

**INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF
ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY PARK
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT NEEDS**

ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY PARK CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Prepared For: Village of Ridgewood
131 North Maple Avenue
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450

Prepared By: SUBURBAN CONSULTING ENGINEERS, INC.
96 U.S. Highway 206, Suite 101
Flanders, New Jersey 07836

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose of Assessment

The Village of Ridgewood (Village), County of Bergen, State of New Jersey is seeking to develop the Zabriskie-Schedler property with an active, passive and historical recreational park. As part of the planning process, the Village engaged Suburban Consulting Engineers, Inc. (SCE) to conduct an independent assessment to evaluate its existing inventory of sports field facilities to determine whether the proposed project is warranted.

1.2 Information and Data

The information and data gathered and relied upon to complete this assessment includes, but is not limited to, physical characteristics and usage patterns of each existing field, local demographics and recreational trends in recent years. Community needs and interests, including both public petitions to the Council favoring and opposing the development of the Zabriskie-Schedler property, were also considered. The data analyzed primarily focused on the following list of stakeholders who have been identified in playing a significant role in the utilization of facilities throughout the Village within the last year:

- Ridgewood Board of Education (BOE) & Athletic Department
- Ridgewood Baseball/Softball Association (RBSA)
- Ridgewood Jr. Football Association (RJFA)
- Ridgewood Lacrosse Association (RLA)
- Ridgewood Soccer Association (RSA)
- Maroons Soccer Club (MSC)
- Village-sponsored Programs & Events

1.3 Background

Ridgewood is a suburban community located along the western boundary of Bergen County, northeast region of New Jersey and within the New York Metropolitan area. Approximately six square miles in size, the Village is nearly entirely developed with one and two family residences, centralized commercial downtown district with mixed-use and higher-density developments and ten schools. Three waterways traverse the Village. The western and eastern boundaries are bound by Goffle Brook and Saddle River, while Ho-Ho-Kus Brook flows through the center and eventually converges with Saddle River in the southeastern corner of the Village. There are seventeen municipal parks and recreational areas of varying sizes that include sports fields, courts, trails and natural areas.

1.4 Applicable Document Review

The Village has conducted several comprehensive studies and master planning efforts over the years to assess its outdoor recreation space. These efforts have considered a variety of methodologies and data sources including land use standards, population-based calculations and community input, resulting in recommendations to expand its inventory of open space.

1.4.1 Village Recreational and Open Space Studies

In 2003, the Village Open Space Committee issued a Recreation and Open Space Plan that outlined the need for active recreational space using state and national benchmarks, such as the NJ Balanced Land Use Standards (SCORP) and Green Acres Population Method. Both calculations identified a large deficit in available recreation acreage. The report also noted the recent construction of numerous substantial residential developments reducing the amount of open space to approximately 30 acres within the Village. Recommendations to address this issue were the augmentation of open space and recreational lands through acquisition of privately owned land by way of the recently passed supplementary real estate tax, to build an acquisition fund, in November 2001. A review of properties was performed to identify potential opportunities for the addition of recreational space. Four priority sites were identified; the first, now known as Habernickel Family Park, was purchased in 2004 and developed into an active and passive recreational park. The second property listed was the Zabriskie-Schedler property, purchased by the Village in 2009 (planned for both active and passive recreation). The other two properties listed were smaller in size and either located adjacent to Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and within the floodplain, or landlocked between residential properties. These properties are still privately owned.

Similarly, a 2007 Comprehensive Parks, Fields, Facilities, and Recreation Master Plan report evaluated the current and future needs in order to provide adequate facilities for its residents. The method used to determine the adequate amount of recreational area was the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Core System Standard. This method compared the acreage of parkland to population, which identified a shortage of approximately 50 acres. The report also explored potential solutions, such as acquiring privately owned land and shared space with outside organizations. These options were found to be nonexistent at the time or did not address the need for active recreation space. Recommended improvements prioritized the rehabilitation of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. A number of these recommendations have been implemented to date, including the conversion of Stevens Field from a multipurpose grass field to synthetic turf and the construction of a track and field at Benjamin Franklin Middle School.

The Recreation and Open Space Plan was updated in 2010 and outlined the purchase of two of the largest parcels of open space remaining in the Village, Habernickel Family Park and Zabriskie-Schedler property, while also completing an expansion of Citizens Park with assistance from the Trust for Public Land. While these additions were critical, the need for additional open space still remained. An adjusted SCORP calculation based on population was used, which indicated a deficit in active recreational space of approximately 14.5 acres. Sites were again reviewed, and it was determined that there were no available options for active recreational space.

The Adopted 2022 Master Plan provides information on a variety of topics including Village demographics, current and future environmental threats including the increase/extremity of temperatures, storm events and frequency of flooding due to a number of waterways traversing the Village, and updates

to the Open Space Plan. The Master Plan recognized the challenges of providing adequate field space to accommodate the various programs resulting in efforts to identify suitable properties for additional parkland. In particular, the study focused on properties adjacent to municipal parks or schools, undeveloped land adjacent to rights-of-way or used for private recreation. All of the noted potential sites may satisfy the acquisition of open space however, many were located within the floodplain, removed existing dwellings or small in stature.

1.4.2 Village Field Policy

The Field Policy adopted in 2018 provides formal procedures for field use and allocation for both Village-owned and Board of Education facilities. The primary use of municipal recreation facilities is for public recreation. The use of school recreation facilities is exclusively for the school during school hours and for school and public recreation use during non-school hours and on non-school days. User priorities are categorized into several groups in the document:

- Category I
 - BOE public school activities
 - Parks and Recreation sponsored activities
- Category II
 - Recognized Athletic Organizations
 - RHS Sports Alumni, RHS & Other BOE Club programs
- Category III
 - Ridgewood Teams in Established Leagues with seventy-five percent (75%) residency or employment rate and approved by the Parks and Recreation Department
- Category IV
 - Private Group Field Requests for citizens or businesses in the Village with seventy-five percent (75%) residency or employment rate and approved by the Parks and Recreation Department
 - Privately Operated Programs will not be made available for organizations, entities, individuals or groups for the purpose of providing recreational services to youth or adults if the event to be operated is on a for-profit basis

The document also contains policies for field closings due to inclement weather including required closures if injury or damage may result to participants or playing surfaces that will affect its current and future use.

1.5 Village Demographics and Trends

Demographics play a key role in assessing recreational needs. As stated in the above-referenced reports, this is a determining factor in estimating the amount of recreational space for a municipality in order to provide adequate recreational facilities for its

residents. As of the 2020 US Census, Ridgewood has a population of 25,979. The American Community Survey 5-year estimates that the school-age population makes up over 25% of the population, approximately 1.5 times the New Jersey rate. This coincides with the Village operating the largest school system in Bergen County. The next largest group is between 40-49 years, making up about 16% of the population, roughly 25% higher than the New Jersey rate. These numbers make up a large majority of youth and adult sports programs.

Age Characteristics of Ridgewood		
Age in 2020 Census	% of Population	% in NJ
Under 9	13.7%	11.6%
Age 10 to 19	18.3%	12.7%
Age 20 to 29	7.8%	12.5%
Age 30 to 39	9.4%	13.1%
Age 40 to 49	15.9%	12.9%
Age 50 to 59	16.4%	14.0%
Age 60 to 69	9.4%	11.9%
Age 70 to 79	4.8%	7.2%
Age 80 and Older	4.4%	4.1%

(American Community Survey)

It can be concluded from this data that the Ridgewood population contains a significant portion in the active age range and therefore, active recreation amenities are in high demand.

2.0 EXISTING SPORTS FIELDS INVENTORY OVERVIEW

Sports fields are a critical component of the Village's recreation facilities. The fields provide designated space for organized team sports, ranging from high school athletic programs to youth and adult sports programs, and serve as open green space for other activities such as school recess and community events.

2.1 Existing Sports Fields Inventory

The Village currently owns a total of seventeen parks, five of which are equipped with sports fields¹. Two of the Village-owned parks with playing fields are located in the center of the Village in Maple Park Field and Veterans Memorial Park, while the other two, Habernickel Family Park and Citizens Park, are located in the northwest corner and southwest region, respectively. The fifth site, Pleasant Park, is adjacent to Hawes Elementary School, located in the southeast corner of the Village. Additionally, the BOE offers 12 additional locations with sports fields². The school properties are generally distributed in a well-planned pattern geographically across the Village.

All sports fields are natural grass with the exception of Maple Field Park, Ridgewood High School's Stadium Field and Stevens Field, which are synthetic turf. These three turf fields are located along the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and are situated within the floodway.

The natural grass fields range from small or irregularly sized grass spaces that support recess, practices, or recreational level programs to standard sized fields that support high school competitive level sports.

All of these fields, while different in character, value, and quality, are important to the different user groups for their intended recreational use. The following table and map provide an overview of the existing sports fields within the Village, including the field size and playing surface.

¹ Village-owned sites include Maple Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Habernickel Family Park, Citizens Park, Hawes Elementary/Pleasant Park.

² Board of Education sites include Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Brookside Park, George Washington Middle School, Glen School, Kenilworth School, Orchard Elementary School, Ridge Elementary School, Ridgewood High School, Somerville Elementary School, Stevens Field, Travell Elementary School and Willard Elementary School.

Existing Parks Inventory – Sports Fields			
Village-Owned Facilities	Field Dimensions	Field Surface	Lighting
Citizens Park *			
Upper – Baseball	40/60	Grass	N
Lower – Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Soccer	46/60	Grass	Y
	120' x 180'		
Habernickel Family Park			
Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Soccer	50/70	Grass	N
	150' x 230'		
Maple Park Field			
Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Football / Lacrosse / (3) Soccer / Softball	46/60	Turf	Y
	160' x 300'		
	180' x 330'		
	210' x 330'		
	135' x 210'		
	135' x 210'		
	40/60		
Veterans Memorial Park			
Multipurpose Field: (2) Baseball / (3) Soccer / (2) Softball	60/90	Grass	Y
	46/60		
	182' x 300'		

Existing Parks Inventory – Sports Fields			
	148' x 240'		
	148' x 240'		
	43/60		
	40/60		
Hawes Elementary School / Pleasant Park			
Baseball Field	46/60	Grass	N
Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Soccer	50/70, 60/90 183' x 270'	Grass	N
Village Board of Education Facilities			
Benjamin Franklin Middle School			
Multipurpose Field: Lacrosse / Soccer	165' x 300' 165' x 300'	Grass	N
Brookside Park **			
Multipurpose Field: Lacrosse ***	175' x 325'	Grass	N
George Washington Middle School			
Softball ***	40/60	Grass	N
Glen School			
Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Soccer / Softball	46/60 150' x 180' 40/60 183' x 270'	Grass	N
Kenilworth Field			
Multipurpose Field: Football /Lacrosse (Half) / (2) Soccer / (2) Softball ***	160' x 270' 170' x 180' 75' x 120' 75' x 120' 40/60 40/60	Grass	N
Orchard Elementary School			
Soccer	130' x 180'	Grass	N
Ridge Elementary School			
Softball ***	40/46		
Ridgewood High School – Stadium Field			
Multipurpose Field: Football / (2) Lacrosse / Soccer	160' x 300' 180' x 330' 195' x 360' 209' x 330'	Turf	Y
Somerville Elementary School			
Multipurpose Field: (2) Baseball / Soccer	60/90 46/60 190' x 285'	Grass	N
Stevens Field			
Multipurpose Field: Baseball / Football / Lacrosse / (3) Soccer / Softball	46/60 160' x 300' 180' x 330' 180' x 360' 135' x 180' 135' x 180' 43/60	Turf	Y
Travell Elementary School			
Multipurpose Field: (2) Softball / Soccer ***	43/60 40/60 120' x 150'	Grass	N
Willard Elementary School			
Multipurpose Field: (2) Softball ***	43/60 40/60	Grass	N

* Adjacent to George Washington Middle School. Use is limited to school use during school hours on school days.

** Closed due to safety reasons. Reopened 3/25/24 for small-sided lacrosse play (50' x 85').

*** Field does not meet regulation dimensions

Total Number of Sports Fields:

Type of Field	Total Number of Village-Owned Fields	Total Number of BOE Fields	Total Number of Fields
Baseball	2	-	2
Soccer	-	1	1
Softball	-	2	2
Multipurpose: Baseball, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer & Softball	5	9	14
Total:	7	12	19

A majority of these fields are multipurpose and offer the ability to play various sports, which often leads to a misperception regarding the number of sports fields available for use. Additionally, five of these fields fall short of regulation dimensions due to inadequate space.

2.2 Seasons of Play

The Village's sports and recreational programs run for approximately nine months of the year, from mid-March to the end of November. Numerous programs now play in multiple seasons, adding to the overall usage of fields.

Season	Start	Finish	Duration
Fall	Mid-August	November	16 weeks
Winter	December	Mid-March	14 weeks
Spring & Summer	Mid-March	Mid-August	22 weeks

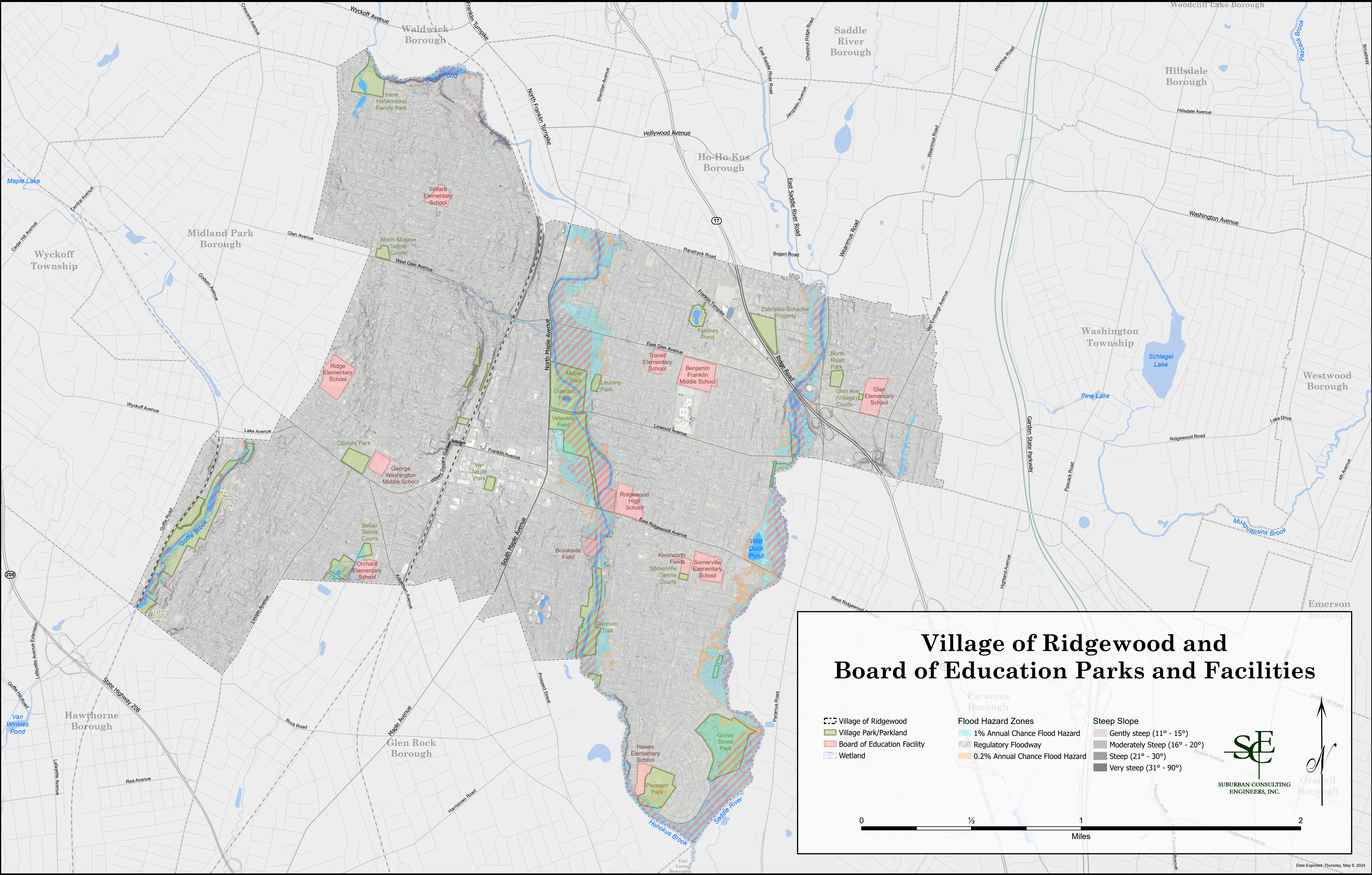
2.3 Primary Village Field Users

The below table lists the recognized groups that utilize outdoor sports facilities in the Village and includes the age range, approximate number of participants and teams from the 2023 playing season. The number of participants has remained steady over the last couple of years, with the exception of the Junior Football program. The number of participants in the recently incepted girls' flag football program has increased by roughly four times since 2021.

Program	Age Group	Approximate # of Participants	# of Teams	Playing Seasons
BOE – Football	HS	100+	2	Fall
BOE – Boys Soccer	HS	80+	3	Fall
BOE – Girls Soccer	HS	80+	3	Fall
Junior Football (RJFA)	K-8	900+	95	Fall
Soccer (RSA)	K-HS	1,200+	81	Fall
Baseball & Softball (RBSA)	3-15+	1,450+	110	Spring thru Fall
Maroons Soccer Club (MSC)	4-19	1,000+	60	Spring thru Fall

Program	Age Group	Approximate # of Participants	# of Teams	Playing Seasons
BOE – Baseball	HS	65+	3	Spring
BOE – Softball	HS	40+	3	Spring
BOE – Boys Lacrosse	HS	85+	3	Spring
BOE – Girls Lacrosse	HS	40+	2	Spring
BOE – Flag Football	HS	18	1	Spring
Lacrosse (RLA)	K-8	700+	40	Spring
Adult Sports League Baseball	35+	18	2	Spring
Soccer	40+	68	4	Fall

**OVERALL MAP DEPICTING
VILLAGE AND BOARD OF EDUCATION
PARKS AND FACILITIES**



Village of Ridgewood and Board of Education Parks and Facilities

- Village of Ridgewood
- Village Park/Parkland
- Board of Education Facility
- Wetland

- Flood Hazard Zones
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Regulatory Floodway
 - 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

- Steep Slope
- Gently steep (11° - 15°)
 - Moderately Steep (16° - 20°)
 - Steep (21° - 30°)
 - Very steep (31° - 90°)



3.0 SPORTS FIELD NEEDS ANALYSIS

As with many communities of this size and region, the increased need for active recreational space and fields far outpaces the available acreage that remains for open space design. This leads to intense usage pressure on park facilities. The following section provides an analysis of benchmarks, playing surface assessment and evaluation of existing fields and the proposed project site.

3.1 Recognized Benchmarks for Active Recreational Space

3.1.1 NJ Balanced Land Use Standard

The Balanced Land Use Standard established by the New Jersey Green Acres 2018-2022 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for open space, parks, and recreation areas specifies that a minimum of 3% of a municipality's developed or developable land should be set aside for active recreation use. Developable lands exclude areas with slopes greater than 15%, wetlands, federal, state and county-owned parklands, and other environmentally sensitive land that is not appropriate for development. For the purposes of this calculation, the entire Village area of approximately 3,840 acres, was used.

Category	Acres	Deficiency/Surplus
Total Developed & Developed Area	3,840	
3% of Developed / Developable Land Area	115.2	
Existing Active Recreational Area	51.5	-63.7 AC

3.1.2 National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Peer Population per Acre Benchmark

The NRPA produces an annual report, the NRPA Agency Performance Review, that provides parks and recreation departments with comparable benchmarks to help guide the management and planning of facilities. The 2023 report found that municipalities ranging in population from 20,000 – 49,999 range have 11.3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and 2,014 residents per park. Using the population from the 2020 US Census, the number of parks meets this metric, however, the total acreage does not. Due to the varying sizes of parks, the benchmark for number of parks has been determined as not applicable in determining the needs of active recreational space. Based on the acres of park space per number of residents, the Village should have a total of 293 acres, a deficit of over 100 acres.

Benchmark Ratio	Benchmark Standard	Village Comparison	Deficiency/Surplus
1 park / 2,014 residents	13 Facilities	17 Facilities	+4 Facilities
11.3 acres / 1,000 residents	293.5 AC	188.6 AC	-104.9 AC

The recognized state and national benchmarks cited above indicates a large deficiency in active recreational space to meet the needs of the residents.

3.2 Natural Grass Field Usage

The continued reliance on natural grass fields will continue to be problematic due to the current over-usage of the Village's sports fields and lack of available time to adequately rest fields and perform proper seasonal maintenance. The Village has not intentionally rested fields since the 1980s, nor does the Village have the availability of space to reorient fields, both of which are techniques that natural grass field owners implement to optimize good playing conditions. This was evident in Spring 2022 as all Village-owned natural grass fields were closed for a majority of the season due to poor playing conditions and required time for the grass to regenerate.

The climate in New Jersey limits early spring playability on natural grass fields when roots and shoots of grass are coming out of winter dormancy. If fields are used before they are ready to support play, the Village runs a potential risk of causing significant damage and inhibiting the quality and vigor of grass for the balance of the year. Natural grass provides excellent play surfaces when in top condition, but it is not designed to take continuous play throughout the seasons, especially during early spring, late fall, and during and after significant rain events. The Village's fields are highly programmed and expected to support continuous use, which often results in less than favorable playing conditions. The use of natural grass fields is challenging in the context of the local climate as the ideal grass-growing temperature range is 65°-75° F, which historically occurs later in the spring sports season.

Synthetic turf fields allow for early spring and late fall play, while also allowing continuous use during and after rain events. They are designed to withstand extended and intense use, without a need for downtime to recover. The subsurface of these fields is typically made up of a layer of crushed stone and piping to allow the system to store, absorb, infiltrate, and transport far greater amounts of precipitation, compared to a natural grass field. Synthetic turf fields are used to increase hours of play, extend seasons of play and provide a consistent playing experience across the entire field, in varying climatic conditions. These types of fields are reliable in helping meet the demands of the community.

Based on the Village's field reservation system and program schedules from last year (2023), the average spring-to-fall usage of all multipurpose natural grass athletic fields in the Village is near or exceeding 1,000 hours. This does not include non-organized program usage or community events. The hours of use expected to be provided by the Village's fields exceed industry standards for maintaining good or fair turf quality condition (see table below).

Expected Grass Field Condition	Field Use (Hours per Year)
Sustained Good Field Conditions	200 Hours or less
Good Field Conditions with Some Thinning of Grass and Localized Wear Areas	400 to 600 Hours
Fair Field Conditions - Expect Significant Thinning and Wearing	800 to 1,000 Hours
Significant Grass Loss, Field Surface Damage, Increased Potential for Athlete Injury	More than 1,000 Hours

(Maximizing the Durability of Athletic Fields, Grady L. Miller, North Carolina Cooperative Extension; Publication AG-726-W 01/2010 BS)

Village-Owned Sports Fields	Approx. Number of Hours per Year
Citizens Park – Upper *	900+ Hours
Citizens Park – Lower *	1,500+ Hours
Hawes Elementary School / Pleasant Park – Upper **	750+ Hours
Hawes Elementary School / Pleasant Park – Lower **	1,100+ Hours
Habernickel Family Park	950+ Hours
Veterans Memorial Park – Northern ***	1,950+ Hours
Veterans Memorial Park – Southern ***	1,900+ Hours
Maple Park Field ****	1,500+ Hours

Additional Hours not Included in the Above Calculation:

* Utilized by George Washington Middle School for school use during school hours on school days. 3 additional hours of daily weekday use for PE/recess/extended day programs (spring/fall). Approximately 360 hours.

** Utilized by Hawes Elementary School for school use during school hours on school days. 2 additional hours of daily weekday use for PE/recess/extended day programs (spring/fall). Approximately 240 hours.

*** Kasschau Memorial Shell: 11 scheduled events throughout summer for 2 hours. Additional events from July to August for 1.5 hours. Approximately 30 hours.

**** Indicates synthetic turf field

In addition to the usage from Village athletic programs, school facilities and the community utilize these fields for various reasons, including recess/PE, practice and tournaments from non-recognized groups, and community events such as fundraisers and live performances. Not all of the users have tracked hours and thus, are not included in the total numbers. Additionally, requests that were denied or cancelled are also not included in this total. Nevertheless, the total number of hours indicates that these fields are overused and in suboptimal condition.

Board of Education Sports Fields	Approx. Number of Hours per Year
Benjamin Franklin Middle School *	1,000+ Hours
Brookside Park ***	600+ Hours
George Washington Middle School	950+ Hours
Glen School *	1,150+ Hours
Kenilworth Field	1,100+ Hours
Orchard Elementary School ***	600+ Hours
Ridge Elementary School *	1,000+ Hours
Ridgewood High School (RHS) Stadium Field **	950+ Hours
Somerville Elementary School *	1,500+ Hours
Stevens Field **	1,000+ Hours
Travell Elementary School *	820+ Hours
Willard Elementary School *	1,000+ Hours

Additional Hours not Included in the Above Calculation:

* Utilized for school use during school hours on school days. 3 additional hours of daily weekday use for PE/recess/extended day programs (spring/fall). Approximately 360 hours.

** Indicates synthetic turf field

*** Closed – does not reflect full usage over a year

Most of the Board of Education sites are used for recess/PE. Requests that were denied or cancelled are not included in this total. The Village also does not have the authority to require the Board of Education to construct its facilities. Furthermore, the following section evaluates each of the existing fields and its suitability for the proposed project.

3.3 Evaluation of Physical Characteristics at Existing Sports Field Facilities

SCE reviewed the existing sports field facilities owned by the Village and Board of Education. These properties were reviewed first to identify if it contained open space appropriate for the proposed project without compromising existing fields. If appropriate space was identified, the properties were further reviewed for the presence of environmentally sensitive areas within the open space. The use of state and federal databases and additional provided publications and data were utilized in this file review. The results of this review are as follows:

Citizens Park

Village of Ridgewood

NW Corner of Godwin Avenue & S. Monroe Street

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project without compromising existing fields.

Hawes Elementary School / Pleasant Park

Village of Ridgewood
531 Stevens Avenue

The site contains a large, undeveloped area appropriately sized for the proposed project, however, it is located within the floodplain, as Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the southern edge of the site. The area also contains wetlands and critical wildlife habitat, per state mappings.

Habernickel Family Park

Village of Ridgewood
1037 Hillcrest Road

This park was purchased and developed with a multipurpose athletic facility as recommended in previous open space reports. The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields.

Maple Park Field

Village of Ridgewood
SW Corner of Meadowbrook Avenue & Northern Parkway

One of three synthetic turf fields within the Village. Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the southern edge of the site and is within the floodway per state mappings. Severe floodings of the field and area have been recorded, causing field closures and significant expenditures in maintenance and repair. The site does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project.

Veterans Memorial Park

Village of Ridgewood
SE Corner of Linwood Avenue & N. Maple Avenue

The largest natural grass multipurpose facility operated by the Village. The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields. Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the eastern edge of the site and is entirely within the floodway, per state mappings. Severe floodings of the field and area have been recorded.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Ridgewood Board of Education
335 N. Van Dien Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project without compromising existing fields or the running track which was recently constructed as a recommendation of the Comprehensive Parks, Fields, Facilities, and Recreation Master Plan report.

Brookside Park

Ridgewood Board of Education
End of Southern Parkway

The facility features a large open space, however, is not adequately sized for the proposed project. Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the eastern edge of the site and is within the floodway, per state mappings. Severe floodings of the field and area have been recorded, causing field closures and significant expenditures in maintenance and repair.

George Washington Middle School

Ridgewood Board of Education
155 Washington Place

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project. The softball field located at this facility does not meet regulation field dimensions as the outfield distance measures approximately 135 feet.

Glen School

Ridgewood Board of Education
865 E. Glen Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields.

Kenilworth Fields

Ridgewood Board of Education
44 S. Pleasant Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields. The lacrosse field is currently small-sided and does not meet regulation field dimensions.

Orchard Elementary School

Ridgewood Board of Education
230 Demarest Avenue

While an open space exists towards the front of the site, it is not adequately sized for the proposed project. The portion of the site is also located within the flood hazard area per state mappings. Additionally, the field has been closed for approximately four years due to known soil contamination and field conditions deemed unplayable from numerous injuries. Remediation has been completed; however, the field remains closed to this day, due to restoration.

Ridge Elementary School

Ridgewood Board of Education
325 W. Ridgewood Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields. The existing ballfield does not meet regulation field dimensions as the outfield distance measures approximately 105 feet.

Ridgewood High School – Stadium Field

Ridgewood Board of Education
627 E. Ridgewood Avenue

One of three synthetic turf fields within the Village. The facility has been developed to the maximum extent possible. Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the western edge of the site and is within the floodway, per state mappings. Severe floodings of the field and area have been recorded, causing field closures and significant expenditures in maintenance and repair.

Somerville Elementary School

Ridgewood Board of Education
45 S. Pleasant Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project, without compromising existing fields.

Stevens Field

Ridgewood Board of Education
SE Corner of Overbrook Road and N. Irving Street

One of three synthetic turf fields within the Village. The facility has been developed to the maximum extent possible. Ho-Ho-Kus Brook runs along the eastern edge of the site and is within the floodway, per state mappings. Severe floodings of the field and area have been recorded, causing field closures and significant expenditures in maintenance and repair.

Travell Elementary School

Ridgewood Board of Education
340 Bogert Avenue

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project. The multipurpose field does not allow for both ballfields to be used simultaneously. Additionally, neither softball field meets regulated field dimensions as the outfield distances measure approximately 160 feet and 130 feet, respectively.

Willard Elementary School

Ridgewood Board of Education
601 Morningside Road

The site has been developed to the maximum extent and does not contain open space appropriate for the proposed project. Additionally, neither softball field meets regulated field dimensions as the outfield distances measure approximately 135 feet and 100 feet, respectively.

As such, it has been determined that there is no available or appropriate open space at existing sports field facilities to propose this project.

3.4 Zabriskie-Schedler Property Site Evaluation

The Zabriskie-Schedler property, identified as 460 West Saddle River Road, is approximately 7-acres in size and is generally bound by NJ State Highway Route 17 to the west, West Saddle River Road to the east, the intersection of NJ State Highway Route 17 and West Saddle River Road to the south, and residential properties to the north. The lot is owned by the Village of Ridgewood and the property was acquired in 2009. The property contains a structure, the Zabriskie-Schedler House, which is on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Beyond the structure, the property is generally undeveloped.

SCE performed a general review of the physical features of the site to determine if the property could support the proposed project. The property is not within any flood hazard areas, contains no freshwater wetlands nor critical wildlife habitats, based on state mapping. The property is adequately sized to support the proposed project without modification to the historic structure. The property does not contain steep slopes per a topographic survey completed in 2023. According to the soil survey, the property contains well-drained sandy loams and urban soils representing disturbed land, likely due to the proximity to the adjacent highway. Therefore, there are no physical restrictions based on our analysis in regard to this property and it is physically suitable for the development of this project.

3.5 Zabriskie-Schedler Property Anticipated Use

The Zabriskie-Schedler property is intended to serve both Village-owned and Board of Education sports programs from youth to adult, including soccer, lacrosse, baseball and softball. Additionally, the flag football program, which currently does not have a home field, will be able to utilize the field. It has the potential to log over 1,500 hours of play time over the course of the year, which would relieve some of the pressure off the existing sports fields.

3.6 Frequency of Storm Events and Severity of Flooding

Flooding events have been well documented in recent months as they have caused significant damage not only to the fields, but also to the residential homes in the Village. As previously mentioned, there are several fields within the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook floodplain including Maple Field Park, Ridgewood High School's Stadium Field, Stevens Field, Veterans Memorial Field and Brookside Park. These fields accommodate a majority of the high school level sports programs in the Village. Three of the aforementioned fields are turf, and while they are typically resilient and are able to be utilized after rain events, flooding has cost the Village tens of thousands of dollars in repair and cleanup, and the fields have been taken out of service for periods of time. In one recent case, a December 18, 2023, storm event resulted in major flooding throughout the Village, including the fields along Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. By reviewing rainfall data issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service (NWS), it was determined that this storm was between a five-year and ten-year storm event, according to the NOAA Atlas 14 Precipitation Frequency Data Server (PFDS). Per the latest version of the New Jersey Stormwater Management Rule (N.J.A.C. 7:8) precipitation depths for storm events are anticipated to increase in the coming

years, and a 1.23 future precipitation change factor should be applied to the NOAA Atlas 14 PFDS ten-year storm event to determine a more accurate future precipitation depth. Applying this factor would classify the December 18, 2023, storm as only between a two-year and five-year storm event in the near future. This indicates that storms of this magnitude are anticipated to occur more frequently. As such, it can be concluded that the fields along the floodplain will be affected more frequently, resulting in more repair and cleanup costs, and more time with fields out of service.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This assessment reviewed the Village of Ridgewood's existing sports field inventory, sports programs, local demographics and trends, previous open space reports and master plans to determine the need for the Zabriskie-Schedler property project. It is evident from the state and national benchmarks and needs analysis that the Village has, and continues to experience, a deficit in active recreational space. A majority of the community's population is within the school-age and middle-aged groups and are both over the average state percentage, signifying the heightened demand of users. Due to this high demand and usage of facilities, coupled with five fields, including the largest and most used Village-owned sports field facility and the three existing synthetic turf fields, located within the floodplain, the result is constant stress on these fields to maintain playable conditions and scheduling between the Village and Board of Education. The Village does not have the flexibility to reorient or place fields offline to allow for the regeneration of fields due to lack of space and demands from the programs. Furthermore, many of the fields are significantly undersized or non-conforming and do not meet industry standards for field size. No Village-owned or Board of Education property provides adequate space without compromising its existing facilities or planning within environmentally sensitive areas to accommodate a full-sized playing field. The Zabriskie-Schedler site does not present any physical restrictions to the park development as proposed. Therefore, the proposed project at the Zabriskie-Schedler property is suitable and will provide essential amenities to alleviate some of the active recreational deficit and needs of the Village, providing a significant public benefit.