



PPMC Master Plan

ANDOVER PARK, PLAYSTEAD & MUNICIPAL COMPLEX MASTER PLAN

FINAL
REPORT



PREPARED FOR
THE TOWN OF ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

PREPARED BY:
GREENMAN-PEDERSEN, INC.
WILMINGTON, MA.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Vision

The Park, The Playstead, and the Municipal Complex (PPMC) represent the civic center of Andover. This 20.4-acres of public realm consists of buildings and lands that were born out of the aspirations of civic minded people, who supported higher education for all children, preservation and access to open space, and the provision of recreational facilities in support of healthy bodies and minds. Now the seat of government, the PPMC has changed much over the years, and development pressures upon the PPMC are expected to only increase going forward.

The Town of Andover desires feasible, sustainable improvements that will preserve and enhance the capacities of the PPMC to preserve the past, set goals and visions for the future, and implement them in a wise and cost-conscious manner. With sights set firmly ahead, this plan of action is needed to guide improvements and investments over the coming decades.

Process

In November 2017, the Town of Andover selected Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. to lead the development of a master plan. From April 2018 to July 2018, the Team held three public meetings soliciting input from the public and key stakeholders. Five incremental concepts were prepared to illustrate what there is and what there might be. This process was capped off with an on-line survey that garnered 557 responses, or approximately 1.5% of the population.

The Plan

The resulting master plan focuses on improving what there is, with a future nod to what yet might be. Along with the plan, 30 key areas are highlighted as to what short-range, mid-range, and long-range recommendations can be/should be made.

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"Practically, what we most want is a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward, with sufficient play of surface and a sufficient number of trees about it to supply a variety of light and shade. This we want as a central feature. We want depth of wood enough about it not only in hot weather, but to completely shut out the city from our landscapes."

Frederick Law Olmsted



Figure 01. Franklin Park, Playstead, Boston, MA.

Credit: <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:2801pr321>



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This masterplan describes the public process and resulting recommendations for improvements for three adjoining Town facilities which include The Park, The Playstead, and the Municipal Complex. Throughout this document, the acronym PPMC is used to represent these facilities.

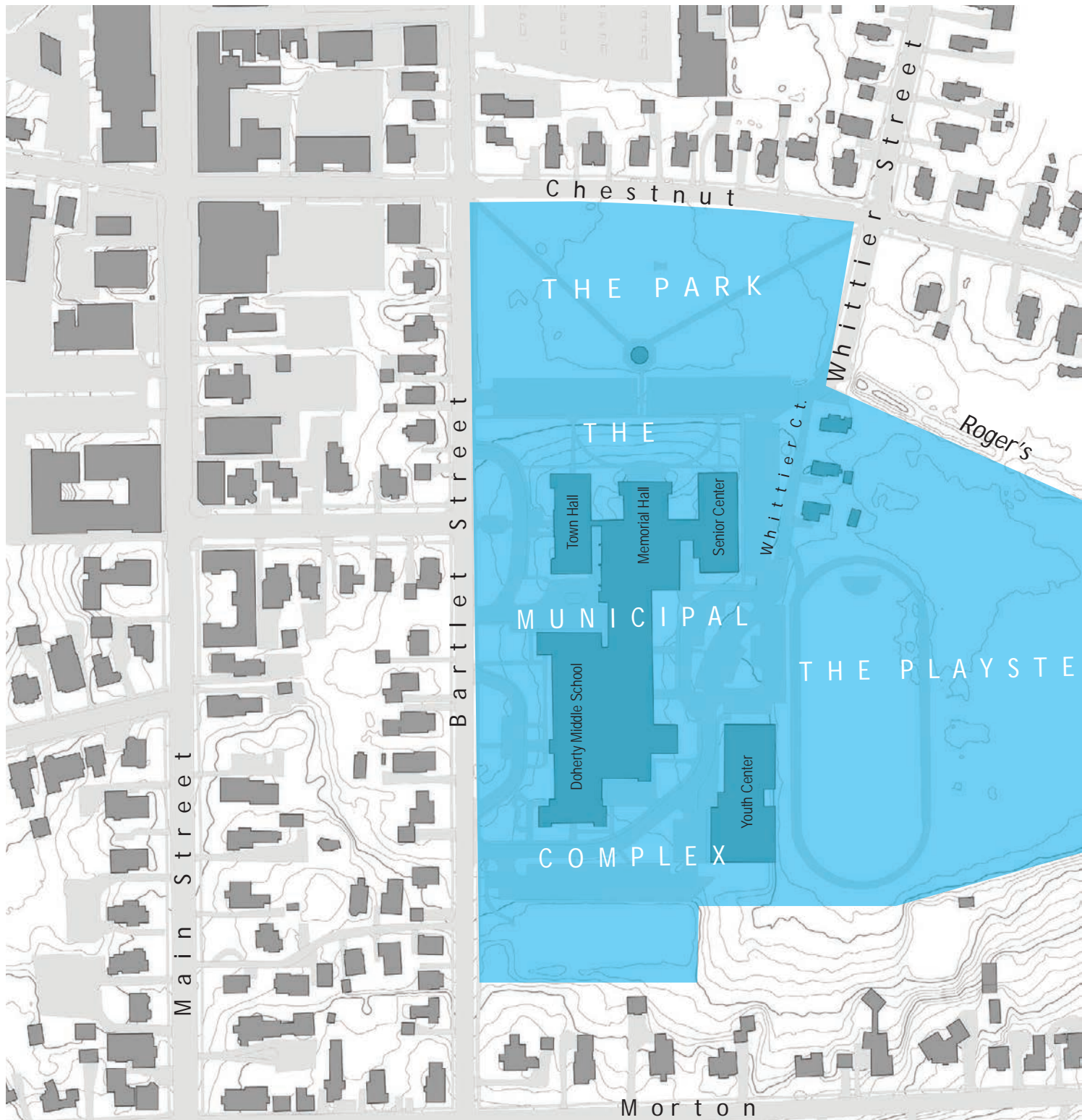
The PPMC plays a pivotal role in the life of the town. It has witnessed the birth of secondary education, benefited from the park and playground movements of the late 1800's and early 1900's, and most recently grown to become the seat of government, education, senior and youth services.

This section describes the project area, purpose and need for this study, and related reports and studies.



Figure 02. The Playstead, Andover, MA.

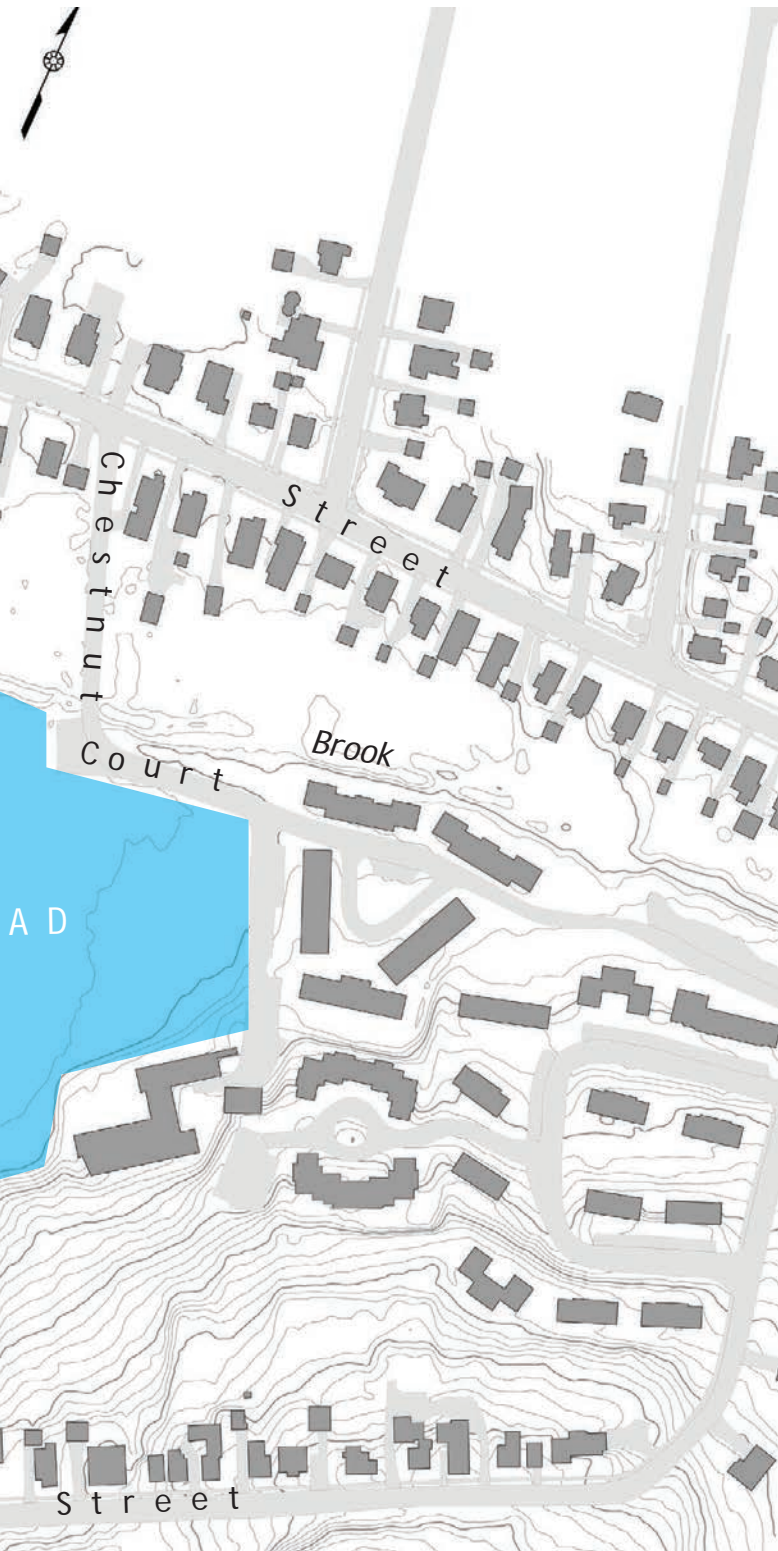
Credit: GPI



*The term *Playstead* derives from the Middle English language, and is a word meaning a place for play, or literally a play place. Similar examples include *homestead* and *farmstead*.¹ The use of the word was popularized in America by the pre-eminent Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who named the large open play area in Franklin Park “The Playstead” - to evoke images of the rolling pastoral topography of England. Olmsted often used toponyms in his parks, with many popular examples that have found their way into our local lexicon, perhaps the most famous example being “The Fenway” – which the nearby baseball stadium draws its name from.²

1. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Playstead>

2. *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*, By Matthew Potteiger, Jamie Purinto, 1998.



1.1 PROJECT AREA

The total PPMC project area measures some 20.4-acres in size, and includes all of the public open space within the Town-owned Park, Playstead, and Municipal Complex property. This area is roughly bounded by Chestnut Street, Bartlet Street and Morton Street

The Park

The Park is a major and beloved public green space within the downtown area, and is considered the primary open space for outdoor Town and civic functions. Rectangular in shape, the park measures 3.95-acres in size and is home to multiple war memorials and veteran's monuments, as well as a bandstand.

The Playstead*

The Playstead is an irregular shaped area, measuring roughly 8-acres in size. This large open space is located behind the Doherty Middle School and Cormier Youth Center, and is primarily used for playing fields. The area currently includes a football/multi-purpose field within an asphalt running track, two 60-foot skinned softball/Little League diamonds, and one 90-foot grassed baseball diamond.

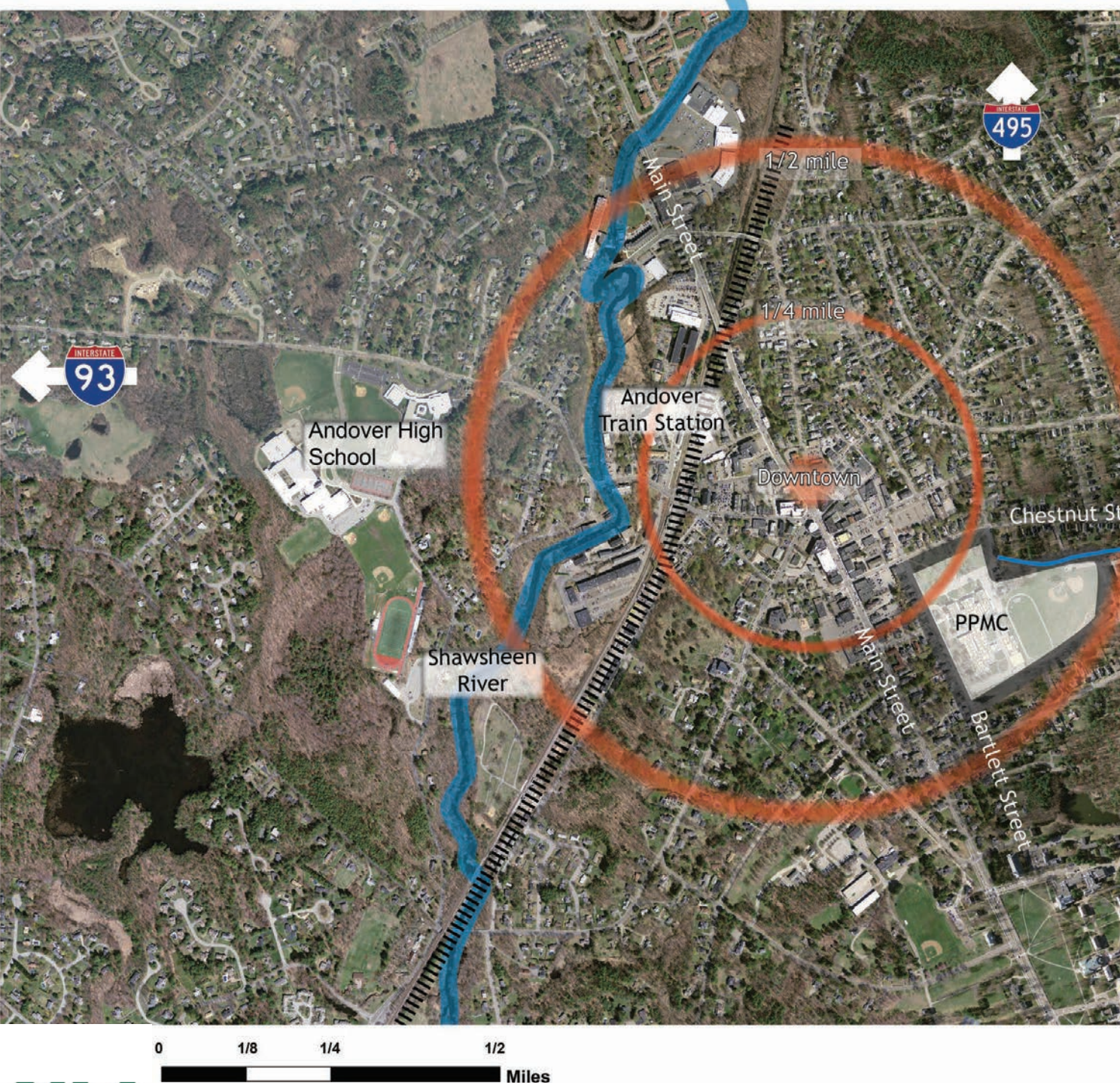
The Municipal Complex

The Municipal Complex is the name given to the 9-acre cluster of town buildings that include the Town Offices, Cormier Youth Center, Doherty Middle School, School Administration building, and the Senior Center at Punchard.

The PPMC Master Plan focuses on the outside areas between and connecting the buildings, which also includes the adjacent Stowe Field/Andover Center Playground.

Figure 03. Project Area.

Credit: GPI



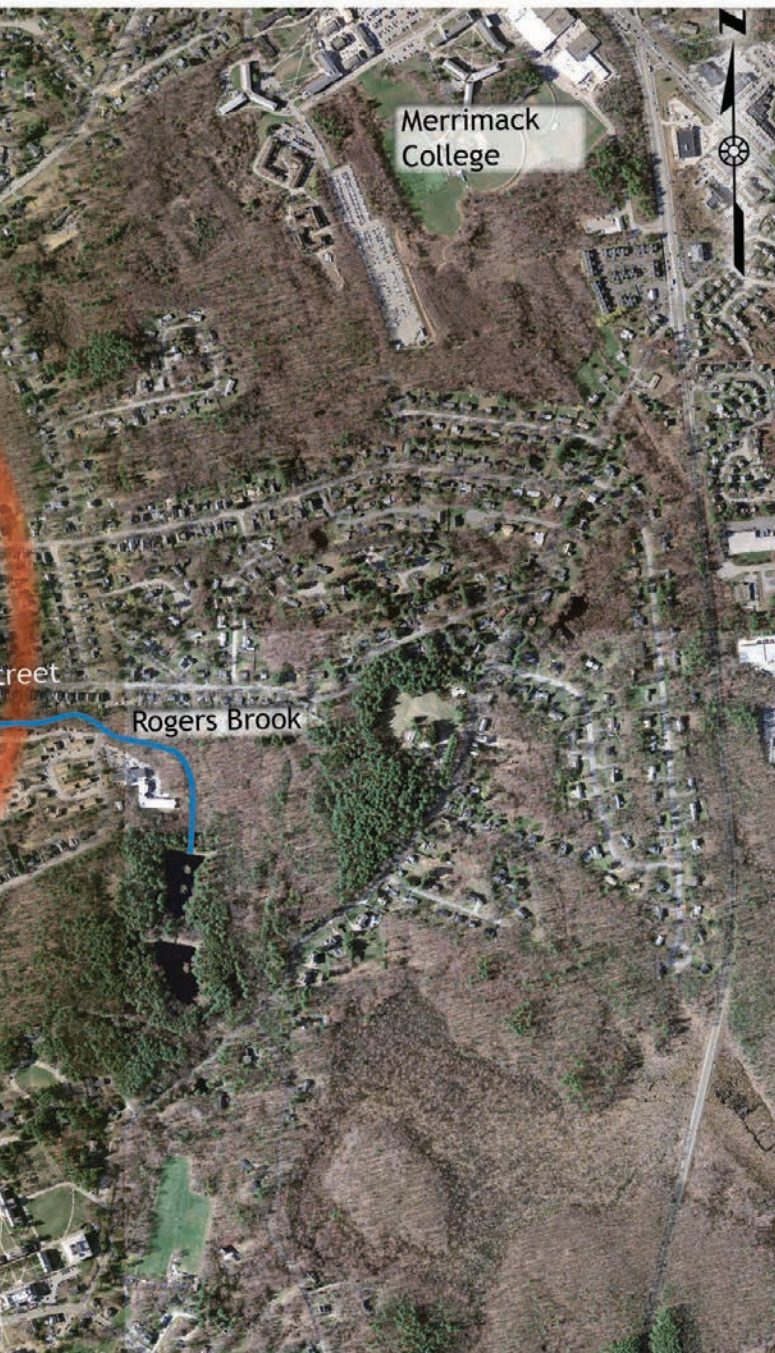


Figure 04. Community Context map.
Credit: GPI

Regional Importance & Use

Located within the heart of the downtown, the PPMC serves the Town in multiple ways.

The Park is located within a 10-minute walk (1/4-mile) from the Town Center, and provides a major outdoor space for numerous civic events.

The Playstead provides recreational fields for the Doherty Middle School, as well as the Youth Center and various youth leagues.

The Municipal Complex provides the Town with centralized offices, including not only the middle school, but also town offices, school administration, senior center, and the youth center.



Figure 05. Historical Image of the bandstand in The Park
Credit: Andover Historical Society

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

Public open space is owned and managed by the local government for everybody's benefit. On occasion, there arises the need to review and decide the form and character of the public open space provided. This document is designed to help Andover officials over the next decade make educated decisions about the 20.4-acre area comprising the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex.

While a variety of maintenance and improvement projects have been carried out within the PPMC over the years - many features, systems, amenities, surfaces, and structures are in need of replacement, upgrade, or other improvement. Due to the size and complexities of the PPMC; the number of different types of infrastructure; and the perceived costs for addressing the historic, cultural and environmental impacts of the facilities; the Town is looking to comprehensively plan for the future. In particular, the Town is looking to determine each facilities' desired uses and to develop a strategy for meeting the breadth of physical infrastructure needs in light of the maintenance and operations costs, and the capital needs.

Each of these beloved and well-used facilities are not likely candidates for a significant re-design or overhaul. It is more widely anticipated that modest improvements, alterations, and upgrades within the existing park layout may be articulated by the community during an engaging public process.

A particular focus of this effort will involve planning for the basic capital needs of the existing facility offerings, which will encompass (at a minimum) the following:

- Modern accessibility standards;
- Utilities (drainage, water, sewer, electrical, and irrigation);
- Environmental stewardship and climate adaptation;
- Landscape management, including managing the mature park canopy;
- All structures and additional recreational features;
- Park furnishings (bike racks, benches, fountains), signage, memorials, walkway surfaces and edges.
- Athletic field needs and layouts
- Annual maintenance and operation costs

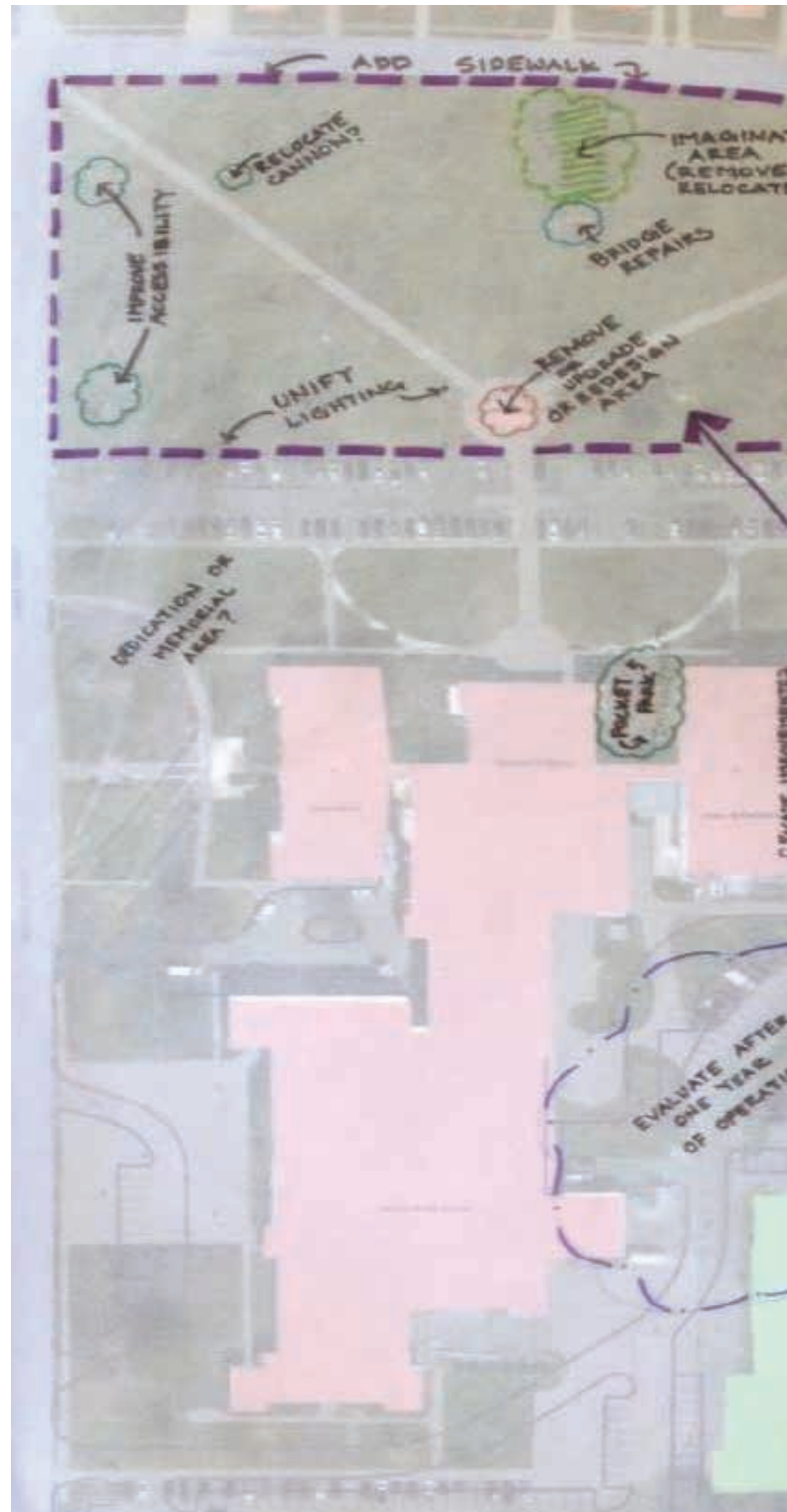




Figure 06. The Public Realm Site Plan Diagram.

Credit: The Public Realm - Park, Playstead, Municipal Complex Plan

Prior Work – A Plan of Action

From August 2013 to February 2015, the Town of Andover Planning Board led a process that resulted in the development of an action plan entitled: *The Public Realm - Park, Playstead, Municipal Complex Plan*.

This document was the culmination of a process that started after the release of the Town Master Plan in 2012, when the Andover Planning Board (APB) began discussion on the idea of creating a Master Plan for the PPMC. During their meetings, the board developed a scope of work to follow over the next year to move towards the creation of a plan. The APB subsequently collected ideas and proposals from various Town departments, boards, commissions and local citizen groups.

The high point of the process came in March of 2014, with a public design charrette organized by the APB. Approximately 50 people participated along with members of the Planning Board. They divided up into groups and held discussions about the area and what improvements could be made. At the end of the group sessions, a representative from each table presented their findings, ideas and thoughts. Overall, the attendees were open to new ideas and making improvements to the PPMC's public realm. The term public realm refers to those external, everyday spaces that we move through and linger within. The public places where we live, work and play.

Overall Complex- The Public Realm	
Issue	Recommendation
Connectivity between the Park, Playstead and Municipal Complex	There are several options outlined in this plan. The next step would be to involve the Department of Municipal Services and to work with a designer to create better connections between the Park, Playstead, Center at Punchard, and the other municipal buildings.
Funding and Timing	Research all grants associated with parks, playgrounds, sport fields, historic preservation, and community centers. The process may take several years to implement but by creating a vision, the citizens can implement the plan in phases.
Completion of the Youth Center	Once the center is finished, then a full analysis of parking, circulation, use and activities can be conducted.
Signage	Create a comprehensive Signage plan for the area.

The Park	
Issue	Recommendation
Lack of designated play area for small children	Create a focal intergenerational passive gathering space
Lack of continuous sidewalk around the Park	Continue sidewalk for a continuous loop around Park
Lighting and Seating	Unify lighting system
Accessibility to memorials and monuments/ dedicated spaces in the Park	Make memorials accessible with pathways Note: Do not move or remove existing war memorials
The Bandstand	Consider reorientation, reconstruction or removing bandstand
Trees in Park	Adopt and follow a management plan to plant diverse native trees to replace dead, dying or diseased trees
Prevent too many obstacles in the Park	Maintain open spaces within the Park
Poor utility connections in Park	Improve utilities within the Park
Year-long activities	Continue winter activities such as ice skating in the Park
Lack of cultural amenities	Add visual or interpretive art

Next Steps

Not every idea was agreed upon, however a few major themes emerged including:

- Better pedestrian and vehicular circulation,
- Better connectivity,
- Increased seating opportunities,
- Refurbishing/replacing worn or weathered elements,
- Creating a place for play, and
- Respecting the existing memorials and adhering to a public process for any new elements in the area.

The large amount of ideas and information gathered during the Design Charrette are not formal recommendations, and they did not materialize into a physical plan. However, they do illustrate a wide variety of ideas that citizens of Andover have when it comes to the public realm. The following table was developed to represent potential next steps.

The Center at Punchard	
Issue	Recommendation
Unappealing and uninviting entrance way.	Create a more appealing “user-friendly” entrance.
Isolated center.	Create better connections for the center to connect to the rest of the public realm.
Un-inviting landscaped areas.	Reinvigorate the “Senior Garden” and surrounding landscape. Create an inviting area between the Center and the Auditorium – possibly include sculpture, seating, a garden, etc. This could be a nice outside inviting space
Bricks and veneer are deteriorating.	Make capital improvements to the exterior of the building.
Parking constraints and lack of connectivity to area.	Revise street and parking pattern and include a sidewalk or pathway to connect the Park, Center and the Playstead. Purchase homes along Whittier Court to provide additional land for connections, green space and vehicular and pedestrian movement.

The Playstead	
Issue	Recommendation
Lack of play structure in the area	Locate a play structure or playground within the Playstead
Circulation	Create a trail loop to create connectivity
Condition and orientation of the playing fields	Study field layout and use programming
Drainage	Along with field layout study, review current drainage issues
Parking	Combine with play structure and playing field discussions
Lighting, artificial turf, seating, restrooms and concessions	Combine with play structure and playing field discussions

Figure 07. The Public Realm Next Steps.

Credit: The Public Realm - Park, Playstead, Municipal Complex Plan



APB Project Goals

The following Goals were derived from the APB work:

Goal 1: Create and maintain a welcoming space that encourages people of all ages and abilities, and supports a sense of community (a multi-generational community campus).

The Park and Playstead attract a wide range of visitors of all ages, residents and non-resident visitors, those seeking moments of peace and reflection and those seeking a place to romp. Future park design should continue to foster opportunities for people to gather, to meet up with friends, to strike up a conversation with a stranger, to enjoy each other as neighbors. The school, Cormier Youth Center, Center at Punchard and Town Offices are a destination for many and should provide an environment with which all residents experience is comfortable, safe and welcoming.

Goal 2: Create a space that promotes a healthy and active way of life.

A well designed park with symbolic functional and aesthetic improvements can help Andover maintain a healthy, active and diverse sense of community. Activities and events such as DCS's Teddy Bear Picnic and Firefighter Day attract the preschool crowd. Both families and seniors bring their picnic blankets on Wednesday evenings in the summer to enjoy the concerts. Clown Town is a beloved annual event as well as Art in the Park and Crafts in the Park. It is important to continue to promote, plan for, and enjoy community activities and events.



Figure 08. PPMC image.
Credit: GPI



Figure 09. PPMC image.
Credit: GPI



Goal 3: Preserve dignity of existing veteran memorials

Given the small size of the park and the many legitimate uses, care must be taken to situate each physical element. To date, four significant veteran's memorials are dispersed within the Park. Memorial Auditorium and the Playstead are also veteran memorials in the area. The memorials and monuments should be cared for and maintained and accessible to all. The Town should follow a public process with regards to any new war memorial or monument and shall involve the Patriotic Holiday Committee. This process should allow for an opportunity to consider innovative and inspired approaches to design and location as well as public input.



Figure 10. PPMC image.
Credit: GPI

Goal 4: Provide continuous stewardship of the public realm and plan for the future.

It is important to update public facilities in response to continually changing public demand. The Town should manage the public realm efficiently and economically, renovate and reposition the area to promote its use, and maintain and value the area for future generations

The area has a one hundred and fifty year history (see abridged chronology attached) and as time has progressed, many changes have occurred. Improvements and elements have come and gone, and the use of the Park, Playstead and municipal area has changed to some extent over the years. However, the area is, and has always been, for the use and enjoyment of all the people of Andover.

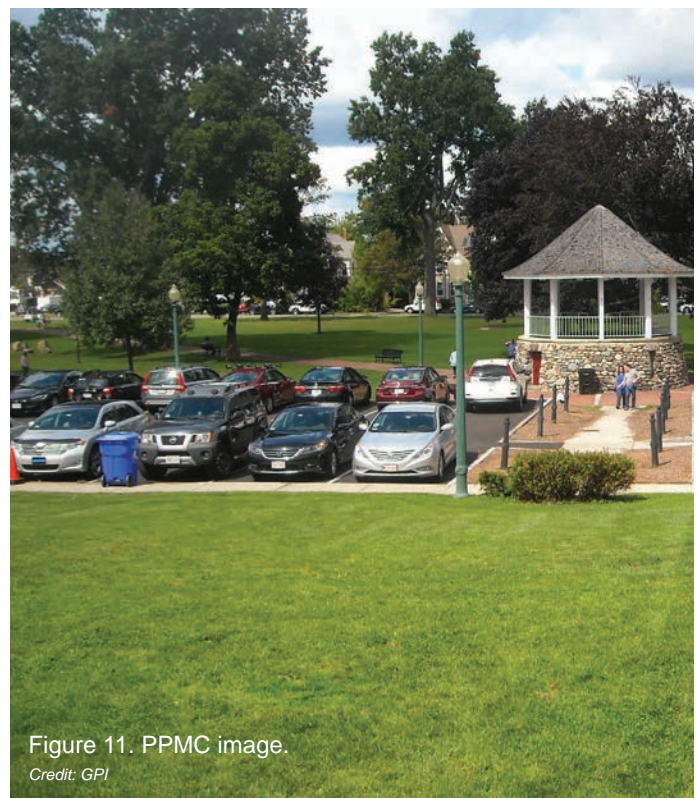


Figure 11. PPMC image.
Credit: GPI



Andover Master Plan

Vision for Andover

In the 2012 Master Plan for Andover, there were various items outlined to define Andover's Vision.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

We will continue to acquire and protect open space as a crucial natural resource that helps to maintain the character of the town, offers access to both active and passive recreation, and provides an important natural system for water recharge, flood control, and wildlife habitat.

MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

We will manage and protect our natural resources, particularly water, in a manner that acknowledges our responsibility to future generations and to other communities that share those resources. We will monitor air quality and take measures to mitigate negative effects of emissions from vehicles, regional incinerators, and industrial facilities.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

We will maintain strong and consistent zoning that protects historic buildings and places, and we will support the institutions that protect and promote Andover's historical heritage.

HUMAN SERVICES

Through our department of community services, other Town programs, and religious institutions, we will sponsor services and programs, facilities, outreach, and recognition to veterans, seniors, youth, and the disabled or disadvantaged among us. We will foster connections among all citizens to help us to appreciate, learn from, and support one another.

TRANSPORTATION

We will monitor changing commuting patterns and side effects on air and water quality, noise, and traffic.

We will work within the region to strengthen opportunities for regional transit, rail travel, commuter buses, and improved connections with mass transit hubs. We will seek solutions to local needs for downtown and commuter parking, for safe and efficient traffic flow, and for shuttle service to local facilities and services. We will encourage foot and bicycle travel as an alternative to automobiles, whenever feasible.

Master Plan Goals

The following Goals were derived from the town of Andover Master Plan (2012) Goals. While all the Andover goals are considered, in particular these goals are directly related to the PPMC.

Goal OS-2 Advocate for Conservation Land Fund

OS.2.3. Create a prioritized "parcels of interest" list to actively seek to acquire open space. The Commission should reach out to owners in advance of parcels coming on the market. This list should be flexible so the Commission is ready to purchase desirable parcels when the owners are ready to sell.

Goal OS-5 Education. The town should educate the public about the parcels under its control so as to encourage access and use.

OS.5.1. Educate the public about town-owned parcels to encourage greater use of the land.

Goal OS-6 Community Gardens and Small Parks - The town should support the creation of community gardens in several neighborhoods across town, especially for people with disabilities, children, apartment dwellers, seniors and families.

OS.6.1. Continue to foster the Community Gardens



program under the direction of a Master Gardener. Create gardens specifically for seniors, people with disabilities, as well as an educational garden for high school students and other target populations.

Goal OS-7 Trail System. The town should strengthen the extensive trail system throughout town to connect neighborhoods and schools, and to encourage connections to abutting open space when new developments are planned.

Goal OS-8 Active Recreation.

OS.8.4. Maintain current sports fields, create new ones on former Reichhold land and seek new sports fields sites and multiuse parks.

OS.8.5. Make improvements to the recreation parcels and buildings that are used by or are under the control of the Department of Community Services.

OS.8.6. Support on-road and off-road biking for recreation and for commuting to work and school.

Goal OS-9 Accessibility

OS.9.1. Create paths along the river and walkways over streams accessible to all persons whenever possible.

OS.9.4. Redesign existing parks and playgrounds to be accessible as recommended by the Commission on Disabilities.

NHC.1.1. Protect and improve surface and ground water quality.

NHC.1.4. Identify, protect, and maintain exceptional natural features, endangered habitats, archaeologically important sites, forests and open space at critical locations.

NHC.1.5. Protect healthy shade trees located on town-owned land when possible.

NHC.2.1 Continue to promote heritage education in the community.

NHC.2.4. Encourage architectural quality and the preservation of community character.

LU.1.4. Encourage pedestrian access downtown.

LU.4.3. Encourage the preservation and restoration of existing structures of historic interest.

LU.5.1. Preserve and enhance the established visual character and historical interest of Andover's general business, mixed-use, and residential districts.

LU.5.2. Promote a pedestrian-oriented downtown that respects Andover's small-town character and heritage.

LU.5.3. Encourage signage that adheres to principles of good design and communicates efficiently in order to meet the needs of the Town and its residents.

LU.5.4. Encourage design solutions that address public safety, accessibility, and sustainability while respecting principles of good design.

ED.4.1. Increase tourism in Andover.

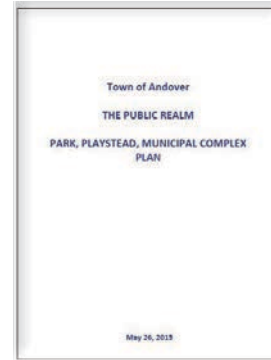
TC.2.1. Promote local transportation improvements such as bridge repairs, congestion elimination and new sidewalks.

TC.3.1. Provide for safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian circulation throughout Andover.

1.3 RELATED REPORTS AND STUDIES

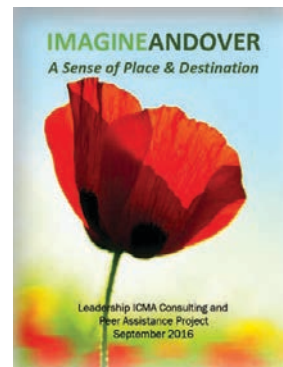
The Public Realm: Park, Playstead, Municipal Complex Plan

In 2015 the Town of Andover Planning Board published this document for the development of The Park, The Playstead, and the Municipal Complex. During 2013 to 2015 information was gathered from a public planning process. This report is a summary of that process, and the foundational start for this master plan.



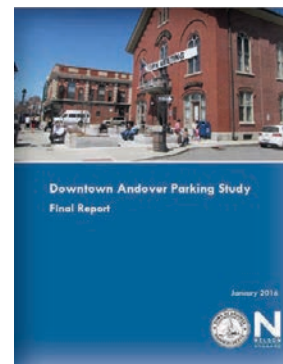
Imagine Andover

The Town of Andover asked The International City/County Management Association to provide fresh insights and candid advice to evaluate the downtown area and make recommendations for revitalization. The work product Town officials sought was a “comprehensive playbook” of best practice recommendations focusing on a sense of place and destination. What makes a great destination downtown? A sense of place for who? What assets does Andover have to leverage? What defines and distinguishes Downtown Andover? The Project Team set out to answer these questions and more.



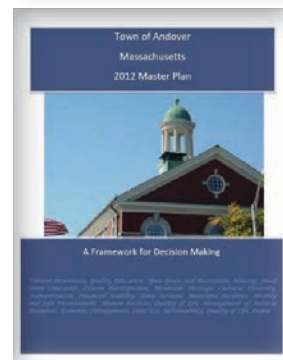
Parking study

In the spring of 2015, the Town of Andover kicked off a parking study in the downtown area. The purpose of the study was to analyze existing parking supply and demand in the downtown, review existing parking management practices, and recommend economically feasible alternatives to meet future parking needs and support economic development.



2012 In house master plan

The 2012 Master Plan draws from, and in some cases, defers to other Town planning documents. It does not intend to replace other Town plans but instead complements and incorporates those plans into one broad document. The overall objective is to provide the Planning Board with the tools and information to make decisions and guide future growth



in a managed and conscientious way. It is also a document that may be referenced by Town Staff, the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and Town Meeting attendees.

2017 Athletic Fields Needs Analysis

The Town of Andover implemented a study of their existing active recreational spaces (fields) to understand where the Town was deficient on field space. There had been complaints about playing surface characteristics from various user groups and the Town wanted to understand how it's existing field quantity and maintenance of field space compared to a desirable program. An analysis was completed that reviewed the number of fields and sizes to Andover's typical annual programs. Along with this analysis, the study includes a comparison of existing maintenance practices to recommended maintenance practices.



Facility Plan for Town of Andover Public School

In January of 2016, the Town of Andover, Massachusetts and the Andover Public Schools contracted with MGT of America Consulting, LLC. (MGT) to develop a ten-year facility master plan to address the facility needs of the town and the schools through 2026. The goal of the Town/School Facility Master Plan is to establish a long-range Facility Master Plan based on input from the community, using best practice facility standards, that identifies and prioritizes the facility needs, and presents an effective and efficient implementation of projects over the ten-year planning period.



Institute for Human Centered Design

Town of Andover ADA Transition Plan

The Institute for Human Centered Design provided a report on the accessibility issues in the park, and offered an estimate for a basic solution.