

Section 5 - Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

The goal of the inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest is to identify and map all protected and unprotected land of interest for open space or recreation use. This inventory has been developed by reviewing the files of lands held by the Town and lands with special tax exempt or tax reduced status. Each parcel was then identified on a color-coded map which categorized by the level of protection afforded the parcel. The list of unprotected privately-held lands was then culled to eliminate all lands targeted for development (such as single house lots and approved subdivisions).

Table 5-1 is the Open Space Inventory for Hanover based on assessors data and other available information. The inventory categorizes the conservation, recreation and significant vacant lands in Town and identifies the Assessors Map-Lot reference, the location, lot area, owner, status for public access and also includes significant details about parcels as available. Parcels that are publicly owned or that are protected by development restrictions or easements are mapped on Figure 5-1. The map is shaded to illustrate the level of protection afforded each of the parcels shown. Lands currently taxed under Chapter 61, 61A and 61B are also indicated on Figure 5-1, however it is important to recognize that these parcels are vulnerable to development and the protection offered to the community is minimal.

The town of Hanover owns approximately 50 parcels of conservation land with a total area of over 900 acres. Along with the land owned by the Town, other land owned and managed by private conservation trusts provide 100± additional acres of open space and recreation land. Conservation land in Hanover is a mix of large and small parcels spread throughout the town. Many of the larger parcels are located on the western edge, bordering the neighboring Town of Rockland, and north-central regions of Hanover. The smaller parcels are distributed around the center of town where the parcels are smaller and development is more intense.

Figure 5-1: Open Space Protection

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Table 5-1: Tax Exempt Properties

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A. *Land Protected From Development*

Protected parcels comprise approximately 1,700 acres and include land owned by the Town, Plymouth County, Massachusetts and several private conservation organizations. Town lands include Conservation Commission land holdings (900± acres), Water Department lands for wellhead protection, schools and other lands under the town's ownership (640± acres). Plymouth County has control of approximately 4.5 acres of land, and the State of Massachusetts also owns approximately eight acres in Hanover. Although it is entirely possible for governmental agencies to remove land from public ownership, this scenario is unlikely and would require considerable public scrutiny if proposed. Public land is identified by State land use code to differentiate between the level of government that owns the property: Commonwealth of Massachusetts (901), Counties (902) and Municipalities (903).

In addition to publicly held parcels, privately owned land may also be permanently protected from development. Private conservation entities include the South Shore Natural Science Center and the Plymouth County Wildlife Trust (140± acres).

Town Owned Land

1. Conservation Land - managed by the Conservation Commission

Hanover's Conservation Commission presently manages approximately 900 acres of Town land, including Tindale Bog, Luddam's Ford, Phillips Bird Sanctuary, Indian Head Drive canoe launch and the Mann Brook lots. In addition to its wetland protection permitting responsibilities, the Conservation Commission also seeks to protect natural resources and preserve open space, increase environmental awareness, and promote linkages of open space corridors.

2. Recreation Land - managed by the Recreation Commission and School Department

Recreation land has been considered "Town Owned Non-Conservation" in Table 5-5 because it is not under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. This land is considered, however, as protected from development.

Hanover presently has eleven facilities for active recreation which are listed in Table 5-2. Figure 5-2 also shows the location of each of these eleven facilities.

Figure 5-2: Active Recreation Facilities

Table 5-2: Recreational Facilities in Hanover		
Name	Location	Ownership/Responsible Party
1. Briggs Field	Hanover Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
2. Sylvester School	Hanover Street	School Department
3. Everett Hall Field	Hanover Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
4. Center School	Silver Street	School Department
5. Salmond School	Broadway Street	School Department
6. Calvin J. Ellis Field	Circuit Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
7. Myrtle/Center Playground	Myrtle Street	Parks and Recreation Commission
8. Hanover High School	Cedar Street	School Department
9. Hanover Jr. High School	Cedar/Whiting Streets	School Department
10. Cedar School	Cedar Street	School Department
11. Amos Gallant Field	Main Street	School Department

Source: Hanover Parks and Recreation Commission (1996).

Table 5-3 indicates the amenities available at the recreational facilities Town.

Table 5-3: Amenities Available at Recreation Facilities	
Amenity	Facility Name
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field (by Sylvester School) • Center School • Cedar School
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field (2) • Myrtle/Center Field (1)
Basketball Courts (indoor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanover High School • Hanover Junior High School
Football/Soccer Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field • Harry Gerrish Field (at Hanover High School) • Hanover Junior High School
Baseball/Softball Diamonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellis Field (4) • B. Everett Hall Field (2) • Briggs Field (1) • Myrtle/Center Field (1) • Amos Gallant Field (by Curtis School) • Hanover High School • Hanover Junior High School • Center School • Sylvester School • Salmond School

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Tennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Everett Hall Field • New Myrtle Fields • Hanover High School
Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanover High School

Source: Hanover Parks and Recreation Commission (1996).

Table 5-4 details the Parks and Recreation Commission’s planned capital expenditures for the next five years. This table shows that considerable improvement is planned for the development of the Myrtle St. Recreation Facility, with projected expenditures totaling \$190,000.

Table 5-4: Parks & Recreation Commission Five Year Capital Program					
	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02
Ellis Field Parking Area	\$35,000				
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development		\$40,000			
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development			\$45,000		
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development				\$50,000	
Myrtle St. Recreation Facility Development					\$55,000
Totals	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$45,000	\$50,000	\$55,000

Source: Parks & Recreation Commission (10/18/95)

3. Water Department Lands

Hanover has four existing water supply areas, with nine wells. The Department of Public Works presently maintains approximately 183 acres of land for the purpose of current and future water supply protection. These lands are also considered protected from development.

County/State Owned Lands

1. County Lands

Plymouth County presently owns one 4.57 acre parcel on Indian Head Drive. This parcel is adjacent to land owned by the Town of Hanover. It is unlikely the County would utilize or sell this land for development.

2. State Lands

The State of Massachusetts presently owns 7.94 acres of land in Hanover, one parcel of which is owned by the Department of Public Works. Only one parcel (2.71 acres) is owned by the Department of Natural Resources. However, all State owned land has been considered as protected from development.

Private Land Restricted from Development

Lands in this category are those owned by private conservation organizations, such as the South Shore Natural Science Center and Plymouth County Wildlife Trust. In Hanover, there are approximately 140 acres in this category, and are considered protected from development.

B. Lands Unprotected from Development

Private open lands can be offered various levels of protection. The designation of private parcels as Forest lands (Chapter 61), Farm lands (Chapter 61A), or Private Recreation lands (Chapter 61B) restricts the use of land in exchange for significant reduction in taxes. Land that is currently taxed under the exemptions allowed by M.G.L. Chapters 61, 61A, or 61B have very little protection. Currently, there are slightly less than 150 acres so designated.

Property under these designations allow the Town a right of first refusal to purchase the land should the property owner intend to take the land out of the restricted status. Land may be taken out of Chapter 61, 61A or 61B classification by notifying the Town and paying a withdrawal penalty tax. However, such land may not be sold for, or converted to, residential, commercial or industrial use while taxed under the classification without written notification of the municipality in which it is located. The Town has 120 days to exercise its right of first refusal option to purchase the land. Should this time period pass and/or the Town state in writing that it will not act on its option, the land may developed for alternative use(s), removing it from its "open" status as forest, farm or recreation land.

1. Chapter 61 Forest Lands

Forest Lands require a minimum of ten contiguous acres under a minimum 10-year management plan certified by the State Forester. Once the application has been received and approved, the classification statement functions as a lien upon the land for taxes levied under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 61. The landowner must refile every ten years or the land shall be removed from classification by the Town Assessor. A tax is payable on stumpage income for the two years prior to management and much reduced property tax is payable once per year of management. Hanover has approximately 88 acres classified as Forest Lands

2. Chapter 61A Farm Lands

Farm land requires a minimum of five contiguous acres "actively devoted" to agricultural or horticultural use. These classifications include animals, fruits, vegetables, and forest products. To qualify as "actively devoted" a minimum of 500 dollars in gross sales income during the prior two years is required. One must apply to the Town Board of Assessors for consideration, and the status must be renewed every year. A reduced property tax is applied if approved. There is only one 66 acre parcel classified under Chapter 61A Farm Lands.

3. Private Recreation - Chapter 61B

Private Recreation land must have a minimum of five acres that is left wild and/or maintained for wildlife habitat or used for recreational purposes by the public or non-profit private group. One must apply to the Town Board of Assessors for consideration and the status must be renewed every year. A reduced property tax results if approved. There are no properties in Hanover designed as Private Recreation - Chapter 61B.

4. Private Tax Exempt Land

While publicly owned property is the most highly protected from future development, private tax-exempt land does offer some protection. Types of private tax exempt lands include those lands owned by the Salvation Army, American Legion, etc. Although these uses are tax exempt, the land is privately owned, and the owners have the right to sell or develop this property for other uses.

Table 5-5 summarizes the acreage by owner and/or protection type all of the parcels identified in the Open Space Inventory (Table 5-1).

Table 5-5: Summary of Protected Land in Municipal, State, and Private Ownership			
Code	Category	Acreage	Percent
A	Town Owned Conservation	902.23	40.55
B	Town Water Department	183.65	8.26
C	Town Owned Non-Conservation	520.66	23.40
D	County/State Owned	12.51	0.56
E	Private, Unrestricted	465.98	20.94
F	Private, Restricted	139.82	6.29
	TOTAL:	2,224.85	100.00

C. Opportunity Areas

Opportunities certainly exist in Hanover to expand its inventory of publicly available open space and recreation land. Large tracts of land or lands adjacent or near to current protected parcels are being inventoried and ranked by the Town. As highly ranked parcels become available, the Town could then attempt to obtain ownership or development restrictions on them.

This Plan serves as the first round of this inventory, while further inventorying will be an action item in Section 9. Sections 6 and 8 discuss the goals of the Town in satisfying its interests and needs in Open Space and Recreation land, Section 7 documents the needs of the community in the form of a summary of items described earlier in the text and analyzes the needs. Section 9 is the Action Plan which identifies the five year plan for implementation of response to community and regional needs.