

OPEN SPACE PLAN
of the
TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND



Prepared by the
Open Space Committee



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1.0 Introduction

A committee of individual residents prepared this Open Space Plan with the assistance of staff from the Department of Community Development and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The committee was originally created in 2001, and members were appointed by the Town Council to represent various aspects of open space preservation, land conservation, and recreation. In early 2007, the committee began meeting regularly to create this plan. The goals of this committee are to advise the Town Council on open space preservation and acquisition efforts, act as a resource for other agencies with open space concerns, and advise the Planning Board on open space elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Committee members feel strongly that to be most effective, the committee must be both proactive discoverers of potential open space acquisitions, as well as reactive advisors to the Town.

Bristol's *Comprehensive Plan* places a strong emphasis on the preservation of open space and sensitive natural areas. The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the value of natural open spaces to the character and cultural heritage of the Town. Though the Town of Bristol — along with several important private conservation organizations — has succeeded in preserving several critical open space parcels in recent years, the *Comprehensive Plan* acknowledges the need to re-establish a reinvigorated Open Space Committee to prioritize open space and recreation needs and to advise Town leaders on preservation and acquisition decisions.

While the *Comprehensive Plan* shows appreciation for past successes in open space preservation, it also acknowledges the need to continue these efforts. As Bristol's population continues to increase, protected open space land will be needed to provide the public with additional opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The *Comprehensive Plan* also recognizes the need to protect ecologically sensitive areas, direct development away from flood prone areas, and provide greenbelts of open space as relief from development. The protection of open space enhances and protects a community's character and leads indirectly to an increase in property values over time.

2.0 Vision Statement

The Open Space Committee developed the following vision statement to guide in the preparation of this Open Space Plan.

As an advisory committee to the Town of Bristol (Town Council, Town Administrator through the Director of Community Development), identify properties for acquisition (short term and long term) using specified rating / ranking criteria. These properties include land for recreation, parkland, habitat preservation, and farmland preservation. Acquisition projects must be consistent with the provisions of the Town's *Comprehensive Plan*. Also, encourage the Town to work with other land conservation organizations, such as the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), the Bristol Land Conservation Trust, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and the Nature Conservancy to maximize the land acquisition benefit for the people of Bristol. The committee sees much value in developing a close partnership between the Town and the re-invigorated Bristol Land Conservation Trust to open dialogue for constructive discussions with private land owners about open space preservation.

The preservation of open space adds ecological value and enhances the character of our Town. The Open Space Committee strives to preserve, protect, conserve and enhance our natural, cultural, scenic and historic resources including parks, woodlands, farmlands, stream buffers, meadows, fields, marshlands, rock walls, overland and underground water systems; while offering opportunities for public enjoyment through renewal of spirit, outdoor education, and recreation activities for present and future generations. Additionally, the committee recognizes the need to enhance public safety by preserving natural areas along coastline and waterways and redirecting development away from areas prone to flooding.

3.0 Committee Goals

The Open Space Committee reviewed the open space and recreational goals outlined in Bristol's *Comprehensive Plan* and formulated the following goals for the development of this plan:

- To develop and recommend for adoption by the Town Council an Open Space Plan to guide the acquisition of lands.
- To identify, review and recommend to the Town Council lands that should be acquired by the Town and preserved as open space or incorporated into the Town park system, by means of donation, purchase, easement, deed restriction and/or limited development.
- To support public education efforts to improve awareness of conservation and environmental issues with particular attention towards youth educational programs such as those currently undertaken by schools and other local groups.
- Provide due consideration and balance for the needs of the Town to develop its economic base, provide suitable affordable housing, and elderly housing while maintaining our primary purpose.
- To carry out the goals of Bristol's *Comprehensive Plan*, including the following:
 - Provide recreation programs and facilities to serve the full range of the public, including those with disabilities.
 - Maximize the public's ability to gain access to, and enjoy the waterfront and the bays that surround the town.
 - Increase and improve the land area reserved for recreation, conservation, and open space.
 - Plan for recreation, conservation, and open space by using a coordinated approach -- to include multiple uses of single sites, and diverse forms of ownership, management, and financing.
 - Protect Bristol's natural landscape and resources for present and future generations.
 - Activate and enable townspeople to meet their responsibility as the first line of defense for natural resources by providing them with information and knowledge of their local environment.
 - Continue to enjoy and protect the historic resources that link Bristol's present with Bristol's past.

- Protect Bristol's historic and cultural landscapes.
- Protect and foster the cultural diversity and "small town" community interactions that distinguish Bristol.

4.0 Definitions

The Open Space Committee recognizes that terms such as "open space" are subject to interpretation. Therefore, for purposes of this plan, the Committee developed a definition for several key terms that are applied throughout this report. These definitions are presented below:

Open Space is land that has not been developed for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. Open space may be publicly or privately owned. Open space in Bristol includes the following:

- agricultural land, grasslands, fields, and woodlands;
- land which contributes to a local watershed system through replenishment of groundwater or stream flows;
- saltwater marshes;
- freshwater marshes and other wetlands;
- river, stream, lake, and pond frontage;
- lands which provide scenic vistas;
- land serving as wildlife habitat; and
- land in recreational use.

Unprotected Open Space is open space owned by an individual, group, or other entity with the right to pursue development of the land.

Protected Open Space is open space, which is subject to certain restrictions that limit the use and transfer of the property in order to maintain its status for conservation and/or recreation purposes. To qualify as protected open space, a parcel must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- A legal deed restriction which requires that the parcel remain as open space for recreation, park, or conservation purposes in perpetuity, regardless of ownership.
- The parcel is owned by the Town of Bristol and is under the control of the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- The parcel is owned by a non-profit conservation organization or Land Trust, whose stated purpose is to preserve the parcel in its natural state in perpetuity.
- The parcel is owned by, or under the control of, a state or federal agency whose management purpose includes the protection of open space, such as the Farm, Forest and Open Space program.

Open Space in its Natural State is open space that has retained its natural condition and has not been developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or active recreational purposes.

Recreational Uses include the use of open space for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, golf courses and driving ranges, community gardens, trails, and non-commercial youth and adult sports. However, land

is not considered as open space if it is used for any of the following: miniature golf or other amusements; covered or indoor skating/hockey rink; gymnasium, field house, bowling alley, or similar temporary or permanent structure for indoor sports activity.

Active Recreation generally refers to team sports or organized sports with facilities, which require the alteration of the natural landscape. Active recreational activities usually require well-maintained turf or a special playing surface, and may have lighting for evening hours. Active recreational activities often attract spectators and may require parking, restrooms, and facilities for storing equipment. A list of active recreational activities might include baseball, football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, tennis, fitness courses, horseshoes, archery or target-shooting, swimming, hockey, skateboarding, or ice-skating or roller-skating on an outdoor rink.

Passive Recreation generally refers to activities which are non-motorized, non-commercial, and non-competitive. However, there are exceptions. Passive recreation is usually an individual activity, rather than a team activity. Passive recreational facilities generally require little or no modification to the natural landscape. In some cases, parking or toilet facilities may be necessary. A list of passive recreational areas and associated activities might include the following:

- woodlands used for picnicking; camping; orienteering; or hunting (where allowed by Town or State statutes);
- trails (unpaved) used for walking; guided nature walks; self-guided nature and historic trails; bird-watching; photography; jogging; cross-country skiing; horse-back riding; mountain bike riding;
- trails (paved) used for walking; wheelchair accessibility; bicycling; or roller skating;
- fields used for kite flying; sledding; or stargazing; and
- water bodies used for fishing; boating; canoeing; kayaking; sailing; ice-skating.

Whether any of the above activities should be permitted on a particular open space parcel is, of course, dependent upon the management needs and goals of the property owner.

5.0 Environmental Analysis

5.1 Topography, Geology and Soils:

Bristol lies on a peninsula measuring approximately 6,320 acres in size that extends in a roughly north-south direction into coastal waters. The town is bounded by the Town of Warren to the north, the waters of Narragansett Bay to the west and south, and Mt. Hope Bay and the Kickemuit River to the east. Two smaller peninsulas extend off the main portion of town with Bristol Neck to the southeast and Poppasquash Neck to the southwest. A topographic ridge extends north-south through the eastern-central portion of town with elevations reaching to approximately 150 feet above sea level. Land slopes relatively steeply towards the shore on the eastern side of Bristol, while the central and western portions of town have a gentler slope towards the western shoreline. The highest elevations in town are found on Bristol Neck at Mt. Hope, which extends to approximately 220 feet. Although bedrock outcroppings are prominent throughout the eastern-central ridge, at or near the surface, much of Bristol is covered with glacial till. The bedrock of Bristol includes the Rhode Island Formation, a sedimentary rock on the

western portion of town, granite in the southern and central portion, and a mica schist in the northern and northeast part of town. A narrow band of quartz runs through Mt. Hope from north to south.

5.2 Landscape Character

Bristol is a suburban community whose landscape character consists predominantly of residential neighborhoods, industrial and commercial businesses, woodlands and urban forest, a few farms, and a long natural shoreline. Medium to high density residential neighborhoods and coastal cottage communities dominate the northern half of the town on both its east and west sides. The central-most areas of town consist of a mixture of commercial, manufacturing, and medium-density residential developments. To the southwest, the historic seaside downtown, with its mixture of high density residential and commercial establishments extends to the east. South-central areas located east of downtown consist of high-density residential and commercial areas with historic mills and manufacturing areas, many of which are undergoing redevelopment for commercial and residential uses. The town's southern tip and coastlines consist of a mixture of natural open space areas, low-density residential developments, and institutions. Poppasquash Neck, to the west of downtown, consists of low density residential uses and open space.

The town's wooded areas are offspring of the mixed eastern deciduous hardwood forest and can be found throughout Bristol. The best-known woodland sites are at or near Colt Sate Park and Mt. Hope. Because most of Bristol was historically cleared of trees for farming and lumber needs, no virgin stands of trees exist today. Native tree species include Red and White Oak, Red Maple, White Ash, and Black Tupelo. In disturbed areas of over 20-60 years old, Black Locust and Eastern Red Cedar have filled in. Because there has been a high interest in trees of all types, an incredibly diverse urban forest of many (50+) species exists throughout the town. Some of these trees are 100+ years old and are over 100 feet tall, including several "Champion Trees" of the Tulip Tree, White Oak, Elm Tree, London Plane, and Zelkova species.

Much of the town's landscape has been disturbed at one time or another. As a result of these many disturbances, numerous invasive plants, and some invasive animals, have been introduced, most during the last 50 years. The most invasive plant is the Oriental Bittersweet followed by other oriental plants to include burning bush, Japanese barberry, and Japanese knotweed. Wild rose, a native plant, set in quite easily almost anywhere, and in wetter areas purple loosestrife and phragmites reed are found. Norway Maple trees, used for many years as a salt-tolerant street tree, have become equally as well an invasive plant. These plants join the many other non-native species or "weeds" introduced by the original settlers and visitors to the area. Invasive animals include the House Sparrow, Starling, Green Crab, and perhaps now the Asian Crab. Native species of plants are present but struggle in some cases to survive in an increasing urban environment.

A small number of agricultural properties, farms both active and remnant, can be found along the northeast, eastern, and southern areas of town. Farming in bygone years centered around dairy herds but no significant herds of dairy cows are present today. For many decades the planting of Indian Sweet Corn has led to some of the best sweet corn in the region, an indication that once less-favorable soil has been transformed into prize agricultural soils. The two largest active farms in Bristol produce almost exclusively sweet corn.

Lastly, a 17.5-mile shoreline wraps around Bristol in the shape of a mitten offering mostly rocky terrain, some low-level cliffs, several marsh and pond zones, and a few beaches, although sandy beach requires some sand import. Except for the eastern part of Bristol Harbor, most of the shoreline is natural. Although shoreline erosion is not a big concern, local flooding in several sections of town can be. Most of this shoreline abuts private property, but there are numerous “rights-of-way” that give the general public access to the shore. This shoreline provides some of the best scenic views of Narragansett Bay.

5.3 Water Resources

As the community is surrounded on three sides by shoreline and estuarine water bodies, these areas are important parts of the community’s character, natural resources, and the local economy. To the east, the Kickemuit River flows from its freshwater origins in Massachusetts southerly to Mt. Hope Bay. This river provides a harbor for recreational boating, saltwater shellfish and finfish resources. Mt. Hope Bay to the southeast and Narragansett Bay to the south and west provide vast recreational (boating, fishing, leisure, etc.) and commercial (fin fishing, shell fishing, manufacturing, marine services) opportunities and are important resources for Bristol’s residents. Bristol Harbor extends into the southwest portion of the town and provides a crucial harbor for recreational and commercial boats as well as an attraction for tourism and downtown development.

In addition to coastal water resources, Bristol also contains other surface water resources, including Silver Creek, Tanyard Brook, and several smaller unnamed streams and ponds located throughout the community. Silver Creek consists of two branches that originate in the north-central portion of town and flows southerly before meeting within a brackish tidal marsh that drains into Bristol Harbor. This waterway drains an area of approximately 1,500 acres, and is an important area for natural open space, wildlife habitat, and flood control. Flooding is a frequent problem in the Silver Creek watershed, most notably at the Chestnut Street and Hope Street road crossings where flow is restricted. Tanyard Brook, located in the southwest corner of town originates at the State Street Reservoir and flows southerly into Walkers Cove. The brook flows through dense residential neighborhoods and in many locations has been enclosed within stone or concrete walls and buried beneath concrete slabs. This waterway drains an area of approximately 500 acres and is frequently the cause of flooding during heavy precipitation. Other smaller streams, ponds, and wetland areas — both freshwater and coastal — are located throughout the community.

Several significant areas of freshwater wetlands can be found within Bristol. Most notable are wooded wetlands located within central portions of town along either branch of Silver Creek, north of Tupelo Street, and south of Woodlawn Avenue and the Griswold Avenue area. Additional freshwater wetland areas are located along the easterly portion of town in the Narrows Road and Hopeworth Avenue areas and south of Tower Street, as well as within central portions of Poppasquash Point on the western side of town. Several of these wetland areas are associated with low order streams, which may flow during portions of the year and are often not mapped. These streams provide important habitat values and help regulate flooding. In addition to low order streams, several of the wetland areas in town are known to contain vernal pools. These resource areas consist of shallow depressions that usually contain water for only part of the year. In Bristol, vernal pools may fill during fall and winter as water tables rise and continue to hold water into spring as rains and melting snow contribute water. These pools usually dry out by mid to late summer and they serve as critical breeding habitat for certain species of wildlife. Wetland resources such as those found in several areas of Bristol help to control floodwaters by storing

excess runoff during heavy periods of rain and snowmelt. Soils and vegetation within the wetlands act as sponges and hold excess water until it can be slowly released into streams. Urban wetlands are particularly important because they help prevent flooded basements, parking lots, and roads, a recurring condition in portions of Bristol, especially in the Silver Creek and Tanyard Brook watersheds.

5.4 Historical and Scenic Resources and Landscapes

Bristol is rich with historic architecture and properties, including its downtown waterfront district, large estates, and colonial-era buildings. Combined with its scenic coastal setting and open spaces, the inventory of significant historical and scenic resources is great.

Significant historical and scenic properties include Colt State Park, Brown University's Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Mount Hope Farm, Blithwold Mansion and Gardens, Linden Place, Juniper Hill Cemetery and numerous coastal rights of way. The entire length of Rt. 114 (Hope Street and Ferry Road), which provides one of two primary north-south roadways through Bristol, as well as High Street in downtown, have been designated as State Scenic Roadways under the Rhode Island Scenic Roadway Program. This designation gives the Town, in partnership with the Scenic Roadways Board, increased authority to regulate activities such as tree trimming, utility work, or roadway and bridge modifications, and enhances eligibility for certain federal and state grants to fund projects along these roadways. The *Stewardship Plan* for the RI Route 114 Scenic Roadway, prepared in June 2005, documents many of the open space, scenic, and culturally important areas along the Route 114 corridor and also includes recommended action items for enhancing and protecting these areas.

6.0 Inventory of Open Space Land

Below is an inventory of publicly and privately owned open space. These parcels have been divided into categories based upon ownership and usage. An *Open Space Inventory* map, depicting the locations and categories of each open space parcel included in the inventory, is provided at the end of this chapter. While some of the parcels included in these categories may not be fully protected as open space, they are currently being utilized as open space and no development or other change in use that would threaten the properties is imminent. In addition to protected open space owned by the Town of Bristol, other public agencies or private organizations, the Town contains a significant amount of unprotected open space owned by private organizations or individuals.

6.1 Town-Owned Open Space

The Town of Bristol owns many parcels of protected open space ranging from small neighborhood parks and recreation areas to large recreation facilities and a variety of undeveloped woodland areas. All of this land is open to the public for active and/or passive recreation, though some activities may be limited or restricted.

6.11 Parks and Recreation Areas

The Town of Bristol maintains at least 14 parks and recreation areas totaling over 133 acres of land. In addition to the properties listed below, the Town maintains at least 37 public shoreline access points. Several of these access points are associated with or are located within existing open space properties, while others consist or limited access points at the ends of local roadways. A detailed list of shoreline access points can be found in the Town's *Harbor Management Plan*.

Town-Owned Open Space Parks and Recreation Areas

USE	LOCATION	LAND AREA	PLAT	LOT(S)
Veteran's Memorial Park and marshlands	Wood Street / Munroe Street / Silver Creek	8.1 acres	6 22	1, 2, 10 & 14 87
Guiteras Park Recreation Field	Washington Street	4.3 acres	6	62
Thomas Park*	Hope Street / Silver Creek	3.9 acres	7	8 & 13
Rockwell Park*	Thames Street	1.2 acres	10	22
Firefighters Memorial Park*	Thames Street	Undetermined 21,595 ft ²	10	84
Walley Park & Beach*	Hope Street	23,850 ft ²	16	30 & 46
Town Common*	High Street and Wood Street	7.08 acres	18	51 & 56
Paull Park*	Chestnut Street / Sherry Avenue	20.59 acres	51	1 & 2
Town Beach and Sports Complex*	Asylum Road	27.15 acres	81	1
Bristol Golf Course	Tupelo Street / Broad Common Road	24.48 acres	92 94	36 22, 23, 46 & 47
Mt. Hope High School Athletic Fields	Chestnut Street / Naomi Street	30.34 acres	117	4, 5 & 6
Cedarcrest Park	Fatima Drive	1.6 acres	123	85
Coelho Park*	Playground Road	3.2 acres	155	175, 207, 210 & 211
Sowams Park	Sweeney Lane	1.4 acres	159	797 to 805

Note: * = Property is permanently protected as open space via deed restriction or other mechanism.

6.12 Undeveloped Natural Areas

The Town of Bristol owns and maintains at least 31 individual properties of undeveloped open space totaling approximately 200 acres of land.

Town-Owned Open Space Undeveloped Natural Areas

Use	Street	Land Area	Plat	Lot(s)
Woodlands, Wetlands	Varnum Avenue / Silver Creek	2.6 acres	1	24
Woodlands, wetlands, marsh, paper streets	Sheffield Avenue / Silver Creek	6.64 acres	3	41 through 91
Woodlands, marsh	Wood Street / Silver Creek	28,476 ft ²	4	47 & 94
Woodlands, wetlands	Poppasquash Road at Mill Pond	8,750 ft ²	5	28
Woodlands, Tanyard Brook	Wood Street & Hope Street*	28,294 ft ²	21	45
Tanyard Brook & Reservoir	State Street	2.9 acres	30	61 & 106
Woodlands, drainage area	Francesca Lane*	2.67 acres	48	3
Undeveloped	Patricia Ann Drive	20,663 ft ²	55	108
Woodlands, drainage area	Patricia Ann Drive	2.16 acres	55	109
Beach right of way, waterfront lot	Aaron Avenue	18,000 ft ²	65	64
Woodlands	Elm Farm Drive*	48,020 ft ²	89	70
Woodlands, wetlands	San Francisco Street*	15 acres	90	67
Woodlands, wetlands	Deer Run Drive*	35.3 acres	92	74
Woodlands, wetlands	Gooding Avenue	9.16 acres	98	2
Woodlands, wetlands	Bristol Woods / Hamlet Court*	10.32 acres	103	44 & 83
Woodlands, wetlands	Peter Road and Gooding Avenue*	19.2 acres	108	11 & 67
Woodlands, wetlands	Dixon Avenue	2+ acres	112	34 to 40, 47 to 68, 10052 through 58, 60 & 100
Woodlands, wetlands	Naomi Street and Debra Avenue*	19.15 acres	118	3, 5, 7 & 8
Vacant land adjacent to right of way to water	North Street	1,800 ft ²	121	174
Undeveloped buffer area for Etelvina Court subdivision	Sherman Avenue and Metacom Avenue*	1.25 acres	123	475 & 485
Woodlands and fields	Lisa Lane*	2.71 acres	127	147
Undeveloped, drainage area	Metacom Avenue	41,120 ft ²	134	40
Woodlands	Tower Street	5 acres	144	6 & 7

**Town-Owned Open Space
Undeveloped Natural Areas
(continued)**

Use	Street	Land Area	Plat	Lot(s)
Woodlands, wetlands "Green Acres"	Hopeworth Avenue and Roosevelt Drive	42.8 acres	145 156	21, 106, 107 & 112 116 & 121
Woodlands, wetlands	Narrows Road	5.79 acres	149	1
Woodlands, wetlands	Narrows Road and Oak Road	3.5 acres	149	3-6, 37-39, 42-44, 53- 59
Right of way to water, waterfront lot	Annawamscutt Drive	9,000 ft ²	151	248
Undeveloped	Sunrise Drive	5,000 ft ²	153	501
Vacant lot	Sowams Drive at Charlotte Drive	6,215 ft ²	159	596
Leahy's Pond	Robin Drive and Hampden Road	5.56 acres	159	1059
Right of way to water, waterfront lots	Poppasquash Road at Windmill Point	7,405 ft ²	187	40 & 141

Note: * = Property is permanently protected as open space via deed restriction or other mechanism.

6.13 Other Open Space

The Town of Bristol owns other properties that have potential uses and benefits as open space including the State Street Wharf property overlooking Bristol Harbor, and the former landfill located off Minturn Farm Road.

**Town-Owned Open Space
Other Open Space**

Use	Street	Land Area	Plat	Lot(s)
State Street Wharf	Thames Street	26,248 ft ²	10	13
Former Landfill / Transfer Station	Minturn Farm Road	91.03 acres	171	25

6.2 Other Publicly Owned Protected Open Space

The Town of Bristol contains approximately 590 acres of protected open space that is owned by the State of Rhode Island. The majority of this land is open to the public for passive recreation use.

Other Publicly-Owned Protected Open Space

Ownership	Use	Street	Land Area	Plat	Lot(s)
State of Rhode Island -	Independence Park	Thames Street	5 acres	8 9	12 10
State of Rhode Island	Rhode Island Veterans Home, Open Space, Boat Ramp	Annawamscutt Drive	111 acres	156	36, 37 & 40
State of Rhode Island	Undeveloped Woodlands	Bayview Avenue*	2.16 acres	27	100
State of Rhode Island	Coggeshall Farm Museum	Poppasquash Road	4 acres	181	145
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Colt Drive	132 acres	180	19, 21, 22
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Colt Drive	259 acres	184	23, 24, 35, 38
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Asylum Road	44 acres	130	4, 5, 6, 7, 8
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Asylum Road	27,600 sq. ft.	129	3, 21, 22, 23
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Asylum Road	12.3 acres	85	1
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Asylum Road	10,530 sq. ft.	80	284
State of Rhode Island	Colt State Park	Asylum Road	5.2 acres	82	1 & 2
	Mill Pond / Head of Bristol Harbor	Poppasquash Road	14.25 acres	186	29

Note: * = Property is not permanently protected as open space via deed restriction or other mechanism.

6.3 Privately Owned Protected Open Space

The Town of Bristol contains approximately 375 acres of protected open space that is privately owned and is protected by deed restriction or other similar mechanism. Much of this land is open to the public on a limited basis for passive recreation use, while others are not open to the public. One cemetery, Juniper Hill Cemetery, has been included in the table below due to its unique park-like characteristics. While there are several other cemeteries located throughout town, they have not been included as open space parcels.

Privately Owned Protected Open Space

OWNERSHIP	USE	LAND AREA	STREET	PLAT	LOT
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Private Open Space	26,181 sq. ft.	Hope Street	55	86
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Private Open Space	7,502 sq. ft.	Hope Street	55	87
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Private Open Space	52,200 sq. ft.	Dartmouth Street	112	1 through 26
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Private Open Space	6,000 sq. ft.	Dixon Avenue	112	69 through 71
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Private Open Space	13,000 sq. ft.	Dartmouth Street	113	1 through 6
Audubon Society of RI	Open Space, Environmental Education Center	26.3 acres	Hope Street	54	12 & 15
Audubon Society of RI	Open Space	5.3 acres	Poppasquash Road	175	111
Audubon Society of RI	Open Space	3.5 acres	Poppasquash Road	177	91 & 92
Audubon Society of RI	Open Space	3.2 acres	Poppasquash Road	177	99
Blithewold Mansion & Gardens	Open Space, Museum	32.6 acres	Ferry Road	165 166	7 & 8 6
Mt. Hope Trust in Bristol	Open Space, Cottage	11 acres	Metacom Avenue and DeWolfe Avenue	41	39 & 40
Mt. Hope Trust in Bristol	Open Space, Cabin	5.3 acres	Metacom Avenue	136	4
Mt. Hope Trust in Bristol	Open Space, Inn, Farmland	115.6 acres	Metacom Avenue	137	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13
The Waypoiset Preserve Trust	Open Space	20.3 acres	Narrows Road	142	1
The Waypoiset Preserve Trust	Open Space	8.4 acres	Narrows Road	149	2
Dudley A. & Janice C. Williams (with deed restriction to RI Audubon Society)	Open Field, Agricultural	60.1 acres	Griswold Avenue	162 161 160	3 9 5

**Privately Owned Protected Open Space
(continued)**

OWNERSHIP	USE	LAND AREA	STREET	PLAT	LOT
North Farm Preserve	Woodlands and Marsh	20 acres	Hope Street	54	2 (portion)
Bristol Landing Preserve	Woodlands, Marsh	20 acres	Metacom Avenue	160	1 (portion)
Children's Grove	Woodlands, Wetlands, Pond	8.4 acres	Gibson Road	67	1 & 2
Kickemuit Anchorage	Woodlands, access to water	3.5 acres	Anchorage Court	133	111
Juniper Hill Cemetary	Woodlands, Cemetary	28 acres	Sherry Avenue	36 27	1, 52, 53 & 54
Hopeworth Community Association	Park and Playground	1.75 acres	Hopeworth Avenue	145	117

6.4 Privately Owned Unprotected Open Space

The majority of privately owned open spaces in Bristol are not permanently protected. As such, these parcels may be available for development. Though the following table includes several parcels that are currently used for institutional purposes such as the Haffenreffer Museum and St. Columban Fathers, their open spaces are not currently protected in perpetuity. In addition, many of these properties are partially developed, and the land area noted in the table may not be entirely open space, though all contain significant open space areas.

Several privately owned tracts of open space are currently enrolled in a tax incentive program that is intended to encourage property owners to manage their land for forestry, agriculture, and open space. Property owners enter into an agreement with the Town to keep their properties undeveloped for at least 15 years in exchange for lower property tax assessments. Should a property owner decide to remove land that has been designated under the tax program, back taxes would be owed to the Town.

**Privately Owned Unprotected Open Space
Large Parcels (>2 acres)**

Ownership	Use	Street	Land Area (acres)	Plat	Lot(s)
Riccio Family	Marsh	Silver Creek	5.67.4	4	14 & 46
Raymond De Leo	Woodlands, Marsh	Creek Drive at Silver Creek	2	7	17
Udvardy Family	Open Field and Marsh	Hope Street	5	7	1
Franco Family	Woodlands	Metacom Avenue	6	48	1
David Pacheco	Woodlands	Waterman Avenue	2.7	48	73
Ann M. Goulart	Woodlands	Metacom Avenue	7.8	87	1
Frank Jr. and Margaret A. Goulart	Woodlands	Metacom Avenue	4.7	87	18
Edward St. Angelo	Woodlands, Wetlands	Terrace Drive	4.2	89	57
Perry / Castro	Woodlands, Wetlands	Jameson Drive Sachem Road	33.9	89	2 & 3
Deer Run Developers	Woodlands, Wetlands	Metacom Avenue	14	92	2
Mack Holdings Co., LLC	Woodlands, Wetlands	Tupelo Street	5.3	92	7
Olga P. Oliver Life Estate	Woodlands, Wetlands	Tupelo Street	2	92	63
Charlotte K. Josephs*	Open Fields - woodlands	Old Orchard Farm Road	15.2	100 103	3 4
Kendan, LLC	Woodlands, Wetlands	Gooding Avenue	6.4	108	1
Kendan, LLC	Woodlands, Wetlands	Gooding Avenue	9.8	111	1
Helen Toste August	Open Field	Metacom & Butterworth Avenues	4	120	2
Mary Mason Stephenson*	Woodlands	Anawan Avenue & Everett Avenue	6.3	127B	6
Mary Mason Stephenson*	Open Fields - Woodlands	Michael Drive	10.1	128	4, 9 & 17
Fales Family*	Open Fields - Agricultural	Metacom Avenue	35.9	134A	1 & 3
Frank Pagano, Jr.*	Open Fields - woodlands	Kickemuit Avenue	16.5	134B	4, 7 & 13
Brown University – Haffenreffer Museum	Museum, Open Space, Woodlands	Tower Street	356.7	135 136 137 144	1 - 11 5, 72, 108 2 1-5 & 8-15
Angelo Stanzione	Woodlands	Tower Street	23.6	136	12
Patrick & James Usher*	Open Fields – Agricultural	Metacom Avenue	110.7	138	1

**Privately Owned Unprotected Open Space
Large Parcels (>2 acres)
(continued)**

Ownership	Use	Street	Land Area (acres)	Plat	Lot(s)
Acelina Cabral	Woodlands	Narrows Road	9.2	138	3
Pawtucket Forms Construction Co.	Woodlands, Wetlands	Clipper Way	7.5	145	95
Dudley A. Williams*	Woodlands	Griswold Avenue	5.7	160	4
Edgardo Rodriguez*	Woodlands	Griswold Avenue	8.9	160	6 & 16
Rodriguez Family	Woodlands, Open Field	Griswold Avenue	6.4	160	6
Christopher & Stephanie Still*	Woodlands	Woodlawn Avenue	18.9	161B	5
Fred Constancia	Woodlands	Woodlawn Avenue	4.8	161	38
Clayton Hicks	Woodlands, Wetlands	Wood Street	7.4	161	47
Dudley A. Williams*	Woodlands	Griswold Avenue	2.3	163	2
Herreshoff Family*	Open Fields - Woodlands	Griswold Avenue	40.5	163	6, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12 & 14
Janice Carr Williams*	Woodlands	Griswold Avenue	3.4	163	13 & 48
Herreshoff Family	Woodlands, Wetlands	Metacom and Griswold Avenues	20.2	163	1
Roger Williams University	Woodlands, Open Fields, Wetlands	Metacom Avenue	50	164	1 & 9 (portions)
Columban Fathers	Monestary Monastery, Open Space, Recreation Fields	Ferry Road	31.32	166	2 & 19
Sisters of St. Dorothy	Open Fields	Monkey Wrench Lane	15.6	167	8, 20, 34, 35,
Ira & Suzanne Magaziner*	Open Fields - Woodlands	Poppasquash Road	31.442	176	17 & 68
Stephen J. Gancz, Jr.	Woodlands, Wetlands	Poppasquash Road	40	178 179	18 18
Virginia Kinder*	Woodlands	Poppasquash Road	14.8	181	20
Samuel Kinder*	Agricultural	Poppasquash Road	15.3	181 182	69 8 & 10

Note: * = Property receiving farm-forestry property tax exemption from the Town of Bristol.

7.0 Analysis of Open Space Needs

This chapter identifies the needs in the areas of natural resource protection, active and passive recreation, access for the general public (and those with disabilities / special needs), and cultural / historic resource protection. The Open Space Committee members formed three subcommittees: the Natural Areas Subcommittee, the Recreation Subcommittee, and the Access, Paths and Trails Subcommittee. Each subcommittee was assigned the task of evaluating the community's needs and developing recommendations for addressing needs in their specific area. The following sections present the Open Space Committee's findings relative to needs for resource protection and management of recreation areas and facilities.

7.1 Resource Protection Needs

The Natural Areas subcommittee focused its efforts on identifying the needs of the Town of Bristol relative to the preservation and protection of open space in its natural state. Using information contained in other planning documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Harbor Management Plan, and statewide Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, the subcommittee estimated that approximately 70% of Bristol's total land area is currently developed. The subcommittee estimates that this figure would increase by an additional 5% over the next 20 years as land is developed for residential and commercial uses.

Based upon reviews of relevant local and statewide planning documents, interviews with Town officials and staff, and field visits and observations made by individual subcommittee members, the following properties are considered priority areas of need for resource protection. Parcels are listed in descending order with the understanding that some parcels that present themselves for acquisition may be elevated due to specific circumstances at the time.

- a) **Mt. Hope Lands** – There are approximately 380 acres of undeveloped open space in the area of Mt. Hope. Much of this land is owned by Brown University, while other smaller, but significant parcels are held by other private property owners. These properties are located near, or are contiguous to protected open space parcels such as the 132 acre Mt. Hope Farm property.
- b) **Agricultural properties east of Metacom Avenue** – Usher Farm (111 acres) located north of Narrows Road. Fales Farm (36 acres) located north of Kickemuit Road. Pagano Farm (17 acres) located north of Kickemuit Road. Stephenson Farm properties (two properties 6 acres and 10 acres) located at Michael Drive and Anawan Avenue.
- c) **Central / Silver Creek Watershed** – Town owns significant parcels of open space adjacent to silver creek. Others are private and should be protected from development and encroachment into wetland and floodplain areas. Open space acquisition efforts in this area should be focused on watershed protection, marshland habitat preservation, and storm water mitigation / flood control. Undeveloped property located south of Creek Drive at the VFW Hall to expand Thomas Park and link to Vets Park across Silver Creek.

- d) **Central / Tanyard Brook Area** – Wooded wetlands adjacent to brook in the Woodlawn Avenue and Wood Street areas should be protected for habitat and flood control purposes. Other parcels in the watershed may be valuable for storm water detention and flood control.
- e) **North-Central** – North of Tupelo Street between Hope Street and Metacom Avenue. Town currently owns several large parcels of open space primarily wooded wetlands. An unnamed stream flows north from Duck Pond at Bristol Golf Course through woodlands to Warren. Several parcels to acquire and create a contiguous area of protected open space.
- f) **South-East** – Several properties consisting of woodlands, open fields, and wetlands near Griswold Avenue and Metacom Avenue north of Roger Williams University. Several privately owned parcels in this area are already protected open space. Priority is to protect open fields and forested wetlands and to connect existing open space parcels at Roger Williams University, Bristol Landing, and Mt Hope Farm to create trail along shoreline of Mt. Hope Bay.
- g) **Central-East** – Several open space properties in the area south of Narrows Road. Significant development in this area in recent years has contributed to drainage problems in several neighborhoods between Annawamscutt Road and Narrows Road. The Town and the Waypoysset Preserve Trust own several significant open space properties in this area. Priority is to protect property contiguous to existing protected lands and wooded wetlands and streams.
- h) **South-West** – Columban Fathers property and Sisters of St. Dorothy. Other private open space parcels located near Blithwold south to Monkey Wrench Lane and Mt. Hope Bridge.
- i) **East side at Kickemuit River & Mt. Hope Bay** – Several small but important parcels are needed to connect existing open spaces and create trail along east side of town and waterfront.
- j) **Poppasquash Neck** – Significant parcels located south and east of Colt State Park. Wooded wetlands, streams, agricultural lands, located near other existing protected open space.
- k) **North-West** – Several smaller parcels located near existing protected lands at North Farm and Audubon properties. Several properties would be important for providing public access to the shoreline, providing connections between existing protected open space areas, and for habitat protection.

7.2 Recreation Needs

The Recreation subcommittee, working with the Parks and Recreation Director, performed an existing site-by-site needs analysis of all Town-owned parks and recreation facilities. The Town is fortunate that, for the most part, its active recreation needs are met with existing playing field and playgrounds available for use by residents and students. The Town currently maintains 16 public parks and recreation areas which vary in size and use from small memorial green spaces to large multi-use recreational facilities. The subcommittee found that, though most of the park and recreation facilities were in good condition, there is a general need for continued long-term maintenance at existing facilities. The subcommittee also evaluated the needs for future recreation facilities. Specific needs identified by the subcommittee are outlined below.

7.21 Athletic Fields

The condition of existing athletic fields appears to be good and maintenance is conducted within the constraints of the Town budget.

There is a need for an additional athletic field to be used by youth football teams. Currently the leagues use the football field at Mt. Hope High School and there are often conflicts between school teams/events and youth football and cheerleading events.

There is a need for additional parking at the Town Beach recreation complex. During busy summer weekends, there are multiple sports leagues using this facility and vehicles are often found parked on grass creating a dangerous situation for pedestrians and additional maintenance burdens.

There is a need to improve existing drainage conditions at Paull Park. Currently, runoff from wetland areas to the east flows through the baseball field making field conditions less than desirable and increasing the maintenance burden.

There is a need to evaluate the condition and future use of the Town-owned Bristol Golf Course to determine if and what improvements may be warranted to improve the facility for golf or if other uses, recreational or otherwise, might be more suitable for the property.

7.22 Playgrounds and Neighborhood Parks

The committee supports the development and continued maintenance of neighborhood playgrounds or “pocket parks” which provide an opportunity for recreation and outdoor enjoyment and community involvement within one’s own neighborhoods. Bristol is fortunate to have several neighborhood parks with open fields and playground equipment located within several neighborhoods. However, it appears that most of these areas are in older established neighborhoods and that additional playgrounds are needed in newer neighborhoods. The committee identified the need for neighborhood parks in several specific areas including:

- Woodlawn Avenue area east of Wood Street.
- Mason Farm development between Michael Drive and Kickemuit Avenue.
- Bordertown development at north end of Metacom Avenue.
- Patricia Ann Drive / Sullivan Lane (Harding Estates) neighborhood west of Hope Street.

The committee identified a need to further develop the Town-owned property surrounding Leahy Pond for use as a passive recreation area with an improved walking trail around the pond and amenities such as picnic tables and benches.

The committee identified a need to improve drainage on the Town Common as several areas, including the children’s playground, are inundated and/or eroded by storm water runoff during heavy rains.

7.23 Community Gardens

The committee identified a need to set aside open space parcels for use as community gardens. These areas could provide residents with the opportunity to produce fruits or vegetables that would supplement

their diets while also fostering a greater sense of community among neighborhood residents and promoting environmental stewardship. Community gardens would be most beneficial in more densely developed areas of town where land to plant is relatively scarce, but would ideally have equal geographic distribution throughout town. Members of the neighborhood could form a committee to oversee the development and appropriate use of each garden area.

7.3 Public Access, Paths and Trails Needs

The Access, Paths and Trails subcommittee focused its efforts on identifying needs for improving access to recreation facilities and public open space parcels. The subcommittee also identified needs relative to the creation or enhancement of trails or other appropriate connections between recreation areas, public and private conservation areas, and other natural open spaces, and scenic or culturally significant locations.

The subcommittee identified a need to create new and/or expand existing walking trails and walking paths in the community. When evaluating the need for additional trails, the committee made assumptions that most residents will be on foot and will walk for approximately one to two hours. In addition, most walkers would like to return to the point of origin and prefer convenient places to park vehicles. The committee evaluated potential walking and biking trail routes using a combination of existing trails, paths and roadways and attempted to identify opportunities for further expansion or connections. In addition to traditional trails on land, the committee also considered the need for shoreline trails to allow the public to access and enjoy the many coastal areas surrounding Bristol. The committee evaluated the locations and conditions of many of the existing public rights of way to the water and looked for potential connections to improve coastal access.

New or expanded trail connections should start simple and work from existing parking areas or public parks/facilities. The Town should look to first identify opportunities for “loops” that will connect trails to open space and recreation areas and ultimately lead back to a given point of origin. Once appropriate trails are established and accepted by the community, additional more challenging trails and linkages should be planned along with appropriate maps, trail markers, and signage.

The following are considered priorities areas of need for public access and trail connections:

- a) **Silver Creek Trail** – Improve/expand walking path for better connections between Thomas Park, the East Bay Bike Path, and Vets Park to additional areas to the north through the Wood Street extension area. The existing footbridge over Silver Creek that connects Thomas Park to Vets Park needs to be replaced with a structure that is accessible to all residents. Future expansion of a Silver Creek trail could include the east fork extending from Vets Park north through existing open space areas to the Bristol Golf Course property, Tupelo Street and beyond to the Warren town line.
- b) **West Side Trail** – Using existing paths, trails and roadways, formalize a loop trail from Independence Park north to the Warren town line. The trail could connect and utilize several public and private open space properties and roadways including Asylum Road, Gibson Road, Hope Street and South Lane, the East Bay Bike Path, and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island’s Environmental Education Center.

- c) **East Side Trail** – Implement plans for creating a walking path along the eastern side of town from Mount Hope north along the shoreline of Mount Hope Bay to land owned by the Waypoyssett Trust and beyond to the Kickemuit River. The trail could also extend south towards Roger Williams University and the Mt. Hope Bridge.
- d) **North-Central** – Existing informal trails through wooded areas could be upgraded to connect existing open space lands north of Tupelo Street to the west towards the East Bay Bike Trail.
- e) **Water trails** including marked locations for access and destination points for kayakers should be planned and mapped throughout Bristol Harbor, the Kickemuit River and Mt. Hope Bay.
- f) **Bridle trails** should be considered in appropriate areas as there are several horse farms along Hope Street and in the southeastern portion of town.

The committee identified a need to direct the public to open space areas and cultural properties with appropriate signage. The number of signs should be minimized by consolidating messages, and the signage should be consistent in design and content. Suggested locations for trail maps or brochures are the Visitor's Center, Town Hall, the library, and a bike path entrance kiosk.

7.4 Cultural / Historic Protection Needs

The Open Space Committee concluded that there is a need to enhance public awareness for the protection and preservation of the Town's historic, scenic and cultural resources. These resources include the many buildings, properties, and landscapes of historical or cultural significance. Many of these areas are associated with natural landscapes, parks, or other open spaces and include such historic and cultural features as stone wall, wells, burial grounds, cellar holes and large trees. Protection of these properties allows for the preservation of important structures and landscape features while providing for greenways, passive recreation, and open space. Examples of historic and culturally significant properties and landscapes include Colt State Park, Mt. Hope Farm, Mt. Hope, the Blithwold property, the Columban Fathers property, Linden Place, the North Burial Ground, the East Burial Ground, and Juniper Hill Cemetery.

8.0 Recommended Action Plan

This chapter presents recommended actions for addressing the open space needs listed in Chapter 7. The recommended actions are intended to guide the Town's open space and recreation priorities in the coming years. These recommendations were developed with the understanding that limited resources and competing interests may necessitate changes to the priority rankings.

1. **Establish a consistent protocol and process for Town officials to approach owners** of desirable open space to begin a dialog as to their intent for the property and impress upon them the Town's desire to preserve their land as open space. Such approaches could include appropriate members of Town agencies in partnership with representatives from private organizations such as the Bristol Land Conservation Trust.
2. **The Town should fully explore alternatives to outright purchase** for the preservation of open space. Land donations, conservation easements, the purchase of development rights, tax incentives and abatements, and other mechanisms which may be unique to a particular parcel (such as limited conservation development and conservation zoning) should be considered. Outright purchase at full market value should be thought of as the "last best option".
3. **The town should establish a long term funding program** to replenish the open space acquisition budget to limit the need for bond referendums.
4. **The Town should not renew the current Bristol Golf Course lease while it conducts a feasibility study of the property** to determine the best use of the land. The property has obvious limitations as a viable golf course, especially given its surrounding land uses. However, the property does contain significant wetland areas that provide an important link between open space parcels to the north and south. Should the Town determine that development of the golf course property is the best use, then the Open Space Committee recommends that protected natural buffers to stream and wetland areas, and the development of a public walking trail through the property become the highest priority for any potential development plans. Revenues from any potential land sales should be set aside for open space preservation and acquisition.
5. **A property management plan should be prepared for existing and newly acquired open space parcels.** Plans should include specific maintenance items for each parcel, and assign a department or agency responsible for maintenance and oversight for each property. Properties that include active recreation areas or improved trails should be maintained by the Town, while more natural areas dedicated for passive uses may be maintained and overseen in cooperation with private organizations.
6. **Existing Town-owned parks and recreation areas that are currently not protected as open space (see Tables in Sections 6.11 and 6.12) should be afforded permanent protection** through the donation of conservation easements on the properties to the Bristol Land Conservation Trust.
7. **The Town should begin a pilot program by dedicating a Town-owned parcel(s) for use as a Community Garden.** The demonstration plot should be located in the area of town with the highest

density of low to moderate income residents to allow the opportunity to supplement food cost with fresh grown produce and to enable a sense of connection and pride in our community.

8. **The Town should make efforts to enhance, expand, and create additional public access paths and trails to link existing open space and recreation areas.** These efforts should begin by expanding upon existing trails in the Silver Creek area and extend north.
9. **The continued preservation and maintenance of historic and culturally significant properties** including historic cemeteries and existing local neighborhood common areas should be encouraged.
10. **The Town should place a priority on the preservation of culturally significant properties** such as Brown University's Haffenreffer properties and Mount Hope, the Columban Fathers property, the Livingston Property, and Sisters of St. Dorothy property.
11. **The Town should pursue the location and mapping of water trails,** including maps depicting access points, destination areas and significant features along the trail route within Bristol Harbor, the Kickemuit River, and Mt. Hope Bay to further enhance the experience for residents and visiting kayakers.
12. **The Recreation Department together with the Harbor Commission should evaluate maintenance needs at all public rights of way to the water.** Each right of way should be clear and safe for pedestrians.
13. **The Recreation Board should undertake the creation of a "Recreation Plan"** for the long term and short term needs of the town.

9.0 Criteria / Ranking for Open Space Acquisition

Any open space acquisition or protection project, which involves funding from the Town of Bristol, should be ranked by the criteria listed below. This process will ensure that the Town gains the greatest benefit from its funds by selectively acquiring property for open space. Before a project can be ranked, as described below, it must be consistent with provisions of the Town's *Comprehensive Plan* and this Open Space Plan. Any project found to be inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* will be considered to be ineligible for funding.

After the initial determination of consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan* and Open Space Plan is made by the Department of Community Development, each proposed open space project would be ranked by the Open Space Committee on the following 10 criteria:

1. **Potential to offset the impact of residential development** (based on current zoning allowances and reduction of impervious surface);
2. **Proximity to other protected land** (Town owned or other) and/or to surface water bodies (bay, harbor, vernal pools, wetlands, ponds, and/or streams);
3. **Stormwater storage/flood protection/groundwater recharge** (where applicable);
4. **Size of parcel** (based on acreage);
5. **Feasibility of purchase and likelihood of acquisition** (with advise from council, solicitor, and/or planner);
6. **Ecologically significant habitat** (rare or endangered flora or fauna);
7. **Historic value** (within historic zoning district and/or of significant cultural value);
8. **Scenic value** (aesthetic value and/or preservation of Bristol's community character);
9. **Public access and/or education** (consider needs of recreation department);
10. **Farmland preservation** (preserve agricultural properties that may also qualify for protection under other programs).

Each parcel will be evaluated by the criteria listed above. For each measure, a point score will be assigned, from 0 to 3. The maximum score for any parcel will be 30. Each appointed member in attendance at the Open Space Committee meeting will evaluate the parcel and an average score will be calculated. The point system is intended to establish an objective way to identify the best projects for acquisition or protection. Those projects rating a score of 15 or above will be considered eligible for town funding. Those projects rating a score of 23 or above will be considered high priority projects. Projects rating a score of less than 15 will be put on a list for possible future action, which will be maintained by the Department of Community Development.

In addition to the above criteria, the Town may also consider the ability to leverage Town funds used in project acquisition. In the case of projects that are ranked equally using the above criteria, the Town may assign a higher priority to projects which are jointly funded through outside (non-municipal) sources and which require a lesser share of Town funding. Consideration should be given to projects that incorporate alternative open space preservation techniques, such as conservation easements, purchase of development rights or tax incentives, which allow limited public funds to be stretched further.

The Town recognizes that small parcels of land located in the more heavily developed portions of town may have important open space values. Small parcels may be important for scenic, cultural, historic, or recreational value; may have outstanding trees or other vegetation may be located within identified greenway; or have strategic value for preservation of existing neighborhood continuity. Because of their small size, however they may not score the required number of points to be considered for funding. In such cases, the Committee may recommend that such parcels be considered for funding as provided in the following paragraph:

Exception: The committee may recommend that a parcel(s) which scores below the threshold of 15 points be considered if the parcel has unique characteristics that would be consistent with the intent of this policy. The Committee shall indicate in writing the reasons for such recommendation.

The decision to fund a project will be made by the Town Council, upon recommendation by the Open Space Committee as described below. Project funding need not follow strict rank order, as the opportunity to make an agreement with the landowner will vary project by project. The Town must have the flexibility to respond to acquisition opportunities in a timely manner. As long as a project meets the threshold rank of 15, it may be funded whenever agreement can be reached among the Town, the owner, and other agencies participating in the project.

Open Space Project Ranking Point System				
	Number of points awarded			
Criteria	0	1	2	3
Potential to offset impact of development: number of housing units possible	0	1 - 3	4 - 10	Over 10
Proximity to other protected land or to surface water bodies	More than 1 mile away	½ - 1 mile	< ½ mile	Abutting or in linkage area
Stormwater storage/flood protection/groundwater recharge area	Little or no impact	Some	Average	Critical
Size of parcel	<1 Acres	1 - 3 Acres	4 - 10 Acres	Over 10 Acres
Feasibility of purchase	Not	Low	Medium	High
Ecologically significant habitat	Degraded habitat	Average habitat	Above average	Prime habitat
Historic value	Minimal or no value	Low Value	Medium Value	High Value
Scenic value (see note below)	Minimal or no value	Low Value	Medium Value	High Value
Public access and education value	Minimal or no value	Low Value	Medium Value	High Value
Farmland preservation	None	Inactive farm	Active farm <5 acres	Active farm >5 acres

Note: *Scenic value* on a parcel should be judged by several factors including whether the land is located within a prominent view from a park or other public area; contains shoreline or open marsh frontage; abuts a flowing water body; or has recognized scenic value in *Stewardship Plan* for the RI Route 114 Scenic Roadway.



Town of Bristol, Rhode Island *Open Space Acquisition Request*

Property owners wishing to offer land to the Town of Bristol should complete this form and include as much pertinent information as possible. This information will be used as the basis to evaluate any request for acquisition of land. All forms should be accompanied by a photograph(s) of property showing current conditions and any significant features.

Name of Property Owner Making Request: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: (day) _____ (other) _____

Email Address: _____

Parcel Information

Parcel Location (Street Location/Address and Nearest Cross Street): _____

Tax Assessor's Plat No.: _____ Lot No(s).: _____

Lot Area (acreage / square footage): _____

Recent appraisal with date (if applicable) _____

Recent Survey with date (if applicable) _____

Brief Property Description

Please include a narrative description of the property offered for acquisition, including any information about its land use characteristics, proximity to other protected open space lands and/or surface water bodies, its potential significance for stormwater / flood mitigation, ecological / habitat significance, and historical or cultural/scenic value. Continue on back if necessary.

Potential Acquisition Type:

Donation _____ Partial Payment _____

Conservation Easement _____

Purchase of Development Rights _____

Right of First Refusal _____

Other _____

Reason For Request: _____

Signature of Property Owner

Date

By submitting this request form, the property grants consent for representatives of the Town of Bristol, including staff members, consultants, and/or members of the Open Space Conservation Committee, to enter upon and inspect the subject property.