

MEMORANDUM

To: Clough, Harbour & Associates, LLP

From: ConsultEcon, Inc.

RE: Emerson Park Market Assessment

Date: June 6, 2001

This report reviews the market potential for a number of proposed uses at Emerson Park, a County park located in the Town of Auburn, Cayuga County, New York. This report first describes the existing conditions of Emerson Park, including existing facilities and recreational opportunities. Utilization of park facilities is also reviewed to better understand usage levels and patterns, as they will help to inform the market potential of planned future uses. As well, the demographic and economic characteristics of the wider regional market are reviewed to better understand the demographic make-up of area residents, who are the primary users of the park. This report then discusses the market potential of and makes planning recommendations for four potential uses at Emerson Park. The four uses for Emerson Park under consideration include the following:

- ◆ Hotel/conference center
- ◆ Full-service restaurant
- ◆ Water park/water play area
- ◆ Ice skating trail

PARK DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Emerson Park is the flagship of the Cayuga County Parks & Trails system. Emerson Park is located on the northern shore of Owasco Lake, to the south of the center of Auburn, New York. Emerson Park is accessible from the east and west from the New York State Thruway and Route

20, a major travel route between the Syracuse metropolitan area and the Finger Lakes region of New York. Access from the north and south is facilitated by Routes 34, 38 and 38A, which merge in the City of Auburn. The land on which the park currently sits has been a landmark for recreational pursuits since 1889, when an amusement park opened on Deauville Island, followed by a hotel a decade later. The park, in its current configuration, came into being in 1968, when Deauville Island was added to surrounding lands. Emerson Park’s history as a destination for active and passive recreation continues to this day. The park is now most closely associated with the Merry-go-round Theater, a renowned summer theater whose stage is located within the park. As well, the park is known for its Victorian-era pavilion, which has a ballroom and a separate dining room, which is used often for weddings, receptions and other functions. Furthermore, Emerson Park is home to the Ward O’Hara Agricultural Museum, which interprets turn of the century farming life. The park also has boat launch facilities and rents boat slips and shelters throughout the park. The park has also been the home of a local little league, though the little league is moving to another facility.

Because of the many ways Emerson Park can be used, or “visited,” producing an exact number of annual park uses is difficult. However, due to the numerous scheduled activities at Emerson Park annually, it is possible to determine a general scale of operations. The Ward O’Hara Agricultural Museum, for instance, received approximately 5,000 visits in 2000, according to the American Association of Museum’s *Official Museum Directory, 2001*. Emerson Park is also heavily utilized for recurring events, such as the Merry-go-round Theater and Pavilion rentals, and for annual events and festivals. The Merry-go-round Theater, for instance, reports that it has 28,000 to 30,000 visitors per season. As well, the Merry-go-round Theater is planning to add 150 seats to its existing capacity of 450 as part of a \$2 million expansion. This expansion should notably increase utilization of Emerson Park during performance dates.

Table 1 below shows the attendance (where attendance has been estimated at annual events at Emerson Park.

Table 1
Estimated Attendance at Annual Events at Emerson Park

Event	Estimated Attendance
The Great Race (running)	10,000+ participants and spectators
Welcoming Summer Festival	3,000+ participants
Tomato Fest	10,000 to 12,000 participants
4 th of July Celebration	15,000+ (Syracuse Symphony and fireworks)
Prison City Ramblers Car Show	250 to 350 cars on display
Conservation Field Days	NA
Antique Car Show	NA

The events for which visitation is estimated bring an estimated 38,000 to 40,000 visitors to Emerson Park annually. The actual number of visitors for annual events is likely to be higher, when attendances for the car shows and Conservation Field days are factored in. As well, parking revenues of \$50,000 annually is translated into 25,000 cars paying for parking at Emerson Park at \$2.00 per car. At an assumed average of two occupants per car, this translates into 50,000 park users paying for parking annually.

Because of the Merry-go-round Theater and the pavilion, utilization of the park is not limited to daytime activity. In fact, the park can become quite heavily used on summer evenings in particular, when a theater production is shown in conjunction with an event at the pavilion. This fact transforms the role of the park from an open waterfront space used primarily for outdoor recreation to a destination for planned, often ticketed, events and activities. For these reasons, Emerson Park has come to be known throughout the region as a multi-faceted destination point for visitors that can accommodate simultaneous recreational and social pursuits.

REGIONAL RESIDENT MARKET CONTEXT

Emerson Park sits in the middle of Cayuga County, one of the four counties (the others being Onondaga, Madison and Oswego) that comprise the greater Syracuse metropolitan market. The

City of Auburn lies approximately 35 miles due west of the City of Syracuse, the largest city in Central New York. Because of the scale and the nature of the attractions at Emerson Park, most of its visitors will come from the surrounding region. **Table 2** shows estimated year 2000 demographic and household information for the greater Syracuse metropolitan market.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Syracuse Metropolitan Area Counties

County	Estimated 2000 Population	Projected 2005 Population	% Change 2000-2005	2000 Households	Average Household Size
Cayuga	81,700	79,600	-2.6	29,000	2.82
Madison	71,800	72,800	1.4	24,900	2.88
Onondaga	454,700	446,000	-1.9	174,900	2.59
Oswego	123,600	123,000	-0.5	43,900	2.82
Total	731,800	721,400	-1.4	272,700	2.68

Source: Sales & Marketing Management, *2000 Survey of Buying Power*.

Emerson Park is situated within a market of over 700,000 residents. Though this population is projected to decline, most significantly in Cayuga County, this is still a sizable market to draw from for a number of potential uses at the park. As well, with the notable exception of Onondaga County, the market is home to a fair number of larger households, likely indicating the presence of children.

The age distribution of residents also provides information on the potential markets for developments at Emerson Park. **Table 3** shows the distribution of the resident population counties by age cohorts.

Table 3

Distribution of Age by Cohorts, Syracuse Metropolitan Area Counties

County	Percent to Total				
	Under 18	18 to 24	24 to 35	35 to 49	50 and Over
Cayuga	25.9	8.4	14.1	22.6	29.0
Madison	25.2	14.1	12.3	22.3	26.1
Onondaga	24.7	10.2	14.1	22.6	28.4
Oswego	28.1	11.0	13.6	22.5	24.8
Average	25.5	10.5	13.8	22.6	27.6

Source: Sales & Marketing Management, *2000 Survey of Buying Power*.

In terms of age distribution, Cayuga County is notable for the lower percentage of residents ages 18 to 24, and for a higher than average percentage of residents under 18 and 50 and over.

Throughout the counties, more than half of all residents are under the age of 18 or over the age of 50.

Income characteristics also play a role in the potential for new developments at Emerson Park. Many existing park facilities already have fees associated with them, though fees should be sufficiently low so as not to be a financial burden. In **Table 4** the median household income of the resident area counties are compared to the income for the State of New York and the United States as a whole.

Table 4
1999 and 2000 Median Household Income,
Syracuse Metropolitan Area Counties and Comparison to
New York and United States Averages

County	1999 Median Household Income (\$)	2000 Median Household Income (\$)
Cayuga County	30,993	32,148
Madison County	32,368	33,879
Onondaga County	33,207	34,848
Oswego County	33,385	34,892
United States		39,400
New York		37,200

Source: Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce

Median household income characteristics are similar among the resident area counties, ranging from approximately \$32,100 in Cayuga County to \$34,900 in Oswego County. These figures are below both the median household income level for the State of New York and the United States as a whole. Pricing at potential facilities at Emerson Park should be sensitive to the income characteristics of the most likely park users and in keeping with the prices for similar activities and facilities in the region. Cayuga County should investigate providing services at subsidized rates for County residents or free of charge, if at all possible.

Summary

The resident market for Emerson Park is drawn from the counties comprising the Syracuse metropolitan area. This market has over 700,000 residents who will likely comprise the base of market support for a number of recreational developments at Emerson Park. This resident population is at once youthful and aging, reinforcing the diverse profile of existing and potential park users.

MARKET ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED USES AT EMERSON PARK

The four uses for Emerson Park under consideration include the following:

- ◆ Hotel/conference center
- ◆ Full-service restaurant
- ◆ Water park/water play area
- ◆ Ice skating trail

These potential uses are treated individually to determine the market potential of each. The examination of these potential uses is supported by information on the wider market context and, where available, relevant examples of similar uses that have been successfully implemented in other markets. It is not assumed that these uses are mutually exclusive; in fact, a combination of any two or more of these uses at Emerson Park may provide a market opportunity in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

HOTEL/CONFERENCE CENTER

A use under consideration for Emerson Park is a new hotel and conference center development. A hotel would not be a new concept for the park – in the early 1900s, a hotel was located on Deauville Island and served as a weekend and vacation retreat for urban dwellers. The setting and current infrastructure of Emerson Park makes this location a potentially attractive one for both leisure overnight travelers and business interests seeking conference, retreat and event facilities. Emerson Park offers opportunities for water- and landside recreation as well as entertainment at the highly regarded Merry-go-round Theater. As well, the Finger Lakes region is an established visitor destination, and Auburn’s proximity to larger urban areas such as Syracuse and Rochester makes the site accessible to firms seeking conference or retreat facilities.

The configuration of a proposed hotel/conference center is as of yet undetermined. Because the hotel marketplace is so varied, a potential hotel/conference center development could be configured in a number of ways. Variables include the type of visitor the development wishes to attract, price relative to the market rates for competitive properties, the extent of visitor amenities and services, and project scale, among other issues.

The Conference Center Marketplace

Hotel/conference centers occupy a special niche in the lodgings and meetings industry. While commercial hotels continue to accommodate the largest share of meeting and conference activity due to their sheer numbers, the marketplace has started to diversify and specialize. Evolving from this diversification are conference centers that focus on the meetings niche of the overall market, especially the portion of the market demand that is oriented to smaller meetings facilities. Conference centers specialize in small to medium sized meetings, averaging about 20 to 50 persons, though sometimes they can accommodate up to 100 or more. Conference centers are designed to provide functional spaces and extensive services such as audio-visual equipment and food service and recreation facilities. The advantage of conference centers over hotels is their ability to customize their facilities and services to the particular needs of meeting planners. As well, conference facilities typically offer “complete meetings packages” which provide an all-inclusive, per-day charge that simplifies meeting planning and budgeting.

There is substantial variation in the conference center marketplace. These variations include

- ◆ **Executive Conference Centers.** These are developed primarily to satisfy requirements of upper-level management planning sessions and training seminars. Users are typically corporations and associations that emphasize the quality of the facility over price considerations, and these centers are typified by personalized service, high quality amenities and food, and recreation opportunities.
- ◆ **Resort Conference Centers.** These are similar to executive centers in emphasizing quality over pricing considerations. However, resort conference centers also emphasize recreation and social functions as well as work meetings. Usually located in scenic rural areas, these facilities offer many resort amenities such as spas or golf as part of their package.
- ◆ **Corporate-owned.** Corporate conference centers are primarily developed for the in-house use of major corporations. They are similar in design and operation to executive centers. Companies may make their conference facilities available to other users when not in use.
- ◆ **University.** University conference centers are usually developed and operated by major educational institutions, though joint ventures and operating agreements with private

owners/operators is not uncommon. These centers are usually located on or adjacent to a university campus. Primary users include university-related, technical and academic organizations. University centers are more price-sensitive than executive and resort centers.

- ◆ **Not-for-profit.** Not-for-profit conference centers have some characteristics of executive centers and university centers. Typically, these centers are established as independent educational or training facilities and may or may not be affiliated with a larger not-for-profit organization or a university from which educational and outreach programs are offered. Price sensitivity is a greater consideration with this type of conference center.
- ◆ **Non-residential.** Non-residential conference centers offer many of the attributes of executive, corporate and resort centers, but they do not offer overnight accommodations and they are designed for day meetings only. These centers are usually located in urban areas and lodging is often available nearby. All other services, such as audio-visual equipment, food, and customer service are expected to be of the same quality as other conference facilities.
- ◆ **Ancillary.** The ancillary conference center is a facility that is part of a larger hospitality facility. An example of ancillary center would be a conference center wing of a larger resort. Like all other conference centers, these facilities must offer a complete package of conference rooms and services.

Conference centers are designed to serve the small meetings market. There is a growing public understanding about the conference center concept and acceptance of the benefits of the product and its commercial viability. Though the meetings industry is competitive, it tends to be locally and regionally based. The exceptions to this, of course, are major convention destinations such as Las Vegas and Chicago, which have a national and international draw and reputation.

Hotel/ Conference Center Competitive Context

An examination of the competitive context of the hotel/conference center marketplace helps to explain not only the number of facilities that exist in the region but also their characteristics and placement within the regional marketplace. Assuming the available market for a hotel/conference center at 100 miles, data in **Table 5** describe the name, location and some characteristics of facilities that fall under the broad hotel/conference center classification. These facilities are listed in order of their proximity to Emerson Park outward.

Table 5

Conference Centers and Hotels with Conference Center Facilities in Central New York

Name	Location	Distance from Site	Number of Rooms	Number of Meeting Rooms	Largest Meeting Room Size/ Capacity
Days Inn	Auburn	...	51	NA	NA
Holiday Inn	Auburn	...	166	6	6,000 SF
Sherwood Inn	Skaneateles	11 miles	20	4	1,350 SF
Holiday Inn	Waterloo	19 miles	147	8	9,100 SF *
Geneva on the Lake	Geneva	26 miles	30	3	35 person capacity
Ramada Inn	Geneva	26 miles	148	6	3,000 SF
Holiday Inn Cortland	Cortland	38 miles	148	2	5,000 SF
Quality Inn	Newark	38 miles	107	7	300 person capacity
Best Western University Inn	Ithaca	40 miles	94	2	1,500 SF
Clarion Hotel	Ithaca	40 miles	106	13	4,150 SF
Holiday Inn Executive Tower	Ithaca	40 miles	178	5	3,000 SF
Ithaca Ramada Inn Airport	Ithaca	40 miles	122	11	3,200 SF
The Statler Hotel	Ithaca	40 miles	150	8	4,140 SF
Rose Inn	Ithaca	40 miles	21	2	1,000 SF
Inn on the Lake	Canandaigua	44 miles	134	6	NA
Sunrise Hill Inn	Canandaigua	44 miles	104	2	250 person capacity
Bristol Harbour Resort	Canandaigua	44 miles	NA	1	600 SF
Viking Resort	Penn Yan	49 miles	18 **	boat	60 person capacity
White Eagle Conference Center	Hamilton	86 miles	65	14	3,000 SF
TOTALS			1,809	101	

* Total square footage for all function rooms.

** Resort is comprised of 18 cottages with occupancies from 2 to 10 persons.

Source: Individual facilities listed.

The criteria for inclusion in the above list were overnight accommodations facilities with adjoining conference facilities that are located in smaller cities, rural areas or on a lakefront. For this reason, the Syracuse hotel and conference center marketplace is considered separately, as it occupies a distinct, urban-oriented segment of the marketplace.

Within the 100-mile radius of Auburn, there are 19 identified facilities of varying sizes and configurations that would form the competitive marketplace for a potential development at

Emerson Park. Of these facilities, only one—the White Eagle Conference Center—is a conference center, based on the definitions provided earlier. These 19 facilities have a combined 1,800 rooms and 101 conference facilities that range from small meeting rooms to large ballrooms to a boat.

There also exists substantial differentiation within the identified competitive hotels and conference centers. The table below identifies the pricing structure and ascribes market segment by lodging type for each facility. The lodging type segmentation is based on Urban Land Institute classifications developed for its publication, *Hotel Development*. The classifications are based on the price, number of rooms, amenities, and services available to guests, and are used in classifying the types of facilities listed in **Table 6**. They are as follows:

- ◆ **Lower-range economy hotel.** Room rates at about 50 percent below market. Generally 50 to 125 rooms with limited services and exterior corridors. Example: Super 8.
- ◆ **Middle-range full service hotel.** A commercial hotel with a wide range of facilities and amenities. Fully furnished rooms with prices at or slightly above market rates. Generally 100 to 500 rooms. Example: Holiday Inn.
- ◆ **Upper-range full service hotel.** A commercial hotel with a wide range of facilities and amenities, including restaurants, bars and health clubs. Fully furnished rooms with prices slightly above market rates. Generally 100 to 500 rooms. Example: Hilton Hotels or Hyatt Regency.

Table 6
Lodging Classification and Pricing for Hotels with
Conference Facilities in Central New York

Name	Location	Price, Double Occupancy Room	Lodging Type/ Description
Days Inn	Auburn	69	lower range economy hotel
Holiday Inn	Auburn	129	middle range full service hotel
Sherwood Inn	Skaneateles	170	historic waterfront inn
Holiday Inn	Waterloo	139	middle range full service hotel
Geneva on the Lake	Geneva	258	executive resort; lakefront
Ramada Inn	Geneva	149	middle range full service hotel; lakefront
Holiday Inn Cortland	Cortland	119	middle range full service hotel
Quality Inn	Newark	119	middle range full service hotel
Best Western University Inn	Ithaca	109	middle range full service hotel
Clarion Hotel	Ithaca	189	upper range full service hotel
Holiday Inn Executive Tower	Ithaca	99	middle range full service hotel
Ithaca Ramada Inn Airport	Ithaca	229	upper range full service hotel
The Statler Hotel	Ithaca	190	upper range full service hotel
Rose Inn	Ithaca	200	bed & breakfast; historic mansion
Inn on the Lake	Canandaigua	179	historic waterfront inn
Sunrise Hill Inn	Canandaigua	69	lower range economy hotel
Bristol Harbour Resort	Canandaigua	NA	executive resort; lakefront
Viking Resort	Penn Yan	95	self-service cottages; lakefront
White Eagle Conference Center	Hamilton	*	full-service conference and retreat facility

* Lodging facilities are factored into total cost of conference center rental.

Source: Individual facilities listed and ConsultEcon, Inc.

In addition to these “standard” classifications, several of the facilities listed in Table 6 are individually described. They are not as easily classified as standard hotels due to their unique nature. Generally, an inn is classified as a small hotel with less than 50 rooms, though offering a wide array of facilities and services. Bed and breakfasts have even fewer rooms than inns, and they are shared with a private residence, usually of the owner/operator. A resort implies a large hotel facility with ample surrounding land for golf, tennis and other recreational pursuits.

As shown in the table, some hotels like Days Inn and Holiday Inn are well-known hotel brands with national exposure and a familiar product type. Others are independent facilities ranging from small historic inns to waterfront resorts, some of which are exclusive, elegant facilities and some of which offer very limited services. The level of the amenities and services offered are reflected in the pricing of each facility. For instance, a mid-range full service hotel will be able to provide conference attendees with standard but limited food service options, while a resort facility tends to be utilized for weddings and parties in addition to conferences, and often has a full catering staff available for functions.

The Syracuse Hotel and Conference Center Market

According to the Greater Syracuse Convention and Visitor Bureau, there are approximately 6,200 hotel rooms in Syracuse and Onondaga County. There are about 4,000 rooms within a seven-mile radius of downtown Syracuse, while the rest are scattered throughout the remainder of the County. These 4,000 hotel rooms are located in three main clusters throughout the Syracuse area:

- ◆ Downtown/University. Proximate to downtown Syracuse and the Syracuse University campus.
- ◆ East/Carrier Circle. In the Town of DeWitt, proximate to a number of business and technology parks and the New York State Thruway.
- ◆ North/Airport. Adjacent to Hancock International Airport and at the Interstate 81/New York State Thruway Interchange.

Syracuse is also a significant destination for meetings and convention business. This is in part due to its location in Central New York along a number of major highways, as well as the existing facilities in the area that can accommodate very large meetings and conventions. The major meetings facilities in Syracuse include:

- ◆ Empire Expo Center. Located on the New York State Fairgrounds northwest of downtown Syracuse. This facility offers up to 300,000 square feet of space available for rent.

- ◆ On Center Complex. This complex consists of the Onondaga County Convention Center, War Memorial building and Civic Center Theaters. It is located in the heart of downtown Syracuse.
- ◆ Major full-service hotels, including Sheraton University Hotel and Conference Center, which has over 13,000 SF of meeting space.

Syracuse Market Trends

The Greater Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau reports that there is growing demand for hotel rooms in the Syracuse market as evidenced by steadily increasing occupancy rates. Two projects in the planning stages are hoping to capitalize on the growing demand. The Pyramid Companies is planning to begin a three-phase, \$900 million expansion of the *Carousel Center Mall*, which will create one of the largest malls in North America. The 3.6 million SF expansion of the existing property, located along Interstate 81 just north of downtown Syracuse, will add 150 new stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. As well, the expansion project calls for 800 hotel rooms, which will make it the largest hotel property in the region. As well, the Greater Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau, a new hotel is planned for State Fair Boulevard adjacent to the New York State Fairgrounds. This hotel property is believed to be a Best Western, and will have no less than 50 rooms initially, with the potential to add on. This hotel property is of interest because it is to the west of Syracuse in the direction of Auburn and the Finger Lakes region. It may signal the development of a cluster of hotels in this area, which in turn will raise the competitive context for a hotel/conference center development in Auburn.

Site Considerations

The type and function of hotels and conference centers are often reflective of their physical surroundings. Urban hotels and conference facilities tend to be larger in order to make them economically viable and they pay special attention to core business travelers with amenities such as data ports and on-site, underground parking. Exurban or rural hotels and conference facilities tend to integrate themselves more into the physical landscape, especially higher-priced resorts and conference facilities that have ownership over larger parcels of land and waterfront. Clearly, it is important that any lodgings development be appropriate to its market potential and its

surroundings in terms of size, available services and amenities, its integration with adjacent and nearby uses, parking requirements and design. In the case of Emerson Park, it is important that any hotel/conference development not overwhelm the site on which it sits and encroach upon other park uses that are familiar to and valued by park users.

The attractive landscape and views, however, are also the factors that may give a hotel/conference center development a competitive advantage with respect to the wider hotel marketplace. Very few hotels with conference facilities have waterfront views or access, as evidenced in Table 6. In fact, there are no hotel/conference center facilities on the waterfront in Syracuse on Onondaga Lake or in the immediate area, along Oneida Lake. The lakefront location is a principal driver behind the market potential of a hotel/conference center development at Emerson Park, which brings with it associated market opportunities as well as impacts on the park itself.

The potential costs and benefits of a hotel development at Emerson Park should be weighed. To test the potential space needed for such a development, an illustrative facility sizing profile for a typical 100 to 120-room hotel is provided.

Table 7
Illustrative Hotel/Conference Center Sizing, Square Feet

Description	Factor	100 Rooms	120 Rooms
Room Size	350 SF per room	35,000	42,000
Ancillary Services/Circulation SF	50% of total room SF	17,500	21,000
Total Building SF		52,500	63,000
Parking	1.5 spaces per room	150	180
Parking SF	162 SF per space	16,200	19,440
Circulation SF	125 SF per space	12,500	15,000
Total Parking & Circulation SF		28,700	34,440

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

Total building square footage is estimate at 52,500 to 63,000 square feet. Exterior parking and circulation will require an additional 28,700 to 34,400 square feet. Given the potential public functions of the facility (dining services, conference facilities), potential parking demand is addressed at 1.5 spaces per room. For the site on which the facility is located, a floor area ratio (FAR), which calculates the lot size surrounding the facility, of 2.0 to 3.0 is estimated. A FAR of 2.0 results in a total lot size of 105,000 square feet. A FAR of 3.0 results in a total lot size of 157,500 square feet. Measured in terms of acreage, an estimated 2.4 to 3.6 acres would be needed to develop a hotel facility of the size indicated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the market and competitive context of hotel/conference center facilities in the region, as well as the spatial requirements necessary for such a development at Emerson Park, the following conclusions and recommendations are set forth:

- ◆ The viability of a hotel development at Emerson Park depends heavily on a waterfront location on Owasco Lake. A hotel development away from the water (e.g., on the north side of Rt. 38A) greatly reduces its viability and appeal.
- ◆ The scale and type of park utilization is generally supportive of a hotel development. There are a number of events annually at Emerson Park that could create demand for overnight accommodations. These include in particular evening events such as the Merry-go-round Theater. However, it should be noted that most of these events occur in the summertime, when hotel utilization by leisure visitors is likely to be at its peak. It is assumed that the hotel will be a year-round operation, and the hotel must be sustainable during periods of lower utilization.
- ◆ A conference center/retreat facility (without overnight accommodations) is not recommended. Generally, these specialized facilities are located on expansive, private property with few distractions. A public park setting without controlled access is generally not conducive to the goals of retreat participants.
- ◆ Any lodgings development be appropriate to its market potential and its surroundings in terms of size, available services and amenities, its integration with adjacent and nearby uses, parking requirements and design. A hotel development of 40 to 80, but less than 100 rooms – with 2 to 4 conference rooms – might be appropriate, depending on the responses to a request of proposals. The interior should have modern amenities, though the exterior design should be sympathetic with the other park uses in terms of scale and design. This will help integrate the new development within the existing built

environment of the park. A primary market for the conference part of the Inn is the Syracuse corporate market. Currently, there are no hotels or conference/convention facilities in the Syracuse area (Onondaga Lake or Oneida Lake) that are on the waterfront, presenting an appealing market opportunity at Emerson Park.

- ◆ An accommodations facility may be of the scale to affect the physical attributes of and use patterns within the park. It is in the County's best interest to have a partner that is committed not only to the well being of his or her own site but also to long term well-being of the Park.

RESTAURANT

A second potential use at Emerson Park is to locate a restaurant on the site of a building currently used as maintenance shed. Currently there is no food service facility at Emerson Park and park users must go off-site in order to purchase food and refreshments.

Site Location

The restaurant site is located to the west of the historic pavilion along the canal that separates Deauville Island from the eastern half of the park. There is parking nearby, as well as more remote parking available adjacent to the Merry-go-round Theater. Depending on the orientation of the building the main dining room and a patio could provide exceptional views of Owasco Lake. The lakefront, the graceful pavilion and the general ambiance of Emerson Park make this a very attractive location for a restaurant.

The downside of the proposed location of the restaurant is poor visibility resulting from its distance from the road. Because of the interest in preserving views of the lake, it is likely that a restaurant development will have a low physical profile. As such, adequate signage will be needed along the roadside to direct patrons to the restaurant. Nonetheless, with appropriate marketing, positive word-of-mouth advertising, and its lakefront location, the restaurant can potentially overcome this challenge.

Market Segments

The restaurant would serve not only the overall restaurant market in Auburn but serve demand for two food service types generated in this location: indoor restaurant and outside café. A full service restaurant could occupy the indoors and café type service could be offered for the outdoor areas. The restaurant's theme, menu, price points and so forth would depend on future study and the operator. Restaurant service can include a number of grilled items as well as sandwiches, salads and lighter fare. A café might offer outdoor dining, appetizers, salads and light meals as well as beverages.

Potential Building Program for Food Service

Data in **Table 8** provide an illustrative program of spaces that responds to the layout of the restaurant. This is of course prepared just to test the basic feasibility of a restaurant in this location; the allocation of spaces is based upon a total property footprint of approximately 3,500 to 4,500 square feet. If outdoor patio dining is a permitted use, the ability to offer tables with outstanding views and ambiance would be created, and the somewhat tight interior space configuration would be alleviated. It is reasonable to expect that an architectural design could be successfully created for restaurant and food service that is sensitive to the existing ambiance of Emerson Park and that satisfies existing restrictions on facilities in the park.

Feasibility

Restaurants and food service facilities of this scale are successful in many places. Food service near public attractions such as waterfront parks, and visitor destinations such as the Merry-go-round Theater have a “built-in” market base to build from. The outdoor seating would allow the operator to serve peak period demand at a relatively low capital investment. A summary of usage levels that might be needed to create a financially successful project is shown in **Table 9**. These usage patterns are possible given the location near existing and new destinations and the potential for a project of this type and location to compete in the general Auburn restaurant market.

A preliminary test of project feasibility in **Table 10** uses the illustrative food service use profile to test the feasibility of a restaurant given the demand assumptions and typical factors for restaurant operations. Another set of assumptions used in testing project feasibility was the capital cost of the project, assumed in this analysis at \$1.6 million, assuming no land acquisition costs, though assuming costs for construction and building fit-out.

Table 8
Illustrative Program for Restaurant Use at Emerson Park

	Square Footage	Seating	Notes
Entry/Vestibule			
Hostess / Waiting / Foyer	150		
Circulation / Mechanical / Architectural	<u>150</u>		
Total	300		
Main Dining Room			
Seating	1,440	80	Seating @18/SF seat
Restaurant Restrooms	250		
Kitchen / Food Prep	620		
Bus Area/ Beverages, Salad, Bread & Dessert Area	350		
Storage / Offices / Maintenance	350		
Circulation / Mechanical / Architectural	<u>200</u>		
Total	<u><u>3,210</u></u>		
Total Interior SF	3,510		
Patio Area	660	30	Seating @22/SF seat helps address seasonal demand
Total Interior and Exterior	4,170	110	

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 9
Illustration of Potential Use of Restaurant at Emerson Park

	Seating	Months Used	Days Used	Seat "Turns" Per Day	Annual Seat "Turns"	Notes
Dining Room	80	12	360	2.5	72,000	Facility Rentals Possible
Patio	30	6	180	2.5	13,500	Outdoor music etc. increases demand
Total	110				85,500	

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

Table 10

Illustrative Analysis of Financial Feasibility of a Restaurant at Emerson Park

	Annual Seat "Turns"	Average Check	Total Sales	Supportable Capital Costs @ 25%	Sales Per SF
Main Dining Room	72,000	\$18	1,296,000	2,700,000	\$310.79
Patio Area	13,500	\$12	162,000	337,500	\$38.85
Total	85,500		\$1,458,000	\$3,037,500	\$349.64
Operating Cost Profile					Factor
Food Costs	25.0%		364,500		
Staff Costs	39.0%		568,620		
Util / Ins./trash	0.6%		17,550		\$5/SF
Maint/Cleaning	0.7%		21,060		\$6/SF
Other	9.0%		131,220		
Total	74.3%		\$1,102,950		
Net Income Potential	25.7%		\$355,050		
Potential Project Capital Cost			Potential Capital Costs		
	Cost Factor per SF				
Interior	\$250		\$877,500		Includes fit-out
Patio	\$25		16,500		
Total			\$894,000		
Building Acquisition ^{1/}	\$0		-		
Construction Costs	\$125		521,250		
Soft Costs	20%		178,800		
Total potential Cost			\$1,594,050		

1/ This is an assumption that there will be no acquisition costs for the property on which the restaurant is planned to be located.

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

Based on a pro-forma capital cost and operating analysis for a restaurant of this scale, the net income potential of approximately \$350,000 appears to be reasonable to cover any costs for land rent, mortgage costs and developer profit. These costs, however, would be determined by the nature of the financial approach taken by the County in its relationship with a private party to develop the restaurant. The approach taken can range from a long-term land lease, in which the developer assumes the bulk of the costs associated with the development of the restaurant, to a

substantial financial involvement of the landowner in developing the facility and a stake in the profits resulting from its operation by a private party.

While this is only a preliminary test of restaurant use feasibility, these findings indicate that more detailed investigations of restaurant business potential are warranted. A restaurant use might infuse capital into a public space that can help support other operations at Emerson Park. In addition, a lively public use would be added to the waterfront that would be mutually reinforcing with other existing and potential uses at Emerson Park. The food service use would provide a necessary ingredient to making Emerson park a successful destination for residents and visitors alike.

Summary and Recommendations

- ◆ Assuming few or no restrictions and a building size of approximately 3,500 to 4,500 SF, a restaurant along the waterfront at Emerson Park could be quite viable.
- ◆ A waterfront location would be very appealing to visitors, though the closer the restaurant is to the water, the less visible it may be from the road. Appropriate roadside signage is recommended.
- ◆ Though the restaurant seeks to be open year-round, any potential owner/operator should be aware that business would vary greatly with the seasons. Summer will be busiest, considering the combination of theater, boating, annual events (summer festivals held at the park), and higher general levels of park usage. Wintertime business will come mostly from local residents and will be lower than summertime business.
- ◆ The success of a year-round restaurant at Emerson Park depends heavily on the type of product offered and the differentiation of the product from other restaurants in the area. Though it might seem obvious, a chain restaurant should be heavily discouraged. A high-end restaurant might appeal to many theatergoers, though it might be out of reach of many local residents, who will support the restaurant in the off-season. A best bet is a casual but well-appointed restaurant with quality food items that appeal to a number of tastes. Its décor and menu would be more contemporary than the “family restaurants” in the local area.

WATER PARK/WATER PLAY AREA

Water parks are a growing segment of the leisure and amusement industry. The approximately 825 water parks operating in the United States come in many forms and sizes, and they are located throughout the country in all climates. In 1999, domestic water parks hosted a total of 67 million visitors, and industry analysts believe the marketplace will continue to expand and diversify to include water parks in smaller markets and bundled with other amusement types.

The largest and most heavily attended water parks are located in top tourism destinations with favorable climates such as Florida, Texas and southern California. The three most visited water parks are all in Florida and have annual attendances that exceed one million visitors. Large water parks do operate in more temperate climates – water parks in the Wisconsin Dells, Ohio and Colorado serve as examples. These water parks, however, have shorter seasons and do not record as high annual attendance levels.

Given the climate, tourism profile, and size of the Emerson Park site, a water park at Emerson Park would likely be moderately sized and would likely serve the Syracuse regional market and summer tourists to New York’s Finger Lakes region.

Available Markets and Demographic Profile

The market available to support a water park is typically the population residing within a 50-mile radius of the site. Markets for attractions such as water parks are analyzed within a “gravity model” context; that is, the closer residents live to the attraction, the more likely they are to visit it. For the purposes of this investigation, the resident market ring of 50 miles has been broken down into three market area zones based on their distance from the Emerson Park site. They are:

- ◆ Primary Market: 0 to 10 miles
- ◆ Secondary market: 10 to 25 miles
- ◆ Tertiary Market: 25 to 50 miles

Based on the understanding of the gravity model, the rate of market penetration will be highest among primary market residents and lowest among tertiary market residents. Of course, the water park will also receive visitors from outside of this 50-mile radius around the site, but at a lower market penetration rate than the three resident market areas defined above.

Population

Data in **Table 11** present a summary of population for the three resident market areas defined for a water park development at Emerson Park. Data are presented for 1990, 2000 and projected to 2005. The resident population of the 50-mile ring surrounding Emerson Park is approximately 1.24 million people. The primary market, the 0-to-10 mile population, is quite small as a part of the total resident market population. The primary market only accounts for five percent of the total resident market population. The secondary market accounts for 37 percent of total population, and the tertiary market accounts for 58 percent of the total. As such, resident visitation would more likely come from farther away as a simple function of the number of residents in the other market areas.

The population of both the primary and secondary markets have been in decline and are projected to continue to decline to 2005. Only the tertiary market area, with residents living 25 to 50 miles from Emerson Park, is currently and projected to increase. Overall, the population of the 50-mile radius surrounding Emerson Park is stable.

Table 11
Population of Resident Market Area by Distance from Emerson Park

Resident Market Area	1990 Census	2000 Census (Estimated)	% Change 90-00	2005 (Projected)	% Change 00-05
Primary Market	61,759	60,430	-2.2%	59,887	-0.9%
Secondary Market	455,383	439,681	-3.4%	435,559	-0.9%
Tertiary Market	724,049	748,950	3.4%	760,569	1.6%
TOTAL	1,241,191	1,249,061	0.6%	1,256,015	0.6%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Income

Data in **Table 12** present per capita and household median income data for the three resident markets. Per capita income data show that the primary market area, which includes the Town of Auburn, has an income profile below that of the secondary and tertiary markets. Per capita income in the primary market has been and is projected to increase at a higher rate than the other market areas, and is projected to eclipse the per capita income profile of the secondary market in 2005.

In comparison with the per capita and median household income profile for the State of New York as a whole, the resident market area has about a 29 percent lower per capita income profile (for the year 2000) and a 16 percent lower household income profile than the State as a whole.

Table 12

Per Capita and Median Household Income by Distance from Emerson Park

Resident Market Area	1989 (Census)	2000 (Estimated)	% Change 89-00	2005 (Projected)	% Change 00-05
<i>Per Capita Income</i>					
0 to 10 Mile Population	\$13,029	\$18,965	45.6%	\$22,262	17.4%
10 to 25 Mile Population	\$13,357	\$19,013	42.3%	\$21,965	15.5%
25 to 50 Mile Population	\$14,170	\$20,379	43.8%	\$23,843	17.0%
Average	\$13,519	\$19,452	43.9%	\$22,690	16.6%
State of New York	\$16,471	\$25,032	52.0%	\$30,014	19.9%
<i>Median Household Income</i>					
0 to 10 Mile Population	\$28,485	\$36,841	29.3%	\$39,590	7.5%
10 to 25 Mile Population	\$29,316	\$37,488	27.9%	\$40,497	8.0%
25 to 50 Mile Population	\$32,457	\$42,263	30.2%	\$45,658	8.0%
Average	\$30,086	\$38,864	29.2%	\$41,915	7.9%
State of New York	\$33,068	\$45,145	36.5%	\$48,937	8.4%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Water Park Competitive Context

According to the World Water Parks Association, there are sixteen water parks currently in operation in New York State. Approximately half are located on Long Island, and the balance are scattered throughout the other regions of the state. There are two water parks in central New York, in the general region between Syracuse and Rochester. These water parks are described by data in the **Table 13**.

Table 13

Water parks Currently Operating in Central New York

Name	Location	Distance from Auburn	Description
Seabreeze Park	Rochester	Approx. 80 miles	Seabreeze is America’s fourth oldest amusement park. Sitting on 30 acres on the shores of Lake Ontario, Seabreeze added its Raging Rives water park in the mid-1990s. A wave pool that contains 260,000 gallons of water is being added for the 2001 season. Pricing and schedule to come.
Thunder Island	Fulton	Approx 45 miles	Thunder Island is a family entertainment center that incorporated a water park in 1997. The water park features two twisting tubes, raft rides and an area for smaller children. Memorial Day through Labor Day the water park is open from 12PM to 8PM. Full access to the water park is \$9.00, limited access is \$6.00, and children under the age of three are free.

Source: World Water parks Association and Profiled Facilities.

Paradise Waterparks, Inc. broke ground on a new water park facility in Canandaigua in the fall of 2000. Canandaigua is located approximately 55 miles west of Auburn. Like Auburn, it is situated at the northern tip of one of the region’s Finger Lakes. The Roseland Water Park encompasses a 56-acre site and is projected to cost \$17 million. The Roseland Water Park will feature a 20,000 square-foot wave pool, a tot pool, a river ride and a tube slides complex. It will offer food service and have a gift shop. It is projected to open in May 2001 and the developers are projecting about 250,000 visitors in its first year of operation. The 50-mile population around this location is 1.38 million residents. The water park will be governed by a not-for-profit corporation set up by the City Council and will be operated by Paradise Waterparks, Inc.

Emerson Park will be situated among three existing water park developments located within 80 miles from the City of Auburn. Assuming a 50-mile market area for all water parks, a water park development at Emerson Park will have some market overlap with all three water parks. Residents of and visitors to places like Waterloo and Geneva may be inclined towards the existing water parks. Emerson Park would compete with Thunder Island in Fulton for the

Syracuse market. As Fulton is due north of Syracuse, the Emerson Park water park would fare best among the communities that comprise the western and southern portions of the Syracuse metro area. As well, the geography of the Finger Lakes region would naturally incline the cities of Ithaca (approximately 50 miles from Auburn) and Cortland (approximately 45 miles from Auburn) to a water park at Emerson Park.

Water Park Site Considerations

A number of inputs go into the consideration of a site as appropriate for water park development. Water parks are land- and resource intensive, and they require a sizable land area and the provision of multiple utilities. Below is a listing of factors to consider when evaluating a site for a “typical” water park development, based on industry standards:

- ◆ **Size:** A typical water park will require 15 to 40 acres of open space. This includes space for back-of-house facilities and parking. The exact size will depend on the level of amenities desired, park capacity requirements and the shape of the site.
- ◆ **Cost:** Costs for water park development can include land acquisition, design fees, construction costs and pre-opening expenses such as staffing and landscaping.
- ◆ **Location and Zoning:** From a market perspective, the site should be accessible by major roads and highly visible. However, the site should be located in an area that promotes visibility without significantly reducing the qualities of adjacent uses. Water parks, like any popular visitor attraction, can generate high volumes of traffic, and the local road network should be suitable to carry increased traffic volume during peak periods (such as summer weekends). Since water parks are not likely to be found in local zoning ordinances, it is prudent to determine if the current zoning classifications for the site would allow such a use.
- ◆ **Natural Features:** Soils, water table level and other subsurface issues should be studied to rule out potential problems in advance of selecting a site.
- ◆ **Utilities:** Water parks use large quantities of water, which can be supplied either through municipal service or a deep well. Water must be potable and well water should be tested to determine its acceptability. Other utilities that will need to be extended to the site include electricity, sewerage and natural gas, for heating.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There may very well be a market for a waterpark/water play area at Emerson Park, however most waterpark developers would look for a large site with better transportation infrastructure than currently appears to exist. On a busy day, there could be upwards of 2,000 attendees, with the consequent traffic and parking requirements. Assuming that 70 percent of the attendees would be on-site at once, with a 2.5 auto occupancy rate, this would translate into customer parking requirements of 560 spaces, with additional parking required for staff. This could be taxing to the infrastructure of Emerson Park and could greatly detract from the quality of other programs and uses at the park.

Given the site and competitive market context, a large swimming pool /water play area is much more desirable than a full-scale waterpark. Emerson Park will not have to compete directly with existing and new waterpark developments in Canandaigua and Fulton, near Syracuse.

Additionally, the use of land resources will be much less intensive, and will not alter the physical characteristics of Emerson Park to such an extent. Furthermore, a smaller development will serve the local population more exclusively, bringing an additional benefit to County and area residents.

The swimming pool/ water play development will require take-out food service, in addition to lockers, changing rooms, and restroom facilities. Convenient food service will be an expected part of a visit to the pool / water play area at Emerson Park. Food service can provide an excellent source of revenue.

Visitors to a pool/water play development will often spend up to three hours or more at the facility. As such, the “in house” population of the pool/ water play area at certain periods during the day could be over one-half of the day’s total attendance. The pool/water play area should be designed to this factor to allow adequate space for circulation and activities outside of the pool. As well, the noise created by such a facility may detract from some of the qualities of the park sought by other users, namely peace and quiet. It is recommended that the water pool/water play

area be designed to be visually unassuming from a number of different points in the park as well as buffered by landscaping where possible to mitigate noise from escaping the immediate area.

ICE SKATING TRAIL

An ice skating trail is a novel potential use at Emerson Park that has an excellent upside from a market perspective. Unlike an ice skating rink or oval, an ice skating trail is more analogous to a speed skating oval that features a narrow connected track the center of which is not used for skating. An interesting feature of an ice skating trail is that it can potentially wind at irregular intervals, and it can be incorporated into wooded areas to give the user the sense that they are in fact on a trail.

Not surprisingly, few of these ice skating trails exist. The closest such trail to Auburn is the trail at Gage Park in downtown Brampton, Ontario, outside of Toronto. It claims to be the first such trail of its kind in North America. For the purposes of this study, the Gage Park trail is the model on which a similar trail at Emerson Park is based. Following is a summary of physical, market and operational characteristics at Gage Park. These characteristics help inform the potential of a similar development at Emerson Park.

The Brampton Ice Trail

Located in Gage Park in downtown Brampton, the ice trail is an artificial ice oval about 800 feet in length that is built into a wooded area of the park. Is purported to be the first rink of its kind in North America. The Gage Park ice trail was constructed in 1990 at a cost of approx. \$1 million Canadian. The City of Brampton received a C\$317,000 provincial grant for rink construction. The trail is open November to March. Admission is free. The trail is lighted for evening use and has a warming hut with beverages adjacent.

The City of Brampton covers the annual operating costs for the ice trail. Operating figures were not made available, but the City purchased a Zamboni machine that is located at ice track to smooth out ice. According to City officials, the ice trail has been a very popular wintertime

attraction since its inception. They report that the ice trail receives especially high utilization from families on weekend days.

Pricing and Operating Characteristics

Though the ice trail at Gage Park is free, it is unlikely that such a development would be free of charge at Emerson Park. The park would most likely seek to recoup operating costs from admissions, seasonal passes, skate rental, concessions and special events rental revenue. The ice skating trail will have a season of approximately five months, from mid-October to mid-March.

Illustrative pricing, use and revenue characteristics are shown below in **Table 14**. These pricing and use assumptions are based on the experience of other public outdoor ice skating rinks that have been developed in recent years. These include public rinks at Reston Town Center in Reston, VA and in downtown Providence, RI as well as at the Gage Park ice trail. In all of these cases, however, the available markets are larger than exists in Auburn and the greater Syracuse metropolitan market. Based on attendance patterns at these facilities, and for the purposes of this analysis, an ice trail is estimated to draw 60,000 visits in a year of operations.

Table 14

Illustrative Pricing, Use and Revenue Potential for an Ice Skating Trail at Emerson Park

Admission Category	Percent of Total Users	Total Number of Users	Ticket/Rental Price	Revenue
Adults	54%	32,400	\$6.00	\$194,400
Children under 12	30%	18,000	4.50	81,000
Seniors	8%	4,800	4.50	21,600
Season Pass Holders	8%	4,800	0.00	0
Total	100%	60,000		\$297,000
Skate Rental	50%	30,000	\$3.50	\$105,000
Season Pass- Individual	150		\$100.00	\$16,500
Season Pass - Family	40		275.00	11,000
			Total	\$429,500

Source: ConsultEcon, Inc.

In addition to revenue from tickets, skate rental and season passes, an ice skating rink can earn additional revenue from the sale of concessions, renting the trail for private parties and functions, and offering lessons to beginning skaters. This use will provide an excellent source of revenue for the County during the winter months, when utilization of Emerson Park is lowest.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Because of its uniqueness in the region, an ice skating trail appears to be a creative and potentially successful, while low-impact, use at Emerson Park. In addition,

- ◆ The ice skating trail will be the anchor attraction at Emerson Park for wintertime activities. It will make Emerson Park a truly four-season park, satisfying one of the goals for the park.
- ◆ Based on the conceptual plan for Emerson Park, the proposed ice trail is an excellent way to integrate a currently underutilized park parcel into the greater whole of the park.
- ◆ The proposed ice trail would be a unique asset in the region of natural curiosity to area residents and would likely perform well, especially in its first year of operation.

- ◆ The ice skating trail would be an admission venue. An admission fee would help to cover operating costs, including utilities, personnel and ice making equipment. Other revenue sources could be from locker rental, skate rental, concessions at the warming hut, and facility rental for private functions.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF OPEN SPACE

Emerson Park offers County residents and visitors numerous opportunities for active and passive recreation, leisure, entertainment, congregation spaces and cultural experiences. Through its combination of open spaces, amenities and facilities, Emerson Park serves a diverse set of users, from boaters to theatergoers, who each place a certain value on the park and its amenities.

Though it is often hard to quantify the economic benefits of parks in dollar terms, most users of Emerson Park would likely state that the park contributes to their quality of life through the recreational and leisure opportunities it offers them. This brief discussion examines the ways in which the economic benefits of parks and open space are measured in order to better understand the impacts of potential developments at Emerson Park.

The State of New York has become increasingly supportive of open space and parkland conservation in recent years. The New York State Parks and Conservation Association called the 1999 New York State budget the “greenest ever.” The state appropriated \$1.2 billion for environmental initiatives, including \$74 million for new state park and forest preserve acquisition and \$25 million for economic development and preservation projects such as heritage trails, parkland improvements and public recreation projects. Its 1998 Open Space Conservation Plan stated broad-based goals to protect water quality; air quality; natural, cultural and historic resources; sustain resource intensive industries such as farming, fishing and tourism; and provide high quality recreational opportunities for its citizens, no matter their location, economic status or physical limitations. This Plan serves to demonstrate New York’s recognition of the value and benefits of its natural resources and the understanding that their conservation can provide economic and quality-of-life benefits to its residents.

Recent sustainable development or so-called “smart growth” efforts nationally have demonstrated the economic benefits of open space preservation. Though the debate is most hotly

contested in high-growth cities and regions with enormous development pressures (such as Austin, Texas and Fairfax and Loudon Counties in northern Virginia), the lessons are applicable in a variety of contexts.

The Trust for Public Land, a national not-for-profit agency working for land conservation and the creation of livable communities, published in 1999 its report, *The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space*. It profiles a number of community efforts nationwide that are working to balance development and create economic impacts through land conservation and strategies for managed growth. The lessons learned from the communities profiled in the report demonstrate that land conservation programs can achieve economic benefits in a variety of ways. A short summary follows:

- ◆ **Open Space Can Attract Investment:** Communities with successful open space conservation programs find that improving the quality of life helps to attract new residents and businesses, who themselves make further investments into the local area. Open space has also been shown to raise property values and the value of adjacent developable lands, as most people consider it desirable to live adjacent to dedicated open space or parkland.
- ◆ **Open Space Can Boost Tourism:** Parks, rivers and natural attractions are an important component of our country's \$500 billion tourism industry. Outdoor recreation represents one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry, generating \$40 billion in spending and accounting for 768,000 jobs in 1996. Smaller communities with advantageous natural resource offerings, such as lakes and hiking trails, can greatly benefit from promoting these resources as an outdoor recreation destination. Increased tourism activity also results in increased spending in the local economy for services such as food service, lodging and retail sales.
- ◆ **Open Space Can Save Communities Money:** All new developments require an extension of public services, including water, sewage, electrical lines and schools, in the case of residential development. While new properties can contribute to the tax rolls, sometimes the costs of providing services to these new developments outpaces the tax revenue they generate. Numerous communities, large and small, have opted to leave lands undeveloped or proactively purchase undeveloped lands as a way to mitigate the anticipated costs of land development.

Summary

Open space preservation has helped many communities become more attractive to their residents and visitors, stimulate new economic activity, and prevent the long-term costs of development. The “smart growth” approach does not mean no growth; rather, it asks communities to consider the costs and benefits of land development and anticipate their impacts, both positive and negative. With each development proposal at Emerson Park, this careful consideration of potential costs and benefits is the first step in creating a logical and sustainable plan for this beautiful lakefront resource.