

Environmental Assessment

For a conversion of land protected under Section 6(f)3 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act

Teague Park

Caribou, Maine

Submitted By:

Project Sponsor:

City of Caribou

Attn: Austin Bless, City Manager

27 High Street

Caribou, ME 04736

citymanager@cariboumaine.org

Caribou Department of Parks and Recreation

Attn: Gary Marquis, Director

55 Bennett Drive

Caribou, ME 04736

gmarquis@cariboumaine.org

Submitted to:

State Liaison Officer:

Doug Beck

Bureau of Parks and Lands

124 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333-0124

doug.beck@maine.gov

Submitted for:

National Parks Service

Northeast Region

200 Chestnut Street, Third Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19106-2878

DRAFT
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CHAPTER 1: Purpose, Need, Background

The City of Caribou, Maine, proposes to convert federal protection from an existing Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) parcel, Teague Park, to new land nearby. The Teague Park 6(f) boundary, located between Bennett Drive and Glenn Street and to the north of Park Street, was developed in two separate LWCF grants. The land the boundary encompasses includes Teague Park, a 6.6 acre parcel, as well as a small 1.3 acre portion of the Teague Park school lot. This proposal replaces the existing 6(f) land with a total of 7.81 acres of land located on two parcels nearby.

This Environmental Assessment has been developed for the National Parks Service to provide an understanding of all impacts regarding the relocation of Teague Park and the associated 6(f) boundary will have on the public and surrounding environment.

The purpose of the conversion is to facilitate the construction of a new school on the Teague Park parcel. Regional School Unit 39 in Caribou, Maine was chosen as a recipient for a state funded school to replace their existing outdated schools that are in major disrepair. As population in the area declines, the need for a consolidated school arose in order to increase efficiencies within the district. Upon completion of a New vs. Renovation Analysis it was determined that a new school should be built to serve the PreK-8 student population of the district.

The City of Caribou and RSU 39 have been working closely to find a site for the new school. An extensive site search for the 750 student school rated the Teague Park site the highest due to a range of factors including location within the town, ease of access, location of utilities, and adjacent public services including police, fire, and indoor recreation facilities. This location is not only central to many neighborhoods, but also located directly across the street from the Caribou Wellness and Recreation Center, a community asset that many student attend for after-school programs.

The site location has been presented to stakeholders including the City of Caribou, the Caribou Department of Recreation, and the general public. A straw poll by the voting population of the RSU (Caribou, Limestone, and Stockholm) determined a large majority to be in support of the site. In order to proceed with the proposed RSU 39 school project, the LWCF 6(f) boundary will need to be converted and relocated to another site.

CHAPTER 2: Description of Alternatives

Alternative A: Proposed Conversion

The proposed conversion removes federal protection from an existing LWCF boundary and replaces it with two new parcels. This alternative was selected in order to facilitate the construction of a new consolidated elementary school. Proposed replacement land was located

with the input from the Caribou Recreation Department and the City of Caribou in locations suited to the cities recreational needs.

The existing 6(f) boundary at Teague Park consists of 7.9 acres including a softball field, (4) tennis courts, (2) basketball courts, a playground, a gazebo, a concession building and a storage building.

The proposed replacement parkland consists of two separate lots. The first replacement parcel, (Replacement Boundary A), is located to the east of the existing land, directly across Bennett Drive and directly adjacent to the Caribou Recreation Center. This location will be across the street from a new K-8 school. There is currently a building on the site which will be torn down. This lot will contain a softball field, (4) tennis courts, a playfield area, and a concession building. A parking area will be provided as well.

The second lot to make up the 6(f) boundary (Replacement Boundary B) is located just under a mile away at the Sincock School site. The 1.83 acres of land for the 6(f) boundary on this site is comprised of .66 acres of woodland and an open field area with an existing building. The proposed project would remove the existing building and utilize the site as a picnic area, dog park, and possible future expansion of the Collins Pond walkway that runs through town.

The RSU currently owns both replacement parcels. Parcel A is utilized by the Superintendents offices and Adult Education. Parcel B is an empty building that is not utilized. The wooded portion of parcel B is currently privately owned. All parcels will be transferred to city ownership upon approval of this conversion and subsequent referendum vote for the new school.

Pending NPS approval, the RSU will be able to submit a site application to the Department of Education for the new school. Upon approval of the site application and the school concept design by the DOE, the project can go to public referendum. At the time of a successful referendum (November 2016 or June 2017), the conversion can begin. Ownership of the replacement 6(f) land will be transferred to the City of Caribou and development of that land will begin within the following 18 months (June 2018).

Anticipated schedule as follows:

Site Approval by State Board of Education (SBOE)	July/August 2016
Concept Design Approval by SBOE	August/December 2016
Public Referendum Vote	November 2016 or June 2017
Teague Park Conversion construction	June 2018

This approval cannot take place without a document indicating that the proposed LWCF conversion is acceptable to the NPS

Alternative B: No Action

Under the 'No Action' alternative, the Teague Park LWCF boundary would remain intact. This alternative was not selected as it would prohibit the construction of a school on the proposed and preferred site. If the 6(f) boundary remained intact, the available acreage for a new school would not be large enough for the 750 student population and would not be acceptable to the Department of Education.

If this alternative was taken, the City and the RSU would have to find a new school site outside of town, and would leave two vacant schools in disrepair in the center of town on both sides of the LWCF land. More importantly, the new school would not be adjacent to the Health and Wellness Center.

CHAPTER 3 – Affected Environment

This Chapter describes existing site characteristics and resources at each of the affected sites as outlined in the NPS Environmental Screening Form. Descriptions of the environmental consequences from this conversion are described in Chapter 4.

Geologic Resources

There are no known significant geologic resources at the sites.

Air Quality

There are no known effects to air quality at the sites.

Noise

The existing boundary as well as replacement boundary 'A' are located in the same in-town area. Replacement boundary 'B' is located in a residential neighborhood.

Water Quality

No surface or subsurface streams exist at any of the properties.

Land Use

Teague Park and 6(f) replacement parcel 'A' are zoned C2, a commercial district intended for uses to which the public requires easy and frequent access. Replacement parcel B is zoned R1/R2, a residential district located within convenient reach of business facilities.

The existing Teague Park is bounded by commercial and residential neighborhoods. Replacement parcel 'A' is also bounded by commercial and residential neighborhoods. At the south side of the site, the National Guard leases a portion of the Recreation Department land. The fence around this land currently encloses a portion of the Replacement parcel. The Guard

has confirmed that this fence can be relocated to within 100' of their building. This area will not be included in the NPS 6f replacement boundary.

Transportation and Accessibility

Vehicular access to the existing 6(f) site is to a parking area from Glenn Street. Pedestrian access to the site is from Glenn Street, Park Street, or Bennett Drive, however there are insufficient sidewalks around the site.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the replacement parcel A is from Bennett Drive. Vehicular and pedestrian access to replacement parcel B is from Main Street.

Wildlife Habitat and Biological Resources

There are no known botanical features or significant wildlife habitats within the project areas.

Recreation

The existing 6(f) boundary at Teague Park consists of a softball field, (4) tennis courts, (2) basketball courts, a playground, a gazebo, a concession building and a storage building.

There are no existing recreation opportunities at the replacement parcels.

Aesthetics

Teague Park is located on a flat lot that is bounded by 3 streets and Teague Park Elementary school to the North. A residential neighborhood is located to the West of the site, and the Caribou recreation center is located to the East of the site. The Caribou Middle school is located to the south.

Replacement site 'A' is a flat site that is bounded by the recreation department to the south, Bennett Drive and Teague Park/Teague Park school to the West, a residential area to the East, and a commercial zone to the North. There is currently an old school building on the site utilized for the RSU 39 district offices and adult education.

Replacement site 'B' is a gently sloping parcel that is partially wooded. It is bounded by forested land to the West, and residential districts on the remaining three sides. There is currently a vacant building on the lot.

Historical and Cultural Resources

There are no known historical or cultural resources on any of the existing or proposed parcels.

Socioeconomics

Caribou, Maine has a population of 8,189 according to the 2010 census. The majority of the population lives in the center of Caribou, with the outskirts composed of agricultural fields and commercial development.

Teague Park and replacement parcel 'A' are both located in the center of caribou.

Replacement parcel 'B' is just under a mile outside the center of town in a well-established residential neighborhood.

CHAPTER 4 – Environmental Impacts

Noise

There will be negligible impacts on noise due to the conversion.

At the Teague Site, there will be a 750 student school replacing the park and 2 public schools. We expect the overall noise of the site will be consolidated due to combined bus and car zones and the closing of Park Street.

At replacement site 'A', there will be an increase in noise levels from recreation events, however it is a relocation from across the street so the noise will stay in the same general area.

At replacement site 'B', there may be an increase in noise due to new recreation opportunities.

Water Quality

There are negligible water quality impacts from the proposed conversion.

The project will meet the State of Maine storm water regulations.

Land Use

The converted Teague Park will be developed as a school site, a use which already exists on both sides of the 6(f) park.

Replacement parcel 'A' will change from an educational use to a public park. A portion currently utilized by the National Guard will also become part of the new 6(f) boundary. See appendix for letter from the National Guard regarding this change.

Replacement parcel 'B' will change from a previous educational use and current vacant lot, to a new recreation area.

Transportation and Accessibility

Vehicular access to the conversion site is from Glenn Street. Pedestrian access to the site is from Glenn Street or Bennett Drive. New sidewalk areas will be created along Bennett Drive.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the replacement parcel A will not be affected. A parking area and driveway will be provided off Bennett Drive for park access.

At replacement parcel B, an existing parking area accessed from Main Street will remain.

Recreation

The Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) priorities include connecting more Mainers of all ages with the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation, increasing access to recreation areas near population centers and provide multiple public benefits in addition to recreation benefits.

The 6(f) replacement land is located to provide access to recreation opportunities in populated areas of the city. Replacement area A is located directly adjacent to the Caribou Recreation Department Health and Wellness Center rather than across the street, providing more opportunity for public programs to be run at the new Parkland. Replacement area B is located in a neighborhood, providing walkable opportunities for people of all ages in that area.

The proposed replacement boundary A will contain a softball field, (4) tennis courts, a playground, and a concession building. Replacement Boundary B will be used as a dog park and picnic area. There are no recreation opportunities currently in that area of the city.

The converted 6(f) land will be utilized for a new PreK-8 school and associated playgrounds. This school will be utilized by Caribou and the surrounding communities. The construction of the school will enhance the public education opportunities of the area as the existing schools are in disrepair.

Aesthetics

The converted land will be utilized for a new school. The school will be bounded by 2 streets (Park street will be closed). The new Teague Park will be located to the East of the site.

Replacement site A will be developed for recreation purposes with the amenities described in the previous section. The existing building on the lot will be torn down and the fence around the National Guard will be moved. This will greatly improve the features of the site for the surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, and schools.

Replacement site B will be developed for recreation purposes. The existing building will be torn down and resulting land is to be used for a picnic area and dog pack

Historical and Cultural Resources

There are no resources affected.

Socioeconomics

The proposal for the conversion of Teague Park will provide more opportunities for public recreation.

Replacement land B will also provide recreation opportunities for three neighborhoods that do not currently have direct access to recreation.

CHAPTER 5 – Coordination and Consultation

The environmental assessment will be released for a 30 day comment period during the month of April/May. All comments and responses will be available in the appendix of the final report.

Additional public meetings regarding a review of the proposed site plan include RSU 39 Building Committee meetings, Caribou City council meetings, open public forums, and a straw poll.

The Caribou recreation Department is developing a long range master plan for both properties.

The following individuals or firms contributed to the development of the Environmental Assessment:

Parties involved in the Environmental Assessment included: RSU 39, the City of Caribou, Caribou Recreation Center, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, PDT Architects, S.W. Cole Engineering, and Stantec (formerly FST).

Public Involvement:

Site Straw Poll: January 12th, 2016

RSU 39 Building Committee Meetings: The second Friday of every month beginning in May 2015.

Caribou Recreation Department Facebook page comments (attached)

Public Meeting: April 27th, 2016

Figures:

- A: Location of Parkland in Caribou
- B: Existing 6f land and amenities
- C: Existing vs Proposed 6f boundary
- D: Proposed Park (Boundary A)

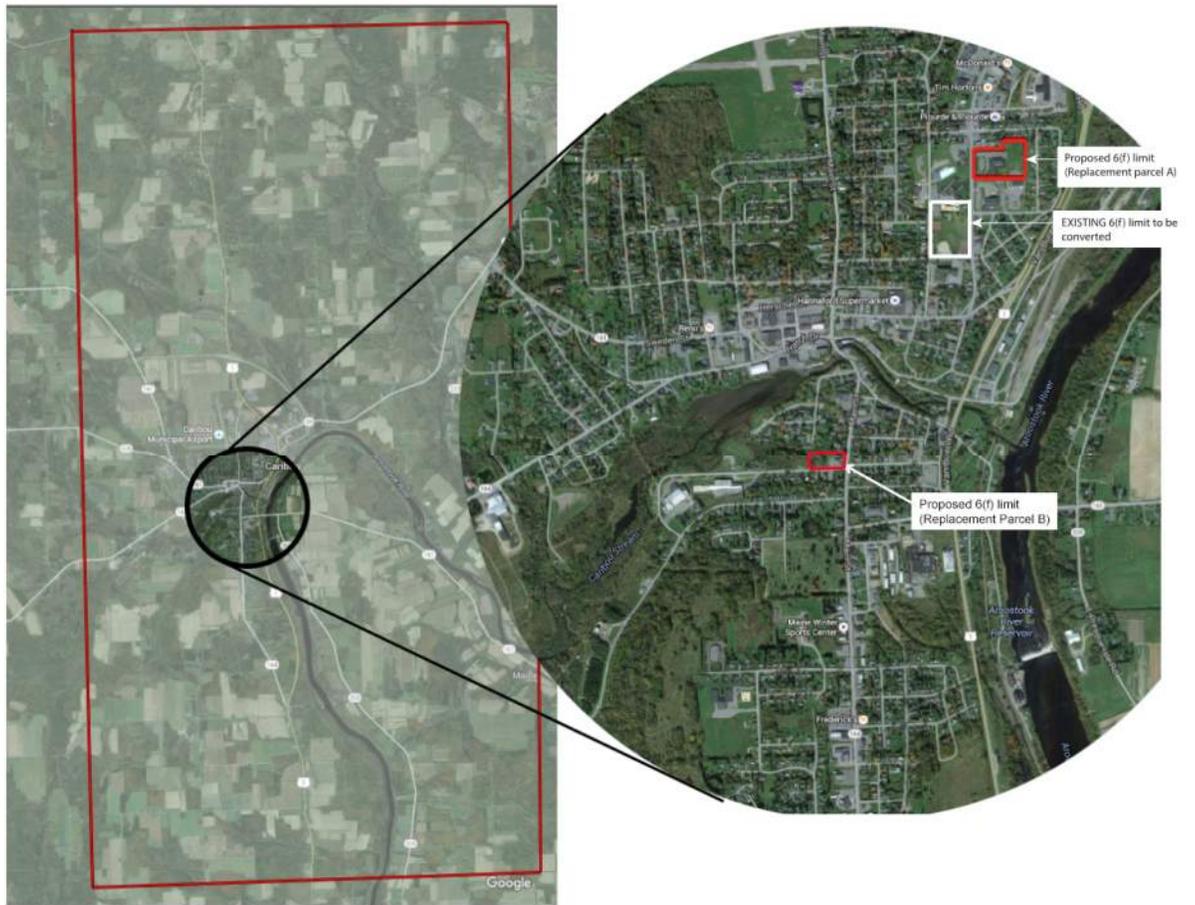


Figure A: Location in City

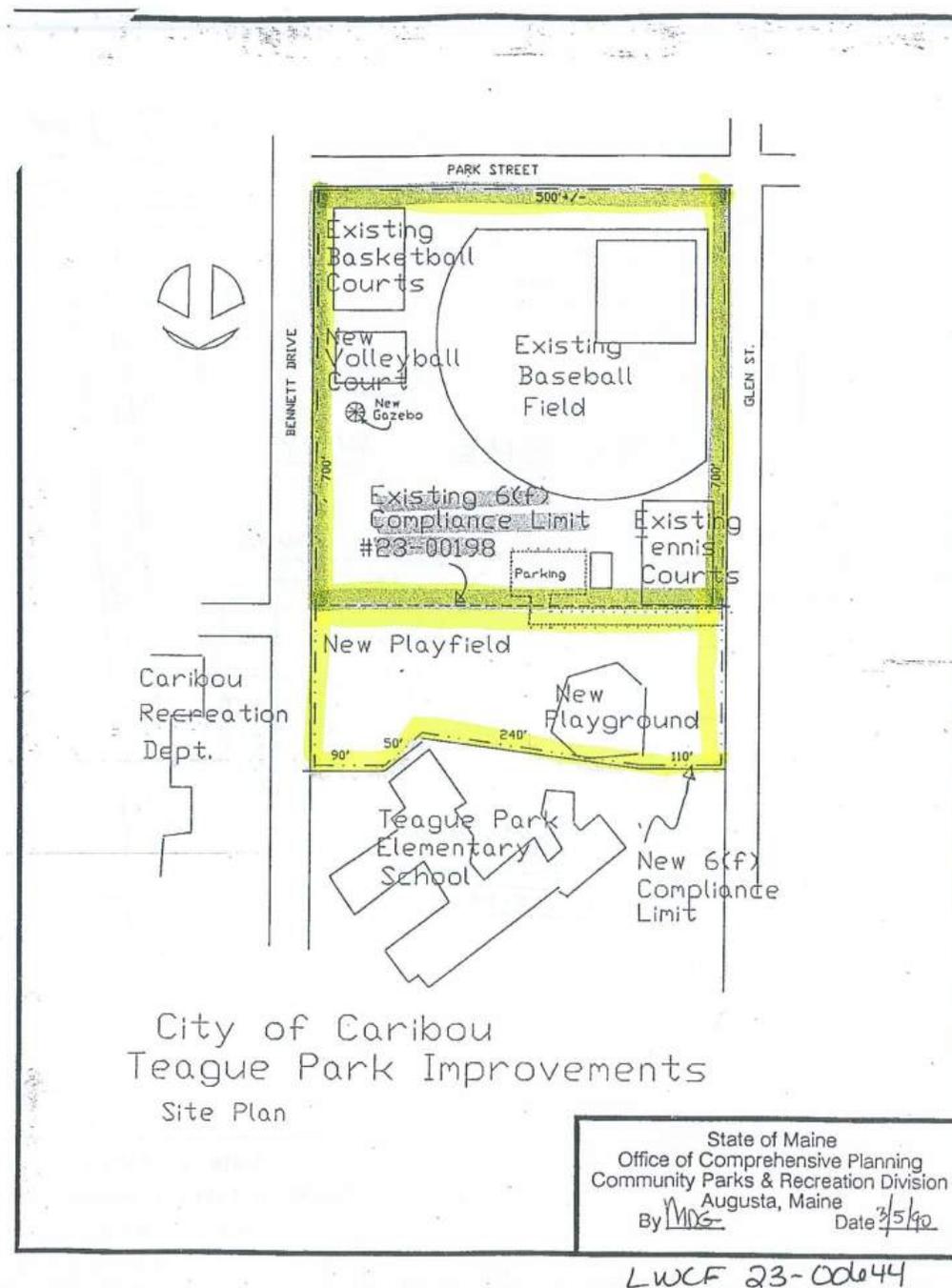


Figure B: Existing 6(f) boundary

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Figure C: Existing 6(f) boundary and replacement 6(f) boundary

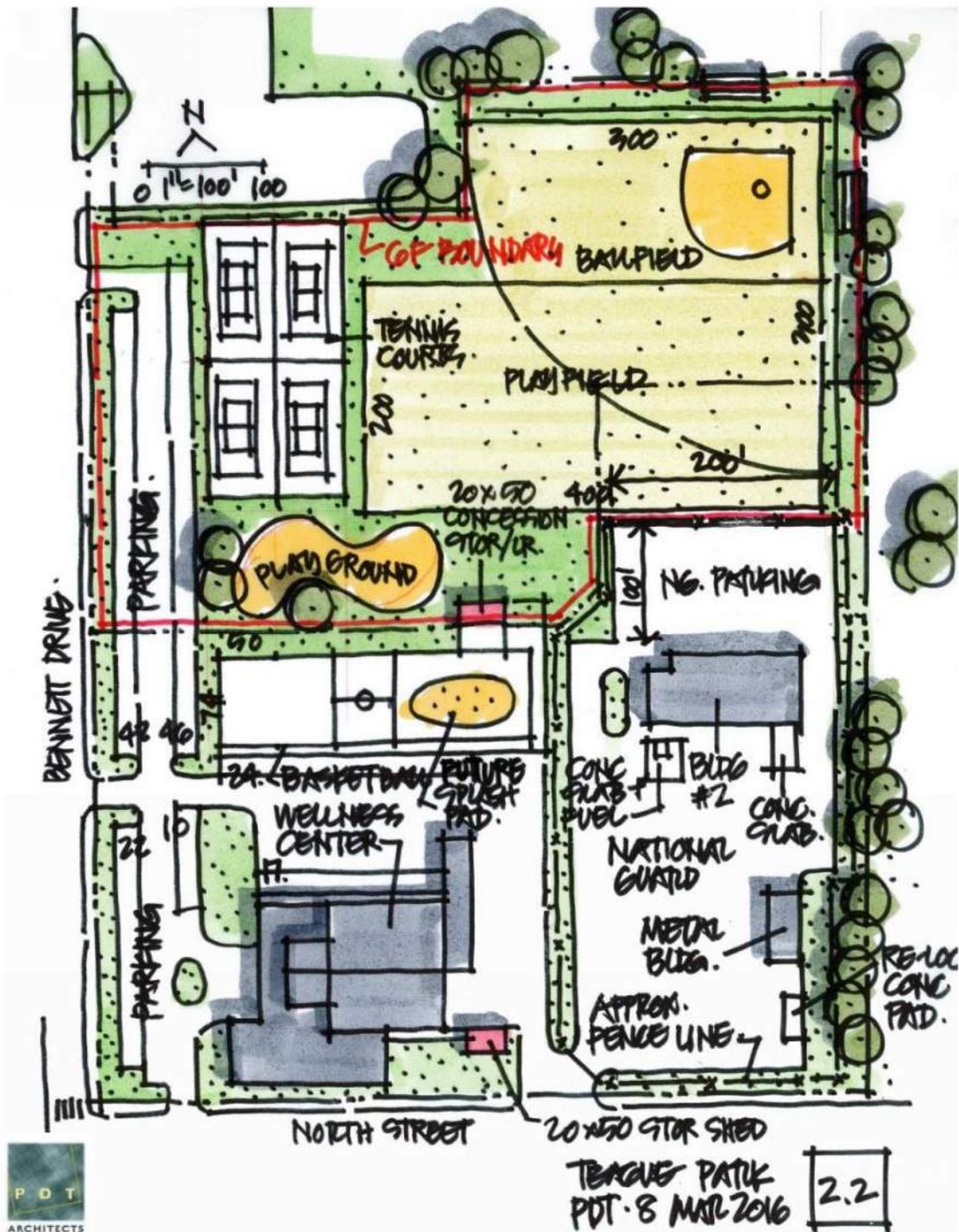


Figure D: Proposed Park (Boundary A)

Appendix: Phase 1 ESA

(Separate Document)

Note: This Phase I ESA is only applicable to the Conversion site Teague Park and the Replacement Parcel A.

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Appendix: Correspondence with Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Appendix: Public Comments

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Facebook Comments:

 **City of Caribou, Maine**
Published by Lydia Wenzel Kieffer [?] · 17 hrs · 🌐

We are looking for your input!
Caribou will be getting a new park in the process of building a new RSU building. Current amenities will be rebuilt, i.e.: Basketball Courts, Tennis Courts, Softball Field, Playground.
--What other type of amenities do you want in the new park? (Splash park, ice rink, etc.)

3,063 people reached Boost Post

Like Comment Share

Marion Rossignol, Tonya Peterson and 13 others Top Comments

22 shares

Write a comment...  

 **Krista Albert Cyr** A pool with a full staff that are able to provide swimming lessons more than one week and free swim for families every night!
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 21 · 12 hrs · Edited

 **Nikki Jandreau Saucier** Swimming pool would be awesome picnic area for families who like have lunch at the park, disc golf. ice rink, snow shoe trail, and cross county skiing.
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 2 · 2 hrs

 **Tami Jordan** We need a pool fully staffed. Swimming lessons for our children is a must have! Free swim when there is no lessons scheduled.
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 8 · 13 hrs

 **Anna Wing McCarty** If your not going to have the pool, a splash park would be great
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 4 · 13 hrs

 **Melissa Hersey** A dog park would be nice.
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 10 · 15 hrs

 **Casey Harpine** Yes a dog park would be very nice, or a ratchet ball court
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 6 · 14 hrs

 **Tonya Peterson** Splash parks are awesome. I visited some in Las Vegas. They are just regular parks in the winter. They also had a discovery trail with activities around it, that was fun for walkers and in the winter skiers. I know a lot of people would enjoy a pavilion for large groups and musicians. Don't know if it could all go in the same area.
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 5 · 15 hrs

 **Jen Poltras** Splash park .. and an outdoor walking track
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 3 · 13 hrs

 **Darren Woods** Assurance that small kids and parents can use the park even during school hours would be nice
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 4 · 13 hrs

 **Debbie Dumond** Water park with rides, ALWAYS goes over HUGE..
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 1 · 15 hrs

 **Joanna McGlinn Gervais** I think an ice rink and splash park would be awesome but think maybe splash park might be expensive to run?
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 4 · 15 hrs

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-  **Anne Kane** Splash pad, swimming pool.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 12 hrs
-  **Kellie Rosado** Splash park would be amazing. A dog park would be nice too;)
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  8 · 14 hrs
-  **Jennifer Dickinson** Dog park and splash park!!!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  4 · 14 hrs
-  **Katina Ouellette** A pool. Or s splash park. Both would be fun!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 2 hrs
-  **Crissy Tracy** Splash park for sure!!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 14 hrs
-  **Chad and April Stallings** Splash park for sure.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 3 hrs
-  **Julia Patten** We need a pool.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  13 · 15 hrs
-  **Jodi Cote** Pool with swimming lessons
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  5 · 12 hrs
-  **Joshua Goodale** Ice rink for winter!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 11 hrs
-  **James Dempsey** Better Bike Paths in town
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 8 hrs
-  **Kara Marie** Splash park
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  3 · 14 hrs
-  **Nicole Sprague** It all sounds great
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 15 hrs
-  **Caragan Haney** Field hockey field
-  **Joanna McGilinn Gervais** Dog park!!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 13 hrs
-  **Kristie Roope-Moir** Ice rink
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 12 hrs
-  **Kaitlyn Jandreau** A pool!
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 11 hrs
-  **Caiah Bernard-Rosado** Water park
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 2 hrs
-  **Noah Rosado** Ice rink
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 14 hrs
-  **Suzanne Brewer Lucci** Ice rink. The old one was awesome.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  3 · 15 hrs
-  **Kelly Chartier** Pool
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  5 · 13 hrs
-  **Mariah Tracy** Yup, a pool.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  2 · 10 hrs
-  **Bethany Souther Zell** From Barbara Gervase Souther: Swimming pool for the children.....What happened to the long range plan for that at the new Rec Center?????
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 1 hr
-  **Lacy Monteith** Splash park would be great!
Like · Reply · Message ·  1 · 1 hr
-  **Mark Angel Levesque** A pool or splash park that way our kids have something to do other than getting in trouble
Like · Reply · Message ·  1 · 1 hr
-  **Ally McCarthy Bell** How about a new school and our street lights turned back

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 **Ally McCarthy Bell** How about a new school and our street lights turned back on
Like · Reply · Message ·  20 · 16 hrs
 3 Replies · 11 hrs

 **Alyson McQuade-Saucier** How about plowing the sidewalks the town children will be walking on to get to said school in the winter time?
Like · Reply · Message ·  2 · 3 hrs

 **Patrick Michaud** Where is the location of the new school going to be?
Like · Reply · Message · 13 hrs

 **Jennifer Michaud** From Teague Park to Middle School..that entire area.
Unlike · Reply · Message ·  1 · 13 hrs
 View more replies

Write a comment...