trail along the abandoned Maybrook Rail Line in Dutchess County. In many ways, the Hudson Valley Rail Trail stands to become a keystone feature of the Mid-Hudson Valley.

The Rail Trail is a recreational amenity that will promote economic development and tourism in the hamlet of Highland and Town of Lloyd. Many studies demonstrate that trails increase nearby property values, which in turn can increase local tax revenues and help offset trail development costs. Spending by local residents on trail related activities helps support recreation-oriented businesses, as well as other businesses that are patronized by trail users. In addition, trails are often major tourist attractions that generate expenditures on food, lodging and recreation-oriented services. Trails also improve the overall appeal of a community to existing and prospective residents. A national survey of people who shopped for or bought a home during 1994 revealed that, "of 39 features critical to their choice, consumers ranked 'walking and biking paths' as the second- and third-highest rated aspects affecting their decision."¹ Expanding and promoting the Rail Trail should be a top priority for the Town.

The NYS DOT's Maybrook Multi-Modal Corridor Study, completed in 2002, found that the preferred use of the old Maybrook rail corridor was as a bicycle and pedestrian railway. A portion of this rail corridor, which includes the

¹ Randall G. Arendt, *Conservation Subdivision Design for Subdivisions: A Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*, Island Press, 1996, page 12

Hudson Valley Rail Trail, runs through the Town of Lloyd. The Maybrook report recommends that the Town develop a plan to carry the trailway to the New Paltz border, possibly using Route 299 and/or New Paltz Road or along the Maybrook Corridor. The report also recommends that a paved trailway along the right-of-way of Route 299 be developed and constructed as a shared-use trail set back from the highway. This could be a joint project between the Town and the NYS DOT. In addition, the study provided a cost estimate to rehabilitate the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, a key link in the planned trail network. The study estimated improvement costs at \$27 million. Clearly public funding will be required to rehabilitate the Bridge and open it for public use. At the present time, trail users must cross the river on the Mid-Hudson Bridge, which is less desirable for safety reasons. Since opening the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, which is a National Register site, for public use will vastly improve the quality of life of all local residents, seeking public funding for its rehabilitation is warranted. The Town should coordinate with the Dutchess County Department of Public Works and the Hudson River Valley Greenway to ensure that the rail trail eventually links with planned trails in Dutchess County.

In 1999, the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association in conjunction with the Town of Lloyd commissioned a study of design recommendations for the Rail Trail and recommended funding sources. Future plans for the Rail Trail include a footbridge across Vineyard Avenue and extending the trail west from Tony Williams Field to Route 299; clearing has already taken place on the former Conrail bed along that stretch. When completed, the rail trail will include over four miles of paved and soft walkways. Long-range plans include extending the trail to Firehouse 2 and eventually to New Paltz. The Town is also working on a plan to create an interpretive nature walk across the Black Creek wetlands connecting to the Rail Trail. From there a new trail is being developed up the western slopes of Illinois Mountain, past the Town reservoirs and back down into the hamlet of Highland. While these additions to the Rail Trail will take a few more years to become a reality, they are an integral part of the development plans. The Town should support ongoing development of the Rail Trail and should capitalize on this resource as a tourism destination.

11.2.2 Highland Landing

The Highland Landing area was historically the commercial riverfront for the Town. Construction of the railroad isolated most of the waterfront property in the Town from the Hudson River. The hazard presented by the railroad tracks limits the waterfront's potential for water-dependent development, and steep slopes further preclude public access. Public access to the river can only be gained through redevelopment of existing sites located east of the railroad

tracks. The former petroleum storage facility in Highland Landing (Riverstar Terminal) has been identified as a potential site for redevelopment to provide public access to the river.

In May 1997, the Town of Lloyd unveiled the conceptual drawings for the development of a waterfront park, called Highland Landing, at this location. The drawings were prepared by the Cavendish Partnership, which the Town retained to prepare a plan to make the riverfront more accessible for recreational use. The firm's initial charge was to investigate the possibility of adaptively reusing an existing petroleum storage facility (Riverstar Terminal) located on the waterfront to provide the Town with its only public access to the Hudson. The study area was later expanded to include other parcels of privately owned lands. The resulting Highland Landing Concept Plan appears as Figure 31 at the end of this chapter.

The plan proposes purchase of the Riverstar Terminal property, and the development of a park and pedestrian promenade, retail shops, a docking facility for cruise boats, a small boat launch, private docks, fishing jetty, and parking.

The Town is currently seeking assistance from public, non-profit and private funding sources to purchase the lands and carry out the plan. In 2002, the Town received a \$250,000 state grant to help purchase the property, and Scenic Hudson is contributing \$275,000 toward the \$550,000 purchase price. Some oil tanks on the site were recently removed. It is hoped that this public/private partnership will result in implementing the Highland Landing plan in two to five years. Redevelopment of Lloyd's waterfront will enhance economic development and promote tourism in the hamlet of Highland. The Town should also keep the Recreation Commission updated on the progress of purchase and redevelopment of this parcel.

11.2.3 Land and Water Trails

The New York State Open Space Plan recognizes the Black Creek and its wetlands complex as an area that "could provide significant recreational opportunities including canoeing, hiking, wildlife observation, fishing, hunting and trapping." The recreational potential of this resource has been recognized by the Town's Environmental Conservation Council, which has developed a plan for an 11-mile water/land trail along the Black Creek from Old New Paltz Road in the Town of Lloyd to the Hudson River at the Black Creek Forest Preserve in the Town of Esopus. The water trail is described in greater detail in Chapter 7 of this Plan. The Town should continue to support this important project, which provides unique recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to the Town.

Scenic Hudson recently purchased a 249-acre parcel on the Hudson River bluffs for public access and passive recreational use. The parcel, known as Franny Reese Preserve, will be developed with a waterfront trail that will provide scenic views of the Hudson River and encourage the promotion of pedestrian access to riverfront parks. The Town should encourage the extension of this trail southward along the Hudson River bluffs during the review of development proposals in this area. Developing a Greenway Trail along Illinois Mountain should also be a high priority.

11.2.4 Recreation Fees

The Town currently requires that residential developments provide recreation areas or fees contributed to a general park fund to defray the costs incurred by new development in providing recreational opportunities to Town residents. The fees currently charged by the Town of Lloyd are low. These should be adjusted upward to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational services to new development in the Town. A fee of \$5,000 per unit has been upheld by the courts elsewhere in the Hudson Valley.

Before the Town can adjust its recreational fees, however, it must first evaluate present and anticipated future needs for park and recreational facilities in the Town, based on projected population growth. The Town's 1999 recreation plan could be used as the basis of this study. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the Town's Recreation Commission work closely with the Planning Board when it drafts its survey (strategy #7) to ensure that the survey can be used as the basis for a Recreational Needs Assessment that will allow the Town to adjust its recreation fee.

The fee might be linked to the land value, for instance 10 percent of the value of the portion of the land to be developed or an equivalent acreage equal to 10 percent of the equivalent value of the developed land in the subdivision. The tax assessor would determine this value. This technique has been utilized successfully in other communities and may be appropriate for Lloyd.

Recreation fees could be used to provide opportunities beyond those in the Town parks. Opportunities for open space preservation and recreation access could be included as well. This requires that the Town's recreation plan be amended once the Recreation Commission has acted on its fifth strategy, to investigate additional properties for new programs. Once the recreation plan has identified desirable properties, and set priorities for their acquisition, recreation fees can be allocated for their purchase, either through direct acquisition or by obtaining a first refusal option on the parcel. Priority areas might include expansion of the Rail Trail, development of a Greenway Trail on

CHAPTER 11: RECREATION

Illinois Mountain, and the purchase and development of the Highland Landing waterfront park.