



**Village of Perry, New York
Parks Master Plan
March, 2021**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Perry has a strong complement of recreational assets. The intent of this plan is to develop this collection in a strategic manner, creating a unified parks system, where investments are well thought-out and build upon one another. While current individual parks each have assets and challenges, they have been developed in a disconnected manner, leaving significant recreational and quality of life improvement potential untapped. A strong network of parks will strengthen your position in the market for residents, and capture the economic power of the tens of thousands of visitors already traveling in the region.

When developing this plan, the steering committee leveraged years of planning and analysis of Village strengths and challenges. The committee looked to the Village's 2015 comprehensive plan to draw on plan principles, and capitalize on the strategic framework and guidance of plan elements. Additionally, the committee evaluated the individual project planning efforts of the Perry Public Beach and Silver Lake Trail projects. The committee also took into account unrealized projects from the prior parks master planning effort. All of this analysis ensured that past efforts were capitalized upon.

In order to avoid planning in a vacuum, the committee sought out community feedback on various elements of park conditions, potential, and user behavior. This data was used to formulate many of the recommendations included in the plan.

Drawing on this public engagement effort, the committee has crafted two sets of recommendations. First, a curated set of physical improvements to each park was developed. But, rather than just developing a wish list of potential projects, the committee thoughtfully recommended improvements that would result in a park system that is greater than the sum of its individual assets. Additionally, the committee has offered several policy recommendations to support continued vibrancy as investments come online.

Finally, the committee has put forward a recommended implementation strategy that creates several years' worth of smaller scale investments, that when stacked upon one another, create real impact.

In summary, this plan seeks to serve as a roadmap toward leveraging recreation to bolster your quality of life and sense of place.

II. PLANNING CONTEXT

In developing the Parks Master Plan, the Board set out to ensure that plan elements were in alignment with our overarching strategies for community growth and development. As such, the steering committee was charged with familiarizing themselves with former planning efforts, and identifying those strategies for parks development that integrate seamlessly with our other strategic planning efforts.

Comprehensive Plan

The roadmap for all growth and development in Perry is the comprehensive plan. Initially developed in 2015, the plan creates a framework for decision making with respect to Village policy considerations, investments, and responses to external conditions.

Specific comprehensive plan elements considered by the steering committee include:

- *Market Strength:* The steering committee recognized the valuable contribution to quality of life that a strong park network can engender. Great homes in great neighborhoods create market value. People are inspired to invest in their homes, when the Village makes corresponding investments in public amenities. This “virtuous cycle” can only be fully realized with mutually reinforcing reinvestment on both the private and public side of the fence.
- *Village Form:* Villages are special places, inhabited intentionally by people seeking to commune with one another. Creating physical spaces where people can interact in a healthy way is critical to the functionality of the Village lifestyle. Appropriately placed, well-maintained park facilities will reinforce the Village as a special spot on the transect.
- *Fiscal Strength:* We recognize that the Village is endowed with limited resources. We must make investment recommendations in such a way as to ensure that maximum value for taxpayer investment can be realized. We must carefully select projects in which to invest, and identify external resources wherever available to minimize our reliance on precious property tax dollars.

In addition to the comprehensive plan, committee members familiarized themselves with project specific plans, including the Silver Lake Trail and Perry Public Beach master plans, as well as the previously developed parks master plan.

III. PLANNING PROCESS

Development of a Parks Master Plan was a charge from the Board of Trustees to the Board's Parks Committee. The Committee crafted the planning process to ensure a broad set of perspectives in plan development, and the creation of a networked set of parks and recreation assets.

The Parks Committee sought to establish a steering committee that was representative of the current and potential user base and stakeholder network for the parks. The Parks Committee and associated Village staff conducted outreach to their respective networks and identified approximately 15 community members, most of whom remained active throughout the process.

Upon appointment, steering committee members were charged with making individual condition assessments for each park facility. Committee members were provided with park maps, and asked to conduct two assessments. First, they were asked to evaluate existing conditions and facility gaps at each of the four parks. Additionally, they were asked to evaluate routes to parks from their own neighborhoods. These individual assessments were aggregated in a mapping exercise conducted at the inaugural steering committee meeting.

Following their initial assessments, the steering committee developed a set of survey questions and produced and distributed a digital survey to the community. The survey effort and results are overviewed in a subsequent section. Results were analyzed and the committee leveraged this analysis to produce recommendations.

An initial brainstorm of potential park improvements was conducted, with each committee member developing their own set of priorities. The committee convened and worked to identify and organize priorities by shared preference, timeline and feasibility of implementation, and associated cost. This resulted in a prioritized list of improvements.

Finally, plan elements were synthesized into a final report for review by the Board of Trustees. The Board will consider recommendations, and leverage plan elements in future budget and capital improvement planning discussions, grant applications, and other critical policy efforts.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT REVIEW

Any planning effort must be rooted in authentic, meaningful public participation. The Board's Parks Committee designed the Parks Master Plan process with this principle in mind.

The core of the public engagement effort was the appointment of a steering committee, with representatives from key constituencies in the Perry parks community. This included representatives from the neighborhoods adjoining key parks, civic organizations who are active in park investment, representatives from neighboring communities (towns of Perry and Castile), parents of children regularly using the park, and Village staff charged with park care and maintenance.

One of the earliest tasks of the committee was the development of a public survey. The survey was developed with the support of the Parks Committee and Village staff, and sought to identify locations of park users, park user typology, activities that park users currently engage in, perceived park conditions, and amenities that park users are hoping to see in the coming years. The committee leveraged their own personal social media networks and the Village promoted the survey via its Facebook page.

At the close of the 60 day survey period, over 150 parks stakeholders participated in the survey effort. These included:

- Village residents accounted for 67% of respondents
- Town of Perry and Castile residents (outside of the Village) accounted for an additional 30% of respondents
- Over 90% of respondents live in single-family homes; and over 80% characterize their yards as "large enough to play in"
- Over 90% visit Village Park the most often of all parks
- Over one-third say they visit Village Park at least once per week
- Over half of respondents say they rarely visit Park Avenue Park
- One-sixth of participants were unfamiliar with Memorial Park
- Over half of respondents say they are familiar with the Perry Beach, but rarely go there
- Seventy-five percent of Village Park users visit primarily for walking or running
- More people access Village Park by walking or running than by car; more than any other park
- People walking or biking to parks find their routes and experience pleasant

When asked for specific recommendations for assessment of park conditions or for amenities that could be improved upon, we received a range of answers. However, some consistent themes emerged.

Selected comments and suggestions appear below:

- Improve upon maintenance efforts and keep this consistent
- Park Avenue really needs some attention. The equipment needs updating and variety. My children love to play here but get bored quickly
- It's difficult to get around - our family is pretty capable to walking and/or biking to our favorite parks because we are an active family...for those who are elderly or may not be very physically active, some of the route to the parks are challenging. A good part of the route to the Park Ave Park doesn't have sidewalks, and portions of the route to the Village Park have very uneven or difficult grades.
- Prioritize the needs of the underserved people in Perry. We should make the parks in their neighborhoods just as inviting and accessible as the Village Park.
- Increase programming—art, live music, performances, etc.
- Ensure that our parks have proper trees for this and future generations. Not only could trees be useful (windbreak at the Village Park) but also could be attractions for people from outside the area.
- Please ensure that there is adequate seating and tables at the Perry Public Beach
- Ensure plenty of dock space for people traveling to the Perry Beach from the lake
- Improve plantings and seating at Memorial Park. This is in a good location, but there isn't much of a reason to stop here.
- Safety and security—sidewalks, lighting, cameras, regular patrols—particularly at night to enhance safety and reduce vandalism.

These, and similar comments were gleaned from the survey results to guide the steering committee in development of plan recommendations.

V. EXISTING PARK ASSETS

The committee evaluated the four primary, traditional park facilities—Village Park, Park Avenue (Bernie Kalise) Park, the Perry Public Beach, and Memorial Park—as well as the planned Silver Lake Trail and its role as a connector between centers of recreation and economic activity.

Brief characterizations of existing park assets include:

- *Village Park*: Village Park is the largest of Perry's traditional parks. It is heavily appointed with a diversity of recreational amenities, including playgrounds, baseball and softball fields, basketball and tennis courts, a walking track, picnic pavilions, and a recently installed spray park.

The park is heavily used, and at nearly every time throughout the year. In winter, walkers and snow-shoers take advantage of the flat topography to get low impact exercise. In the summer, a flurry of organized and casual recreational activity, from sports leagues to family picnics dot the entire landscape.

- *Park Avenue Park (Kalise Park)*: Park Avenue park is a neighborhood facility that has limited recreational offerings. Its flat topography is well-suited for field sports, and it plays host (mostly as overflow for Village park) to several tournaments and leagues throughout the year. A sparse playground is also located at the site.
- *Perry Public Beach*: The beach is located on Silver Lake, and is home to a major recent upgrade, with a pavilion, play area, and vast open space for organized and casual gathering.
- *Memorial Park*: Memorial Park is a pocket park located in downtown Perry. It is very lightly used, and many individuals engaged during the planning process did not realize it was even there. Outside of appropriately located memorials, there are no other amenities.
- *Silver Lake Trail*: The Silver Lake Trail is in design, and set to be a connector from the lakefront to Memorial Park. Construction is slated to commence this summer.

VI. RECOMMENDED PHYSICAL ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancements are categorized by specific park (where applicable), and by relative cost.

Recommendations include:

Relative Cost Categories:

VLC:	<i>Little or no incremental cost</i>
\$:	<i>Less than \$5,000</i>
\$\$:	<i>Between \$5,000 and \$10,000</i>
\$\$\$:	<i>Over \$10,000</i>
Variable:	<i>Dependent upon approach</i>

- All Parks
 - A specified, annual plan of maintenance for each park (VLC)
 - Regularly replenished pet waste stations (VLC)
 - Improved/Coordinated signage (VLC)
 - Coordination with the Village Tree Board on coordinated planting, care, and maintenance of all public green spaces and planted areas (\$\$)
- Village Park
 - Water fountain at basketball court (\$)
 - Pit, play surface, and associated equipment for ga-ga ball (\$)
 - Pavement markings on Park Drive to delineate space reserved for non-motorized vehicles (\$)
 - Finish paving work, including demolition of pavement and re-planting at the turn (\$\$)
 - Improved playground equipment for small children (\$\$)
 - Demolish former basketball court surface (\$\$)
 - Play surface and associated equipment for pickleball (\$\$)
 - Demolish failing tennis courts (\$\$)
 - Construct skate park/pump track (\$\$\$)
 - Install exercise equipment (\$\$\$)
 - Improved care, maintenance, and upgrades to Skate Cabin and Maintenance Building (\$\$\$)
- Park Avenue Park
 - Benches and other seating (\$)
 - Charcoal grills (\$)
 - Pit, play surface, and associated equipment for ga-ga ball (\$)
 - Relocate Village Park basketball equipment/install play surface for basketball (\$\$)
 - Organize parking/address transition from parking to park (\$\$)
 - Install pervious walking path (\$\$)

- Upgrade playground equipment (\$\$\$)
- Construct restroom facilities (\$\$\$)
- Perry Public Beach
 - Execute recommendations of Public Beach Master Plan (Variable)
- Memorial Park
 - Execute recommendations of Silver Lake Trail Master Plan (Variable)
- Silver Lake Trail
 - Execute recommendation of Silver Lake Trail Master Plan (Variable)

VII. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Outside of physical improvements, the following policy area recommendations are recommended as part of plan implementation:

- Parks should remain “pack-in / pack-out” with respect to garbage, but the Village should take care to monitor and clean parks regularly; particularly after significant events
- Fee schedules for use should be regularly reviewed, and tied to actual costs associated with maintenance, upkeep, and programming of facilities
- Capital improvement planning should include deferential scoring for sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and street condition enhancements on known travel routes to parks.
- When constructing park facilities, the Public Works Superintendent, and Building and Parks Foreman should be included in parks design to ensure that facilities are developed with an eye toward long run maintenance.
- As part of project budgeting, the Public Works Superintendent and Building and Parks Foreman should develop a five-year maintenance forecast, which should be incorporated into future budget cycles. Beyond five years, staff should budget appropriate amounts for ongoing maintenance as part of the total maintenance plan.
- Relative to implementation, projects that are eligible for, and receive grant or other outside funding should have implementation accelerated.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

Continued and timely investment in parks and recreation assets is critical to creating a strong network and a high market impact. The facilities, projects, programs, and other investments recommended here can be incrementally implemented over the planning horizon.

Recommended phasing of project elements are as follows.

Project	Years 1-2	Years 3-4	Years 5+	Regularly/ As Needed	Funding Dependent
All Parks					
Regular Plan of Maintenance					
Additional Pet Stations					
Improved/Coordinated Signage					
Coordinated Planting Plan					
Village Park					
Water Fountain--Basketball Court					
Ga-Ga Ball Installation					
Park Drive Pavement Marking					
Complete Paving Project					
Playground Equipment--Small Children					
Former Basketball Court Demolition					
Pickleball Installation					
Skate Park/Pump Track Installation					
Circuit Exercise Equipment					
Skate Cabin/Parks Building Maintenance					
Park Avenue Park					
Benches/Seating					
Charcoal Grills					
Ga-Ga Ball Installation					
Basketball Court Relocation/Install					
Organize Parking/Transitions					
Install Pervious Walking Path					
Upgrade Playground Equipment					
Construct Restroom Facilities					
Public Beach					
Complete Master Plan Projects					
Memorial Park					
Complete SLT Plan Projects					
Silver Lake Trail					
Complete SLT Plan Projects					

The Board has a strong track record relative to development of external resources in the form of federal, state, and philanthropic grants, and the community has a history of generosity, specifically with respect to community parks and play assets. While this matrix may give the impression of a rigid implementation approach, care should be taken to remain flexible in light of funding and other market opportunities to leverage non-general fund dollars for improvements.

IX. ONGOING REVIEW

The Board's Parks Committee should convene annually with the DPW Superintendent and Building and Parks Foreman to review recommendations of the plan, and ensure due consideration for implementation. The plan should be reviewed and updated by a stakeholder-driven committee every five years.