

4.0 Open Space

Master Plan Recommendations Updates

Recommendation 4.1: Assist the Monmouth County Park System (MCPS) in its preparation of updates to the *Monmouth County Open Space Plan (2006)* and other similar or related studies, and incorporate the *Monmouth County Open Space Plan* by reference as a component of the *Monmouth County Master Plan (Near Completion)*. In 2016 MCPS began the process of updating the *Open Space Plan*. Significant outreach to residents and municipalities was conducted, including a Citizen Survey in 2017. During 2017 MCPS made presentations to the Monmouth County Environmental Council (MCEC) and the Monmouth County Planning Board. Staff continues to provide the MCPS with information as requested. MCPS anticipates the plan update will be complete by the end of 2018.

Recommendation 4.2: Work with all levels of government and nonprofit organizations to promote the preservation of sensitive environmental systems and significant natural features through acquisition, deed restrictions, conservation easements, redevelopment projects, zoning, and other innovative land use techniques (Continuous). The Environmental Planning staff continues to work with MCPS and municipalities on new nominations for *Areas of Significant Environmental Quality (ASEQs)* and with the MCPS on the identification of possible acquisition sites. The recently completed *Joint Land Use Study (JLUS)* focus has been on properties located in the Military Influence Area (MIA) surrounding Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle. (See Chapter 2.0, Program Updates, *Naval Weapons Station Earle Joint Land Use Study*)

Recommendation 4.3: Provide technical and professional assistance to our municipal partners in support of their local open space acquisition efforts and recreational facility improvements (Continuous). During 2017 staff reviewed and prepared letters of

support for five (5) municipal applications for Green Acres funding. The MCPS awarded over \$2.2 million in open space/recreation grants to sixteen (16) communities in 2017. (See Figure 4.5)

4.2 Existing Conditions

- **4.2.1 Primary Open Space and Recreation Lands Inventory** | While the Federal government maintains a number of parks and wildlife management areas in New Jersey, the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area is the only national park facility found within Monmouth County. There are nine Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) found entirely or partially within Monmouth County. Figure 4.2: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Management Areas in Monmouth County provides their general location and size in acres as of May 2018. The Prospertown Lake WMA was expanded with acquisitions in Millstone and Upper Freehold to over 1,030 acres. Two new access areas are listed by NJDEP among their WMAs: Shark River Access in Avon and Deal Fishing Access in Deal. There are four State recreational facilities within Monmouth County. The Leonardo State Marina, located on Raritan Bay in Middletown, provides 176 berths. Monmouth Battlefield State Park has permanently preserved over 1,818 acres surrounding the site of one of the largest and most decisive battles of the American Revolution.

4.2.3 Supportive Reports and Guiding Documents

- **Monmouth County Open Space Plan (2006)** | The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders founded the MCPS in 1960. During the following year in 1961, the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners was established as its governing body. Under the guidance of the Board of Recreation Commissioners, MCPS serves as the open space, park, and recreation agency for the County. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the MCPS compiled a [detailed history](#) of MCPS achievements. The County's first *Open Space Plan* was adopted in 1972 and became the driving force of land acquisitions. An open space policy was

adopted in 1983, titled the *Monmouth County Open Space Guide*. The most recent *Monmouth County Open Space Plan* was adopted in 2006. In 2016 MCPS began the process of updating the *Open Space Plan*. Significant outreach to residents and municipalities was conducted, including a Citizen Survey in 2017. MCPS anticipates the plan update will be complete by the end of 2018.

- **Monmouth County Park System Annual Report** | The first *MCPS Annual Report* originated in 1967 and recorded more 2,000 County acres preserved. Subsequent years reported 3,569 preserved County park acres in 1976, 5,442 in the 1989 *Annual Report*, 12,114 in the 2000 *Annual Report*, and 16,557 in 2017, the most current version.

According to the MCPS:

- There are presently over 16,788 total acres in the MCPS, of which 231-acres were acquired during 2016.
- Crosswicks Creek Park is the largest County park, totaling 2,277 acres.
- The MCPS maintains 138 miles of trails consisting of paved, easy, moderate, and challenging difficulty levels.
- During 2016, 6,027 MCPS programs were offered which were attended by 91,592 people.
- Overall the MCPS estimated that 2016 saw over 6.5 million park visits.
- Manasquan Reservoir facility was the most visited with over 1.1 million visits.

Figure 4.3 provides a list of Monmouth County Park System Facilities.

- **Deer Management (Relocated to 3.0, Natural Resources)**

- **New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)** | The NJDEP’s Green Acres Program develops five-year plans known as the SCORP. The SCORP provides a framework and guidance for the State, local governments, and conservation organizations for efforts toward the preservation of open space and the provision of public recreation. The current 2013-2017 *New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* was adopted in September 2014. NJDEP is in the process of preparing an updated 2018-2022 SCORP. During the spring of 2018 the draft plan was released for comments. It is anticipated that a new SCORP will be adopted in 2019. www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/

4.4. Stakeholder Actions and Efforts

- **4.4.1 Monmouth County Efforts** | The MCPS administers the competitive [Municipal Open Space Grant Program](#) to assist Monmouth County municipalities in land acquisition and recreational development. The Board of Chosen Freeholders annually allocates this funding from a portion of the Monmouth County Open Space Trust Fund. Since the 2003 inception of this program, over 200 grants have awarded more than \$30 million to 47 municipalities. The 2015-2017 rounds provided a total of \$6,427,000 to 31 municipalities, with an average award of approximately \$149,465. Figure 4.5: Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program (2015-2017) details the awards for those years.

Updated Figures for Chapter 4.0 Open Space

Figure 4.1 | Monmouth County Open Space and Parkland Map

■ Newly acquired properties since the 2016 Master Plan are represented on this map.

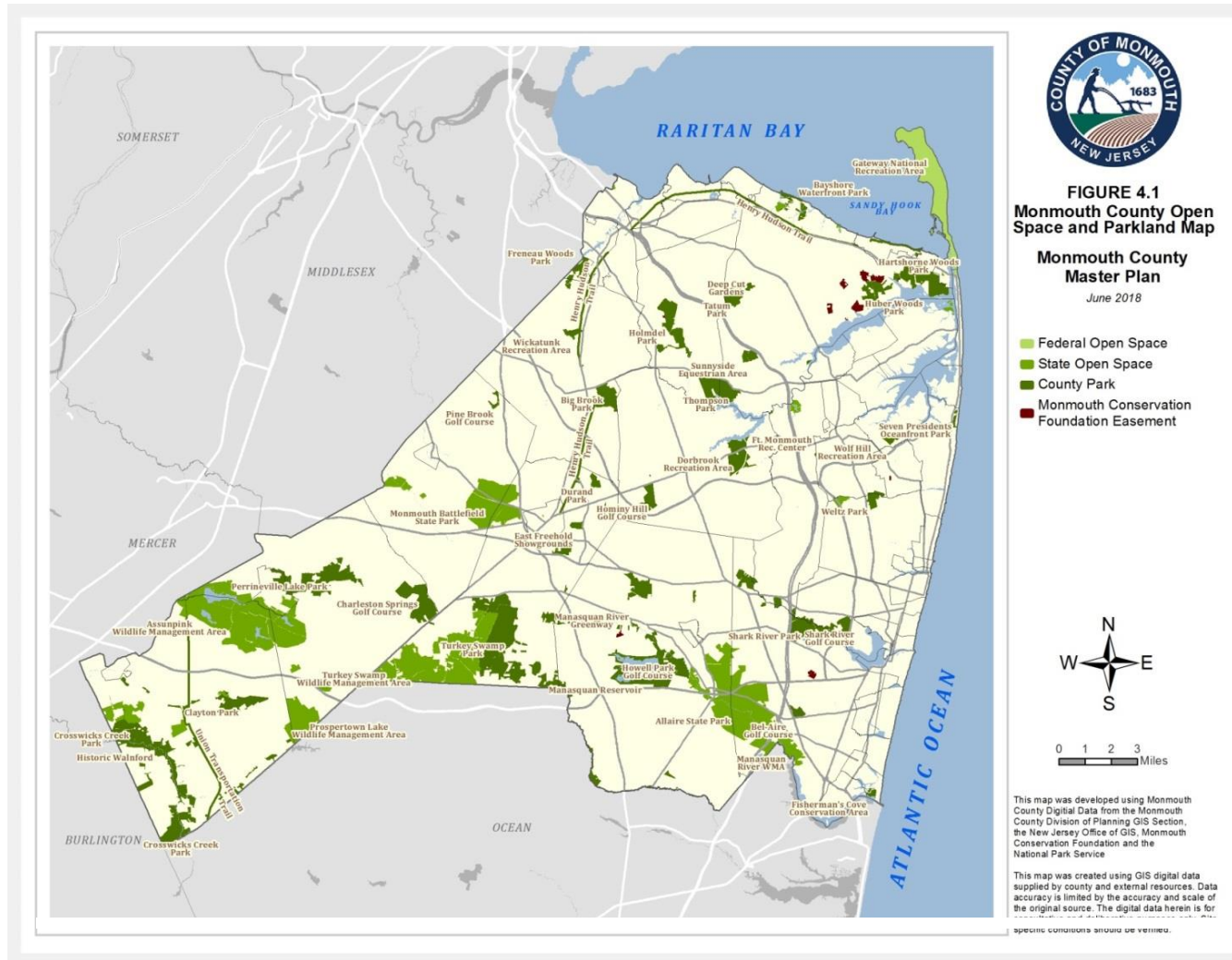


Figure 4.2 | NJDEP Wildlife Management Areas

■ This table includes a comprehensive list of locations.

Figure 4.2: NJDEP Wildlife Management Areas in Monmouth County as of May 2018		
Name of Tract	Municipality (County)	Total Acreage
Assunpink	Millstone, Roosevelt and Upper Freehold	6,373.44
Deal Fishing Access*	Deal	>0.1
Imlaystown Lake	Upper Freehold	30.00
Manasquan River	Wall and Brick (Ocean County)	744.33
Navesink River	Rumson	66.93
Pleasant Run	Upper Freehold, Hamilton (Mercer County), and North Hanover (Burlington County)	500.00
Prosperstown Lake	Jackson (Ocean County), Millstone & Upper Freehold	1030.68
Shark River Access	Avon	0.95
Turkey Swamp	Freehold Township	3,972.62
* Managed jointly with the Borough of Deal. Revised 6/6/18		

Figure 4.3 | Updated Monmouth County Parks and Recreation Areas Table

- Renames Figure 4.3
- This table includes updated acres for each facility as of 2018.

Figure 4.3: Monmouth County Parks and Recreation Areas			
Name	Location	Acres	Facility Summary
Baysholm Tract	Freehold Township	71	Preserved in natural state
Bayshore Waterfront Park	Middletown	228	Bayfront beach, fishing, boating, & nature programs
Big Brook Park	Marlboro	432	Preserved open space & trails with limited facilities
Clayton Park	Upper Freehold	450	Preservation, fishing & extensive trail system
Crosswicks Creek Park	Upper Freehold	2,353	Preserved open space and farmland, canoeing & extensive trails with limited facilities
DeBois Creek Recreation Area	Freehold Township	165	Preserved in natural state
Deep Cut Gardens	Middletown	54	Horticultural Center, greenhouses, Home Composting Demonstration Site, and extensive gardens
Dorbrook Recreation Area	Colts Neck	535	Barrier free playground, Sprayground, swimming pools, court sports, athletic fields, and paved trails
Durand Tract	Freehold Township	94	Preserved in natural state
East Freehold Showgrounds	Freehold Township	81	Showgrounds for horse shows, dog shows and special events including the County Fair
Fisherman's Cove Conservation Area	Manasquan	55	Riverfront beach, dog beach & fishing
Fort Monmouth Recreation Area	Tinton Falls	10	Gymnasium, pools, game room & program rooms
Freneau Woods Park	Aberdeen	205	Preserved in natural state
Hartshorne Woods Park	Middletown	794	Preservation, historic resources, fishing & extensive trail system
Holmdel Park	Holmdel	627	Arboretum, fishing, court sports, ice skating, sledding & trails
Huber Woods Park	Middletown	375	Preserved open space, visitors center, historic resources & trails
Manasquan Reservoir Recreation Area	Howell	1,208	Visitor's Center, Environmental Center, fishing, boating, ice skating, & trails
Manasquan River Greenway	Howell & Freehold Townships	478	Preserved open space with riverfront access for canoeing and fishing
Metedeconk River Greenway	Howell & Freehold Townships	457	Preserved open space with riverfront access for canoeing and fishing

Figure 4.3 Continued | Updated Monmouth County Parks and Recreation Areas Table

Figure 4.3: County Parks and Recreation Areas			
Name	Location	Acres	Facility Summary
Monmouth Cove Marina	Middletown	10	154 slips, floating docks, storage & fuel
Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook	Atlantic Highlands	12	9/11 Memorial & 1980 Hostage Memorial
Perrineville Lake Park	Millstone & Roosevelt	1,239	Fishing, boating & trails
Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park	Long Branch	38	Oceanfront beach, activity Center, skateplex, & fishing
Shark River Park	Neptune & Wall	988	Fishing, ice skating, group picnic facilities, fields & trails
Sunnyside Equestrian Center	Middletown	135	Equestrian Center, preserved open space, & trails
Swimming River Greenway	Middletown	4	Preserved open space with riverfront access for fishing
Swimming River Park	Middletown	18	Boat ramp
Tatum Park	Middletown	366	Two activity centers, preserved open space & trails
Thompson Park	Middletown	667	Park Headquarters, Visitor's Center, Craft Center, athletic fields, court sports, group picnic areas, fishing, boating, off-leash dog park, & extensive trails
Turkey Swamp Park	Freehold Township	2,281	Boat rentals, fishing, archery range, athletic fields, camping (family & group sites), group picnic area & extensive trails
Weltz Park	Ocean	169	Preserved open space with limited facilities
Wickatunk Recreation Area	Marlboro	98	Preserved in natural state
Wolf Hill Recreation Area	Oceanport	92	18-hole disc golf course, athletic fields & off-leash dog park
Yellow Brook Tract	Howell	369	Preserved in natural state
SUB TOTAL		15,158	
Historic Sites			
Name	Location	Acres	Facility Summary
Historic Longstreet Farm	Holmdel	9	Historic resources & living farm within Holmdel Park
Historic Walnford	Upper Freehold	36	Historic resources including a 19th Century gristmill
SUB TOTAL		45	

Figure 4.3 Continued | Updated Monmouth County Parks and Recreation Areas Table (Continued)

Golf Courses			
Name	Location	Acres	Facility Summary
Bel-Aire	Wall	114	27 holes in total: 18-hole executive par 60 course & 9-hole par 3 courses. Golf center
Charleston Springs	Millstone	789	36 holes in total: Two 18-hole par 72 courses. Golf center & short game area
Hominy Hill	Colts Neck	262	Award-winning course, golf center, & putting green
Howell Park	Howell	348	18 hole, par 72 course & practice green
Pine Brook	Manalapan	61	18 hole par 61 course & golf center
Shark River	Neptune	176	18 hole par 71 course & golf center
SUB TOTAL		1,750	
TOTAL ACRES ALL FACILITIES		16,953	
Trails			
Name	Location	Miles	Facility Summary
Henry Hudson Trail	various municipalities	24	Paved and gravel trails on former railroad rights-of-way
Union Transportation Trail	Upper Freehold	8.6	Natural surface trail on a former railroad right-of-way
TOTAL MILES ALL TRAILS		32.6	

Figure 4.4 | Monmouth County Composite Open Space Map

- Includes all the existing municipal, County, State, and Federal recreation and open space lands.

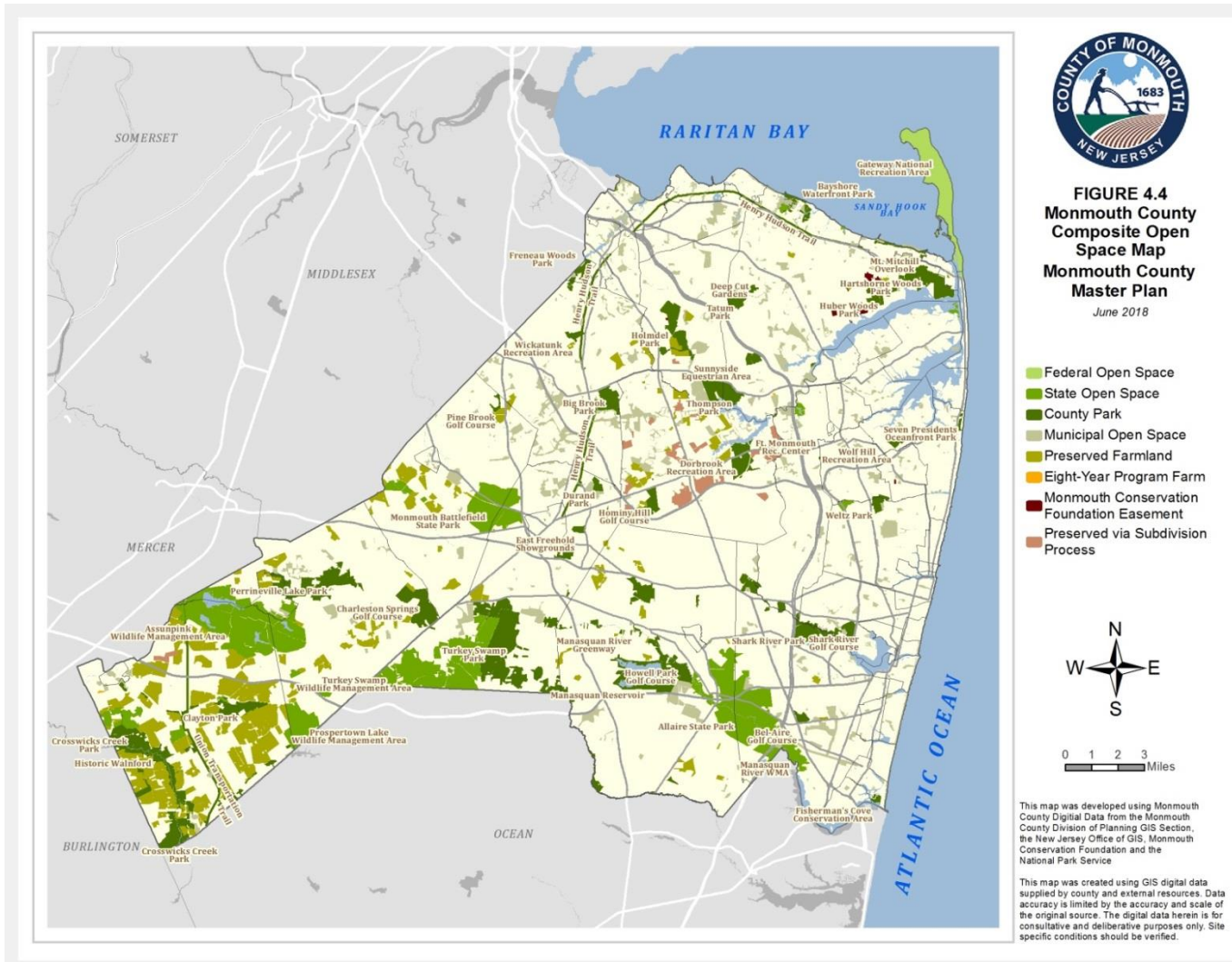


Figure 4.5 | Monmouth County Park System Municipal Open Space Grant Program (2015 – 2017)

■ This table includes project awards from 2016 & 2017.

Figure 4.5: Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program 2015 - 2017			
Municipality	Project	Year	Award
Aberdeen	Veterans' Memorial Park Improvements: Phase 1	2015	\$250,000
	Pocket Park Improvements: Phase 1 - Deerfield Park and Midland Park	2016	\$150,000
Allenhurst	Railroad Plaza Open Space Improvements	2016	\$125,000
Allentown	North Main Street Acquisition	2016	\$125,000
Asbury Park	Bradley Cove Acquisition	2016	\$250,000
Bradley Beach	Sylvan Lake Park Improvements: Phase 1	2016	\$161,000
Colts Neck	Town Hall Walking Path Paving	2016	\$94,000
	De Angelis Property Acquisition	2017	\$250,000
Hazlet	Natco Park Environmental and Restroom Building	2016	\$200,000
Highlands	Highlands Beach Park and Snug Harbor Beach Park Revitalization: Phase 1	2016	\$150,000
Holmdel	Cross Farms Park Improvements	2015	\$137,000
	Phillips Park Basketball Improvements	2017	\$43,000
Keansburg	Keansburg Bayfront Boardwalk Replacement	2016	\$73,000
Keyport	Main Street Park Development	2015	\$204,000
Little Silver	Improvement to Borough Fields	2015	\$121,000
	14 Parker Ave. Acquisition	2017	\$190,000
Long Branch	Florence Avenue Park Enhancement	2017	\$47,000
Manalapan	Holiday Lake Park Pavilion	2015	\$13,000
Manasquan	Mallard Park Improvements: Phase 2	2015	\$39,000
	Mallard Park Improvements: Phase 3	2017	\$100,000

Figure 4.5 Continued | Monmouth County Park System Municipal Open Space Grant Program (2015 – 2017)

Figure 4.5: Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program 2015 - 2017			
Municipality	Project	Year	Award
Marlboro	Stattel Farm Acquisition	2017	\$250,000
Matawan	Gravelly Park Improvements Phase 2	2017	\$100,000
Middletown	Croydon Hall Synthetic Turf Field	2015	\$201,000
	Multiple Playground Renovations	2017	\$150,000
Millstone	Clarksburg MEC-CRC Historic Preservation Project: Phase 1	2015	\$250,000
	510 Stage Coach Road Acquisition	2017	\$113,000
Monmouth Beach	Griffin Park Playground Renovation	2017	\$100,000
Neptune	Loffredo Field Improvements	2015	\$250,000
	Sunshine Field Skate Park	2017	\$165,000
Neptune City	Multiple Park Improvements	2017	\$175,000
Ocean	Community Pool - Wading/Activity Pool	2016	\$200,000
Oceanport	Fort Monmouth - Murphy Drive Acquisition	2016	\$250,000
	Fort Monmouth - Bldg. 918 Rec. Center	2017	\$200,000
Red Bank	Mohawk Pond and East Side Park Improvements	2015	\$223,000
Rumson	Piping Rock Park Improvements: Phase 2	2015	\$137,000
Sea Bright	Shrewsbury River Riverfront Park	2016	\$100,000
Sea Girt	Baltimore Park Improvements: Phase 1	2016	\$50,000
	Baltimore Park Improvements: Phase 2	2017	\$50,000
Spring Lake	Divine Park Improvements: Phase 1	2016	\$200,000
	Divine Park Improvements: Phase 2	2017	\$100,000
Union Beach	Scholer Park: Phase 7	2016	\$66,000
Wall	Municipal Complex Basketball Court	2015	\$175,000
	Municipal Park Roller Hockey Rink	2017	\$200,000
<i>revised 6/1/18</i>			