

Open Space & Recreation Plan - 2001

Town of Reading

Compiled and Written by

Open Space & Recreation Planning Task Force

Town Hall

**16 Lowell Street
Reading, Massachusetts 01867**

Approved By

Division of Conservation Services
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2001 TOWN OF READING

Executive Summary

Reading's *Open Space and Recreation Plan – 2001* is a formal inventory and planning document developed from existing Town, State and Federal information, from citizen input, and from the results of a town-wide survey. The 2001 plan is an update of the Town's first plan, written in 1995. The current plan concludes that the overarching open space and recreation goals of the community are to preserve the quality of life and the aesthetic character of Reading. Residents wish to maintain Reading's quality of life by protecting the environment, especially water supply and wildlife habitat, by providing ample, useable and accessible open space and recreation facilities for all residents, and by preserving the New England character and less-dense suburban character of the town.

In the *Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey – Spring 2000*, survey respondents and, by extension, Reading residents strongly support acquisition of additional open space. By 76% or larger majorities, they agreed Reading should acquire more open space for ball fields and playgrounds, for watershed protection and wildlife, and for passive recreation. Other priorities identified by respondents include the need for better accessibility to, more information about the Town's open space, and additional open space and recreation amenities, including bike trails and hiking/nature trails that could be provided on existing Town-owned land.

Majorities of respondents would be willing to pay more taxes for open space purchases, favor funding the purchase of open space as a standard part of the Town's capital plan, and would support a local referendum like the Community Preservation Act to fund open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. Support for acquisition and funding is strong regardless of household composition or length of residency in Reading.

Reading has lost substantial amounts of open space over the years and stands to lose significantly more in the near future. A buildout analysis of Reading completed in the spring of 2000 by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs estimates that there are 727 additional developable acres in the Town, or an additional 771 residential lots. New homes on these lots would require an additional 10.7 miles of roadways, and the home owners would use an additional 153,769 gallons of water per day. 2,050 new residents are forecast for the Town at buildout, including an additional 382 school children. If these forecasts are even close to accurate, Reading will experience a major loss of open space, at a time when residents will need and demand expansion of passive and active recreation spaces. Survey comments reveal the community's sense of loss over changes to the character of the town. If we are not proactive in meeting the Town's recreation and open space needs, the quality of life in Reading will change significantly.

The major goals formulated in this plan are:

1. Provide high quality habitat and a healthy environment
2. Provide ample open space and recreation space
3. Make recreation and open space accessible to all
4. Preserve the character of the town
5. Provide connection between open spaces
6. Identify new funding sources for recreation and open space

The two priority action items identified in the plan are:

- To explore the enactment of the Community Preservation Act locally
- To acquire additional open space for playing fields, passive open space, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.

What has the Town of Reading accomplished since the Plan was written in 1995? It acquired Sledge Woods and Marion Woods with State self-help grants, received land and conservation restrictions from individuals, partnered with the YMCA to build a new indoor “town pool”, developed new playing fields off Symonds Way, and pursued a field and playground maintenance program.

The 1995 Plan grouped its goals and objectives under the acronym ACE for acquisition, connection, and enhancement. The accomplishments listed above illustrate these goals. But two other watchwords arise out of the last five years’ achievements - *partnership* and *funding* – two new watchwords that will be increasingly important over the next five years. Creative funding mechanisms and new funding sources are critically important if Reading is to make forward progress in open space acquisition, new recreational field development, and the enhancement of our existing open spaces and facilities. In the face of continuing development pressure and recurring budget shortfalls, we are at a critical juncture for securing our open space and recreation future. Reading must not stop moving forward.

Task Force members:

Kim Honetschlager, Chair	Citizen
Camille Anthony	Board of Selectmen
Claire Bolger	Recreation Committee
J. Ronald Boucher	Reading Open Land Trust
Nancy L. Eaton	Conservation Commission
Gladys Montgomery-Jones	Citizen
Catherine Martin	Finance Committee
Richard Schubert	Community Planning & Development Commission
Karen Mullins, Conservation Administrator	Staff Liaison

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN TOWN OF READING 2001

Section 1 Plan Summary

The Reading Open Space and Recreation Plan – a formal inventory and planning document developed primarily from existing Town, State and Federal information and from the results of a town-wide survey – is based upon the premise that the availability of open space for watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and recreation space for children and adults is necessary to preserve the quality of life and the aesthetic character of Reading.

In the April 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey conducted during the open space and planning process, respondents clearly attached importance to open space and recreation facilities. Written comments reflecting majority viewpoints and key issues appear in various sections of this report. (See Attachment B-3.)

Survey respondents – and, by extension, Reading residents – strongly support acquisition of additional open space. By 76% or larger majorities, they agreed Reading should acquire more open space for ball fields and playgrounds, for watershed protection and wildlife, and for passive recreation. Other priorities identified by respondents include the need for better accessibility to, more information about the Town's open space, and additional open space and recreation amenities, including bike trails and hiking/nature trails that could be provided on existing Town-owned land.

Majorities of respondents would be willing to pay more taxes for open space purchases, favor funding the purchase of open space as a standard part of the Town's capital plan, and would support a local referendum like the Community Preservation Act to fund open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. Support for acquisition and funding is strong regardless of household composition or length of residency in Reading.

Reading is losing open space at an alarming rate and stands to lose significantly more in the near future. A buildout analysis of Reading completed in the spring of 2000 by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs estimates that there are 727 additional developable acres in the Town, or an additional 771 residential lots. New homes on these lots would require an additional 10.7 miles of roadways, and the home owners would use an additional 153,769 gallons of water per day. 2,050 new residents are forecast for the Town at buildout, including an additional 382 school children. If these forecasts are even close to accurate, Reading will experience a major loss of open space, at a time when residents will need and demand expansion of recreation spaces. If we are not proactive in planning for additional growth, the quality of life in Reading will change significantly.

The major goals formulated in this plan are:

1. Provide high quality habitat and a healthy environment
2. Provide ample open space and recreation space
3. Make recreation and open space accessible to all
4. Preserve the character of the town
5. Provide connection between open spaces
6. Identify new funding sources for recreation and open space

The two major action items identified in the plan are:

- To initiate the process for consideration of the Community Preservation Act locally.
- To purchase more open space for playing fields, passive open space, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.

A significant challenge lies ahead.

Section 2 Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the open space and recreation planning process is to understand the Town's open space and recreation needs and assets and to develop a plan for meeting these needs in the future. On a practical level, updating the Plan maintains the Town's eligibility to apply for certain grants from the State. On a philosophical level, the process of updating the plan ensures that we as a Town look at our needs and our assets prior to and independent of considering a particular open space or recreation initiative or land acquisition. Equally important, is to consider recreation and open space needs as closely related rather than competing.

The process requires us to take the pulse of the community, to sit back and listen to what the community has to say, rather than assuming an advocacy stance telling the community what its needs are. An effective open space and recreation planning process starts with listening, then synthesizes what the community has to say, sets out a plan for the future and ultimately advocates for that plan.

As you read this plan, we hope you will follow the same process. Listen with an open mind, then struggle with us to balance the competing desires of the community and the competing needs of the Town. Finally, work to meet the open space and recreation goals of the Town of Reading and ensure its continued high quality of life.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

In December of 1999 the Board of Selectmen voted to appoint a nine member Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Task Force (Attachment A-1). The Task Force was charged with updating the 1995 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Public interviews were held and eight appointments were made to the Task Force. After appropriate posting under the Public Meeting Laws and listing in *The Reading Chronicle*, the Task Force had more than a dozen meetings.

A questionnaire was handed out at an April 2000 Special Election that featured a Proposition 2½ override. Task Force members were on hand at three poll exits for much of the day to hand out surveys, take public input, and answer questions. Following the election, copies of the questionnaire were made available at the Reading Public Library and at Town Hall. Collection boxes were placed at both of these locations and surveys could be returned to the white “mailbox” outside Town Hall. In all, 1,657 surveys were distributed. The return rate was 45%; of those returned, seven in ten were returned at the election. Survey findings comprise Attachment B-1 and B-2.

All Task Force meetings were open to the public. The April 6 meeting was specifically advertised as a public input session and the Recreation Committee was invited to review the preliminary survey results at that time. The Board of Selectmen held a Public Hearing on the draft plan on January 9, 2001.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan – 2001 was distributed to Town committees in draft form in November 2000. The final draft was submitted to the Division of Conservation Services in March 2001.

C. Accomplishments

What has the Town of Reading accomplished since the Plan was rewritten in 1995? It acquired Sledge Woods and Marion Woods with State self-help grants, received land and conservation restrictions from individuals, partnered with the YMCA to build a new indoor “Town” pool, developed new playing fields off Symonds Way, and pursued a field and playground maintenance program. These are the main accomplishments; a full list is included as Attachment C.

The 1995 Plan grouped its goals and objectives under the acronym ACE (Acquisition/Connection/Enhancement). The two open space purchases epitomize the first two letters of the acronym: the acquisition of these two properties connect critical wildlife habitat and recreational spaces. The Symonds Way ball fields and field maintenance programs are examples of the third letter: they enhance existing Town-owned open space and fields. But two other watchwords arise out of the last five years’ achievements: Partnership and funding – two new watchwords that will be increasingly important over the next five years. The Marion Woods purchase would not have happened without the partnership of the Town, the Trust for Public Land (a national nonprofit organization), the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Reading Open Land Trust, and the Reading Friends of Historic Preservation. The purchase was made possible by the intermediate financial help

and temporary ownership of the land by the Trust for Public Land and by donations from other partners and individuals. The new pool happened through a partnership between the Town, the YMCA, and generous citizens. The pool, like the Burbank Ice Arena, was made possible by public/private cost sharing, including agreements about future fees and revenue return.

Creative funding mechanisms and new funding sources are critically important if Reading is to make forward progress in open space acquisition, new recreational field development, and the enhancement of our existing open spaces and facilities. Reading must not stop moving forward. In the face of continual development pressure and recurring budget shortfalls, we are at a critical juncture for securing our open space and recreation future. There is no catchy acronym for the importance of building partnerships, using creative funding mechanisms and developing new funding sources. There is only the need for continued dedication and purpose. The Task Force gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following Town employees and volunteers:

D. Task Force

Kim Honetschlager, Chair	Citizen
Camille Anthony	Board of Selectmen
Claire Bolger	Recreation Committee
J. Ronald Boucher	Reading Open Land Trust
Nancy L. Eaton	Conservation Commission
Gladys Montgomery-Jones	Citizen
Catherine Martin	Finance Committee
Richard Schubert	Community Planning Development Comm.
Karen Mullins, Conservation Administrator	Staff Liaison
Bill Connors	Technology Director
Wayne Currie	Recreation Administrator
Mike DeBrigard	Department of Public Works
Joseph Delaney	Town Engineer
Frances Fink	Conservation Administrator
Peter I. Hechenbleikner	Town Manager
Cheryl Johnson	Town Clerk
Bob Keating	Director, Parks Department
Anne Krieg	Town Planner
Edward McIntire	Director, Department of Public Works
Faye Meehl	Assessor's Office
Carol Roberts	Personnel Director
Peter Tassi	Water Department
Virginia Adams	Historical Commission
Leo Kenney	Vernal Pool and Biology Consultant
Judy LeBlanc	Understanding Disabilities
Benjamin E. Nichols	Town Forest and Land Bank Committees
Nancy Radville	Understanding Disabilities
George Perry	Town Forest Committee

Section 3 Community Setting

A. Regional Context

The Town of Reading occupies 9.98 square miles of land (6,388 acres) in the east central portion of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 10.5 miles due west of Salem and 12.5 miles due north of Boston. The nearest portion of the ocean, Lynn Harbor, lies 8.75 miles to the southeast of the Town. Reading's borders are delineated by distinct barriers: Interstate 93 to the west, Interstate 95 to the south, a series of swamps and wetlands to the east, and the Ipswich River to the north. The land occupied by the town is part of the Seaboard Lowland of New England, a region characterized by low rolling hills of less than 500 feet gradually sloping eastward and southeastward toward the Atlantic Ocean.

Over fifty percent of the surface of the town's land is covered by glacial outwash and till deposited as ground moraine. The glacial retreat left deposits of muck and peat. Large areas of Reading are covered by swamps and wetlands: Cedar Swamp along the entire north/south length of the eastern half of the Town, wetlands along the Ipswich River in the Town Forest, and wetlands along the Aberjona River in the west-central part of town.

Reading is located within three watershed basins: Ipswich, Aberjona (part of the larger Mystic River watershed), and Saugus (part of the larger North Coastal watershed). The protection afforded around these rivers and headwaters contributes to the water quality and flood control for downstream communities.

Although Reading benefits from the easy accessibility offered by the closeness of two major interstate highways, these same road systems, coupled with a series of wetlands, serve to cut Reading off from its neighbors. Reading has no large shopping centers, requiring residents to travel to sites in North Reading, Stoneham, Woburn, Burlington, Peabody and Danvers or farther.

Reading's accessibility and proximity to Boston is also the source of most of its open space and recreation challenges. High traffic volume cuts neighborhoods off from each other and makes it difficult to access open space and recreation areas. Demand for new houses keeps land prices high making it expensive for the town to acquire land, and privately-owned undeveloped land is being developed rapidly. Accessibility and high quality schools bring school-aged families to town ensuring continued high demand for recreation space. Reading is an upper and middle-income community with high housing prices, surrounded by similar communities. More affordable housing is needed.

Reading has no lakes or ponds of sufficient size for recreational purposes. The Ipswich River is navigable only in times of high water. There is a posted canoe landing at the Lobs Pound Mill conservation area. Lake Quannapowitt to the south in Wakefield attracts many Reading residents as a walking route and for boating activities. The recently completed 44-acre Ipswich River Park in North Reading attracts many Reading residents for canoeing, fishing, biking, inline skating, walking, tennis courts, ball fields and the children's play structures. The park is the terminus the Ipswich River Greenway now extending from Interstate 93 on the west at the Wilmington/Reading line, along the Ipswich River and Reading's northern boundary, to the Ipswich River Park on the east.

This Ipswich River Greenway will continue to be a focus of resource protection efforts and, hopefully, joint recreational and trails programs between Reading and North Reading.

Reading is a member of the North Suburban Planning Council, one of eight subregions of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The North Suburban Planning Council is a group of communities north of Boston that meet regularly to discuss issues of common interest.

The Upper Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project is an Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) funded initiative to have the towns of Burlington, Wilmington, Reading and North Reading work together to develop a regional growth management strategy that will improve the health of the river. Draft recommendations presented at the Second Subregional Forum can be found in Attachment D-5.

The Ipswich River Watershed Association has been an active participant in the Planning for Growth Project as well as in local discussions of water supply issues. Conversations have recently been initiated between the Mystic River Watershed Association and Reading's Conservation Commission with the purpose of identifying and prioritizing areas of open space that could play a significant role in minimizing flooding and protecting water resources in the Mystic River watershed.

In Woburn, the development of the former Industri-Plex site on the west side of Route 93 and the development of the Inwood Office Park on the east (Reading) side of Route 93 will both have a significant impact on Reading. The new regional transportation center on the Industri-Plex site and the new exit and entrance ramps leading to it will change regional transportation patterns, but to what effect is not yet clear. The development of Inwood Office Park has meant the loss of a large tract of open space on Reading's corporate border contiguous with Longwood Poultry Farm, one of the largest tracts of privately owned open space in Reading. The office park's sole access is from local streets so increased traffic can be expected.

In 1999 the Town of Wakefield acquired a commercial site at the north end of Lake Quannapowitt (the Lanai Island Restaurant site) partially funded by a self-help grant. This parcel will be returned to open space and will enhance the three-mile walking route around the lake. Just south of Reading's border, the lake is a major recreational destination for Reading residents despite the fact that it is divided from Reading by Route 128 (Interstate 95).

Like Lake Quannapowitt, the Ipswich River Park in North Reading is a major draw for Reading residents. Reading and North Reading have recently begun to explore joint promotion of the Ipswich River Greenway featuring improved river access at the Lobs Pound Mill site in Reading and at North Parish Park in North Reading. A rail trail from the North Parish Park to the Ipswich River Park is in the planning stages. North Reading is in the process of updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan.

North Reading is planning to develop the 87-acre, J. T. Berry site (a former state hospital) as an office park. A proposal for a wastewater treatment plant also on that site, and

perhaps a second treatment plant at the DPW site, is being studied. Sewering Main Street (Route 28) in North Reading would likely result in increased business uses and, consequently, increased traffic in both towns. On the plus side, however, returning wastewater to the Ipswich River watershed would reduce low flow stresses on the river that divides the two towns.

Reading is one of five communities (Reading, North Reading, Wilmington, Wakefield, and Lynnfield) that have been funded through the Mass Highway Department's Transportation Enhancements Program to receive a grant to fund a North Suburban Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan. The \$314,000 grant was awarded in 1997, but has not been received.

B. History of the Community

Prior to its settlement by English emigrants, the Reading area was largely "meadow" (defined in modern parlance as "swamp") used as a hunting ground, but probably not as a living area, by the Quannapowitt Indians who inhabited this part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This characteristic remains, with much of the remaining open land in town classified as wetland.

Reading's early settlers were farmers whose agricultural work and animal husbandry provided for most of the needs of their families. The Reading area was first settled in 1638, when residents of the Lynn land grant were awarded additional land which comprised the areas of present-day Reading and Wakefield and which they first called "Lynn Village". In 1644, they renamed this area "Redding", and in 1647 elected their first Board of Selectmen. Land encompassing present-day North Reading was added to this grant in 1651. In the decades that followed, various areas of the resulting plantation petitioned to form separate parishes, each with its own Meeting House. North Reading was the first to do so in 1713, followed by Wood End (present-day Reading, the West Parish) in 1769, and South Reading (South Parish) in 1812. Reading and North Reading incorporated as towns in 1853, and South Reading was renamed Wakefield in 1868. The West Parish's (i.e., Reading's) meeting house was located on the town common near the site of the current Town Hall. A 1790 census identified 1802 people living within what became the three communities.

Boards for Reading's first meeting house were probably planed at the Lobs Pound Mill (pictured on the Town's Seal), established in 1694 on the then-thriving Ipswich River that terminated at Ipswich, which at that time rivaled Boston in prestige as a port city and inland gateway. Several other sawmills and grist mills operated in Reading through the 18th century, providing goods for Reading's early development.

In the 18th century, many farmers augmented their incomes by doing piecework at home, such as "cordwaining" ("shoemaking" in modern parlance) and one resident in the 1750s developed a scheme to export Reading-made shoes from Massachusetts to the other colonies. In the later 18th and 19th centuries, Reading businesses included a pipe-organ factory and many greenhouses.

The town's first straight thoroughfare – then called the Andover Turnpike, now Route 28 – was laid out in 1806. The railroad to Boston was opened in 1845, leading to Reading's development as a commuter suburb. Over the next century, local businesses included many greenhouses, some of whose locations are recalled in current street names. Gradually, open land was developed for housing as more and more people came to appreciate Reading's character, schools and proximity to Boston.

The Town of Reading had an open town meeting form of government until 1945 when it was changed to representative town meeting. There are now eight precincts of 24 Town Meeting members each, one third elected each year. The Charter adopted by Town Meeting in March 1986, was amended through 1990 to allow for a Town Manager with a five-member Board of Selectmen.

C. Population Characteristics

In order to determine future recreation and open space needs, the changes in the population size, density and employment status and income were analyzed.

Table 3-C-1. Population by Age Cohort

	<u>*1990 %</u>	<u>2000 %</u>	<u>2010 %</u>	<u>2020 %</u>
0-19	5,760 25.56	6,099 26.45	5,986 25.67	23.76
20-34	5,056 22.43	3,816 16.54	3,461 14.84	16.96
35-54	6,553 29.07	7,632 33.09	7,147 30.65	25.36
55+	5,170 22.93	5,517 23.92	6,723 28.83	34.28
Totals	22,539	23,065	23,317	23,400

*Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) 1996 and 1998 statistics (Attachments D-1, D-3).

While 0-19 age group is relatively stable in the 25% range, the 20-34 group is shrinking, and the 55 and over group is predicted to increase by over 10%. The group of 35-54 rises in 2000, then falls by 8% in 2020. The statistics can be misleading as actual numbers or projections given for ten-year brackets do not show the yearly fluctuations within age groups. The 10-14 and 15-19 age groups showed large decreases from 1980 to 1990 but project steady increases out to 2010. The 55-59 group projects the largest increase from 1,140 in 1990 to 1,864 in 2010. Over 75 likewise projects a big increase from 1,254 in 1990 to 1595 in 2010. Fluctuations by 300-400 do not materially affect the percentages but can have a dramatic effect on the number of classrooms needed for school children, the type of services provided to the elderly or the quantity and type of recreational opportunities.

The 1995 statistics showed the community was 97% white, 1.25% Asian, .75% Hispanic, .25% Black and .75 other. The 2000 federal census information has not been released and new population and income analysis cannot be completed at this time.

Median home prices rose from \$176,000 in 1990 to \$212,000 in 1997 following a steady increase. Condo prices yo-yoed from \$170,000 in 1990 to a low of \$103,000 in 1993, to a high of \$162,000 in 1994, to \$116,000 in 1995, and to \$157,000 in 1997.

Persons per household are projected to hold fairly steady from 2.82 in 1990 to 2.75 in 2000, 2.66 in 2010, and 2.58 in 2020, with total household units increasing from 7,932 in 1990 to 8,386 in 2000 to 8,790 in 2010 and 9,138 in 2020.

Average annual wage has increased from \$28,392 in 1990 to \$33,582 in 1996. Local jobs have not changed significantly ranging from 569 in 1990 to 586 in 1998. Unemployment has fallen from 4.7% in 1990 to 3.6% in 1995, 3.0% in 1996 and 2.8% in 1997, reflecting the robust regional and national economy.

Buildout analysis done jointly by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in the spring of 2000 forecasts a population of 25,009 when the town is completely built out. EOEA buildout analysis (Attachment D-4) forecasts a total of 9,051 households in town at buildout, up from 7,932 in 1990 and 8,280 in 1998. They forecast a total of 4,500 students at buildout, up from 3,489 in 1990 and 4,118 in 1998/1999. The analysis makes no prediction as to when buildout will occur. Rather it applies existing state and local regulations (zoning, subdivision, conservation, etc.) to the remaining developable land in town to predict the maximum population.

With negligible change in land area, the population density of the Town has changed proportionally with population growth. Table 3-C-2 shows population growth and density data from 1870 to 2000.

Table 3-C-2. Population Size and Density

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Per Sq. Mile</u>
1870	2,664		270.5
1880	3,181	19.4	322.9
1890	4,088	28.5	415.0
1900	4,969	21.6	504.5
1910	5,818	17.1	590.7
1920	7,439	27.9	755.2
1930	9,767	31.3	991.6
1940	10,866	11.3	1,103.1
1950	14,006	28.9	1,421.9
1960	19,259	37.5	1,955.2
1970	22,539	17.0	2,288.2
1980	22,678	0.6	2,302.3
1990	22,539	-0.6	2,288.2
2000	23,268	3.2	2,362.2

Population analysis by Earl R. Flansburg & Associates forecasts the elementary school population continuing its climb from 2,006 in 1994, to 2,215 in 1998, to 2,430 in 2004. These numbers, updated from New England School Development Council projections, were based on 1999-2000 enrollment and 1998 births.

The median age of Reading's population has risen from 31.2 years in 1960 to 36.1 years in 1990. While new homes continue to be built, the total population has remained relatively constant, although redistributed in older and younger age brackets, with smaller family sizes per home. Although employment income has risen sharply, it has just kept pace with inflation.

D. Growth and Development Patterns

1. Patterns and Trends

Reading evolved from an out-lying and isolated collection of farms to a specialized farming community centered around a village center, to a minor center for the manufacture of everyday commodities, to a residential suburb. From 1951 and 1981, Reading's land use changed from 32% urban (agricultural, forest, wetlands) to 51% urban, predominantly residential, population grew from 14,006 to 22,678, and the number of housing units rose from 3,962 to 6,655. This trend continued, with the number of housing units rising to 7,300 by 2000.

Through the second half of the 20th century, Reading prided itself in being an "affordable community" (which concept precluded zoning to establish large building lots). With the most recent development of some of the last large private tracts on the north side of town, the Town set a requirement of 15,000 square foot building lots with a 100 foot minimum of street frontage.

Today, with many of the town's empty lots and wooded areas going for new housing, with trends toward enlarging existing homes and "mansionization", that is, the building of larger residences where smaller ones recently stood. (Attachment F-1.) With real estate close to Boston at a premium, Reading is pressured with increasing density and acquiring an increasingly urban character. The shift from a general non-urban to an urban environment generates conflicts: the demand for buildings with their attendant infrastructure improvements versus the need to protect natural resources and to preserve open space amenities that are integral to Reading's suburban character. These conflicts are anticipated to produce key planning issues in coming years.

2. Housing

Diverse building styles in Reading provide visual evidence of patterns of development. Different architectural styles indicate when various parts of town were settled.

The earliest homesteads of the First Period (ca. 1650-1720) and Georgian (ca. 1720-1780) are located along the town's earliest streets, including the border-defining South and West Streets, Walnut, Washington, Haverhill, Salem, Ash, Lowell, Franklin, Pearl and Mill. These appear on Reading's earliest known map, ca. 1765, along with the names of their owners. The coach route from Reading to Andover ran along Pearl and Mill Streets, until 1806 when the Andover Turnpike, now Route 28, was laid out as the town's first really straight road. By the end of the Federal Period (ca. 1780-1830), during which time

the Quincy quarries began supplying granite for the Bunker Hill monument and for the foundations of public and private buildings, the town had 138 homes.

Two important developments occurred in the early 19th century, during the Greek Revival period in American architecture (ca. 1830-1860), the first building style of the Victorian era. In 1840, the Damon farm east of Main Street was subdivided to create Reading's first real estate development. In 1845, track for the Reading to Boston railroad was laid, making Reading a "bedroom community", which it remains to this day.

During the Victorian period (ca. 1835-1885) many homes were built fashionably near the new railroad. Some were modest mansard-roof houses on the streets west of the Reading Depot. Some, for instance on High and Woburn Streets and on Summer Avenue, were high-style houses, whose size and conspicuous exterior decoration testified to the prosperity of their owners. By 1870, 520 homes and 237 barns (some used agriculturally, some for horses and carriages) stood in Reading.

Victorian architectural styles in Reading – Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Stick – attest to the community's development as a suburb during the latter part of the 19th century. The extension of piped water, beginning in 1892, to different areas of town ushered in a new period of development. Houses built at that time, for instance in the area between Summer Avenue and West Streets, reflect the Colonial Revival style (ca. 1880-1940), which, at a time of increased immigration, romanticized the American colonial experience. Electricity became available to residents in 1895. By the early 1900s the backyard outhouse had been replaced as cesspools and septic tanks allowed indoor plumbing. The town's sewerage system was laid out with the first homes and businesses connected by 1919. And, perhaps as a testament to Reading's then-rapid growth, the 1906 map was the last to identify property owners by name.

Growth continued throughout the 20th century, as is evidenced visually by the presence of a variety of house styles: small, single-story Bungalows (the former fairgrounds near Lake Quannapowitt was subdivided into bungalow lots and the racing oval became Track Road), larger Craftsman houses (for instance, on Summer Avenue and vicinity), American Four Squares, and gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonials.

During the Great Depression, when Reading counted 2,562 dwellings, real estate development halted, many sales were foreclosures, and the Selectmen actively marketed the town. In 1936, houses were renumbered; the 1937 Annual Town Report shows every building with present and proposed street numbers.

After World War II, Veterans Administration mortgage loans enabled many returning servicemen to own their own homes, a concept that was a cornerstone of the American Dream. Assembly-line techniques created "cookie cutter" developments. From 1949 to 1959, Reading added 1,419 housing units – many of them Cape Cod-style starter houses – and began to pride itself on its affordability and accessibility to the average family. Building materials were expensive, so dwellings tended to be smaller, and many developers measured lots to meet minimum zoning requirements for frontage.

From 1950-1980, 3,700 new homes were built, accounting for 45% of total housing units counted in Reading in the 1990 census. These included the one-story Ranch, the Split Level, and a whole new generation of Colonial Revival homes. When one resident moved to Reading in the 1960s, he was told that only 18 buildable house lots then remained in town. This was hardly the case.

The expansion of the U.S. economy in general and of the Route 128-high-tech belt in particular fueled the town's growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Development continued, and as prices climbed to near \$300,000 for a buildable half-acre lot, properties were sold for subdivision. In the north section of town, Sanborn Lane and Sunset Rock developments, characterized by the new late-20th century "Executive Mansions" replete with two-story foyers and an architectural vocabulary drawn from styles of the past three centuries, were built, the Strawberry Lane cul-de-sac was tucked into a former farm on Walnut Street, and new house-lots were carved out of wooded side yards.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the Tax Assessor's office counted 7,300 housing units in Reading. With open land at a premium, some builders are turning their focus to tearing down houses of past decades and earlier centuries and replacing them with the modern, plywooded, PVC'd and polyurethaned executive mansions of the 21st century.

3. Infrastructure

A. Transportation

(1) Streets and Roads

Reading has approximately 100 miles of streets and roads within its borders. It also contains portions of Interstate 95 (also known as State Highway 128), located to the south and southeast (Stoneham and Wakefield borders), and Interstate 93 to the west (Woburn and Wilmington borders). Other principal routes through the Town are State Routes 28 (north/south) and 129 (east/west) that intersect at the Common in the Town's center.

The downtown area, comprising Main Street from Salem Street on the north to Washington Street on the south, plus Haven Street from Main Street on the east to High Street on the west is currently undergoing a streetscape development study. Initial plans have been submitted for approval by the Massachusetts Highway Department.

Reading's street network was established over a long period and neither its basic framework nor its major streets were designed to accommodate large numbers of fast-moving vehicles. Within both the physical character of the network and the qualities that identify the character of the Town, there is a definite limit to the volume of traffic that can safely and sensibly be accommodated. Even if Reading were to experience no further development of its own, impacts from regional traffic traversing the Town is projected to load its street network even more.

(2) Commuter Rail

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates regularly-scheduled trains between Boston's North Station and Reading's centrally-located depot, with a few of the trains continuing to Haverhill. Because the Reading depot is the head of frequent service, it attracts a large number of commuters, principally from towns north of Reading, who use local streets to reach the depot. This situation should improve once the new commuter rail station and its related parking are available near the recently-completed Interstate 93 interchange at the Woburn/Reading line.

(3) Bus Service

The MBTA operates two bus routes from the Reading railroad depot through the southeastern portion of Town to the Malden rapid transit station (Orange Line) via Wakefield and Melrose. The Merrimack Valley Transit Authority operates two buses daily between the Reading depot and Andover and Lawrence. There is no local bus service to surrounding towns.

(4) Air Service

Reading is served by Logan International Airport in East Boston, approximately 16 miles away. The "Logan Express" operates a convenient shuttle service to the airport from its station in Woburn. Regularly scheduled discounted air service from Manchester, New Hampshire, has become a viable option for north of Boston towns. In addition, Shuttle America has instituted commercial air service between Hanscom Field in Bedford and LaGuardia Airport serving greater New York. Providence, RI and Manchester, NH also offer air service to various destinations. These options have given the residents and businesses, particularly along the Route 128 corridor, alternatives to Logan Airport.

B. Public Utilities

(1) Public Water

The Town owns and operates a public water system with approximately 100 miles of distribution mains and lines serving the entire town. The water is drawn exclusively from groundwater through wells in the Ipswich River watershed. Eight wells are located within the 100-acre well field in the Town Forest, with a maximum pumping capacity of 7.55 million gallons per day (mgd).

There is now one well in the Revay Swamp well field; the other was decommissioned this year due to salt contamination from the nearby Mass. Highway maintenance and storage facility off Lowell Street and from de-icing chemicals used on Interstate Route 93.

Water drawn from all its wells is treated at the Water Treatment Plant located in the Town Forest. High levels of iron and manganese, naturally occurring in the groundwater, are removed in treatment. The Town has completed cleanup pursuant to a consent decree with the Department of Environmental Protection of the sludge from this process and extension of the sewer line allows newly generated material to be removed and not put into the wetlands. Concentrations of sodium, not removed in treatment, exceed State-recommended levels and are continuously monitored.

Modifications and additions to the existing treatment plan, including a new aeration system, an improved lime system, and an air scouring system were completed in 1991. The project was funded in part by a \$1,000,000 settlement with the owners of the former GE plant on Fordham Road in Wilmington after volatile organics (PCEs) were detected in one of Reading's wells. Presently, no contamination is being detected but the process of pre-treatment continues due to concern over contamination plumes originating in North Reading.

A gasoline spill occurred in September of 1992 along Route 93 in Wilmington adjacent to Reading's well fields. No contamination of wells resulted from the spill, although six wells were shut down for some time. Cleanup is in the final stages of remediation.

Average Water Consumption:	1985	2.64 mgd
	1990	1.91 mgd
	1995	1.85 mgd
	2000	2.01 mgd (as of 8/30/00)

Maximum Water Consumption:	1985	2.84 mgd
	1990	3.81 mgd
	1995	3.00 mgd
	2000	2.81 mgd (as of 8/30/00)

Currently, commercial and industrial enterprises account for 11% of the Town's water consumption. Average consumption is now projected to equal 2.11 mgd in 2010 with maximum consumption to equal 3.90 mgd.

Further commercial development, including commercial and office space planned for the former landfill on Walkers Brook Drive near Interstate 95 and hotel and office space at the former Addison-Wesley site will increase demand beyond the above projections.

The Town's water system includes two storage tanks from which water is distributed by gravity to the mains. Located atop the highest point in the center of town, the Auburn Street elevated tank, built in 1953, holds 750,000 gallons. On top of the second highest point in town, Bear Hill, a large cylindrical tank, built in 1930, holds one million gallons. In addition, the Water Department controls a 34,000 square foot tract of land on Dobbins Hill, the highest point of land in Reading. This site is currently being considered for an additional storage tank(s).

Because the Town is entirely dependent for potable water on groundwater sources, safeguarding the aquifer that replenishes the groundwater is critical. Yet, the Town is at a juncture of two major highways, with a good deal of trucking traffic on state roads that run through it. The aquifer is vulnerable due to impervious surface changes caused by land development; snow removal and ice control practices of the state, Town and other municipalities; the use of fertilizers and pesticides by property owners; leachate through contaminated soils; erosion and contaminated surface runoff; and sewage infiltration from faulty septic systems and sewer mains. These are all areas of concern dealt with in the North Suburban Water Supply Protection Plan. The Town is currently considering joining the Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and/or drilling deep bedrock wells for its future water supply.

(2) Public Sewer

The Sewer System, owned and operated by the Town, serves the entire Town, with the recent connections of Longwood, Kelch, Mill and Short Streets. As of January 2000, 712 properties throughout the Town are not yet connected to the available public sewer system. New subdivision and PRD developments are required to connect to the sewer system. Reading's sewage is discharged into a regional sewerage system operated by the MWRA with its principal treatment facility on Deer Island.

(3) Electric Power

The Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) serves approximately 25,000 customers in the towns of Reading, North Reading, Wilmington and Lynnfield Center, distributing power purchased in bulk from the NEPOOL consortium to provide the four-community service area with a load of 120 kilowatts at peak demand. The RMLD has a new substation in North Reading.

4. Long-term Development Patterns

The Zoning Bylaws control development in Town through the following:

Residence	Single Family 15 District	S-15
Residence	Single Family 20 District	S-20
Residence	Single Family 40 District	S-40
Residence	Apartment 40 District	A-40
Residence	Apartment 80 District	A-80
Business	Business A District	Bus.A
Business	Business B District	Bus.B
Business	Business C District	Bus.C
Industrial	Industrial	Ind.
Overlay	Flood Plain District	F
Overlay	Wetlands Protection District	W
Overlay	Municipal Building Reuse District	MR
Overlay	National Flood Insurance Flood Management District	FP
Overlay	Aquifer Protection District	AQ
Overlay	Planned Residential Development	PRD
Overlay	Planned Unit Development	PUD

The Flood Plain and Aquifer Protection Districts are designed to control development in sensitive areas as well as safeguard water recharge areas in order to maintain the ground water needed for the Town's municipal wells. The Wetlands Protection District needs review as to adequacy.

Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD) allow for closer proximity of buildings to each other but with greater amounts of combined open space. Four Planned Residential Developments (cluster zoning) have been constructed since 1995. One other PRD is in the permitting process. There has been mixed reaction as to their success. There is evidence to suggest the PRD is used in cases where conventional plans would not be possible. It is also evident the PRD process is cumbersome due to the initial step of Town Meeting ratification on a per lot basis.

The Sign Bylaw was completely rewritten and updated in 1994 and, after a grandfathering period, will bring a new and harmonious look to the Town's commercial areas.

Zoning Bylaw changes from November 1994 Town Meeting increased the amount of upland that a "buildable" lot must have outside any resource area:

S-10	12,000 square feet
S-20	12,000 square feet
S-40	20,000 square feet

Changes were also made in the PRD overlay districts to require a minimum of 40% of the parcel being devoted to open space left in an undisturbed natural condition or developed as park, recreation or visual amenity. Only 25% of floodplain and wetlands and open water bodies including detention ponds may be used in that 40% calculation. Steep slopes are not considered as open space

These increased open space requirements will allow residents to have more usable "upland" yards. All development projects now go to the Conservation Administrator first to evaluate the necessity for a Request for Determination of Applicability, an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation or a Notice of Intent to be filed. In each instance, the resource areas are as determined by the Conservation Commission. A Development Review Team of town employees, including divisions in the Community Development Department, Public Works as well as the Town Manager, Reading Municipal Light Department, Police and Fire Departments, assesses all large projects for impacts and construction standards.

Lot shape was also revised to allow for more uniformly shaped lots and eliminate "dumbbell," "reverse porkchop" and "flagpole" shaped lots. Another change redefined the calculation for impervious area in subdivisions to prevent exceeding the 20% maximum coverage and to allow for sufficient groundwater recharge areas. Spring 1995 Town Meeting approved a zoning bylaw change to eliminate the S-10 district and to adopt a new S-15 district.

The Community Planning & Development Commission continually reviews all new subdivisions, PUDs and PRDs with open space and recreation needs in mind.

There has been a significant shift in development practice in Reading in the provision of housing units. Four applications for a comprehensive permit have been filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals between the period of 1999 and 2000. Comprehensive Permits are empowered under MGL 40A as a mechanism to provide for affordable housing and override local zoning regulations. The history of the lots currently under review and decided upon are sites otherwise difficult to develop, due to zoning constraints, physical constraints, and lot configuration.

A shift in planning focus has also occurred due to the inception of Executive Order 418 by the Cellucci Administration to require communities to place the provision of affordable housing as a priority focus for development. The Town is reviewing bylaw changes and funding sources to increase affordable housing opportunities. The Town, as part of this Order has received a build-out study. In 2001, the Town is slated to receive \$30,000 for the preparation of a plan to meet housing and economic development needs. The Town

received its requisite housing certification for 2001 as part of the Order. This certification is a yearly requirement and contains elements of activities the Town must do to assist in the provision of affordable housing. After the fourth year, only the creation of units will be allowed to be certified. Certification is linked to the receipt of funds from agencies such as EOEA and the Massachusetts Highway Department.

There has been minimal impact with the changes in Title V septic regulations as 98% of the town has sewers available and 95% of households are connected. While some inappropriate infiltration will cease as more homes are connected to the MDC system, the gray water that could be treated locally and contribute to groundwater recharge will be removed from the watershed. Changes in the Massachusetts wetlands delineation procedure to include vegetation, hydrology and soils will result in more accurate limits of development. Local wetland regulations provide a naturally vegetated buffer zone of at least 25' from bordering vegetative wetlands and up to 100' around vernal pools. The addition of the Riverfront regulations has added a 200' zone within which the Conservation Commission will review and regulate proposed construction or renovation.

The town is actively proceeding with the capping of its former landfill and plans to develop it as a business park. Action plans to deal with Chapter 61, 61A and 61B properties must be developed as well as a plan to control growth should Camp Curtis Guild National Guard base close and its land become available.

Town Meeting in 2000 approved comprehensive amendments to the Business C Zoning District, located on the Addison-Wesley parcel. Addison-Wesley plans to vacate the site in 2001 and subsequently sell the property. The amendments were a result of over three months of public workshops with the neighborhood residents and town officials to derive a build-out scenario to meet the needs of the future owner, the economic development needs of the Town, and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the abutting neighborhoods by including an open space buffer zone.

Section 4 Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

The Town of Reading is composed primarily of igneous and metamorphic rock, with glacial deposits on that bedrock. Outcroppings appear generally on hilltops scattered around many parts of the central ridge in the southwest and central part of the Town. As the glacier of 10,000 years ago receded, it left behind debris that varies from boulder-rich till to fine-sorted sand. This debris forms a thin but regular cover on more than fifty percent of the Town's area, including most of the higher elevations.

The glacier also left behind kames, eskers and drumlins, and huge blocks of ice that, in turn, caused deposition and formation of deltas and edge terraces and allowed bottom siltation to accumulate in low-lying areas. Muck and peat deposits occurred in many areas of the Town, particularly along the entire north/south length of the eastern half (North and South Cedar Swamps and Timberneck Swamp), along what is now the Ipswich River at the northern end of Town, and along the present Aberjona River in the west-central part of the Town.

In general, the overall slope of the Town is from the high land of the south and west toward the low land of the north and east. Within this general orientation, the area encompasses the headwaters of the Saugus River on the southeast, the Aberjona River on the west-central side, and tributaries to the Ipswich River on the north. Because of the uneven terrain, there are many smaller creeks, intermittent streams and wetlands throughout the Town, which in turn contribute to these river systems, but there are no significant lakes or ponds. Rainfall averages 42.5 inches a year, causing seasonal flooding during the spring. Low flows generally occur in late summer and early fall.

Early settlement in the Town of Reading was on the high, dry areas, with the lower and wetter areas left to be used as meadows, farms and woodlots. The town was originally referred to as "Wood End" because of the abundance of trees, which ultimately were harvested for timber. Sand and gravel deposits have mostly been mined out or built upon, except the protected areas such as the Town Forest, Bare Meadow and Cedar Swamp.

Prior to the 1970s, when state wetlands protection laws were passed, significant portions of the Town were drained and filled to accommodate pressures for residential and industrial development. The Aberjona and Saugus Rivers, in particular, were channelized and riprapped so that in many areas they do not moderate and control springtime flooding, major storm events or the increased runoff that comes from housing development, ultimately resulting in increased flooding downstream. Thus, houses built in these low areas now frequently have water problems in their basements and yards.

Because of Reading's topography and development, major areas that offer opportunities for active recreation are in the south or central part of town, while areas that offer opportunities for passive recreation are primarily in the north sections of town. The major swamps on the east and southeast part of town do not lend themselves as readily to recreational activities and were not acquired for those purposes. However, these major

wetlands, as well as the many smaller wetlands scattered throughout the town, are still under constant pressure of encroachment and fragmentation, even though they provide natural buffers for privacy and wildlife habitat, and flood control for the developed areas.

B. Landscape Character

Sculpted by glacial activity, the town is a series of gentle hills split by ravines with a few steep slopes: Bear Hill, Dobbins Hill (town's highest point, 232 feet above sea level), Prospect Hill and Auburn Street Hill. Surfaces of Reading's woods and meadows are broken by numerous outcroppings of bedrock. Drumlins, kames and eskers dot the landscape and can be seen in the Town Forest and North Cedar Swamp. Swamps, wetlands and floodplains make up more than 30% of Reading's land area. The headwaters of the Saugus and Aberjona are within Reading's boundaries. The Ipswich River flows along the northern border and at this time is the only source of the town's drinking water. The channels, swamps and tributaries control flooding downstream as well as providing undisturbed habitat for fish, birds, mammals and plants.

The Town Forest and well fields encompass 310 acres along the northern perimeter of town abutting the Ipswich River. The Town Forest also serves as a buffer from development for most of the town's well fields. This area lies within the floodplain of the Ipswich River. Reforested areas were planted in the 1930s and now form a dense pine forest. There are several wide paths for hiking, cross-country skiing, birding, nature study, scout projects, camping and environmental education. Recent subdivision on its east end has brought a new access point to the Town Forest and a new neighborhood to its doorstep. The School Department controls 11 undeveloped acres to the east of the Town Forest, which is being developed for the construction of a new elementary school.

A private golf club is located to the southwest of the Town Forest and comprises 139 acres. It is within the Interim Zone II of the well fields and abuts wetland resource areas. The club has a Chapter 61 B restriction. The town should remain alert to any proposed changes in this area and exercise any options it has under Chapter 61 B.

North Cedar Swamp (429.10 acres) and South Cedar Swamp (119 acres) stretch the length of the town's eastern boundary. The Reading Rifle & Revolver Club owns 51.89 acres between these areas and its passive recreational activities are in harmony with the conservation goals of the area. North Cedar Swamp, which continues to the town's northern border, was acquired to protect the wetlands. The area provides flood control, groundwater supply, wildlife habitat and protects several vernal pools. The Symonds Way full-size baseball field with an overlay soccer field has recently been constructed on the remaining piece of upland at the former Nike site. South Cedar Swamp is a relatively inaccessible wooded wetland, except in winter when frozen. An interesting aspect is that water from the area sometimes flows north toward the Ipswich River and sometimes south toward the Saugus River, depending on ground water levels.

Camp Curtis Guild National Guard Base is located to the south and east of South Cedar Swamp, straddling the boundary line of three communities and containing 275 acres within Reading. A portion of this land is upland (195 acres) and could be developed if the base were to close. Particular attention needs to be given to the areas abutting both North and South Cedar Swamp and Dead River to protect the wetland resource areas. The 1990 Master Plan suggested rezoning this area from S-40 to PUD. Current zoning would allow 293 single family homes and a zoning change would permit an industrial or commercial area adjacent to Route 128 (Interstate 95). The Town is monitoring the state's actions in its review of future uses for this area.

Timberneck Swamp (101 acres) is a wooded swamp at the headwaters to the Saugus River. It prevents flooding downstream and provides pollution control and wildlife habitat.

Bare Meadow (84.51 acres) is protected by Conservation Commission jurisdiction and abuts Fairbanks Marsh (32 acres) owned by the Reading Open Land Trust, Inc. The area includes marsh, wet meadows, wooded wetlands with vernal pools, forested upland and open upland and allows residents to escape from daily pressures without having to drive out of town.

Kurchian Woods (32.7 acres), an upland open space encroached upon by residential development, includes stands of mature trees, rocky outcrops, vernal pools, a bog and a relatively uneven terrain. The area is crossed by a Tennessee Gas Pipeline easement. Several subdivisions abut it and it acts as a natural buffer between them while providing passive recreational options. An eight-acre parcel adjacent to this site is undergoing permit review.

Marion Woods (8.6 acres) completes the publicly-owned greenway corridor along the Town's northern border abutting the Ipswich River. The 1999 purchase of Marion Woods provides a connection to Lobs Pond and its canoe access area. This riverfront parcel features bordering vegetated wetlands, an upland pine grove and a certified vernal pool.

The Reading Open Land Trust, Inc. preserves land in its natural state: wetlands, open lands and lands of historical significance. Since its founding in 1979, the Trust has acquired over 68 acres of open land. In 1998, the Trust received an 8.68-acre parcel of land known as Swamp Island on the Reading-Wakefield line, part of an area identified in the 1995 Open Space & Recreation Plan as needing to be protected.

The image of the Town is one of a suburban residential community with a business strip along Route 28 that runs from Route 128 (Interstate 95) at the south just past the center, a few businesses midway through town and then another grouping of stores just before Route 28 crosses into North Reading. Two major business developments have been proposed for the former landfill and the Addison Wesley sites. These commercial projects will be completed within the next several years. Welcoming signs and Adopt-an-Island landscaping have improved the visual image to those entering the community and should be monitored for upkeep and appearance.

The view that northern commuters on their way to Boston have of Reading is the open meadow area adjacent to Route 93 and a forested area. A mile further south, the open expanse of land of Longwood Poultry Farm (recently removed from Chapter 61A status) gives one a more bucolic image. This area has changed dramatically since the adjacent land in Woburn is being developed for industry and business and there is a new flyover exit ramp with no access into Reading.

Reading's marshes, swamps and wetlands provide natural scenic environments and visual escape from the stresses of modern life.

C. Water Resources

Because of its low-lying topography, Reading historically has been a very wet area. Its landscape is dotted with small ponds, wetlands, swamps, woodlands and the three rivers that traverse its environs. The Town is situated at the drainage divide of three watersheds: the Aberjona, the Ipswich and the Saugus Rivers. The Ipswich River provides Reading with its municipal drinking water supply, serves as its northern boundary, and is a recreation resource for fishing. During the spring when water levels are high, the river can be used for canoeing. Bare Meadow Brook, which traverses the northern section of Town, is a major tributary to the Ipswich River. In the past the brook was stocked, providing another recreational resource for fishermen.

Even after decades of development, there remain a significant number of acres of swamps, wetlands and floodplains within the town. Many of these lands are under the auspices of the Conservation Commission and are held for the purpose of water supply protection, passive recreation and wildlife habitat. Presently, the Commission has 900 to 1000 acres of lands under its jurisdiction including the Great Cedar Swamp, which is one of the largest swamps remaining in eastern Massachusetts with some potential as a future water supply. Deep bedrock wells may be drilled in Cedar Swamp within the next year as the Town continues its search for additional water resources. The Town also contains the Nichols, Revay and Timberneck swamps, protected areas and home to rare species of salamanders and ferns. Many of these areas are utilized by the residents for hiking, birding and cross-country skiing.

The Ipswich River is especially vulnerable to pollution due to its proximity to Interstate Route 93 and the industrial developments across the river in North Reading. The residents discovered this in 1992 when an oil tanker overturned on Route 93 at the crossing of the Ipswich River, dumping ten thousand gallons of petroleum product into adjacent wetlands. Although contamination did not reach the wells, six of the town's nine wells were closed due to the potential for contamination. During the emergency cessation, interim lines were laid and the Town was allowed to access the MWRA system through Woburn. A permanent connector trunk was installed in case of future emergency. Water restrictions were in effect for six years and still remain due to the stressed state of the river. As of 1998, all nine of the community's wells were operational and continual testing has not shown any contaminant movement from the spill area. Cleanup is in the final stages of remediation.

The value of the Ipswich River to Reading as a resource for water supply and wildlife habitat is considerable. As a recreation resource, the bulk of the river is not easily accessible because private motor vehicle traffic is not allowed in the Town Forest.

Canoeing is difficult from Route 93 on the west to Mill Street on the east due to limited access and the narrowness of the channel downstream of the Town Forest. The Lobs Pound Mill site now has a canoe landing sign and is increasingly used during medium to high water as the starting point for a canoe trip from here to the Ipswich River Park in North Reading. This area was recently the focal point for several biodiversity events. In addition, the Lobs Pound Mill area has been used as a fishing area for many years

The Zone II wellhead protection district was defined in 1996 and plotted by MassGIS mainly around the existing well fields along the Ipswich with medium yield potential near Bare Meadow Brook in the northeast and in the Timberneck Swamp area in the southeast. The Town continues to monitor land use activities in the area. Any unprotected areas identified in this study should be acquired.

In the past five years the Town has been proactive in its attempts to enhance the protection of the Ipswich River. These many activities are as follows:

- Support of the Tier IA process to attenuate the contamination from the four sites (Sterling, Former GE, MSM, Roadway Express) that are migrating toward the river from North Reading and Wilmington. The Reading/North Reading Stream Team was responsible for this public involvement process.
- A Water Supply Advisory Committee established by the Board of Selectmen in 1999 studied the water needs of the community for the next thirty years. The firm of Camp, Dresser and McKee served as consultant to the group in determining its recommendations to the Town. Those recommendations included pursuing a MWRA water connection, rehabilitation of the present water treatment plant, drilling for bedrock wells and an aggressive water conservation program. The health of the Ipswich River continued to be a primary concern of the study group.
- The Town recently applied for a Wellhead Protection Grant from the DEP to embark upon a study for design of containment structures to prevent pollutants from Route 93 entering into the Ipswich River.
- Marion Woods, the last piece of privately-owned property along the river, was purchased by the Town in 1999. The successful completion of this purchase was achieved by the efforts of dedicated citizens, the Trust for Public Lands, Reading Open Land Trust, Reading Friends for Historic Preservation, the Ipswich River Watershed Association, Town boards and Town Meeting.
- To address growth issues and future water needs the Town is involved with the Community Planning for Growth partnership, a collaborative effort with the MA EOEA and four communities: North Reading, Reading, Burlington and Wilmington.

- Certain Best Management Practices were instituted in the past five years to further protect the Town's water supply. These include using calcium chloride for de-icing and reusing backwash through the water treatment plant.
- Reading continues in its efforts to monitor the removal of underground storage tanks, pursue low salt or conversion of state salting on Route I-93 to calcium chloride, conduct hazardous waste collection days, monitor pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers and their storage, review vegetative management plans, consider an Earth Removal Bylaw, acquire additional lands within the aquifer protection district and work with neighboring communities to accomplish region-wide goals.
- The findings and recommendations of the MAPC North Suburban Water Supply Plan are continually used as a guide for the Town of Reading as it attempts to safeguard the Ipswich River and the water supply it provides to many communities.

D. Vegetation

In the residential areas of the community, much of the vegetation is ornamental and non-native. The most frequent are the common white, red, pitch and Scotch pine; Norway, blue, white, red and black spruce; balsam and Douglas fir; tupelo, dogwood, weeping willow; American elm; black cherry; a few American chestnuts; white, gray, yellow and black birch; poplar; linden, white, black, red, swamp and pin oak; sassafras; red, sugar, Norway, silver and mountain maple; American sycamore; shagbark and bitternut hickory; black walnut; boxelder; staghorn, smooth and poison sumac; white and mountain ash; catalpa, black and honey locust; witch hazel; buckeye; dogwood; beech; gingko; rhododendrons and azaleas.

The swamps abound with skunk cabbage, high bush blueberry; and cinnamon, royal, maidenhair, rattlesnake, New York and marsh ferns. The tree layer includes American larch, black spruce, white pine, eastern hemlock, red maple and sugar maple. The shrub layer includes sweet pepperbush, red osier, viburnum, arrowwood and aster. There is prevalent swamp reed grass, a variety of sedges, moss, holly, ragwort, goldenrod, knotweed, jewelweed, cattails and purple loosestrife. In several locations in town there are areas with beech and tamarack. Invasive species of purple loosestrife, buckthorn and phragmites have spread widely.

The community participated in the state's first Biodiversity Day inventory in June 2000 and the results of that survey show 441 species. Efforts will be made in the future to expand these lists. A special find were several large American Chestnuts in the Bare Meadow Conservation Area.

The Town Forest protects 300+ acres and also supplies a buffer zone for most of the Town's well fields. It has several acres of large pine and includes the floodplain of the Ipswich River, reclaimed sand pits, an old cranberry bog, mature woods and wetlands. Over 50 varieties of lichen have been identified. Present use includes trails, camping, cross-country skiing, birding, nature study, scout projects and environmental education. There are also cranberry bogs in Fairbanks Marsh, Kurchian Woods and behind the

Sanborn Village subdivision. In the eastern part of both north and south Cedar Swamp, abutting the Camp Curtis Guild National Guard property, there is a black ash swamp.

A white cedar bog at the north end of Cedar Swamp at the Reading-North Reading boundary is about 10 acres in size. There is also a 1-2 acre parcel at the easterly end of Meadow Brook Golf Club of northern white cedar. These areas provide habitat for a

variety of insects and wildlife. There is a private 10-acre parcel of forestry land in Chapter 61, which abuts Kurchian Woods Conservation Area.

Reading was designated as Tree City USA in 1985 and has retained that designation annually since then. The town has a shade tree program to maintain public roadside trees and conducts public relations with residents to encourage shade trees. If the town places trees on private property within twenty feet of a town sidewalk, it will provide maintenance for them. The Route 129 project included planting hundreds of trees to replace those lost to the widened road. In conjunction with the Reading Rotary Club, the town participates in an annual Arbor Day celebration giving 500 tree seedlings to fifth graders.

Leaves are picked up at the curbside during a three-week period in the fall or residents may transport them to the town's compost area during the growing season. Days and times vary throughout the year. Christmas trees may be recycled for one week either curbside or dropped off at the compost area in January. The materials are windrowed and decomposed and available to the residents in the spring for yard use and are also added to the soil in the town's tree nursery and used for other town projects. Dumping of yard debris in wetlands and on town-owned or undeveloped property is a perpetual problem. The Board of Selectmen have recently instituted a combined depot parking and compost area fee of \$25 annually.

The Community Planning & Development Commission has a tree policy governing all new subdivisions and planned residential developments. Each site is walked with the tree warden and town planner, accompanied by the project proponent, to see what trees can be saved, to minimize clear cutting and to enhance tree lawn plantings.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Wildlife seen in town includes much of the usual New England wildlife: Deer, red and gray fox, raccoons, ground hogs, rabbits, skunks, coyote, fisher, muskrat, an occasional moose, wild turkeys, opossum, frogs, spotted turtles, dragonflies, damselflies, spotted salamanders, geese, ducks and over 50 varieties of birds. Because of the many acres of swamps, the Town has a large mosquito population. Fish exist in the Ipswich and Aberjona Rivers and the headwaters of the Saugus River.

The Ipswich River corridor, the NEPCO high-tension electric lines at the north end of Camp Curtis Guild, and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline through the Cedar Swamp areas provide corridors of undeveloped forested wetlands in an otherwise residentially-populated area for wildlife to live and traverse.

There are 65 certified vernal pools in Reading. The Town's Wetland Protection Bylaw (last revised effective July 1, 1993) protects vernal pools under Section 3: Performance Standards for Resource Areas, "I. Vernal Pools;" and the Commission reviews any proposed project within 100 feet of such pools.

Species on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List that have been sighted in Reading include the blue-spotted salamander, the spotted turtle and the Mystic Valley amphipod.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Nearly 100 Reading properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and the Town Common and part of Woburn Street are classified as National Register Districts. The Town's historic inventory includes an additional 200 houses and a historic site at Lobs Pound Mill on the Ipswich River.

In 1995, Reading adopted a Demolition Delay Bylaw to protect historic properties. It allows up to a six-month demolition delay while alternatives are explored. The Bylaw has been used to protect several properties, notably a circa 1710 house on the Meadow Brook Golf Club, which was moved to a half acre Town lot released by Town Meeting, placed in private hands and restored.

Three of the town's more rural roads, Mill, Walnut and South Street, have been designated as scenic roadways. Several other roads in town also retain an earlier New England character.

The town now enjoys a green belt along the south side of the Ipswich River, since the June 1999 Special Town Meeting approved funding for the Marion Woods site. The purchase of the 8.64-acre site, then the last remaining privately-owned land in Reading along the Ipswich River, was acquired for \$800,000 in December of 1999. Grant funding of \$250,000 has been received from the state with another \$236,000 expected, bringing the total net cost to the Town to \$314,000.

The Ipswich River has been impacted by heavy water usage within its watershed for many years as well as the low snow levels of recent years. In 1997, the river was listed as one of the 20 most threatened rivers in North America. Despite this year's heavier than normal rainfall, low flow problems persist along the Ipswich River. A study of the river by the U. S. Geological Survey has determined that pumping groundwater wells is the main cause of the low flow problem.

The town has an abundance of wetlands and swampy areas that provide scenic views of several open meadows and marshes. Several of our vernal pools are extensive and are critical habitats for rare and endangered species.

G. Environmental Problems

Environmental problems, as they relate to open space and recreation, can be grouped into three main areas: impacts of development pressures and traffic, wetland degradation, and water supply (quantity and quality). In addition are fiscal pressures, problems in themselves: the high cost of land and limited funds to purchase and maintain open space.

Because the Town of Reading is located at the intersection of two major interstate highways, it is a convenient place for commuters to live. Pressures for housing development are intense. Because developers can move much more rapidly than the wheels of local government, and because they have ready cash with which to move forward, the Town has been left with few choices of sites for open space and active recreation to meet the needs of residents. There is, of course, less and less open space available for acquisition by the Town.

With the development pressure comes increased traffic pressure, a problem caused not only by local people, but also by cut-through traffic seeking to avoid the major interstate interchange. In addition, because the Town is a commuter stop for the train to Boston, many out-of-town commuters park and ride from here further adding to the traffic load on our local streets.

As a result of the excessive traffic, old roads that were not designed to carry a large volume of vehicles are under pressure to be widened, straightened and flattened, and denuded of 100-year old trees and stone walls, in the name of safety and progress. Fast moving through traffic makes these residential streets noisy, unpleasant, unsafe and unhealthy for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists. This, in turn, discourages environmentally friendly modes of exercise and travel such as biking and walking, and encourages even more vehicle use.

The shape of new developments, with wide streets, cul-de-sac off cul-de-sac, few pedestrian rights of way, and no local services, encourages a car-dependent, environmentally-unfriendly lifestyle. Local planning bylaws adopted over the last five years have restricted cul-de-sac length and made cluster development more attractive in an effort to lessen the environmental impact of new subdivisions.

Wide roads and sidewalks in new subdivisions increase safety, but also increase impervious surface area preventing infiltration of rainwater and exacerbating runoff problems. Town-wide, the suburban love affair with green lawns increases water demand and causes pesticide pollution of wetlands and streams. Wetlands are degraded by new development, increasingly located in environmentally sensitive areas, as well as by additions to existing houses, by mansionization, and by commercial developments.

The sale of the town's landfill is now under agreement with Dickinson Development. The ninety-day "due diligence" period expired in mid October of 2000. It is expected that the purchase will be completed by June 2002. Dickinson will close and cap the landfill at its own expense, relieving the town of the considerable expense of the capping the site.

Dumping of yard debris in wetlands, often Town-owned open space, is a continuing problem despite the vigilance of the Conservation Commission. The Town's compost area, though well-used, has suffered a cutback in hours due to area residents' traffic complaints and a fee is being considered due to budget constraints.

All-terrain vehicle use, illegal on Town land, is an increasing problem, especially in our aquifer protection district. ATVs cause wetland and habitat destruction and noise pollution, and are a safety concern for passive users of open space.

The Ipswich River, which forms much of our northern border with North Reading, was listed as one of the 20 most endangered rivers by the American Rivers Association in 1997. It flows through densely populated north suburban Boston and provides drinking water for 14 towns, including Reading. The acquisition of the Marion Woods parcel completed a corridor of protected open space along the length of the river in Reading.

Awareness of watershed issues has improved over the last five years, but the health of the Ipswich River, arguably, has not. In 1995, 1997, and 1999 the riverbed was completely dry in the vicinity of the Reading well fields and contained only puddles of water until downstream of Route 28 (Main Street). Normal summer low flow was seriously impacted by high water demand in Wilmington, Reading, and North Reading, all of which have well fields in the headwaters area, as well as by demand from downstream towns. Documented fish kills were only one of the environmental impacts of no flow. In September 2000, despite above-average rainfall, the town's water department issued a river flow advisory triggered by flows dropping below a minimum threshold set by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management.

In April 2000, the U.S. Geological Survey released a study of the hydrology of the Ipswich River. The U.S.G.S. developed a computer model of the river basin and estimated the natural "base flow" of the river – what streamflow would be like in the absence of development and water withdrawals. In addition, several regional planning efforts are underway to address watershed issues: the "Upper Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project" and the "Communities Connected by Water" program, both undertaken jointly with the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, and neighboring communities.

The 1992 gasoline tanker spill on Interstate 93 and the presence of four Tier 1A hazardous waste sites across the Ipswich River in the Concord Street industrial area all underscore the sensitive location of our water supply wells. These sites are summarized below:

- **Interstate Route 93 Gasoline Spill:** In 1992, 11,000 gallons of gasoline spilled from a tanker truck into wetlands adjacent to Reading's wells. Six of Reading's wells were shut down for varying periods of time; the last of these came back on line in 1998. The site is in the final stages of cleanup.

- **Sterling Supply:** Sterling Supply was a dry cleaning supply firm handling bulk deliveries of PCE. The PCE, TCE and DCE contamination in Reading's well 82-20 is believed to have originated there. There is no viable responsible party for the contamination, so DEP is handling the cleanup.
- **Roadway Express:** There is PCE and chlorobenzene contamination in the bedrock at this site, which originated from a discharge to an on-site catch basin. The concern with Reading's well field is that a fracture trace analysis of the site's bedrock showed a fracture zone extending from the contaminated area towards the Town Forest well.
- **General Electric:** This site was responsible for the closing of North Reading's Stickney Well in 1978. PCE and TCE at this site extend towards the Ipswich River. This plume is by far the largest and most complex of the contaminant plumes in the area. In a 1991 settlement with the Town of Reading, GE contributed to the installation of air stripping equipment at the Reading water supply plant.
- **MSM Industries:** The MSM Industries site has introduced 1,1,1- trichloroethane contamination to the overburden and the bedrock. The groundwater recovery and treatment has been ongoing since 1995. A contaminant plume extends beneath the Ipswich River towards Reading wells and is still being investigated.

The Ad Hoc Water Supply Task Force report, released in November 1999, dealt with Reading water supply issues primarily from the supply side, but also discussed environmental threats to the water supply. In its final report, the committee made the following findings:

- Four contamination sites in North Reading represent the most concern regarding risk to the Reading wellfield: Sterling Supply (Highest Priority), Roadway Express, GE, and the 1992 gas spill.
- The water treatment plant is capable of treating present levels of volatile organics (PCEs) from the contaminant plumes originating in North Reading. Though PCEs have been detected in the past, no contamination is presently being detected and pre-treatment continues.
- The Ipswich River water source continues to be vulnerable to potential contamination from the Concord Street area of North Reading and from Interstate Route 93.

At this time all commercial underground storage tanks have been either removed or upgraded to ensure ground water protection.

Self-Evaluation: Accessible Recreation Programs

Reading Recreation sponsors the Challenger Basketball, Baseball, and Soccer programs, the Special Skates Program, and T-Ball. In addition, several special needs programs are contracted. Alternative Leisure sponsors the "Spinning Wheels" program which has included bowling, special swim, Athletes on the Move, adventure trips, dinners, and plays.

Reading Recreation provides a Special Needs Coordinator who works with the Summer Camp Program. This individual is responsible for serving the needs of any Special Needs camper in the summer day camp.

There is also a Special Needs Subcommittee of the Recreation Committee. Special Needs children are allowed in regular programs if they meet the following criteria: (a) they don't need one-on-one supervision; (b) the individuals do not inflict injury to self; (c) the individuals do not inflict injury to others; and (d) are able to function in a group.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Barrows School
 Location of Facility 16 Edgemont Ave

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460751

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			
Site Access			X	Street entrance not evenly paved.
Walks	X			
Entrances	X			
Stairs	X			
Bleachers			X	
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches			X	
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Burbank Ice Arena

Date 5/12/00

Location of Facility Symonds Way

Conducted

GIS # 2460767

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps	X			
Parking	X			
Site Access	X			
Walks	X			
Entrances	X			
Stairs	X			
Bleachers	X			
Playground			X	
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink	X			
Restrooms	X			
Shower Rooms	X			
Floors	X			
Telephone	X			

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Coolidge Middle School
 Location of Facility Birch Meadow Drive

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460753

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps				
Parking				
Site Access				
Walks				
Entrances				
Stairs				
Bleachers				
Playground				
Drinking Fountain				
Picnic Tables				
Signs/Signals/Switches				
Pool				
Restrooms				
Shower Rooms				
Floors				
Telephone				
Skating Rink				
Restrooms				
Shower Rooms				
Floors				
Telephone				

FIELD UNDER CONSTRUCTION - SHOULD BE READY FOR SPRING 2001

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Hunt Park
 Location of Facility Pleasant Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460745

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			No Handicap spots designated. 16± head in spots along Pleasant St. 28± parallel spots along Pleasant St. and Eaton St.
Site Access			X	
Walks			X	No paved access - all grass / dirt.
Entrances	X			Between telephone poles. Much of field blocked by horizontal telephone poles.
Stairs			X	
Bleachers	X			
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches			X	Signs naming field. Parking none with handicap designation.
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Joshua Eaton
 Location of Facility Summer Ave.

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460752

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			
Site Access	X			
Walks			X	
Entrances	X			Entrance from Cherry Lane Drive is fenced. Entrance from Indiana blocked by boulder.
Stairs	X			Built into hill, used for seating.
Bleachers			X	
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain			X	
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Killam School
 Location of Facility Charles Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460751

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			
Site Access	X			
Walks			X	
Entrances			X	
Stairs			X	
Bleachers			X	
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain			X	
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Longwood Place
 Location of Facility Pearl Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460761

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			
Site Access	X			
Walks			X	
Entrances			X	
Stairs			X	
Bleachers			X	
Playground			X	
Drinking Fountain			X	
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Memorial Park
 Location of Facility Charles Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460758

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			On street parking. No handicap designated spots.
Site Access			X	No paved access – all grass / dirt.
Walks		X		One dirt walkway is blocked off by chain.
Entrances			X	Much of field is blocked by horizontal telephone poles. Entrance to parts of park is over grassy hills.
Stairs			X	
Bleachers			X	
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Parker Middle School
 Location of Facility Temple Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460756

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			Two school parking lots and on street parking.
Site Access		X		Access to field and bleachers is down a steep grassy hill with a paved walkway or stairs.
Walks	X			Paved driveway from parking lot.
Entrances	X			Entrances from parking lot are accessible but entrances to field and bleachers are not easily accessible.
Stairs	X			
Bleachers	X			
Playground			X	
Drinking Fountain			X	
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Sturges Park
 Location of Facility South Street

Date 9/14/00
 GIS # 2460757

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			No Handicap spots designated.
Site Access			X	No paved access – all grass / dirt
Walks			X	
Entrances			X	Much of field blocked by horizontal telephone poles. Entrance to parts of park is over grassy hills.
Stairs			X	
Bleachers			X	
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

RENOVATIONS COMPLETED IN SEPTEMBER 2000

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Symonds Way Field
 Location of Facility Symonds Way

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460767

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps				
Parking				
Site Access				
Walks				
Entrances				
Stairs				
Bleachers				
Playground				
Drinking Fountain				
Picnic Tables				
Signs/Signals/Switches				
Pool				
Restrooms				
Shower Rooms				
Floors				
Telephone				
Skating Rink				
Restrooms				
Shower Rooms				
Floors				
Telephone				

UNDER CONSTRUCTION – READY FOR SPRING 2001

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility Washington Park
 Location of Facility Washington Street

Date 5/12/00
 GIS # 2460759

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			Street Parking on Washington Street limited to resident parking only from 6:00 – 10:30 a.m. On street parking on Warren Ave, Riverside Drive and Sweetser Ave.
Site Access	X			
Walks	X			Three unpaved walkways into park.
Entrances	X			
Stairs			X	
Bleachers	X			
Playground	X			
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables			X	
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility YMCA

Date 5/12/00

Location of Facility Arthur B. Lord Drive

Conducted _____

GIS # 2460755

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	Elevators within building.
Parking	X			
Site Access	X			
Walks	X			
Entrances			X	Must be manually opened, not electric.
Stairs		X		Elevators within building.
Bleachers	X			
Playground			X	
Drinking Fountain	X			
Picnic Tables	X			
Signs/Signals/Switches	X			
Pool	X			
Restrooms	X			
Shower Rooms	X			
Floors	X			
Telephone	X			
Skating Rink			X	
Restrooms			X	
Shower Rooms			X	
Floors			X	
Telephone			X	

RENOVATIONS COMPLETED IN FALL 1999

Section 504 Guidelines: Handicapped Accessibility Self-Evaluation

Conservation areas in natural condition and with no on-site parking:

Name	GIS Identification #
North Cedar Swamp	2460202
South Cedar Swamp	2460227
Timberneck Swamp	2460234
Sheehan	2460239
Xavier	2460240
Querolo	2460728
Conserva	2460731
DiCenzo	2460733
Monterisi	2460744
Thomas	2460748
Pacey	2460770

The following naturally vegetated land donations were made to **Conservation**:

R 110 Van Norden Road	NEW	50,744 sf
R 72 Van Norden Road	NEW	
Lowell Street/Morris	NEW	7.66 Acres
Grove Street/Pitman	NEW	2.2 Acres

The following naturally vegetated tax title parcels were transferred to **Conservation**:

E/S Haverhill Street 171/1	NEW	8.5 Acres
N. Main Street 245/6-7	NEW	.482 + .484 Acres
Main Street 195/2	NEW	3.617 Acres
Salem Street 92/30	NEW	.923 Acres
Knollwood Road 35/6-7	NEW	.619 Acres
Haverhill Street 147/13	NEW	.921 Acres
Maple Street 42/28&	NEW	.201 Acres
Longwood Road 47/4	NEW	5.10 Acres
Sturges Road 10/21	NEW	2.65 Acres
Colburn Road 154/5	NEW	.206 Acres
Colburn Road 153/44	NEW	1.08 Acres
Off Temple Street 62/6A	NEW	.570 Acres

The following naturally vegetated tax title parcels were transferred to **Conservation, DPW and Light Department** for conservation, utilities and drainage maintenance purposes:

Track Road 79/11	NEW	.115 Acres
Track Road 79/33-34, 3 47-48	NEW	.257 Acres
Track Road 79/98	NEW	.057 Acres
Track/Harvest Rd 79/55-57, 78-80	NEW	.257 Acres

The following naturally vegetated tax title parcel was transferred to **Conservation and DPW** for conservation and drainage maintenance purposes:

Salem Street	92/13	NEW	.577 Acres
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The following naturally vegetated tax title parcel was transferred to **Conservation, Recreation and DPW** for conservation, recreation and drainage maintenance purposes:

Off Arcadia	59/97	NEW	2.61 Acres
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The following tax title parcel was transferred to the **DPW** for incorporation into public rights of way (naturally vegetated):

Oakland Rd (Birch Meadow Dr) 123/126-135	(natural vegetation)
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Transition Plan: There are no plans to develop the above-mentioned parcels. Most are wetlands and have little potential for development. If any developments or improvements are made to these areas, grade for wheelchair access and turnaround. Federal trail guidelines have been obtained and are on file in the Conservation office. Consider railings for the blind. Develop signage plan for general identification of sites. Coordinate with public information plan to distribute map of open space and recreation areas in town to the residents.

Programs: None presently exist. Conservation areas are available for individual passive recreation. If organized programs are developed, consider alternative formats for information distribution: large print, tape or Braille. Request must be made for information in alternative format.

Other town-owned parcels that are in undeveloped state include:

Location	Map/Plot	GIS #	Description
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(These parcels are undergoing review for transfer of tax title parcels by the Board of Selectmen to the appropriate department and for transfer of other town owned land to the appropriate department on a subsequent Town Meeting Warrant or for sale.)

Line Road	68/6		Vacant Land
Quannapowitt Park	79/114-120, 133-143, 147-165		Vacant Land
Governor's Drive	93/33-45		Vacant Land
Ash Street	28/1		Vacant Land
Chapel Hill Drive	208/49		Vacant Land
Eaton Street	66/50		Vacant Land
W/S John Street	46/4		Vacant Land
Partridge Road	226/48		Vacant Land
Walnut Street	2/21, 2/9		Vacant Land
Border Road	7/10		Vacant Land

Curtis Street	3/33	Vacant Land
Bear Hill	12/33	Vacant Land
Birch Road	134/172	Vacant Land
Village Street	56/15	Vacant Land
Pinevale Avenue	35/27	Vacant Land
Sturges Road	10/20	Vacant Land
Bay State Road	79/184	Vacant Land
Torre Street	79/175	Vacant Land
County Road	36/19	Vacant Land
Francis Road	115/23E	Vacant Land
Parcels across from High School		Vacant Land

Colburn Road	154/4	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
Off West Street	47/5	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
E/S Haverhill Street	198/3	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
N. Main Street	225/37	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
Summer Avenue	20/23	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
Bear Hill	13/47	Vacant	Spring TM to DPW
Bear Hill	13/79, 80, 82	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons
Bear Hill	14/18	Vacant	Spring TM to Cons

Town-owned parcels assigned to Departments:

Revey Well Field	2460229	No Public Access
Revey Well Field	2460231	No Public Access
Willow Street	2460743	No Public Access
DPW Garage	28/20	Restricted Access
Union Street	76/008	New Police Station Accessible
Middlesex Avenue	73/001	Library Accessible
Salem Street	87/21	ROW to fire station Accessible

Street Triangles of Open Space:

Town Common (paved walkways)	2460746	Accessible
Elm Park (Main & Washington)	2460747	Accessible
Leach Park (Hopkins & Summer)	2460764	Open Space
Haverhill/Charles	2460765	Open Space

Cemetery parcels developed with paved roadways:

Charles Lawn Cemetery	2460232	Accessible
Laurel Hill Cemetery	2460762	Accessible
Forest Glen Cemetery	2460763	Accessible
Wood End Cemetery	2460727	Accessible

Undergoing development review:

Dividence Road (School Dept.)	2460754	Will meet accessibility requirements
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ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Bare Meadow **Date Conducted:** June 10, 2000
Location of Facility: Pearl Street **GIS #** 2460189
Primary Access: Pearl Street at Parking Area

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			4 regular, 1 handicapped
Site Access	X			
Trails	X			
Signs	X			

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. If picnic area developed, provide for wheelchair access to table.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Schneider Woods **Date Conducted:** May 12, 2000
Location of Facility: Haverhill Street **GIS #** 2470730
Primary Access: Haverhill Street near Rustic Lane

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking		X		Street parking only.
Site Access		X		Guardrail
Trails		X		Short boardwalk. Access restricted by slope.
Signs	X			

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Lobs Pound Mill **Date Conducted:** June 10, 2000
Location of Facility: Mill Street **GIS #** 2460195
Primary Access: Mill Street at Ipswich River

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			Needs handicap sign. Rebuilt with acquisition of Marion Woods
Site Access	X			Roadway width.
Trails		X		One access trail to river. Needs maintenance.
Signs	X			

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. If picnic area developed, provide for wheelchair access to table. Area needs maintenance.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Marion Woods **Date Conducted:** June 10, 2000
Location of Facility: Between Main and Mill **GIS #** NEW
Primary Access: Mill Street at parking area.

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			2 regular, 1 handicapped. Requested handicapped sign.
Site Access			X	
Trails			X	
Signs	X			

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. If picnic sites developed, provide for wheelchair access to table.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Kurchian Woods **Date Conducted:** May 26, 2000
Location of Facility: Franklin Street **GIS #** 2460222
Primary Access: Franklin at Kurchian
Secondary Accesses: Buckskin Drive and Fairchild Drive

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			4 regular, 1 handicapped
Site Access	X			
Trails	X			Short boardwalks. No turnaround areas.
Signs	X			At primary access and one secondary access

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. Develop picnic sites. Allow for wheelchair access.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Town Forest **Date Conducted:** June 10, 2000
Location of Facility: Strout Avenue **GIS #** 2460726 and 2460204
Primary Access: Strout Avenue
Secondary Accesses: Fox Run Lane, Roma Lane, and Sunset Rock Lane

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>COMMENTS</i>
Ramps			X	
Parking		X		Street parking.
Site Access		X		Roadways blocked by chain or grades.
Trails	X			Road width. Vehicle access for town vehicles only.
Signs		X		Need considerable additional signage and trail markings.

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. If picnic area developed, provide for wheelchair access to table. Create and post additional signage.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Thelin Bird Sanctuary **Date Conducted:** July 9, 2000
Location of Facility: Hancock Street **GIS #** 2460241
Primary Access: Hancock Street between Summer Avenue and Willow Street

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking		X		Street parking.
Site Access		X		Needs maintenance.
Trails		X		Needs trail improvements.
Signs	X			

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Pinevale **Date Conducted:** April 28, 2000
Location of Facility: Pinevale Avenue **GIS #** 2460735
Primary Access: Pinevale Avenue
Secondary Accesses: Warren Avenue and Park Avenue

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			2 regular, 1 handicapped.
Site Access		X		Needs maintenance
Trails	X			Short boardwalk sections in interior. Trail maintenance recently done by scout project.
Signs	X			Need better trail markings.

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. Potential for better trails and stream crossings. Improve signage.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Maillet/Morgan/Somes **Date Conducted:** Monthly since November, 1999

Location of Facility: Willow Street **GIS #** 2460734

Primary Access: Willow Street

Secondary Accesses: Lowell Street, Lee and Hunt Streets

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking		X		Street parking; 1 off road
Site Access	X			1 sloping paved area.
Trails		X		Looped trail needs improvements. Considerable beaver activity over last year has flooded some areas.
Signs	X			Needs improved signage and trail markings.

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access. Potential for improving parking at entrance.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Woodland/Aberjona/Higgins **Date Conducted:** June 18, 2000

Location of Facility: Off Birch Meadow Drive **GIS #** 2460233 and 2460238

Primary Access: Henzie Street; Birch Meadow Drive

Secondary Accesses: Criterion Street and Woodland Street

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking			X	Street parking.
Site Access		X		Needs maintenance.
Trails		X		Needs trail improvements.
Signs	X			Need improved signage and trail markings.

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access.

ACCESS SURVEY FOR CONSERVATION/RECREATION AREAS

Name of Facility: Sledge Woods **Date Conducted:** May 26, 2000
Location of Facility: Off Pasture Road **GIS #** NEW
Primary Access: End of Pasture Road

YES = accessible, NO = not accessible, N/A = not applicable

ITEM	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Ramps			X	
Parking	X			Street parking; 3 on site, 1 handicapped.
Site Access	X			Main entrance also driveway of single family house.
Trails	X			No off driveway trails developed yet.
Signs	X			Needs improved signage and trail markings.

Transition Plan: When site improvements are made, grade and widen for wheelchair access.

Section 6 Community Goals

A. Description of Process

The Task Force conducted a public opinion survey of Reading residents to elicit views on open space and recreation. The two-page questionnaire was distributed at a special election in April 2000 and was available at Town Hall and at the Reading Public Library through April 6. 740 questionnaires were returned from a total of 1657 questionnaires distributed - a return of nearly 45%. Given that nationwide opinion surveys are considered valid using samples of 1,200 people, a sampling of 740 residents in Reading is significant.

All Task Force meetings were posted and open to the public. The April 7, 2000 meeting was specifically advertised as a public input session and the Recreation Committee was invited to attend.

Concurrent with the updating of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Upper Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project was taking place. The project, sponsored by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, is a collaborative effort of the towns of Wilmington, Burlington, Reading, and North Reading to improve quality of life, protect natural resources, and promote environmentally sustainable economic development. A "Visioning Session" was held February 17. Led by a team of facilitators, over 25 residents, including several Task Force members, were led through a structured series of questions designed to elicit feedback on the vision Reading residents have of the town and its future. The visioning session and a draft vision statement that came out of this session were additional sources of community input.

The Conservation Commission and the Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Task Force both reviewed tax-title parcels during the open space and recreation planning process. Site visits of the major parcels were done by a group made up of the Town Manager, the Conservation Administrator, and members of the Board of Selectmen, the Conservation Commission, the Task Force, and the Land Bank Committee.

Finally, Town Meeting debate and public comment at Selectmen's meetings, and at Community Planning and Development Commission, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and Recreation Committee meetings have been a rich source of community input. Task Force members serve on each of these committees and several Task Force members are elected Town Meeting members.

B. Survey Summary

In the survey the Task Force conducted, significant majorities said the Town should invest in open space acquisition and amenities. While priorities vary with age of household members, this opinion trend held true across the board, irrespective of age of people in the household.

- 86% of respondents disagreed that “Reading has all the recreation and conservation land it needs”. When it comes to quantity of conservation land, such as the Town Forest, respondents, by a 50-to-41% plurality, indicated they were not satisfied. With respect to the quantity of recreational space for children and youth, a 47-to-38% plurality were not satisfied. With respect to the quantity of recreational space for adults, 52% indicated they were not satisfied. In 1995, when identical questions were asked, 51% reported being satisfied with the quantity of recreational space for children, compared to 38% satisfied this year.
- 86% agreed “Reading should acquire more conservation land to protect our watershed and wildlife”, a figure that rose to 90% among respondents whose households include senior citizens or infants/pre-school age children.
- 76% agreed that “Reading should acquire more open space for ball fields and playgrounds”. Support for this is largest among families with children: 89% of those with infants/preschoolers agreed, compared to 86% of those with elementary-age children and 85% of those with middle-schoolers.
- With regard to financing open space, 84% of the sample agreed that “open space should be a standard part of the Town’s capital plan”. 71% said they “would support a local referendum to adopt a state Community Preservation Act, which would place a 1% to 2% surcharge on new real estate transactions to fund open space, historic preservation and affordable housing in Reading”. 63% said they “would be willing to pay more in taxes so Reading could purchase additional open space”. Notably, these attitudes were recorded just as Reading voters were defeating an operating budget override.
- When asked what conservation areas they use or enjoy, 85% of respondents checked the Town Forest, 30% Bare Meadow, and 23% Kurchian Woods. With respect to recreation, the top ranked facilities were 57% respondents reporting they use or enjoy the Birch Meadow Complex, 51% for Imagination Station, 45% for Ipswich River Park (North Reading) and 43% for Memorial Park. Reported use/enjoyment patterns of active recreational facilities varied with household composition. Notably, of all the items checked, the one with the most reported use/enjoyment is the Town Forest.
- Asked to select from a 20-item list of additional conservation and recreational activities those five which they would most like to have in Reading, respondents indicated their priorities as Bike Trails (65%), Hiking/Nature Trails (53%), Conservation Areas (36%), Family Picnic Area (34%), Bird watching/Wildlife Habitat (29%), Athletic Fields (28%), Canoe Facilities (26%), Community Gardens (24%), Outdoor Pool (23%), Sledding Hills (21%), Children’s Play Areas (20%), Cross-Country Ski Trails (19%), Skateboarding/In-Line Skating (17%), Fishing Areas (14%), Tennis Courts (13%), Outdoor Skating (11%), Basketball (7%), Archery/Shooting (6%), and Volleyball (3%). Interestingly, respondents place at least as high a value on conservation and passive

recreation -- being out and active in nature -- as the Town has traditionally placed on team sports and athletics.

Respondents' priorities regarding open space amenities they would most like to see in Reading changed according to the ages of people in household:

- Among respondents with infants or preschool children, the top five priorities were bike trails (71%), children's play areas (50%), hiking/nature trails (45%), family picnic areas (43%), and athletic fields (36%). (An outdoor pool, at 35%, almost made their list.)
- Among those with elementary school age children, the top five priorities were bike trails (71%), hiking/nature trails (45%), athletic fields (39%), family picnic area (36%), and an outdoor pool (34%).
- Those with middle school students in their households wanted bike trails (66%), hiking/nature trails (45%), athletic fields (40%), canoe facilities (33%), and conservation areas (31%). (An outdoor pool, at 30% almost made their top five list.)
- Among those with high school students in their households, the top five priorities were bike trails (56%), hiking/nature trails (55%), conservation areas (37%), canoe facilities and athletic fields (both at 34%), and family picnic area (33%).
- Among respondents whose households include senior citizens, the highest ranking priorities were biking trails and hiking/nature trails (both at 55%), followed by bird watching/wildlife habitat (48%), conservation areas (46%), family picnic area (34%), and community gardens (24%).

Complete survey results and citizens' comments can be found in Attachment B-3.

C. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The overarching open space and recreation goals of the community, as elicited from the citizen input, are to preserve the quality of life and the aesthetic character of Reading. Residents wish to maintain Reading's quality of life by protecting the environment, especially water supply and wildlife habitat, by providing ample, useable and accessible open space and recreation facilities for all residents, and by preserving the New England character and less-dense suburban character of the town. Residents want a thriving, affordable community with attractive natural and built environments, good schools, public safety and access to Boston (without related traffic and development density).

We should have a moratorium on building in Reading. The Town used to be a lot smaller. Now it's beginning to look like [a densely populated city] and that's what most people came to Reading to get away from. (survey comment)

Reading's open space and recreation goals are echoed in two other planning documents that cover our area. The EOEPA funded Upper Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project held a "visioning workshop" in Reading in February 2000. Comparable workshops were held in Burlington, Wilmington, and North Reading under the same project. Each workshop was aimed at eliciting that town's vision of its future as it grapples with growth issues. The Reading workshop was attended by about two-dozen residents and resulted in a draft vision statement (see Attachment D-6) that echoes the main themes of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

On a regional scale, MetroGreen, the land resources protection element of MAPC's regional development plan, states a comparable goal in its MetroPlan 2000: The Regional Development Plan for Metropolitan Boston:

"The regional development plan should include a set of actions the goal of which is the protection of environmental and recreational resources within the region to enhance the quality of life and protect the public health. These resources include environmental, recreation, historic, visual and cultural resources, such as views, landmarks and areas of special locational character which define "a sense of place".

The four major goals of MetroGreen are:

- To preserve and protect critical land resources.
- To shape the growth of the region.
- To help preserve and enhance a "sense of place" for the region.
- To fulfill the recreational needs of the region's population and to provide access, when appropriate, to protected open area.

Note the similarity of these goals with the goals and objectives laid out in Section 8 of Reading's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Finally, one of the action recommendations of MetroGreen is to "Encourage implementation of local open space and recreation plans."

Section 7 Analysis of Needs

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The open space we preserve now is all we will ever have!

Purchase and protect more open space. No more development. Preserve our quality of life = open space & water in the Ipswich River. (survey comments)

Protection of natural resources and open space acquisition are important to Town residents. Eighty-six percent of survey respondents indicated that it is important for Reading to acquire new open space to protect our watershed and wildlife.

There is a complete wildlife corridor along the north-south axis on the east side of town through the North and South Cedar Swamp Conservation Areas, Reading Rifle & Revolver Club and Camp Curtis Guild National Guard base and one across the northern boundary along the Ipswich River from west to east. There are pockets of wildlife habitat in other conservation areas scattered throughout town.

Boundaries of the Zone II area of the Town's well fields have been completed and mapped. Investigation should be conducted to acquire any undeveloped sites within it. Attention also needs to be given to lands in the neighboring communities of Woburn, Wilmington and North Reading that have impacts on the Zone II, including four Tier 1A sites just north of the Ipswich River.

The health of the Ipswich River is an ongoing concern. Reading is actively investigating connecting to the MWRA to relieve the stress of water withdrawals on the Ipswich especially during seasonal low flow periods. Deep bedrock wells will continue to be investigated as potential a water supply source.

Wetlands protection requires continued vigilance to protect the Ipswich River as well as the headwaters of the Saugus and Aberjona Rivers. Protecting wetlands will help prevent flooding problems throughout the Town. Drainage issues need to be addressed in the Saugus River watershed, especially in the Ash Street and Track Road neighborhoods.

B. Summary of Community's Need

We need to protect our resources and provide space for healthy activities for children and families and seniors. (survey comment)

This year's survey shows an increased desire for active and passive recreation and for the preservation of open space. Reading's location, school system and commuter rail service to Boston have further solidified the town's reputation as a desirable bedroom community. As new families move into the few new homes and existing housing stock, the number of school-age children increases, along with the demand on the town's existing recreation areas and the call for the development of new recreation sites. There is little undeveloped land left in Town and the high demand for building lots has priced acquisition of many parcels above the financial resources of the community.

Need for Information and Accessibility

Need more info, especially about access to conservation lands.

The Conservation Areas i.e. Town Forest, Kurchian Woods, Bare [Meadow], etc. really should be made accessible for disabled people. (survey comments)

Although the Town of Reading over the past 25 years has acquired considerable protected acreage in conservation care, custody and control, many respondents were unaware of the extent of the natural resource assets protected by the town. Information and education about conservation areas needs to be developed and shared with residents. Eighty-six percent (86%) of survey respondents said they would use Reading's recreation and conservation areas if they knew more about them. An active, ongoing information and public relations program needs to be implemented to inform the residents of the location and use that can be made of these areas. Local newspapers are the preferred (78%) method of obtaining information about Reading's open spaces; 51% wanted it included in the Recreation Guide mailed to each resident; 40% would like to see it in Reading Notes (a Town news insert recently discontinued for budgetary reasons); 28% would like to see it on Community cable TV and 27% on the Town's web site.

Survey comments also identified better access to open space as a community need. Both handicapped access and access for seniors and folks pushing baby strollers were mentioned. More parking and improved signage were also mentioned.

More Trails and Linkage Between Areas

Reading needs more walking/biking paths. It would be nice to have a bike/walking path around the perimeter of Memorial Park and through some of the conservation land areas.

It would be nice to integrate green areas with downtown, rather than isolated areas to travel "to". (survey comments)

Residents indicated that they would like to see more bike trails (65%), hiking and nature trails (53%) and cross-country skiing (19%) within existing areas. The direction is clear that efforts must be made to develop greenways between and through protected areas to residential neighborhoods to allow the residents better access to enjoy and appreciate the natural resources of the community. Forty-five percent (45%) of respondents indicated they use the Ipswich River Park in North Reading. Efforts could be made to duplicate these facilities in Reading and consider improving non-automobile linkage to the park from Reading.

Passive Recreation Areas

We need better access to the Town Woods. Please improve it and publicize!

Not enough open undeveloped space for children however! (survey comments)

A large percentage of the Town's conservation lands are wetland swamps, and while offering habitat for a variety of wildlife and plants and providing areas for flood storage and groundwater, are not suitable for active and even sometimes passive recreation, except in winter when frozen and hiking, skating and cross-country skiing can take place. In other conservation areas, trails have fallen into disrepair, as the Town has no funds allocated for conservation land improvement, trails maintenance or expansion and relies on scout troops for completing projects.

Eighty percent of survey respondents indicated that it is important for Reading to acquire more open space for hiking, canoeing, cross-country skiing and birding.

Active Recreation Areas

We need more fields for the children's sports programs and activities to provide them with things to do. (survey comment)

Recreation assets are important to Reading residents. 76% felt the Town should acquire more open space for ball fields and playgrounds. There is little downtime at all for the town's athletic fields and the recreation department has continued its "no new leagues" policy (with the short-term exception of the men's "Over the Hill" soccer league). Due to overcrowding, it has become necessary for the recreation committee to issue permits to leagues for practice times in order to avoid potential safety problems and to help prevent excessive damage to the fields. Some fields have dual and occasionally conflicting uses that make scheduling and maintenance a challenge.

Burbank ice Arena has been operating since 1994. One baseball field with an overlapping soccer field has just been completed behind the arena and is expected to open in the spring of 2001. A reconstructed soccer field is being prepared behind the renovated Coolidge Middle School. The Reading YMCA was renovated with the addition of two new indoor pools, an expanded fitness area and childcare wing. The renovation, which was funded in part by private donations and public funds, was completed in the fall of 1999. The antiquated outdoor pool has been demolished and will be used as a

multipurpose field pending funding, but 23% of survey respondents would still like to have an outdoor pool. A soccer field and a play area are planned for the new school site off Dividence Road.

Land Acquisition and Funding

I know it is difficult and expensive but in the long term, protecting open space and increasing recreational areas will actually improve Reading's property values.

Private sector/public improvement partnerships should be investigated as part of landfill, Longwood, Spence Farm (Marriott) or others.

I feel let down by the Town on recreation space. We have 1500+ children in Reading soccer. We need fields for them. It's that simple. Look at surrounding towns. They have gorgeous facilities for soccer. It's embarrassing. Stop diddling around & buy Longwood and make some soccer fields so the kids have a safe place to play. (survey comments)

Despite the Town's fiscal constraints, there is strong support for land acquisition. While the majority of residents support various financial measures to fund open space acquisition, survey comments reflected concerns about funding.

No additional Town-owned land is available for expansion of active recreation fields. However, there are still a few large privately owned sites that could be acquired if financial resources were available. Both Longwood Poultry Farm and Spence Farm were mentioned in this context by survey respondents. (Both parcels recently chose not to renew their Chapter 61A status.) Longwood also has potential for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.

Passage of the Community Preservation Act at state and local levels would create additional funds to acquire land for both passive and active recreation. Although worded in the form of a transfer tax, a survey question showed residents would support a local referendum question (71%) to fund this type of project. In separate questions, 63% said they were willing to pay more in taxes so the community could purchase additional open space and 84% felt that purchase of open space should be a standard part of the Town's capital plan. These percentages are significant since the survey was distributed at an election where a general Proposition 2½ override question was defeated by an almost two-thirds vote.

Reading's residents have voluntarily contributed to acquisition and development of both active and passive recreation sites including the children's playground at Imagination Station, the Burbank Ice Arena, the Burbank YMCA pools, donation of land and funds to the Reading Open Land Trust and donation of land and conservation restrictions to the Town through the Conservation Commission. Several residents and groups helped defray carrying costs during the purchase of Marion Woods, as well.

Reading does not have perpetual care or endowment funds needed to provide for the ongoing care of all recreation and conservation areas. The Recreation Committee has instituted a fee system with proceeds to be devoted to the improvement and maintenance of these intensely used areas.

The community has always relied heavily on its residents and community groups as volunteers whether to serve on committees, to contribute funds or to actively share their knowledge and talents to build and maintain community resources. With Proposition 2 ½ restraints and the growth of municipal and school budgets, either public tax dollars will need to be increased (for example, by passing the Community Preservation Act locally) or private resources will need to be attracted to reach the goals and meet the desires of residents. Friends or stewardship programs can be developed and grant applications written to assist when tax-revenue programs are inadequate.

Community Character

I wish the town & people tried more saving Blueberry Hill (it's by Longwood Poultry Farm) at end of Longwood Road overlooking 93. The developer [took] a dozer up there and destroyed everything. It was a special place. Now it's destroyed.

[Editors note: "Blueberry Hill" is actually in Woburn, on the Reading side of Rt. 93.]

I am saddened to see so much of Reading turn into private swimming pools replacing old & lovely trees and blacktop everywhere, where grass and trees grew.

Conservation of untouched land would be wonderful to preserve Reading's lovely community!
(survey comments)

Survey comments reveal the community's sense of loss over changes to the character of the Town. The survey did not ask directly which landscape and aesthetic features residents wish to see preserved, but the Draft Vision Statement developed in the Upper Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project workshop mentions "well-defined neighborhood ... centers", "a leafy woodland character", "strong visual cohesiveness" and "small-town character". (Attachment D-6.)

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

The Conservation Division has a full-time administrator but the available hours are almost exclusively devoted to regulatory activities. Management plans have been written for the two most recently acquired conservation areas, Sledge Woods and Marion Woods (both purchased with Self-Help funds). Management plans need to be developed and implemented at the remainder of the sites, including boundary surveys, signage, and trail development and maintenance.

The Recreation Division has a full-time administrator who develops and conducts various athletic programs and assigns the Town's recreational facilities. There is limited other town support for either position, including clerical. The Recreation Administrator should participate in the Development Review Team and work with the Town Planner to explore active recreation sites in the planning of new developments.

The Conservation Commission and Recreation Committee should work together to find new areas or supplement existing areas that residents can use for passive and active recreation needs.

Educational programs and outreach to community and school groups should be implemented regarding watershed issues, recycling, fertilizer, herbicide, pesticide and de-icer usage, dumping of yard debris in wetlands and biodiversity in the natural environment.

The Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works need to continue their interaction with respect to appropriate maintenance activities, including when and how such actions should be approved and monitored. Bike and hiking trail potential along existing waterways controlled by the DPW for drainage and sewer easements should be investigated and expanded where appropriate.

Additional Town Forest parking and better signage at access points to the Town Forest should be addressed by DPW and the Town Forest Committee.

A thorough review of all tax title parcels and other Town-owned land not allocated to a specific department has been completed and is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Selectmen this fall. Transfer of tax title parcels can be approved by the Board of Selectmen but transfer of other Town-owned parcels must be placed on a Town Meeting Warrant. As future tax title parcels are acquired, appropriate departments should be contacted and an assignment made based on appropriate criteria. Any Town-owned parcels not acted on should be reviewed regularly and a decision made by either the Board of Selectmen or Town Meeting as to appropriate department assignment.

Section 8 Goals and Objectives

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey – Spring 2000 was the primary form of citizen input to this document. Based on the survey and other public input, the overall open space and recreation goals of the community are to preserve the quality of life and the aesthetic character of Reading (see Section 6 C). Within this context and taking into account resource protection and community needs (see Section 7), six concrete open space and recreation goals have been identified:

- 1. Provide high quality habitat and a healthy environment**
- 2. Provide ample open space and recreation space**
- 3. Make recreation and open space accessible to all**
- 4. Preserve the character of the town**
- 5. Provide connection between open spaces**
- 6. Identify new funding sources for recreation and open space**

These goals are discussed below. Bulleted objectives, or concrete ideas for accomplishing each goal, are listed under each.

The Task Force recommends as top priorities: (1) the acquisition of additional open and recreation space and (2) consideration of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA would provide revenue to meet many of the open space and recreation goals of the community, as well as a structure within which the community can balance and prioritize its open space, recreation, housing, and historic preservation goals.

Goal 1: Provide high quality habitat and a healthy environment

The natural environment plays an important role in defining the character and identity of Reading as a single-family residential community. Ironically, the very qualities that attract people to Reading are endangered by development fostered by this demand. This leads to increased density and reduction in upland open space; increased traffic congestion; air and noise pollution; groundwater degradation and reduction in the quantity and quality of drinking water; solid-waste and toxic waste generation; and despoliation of wetlands and groundwater through fertilizer, herbicide, pesticide, salt, oil and other hazardous runoff.

Reading residents' concern for environmental degradation is growing. In particular, residents' awareness of watershed health and water supply issues has grown substantially over the past five years.

Objectives:

- Continue watershed awareness programs.
- Continue recycling awareness programs.
- Continue to celebrate Biodiversity Days or comparable events.
- Conduct public education to eliminate dumping of yard debris in resource areas and on Town-owned land.
- Conduct public education with schools and youth groups.
- Conduct public education on best-management practices for fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and de-icers.
- Monitor 21 E sites in adjacent communities.
- Transfer appropriate tax title and other Town-owned parcels to the Conservation Commission.
- Reduce water use by residents, businesses, and the Town
- Evaluate conservation areas for interpretive programs
- Enact new conservation and resource protection ordinances as needed
- Keep Town ordinances current with State regulations
- Develop strategy to reduce ATV damage to public lands.

Goal 2: Provide ample open space and recreation space

The loss of open space means the loss of opportunities for passive recreation and for nature appreciation and study. The lack of large tracts of undeveloped, but developable, Town-owned land also means that Reading is constrained in its future needs for land for new schools, playing fields, or other Town infrastructure. Open space is a diminishing resource and pressure to develop our existing limited stock of Town-owned land will increase over time.

There is no Town-owned land available to meet the need for additional playing fields (with the exception of the planned soccer field at the yet to be built elementary school). Reading is an active town that prides itself on its individual and team sports and that puts high demand on its recreation fields and facilities. Only the acquisition of additional land can meet this demand.

Objectives:

- Provide active management and maintenance of conservation areas.
- Acquire additional open space for water supply protection (Zone II).
- Acquire additional open space for resource area protection.
- Acquire additional open space for passive use and connections.
- Use subdivision control and PRD ordinances to set aside open space on parcels being developed
- Acquire more land for playing fields.
- Continue programs for refurbishing the town's playgrounds.
- Continue to maintain the turf on the playing fields.
- Develop pocket parks.

- Develop a family picnic area.
- Establish a policy of no net loss of sledding hills, skating rinks, basketball and tennis courts, etc. when school properties and recreation areas are redeveloped.

Goal 3: Make recreation and open space accessible to all

Accessibility of open space and recreational facilities is a challenge for the town to address. The town has a legal as well as a moral obligation to provide handicapped accessibility. By meeting handicapped accessibility requirements, facilities are also more useable for seniors and for children in strollers.

Parking and signage are additional aspects of accessibility that survey respondents found lacking (based on survey comments). Public information about open space available for passive use is generally lacking or is of low quality. The packet of information on conservation lands available from the Department of Community Development is a well-kept secret and is of variable quality.

Objectives:

- Improve signage at conservation areas and Town Forest.
- Create a “Guide to Reading’s Open Space” including better maps.
- Lead walks for the public at different conservation areas.
- Build a handicapped accessible nature trail on existing open space.
- Build a bike/walking path for seniors, baby strollers, and wheelchairs.
- Provide more handicapped parking.
- Provide more regular parking at well-used conservation areas and for the Town Forest.
- Build more quality trails at existing open space areas.

Goal 4: Preserve the character of the town

Reading residents genuinely mourn the loss of open space whether it be lands they once hiked or vistas that no longer exist. Open fields, pine woods, stone walls, and country lanes are fondly remembered. The town clings to its New England past, to the look and atmosphere of a New England village (though we enjoy the amenities of suburban living). Planning initiatives have been largely unsuccessful in preserving this vision in the face of private development, traffic pressure, and budgetary constraints.

Objectives:

- Designate more scenic roads.
- Protect stone walls.
- Encourage cluster development through the PRD special permit process.
- Use subdivision control ordinances to retain landscape features, e.g. limit the extent of tree cutting.
- Continue Adopt-an-Island and other beautification programs.

Goal 5: Provide connection between open spaces

Connection between open spaces is necessary to maintain the viability of animal populations, especially as open spaces become increasingly fragmented. Connection maintains wildlife corridors and healthy watersheds. Connecting recreation areas and Town facilities to residential areas, and connecting neighborhoods to each other, reduces reliance on automobiles and provides the face to face contact that makes a neighborhood a neighborhood and a town a community.

Objectives:

- Work with adjacent communities to connect public spaces.
- Look for opportunities to connect open spaces within Reading.
- Build river/watershed greenways.
- Develop walking/biking trails between open spaces.
- Improve walking/biking access to schools.
- Address safety issues along new and existing trails.
- Provide legal rights of way between neighborhoods and from new subdivisions to adjacent public land.

Goal 6: Identify new funding sources for recreation and open space

Reading must identify new funding sources for open space and recreation if any of the above goals are to become a reality. Finding creative ways to acquire additional open space is equally important.

Objectives:

- Develop new sources of funding, such as the Community Preservation Act.
- Apply for grants and self-help funds.
- Build partnerships with developers of large tracts of land.
- Develop links with local businesses and civic groups.
- Create a Friends or Stewardship program to help maintain open spaces.
- Interact with owners of large tracts for conservation restrictions, for land donations, and for “bargain” land sales to realize income tax relief.

Section 9 Five-Year Plan – 2001-2005

Abbreviations for Boards, Committees and Commissions:

BOS = Board of Selectmen and its staff/liaison
 CC = Conservation Commission and its staff/liaison
 CPDC = Community Planning & Development Commission and its staff/liaison
 RD = Recreation Committee and its staff/liaison
 HC = Historical Commission and its staff/liaison
 DPW = Department of Public Works and its staff/liaison
 WS = Water & Sewer Advisory Board and its staff/liaison
 SW = Solid Waste Committee and its staff/liaison
 HW = Hazardous Waste Committee and its staff/liaison
 HA = Housing Authority and its staff/liaison
 TF = Town Forest Committee

Priority: 1=first year 2001; 2=second year 2002; 3=third year 2003; 4=fourth year 2004; 5=fifth year 2005. Each year continue prior goals and add new goals.

Goal 1: Provide high quality habitat and a healthy environment

Objectives	Actions	When/Who Priority
Continue watershed awareness programs	Coordinate with IRWA; News articles; displays	Quarterly CC 1
Continue recycling awareness programs	Coordinate with Solid Waste; News articles, displays; mailings	Quarterly SW CC 1
Continue to celebrate Biodiversity Days or comparable events	Coordinate with volunteers; news articles, displays, walks	Spring/Fall Annually CC 1
Conduct public education to eliminate dumping of yard debris in resource areas and on Town-owned land	Coordinate with volunteers; news articles; web site; library displays; mailings	Spring/Fall CC SW 3
Conduct public education with schools and youth groups	Speakers; displays	Spring/Fall CC 2
Conduct public education on best-management practices for fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and de-icers	Speakers; displays; mailings; news articles	Spring/Fall CC SW HW 1 Winter

Monitor 21 E sites in adjacent communities	Attend DEP PIP meetings Respond to filings	As held CC 1
Transfer appropriate tax title and other Town-owned parcels to the Conservation Commission	Request BOS to act; Town meeting Warrant Articles	Fall/Spring 1 As parcels become available CC
Reduce water use by residents, businesses, and the Town	Incentives for water-saving devices; rate changes; consider hand-held hoses; improve reporting and unaccounted water; resolve leaks into sewer pipes; public education	Quarterly 1 WS BOS DPW
Evaluate conservation areas for interpretive programs	Develop self-guided trails; improve mapping	Annually 2 CC DPW/E
Enact new conservation and resource protection bylaws and regulations as needed	Review and revise existing; propose new	Annually 2 CC
Keep Town bylaws current with State regulations	Update locally as state changes occur	Annually 2 CC
Develop strategy to reduce ATV damage to public lands	Public education; news articles	Annually 3 CC PD

Goal 2: Provide ample open space and recreation space

Objectives	Actions	When/Who Priority
Provide active management and maintenance of conservation areas.	Write management plans Develop maintenance schedules	2-3 per Year CC DPW 1
Acquire additional open space for water supply protection (Zone II)	Identify and communicate with current owners; evaluate funding sources	Annual or 2 as available CC WS BOS
Acquire additional open space for resource area protection	Identify and communicate with current owners; evaluate funding sources	Annually or as available CC 2
Acquire additional open	Identify and communicate	Annually or

space for passive use and connections	with current owners; evaluate funding sources	as available CC 2
Use subdivision control and PRD bylaws to set aside open space on parcels being developed	Review filings, attend public hearings, make recommendations	As filed CC CPDC 1
Acquire more land for playing fields	Identify and communicate with current owners; evaluate funding sources	Annually or as available RC 1
Continue programs for refurbishing the town's playgrounds	Include in Capital Plan or annual operating budget	Annually 1 RC DPW
Continue to maintain the turf on the playing fields	Include in operating budget; water as necessary	Annually 1 RC DPW
Develop pocket parks	Include in Capital Plan or Annual operating budget	Annually 3 BOS DPW
Develop a family picnic area	Include in Capital Plan or Annual operating budget	Annually 3 CC DPW RC
Establish a policy of no net loss of sledding hills, skating rinks, basketball and tennis courts, etc. when school properties and recreation areas are redeveloped	Communication with Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Recreation Committee	As required RC 2

Goal 3: Make recreation and open space accessible to all

Objectives	Actions	When/Who Priority
Improve signage at conservation areas and Town Forest	Develop standard signage Install as appropriate	Annually 2 CC TF DPW
Create a "Guide to Reading's Open Space" including better maps	Use new aerial photos, create scaled maps, resources and history	2-3 Annually CC TF 3-4 DPW/E
Lead walks for the public at different conservation areas	Develop schedule, route, orientation info	Annually 2 CC

Build a handicapped accessible nature trail on existing open space	Get input from potential users Select location, recruit donations and volunteers, grant	Biennial 2 CC DPW
Build a bike/walking path for seniors, baby strollers, and wheelchairs	Get input from potential users Select location, recruit donations and volunteers, grant	Biennial 2 CC DPW
Provide more handicapped parking	Get input on where needed	Annually 2 CC TF DPW
Provide more regular parking at well-used conservation areas and for the Town Forest.	Get input on need	Annually 3 CC TF DPW
Build more quality trails at existing open space areas	Get input on need; recruit volunteers, grant	Biennial 2 CC

Goal 4: Preserve the character of the town

Objectives	Actions	When/Who Priority
Designate more scenic roads	Work with citizens; CPDC	Annually 2
Protect stone walls	Review plans	Annually CPDC 1
Encourage cluster development through the PRD special permit process	Review plans Development Review Team	As filed CPDC 1
Use subdivision control ordinances to retain landscape features, e.g. limit the extent of tree cutting	Review Plans; comment at public hearings	As filed CPDC 1
Continue Adopt-an-Island and other beautification programs	Work with volunteers	Annually 1 BOS

Goal 5: Provide connection between open spaces

Objectives	Actions	When/Who Priority
Work with adjacent communities to connect public spaces	Develop liaisons and collaborate	Annually 2 CC BOS

Look for opportunities to connect open spaces within Reading	Review filings; contact owners; grants	Annually CC BOS	3
Build river/watershed greenways	Submit grants	Annually CC	2
Develop walking/biking trails between open spaces	Solicit public input Submit grants	Annually CC RC	3
Improve walking/biking access to schools	Solicit public input	Annually CC RC SD BOS	2
Address safety issues along new and existing trails	Do inspection; perform maintenance as needed	Annually CC DPW	1
Provide legal rights of way between neighborhoods and from new subdivisions to adjacent public land	Investigate ownership, Town Counsel review, letters to owners, input at public hearings	Annually or as filed CPDC CC BOS	1

Goal 6: Identify new funding sources for recreation and open space

Objectives	Actions	When/Who	
Consider the Community Preservation Act	Educate citizens Town Meeting and Referendum	Annually CC HC HA BOS RC	1
Develop new sources of recreation funding	Submit grants; create endowment or friends groups	Annually RC	1
Apply for grants and self-help funds	Submit grants	As available CC	1
Build partnerships with developers of large tracts of land	Review filings; negotiate	As filed CPDC	1
Develop links with local businesses and civic groups	Get BOS approval; solicitation letters	Annually CC RC	1
Create a Friends or Stewardship program to help maintain open spaces	Solicitation letters News articles	Annually CC RC	2
Interact with owners of large tracts for conservation restrictions, for land donations, and for “bargain” and sales to realize income tax relief	Identify owners, write letters; create information packet	Annually CC	1

Section 10 Public Comments



**Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867-2683**

Open Space and Recreation Planning Task Force
Phone (781) 942-9016 Fax (781) 942-9070

November 17, 2000

Board of Selectmen
Community Planning Development Commission
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Conservation Commission
Recreation Committee
Historical Commission
Land Bank Committee
Town Forest Committee
Town Hall
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan - 2000

Dear Town Volunteers and other Reviewers:

Last year the Board of Selectmen created the Open Space & Recreation Planning Task Force to update this required state plan. As part of this process, public input was solicited and described in detail in the plan. Needs and goals were identified as well as a proposed set of action items. The state also requires or suggests your boards review the plan, recommend changes, if any, and include these goals and actions in the performance of your volunteer responsibilities.

Enclosed please find a copy of the draft plan. We can also provide this to you in electronic format if you provide us with your e-mail address. Before we can submit the Plan to the state, we must have your comments and consider any revisions necessary based on them. We would appreciate it if your letters of support could be returned to our staff liaison, Karen Mullins, Conservation Administrator, by December 4, 2000. Each board is being provided with one copy. If you need additional copies or if you have questions, please contact Karen Mullins at 942-9016.

Very truly yours,

Kim Honetschlager, Chair

Enc.: Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan
CC: Library
Town Manager

Section 11 References

Town of Reading Public Documents

Assessor Records and Plans

At Wood End, Reading, Massachusetts, 1644-1994: A Pictorial History, 1994.

Conservation Division Records and Plans

Conservation Assessment of Conservation Lands

Engineering Division Records and Plans

Land Bank Committee Records and Plans

Master Plan, 1991

Open Space & Recreation Plan, November 1995

Planning Division Records and Plans

Recommendation of the Town of Reading Ad-Hoc Water Supply Committee,
November 1999

Recreation Division Records and Plans

Recreation Park Planning Report

Water Division Records

Zoning Bylaws

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Documents and Plans

Mass. GIS data layer information

Creating Greenways: A Citizen's Guide, Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Department of Environmental Management, Greenways Program, (no date).

The Local Capacity Building Project, Summary Report and Recommendations,
Department of Environmental Protection by U. Mass Extension, Executive
Summary, final report 35 pages with many attachments. U. Mass. Extension 413-
545-2188.

The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook, EOE, Division of
Conservation Services, 1992.

Massachusetts Natural Resources Conservation Plan: For the Conservation of
Soil, Water and Related Resources. Fading Choices; Rising Issues: An Action
Plan for the Conservation of Natural Resources in Massachusetts, October 1988.

Our Irreplaceable Heritage; Protecting Biodiversity in Massachusetts, Henry
Barbour, Tim Simmons, Patricia Swain and Henry Woolsey; Natural Heritage and
Endangered Species Program, Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the
Massachusetts Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, 1998.

Community Choices: Thinking Through Land Conservation, Development, and Property
Taxes in Massachusetts, The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

Conservation and Land Use Planning with Massachusetts' Chapter 61 Laws: A Primer for Cities, Towns, and Conservation Organizations, by Keith Ross and Scott Wallace, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Inc.; 1990.

Conserving our Common Wealth: A Vision for the Massachusetts Landscape, prepared by The Land Conservation Center of the Trustees of Reservations, 1999.

Creating Land Development: Bridge to the Future; Robert A. Lemire, c. 1979, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

Doing Deals: A Guide to Buying Land for Conservation, The Trust for Public Land, Land Trust Alliance and The Trust for Public Land, 1995.

The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space: How Land Conservation Helps Communities Grow Smart and Protect the Bottom Line, by Steve Lerner and William Poole, The Trust for Public Land, 1999.

Environmental Handbook for Massachusetts Conservation Commissioners, Eighth Edition, Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, revised 2000.

The Forest Stewardship Source Book: Information and Services for Massachusetts Woodland Owners, Massachusetts Forestry Association and Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program, 1996.

Ipswich River Basin Water Conservation Report Card, Ipswich River Watershed Association and Massachusetts Audubon Society, October 2000.

Land Conservation Methods and their Tax Advantages: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners, revised and edited by Wesley T. Ward; Essex County Greenbelt Association and The Trustees of Reservations, 1989.

Land Conservation Methods and their Tax Advantages: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners – Technical Supplement: Tax Treatment of Conservation Gifts, by Wesley T. Ward, Essex County Greenbelt Association and the Trustees of Reservations, 1989.

Land Conservation Options, A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners, Essex County Greenbelt Association and The Trustees of Reservations on behalf of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, June 1999, 4th edition.

Land – Financing of Open Space, Edith M. Netter and Daniel J. Barry, An Environmental Policy Issue Paper of the ELM Education Fund; Environmental Lobby of Massachusetts, November 1988.

Losing Ground, Massachusetts Audubon Society, 1999, 2nd edition.

Managing Conservation Land: The Stewardship of Conservation Areas, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Open Space in Massachusetts, Peter Westover, The Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals, 1994.

MetroPlan 2000: The Regional Development Plan for Metropolitan Boston, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111, April 1994.

Open Space: Conservation: Investing in your Community's Economic Health, John Tibbetts, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1998.

Open Space Pays: The Socioeconomics of Open Space Preservation, Darryl F. Caputo; New Jersey Conservation Foundation and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program.

A Precipitation-Runoff Model for Analysis of the Effects of Water Withdrawals on Streamflow, Ipswich River Basin, Massachusetts, Water Resources Investigation Report 00-4029, US Geological Survey, 2000.

Protecting a River: A Volunteer's Guide to the Ipswich River Watershed Conservation Strategy, 2nd edition, June 1994, Ipswich River Watershed Association.

Saving Special Places: A Centennial History of the Trustees of Reservations: Pioneer of the Land Trust Movement, Gordon Abbott, Jr., Ipswich Press, 1993.

Southern Middlesex Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

State of the New England Environment, 1970-2000, United States Environmental Protection Agency, March 2000.

Watershed Resource Guide: Tools for Protecting New England Watersheds, EPA, Region 1, New England, April 1999.

Related Internet Sites of Interest*

Nonprofit and Other Organizations

Mass. Association of Conservation Comm.	www.maccweb.org
The Trustees of Reservations	www.thetrustees.org
The Trust for Public Land	www.tpl.org
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition	www.shore.net/~mltc
Land Trust Alliance	www.lta.org
National Wildlife Federation	www.nwf.org/nwf/education
The Nature Conservancy	www.tnc.org
National Audubon	www.eNature.com or www.audubonguide.com/guides
The Vernal Pool Association	www.vernalpool.org
Ipswich River Watershed Association	www.ipswichriver.org
Saugus River Watershed	www.saugusriver.org
Mystic River Watershed	www.tufts.edu/mystic/index.htm
Environmental League of Massachusetts	www.environmentalleague.org
Community Preservation	www.communitypreservation.org
Association for Biodiversity Information	www.abi.org
Izaak Walton League	www.iwla.org
New England Wild Flower Society	www.newfs.org
Ode News (dragonflies)	www.capecod.net
Public Open Space and Dogs	www.petnet.com.au/openspace
Appalachian Trail Conference	www.fred.net/kathy/at.html
National Trust for Historic Preservation	www.nthp.org
Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities	www.spnea.org
Historic Massachusetts	
Citizen Planner Training Collaborative	www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~masscptc
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	www.lincolninst.edu/main.html
The Foundation Center	www.fdncenter.org
Rails to Trails Conservancy	www.railtrails.org
Mass. Bicycle Coalition	www.massbike.org
North American Water Trails, Inc.	www.heritageworks.com/nawt.html
American Fisheries Society	www.fisheries.org/publications/
National Organization for Rivers	www.nors.org

*Web addresses correct as of date of publication.

State Government

Massachusetts Home Page	www.magnet.state.ma.us/
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs	www.state.ma.us/envir
DEM – OWR – Rainfall	www.state.ma.us/dem/programs/rainfall
Mass. Historical Commission	www.magnet.state.ma.us/sec/mhc
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	www.mapc.org/
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition	www.ma.ultranet.com/~mwc
Mass Geographic Information Systems	www.state.ma.us/mgis
USGS	ma.water.usgs.gov/basins
USGS	ma.water.usgs.gov/streamstats
Natural Heritage & Endangered Species	www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfwnhes
Mass. Fish & Wildlife	www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw
Public Access to Waters of Mass.	www.state.ma.us/dfwele/pub

Federal Government

Environmental Protection Agency	www.epa.gov
Polluted Waters	www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/atlas/index
US National Park Service,	
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	www.nps.gov/rivers
US Census	www.census.gov
US Forest Service	www.fs.fed.us
USGS – quadmaps	www.usgs.gov/www/gnis/gnisform.html
USGS – Science in your Watershed	www.water.usgs.gov/wsc
USGS – Water Quality Assessment	www.water.wr.usgs.gov/pnsp
	www.water.usgs.gov/wsc/glossary
National Biological Service	www.nbs.gov
National Wetlands Inventory US F & W	www.nwi.fws.gov
Fish & Wildlife Service	www.fws.gov
National Plant Data Center	www.plants.usda.gov/plants
Millennium Green	www.millenniumgreen.usda.gov

ATTACHMENTS

- A-1 Policy Establishing an Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Planning Task Force
- A-2 Operating Guidelines for Boards, Committees, Commissions and Task Forces

- B-1 2000 Open Space & Recreation Planning Survey results
- B-2 2000 Open Space & Recreation Plan Survey analysis
- B-3 Survey Comments by Category

- C 1995 Open Space & Recreation Plan Accomplishments

- D-1 MAPC Community Profile
- D-2 Employment Forecast
- D-3 Population Age Group Forecast
- D-4 Build-out Analysis
- D-5 Ipswich River Watershed Planning for Growth Project – Draft Recommendations
- D-6 Ipswich River Watershed Planning – Vision Statement

- E Sporting Programs

- F Town Meeting Surveys
- F-1 Mansionization Survey
- F-2 Community Preservation Act Survey and Comments

- G Conservation Commission – Criteria for Open Space – Adopted December 16, 1992

- H Potential Areas for Greenways/Trails/Paths

- I Open Space & Recreation Plan Funding Sources and Techniques

- J Public Comments (Responses to and from Committees & Agencies & Groups)

- K Town Policies and Contracts re: ADA and Disability Accommodations

- L Division of Conservation Services Approval Letter