

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action on open space within the Village. This chapter provides information on current open space use and demands and assesses the Proposed Action's potential to increase the amount of public open space acreage.

### **3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

#### **3.2.1 PROJECT SITE**

The project site, which is currently occupied by the vacant Main Building and Ellis Hall, totals approximately seven acres. The former school buildings on the project site are currently not in use. While certain areas on the project site are occupied by grass and trees, these areas are not currently used as recreational open space due to the proximity of the deteriorating, vacant buildings on the site.

The project site is part of a larger, 48-acre Village-owned parcel (i.e. the project area), with the majority of the property used for a variety of Village purposes, including field and indoor recreation, special events, exhibits, and other general recreational and cultural community uses.

The Village acquired the 48-acre parcel in 1993, according to the Village Board resolution approving acquisition of the property for Village purposes, including recreational purposes. The Village's petition in the eminent domain proceeding to acquire the property stated that the public benefit to be gained by the acquisition was the preservation of the 48-acre site, the provision of significant green space, and the prevention of an undesirable use of the property. In 2004, the Village Board dedicated the entire project area as parkland. Therefore, it is held in public trust and cannot be converted to non-park use without approval by the State legislature.

##### *3.2.1.1 RECREATIONAL FACILITY INVENTORY AND USAGE*

The Saint Paul's Recreational Complex, operated by the Village of Garden City Recreation Department, occupies a portion of the larger 48-acre St. Paul's parcel. The complex includes natural turf athletic fields (including one baseball field) on approximately 38 acres, a 2,200-square-foot Field House, a 1,000-square-foot Senior Center, a 2,000-square-foot Recreation Department Administrative Office, a playground, a cultural center (i.e., Cluett Hall), a nursery school, and a comfort station. Based on consultations with Village staff, overall, the facility is heavily utilized by permitted groups, including youth soccer, lacrosse, and football teams, with the parking area at or near capacity during most afternoons and weekends in the spring, summer, and fall seasons (see Appendix F).

##### *Recreational Fields*

The recreational fields are utilized in the spring, summer, and fall seasons, as follows:

## **St. Paul's School Demolition for Additional Open Space**

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- **Spring Season.** During the Spring Season, the recreational fields are utilized to support the activities of intramural soccer (2,000 participants), lacrosse (850 participants), and baseball (300 participants) that specifically use 13 soccer fields, 4 lacrosse fields, and 1 baseball field. Special events in the spring include Soccer Fest Weekend and the Jay Gallagher Lacrosse Tournament—each with an attendance of over 3,000 participants. Middle school sports teams use the lacrosse and soccer fields every afternoon for games and practices, as well as the baseball field.
- **Summer Season.** Girls' lacrosse teams utilize two lacrosse fields during the Summer Season. In 2010, Cricket will be introduced, utilizing three fields. Intramural football teams use the equivalent of two football fields for practices in August.
- **Fall Season.** In the Fall Season, soccer teams utilize 11 soccer fields and 8 clinic fields—all field space with the exception of the baseball field. Middle school sports teams use the soccer fields and the baseball field.

In addition, one 90-foot baseball field is used from the first week of April through the last week of October.

### *Cluett Hall*

This facility is in operation year round as the instruction facility for the Village's dance program and is utilized for the Village's special winter programs, adult education classes, and walking track.

### *Field House*

This facility supports the activities of intramural basketball programs operated by local sports organizations with 1,000 participants. In addition, the Recreation Department uses the field house for programmed sports activities on a year round basis. This facility is also used for special events such as the Antique Book Fair, Turkey Trot, Andy Fund Garage Sales, and Arts and Crafts Show, with all events attracting thousands of visitors.

## **3.2.2 EXISTING OPEN SPACE IN THE VILLAGE**

In 1993, the Village Board acknowledged the need to preserve additional open space within the Village for the use and enjoyment by the Village's residents. The Board commissioned Buckhurst, Fish, Hutton, Katz and Jacquemart, Inc. to inventory existing open "green" space within the Village, and to identify other areas suitable for acquisition. The inventory determined that there are 293 acres of public open space within the Village, including 218 acres owned by the Village and 75 acres owned by Nassau County. The inventory also identified 517 acres of privately owned open space, consisting mostly of the three private golf courses within the Village, including the Garden City Golf Club opposite the project area on the east side of Rockaway Avenue. The public open space figures include the green portions of the project area. The study recommended that the Village acquire additional areas of open space.

## **3.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The Proposed Action would add approximately seven acres of usable, public open space for the use and enjoyment by the residents of the Village. The removal of the Main Building and Ellis Hall on the project site would create new grassy fields and would allow for the use and enjoyment of the existing grassy areas on the project site which are currently not attractive as an open space resource due to the proximity of the buildings on the site. It is anticipated that the

additional open space would be utilized by the current users of the existing recreational fields on the St. Paul's property. The added open space would provide needed, additional recreational space for the users of the St. Paul's Recreational Complex.

The Proposed Action would be consistent with public policy as embodied in the zoning laws and park dedication governing use of the site.

The project would not have an adverse impact on open space in the Village, and it would not affect the ability of the Village to acquire any additional open space in the future. Rather, the Proposed Action would create an open space benefit and would not result in significant adverse impacts on open space.