

VIII Community Goals and Objectives

Bridgewater's Major Goals and Related Objectives

A. Agriculture Related

Goal 1A. To preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands using tools such as Conservation Restrictions, appropriate zoning of present farmland, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, Community Preservation Act funds, along with other state resources such as the Farm Viability and Environmental Enhancement programs

Objective - Protection of productive land through acquisition of development rights via local or non-profit acquisition of Conservation Restrictions or state acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs); or if feasible, acquisition in fee simple; or through State programs supporting investment in continuing farm operations

Objective - Creation of an Agricultural Commission to pursue programs such as:

- Restoring production at major resources such any available Cumberland Farms land or BCC land
- Putting unused public land acquired for other purposes, e.g., land on North Street west of the new high school, to interim productive use by leasing it to a farmer or allowing community gardens
- Working with supportive local, state, and federal agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Farm Planning staff to create a corn growers/sellers cooperative.

Objective - Review of the zoning of present or recent farmland (working with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, or other informed parties) leading to revisions to protect such land and existing neighborhoods while accommodating well-located commerce and industry

Objective - Passage of a right-to-farm bylaw

1B. Identification of potential community garden sites

Objective - Establishment and expansions of such programs - being initiated by the State College and the Department of Corrections on part of the Old State Farm

B. Open Space, Landscape, and Townscape Related

Goal 2A. To support the efforts of the Conservation and Recreation Commissions to maintain the beauty of Bridgewater and its landscape, to provide varied recreational opportunities for all, and to increase general environmental awareness, and awareness/protection of the town's cultural and natural history

Objective: Acquisition/ protection of scenic Ch. 61A open fields for continued farming unless saved under local TDR provisions or conservation restrictions

Objectives- See scenic, historic and environmental objectives

Objectives - See recreation objectives

Objective - Development of public/private partnerships with civic groups, non-profit organizations, Bridgewater State College, and municipal bodies to enhance, protect and promote the environmental resources within the Linked Town Park System

Objective - Acquisition of all or part of key riverside Ch. 61A properties

Objective - Consideration and enactment of an expanded or added historic district.

Objective - Creation of interpretive centers at sites such as the Iron Works Park, the Stiles and Hart brick making site, or the Titicut shipbuilding site.

Objective – Increased state acquisition of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions over qualifying farms particularly along North St. and Pleasant Street

Objective - Identification and designation of Scenic Roads under MGL Ch.40 S.15 so that roadway projects may not cut or remove trees and tear down stonewalls or portions within public projects only following a Planning Board hearing.

Objective - Exploration of possible scenic easements or conservation restrictions to protect key views like that south of Crescent Street

Objective - Exploration of zoning and site plan review guidelines to protect views of scenic backland from obstructive siting of buildings along major roads.

Objective: Acquisition/protection of open fields on Taunton River with frontage within potential streamside walking distance of proposed expanded Titicut Conservation Area

Objective – Support efforts to plan for upgrade maintenance of town properties, particularly the historic Town Hall and the Academy building.

Goal 2B. To create a town-wide linked open space system or net work which in turn could be connected, if feasible, to open space provided next to or near every neighborhood

Objective - Establishment of a greenway along Bridgewater's portions of the Matfield, Town, and Taunton Rivers as part of a joint effort with all riverside towns

Objective - Objective - Linking major pathways between resources, e.g., through:

- Connecting the Stiles and Hart Conservation area and the downtown landscape
- Expansion of the State Forest north along both sides of South Brook to where it crosses Water Street, and east to Walnut Street, and to Ch. 61A land to the southwest
- Development of a streamside trail along South Brook from Water St. to the town's riverside holdings east of Hayward and Whitman Streets.
- Acquisition of selected private lands around the north end of Carver's Pond through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds or other resources
- Acquisition/protection of all or parts of riverside Ch. 61A properties possibly through fee-simple purchase or conservation restrictions in cooperation with groups such as the Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater, or the Wildlands Trust of SE Massachusetts
- Development of a sidewalk and trail from the Starr and Hogg lands via local streets to Carver's Pond via the frontage on Bedford St., through other sidewalked neighborhoods to the BSC campus, on to Town River Landing and then to the Stiles and Hart Conservation Area by the proposed footbridge.
- Acquisition of Ch. 61A of wooded wetlands between Hanson Farm and Forest Drive/Ledgewood Drive to give access to potential trails north to the extensive Ch. 61B swamp lands and state-owned Hockomock Swamp land on the W. Bridgewater line.
- Using CPA funds or other resources to make minor acquisitions filling gaps in town holdings or offering significant recreation opportunities.
- Acquisition of land from the town-owned Emerald Lane to the northwestern corner of Sturtevant's Pond to allow a trail from just south of the Vernon land to the pond and on by a short walk along Vernon Street or Green Street to the Titicut Conservation Area

Objective - Acquisition of key Ch. 61, parcels or other holdings near existing and prospective development to provide open space for present and future neighborhoods, by various means, e.g.:

- Transfer of scattered, accessible town-owned parcels to the Conservation Commission to provide permanently protected local open space
- Town acquisition of the State Forest for Conservation management if the State is not interested in expanding it
- Acquisition of small open fields southeast of Carver's Pond for vista, continued agriculture, grasslands habitat and neighborhood open space
- Acquisition/protection of wooded wetlands surrounded by housing on three sides north of Forest Street to provide permanent neighborhood open space.

Objective: To find opportunities to connect present public and non-profit cluster holdings to nearby public open spaces

Objective: To revise the present zoning provisions and guidelines to encourage integrated open spaces

Objective: Adoption of a set of priorities to guide the Town in using tax title land and in responding to Ch. 61, properties offered to the Town.

Objective: Acquisition of Ch. 61 land on south bank of Town River at West Bridgewater in cooperation with the West Bridgewater Open Space Committee and develop a streamside trail to the Iron Works Park if found to be feasible.

Goal 2C. To enhance and expand the river-oriented Conservation Park Land System

Objective - Acquisition of river access at many key points, for example through:

- Creation of passable trails at and through the major parklands and at the DPW and WTSEM holdings
- Expansion of the Titicut Conservation Area to potentially include adjacent Bridgewater Water Department land and possibly Middleboro land on the opposite bank of the river.

Objective - Increased access to and along major tributaries, for example by

- Creating a trail along South Brook from the State Forest to the Town River

- Creation of access points to all public and non-profit riverside properties e.g., through a clear trail around the Highway Department's riverside sand pit and on to the river.
- Creation of a passable walk to the river and an oxbow from a steep town-owned lot on Plymouth St.
- Construction of the pedestrian bridge proposed between the Town River Landing and the Stiles and Hart Conservation Area, with shovel ready design plans and permits provided by the NRTB
- Integration of major town riverside holdings such as the Highway Department sand pit at the Halifax line and the Water Department's unused land next to the Titicut Conservation Area with the protected open space system



The Taunton River Bend at Titicut; Top left-View east with Water Dept. land to left; Top right-view south downstream with Middleboro land to left; Bottom - Canoers rounding the bend



Objective - Increased protection of a Riverside greenway on the Old State Farm's riverside land

Objective - Protection of a swath of streamside open fields and woodland on 61A land in accord with the Ch.61A survey through acquisition in fee or conservation restrictions and related actions:

- Protection of backlands at the junction of the Town and Matfield Rivers next to/ behind an electric substation, and creation of pedestrian access possibly through a boardwalk
- Acquisition of Town River Ch. 61A land at West Bridgewater line; exploration of a streamside trail to the Iron Works Park
- Acquisition / protection of Ch.61A open fields on Taunton River with frontage on Green Street

Goal 2D. To increase public awareness of existing open space and recreation areas, through varied media; signs, maps, and newspaper and web page features.

Objective - Reoriented and improved signs where needed at major public and non-profit holdings

Objective - Production and distribution of a clear, parcel-based map showing and describing all public and non-profit holdings and the activities possible at them

Objective - Addition of short segments on all major sites to the town web page and/or cable TV along with the map proposed above

Objective - Promotion of major conservation properties, possibly with an interpretative display at Lake Nippenicket done in collaboration with the main owners, the town, the Commonwealth, the Nature Conservancy, and the Wildlands Trust of SE Massachusetts; and elsewhere such as at the Iron Works Park

C. Water Related

Goal 3A To protect environmentally sensitive areas, including the quality and capacity of the public water supply and preservation of riparian land along streams, lakes, and ponds, and to enhance and protect wildlife corridors

Objective – Protection/improvement of the riparian areas of the Matfield, Taunton, and Town Rivers by updating the Town and Matfield Rivers Stream Survey and extending it to the other rivers

Objective - Evaluation of any hydraulic connection between Carver's Pond and the nearby town wells which could limit recreational use of the pond.

Objective - Identification of any water quality impacts on the Matfield or Taunton Rivers of upstream wastewater treatment plants and participation in the ongoing Upper Taunton Basin Wastewater Evaluation Study

Objective - Review of mapped Zone II areas (and soil maps for prospective wells) to set higher priorities for acquisition

Goal 3B. To support Low Impact Design (LID) strategies reducing runoff and maximizing ground water recharge, to consider recharge value when prioritizing open space acquisitions, and to implement flood control strategies such as augmenting flood storage areas, and actively managing dams and control structures

Objective - Use of rain gardens and other LID techniques for paved areas attached to new athletic facilities and open spaces

Objective - Incorporation of LID principles in applicable Town regulations

Objective - Identification of impoundments/control structures with the potential to be managed for active flood control to ease problems discussed in Ch. IV under Environmental Problems (p.IV-35); and development of such management programs

Objective - Identification of lowlands and impoundments with potential for augmented flood storage/recharge preferably combined with protection of habitat and provision of local open space, and implementation of such possibilities

D. Smart Growth Related

Goal 4A. To encourage future town growth and development to follow Smart Growth Principles by incorporating them in the Subdivision Rules and Regulations, Zoning Bylaw, Board of Health Regulations and related regulatory board guidelines and policies, and through use of new tools such as Transferable Development Rights

Objective - Review and modification of existing provisions related to density patterns, open space preservation and environmental protection in cooperation with the regulatory bodies and in consideration of the Master Plan Recommendations

Objective - Exploration of Revision of the Subdivision Rules and Regulations to encourage bicycle/pedestrian easements and paths to adjacent property, located so as to tie into an adopted binding town-wide bicycle/pedestrian system

Objective - To review traffic patterns for ease of movement, safety and neighborhood interconnectedness.

Objective - Design/adoption of a binding town-wide bicycle/pedestrian system guiding local segments, to be required under the Subdivision Rules and Regulations, and other activities to facilitate bicycling.

Objective - Participation in the review of Chapter 40R Smart growth projects to integrate/coordinate the required open space with the Town's open space system

Objective -To use new tools such as Transferable Development Rights - now allowed and used in the Bedford Street Overlay Zoning District.

E. Habitat Related

Goal 5A To protect varied upland and aquatic wildlife, particularly increasing the fisheries productivity of water bodies, protecting vernal pools, and enhancing/protecting wildlife corridors

Objective - Restoration of local herring fisheries through actions such as:

- Addition of fish ladders and modification of culverts and control structures, on South Brook from Skeeter Mill Pond (Flynn's Pond) to Carver's Pond, if feasible and productive
- Improvement of water quality of the Matfield and (East Bridgewater's) Satucket River portions of the fishery
- Repair/maintenance of key public and private fish ladders as needed.

Objective – Continued field examination and certification of all Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) mapped potential vernal pools and of any previously unidentified vernal pools

Objective - Continued protection of the extensive wooded swamp north of Pleasant St. and cooperative development of trails. This is BioMap land crucial for wildlife diversity. It includes the northern and western portions are in the Hockomock Wildlife Management Area; and the 263.3-acre southern portion under Ch. 61B contains upland forest which the Ch.61A Inventory team found to be a "beautiful wooded area."

Goal 5B. To enhance/protect wildlife corridors through creation of a linked town-wide open space system.

Objective- Identification of gaps in wildlife corridors and of means of filling them such as:

- Acquisition/ restriction, re-routing, or other means of protecting wildlife corridors and/or closing gaps in them
- Protective acquisition of land in NHESP Priority or Estimated Habitat areas or in the BioMap Core habitats
- Maintain a wooded corridor from Carver's Pond to the old Winter Street dump, and into the Old State Farm protected lands near by the old Flagg St. wells
- Acquisition of woodland parcels west of Aldrich Street to make a wildlife corridor to the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area

F. Recreation Related

Goal 6A To provide varied opportunities for organized and casual, sports-oriented and nature-oriented, upland and water-based outdoor recreation

Objective - Balanced recreation and conservation uses of the former Hogg's Farm by completing the playfields on the northern upland and creating a trail to the Starr Playground woodlands to the north.

Objective - Restoration of Jenny Leonard Park and improved accessibility via the sloping driveway and level paths between facilities

Objective - Creation of suitable, acceptable areas for riding ATVs, trail bikes and horses

Objective - Resolution/implementation of the use of the endowed Toole Park land on Pleasant St. (Route 104.)

Objective - Increased opportunities for outdoor swimming

Objective - Increased capacity for pond-side swimming lessons by installing a protective U-shaped float system where needed.

Objective - Creation of sailing/kayaking/canoeing programs at Lake Nippenicket

Objective - Addition of a small boat borrowing or rental program at Lake Nippenicket or Carver's Pond.

Objective - Identification of any need to permanently protect publicly-used private land at Skeeter Mill Pond ("Flynn's Pond")

Objective - Improvement of accessibility at any sites and facilities noted in the ADA self-evaluation section

Objective: Replacement of the tennis courts removed from Legion Field, possibly at Crescent Street (Hogg's Farm.)

Objective - Exploration of cooperative park development at Lake Nippenicket with the State, and with The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlands Trust of SE Massachusetts, given their newly acquired land.

Objective - Development of 60 + acres of Ch.61A woods, sand pits and open water west of Bedford St. for swimming, skating and picnicking

Goal 6B. To expand opportunities for passive and active recreation via facility improvements, greenway connections, and a town-wide/regionally-linked recreational /functional bicycle and pedestrian trail system building on previous proposals

Objective - Acquisition of property / easements through Ch. 61A land and private parcels to the south to complete a corridor from the Toole Park to the Olde Scotland Links.

Objective - Creation of a trail from just south of the Vernon land east of the golf course to possibly expanded town holdings on Sturtevant's Pond via the town-owned Emerald Lane and intervening land along Snow's Brook

Objective - Review of the usefulness of previously proposed and partially implemented systems, and design and adoption of a town-wide recreational /functional bicycle and pedestrian system including:.

Objective- Examination and development of the previously proposed Pleasant St. to Forest St. cross-country bike path

Objective - Design and implementation of trails easing access to schools through the (elementary and middle school-oriented) Safe Routes to School program or other resources

Objective - Design and implementation of a State Recreational Trails-funded trail east and west of the State Forest and along South Brook to Hayward and Whitman Streets, then along local streets and possible easements to the Tuckerwood Conservation Parkland and potentially on to the High Street Water Department lands.

Goal 6C. To organize, expand and adequately fund professional and volunteer maintenance and improvement of Bridgewater's Parklands System

Objective: Creation of a unified Park and Recreation Department and an adequately staffed Conservation Commission to maintain their respective lands



The Nip - Inviting boaters (watched over by the Old Man of the Lake) Photo by Joseph Pitta

Objective: Creation of an adequately funded staff and volunteer body, drawing on the Parklands Stewards, to manage, maintain and improve town's Parklands and Conservation lands

G. Open Space Committee /Implementation Related

Goal 7A Creation of a standing committee to make this Plan be a living document to be used, and to evolve with changing needs, opportunities, and concerns

Objective - Continuation of the Open Space Committee as a permanent Open Space Committee to complement the Conservation Commission and Master Plan Implementation Committee in implementing (and later updating) this plan and in developing proposals for CPA funding and other resources.



Two approaches to hiking; above, walking along a Tuckerwood trail and below, bushwacking through a powerline easement. Photos by Mrs. Anne Swarce.

