

**New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)  
FINAL SCOPING DOCUMENT**

for the

**Nissequogue River State Park Master Plan  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**

**Project Location**

700 St. Johnland Road  
Hamlet of Kings Park, Town of Smithtown  
Suffolk County, New York

**April 6, 2022**

SEQR CLASSIFICATION: TYPE 1

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Full Environmental Assessment Form  
State Environmental Quality Review, Positive Declaration  
Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement,  
Determination of Significance

## I. INTRODUCTION

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) process has been initiated for the Proposed Action: the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Nissequogue River State Park. The New York State (NYS) Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is the Lead Agency for the SEQR process and the Proposed Action.

This Final Scoping Document defines the intended scope of information to be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Proposed Action. The Final Scoping Document provides an overview of the SEQR process, a general description of the Proposed Action, and a general discussion of the benefits and potentially adverse impacts of the Proposed Action that will be addressed in the DEIS/FEIS. The document also identifies items that have been eliminated from consideration in the DEIS/FEIS. The Final Scoping Document reflects input received from the public, interested/involved agencies, and stakeholders during the public review process thus far.

### **SEQR and Scoping the Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

The purpose of SEQR is to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during the planning, review, and decision-making processes of a project from its outset. These considerations are captured in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Issues to be addressed in the EIS are identified through the scoping process. Scoping is also the first opportunity for public participation in the SEQR process, ensuring the community and interested stakeholders are made aware of the Proposed Action and have an opportunity to identify topics and concerns of interest for potential inclusion in the EIS.

The objectives of the scoping process are as follows:

- Inform the public of the purpose and need for the Proposed Action
- Describe the location, environment, and site history in the Proposed Action
- Describe the Proposed Action, including the Master Plan development and adoption process
- Identify site resources that will potentially be impacted by the Proposed Action
- Identify potential mitigation measures
- Eliminate issues that will not be impacted by the Proposed Action
- Identify additional studies that will be conducted to inform the development of the DEIS

A Draft Scope for the Nissequogue River State Park Master Plan DEIS was published on December 8, 2021. A 45-day public comment period for the Draft Scoping document was opened on December 8, 2021. The comment period closed at the end of day on January 22, 2022. Substantive comments received during the comment period for the Draft Scope were considered during preparation of the Final Scoping Document. The DEIS for the Master Plan will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations pertaining to Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL Section 8-0101 et seq.) and its implementing regulation found in Part 617 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York (6 NYCRR Part 617).

## **Public Input**

Meaningful opportunities for public participation in the creation of the Master Plan/DEIS help to ensure a balance of interests in plan formulation and build broad support for plan implementation.

Prior to the release of this Final Scoping Document the planning team hosted two Master Plan public information sessions, three informal community meetings, as well as several meetings with key local stakeholder groups. These meetings not only helped to alert the public to the planning process for Nissequogue River State Park but helped the planning team to gather preliminary information regarding the community's aspirations for park development. At the public information sessions, the planning team shared an outline of the overall planning process, their research, and preliminary findings from site investigations. Additional insights were solicited through a recreational needs assessment conducted through an online survey. The results of the public information sessions and online survey are available on the OPRHP Master Plan website: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>

All comments received during the public meetings and the public comment period on the Draft Scoping Document have been recorded and considered during preparation of this Final Scoping Document. Information gathered from all engagement efforts has informed the scope of work and early concepts for the Draft Master Plan/DEIS. The planning team will continue to employ a broad-based public participation process as it prepares the DEIS and refines Master Plan goals, objectives, strategies, and other content that address local, regional, and statewide preservation and cultural resource protection needs.

## **Environmental Review Process**

OPRHP has declared itself Lead Agency for the SEQR process, issued a Positive Declaration, and published a Draft Scope of Work for the Draft Nissequogue River State Park Master Plan/DEIS on December 8, 2021, indicating a DEIS would be prepared for the Proposed Action. The public comment period for the Draft Scope of the Master Plan/DEIS ran 45 days, from December 8, 2021, through close of business on January 22, 2022. A number of comments concerning the Draft Scope were received during the comment period. OPRHP published this Final Scoping Document on April 6, 2022.

After its publication, the DEIS will be made available for public and interested agency review and comment for a minimum 30-day period. Comments may be provided to the Lead Agency in writing during the DEIS comment period, and a public meeting/webinar will also be held to share key features of the master plan and receive comments on the DEIS. A Final EIS will then be produced considering and incorporating substantive comments received.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Nissequogue River State Park (NRSP) is a 521-acre park located on Long Island's North Shore; The Park borders the Long Island Sound and the mouth of the Nissequogue River. The Park is situated within the Hamlet of Kings Park in the Town of Smithtown, Suffolk County. The property is approximately bounded to the east by Lawrence Road, to the south by East Main Street and State Route 25A, and to the west by Old Dock Road. Approximately 66 acres of the Park are located west of Old Dock Road, abutting private residences. Nissequogue River State Park is accessible by the Port Jefferson branch of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR); the Kings Park station is located immediately adjacent to the southwest corner of the Park. The Park is accessible by car from the east and west via St. Johnland Road and State Route 25A and is accessible from the south via Sunken Meadow Parkway.

Nissequogue River State Park is located immediately to the east of Sunken Meadow State Park, and fewer than 10 miles from other large state and regional parks including Blydenburgh County Park, Caleb Smith State Park, Makamah Nature Preserve, and David Weld Sanctuary.

The Park property was formerly the campus of the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC) under the jurisdiction of the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH). The jurisdiction of the state-owned property was transferred to OPRHP from OMH in two phases. The first parcel, 153 acres in size, was opened to the public in 2001; the second parcel, 368 acres in size, was opened to the public in 2007. The property today features a mix of developed institutional land formerly associated with the hospital campus, park facilities including hiking trails, boat launches, a marina, and informal lawn areas, as well as undeveloped parkland with a range of natural habitats. Buildings of the former KPPC that are currently in use by the Park include an administrative building (Building 125), a greenhouse (Building 65), and a garage (Building 62). (*Key Map 1*)

The Park today is used by visitors and neighborhood residents for walking, hiking, biking, flying model airplanes, bird watching and access to the waterfront. The Park is well-loved and well-used but in need of more open space focused amenities to expand its mission as a public park and better serve the recreational needs of the surrounding community. While some park and building improvements have been undertaken by OPRHP in the northernmost portions of the Park, Nissequogue River State Park does not have a comprehensive plan to guide its transformation from an institutional campus to a local and regional park destination. The Nissequogue River State Park Master Plan is being developed to provide a parkwide framework with alternatives for this transformation.

OPRHP is currently undertaking a Marina Redevelopment Project at Nissequogue River State Park. The Marina Redevelopment Project is not included in this Project Description or the Nissequogue River State Park Master Plan DEIS. The Marina Redevelopment Project is the subject of an independent environmental review.

### III. PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of the project is to develop and adopt a Master Plan for Nissequogue River State Park. The Master Plan will provide a long-term vision and armature for park development that helps OPRHP to meet park users' needs, protect the Park's natural features, and honor the site's local history and its relationship to the surrounding community.

Nissequogue River State Park was established in 2001. The Park occupies a large portion of land that once comprised the Kings Parks Psychiatric Center (KPPC) hospital campus, a state-run facility in operation from 1885 until 1996. Many structures and landscape features remain from the former health institution. In addition to these cultural resources, the site contains an array of natural areas and wildlife habitats, a designated Bird Conservation Area, wetlands, and access to the Nissequogue River, a state-designated recreational river. The Park currently supports active programming including soccer and boating, as well as various passive uses through a limited trail network and diverse array of open spaces, woodlands, and waterfront areas.

The Master Plan will set forth OPRHP's vision for operational enhancements, capital improvements, and future studies at the Park over the next 15-20 years. The Plan provides comprehensive guidance for the long-term, sustainable development and management of Nissequogue River State Park by identifying programs and site uses that are appropriate to the site's unique environmental, cultural, and historic context. The Master Plan will identify opportunities for strategic preservation, community programming and adaptive reuse of select hospital buildings. It will identify actions for OPRHP and stakeholder organizations that will further protect, preserve, and enhance areas of ecological significance, providing suggestions on how to adapt the site—including its shorelines and upland ecosystems—to address the impacts of climate change that ensure the site is able to continue to serve the community well into the future. The plan will also strive to align its goals with the goals of the 2020-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) which has set statewide guidelines to improve visitors' experience through "Inclusivity, Diversity and Resiliency"

Overall, the Master Plan will work to achieve the following major goals:

- 1. Collaborate with community members:** Work with the local community and stakeholders to ensure the planning process is inclusive and transparent. Encourage long-term park stewardship through early action projects and involvement in the master planning process.
- 2. Protect and enhance the riverine and coastal environment:** Identify implementable measures to protect, preserve, and expand the Park's relationship to the Nissequogue River, Smithtown Bay and coastal shoreline. Ensure Master Plan goals and recommendations are consistent with other State and Local plans and programs related to the riverine and coastal resources in the Park.
- 3. Enhance forested habitats:** Identify implementable measures to protect, preserve, and expand the Park's emergent and mature forested areas.

4. **Explore strategic adaptive re-use of site structures:** Develop a set of recommendations for the strategic and targeted selection of existing structures and assets for potential preservation and reuse in support of park programming.
5. **Develop sitewide strategies for interpretation of the site's unique past:** Incorporate interpretive opportunities within the fabric of the park design from its earliest occupation by Indigenous tribes to the present day.
6. **Identify future park programs and necessary park improvements to support those programs:** Conduct a Recreational Needs Assessment to determine which recreational resources are most needed for the town and region. Identify programs and uses that are compatible with the Park's natural and cultural assets and fulfill the recreational needs of the surrounding community. Identify recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
7. **Consider climate change:** Develop strategic actions to guide Park development to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.
8. **Align the park development goals with those of the 2020-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP):** Use the direction and guidance found in the SCORP to help fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate.
9. **Evaluate overall park infrastructural needs:** Make recommendations for the upgrades to park infrastructure with long-term operation and maintenance considerations in mind.
10. **Create a parkwide circulation system:** Create a universally accessible parkwide circulation system prioritizing safety and access for pedestrians and cyclists. Propose traffic calming measure and grade separated crossing to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Designate localized areas for vehicular access to park destinations and trails.
11. **Create new recreational resources:** Identify community needs for active and multi-use passive recreational areas, fitness areas, play areas and other open space amenities. Identify areas in the Park best suited for the development of active and passive recreation.
12. **Evaluate the potential for land transfers, easements and acquisitions:** Evaluate non-OPRHP owned parcels abutting the Park with the intent of creating uninterrupted recreational and natural areas. Explore possible connections to Sunken Meadow State Park. Where State acquisition is not feasible, the plan will consider exploring protective easements or voluntary stewardship with local organizations. Explore transfer of jurisdiction of parcels under state or local ownership, but not under OPRHP.

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Nissequogue River State Park is comprised of 521 acres of state parkland adjacent to the mouth of the Nissequogue River to the east and abutting the Smithtown Bay and Long Island Sound to the north. The coastal areas of the Park are designated by the NYS Coastal Management Program as a Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat. A 55-acre portion of the Park is designated as a New York State Bird Conservation Area. The Park currently offers recreational opportunities to the surrounding communities of Kings Park and Town of Smithtown. Patrons use the Park for hiking, walking, bike riding, picnicking and field sports. Most of these opportunities exist within the original 153-acre portion of the Park, closest to the waterfront. A marina within the Park offers seasonal slip rentals, parking, and designated boat and kayak Launches.

A unique feature of the Park is its former role as the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC)<sup>1</sup>, which operated from 1885 to 1996. Sixty former hospital buildings and structures remain, some of which have been maintained or restored for park use or are in the process of being stabilized for future use. Additional infrastructure and landscape features remaining from the site's use as a hospital include roadways, plantings, a cemetery, a sports field, reservoirs, retaining walls, site grading, a water tower, and extensive underground utilities. In 2007, the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) issued a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) letter stating, "...that the remaining buildings of the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center in the Kings Park vicinity (Town of Smithtown), Suffolk County, New York, constitute a historically and architecturally significant district." State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NRHP) eligibility for the historic district, the boundary of which corresponds with the remaining former hospital campus, was cited in association with NRHP Criterion A, in the area of Health/Medicine, and Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, with a period of significance spanning 1890 to 1960.

A survey of all extant buildings of the former KPPC campus was conducted by Building Conservation Associates (BCA) from fall 2020 to fall 2021 as part of the overall research for the environmental setting portion of the Master Plan. BCA updated the 2007 building inventory based on the additional field investigations, and submitted the results to the SHPO, who independently evaluated the existing site conditions according to the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Based on their review, SHPO issued a March 2022 clarification of the S/NRHP district status that simultaneously reversed the 2007 campus-wide DOE and established the S/NRHP eligibility of York Hall, Building 93, and 14 buildings that comprise the Veterans' Memorial Hospital Unit in the northern section of the Park. This change in State/National Register eligibility will be acknowledged and reflected in the draft and final Master Plan. Further documentation regarding this clarification is available in the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) at: <https://cris.parks.ny.gov/>

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<sup>1</sup> The hospital operated under several names throughout its history: The Kings County Farm and Asylum, which served as a satellite facility for the Kings County Lunatic Asylum in Brooklyn (1885-1895); the Kings Park branch of the Long Island State Hospital (1895-1904); The Kings Park State Hospital (1904-1974); and the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (1974-1996).



To provide context for the Proposed Action, the DEIS will describe the general setting of the Park in relation to the natural and cultural resources of the Long Island Region. The site inventory will include the following:

- Regional Location and Neighborhood Context
- Park and Waterfront Access and Boundaries
- Adjacent Land Use and Socioeconomic Characteristics
- Natural Resources, Vegetation, Soils and Geology
- Coastal Hazard Erosion Areas (CEHA Boundaries)
- FEMA Flood Hazard Areas
- Existing Topography and Hydrology
- Significant Ecological Communities and Conservation Areas
- Scenic Resources
- Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Resources
- Buildings Inventory
- Infrastructure, Maintenance and Operations Facilities
- Transportation, Vehicular Circulation, and Parking
- Accessibility, Pedestrian Circulation, and Multi-use Trail Systems
- Consistency with Local Projects and Planning Initiatives

## V. PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action requiring review under SEQR is the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Nissequogue River State Park. An Analysis of Alternatives will be included as a separate chapter in the DEIS and investigate reasonable options relative to the Purpose and Goals for the Proposed Action. The description and evaluation of each alternative will be at a level of detail sufficient to allow for a comparative assessment of the alternatives discussed. The range of alternatives for each individual action will also include a No-Action Alternative which will evaluate reasonably foreseeable adverse or beneficial site changes that are likely to occur in the absence of the Proposed Action and serve as a baseline for assessing impacts of the Proposed Action. The specific actions being proposed in the draft Master Plan are as follows:

### **Actions for Natural Resource Protection and Enhancement**

- Identify invasive species extant in the Park and develop a management plan to control their spread.
- Identify areas that should undergo natural succession to encourage habitat diversity.
- Identify optimal areas for designation of grassland habitat.
- Identify areas where forest expansion can connect existing forested habitats within the Park.
- Consider the coastline, coastal uses, and coastal issues, including but not limited to actions that could enhance the watershed of the Nissequogue River and mitigate potential impacts on nearshore resources.
- Develop management recommendations to protect and improve the existing Mesophytic and Successional Mesophytic Forest Areas.
- Propose expansion of the Bird Conservation Area, especially adjacent to the Nissequogue River
- Consider how vegetated upland buffer zones should be protected or established to further reduce water quality impairment from upland sources.
- Rehabilitate the existing reservoir as an open space resource-and soften the embankment of the existing reservoir to improve safety.
- Identify areas for expansion of freshwater wetlands around the former reservoir.
- Propose areas to be preserved and enhanced as a botanical garden and location for community horticulture.
- Provide recommendations for preservation of the mature ornamental tree canopy on the Park interior.
- Connect proposed garden areas to areas historically cultivated during the early phases of the KPPC.
- Determine methods for limiting the impacts to and preserving Significant Ecological Communities (as defined by the New York Natural Heritage Program), including the low salt marshes along the Nissequogue River and its estuary.
- Provide consistency and align project goals with state and local coastal management plans, including Smithtown's approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).

## **Actions for Recreational Resource Expansion**

- Determine additional programmatic support for a range of active recreational needs, including but not limited to fitness structures, equipment rentals, and seasonal recreation programming.
- Improve access to the Park's waterfront resources
- Identify active recreational areas with supporting amenities such as shade structures, picnic areas, restrooms, and parks concessions.
- Create a layout for parkwide fitness trails for pedestrians and cyclists with appropriate signage, mile markers, bike racks and pumps, trailheads, meeting areas, etc.
- Provide active recreational facilities in the southern end of the Park including a variety of sports fields and sport courts for community and local league use.
- Identify locations for dedicated early childhood play areas, including areas especially adapted for children of special needs that can be designed to be universally accessible.
- Identify areas for skate parks and teen fitness areas.
- Identify areas for dog parks/enclosed off-leash areas.
- Preserve open multi-use areas suitable for model airplane use and identify potential areas for a disc golf course.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation in the core areas of the Park for picnicking, relaxing, walking, and nature viewing.
- Identify non-motorized trail uses and delineate/designate trails throughout the Park.
- Provide facilities for group gatherings and picnics.
- Provide trails and facilities that interpret the health and fitness focus of the Park's history and encourage physical wellness and activity in the Park.
- Identify location(s) for bike competition courses (i.e., pump tracks) and bike maintenance areas.
- Propose an Equestrian Center with a riding arena and boarding stalls north of Old Dock Road.
- Provide localized equestrian trails north of Old Dock Road. Explore potential connections to Sunken Meadow State Park.
- Propose preservation and protection of the existing cemetery.

## **Actions for Circulation**

- Expand the existing Hike and Bike trail that enters the Park from 25A into a continuous paved loop.
- Create a plan for emergency access and public services serving the site.
- Implement traffic and circulation plans that identify and develop welcoming park entrances, manage public vehicular access, prioritize park patron safety, identify primary and secondary roads, maintenance and service roads, and visitor parking areas.
- Propose traffic calming measures along Old Dock Road and St. Johnland Boulevard where pedestrian and cyclists cross between Park parcels.
- Explore the creation of grade-separated crossings on St. Johnland Boulevard.
- Review possibility of removing former hospital campus roads (including Kings Park Boulevard) that are redundant or interfere with planned park uses; review potential impacts caused to community roads by the removal of existing interior vehicular roads.

- Convert existing interior vehicular roads to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized patron circulation throughout the Park.
- Create a universally accessible loop trail around the reservoir.
- Prioritize and include universal access in the development of all new Park destinations.

### **Actions for Waterfront Access & Protection**

- Create a new connection to the Long Island Greenbelt Trail from upper portions of the Park at the former Veteran's Memorial Hospital Area.
- Propose reduction of redundant paths along the existing Long Island Greenbelt Trail that contribute to erosion and habitat degradation.
- Designate areas for kayak storage and rentals.
- Consider how to improve access to the waterfront for water-dependent activities, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Maintain access to the existing boat launch areas and docks; maintain existing number of boat slips and kayak access to the Nissequogue River in accordance with the plans for the Marina Redevelopment Project that is currently underway.
- Coordinate Park Master Plan with proposed improvements that are part of the Marina Redevelopment Project. Currently proposed improvements to the Marina will be considered as a future condition and cumulative impact in the master plan. Propose Park paths that connect the Marina to adjacent and complementary park amenities. Proposed improvements to the Marina are subject to an independent environmental review and will not be analyzed in the Master Plan/DEIS.
- Enhance passive recreational areas along the coastal shoreline, while protecting natural resources.

### **Actions for Infrastructure and Buildings**

- Provide recommendations for safety measures to prevent further vandalism or illegal entry into the buildings.
- Evaluate landscape features (topography, trees, former agricultural areas, pathways) for protection, enhancement, and interpretation.
- Consider alternatives for building retention, preservation, and reuse, ranging from code-compliant rehabilitation to stabilization until future needs and/or uses are determined.
- Acknowledge National Register Status of select buildings and/or districts of extant buildings that are recognized as eligible.
- Provide recommendations for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of York Hall, which is currently being stabilized, as a theatre including provisions for event infrastructure.
- Propose methods for parkwide interpretation.
- Identify park programming and uses that meet the needs of the Park and the surrounding community and are compatible with extant buildings of the former KPCC.
- Review previous hazardous materials testing, recommend additional testing and study options for environmental remediation and/or containment.
- Provide recommendations for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings to support programming suggested by the community as a potential community space with a mix of assembly, cultural and retail uses.
- Develop a set of targeted recommendations for the preservation and reuse of the site's historic and cultural assets, including select buildings, infrastructure, and landscape

features related to the former KPPC, prioritizing buildings, infrastructure, and landscape features eligible for the National Register.

- Provide recommendations for the targeted removal of select buildings and infrastructure, which include strategies for mitigation and/or interpretive strategies.
- Develop a prioritization plan for adaptive re-use of buildings based on park programming and park opportunities. The prioritization plan will include the following metrics: economic considerations, condition, building size and configuration, location, ability to support park-related uses and programming.
- Explore areas of the Park as flexible community event venues/private event venues/concessions.
- Propose further study for appropriate programming over the ash fill area.
- Consider opportunities for interactive interpretation, such as living ruins or walking museums.
- Identify operational improvements to increase efficiency and decrease costs.
- Improve the functionality of Park maintenance and operations.
- Identify additional areas for Park's maintenance facilities based on proposed park programming, especially in relation to active recreation or potential concession areas.

### **Actions for Outreach and Partnership Development**

- Build capacity with friends' groups including, but not limited to, the Nissequogue River State Park Foundation, Preserve KPPC, the Kings Park Soccer Club, and Preservation Long Island.
- Foster partnerships for recreational and cultural programs with local educational institutions at all levels.
- Maintain open lines of communication throughout the process with local and state elected officials and partner organizations.
- Identify opportunities for artistic and cultural partnerships with a group or theatrical company for the operation of York Hall as a performance/event venue.
- Identify potential partnership for a KPPC Museum and Education Center.
- Consider opportunities for interactive interpretation of the site's history such as living ruins, walking museums, and interpretive trails.
- Increase engagement and consultation with Indigenous Nations and other stakeholder communities to shape interpretive content.
- Identify potential partnerships for a botanical garden area and community garden destination.
- Recommend private and public partnerships to preserve and utilize adjacent land parcels through land transfers, acquisitions, conservation easements, or other agreements.
- Identify existing and potential partners for active recreation programming.
- Identify potential outreach and partnership development that recognizes and champions the responsibility to uphold and progress the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access.

## VI. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The Master Plan will include a map showing preferred alternatives proposed for implementation at the Park. Two alternatives will be considered in the DEIS. The first is the Status Quo, or No Action, Alternative. Under this alternative, Nissequogue River State Park would continue to operate as it does now; there would be no changes to natural resources protection strategies, recreation resource development, cultural or scenic resource protection, infrastructure improvements, or facility management and operation. The increasing demands on the Park and its facilities would not be addressed or impacts mitigated. Any improvements would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The second alternative is the Preferred or the Master Plan Alternative; this alternative will be a compilation of the preferred alternatives selected within the DEIS. These alternatives will propose improvements to enhance Nissequogue River State Park's recreational, cultural, and natural resources, as well as its infrastructure in support of park programming and operations.

The DEIS will identify and analyze reasonable alternatives and their potential impacts in a comprehensive and detailed manner. It will select and describe preferred alternatives for each action to be undertaken at the Park, including the physical location any proposed new development will occur where possible. It will describe new uses and improvements to the Park's recreational amenities, circulation, parking, signage, utilities, and other infrastructure.

Discussion of each alternative will include an in-depth assessment and analysis for each proposed action. It will describe potential environmental impacts and the degree to which the alternative successfully achieves stated project goals. Findings from the evaluation of the many alternatives discussed will help in the identification of the preferred alternatives—the actions that best meet OPRHP's mission and vision for Nissequogue River State Park—within each resource category. The document will provide a road map for future development and will enable the facility to meet the needs and demands for these resources and activities in the region and beyond.

The following section identifies the potential impacts that may result from implementation of the Master Plan. Alternatives for each action will be evaluated in the DEIS. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for the potentially adverse impacts will also be discussed. The potential impacts have been organized under environmental resource categories such as Land, Historic Resources, Transportation, etc.

### - **Impacts on Land**

The land surface will be reviewed in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Natural Resources and will include an analysis of Nissequogue River State Park's geology, soils, and topography.

Multiple phases of construction may significantly impact the soil and vegetation. Some of the Park is located within the Coastal Erosion Hazard Area (CEHA) and is at higher risks of storm damage and erosion. Construction within the CEHA requires careful planning and mitigation. Any actions proposed within the CEHA will be evaluated with respect to their conformity with the regulations for actions within the CEHA. Any actions within the CEHA will consider the impact of coastal flooding, sea level rise and the ability to be designed in line with the requirements set forth by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Several actions propose the removal of pavement and buildings, the construction of trails, sports fields, and support facilities (restrooms, benches, bleachers, etc.) which will cause ground disturbance. Proposed actions will be evaluated to minimize impacts on existing steep slopes and forested areas.

- **Impacts on Surface Water**

Nissequogue River State Park is located along the tidal portion of the Nissequogue River and the Park contains low and high marsh wetlands. There are also emergent freshwater wetlands along drainage corridors leading to and from the former freshwater pond that was converted to a reservoir. The freshwater pond/reservoir, the Nissequogue River, and the tidal marshes are all under regulatory jurisdiction at the State and Federal level. These surface water resources will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Natural Resources, and will include analysis of watersheds, wetlands, and water bodies.

The impacts the Proposed Action may have on surface water will be considered in the DEIS. The potential for future construction of recreational structures or facilities in, or adjacent to, wetlands, as well as in, or on, the banks of other on-site water bodies may have significant impacts. Alternatives will be evaluated.

Some proposed actions within the Master Plan include tree removal, building removal, grading for pathway construction and road removal, actions which could either decrease or increase the amount of impervious surfaces within the Park. Alterations to the steep topography surrounding the reservoir to increase safety may also provide opportunities for the establishment of wetland vegetation. These proposed actions may lead to impacts to surface waters of the Park as the result of stormwater run-off and the transportation of sediments. Impacts to surface waters because of these proposed actions will be analyzed and mitigation proposed within the DEIS.

- **Impacts on Groundwater**

Groundwater will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Subsurface Resources. The Proposed Action may result in changes to usage of groundwater, such as increased usage for recreational areas should the water source be from wells. Decreased usage of groundwater may result from the decommissioning of existing buildings.

Increased infiltration of stormwater may result from the decrease in impermeable surfaces through the removal of roads and buildings that are deemed no longer compatible with proposed park programs. Conversely, expansion or establishment of new paved areas for parking or sport courts in areas that are not currently paved could increase the volume of run-off and decrease infiltration.

- **Impacts on Flooding**

Coastal portions of Nissequogue River State Park are located in the 100-year and 500-year FEMA floodplain. The floodplain locations and extents will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Natural Resources.

The Proposed Action may result in disturbance to lands in the floodplain. Impacts the Proposed Action will have on the land in the floodplain will be considered and alternatives will be evaluated in the DEIS.

Projects such as paving, trail construction/rehabilitation, building removal, or new construction within the floodplain areas are proposed within the Master Plan. These projects will have the potential to impact or be impacted by flooding. Appropriate mitigation measures will be analyzed and recommendations for flood proofing or avoidance of sensitive areas will be provided in the DEIS.

#### - **Impacts on Plants and Animals**

Plants and animals will be considered in the DEIS in the Environmental Setting chapter under the heading Natural Resources. The chapter will include an analysis of the site's ecological communities, as well as its Bird Conservation Area.

Potential impacts of the Master Plan would include vegetation removal associated with construction, as well as removal or management of invasive plant species. Most projects will be located away from sensitive habitats. Activities within the Bird Conservation Area may involve limited tree removal for the creation of paths or trailheads. Tree removals will be scheduled so as not to interfere with breeding or nesting of important bird species or hibernation of bat populations.

Where feasible new park facilities will be placed in already disturbed areas of the Park, i.e., locations where former buildings or parking areas were developed and subsequently abandoned or removed. Proposed parking areas or programs that require paving such as sport courts will be located in existing paved or former building sites. Restoration of forested areas and the creation of dedicated grasslands is proposed and may increase wildlife habitat. Expansion of the Bird Conservation Area will be considered. Impacts of the existing deer population on the existing and proposed ecosystems will be discussed.

#### - **Impacts on Scenic Resources**

The coastal shores of Nissequogue River State Park and mouth of the Nissequogue River constitute scenic resources that will be documented in the DEIS in the Environmental Setting Chapter under the heading Scenic Resources. The DEIS will identify vistas, overlooks, and potential for inclusion in the Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (SASS). The designation would follow New York State Coastal Policy #24 which identifies the criteria for inclusion in this determination and outlines policies for development within designated areas. The entirety of the Park is within the boundaries of the Smithtown LWRP and is considered a scenic resource as a whole, as experienced from all sides.

Any development that occurs on or along the coastal and riverine areas, as the result of the Proposed Action, may have a significant impact. The DEIS will include strategies for mitigating the visual impact that the Proposed Action will have on the site both for proposed park facilities and during periods of construction.



## - **Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources**

Projects undertaken on identified historic buildings and structures may include rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse to meet current needs while maintaining their architectural character and context. The plan will recommend, as appropriate, that all changes to historic elements should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatmentguidelines-2017.pdf>). Any project or activity proposed in the Master Plan that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the Park will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP's Division for Historic Preservation, in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act of 1980.

Archaeological resources have been evaluated through the completion of an archaeological Phase 1A Survey. These historical and archaeological resources will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Cultural Resources; the analysis will include the site's prehistoric context, historic buildings and structures, and archaeology. Project locations will be chosen to avoid sub-surface resources to the greatest extent practicable.

Impacts the Proposed Action may have on the site's historic and archaeological resources include disturbance, demolition, or alteration of the site's historic buildings and structures. The DEIS will evaluate alternatives and identify ways to avoid or mitigate disturbance of archaeologically sensitive areas.

## - **Impacts on Transportation**

Construction impacts of the development of a new trail system could include the removal, realignment, or reuse of existing paved areas. Permanent and temporary road closures could be required for the creation of the new circulation system.

Many internal Park roads that were part of the former KPPC campus have already been closed. Removal of roads and transformation of roads to pedestrian paths would have a temporary construction impact. Following completion of construction, the number of visitors may increase, thereby increasing the number of personal vehicles accessing the Park. The DEIS will evaluate and propose alternatives and provide strategies for mitigating adverse impacts and enhancing impacts to existing transportation resources (trails, bridges, crosswalks, roads, bike lanes, bike share programs, etc.) within and adjacent to the Park and improving transportation and circulation. Analysis of the impact of proposed parking areas and vehicular access to proposed park programs will be evaluated in the DEIS.

The Proposed Action may result in an increase of traffic associated with construction as well as operational changes to the Park. Transportation and site circulation patterns will be documented in the Environmental Resources chapter of the DEIS under the heading Infrastructure. Analysis will include traffic patterns surrounding the site, circulation through the site, existing roadway capacity, parking usage, proximity to transit, and bikeway and pedestrian circulation routes.

## - **Impacts on Energy**

Energy resources will be documented in the Environmental Resources chapter of the DEIS under the heading Infrastructure. This section will include an analysis of exterior electric

services that feed building and site lighting and park amenities such as ball fields, walkways, and parking.

The Proposed Action may result in impacts to energy uses on site. The reuse of historical buildings and additional site programming may require additional lighting or other electrical services. Buildings supporting park programming will require lighting systems within the buildings and in the adjacent landscape. Safe transition between parking areas and pedestrian paths to buildings will require dedicated lighting, assuming programs within those structures would extend past dark on a regular basis .

The exploration of solar powered or other “off-the-grid” energy sources will be explored as options to traditional hardwired energy systems for the Park.

The DEIS will propose and evaluate alternatives; it will also provide strategies for mitigating impacts to energy resources and consumption at the Park.

- **Impacts on Noise, Odor, and Light**

Impacts relating to noise, odor, and light will be documented in the DEIS in the Environmental Resources chapter under the heading Operations.

The Proposed Action may impact how outdoor lighting associated with site programming is deployed. The Master Plan will study the future needs for security lighting, pathway lighting, sports lighting, and streetlights. Any permanent exterior lighting system or safety lighting proposed should be Dark Sky Compliant to reduce light pollution in the forms of sky glow, light trespass, and glare. Any locations designated as event venues will be evaluated for noise, odor and light.

New construction resulting from the Proposed Action may temporarily increase noise in NRSP and the surrounding area. Construction activities may also be associated with related odors, such as fuel odors. The DEIS will propose and evaluate alternatives and provide strategies for mitigating impacts of noise, odor, and light during and after construction associated with the Proposed Action.

## VII. RESOURCES UNLIKELY TO BE IMPACTED BY THE PROPOSED ACTION

This section addresses areas that are not likely to be impacted by actions proposed in the Draft Master Plan and will not be discussed further in the DEIS.

### - **Impacts on Geological Features**

The site's geological features will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Natural Resources. The Proposed Action is not expected to have an adverse impact on geological features. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in modification or destruction of cliffs, dunes, caves, minerals, fossils, or any other unique landforms.

### - **Impacts on Air**

Air quality will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Natural Resources. The Proposed Action is not expected to result in adverse impacts on air quality; temporary increases in emissions from construction equipment on site may occur, however, as well as increases in vehicular emissions due to increased traffic following completion of site improvements. Activities related to demolitions and construction have potential to create temporary increase of dust and vehicular and construction-related emissions. These impacts will be reviewed in the DEIS in the Environmental Resources chapter under the Infrastructure heading, and mitigation measures will be identified.

### - **Impact on Open Space and Recreation**

Site recreational and open space resources will be documented in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the Recreational Resources and Activities heading. The Proposed Action would not result in reduction of open space or recreational resources, nor would it impair the function of the site's natural systems. We anticipate that the Proposed Action will enhance and significantly expand recreational and open space resources and opportunities. The Proposed Action would not have an adverse impact on adjacent open space or recreation resources.

### - **Impacts on Critical Environmental Areas**

The northern portions of the Park include a low salt marsh ecological community which is designated by the New York Natural Heritage Program as a Significant Ecological Community due to its relative scarcity in the state. The coastal areas of the Park are within the broader 750-acre Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat designated by the NYS Coastal Management Program. The Proposed Action does not propose alterations in these areas therefore would not have an adverse impact on Critical Environmental Areas.

### - **Impacts on Human Health**

Impacts on human health will be considered in the Environmental Setting chapter of the DEIS under the heading Recreational Resources. The Proposed Action is not expected to result in the creation of a hazard to human health. A primary goal of the Master Plan is to improve conditions for community use, therefore have a positive impact on human health through access to trails, natural areas and abundant recreational resources.

- **Consistency with Community Plans and Community Character**

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts on community character. NRSP is located on land under the jurisdiction of OPRHP. Local zoning requirements are preempted by the state, thus precluding compliance with local zoning code. Stakeholder engagement undertaken during the development of the Master Plan, however, will include coordination with local planning officials, with the intention of aligning the Master Plan goals with broader planning goals and objectives of Smithtown and surrounding communities.

The plan will be evaluated for compatibility in relation to the current planning efforts underway by Smithtown, specifically *Town of Smithtown's Comprehensive Plan Update*. Proposed Actions will also be reviewed for regulatory compliance and consistency with Smithtown's 1989 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), and the New York State Wild, Scenic and Recreational River (WSRR) program.

- **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

The implementation of the Master Plan may result in some unavoidable adverse impacts. There could be some minimal permanent loss of pervious soil surface and vegetative cover because of construction of new facilities, such as new proposed buildings and trails. Construction will be monitored by Park staff and actions will be taken, if necessary, to prevent any significant impacts from occurring. In addition, there may also be temporary air and noise impacts (e.g., fugitive dust, noise from construction equipment and vehicles, etc.) associated with construction and demolition of proposed improvements. Construction is generally scheduled for periods of low park use to minimize impacts to park visitors.

- **Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

The planning, development, and implementation of this Master Plan—including rehabilitation of facilities, improvements to parking areas, new construction of buildings and trails, and more—has and will involve the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of public resources in the form of time, labor and materials. It will also require a commitment to the long-term operation and maintenance costs of the Park.

## VIII. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The DEIS will analyze cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action in accordance with SEQR requirements (6 NYCRR 617.9). Cumulative impacts will be defined as “two or more related actions undertaken, funded or approved by an agency, none of which has or would have a significant impact on the environment, but when considered cumulatively would meet one or more of the criteria in this subdivision.” The DEIS will define cumulative impact; describe reasonably foreseeable actions relevant to the cumulative impacts and evaluate potential cumulative impacts that may result from the interaction of coincidental effects on the same environmental resource.

## **IX. REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES**

The main body of the DEIS will provide sufficient detail about the Proposed Action and potential impacts to site resources, so that readers can understand, interpret, evaluate alternatives, and understand proposed mitigation measures. References with information supporting the research for the environmental setting and design approach will be listed along with relevant maps or figures.

The purpose of any technical studies of the site that are conducted in preparation for the release of the DEIS, as well as their findings, will be summarized in the DEIS. The appendices will contain all technical studies with information supporting the findings relayed in the DEIS.

## X. KEY MAP

Map showing the Park's boundaries and reference numbers for existing buildings.



## XI. APPENDICES

The appendices will include at a minimum:

1. SEQR Documentation (Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF), Positive Declaration, Final Scoping Document)
  2. Illustrative Maps
  3. Recreational Survey Results
  4. Archaeological Studies
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