

## Appendix 4-1

### Protecting Historic Resources

#### **Local Historic Preservation Programs & Districts**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. The MHC is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the office of State Archaeologist. The MHC works closely with local preservation groups and, if one has been established as in Hingham, the Local Historic Commission which must be established by vote of the town.

As the State Historic Preservation Office, the MHC acts as liaison to federal, state, and local development agencies. The MHC is authorized by state and federal law, through its environmental review processes, to review and comment on certain state and federally licensed or funded projects that have an impact on historic properties.

#### ***Local Historical Commission (LHC)***

Once established, the LHC is the municipal agency responsible for ensuring that preservation concerns are considered in community planning and development decisions. They serve as local preservation advocates and as an important resource of information about the community's cultural resources and preservation activities.

#### ***Local Historic Districts (LHD)***

An LHD is established and administered by a community to protect the distinctive characteristics of important areas and to encourage new construction that is compatible with the historic setting. A District Study Committee is appointed to conduct a survey of the area and to prepare a preliminary report for state and local review. A final report is then submitted to the local governing body for approval of the local ordinance. Once the LHD is established, a Local Historic District Commission (LHDC) is appointed to review all applications for exterior changes to buildings within the district.

This design review process assures that proposed changes to properties will not destroy the district's character. Review criteria, which may be either quite restrictive or quite flexible, are determined locally by each town and city and vary considerably for each local district. Therefore, it remains the decision of the town as to the degree of discretion given to the LHDC to review proposed exterior property changes.

#### **National Register of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) documents and records the nation's significant buildings, sites, and objects as well as districts worthy of protection. Based on local and state surveys, nominations to the National Register are generally initiated by the Local Historical Commission, which works with MHC staff to prepare the nomination form. Nominations are then reviewed by the MHC State Review Board at a public meeting and forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register for approval. Listing on the NRHP provides a basis for making informed planning and development decisions. National Register status places no constraints on what owners may do with their properties when using private funds. While the National Register is not a design review program, it does provide limited protection from state and federal actions, as well as eligibility for matching state and federal restoration and research grants and certain federal investment tax credits and benefits for certified rehabilitation projects.

#### **State Register of Historic Places**

The State Register of Historic Places was created to serve as a master list of designated historic properties in Massachusetts and to provide an added measure of protection to these properties. Properties are included on this Register if they are: listed or determined to be determined eligible for listing in the NRHP; local historic districts; local, state and national landmarks, state archaeological landmarks; or

(Continued)

properties with preservation restrictions. The State Register serves as a guide for project developers to determine whether a state funded or licensed project will affect any historic properties. The State Register review process is modeled closely after the federal review process and ensures that State Registered properties will not inadvertently be harmed by activities supported by State agencies.

**Preservation Restrictions**

Preservation Restrictions protect historic properties from changes that may be inappropriate. A preservation restriction (easement) on a property restricts present and future owners from altering a specified portion of a building, structure or site. A restriction can run for several years or in perpetuity and may be included as part of a property deed. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body, or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction. Charitable donations of easements on historical buildings or archaeological sites may qualify for federal income tax deductions.

## **Section 5: OPEN SPACE**

Hingham has been very proactive in planning, preserving and managing open space. The town has a long history of commitment to protecting its unique landscapes, and is fortunate to have benefited from the land conservation activities of state and nonprofit organizations. The town has carried on the tradition of open space planning, producing a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1996 to guide its land conservation and management activities.

### **I. OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

This section of the Master Plan provides an updated inventory of Hingham's protected and unprotected open spaces, and discusses existing provisions for their protection. This section then discusses specific courses of action to increase the amount of protected open space in town and to capitalize on other opportunities, such as connecting open spaces and increasing public access to existing protected lands.

#### **Relation to Previous Studies**

In 1995 and 1996, the Open Space Committee, consisting of members of many of Hingham's town departments and conservation and recreation groups, prepared an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan, completed in 1996, provides an extensive inventory of the town's public and private open space lands, including detailed descriptions of 105 parcels. The plan also identified open space and recreation needs and opportunities and outlined an open space and recreation action plan for the next five years.

This Master Plan element does not attempt to replicate the thorough and detailed work represented in the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Rather, it uses the 1996 plan as a factual resource and a starting-point for framing the town's open space and recreation goals and action plan, incorporating new and updated information to modify the previous plan as appropriate. In addition, this Master Plan element focuses on integrating open space objectives into the overall land use plan.

#### **INVENTORY OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

Hingham contains several large open space parcels with regional significance. These parcels provide wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge areas, and opportunities for hiking, camping and the enjoyment of nature not just for Hingham, but also for the surrounding South Shore communities. Hingham also has numerous smaller protected open space parcels acquired by the town or donated over the years.

#### **Open Space Inventory**

Hingham's protected, semi-protected, and public open space lands were identified based on information in the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Acreage figures were verified using the Hingham Assessor's Maps. In addition, a current list of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands was obtained from the Assessor's office, and a list of significant private unprotected open space parcels

was developed with assistance from the Town Planner. These lands are classified according to ownership and level of protection in Table 5-1 and displayed in Figure 5-1. In Table 5-1, "Level of Protection" refers to the potential of the property to be legally developed.

**Table 5-1  
Protected and Unprotected Open Space in Hingham (Year 2000)**

<b>Owner/Manager</b>	<b>Protection Status<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Town<sup>1</sup> Level of Protection<sup>1,3</sup></b>
<b>Permanently Protected Open Space</b>			
Hingham Conservation Commission	P	856.4	6.1%
Bare Cove Park Committee	P	469.3	3.3%
State of Massachusetts	P	2,118.3	15.0%
Massachusetts-American Water Company	P	253.5	1.8%
Hingham Land Conservation Trust	P	97.6	0.7%
Trustees of Reservations	P	461.5	3.3%
<b>Subtotal Permanently Protected</b>		<b>4,256.6</b>	<b>30.2%</b>
<b>Open Space with Limited Protection</b>			
Other Town Land <sup>2</sup>	Z	472.0	3.4%
U.S. Government	Z	152.0	1.1%
South Shore Country Club	Z	154.2	1.1%
Chapter 61 (Forestry)	T	25.9	0.2%
Chapter 61A (Agriculture)	T	34.9	0.2%
Chapter 61B (Recreation)	T	67.5	0.5%
<b>Subtotal Limited Protection</b>		<b>906.5</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>Unprotected Open Space</b>			
Other Town Land	N	1.5	--
Boy Scouts	N	7.7	0.1%
Significant Private Undeveloped Parcels <sup>3</sup>	N	1,132.5	8.0%
<b>Subtotal Unprotected</b>		<b>1,141.7</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
<b>Total Open Space</b>		<b>6,304.8</b>	<b>44.7%</b>

Sources: 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Hingham Assessors Office.

<sup>1</sup> P = Protected in perpetuity by legal or ownership mechanisms (i.e., is protected regardless of the local zoning); Z = Protected currently by virtue of being within Hingham's OS (Official and Open Space) or WR (Waterfront Recreation) zones; T = Protected temporarily by the Chapter 61, 61A or 61B tax abatement programs; N = No protection.

<sup>2</sup> Includes land managed by the Hingham Recreation Department, School Department, Department of Public Works, and Selectmen.

<sup>3</sup> This category includes individual privately-owned parcels or groups of abutting privately-owned parcels that are 5 acres or larger in size, that are entirely or primarily undeveloped, and that are not permanently or temporarily protected from development.

Note: A detailed inventory of parcels in each category is provided in Appendices 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3.

As shown above, more than 30% of Hingham's land area is protected open space. About half of this land is within Wompatuck State Park, while the other half is scattered throughout the town.

## **Public and Private Open Spaces**

### **Municipal Land**

The Hingham Conservation Commission owns more than 40 separate parcels of land, most of them acquired over the years using the Commission's land acquisition fund or donated to the town by private landowners. Other significant town-owned lands include Bare Cove Park and other properties managed by the Recreation Commission, as well as various lands owned by the School Department and other town departments.

Aside for a few exceptions, virtually all of Hingham's town-owned lands are zoned as OS (Official and Open Space). Under this designation, the land cannot be developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. The land may be developed to accommodate a church or a public school by right, and a variety of other public and semi-public uses by special permit. In addition, it should be noted that the zoning designation of land in Hingham can change through a vote of town meeting, and variances may also be granted to waive the prohibitions on certain land uses in the OS district. For these reasons, public lands protected only by zoning are not considered to be permanently protected.

### **State Land**

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) owns and manages Wompatuck State Park, a large regional open space resource with land in Hingham, Norwell, Cohasset and Scituate. Other state agencies also manage smaller parcels of land within Hingham. All of Hingham's state-owned land may be considered protected in perpetuity.

### **Chapter Land**

Hingham contains a handful of privately-owned parcels that are temporarily protected under Chapters 61, 61A or 61B of the Massachusetts General Laws. Under these laws, property owners receive tax credits for retaining their land in forestry, agricultural or recreational uses, respectively, rather than selling or developing this land.

Chapter 61 applies to forest land in tracts of ten acres or more that have received approval of a forest management plan by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Chapter 61A is most commonly applied to agricultural or horticultural land but can be used for the forested portions of a farm, provided that a forest management plan is approved by the DEM. To qualify for Chapter 61A, a farm owner must have five or more contiguous acres being used for agricultural or horticultural purposes. This land must produce annual gross sales of not less than \$500. For each additional acre over five, the minimum produce value is \$5. There is no product value for woodlands and wetlands, for which the added value is \$0.50 per acre. Property under Chapter 61A is assessed at rates which vary for different agricultural uses. Generally, classification will result in a reduction of 80% in assessed value.

Chapter 61B is similar to 61A, but applies to lands designated for recreational use, containing at least five contiguous acres. The land must be retained in a natural state to preserve wildlife and natural resources, must be devoted primarily to recreational use, and must provide a public benefit. Recreational uses include hiking, camping, nature study, shooting/target practice, hunting, and skiing. The assessed valuation of Chapter 61B land is reduced by approximately 75%.

There are penalties associated with removing land from classification under the Chapter 61 programs that include paying back taxes plus interest. If Chapter land is placed on the market, the town has the “right of first refusal” for purchase of the land for 120 days. This right may also be assigned to a non-profit conservation organization such as a land trust. In reality, towns often have trouble taking advantage of the right of first refusal, because they must have available a large cash reserve to buy the land, as well as a political structure that can quickly approve the purchase. For practical purposes, Chapter lands are considered to be protected only tenuously and temporarily.

### **Protected Private Land**

Private organizations control some of Hingham’s most valuable open space parcels. Two nonprofit organizations own and manage land in Hingham: the Trustees of Reservations and the Hingham Land Conservation Trust. The Massachusetts-American Water Company (MAWC), which provides water service to Hingham, owns about 253 acres of watershed protection land including a large parcel adjacent to Fulling Mill Pond. Nonprofit and MAWC lands may be considered protected in perpetuity.

### **Unprotected Private Land**

Local institutions such as the Notre Dame Academy also control significant parcels that currently function as open space, but are residentially-zoned and could be developed in the future.

Unaffiliated private landowners control the greatest share of Hingham’s unprotected open space. These lands range from a few acres of woods behind a suburban backyard to forests, wetlands and old fields many dozens of acres in size. With a few exceptions, this open space is zoned for development (e.g., residential or industrial) and is not protected. Private open space is any land that appears as “undeveloped land” on the Land Use map provided in the Land Use Element, and that is not included in the above open space inventory. Appendix 5-3 contains a list of privately-owned parcels or groups of privately-owned parcels that are larger than 5 acres in size, are entirely or primarily undeveloped, and are not protected from development.

### **Significant Open Space Parcels**

The 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan provides detailed descriptions of 105 open space parcels in Hingham, including the character of the land, public access, primary function and special significance. The reader should refer to this document for additional information on specific open space properties. Below is a brief description of some of the town’s most important open space lands:

**World’s End Reservation:** This unique 258-acre coastal reservation, owned and managed by the Trustees of Reservations, juts out into Boston Harbor and provides sweeping vistas of Boston and the surrounding towns. The land was originally developed as a country estate in the late 1800s and landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted. The property is open to the public for passive recreation activities. World’s End is also a partner in the Boston Harbor Islands Park.

**Foundry Pond Conservation Land:** This 34-acre Conservation Commission parcel provides critical wildlife habitat in the upper reaches of the Weir River estuary, and is home to mink, muskrat, turtles, waterfowl, shore-birds and many migratory animals. The Weir River also supports a herring run which depends upon the fish ladder on this property. The land also includes the historic Foundry Pond and an abandoned quarry to the east.

**Weir River Farm:** The Trustees of Reservations manages this privately-owned 82-acre parcel located on East Street. The land was formerly a working farm and is still primarily open. The parcel serves two important functions: it connects adjacent protected parcels to the north, east and south to form a limited greenway; and it protects the banks of the Weir River in an area just above Foundry Pond.

**Triphammer and Shingle Mill Pond and Access:** These two parcels, which total about 98 acres in size, provide a critical link in a greenway extending from Wompatuck State Park all the way north and west to the Hingham High School land. The property is also the historic site of a former mill, and provides an unusual variety of aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The New England Aquarium is currently working with the Conservation Commission to study Triphammer Pond's habitat and to establish a water management and weed control program for the pond.

**Wompatuck State Park:** This park contains 3,477 acres in the towns of Hingham, Cohasset, Norwell and Scituate, including 2,051 acres in Hingham alone. The park is heavily wooded and provides an important wildlife habitat for large game species, such as deer, as well as wildlife requiring unfragmented woodlands. The park offers numerous recreational activities, including bicycling, hunting, horseback riding, and camping.

**Fulling Mill Pond:** The Massachusetts-American Water Company owns 163 acres of watershed protection land to the south of Fulling Mill Pond. This scenic piece of property is wooded and is characterized by steep eskers and deep kettleholes indicating the action of the retreating glacier on this land. The Fulling Mill Pond land is officially closed to the public.

**Bouve Park and Conservation Area:** This 32-acre waterfront parcel accesses to Cove on the Weymouth Back River. The property includes a swimming beach, vistas of the waterfront and the Boston skyline, and geologically interesting slate cliffs. The Hingham Conservation Commission owns and manages this land.

**More-Brewer Park:** This 107-acre park and the adjoining Brewer Reservation may be accessed off of Hobart Street. The property was formerly a farm estate and still contains a rolling meadow fringed by pine, larch, sugar maple, and dogwood. Brewer Pond is used for ice skating, while the numerous carriage roads through the property are used for walking and cross-country skiing. This Olmsted-designed park has a unique plant collection including many mature trees.

**Bare Cove Park:** Bare Cove Park contains 469 acres of land along the Weymouth Back River. The terrain is diverse and scenic, ranging from salt marsh to upland forest to open meadows that are beginning to revert to forest. The park supports a wide array of wildlife. Bare Cove Park is contiguous with Weymouth's Great Esker Park (on the other side of the river) and Stodder's Neck (across route 3A). Together, these parks comprise 753 acres of protected open space.

**Landfill:** This 34-acre property is contiguous with Brewer Reservation, More-Brewer Park, and Cassidy Field. Future development of recreational facilities may be possible on the capped portions of the landfill.

## Townwide Open Space Patterns and Characteristics

### Patterns

It is important to note several characteristics of Hingham's current open space holdings. These patterns are useful in open space planning since they highlight potential needs and opportunities for future land acquisition. These patterns include:

- Thus far, development in Hingham is generally not contiguous: major developed areas are buffered by open space areas. The town has an opportunity to continue this pattern if it can encourage or require the provision of open space corridors through and around new developments.
- The town has extensive holdings in wetland areas, but few holdings on ridgetops and hilltops, which are often the most scenic locations.
- The town owns a significant amount of land along streams, particularly on the Weir River, but these lands are not connected, so there is no contiguous public access to the riverfronts.
- There are few areas where the public can access the shoreline.
- The town has several viable greenways—an impressive accomplishment given the typical fragmented ownership patterns of land in Massachusetts. Additional greenways could be created or extended by the acquisition (or easement through) a few critical “keystone” parcels.
- The least amount of protected open space is in southwest Hingham.

### Linkages

There are several areas of the town where protected open spaces are clustered together. In some cases these lands are linked, but in other cases there are gaps of unprotected private land separating open space parcels. Existing and potential linkages in Hingham include the following:

**Wompatuck State Park to Merrymount Road Conservation Land:** An existing greenway exists from the State Park, west through the Triphammer Pond area and High School, to the Merrymount Road Conservation Land. Additional private land northwest of Triphammer Pond could be acquired to expand this greenway.

**Wompatuck State Park to Weir River Farm:** The former U.S. Military Reservation and several private parcels separate the state park from Whitney Woods, Thayer Woods, and the Weir River Farm. If this land were acquired or otherwise protected, a string of open space would stretch from Norwell north to Foundry Pond and beyond.

**McKenna Marsh to Notre Dame Academy:** Two clusters of open space (one surrounding McKenna Marsh and the other to the west around Hingham Middle School) are separated by private land that is mainly undeveloped. Acquisition of this land would provide a greenway connection and frontage on Accord Brook.

## EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

Hingham currently uses environmental regulations, land use regulations, and land acquisition activities to acquire and protect open space. The town's existing provisions for open space protection and acquisition are described below.

### Environmental Regulations

State and Federal environmental regulations offer some protection for open spaces identified as wetland or riverfront resources, or containing significant environmental constraints to development. These regulations prohibit most development on and/or near floodplains, wetlands, streams, and ponds. Limited restrictions also apply to areas with rare species habitat, high groundwater, and other environmental constraints. These environmental regulations are discussed further in the Natural Resources Element.

Hingham has adopted two districts to supplement state and federal environmental regulations. The Flood Plain and Watershed District contains low-lying areas that are subject to flooding and/or high groundwater. Within this district, major allowed uses are limited to conservation uses, outdoor recreation, and agriculture. The Accord Pond Watershed and Hingham Aquifer Protection District is much more extensive in its coverage (it applies to much of the southern half of town) but only regulates toxic substances and does not protect open space. In addition, Hingham's Wetlands Protection By-Law provides additional protection for isolated wetlands and wetland buffer zones, beyond what is provided in the state Wetlands Protection Act.

Although these environmental regulations offer some amount of protection against development, they do not provide any benefits in the form of public access to the land they protect. For example, the riparian areas on private land protected under the Rivers Protection Act could not be combined to form a public streamside trail unless the individual landowners consented to this use. Nevertheless, such private lands are considered "open space" since they provide important public benefits such as wildlife habitat, flood control, aquifer recharge, and scenic value.

### Zoning By-Laws

The Official and Open Space district and the Waterfront Recreation districts, discussed above, provide some protection for otherwise unprotected public lands. In addition to these districts, the town has adopted "optional" development methods that allow a more flexible use of land in order to set aside open space on a portion of the development parcel. These include:

#### Flexible Residential Development

The April 23, 2001 Annual Town Meeting adopted a new Section IV-D of the Zoning By-Law to replace the former "Residential Housing Development" section and the "Residential Inclusionary Development" section. The new By-Law provides an alternative to conventional subdivisions for parcels of five or more acres. It allows clustering of housing and requires a minimum of 40% of the site to be designated as open space. Density bonuses up to 35% are available, provided that one-third of the additional units are "affordable," one-third are "moderate sized", and one-third are unrestricted.

**Residential Multi-Unit Development:** These provisions allow some flexibility in the design of larger sites in the Residence D and E districts in order to cluster apartment or townhouse units on one portion of the site while reserving part of the site as open space. However, there are no vacant parcels in either of these districts that are large enough to accommodate the type of development that this regulation allows.

### **Land Acquisition**

In the past, Town Meeting has periodically appropriated money for individual large land purchases. These purchases were mostly fortuitous one-time events, and were not part of a systematic town-wide open space or land use planning effort. The town has also received numerous land donations from generous landowners. According to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the town acquired more than 600 acres through donations between 1965 and 1996.

In the past, the Conservation Commission also had a land acquisition fund that was supported by an annual appropriation from the town. Over the last 20 years, the Conservation Commission has bought over 300 acres of land using town funds. However, this annual appropriation has ceased, and with it the ability of the Conservation Commission to purchase land for open space protection.

Following the completion of the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 1998 Town Meeting voted to create an Open Space Acquisition Committee. This committee operates under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, is composed of volunteer citizens, and is charged with acquiring or otherwise protecting land as open space. Because the committee has insufficient funds to make any land purchases, it has focused on low-cost land protection techniques, such as encouraging the provision of conservation land in new subdivisions.

## II. OPEN SPACE GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### GOALS

Open Space goals were developed based on public input provided in several recent surveys of Hingham residents that related to open space. In addition, the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan provided the basis for some of the open space goals.

#### Public Input

In preparing the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Committee prepared a survey questionnaire to determine residents' views on the need for and use of open space in Hingham. The survey was mailed to 3,600 households, with a 5% response rate. Notable results included the following:

- A majority of respondents (107 out of 157) believe that Hingham should actively try to acquire more open space.
- 90% of respondents feel that Hingham's conservation and recreation land is adequately maintained.
- In order to make the conservation land more user-friendly, respondents identified the following needs as the highest priorities: detailed maps of conservation land; more foot and bridle paths; accessibility for disabled persons; bicycle paths; and marked historic trails.
- In identifying which areas of open space to protect, respondents identified the following criteria as the highest priorities: protecting drinking water/water quality; protecting vegetation and wildlife; creating contiguous corridors of protected land; and providing additional trails. Recreational opportunities were identified as a lower priority.

The 1998 Zoning and Land Use Planning Survey also asked several questions relevant to open space. This survey was mailed to all 7,396 of Hingham's households and generated 2,406 returns, or a 33% response rate. Results that relate to open space include:

- 59% of respondents believe that Hingham has enough open space (35% do not), but 75% believe that the town should purchase additional open space (14% do not). This apparently contradictory set of responses seems to indicate that residents want the town to purchase undeveloped, unprotected lands that are currently open space, but that could be developed in the future if they are not protected.
- 66% of respondents believe that there is enough open space in their area of town (25% do not). Residents in northwest Hingham and Hingham Center/Hingham Square were least apt to find the level of open space in their neighborhood satisfactory.
- 41% favor the development of cluster subdivisions (37% do not).

The goals statement includes five broad goals, each of which is divided into specific goals that form the basis for the recommendations presented below.

#### **Goal 1: Expand Hingham's network of protected open spaces to create an open space system that does the following:**

- Preserves examples of all of Hingham's major landscape types, including salt marsh, fresh marsh, wooded and shrub swamp, meadow, rocky woods, stream valley bottoms, and open hill tops.

- Includes protected open space in all portions of town, and near all existing and projected future residential neighborhoods.
- Provides opportunities for a wide range of active and passive recreational activities.
- Creates large contiguous conservation areas and links conservation areas to the extent possible.
- Establishes linear greenways following stream bottoms and ridges that can be used for hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails.
- Provides access to and along the shorelines of major ponds, streams, and the ocean.
- Protects water resources, aquifer recharge areas, and flood control areas.
- Protects sufficient agricultural land to allow small-scale farming and large-scale gardening activities.

**Goal 2: Develop an effective and cost-efficient strategy to increase the amount of permanently protected open space in Hingham.**

- Increase citizen awareness of the ecological and financial benefits of open space acquisition and protection so that town meeting voters can make informed decisions when proposals for the town to purchase land for open space are brought before town meeting.
- Improve Hingham's existing Residential Cluster Development By-Law and/or create additional zoning and land development options or requirements that promote open space protection.
- Partner with nonprofit organizations to facilitate open space acquisition projects.
- Seek state and federal aid for open space land acquisition.
- Work with large private landowners to identify economically viable alternatives to development before they are ready to sell their land.
- Identify a strategy to take advantage of the "right of first refusal" to acquire Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands.
- Work with the various Hingham town departments to ensure that critical portions of the town lands zoned Official and Open Space are protected from future development.
- Encourage or require the provision of greenbelts or conservation land in new subdivision and major development proposals.

**Goal 3: Provide sufficient open space resources for all sectors of the Hingham public.**

- Ensure that all areas of the town have adequate open space resources.
- Create additional "neighborhood" open spaces in and directly adjacent to residential areas.

**Goal 4: Increase public access to and use of open space areas within Hingham.**

- Improve public knowledge of open space resources in Hingham.
- Improve access to existing open space land in the town.
- Connect undeveloped natural lands into "greenbelts" to provide opportunities for continuous trail systems.
- Improve public access to the harbor and waterfront.
- Improve and expand swimming and boating opportunities.
- Ensure adequate access to Hingham's open space areas for all members of the public, including the physically challenged.

**Goal 5: Preserve Hingham's scenic character.**

- Protect unique and scenic environments including hilltop vistas, waterfront views, geologic formations, archaeological sites, and active farmland.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Specific actions that will be required to achieve each of the five open space goals are discussed below.

**Goal 1: Expand Hingham’s network of protected open spaces.**

**Land Acquisition or Easement**

To achieve the goals presented above, Hingham will need to acquire and protect undeveloped land through purchase, easement, and incentive mechanisms. The priorities for land protection outlined below are based on the eight land protection criteria listed under Goal 1, above. In addition, specific parcels were selected based on their adjacency to existing open space, ownership and parcel assemblage characteristics, and likelihood that the parcel would be developed if it were not protected through purchase or easement.

**Chapter Lands**

Chapter lands (i.e., Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B) are temporarily protected under the state’s tax abatement program, but could be removed from this program at any time and developed. If land is removed from the Chapter program, the town can exercise its Right of First Refusal for 120 days, or can assign this right to a non-profit land conservation group. Hingham should seek to purchase outright or purchase the development rights for the following Chapter properties:

**Table 5-2  
Land Protection Priorities, Chapter Lands**

In approximate order of priority:

<b>Parcel</b>	<b>Map &amp; Lot</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Reason to Protect</b>
East Street	64-11	9.88	Link in a potential greenway from Whitney Woods to Foundry Pond
Lazell Street	119-1 and 128-1	14.48	Abuts Fulling Mill Brook & Conservation Area; groundwater protection
Lazell Street	119-18 & 19	24.74	Abuts Fulling Mill Brook & Conservation Area; groundwater protection
Leavitt Street	92-17	5.83	Expands system of conserved lands north from the state park

**Private Property**

Hingham contains many large parcels of private, undeveloped, unprotected land. Many of these properties will likely be developed in the upcoming years unless the town is proactive in acquiring or otherwise protecting them. Because there is more such land than the town can realistically purchase, a multi-pronged strategy is needed. First, the town should attempt to purchase some of the highest-priority parcels. Based on the open space goals stated above, these parcels would include the following:

**Table 5-3  
Land Protection Priorities, Other Private Lands**

In approximate order of priority:

<b>Parcel</b>	<b>Map &amp; Lot</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Reason to Protect</b>
Foundry Pond Link	64-4,5,6	21.22	These parcels, plus 64-11, complete the greenway from Whitney Woods to Foundry Pond
South of Whitney Woods	84 & 93-several	25.08	Critical link in a greenway from the state park potentially to Foundry Pond
Bradford Road	109-4,17,20	56.1	Wellhead protection; linkage to existing conservation land in the area
West of Military Reservation	92 & 102-several	40	Links military reservation with Triphammer Pond area
Whiting Street	176 & 186-several	About 150	Open space needed in SW Hingham; use incentive zoning to protect portions (see below)
Glastonbury Abbey	54-several	56.62	Abuts Foundry Pond Conservation Area; seek to protect backlands along Weir Street
East of Main Street	197-3,4,5	30.97	Water resource protection (Accord Brook); linkage from middle school to McKenna Marsh
West of Main Street	198-12,13	34.29	Water resource protection (Accord Brook); linkage from middle school to McKenna Marsh
Studley Road, Triphammer Lane	91 & 101-several	16.4	Water resource protection; linkage to existing conservation land
Triphammer Brook Area	101-13 and 91-29	23.4	Water resource protection; linkage to existing conservation land

Lands that the town cannot purchase should be protected partially, or developed sensitively, based on appropriate zoning or incentive programs (described below). Finally, some undeveloped or partially-developed lands are currently being used for economically profitable purposes and might not be further developed in the foreseeable future. (Examples of such lands include golf courses, riding stables, and campus-style schools and other institutions.) The town should work closely with these landowners to ensure that such land uses remain economically viable, and to provide limited zoning relief, if necessary, to allow this to occur.

### **Greenways**

Greenways are corridors of open space that extend for a significant distance across the landscape. Greenways are often planned along natural features—particularly rivers and streams—but may also follow ridgetops or simply be a connected string of conservation land across a variety of landscape types. Creating greenways of public conservation land is often very challenging because it requires acquiring or obtaining an easement across every property along the greenway. One “missing link” in a greenway can prevent the creation of a continuous public hiking or bicycling trail.

Several of the priority open space parcels identified above represent such “missing links” between nearby conservation lands, and should be pursued by the town for acquisition. Other options are available, however. For example, riparian areas in Hingham are unlikely to be developed because of restrictions on development placed by the MA Rivers Protection Act and the Hingham Flood Plain and Watershed District. For this reason, private landowners may be willing to donate or sell at a reduced price the right for limited public access (e.g., access for walkers/hikers who remain on a designated trail) across a portion of their land. Several communities with trail systems on or adjacent

to private land have found that the trail and its users are not a nuisance to landowners, and, on the contrary, can even help to increase property values.

***Goal 2: Develop an effective and cost-efficient strategy to increase the amount of permanently protected open space in Hingham.***

To achieve its open space goals, Hingham will need to pursue several methods of protecting undeveloped land. Many of these mechanisms, discussed below, will cost the town very little money. However, such low-cost mechanisms often do not allow the town to acquire the most important open space parcels. For example, to acquire Chapter lands that are put up for sale, the town needs to have an available funding source that can be tapped before the 120-day Right of First Refusal period expires.

Therefore, an effective land protection strategy will require some funding outlay by the town. Hingham once had a fund for purchasing conservation land, which was replenished by an annual appropriation from the town. The town should re-instate this funding mechanism if it hopes to acquire the priority lands listed above.

**Zoning and Incentive-Based Protection Strategies**

**Cluster Zoning By-law**

Cluster zoning (also known as “open space residential zoning”) is one of the best ways for a community to protect open space inexpensively. While cluster zoning is potentially a powerful tool, it requires a well-constructed and well-administered cluster zoning by-law in order to be implemented effectively. Many Massachusetts communities that have passed cluster zoning have found either that it is not used by developers, or that it results in developments and open spaces that do not meet their expectations. These outcomes do not indicate a problem with cluster zoning *per se*, but merely with the particular cluster by-law that the community chose to adopt.

The April 23, 2001 Annual Town Meeting adopted a new Section IV-D of the Zoning By-Law, thereby replacing the former “Residential Housing Development” section and the “Residential Inclusionary Development” section with the Flexible Residential Development (FRD). The new By-Law provides a cluster-type alternative to conventional subdivisions for parcels of five or more acres. It allows clustering of housing and requires a minimum of 40% of the site to be designated as open space. Density bonuses up to 35% are available, provided that one-third of the additional units are “affordable”, one-third are “moderate sized”, and one-third are unrestricted.

In addition to the application of cluster or “open space” zoning such as that outlined in the FRD, the Town of Hingham should actively pursue the following additional zoning and incentive based methods of land protection:

**Open Space in Subdivisions**

Subdivision regulations may require that the developer set aside a small portion of a site as open space (such as 5%), even in proposed subdivisions that are not clustered. The Planning Board could use such a provision to promote the creation of connecting trail systems (greenways) that utilize backlands and narrow corridors through subdivisions. If the Planning Board chooses to use this tool, the subdivision regulations should state that off-street trails, connecting to adjacent properties, will be required, and should state the purpose for this requirement. Public access to the trails, however, cannot be required.

### **Incentive-Based Land Protection in Southwest Hingham**

Much of the commercially- and industrially-zoned land in southwest Hingham is quite attractive for developers of office parks, industrial parks, and similar large-scale commercial developments. The construction of the proposed Route 3 connector road to the South Weymouth Naval Air Station, if built, will further increase the value of this land for commercial development. The desirability of this property presents an opportunity to develop an incentive-based system to allow increased commercial density on certain parcels of land in exchange for protected open space in other areas.

Under this system, the town would allow increased development density (higher floor-area ratio, percent lot coverage or building height) in exchange for protecting open space either on the site or off-site. The resulting system would be similar to “transfer of development rights” but would be much more simple because the higher-density parcels (“receiving areas”) and the open space areas (“sending areas”) would be defined ahead of time by the zoning. The zoning for the commercial areas would specify as-of-right intensity allowances (e.g., FAR, lot coverage, and building height) as well as maximum intensity allowed under the “open space incentive” provisions.

The Open Space Incentive provisions would include two components: 1) a list of parcels that developers may protect in exchange for additional commercial density. These parcels would be selected in advance by the Planning Board and/or the Open Space Committee because of their potential importance for open space, habitat, recreation, or other values. 2) A formula for determining how much additional commercial density a developer is allowed for protecting a given parcel of open space. (For example, 1 square foot of additional building for every 10 square feet of open space protected.)

Short of purchasing significant amounts of land in southwest Hingham, this system may provide the town with the best option for protecting open space in this section of the town. The system leverages the strength of the real estate market to provide a public benefit that otherwise would not be possible. If the town chooses to pursue this option, it should first determine which parcels of land are suitable for higher commercial density (most likely, land near the Route 3/Derby Street interchange as well as adjacent to the proposed Route 3 connector road), and which parcels should be targeted for open space protection (such as the land off of Whiting Street, and stream corridors in the triangle south of Abington Street). An appropriate incentive structure may then be created. Once the parcels and incentive structure have been determined, incentive-based land protection should be allowed by right to encourage its use by potential commercial developers.

### **Working with Landowners**

#### **Increased Protection for Town Lands**

Much of the land contained within the Official and Open Space District is not permanently protected from development. Land owned by the Selectmen, School Department, DPW, and other departments could be developed within the Official and Open Space District (many types of uses are allowed in the district), or the town could decide to rezone the land and sell it to a developer. While it is important that the town retain vacant sites for future public projects, the town should also identify whether any of its land provides outstanding conservation values that should be permanently protected. These portions of land could then be transferred to the Conservation Commission or otherwise protected from future development. For example, the Middle School site is part of a potential open space corridor, and also provides riparian habitat along Accord Brook. The town may wish to permanently protect these important natural areas from further development.

#### **Working with Large Private Landowners**

In recent years Hingham’s Planning Department has done an excellent job in working with large landowners on upcoming development proposals. The town should continue this effort, and should

also focus on working with large landowners before they are ready to sell their land. This will allow both the town and the landowner to identify options for protecting the parcel from development while still providing a satisfactory economic return for the landowner.

## **Outside Money**

### **Grants**

Several state and federal grants are available to help Hingham fund open space purchases. Many of these are matching grants, and would therefore require the town to appropriate money of its own to take advantage of the grant. A detailed list of the relevant grant programs is included in the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### **Partner with Nonprofit Organizations**

Land conservation organizations such as the Trustees of Reservations regularly collaborate with landowners, municipal officials, and local volunteers to protect key parcels of open space. Such efforts might combine several funding sources to purchase the land or its development rights. In time-critical situations, a nonprofit will sometimes “front” the money to buy a piece of land until the town is able to appropriate enough money to reimburse the nonprofit. Finally, nonprofits sometimes engage in “limited development” projects where a few residential lots are carved off of a large parcel in order to help fund the protection of the rest of the site. Hingham’s Open Space Acquisition Committee should actively seek opportunities to partner with nonprofit organizations on conservation projects.

### ***Goal 3: Provide sufficient open space resources for all sectors of the Hingham public.***

Open space protection priorities should focus on ensuring that all neighborhoods in Hingham have easy access to conservation and recreation land. As discussed above, developers of new subdivisions should be encouraged or required to provide small pocket parks as well as linear greenways to connect adjacent open space parcels. Also, as discussed above, special effort is needed to provide additional open space in southwest Hingham.

### ***Goal 4: Increase public access to and use of open space areas within Hingham.***

### **Parking, Access and Signage**

Most of Hingham’s conservation areas are already fairly well-marked, with good parking and access. Nevertheless, certain improvements are possible. The 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan identifies specific parking, access, and signage needs at the town’s various conservation areas.

### **Publicity**

In the past, the Hingham Land Conservation Trust has published excellent maps and descriptions of conservation lands in the town. These materials should continue to be made available to the town’s citizens to increase the public’s knowledge and use of conservation lands.

### **Trail System**

Although there are many open space parcels in Hingham that are adjacent to one another, there are no long-distance trails, except within Wompatuck State Park. Long-distance trails through the town could be used for hiking, off-road bicycling, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing. For example, a trail in eastern Hingham could run from the High School on the west to the Skating Club pond on the east, with a spur down to Wompatuck State Park.

The town should consider developing such a trail system through its existing conservation lands. If appropriate, a trails committee could be established to plan the routes and work with volunteers to build the trails.

**Oceanwalk**

One of the opportunities identified by the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan was to create an “oceanwalk” along Hingham Harbor. Many waterfront parcels are already open to the public, but numerous gaps exist. One possibility is to work with private landowners to allow public passage below the seawall where there is exposed land. This arrangement could allow public access to the water without significantly affecting private landowners. If the town chose to pursue this opportunity, a detailed assessment of parcel ownership would be required, prior to direct outreach to waterfront landowners.

***Goal 5: Preserve Hingham’s scenic character.***

Protecting Hingham’s scenic character will require not just preserving undeveloped land, but also ensuring that new development is compatible with the town’s existing landscape. For example, architectural styles and road widths in new development should reflect historic patterns; stone walls and large shade trees should be retained unless it is absolutely necessary to remove them; and development should be screened from roadways and should be of a scale that it blends into, and does not dominate, the surrounding landscape. The Planning Board should utilize its authority to promote these design objectives through its subdivision review powers and its rules and regulations. The town may also wish to designate more town roads as “scenic roads” (see Section 4, Historic & Cultural Resources).

**Appendix 5-1**  
**List of Protected, Semi-Protected, and Public Properties in Hingham, MA**  
 Current as of April, 2000

Parcel	Owner	Current Use	Acreage	Protection Status	Notes	Order
Bouve Park & Conservation Area	Conservation	Waterfront access	32	P		1
Bradley Woods Playground	Federal/ Recreation	Playfields	4.17	Z		2
Eel Pond	Conservation	Open space, fishing, skating	2.58	P		3
Hingham Yacht Club	HYC	Yacht club	4.8	N		4
Foster School Grounds	School/ Recreation	Active recreation, marsh	40.93	Z		5
Broad Cove	Conservation	Wildlife, open space	14.65	P		6
Governor Long Bird Sanctuary	Conservation/ DPW	Tree nursery, wildlife habitat	11.12	P		8
Hingham Bathing Beach	Town	Waterfront recreation	6	Z		9
Monument Park	Town	Waterfront recreation	5.75	Z		10
Whitney Wharf	Town	Passive recreation	1.86	Z		11
Harbor Park	Town	Passive recreation	1.3	Z		12
Home Meadows	Conservation	Passive recreation	30.87	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	14
Home Meadows Access	Hingham Land Cons. Trust	Passive recreation	2.6	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	15
Barnes Wharf	Town	Waterfront recreation	1.2	Z		16
Steamboat Company Wharf	Town	Waterfront recreation	1.8	Z		17
Boulevard Border Park & Rockland Street Conservation Area	Conservation	Open space	11.69	P	Acquisition opportunity to north	18
Martin's Lane Conservation Land	Conservation	Open space	1.42	P		19
World's End	Trustees of Reservations	Open space	257.75	P		20
Button Island	Town	Passive recreation	0.75	Z		21
Ragged, Sarah and Langlee's Islands	Town	Passive recreation	11.45	Z		22
Lyford's Lyking	Conservation	Wildlife; scenic vista	6.63	P	No acquisition opportunity adjacent	23
Hull Street Playground	Recreation	Playground, skating	5.84	Z	Acquisition opportunity to north	24
Hingham Skating Club	Recreation	Flood control, recreation	8.83	Z	Chapter parcel to the west	26
Foundry Pond	Conservation	Wildlife habitat, scenic and historic value	33.81	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	28
Chief Justice Cushing Highway Border	Conservation	Open space; rare species habitat	10.81	P		29

Parcel	Owner	Current Use	Acreage	Protection Status	Notes	OSRP #
Weir River Farm	Trustees of Reservations	Open space	82	P	Closed to Public	30
Weir River Farm	Trustees of Reservations	Open space	2	P	Closed to Public	31
East School	School/ Recreation	Recreation, open space	11.62	Z		32
Whitney Woods/Thayer Woods	Trustees of Reservations	Open space	119.7	P		35
Boy Scout Troop 1	Boy Scouts	Trails, cabin	1.35	N		36
U.S. Military Reservation	U.S. Government	Mostly open space	152	Z	Acquisition opportunity to north	37
Leavitt Street Conservation Land	Conservation	Wildlife habitat, passive recreation	27.1	P		38
Triphammer Pond, Shingle Mill	Conservation/ DPW	Wildlife habitat, passive recreation	97.8	P	Acquisition opportunity to north, northwest	39
Town Common	DPW	Open space	1.27	Z		40
Veterans Memorial Park	DPW	Open space	0.49	Z		41
Old Center School Park	Recreation/DPW	Active recreation	4.13	Z		42
Burns Memorial Park	Conservation	Open space	24.1	P	Surrounded by housing	43
250 Central Street	Town	Open space buffer	1.5	N		44
Central Junior High School	Town	Town Hall, Active Recreation	18.7	Z		45
Downing Street Water Co. Land	Mass.-American Water Co.	Water resource protection	10.91	P		46
Hingham High School	Town	Active recreation	71.6	Z		47
South Bradford Road Water Co. Land	Mass.-American Water Co.	Water resource protection	27.49	P	Acquisition opportunity to north	48
Merrymount Road Conservation Land	Conservation	Water resource protection	13.41	P		49
Weir River Walkway	Conservation	Water resource protection	1.3	P	May be possible to extend north and south	50
Wompatuck State Park	State of Mass.	Wildlife habitat, passive recreation	2051	P		51
Wadleigh's Rill	Conservation	Open space	0.59	P		52
George Washington Forest	DPW	Reforestation	107.56	Z		54
Fulling Mill Pond	Mass.-American Water Co.	Water resource protection	162.9	P	Resident'l development to north & south	55
Fulling Mill River & Glad Tidings	Conservation	Water resource protection	23.09	P		56
Eel River Woods	Hingham Land Cons. Trust	Open space	14	P	Acquisition opportunity to east & west	57
Mildred Cushing Woods	Conservation	Water resource protection	19	P		58
Cushing Street Conservation Land	Conservation	Open space	6.52	P		59

Parcel	Owner	Current Use	Acreage	Protection Status	Note	DSAP
Crooked Meadow River Conservation Land	Conservation	Water resource protection	6	P		60
Jacobs Meadow Area	Hingham Land Cons. Trust	Open space	65.01	P		61
South Elementary School	Town	School, Active Rec.	28.3	Z		62
Indian Spring – North of Liberty Pole	Conservation	Water resource protection	0.8	P		63
Prospect Street Water Company Land	Mass.-American Water Co.	Water resource protection	31.25	P	Discontiguous from Geo. Wash. Forest	64
Carvin Court - Water Company	Mass.-American Water Co.	Water resource protection; neighborhood park	8.6	P	Surrounded by houses on four sides	65
McKenna Marsh	Conservation	Water resource protection; passive recreation	108.26	P	Area includes open water	66
Wigwam Swamp	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	32	P	Adjacent to McKenna marsh	67
Dowden Conservation Tract	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	31.25	P	Acquisition opportunity to west	68
Richard Road	Conservation	Water resource protection	8.6	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	69
Richard Road Wellfields	Conservation/ Town of Norwell	Water resource protection	3.48	P		70
19 Wanders Drive	Conservation	Water resource protection	1.71	P	Abuts Accord Brook	71
Hingham Middle School	School/ Recreation	Active recreation	31	Z	Acquisition opportunity to south and west	72
Accord Pond Shoreline	Mass.-American Water Co.	Pumping stations	12.38	P	Land area only	74
Gardner Street Conservation Land	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	3	P	Possible linkage to Middle School	75
Kress Field	Recreation	Active recreation	5.03	Z		76
Industrial Park	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	4.4	P	Acquisition opportunity to east and south	77
Whortleberry Hollow	Hingham Land Cons. Trust	Passive recreation	16	P	Acquisition opportunity to east	78
Eel River Reservation	Conservation	Water resource protection	7.17	P		79
Boy Scout Troop 4 Land	Boy Scouts	Recreation	6.31	N		80
President's Road	Conservation	Neighborhood open space	1.11	P		81
Old Ward Street Conservation Land	Conservation	Open space	29.6	P	Subject of proposed land swap	82
New Recreation Field	Recreation	Active recreation	6.22	Z		83
Plymouth River School	School/ Recreation	School, active recreation	49.04	Z		84

Parcel	Owner	Current Use	Acreage	Protection Status	Notes	OSRP #
Plymouth River Conservation Land	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	27.7	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	85
Wirkala Tract	Conservation	Neighborhood open space	3.84	P	Acquisition opportunity to south	86
Cassidy Field	Federal/ Recreation	Active recreation	8.38	Z		87
Whitcomb Avenue	Conservation	Water resource protection	1.75	P	Abuts Cushing Pond	88
18 Camelot Drive	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	1.82	P		89
Bucket Mill Pond	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	0.91	P		90
Cranberry Pond	Conservation	Scenic vista, winter recreation	13.8	P		91
Landfill	DPW	Landfill	34.07	N	Potential recreation use in future	92
Brewer Reservation	Conservation	Open space	39.44	P		93
More-Brewer Park	Conservation	Open space, passive recreation	107	P		94
Blue Sky Drive	Conservation	Neighborhood open space	8.71	P		95
Grossman Property	Conservation	Open space	40.36	P		96
Lot #4, New Bridge Street	Conservation	Passive recreation	2.8	P		97
South Shore Country Club	South Shore Country Club	Golf, wildlife habitat	154.2	Z		98
Bare Cove Park	Town	Open space, passive recreation	469.3	P		99
Stodder's Neck	State of Mass.	Public park	20.59	P		100
Beal Street School Tracts	State of Mass.	Open space, passive recreation	39.69	P	Contiguous to Bare Cove Park	101
Hersey Field	Recreation	Neighborhood playground	4.73	Z		102
McClusky Park and Bradley Pond	Conservation	Neighborhood open space	2.4	P	1.5 acres is pond	103

Source: 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Hingham Assessors Office  
Prepared by John Brown Associates for the Hingham Master Plan

PROTECTION STATUS: P = Protected in perpetuity by legal or ownership mechanisms (i.e., is protected regardless of the local zoning; Z = Protected currently by virtue of being within Hingham's OS (Official and Open Space) or WR (Waterfront Recreation) zones; N = No protection.

OSRP #: Refers to the property site number from the 1996 Hingham Open Space and Recreation Plan and accompanying map.

**Appendix 5-2**  
**List of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B Parcels**  
 Current as of January 2000

Address	Owner	Map & Lot	Area	Chapter	Notes
235 Rockland Street	Lovett	32-60	11.43	61	Abuts Hull Street Playground
83 Lazell Street	Barry	119-1	7.88	61	Abuts Fulling Mill Brook & Conservation Area
91 Lazell Street	Barry	128-1	6.6	61	Abuts Fulling Mill Brook & Conservation Area
65 Lazell Street	Bickford	119-18	3.14	61A	Abuts Barry Property
59 Lazell Street	Bickford	119-19	21.6	61A	Abuts Barry Property
22 Charles Street	Bennett	138-8	9	61A	
Charles Street	Bennett	148-6	1.14	61A	
22 Bremer Circle Road	Frederickson	49-49	8.58	61B	Abuts Hersey Field
East Street	Cohasset Golf Club	55-13	9.42	61B	
210 East Street	Cushing	64-11	9.88	61B	Abuts Weir River Farm & Weir River
345 East Street	Stein	66-2	6.02	61B	
Leavitt Street	McCormack	92-17	5.83	61B	Abuts U.S. Military Reservation
Old Ward Street	Hall	154-2	8.97	61B	Area of Proposed Golf Course/Senior Comm.
Old Ward Street	Hall	154-3	10.65	61B	Area of Proposed Golf Course/Senior Comm.
Old Ward Street	Hall	154-5	8.19	61B	Area of Proposed Golf Course/Senior Comm.

Total Chapter 61 (Forestry)	25.91
Total Chapter 61A (Agriculture)	34.88
Total Chapter 61B (Recreation)	67.54
<b>Total Chapter Lands</b>	<b>128.33</b>

Source: Hingham Assessor's Office  
 Prepared by John Brown Associates for the Hingham Master Plan

**Appendix 5-3**  
**List of Private, Unprotected Open Space Parcels**  
 Current as of January 2000

Parcel	Owner	Map #	Acres	Notes
Hingham Bay	Lot 192C Trust	16-208	5.4	Frontage on Hingham Bay
Canterbury Street	Jordan	43-2	23.58	Abuts Glastonbury Abbey & Pond
Derby Academy	Derby Academy	49-57	21.63	Fronts on Broad Cove
Glastonbury Abbey	Glastonbury Abbey	54-1,2,3,4,11	56.62	Abuts Foundry Pond Conservation Area
Lincoln Street		49&60-Several	4.9	Abuts Hersey Field
Below Foundry Pond		64-4,5,6	21.22	Abuts Foundry Pond to N and Chapter 61B land to S
Hersey Street, New Towne Drive		79-1	6.6	DPW rents this parcel
Adjacent to Whitney Woods		84&93-Several	25.08	Links Whitney Woods to U.S. Military Reservation
Studley Road, Triphammer Lane		91 & 101-Several	16.4	Many environmental constraints
Triphammer Brook		101-13, 91-29	23.4	
West of U.S. Military Reservation		92&102-Several	40	Links Triphammer Pond to U.S. Military Reservation
French Street		97-2	8.6	Next to More-Brewer park
Bradford Road		109-4,17,20	56.1	Links Water Co. Land to Merrymount Road
French Street	Roman Catholic Archbishop	115-69,70,71,74,96	41.3	Abuts the landfill
High Street	Gilbert	116-57	12.32	Backlands; mostly wet
High Street	French & Roberts	116-32,35,36	15.7	Backlands; mostly wet
DeMatteo (various)	DeMatteo	14 parcels	244.16	
Margetts (various)	Margetts	19 parcels	203.5	
South of Whiting Street	Several	176 & 186-several	About 150	Part of area is a quarry; some developm't along Whiting St.
Notre Dame Academy	Notre Dame Training Sch.	189-19	69.57	Abuts middle school
Between Main St. & Scotland St.	Several	190-18,20,34	21.18	Connection to McKenna marsh
Off of Main Street	Verrochi	197-3,4,5	30.97	Abuts middle school & Accord Brook
Main Street		198-12,13	34.29	Connection to McKenna marsh
<b>Total Acreage</b>			<b>1132.52</b>	

Source: Hingham Assessor's Maps, 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Town Planner

Prepared by John Brown Associates for the Hingham Master Plan

## Section 6: ACTIVE RECREATION

### I. ACTIVE RECREATION RESOURCES INVENTORY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Hingham is rich in parks, playfields and other recreational facilities that provide active recreational opportunities for Hingham citizens of all ages. These active recreational resources range from the new Recreation Center at Town Hall to various sports playfields located at various school sites, the South Shore Country Club, the Hingham Bathing Beach and Bare Cove Park. Of course, Hingham Bay provides many opportunities for swimming, boating and other water-oriented activities as well. Additionally, a number of Hingham's ponds and streams serve fishermen and several of the town's ponds provide ice skating venues in the winter; and, many of the recreational needs of school-aged children are provided by school activities, playfields, and programs. Though the town is obviously rich in recreational resources, some parts of Town remain underserved – particularly southerly neighborhoods such as Liberty Plain.

In the future, if the South Weymouth Naval Air Station property is developed as now anticipated, a large new recreational center and playing fields will be constructed there that can serve, in part, some of Hingham's future recreational needs. Additionally, a new, privately-sponsored 18 hole golf course and country club is being proposed for the Black Rock Golf Community on Ward Street.

The town has, of course, many large natural open spaces, forests, passive parks, and conservation lands as well, such as World's End and Whitney Woods (Trustees of Reservations properties), Wompatuck State Park, and Bare Cove Park. These natural open space resources are primarily used for visual enjoyment and *passive* recreational uses such as walking, nature studies, bird-watching, fishing, or cross-country skiing. They do not, for the most part, provide *active* recreational opportunities for organized sports, games or active play. These natural open space resources are described elsewhere in the Open Space Resources element of the Master Plan. The inventory of resources described below describe Hingham's current *active* recreational opportunities (e.g. sports playfields and courts, playgrounds, swimming beaches, ice skating venues, etc.). Most venues are publicly owned or accessible while others are privately owned and operated. All of Hingham's town-owned recreational playfields, including school playfield properties, are maintained by the Hingham DPW.

Hingham's recreational and open space resources were thoroughly documented in Hingham's *1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, which still serves as an invaluable resource for the preparation of this document. The *1996 Plan* also identified recreational needs and a 5-year improvement strategy.

## 2. INVENTORY OF ACTIVE RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The locations of active recreation facilities are shown on Figure 6-1.

### **Town Recreation Facilities**

Hingham possesses a number of active recreational facilities and playfields that address a wide variety of active recreational needs for residents of all ages. Many of these facilities are town-owned. Others are privately owned or operated. These facilities and venues include:

#### **□ Recreation Center / Cronin Field / Haley Field / Burr Field**

The new Recreation Center at the Town Hall (formerly the Central Junior High School) is operated by the Recreation Commission and offers programs for residents of all ages. It is open seven days a week. The Recreation Center includes a game room, gymnasium, activity rooms, and a new Hingham Striders Fitness Room. The Recreation Center runs a variety of programs and classes ranging from aerobics, yoga, swing dance and Tai Chi to coaching clinics, arts and crafts, CPR and junior high dances. The game room includes video games, bumper pool, ping pong, and a CD jukebox. The new Hingham Striders Fitness Room includes aerobics equipment such as treadmills, stairmasters, and stationery bicycles as well as a variety of weight training equipment.

The Recreation Center overlooks Cronin Field, Burr Field and Haley Fields. Cronin Field includes a regulation ballpark with electronic scoreboard and dugouts. Haley Field includes a Little League Field, and Burr Field includes a Farm League Field. The site also includes a football field, a street hockey field, 6 tennis courts, a track, a basketball court, volleyball court, and a playground with swings and slides as well as a toddler's playground. The site includes restrooms and a barbecue area with picnic tables as well. [Recently, there has been a proposal by private citizens to construct a skateboard park behind the Recreation Center.]

#### **□ Hingham Bathing Beach**

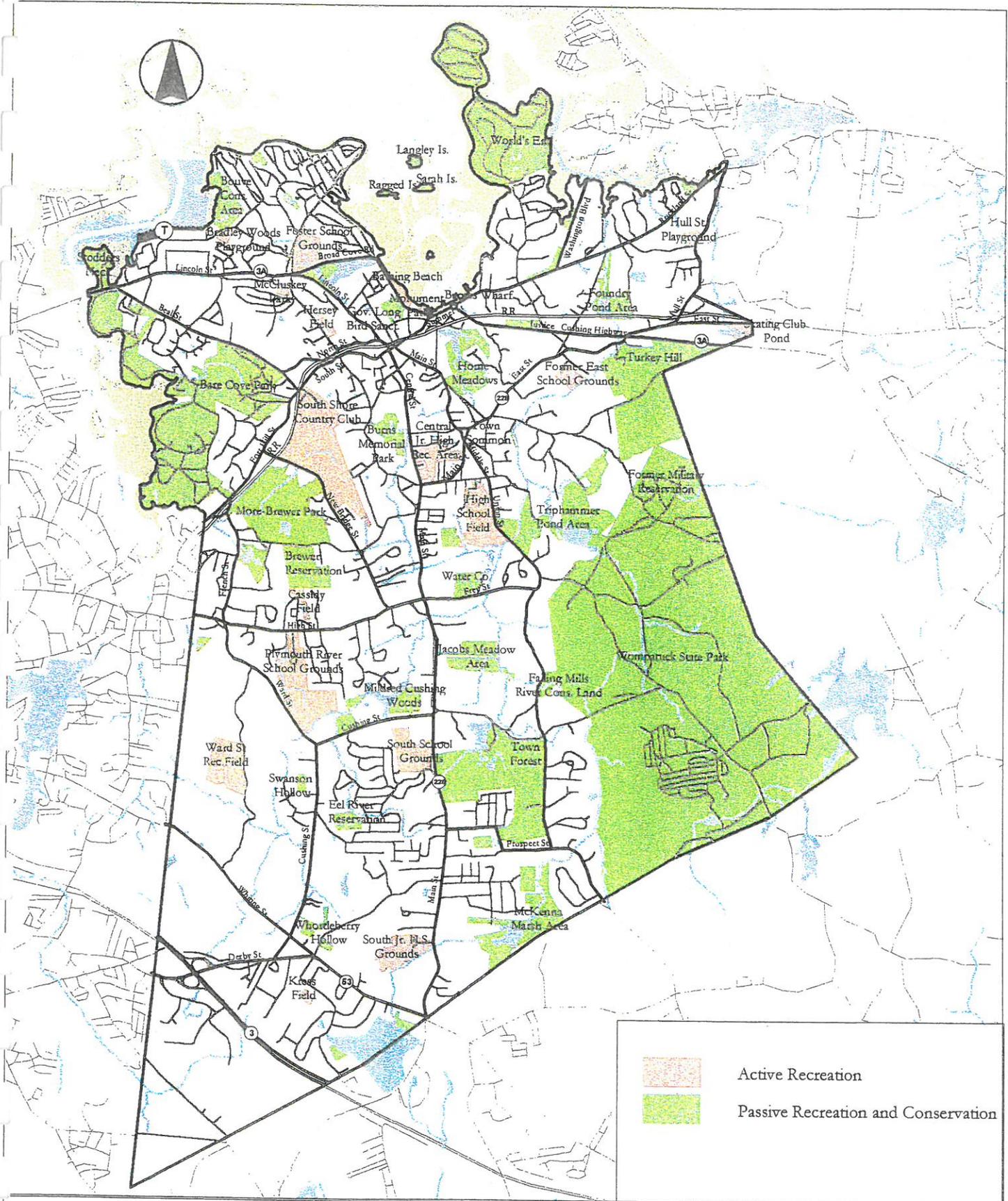
The town-owned Bathing Beach, under the jurisdiction of the Trustees of the Bathing Beach and the Harbor Development Committee, includes the bathing beach itself and bath house, a bandstand for summer band concerts, a picnic table area, and a paved parking lot. The Bathing Beach is managed by the Trustees of the Bathing Beach. Outside the Bathing Beach, there are few other opportunities in Hingham for access to the shoreline for bathing or boating.

#### **□ South Shore Country Club & Golf Course**

This town-owned country club includes a golf course, practice area, outdoor swimming pool, bowling alley, 3 tennis courts, T-ball, and a cross-country ski course and sledding course. A clubhouse with restaurant facilities is used for various functions such as weddings. Operating revenues exceed operating expenses. Therefore the country club can continue as a self-sustaining profitable operation providing family-oriented recreational opportunities.

#### **□ Hingham Skating Club Pond**

Owned by the Town and managed by the Recreation Commission, the Skating Club on East Street operates on a shallow pond formerly created and owned by the Nantasket Ice Company for harvesting ice. Until earlier this decade, the property was owned by the Hingham Skating Club. However, it has been turned over to the Town for recreational use. In winter, the frozen pond is kept clear for skating by the Recreation Commission. The facility includes a clubhouse, floodlights for night skating, a concession stand, and a parking lot off of East Street.



**Town of Hingham Master Plan**

Figure 6-1



John Brown Associates, Inc.  
Planning Consultants

**Active and Passive  
Recreation Facilities**



❑ **Barnes Wharf / Community Sailing Program**

Owned by the Town and managed by the DPW and the Lincoln Sailing Center, Inc., this wharf includes a pavilion, float and mooring area, and is presently used by the Lincoln Sailing Center which offers a community sailing program open to the public. Accessed from Summer Street near the Route 3A Circle, the wharf provides an unpaved 20 car parking lot.

❑ **Pilgrim Skating Arena**

Privately-owned, the Pilgrim Skating Arena on Recreation Road in South Hingham is an enclosed rink used by recreational skaters and various hockey leagues.

***Active Use Parks, Playgrounds and Playfields***

Hingham owns a number of parks and additional playgrounds, many of which are used, in part, for active recreational uses. These include:

❑ **Town Common**

The Town Common, managed by the DPW, is a well-groomed lawn primarily used as community open space and visual amenity. It is also used, however, for informal games such as volleyball and Frisbee as well as passive uses such as sunning, picnics and community fairs.

❑ **Monument Park (Iron Horse Park)**

Monument Park, owned by the Town, is located on the harbor next to the Bathing Beach and offers waterfront recreation and scenic harbor vistas. The park includes picnic tables and benches, the Town Pier, a boat-launching ramp, and a float for swimming, sunbathing, boating and fishing. The "Iron Horse" was installed in 1929 to honor townspeople who had served in the armed forces. The park's access off of Otis Street provides substantial parking for cars and boat trailers.

❑ **Old Central School Park**

Old Central School Park is owned by the town and managed by the DPW and Recreation Commission. This 4.13-acre neighborhood park, once the site of the Central School, includes a playground with jungle gym and swings as well as a field for summer use by the Recreation Department's baseball leagues.

❑ **Bare Cove Park & Edward Lynch Field**

Formerly a Naval Magazine Depot, this land was transferred to the town in 1972 from the Federal Government under the federal "Legacy of Parks" program and became town property in 1992. Under the conditions of the deed, the property must remain in park use in perpetuity. Now overseen by the volunteer Bare Cove Park Committee and Long Range Planning Committee for Bare Cove Park, Bare Cove Park is 460 acres in size and lies entirely within the Back River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The park includes fields, woodlands, shellfish beds, and swamps and serves as a natural wildlife preserve. It is accessible by both vehicle and transit. Its main entry is on Beal Street where there is parking for approximately 50 cars. There is another entry to the park, with parking, off of Fort Hill Street.

From an active recreational point of view, the Park includes the Scout area, the recreation / dock Building, two Police Athletic League (PAL) ball fields, a flag football field, and a scenic riverside four-mile bicycle trail loop.

The Park is a valuable resource that continues to be upgraded by the work of various federal and local departments as well as volunteer groups such as the Bare Cove Park Committee. For example, the Hingham DPW is repairing drainage and culverts to lessen erosion and flooding,

and the Army Corps of Engineers, under the Defense Emergency Restoration Program, has filled old bunkers within the park, which had been considered a public safety threat.

Today, the Bare Cove Park Committee continues to oversee and maintain Bare Cove Park. The Bare Cove Park Committee and the Long Range Planning Committee are now preparing a Master Plan for the Selectmen's consideration, to guide the Park's long-term development and management. It is hoped that funding for a paid professional staff to manage and maintain the Park can be identified and appropriated.

❑ **Whitney Wharf Park**

Whitney Wharf Park, adjacent to the Harbor, was purchased by the Town in the mid-1990s. It is scheduled for renovation and conversion to a formal park, in stages, as town funds become available. When renovations are completed, the new park will include the installation of a float for small boat access to the harbor, a picnic area, observation deck, and an area for "Summer Fest" art shows. Today, however, the site is closed due to erosion of its harbor edge, and clean-up issues arising from the discovery of hazardous waste.

❑ **More-Brewer Park**

This 187-acre park is primarily used for walking and horseback riding. It includes meadows, Brewer Pond, and Ice House Pond. A parking area is available off of Hobart Street.

❑ **William J. McCluskey Park and Bradley Pond**

This 2.4-acre site is town owned and managed by the Conservation Commission. It serves as a neighborhood mini-park and includes Bradley Pond, which is used for skating in the winter.

❑ **Bradley Woods Playground**

Managed by the Recreation Commission, but owned by the US Department of the Interior-HCRC, Bradley Woods, adjacent to the Hewitts Cove area, provides grassy playing fields surrounded by open woods and offers an attractive setting for organized sports. The playfields include a basketball court, football field, baseball field, and playground swings. No parking is now provided; therefore, the playground basically serves the surrounding local neighborhood.

❑ **Hull Street Playground**

Owned by the Town and managed by the Recreation Commission, this 5.84-acre site serves as a neighborhood playground and skating area. It includes a playground with swings and slides as well as a ball field, which also serves as a skating pond when it is flooded in the winter.

❑ **Kress Field**

Owned by the Town and managed by the Recreation Commission, Kress Field on Gardner Street includes a softball field, basketball court, a playground with a slide and seesaws, and a picnic area. There is also a parking lot that can accommodate approximately 30 cars. This is the only substantial recreational field in the southwest part of town. The Recreation Commission is investigating the potential of acquiring adjacent land to create additional playing fields.

❑ **Hersey Field**

This 4.73-acre field is owned by the town and managed by the Recreation Commission. It is accessed from Thaxter Street and includes some off-street parking. It serves as a neighborhood playground and organized baseball venue from April through September. Hersey Field includes two baseball fields, with backstops and dugouts, used by the Little League and Farm League. The fields are also used informally for soccer and football games. A playground with swings and seesaws are used by neighborhood children.

❑ **Ward Street Recreation Field**

Adjacent to the Plymouth River School fields off of Ward Street, this 6.22 acre open field is managed by the Recreation Commission and was created in 1996. It serves the relatively underserved south/central part of town. This relatively new recreation venue provides a soccer field, lacrosse field and football field for neighborhood and town-wide use. Parking is available for 60 cars. New sidewalks were recently constructed on surrounding streets which make this field much more accessible to neighborhood users.

❑ **Cassidy Field**

Owned by the US Department of the Interior-HCRS, and managed by the Recreation Commission, the 8.33-acre Cassidy Field off Hemlock and White Horse Road hosts one baseball diamond.

**School Recreational Grounds**

Many of Hingham's sports fields and courts are owned by the School Department and maintained by the School Department during the school year. These recreational venues include:

❑ **Hingham High School Grounds**

Managed by the School Department and the Recreation Commission, the High School's playing fields include an outdoor track, football field with bleachers, one baseball field, tennis courts, 6 girls' softball fields, 4 men's softball fields, 2 soccer fields, and a combination pony league / regulation baseball field. The fields are irrigated and well groomed. Parking is available at the adjacent school lots. However, during major events, there is overflow parking available on a paved designated area off of Union Street.

❑ **Hingham Middle School Grounds**

The Middle School's active recreational fields include a large indoor gymnasium, baseball and soccer field, 2 basketball courts in the parking lot and a playground with swings and slides.

❑ **Foster School Grounds**

The Foster School grounds on Downer Avenue include a playground, softball field, two outdoor basketball courts, one enclosed basketball court under a shed, and three tennis courts. The recreational fields are supported by the Foster School parking lot. Improvements to the property have been made by the Parent Teachers Organization (PTO) and the Eagle Scouts.

❑ **Plymouth River Elementary School Grounds**

The Plymouth River School fields, managed by the School Department and the Recreation Commission, includes baseball fields, 6 tennis courts, a roofed basketball court / playshed which doubles as an ice-skating rink in the winter, cross-country ski-slopes, and a playground with a large wooden play structure.

❑ **South Elementary School Grounds**

The South Elementary School's recreational playfields include 2 baseball fields, a basketball court and a playground with a large wooden play structure.

❑ **Former East School Grounds**

This town-owned 11.5-acre parcel, managed by the School Department and the Recreation Commission, was once a town elementary school.

### 3. NEEDS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Identified Recreation Space Needs and Deficiencies**

Hingham's 1996 "*Open Space and Recreation Plan*" defined national recreation design standards for various town population sizes as recommended by the US Heritage, Conservation & Recreation Service's design standards study of 1970 and then compared those national standards to Hingham's recreation venues to identify any recreation deficiencies and needs. That examination is included as *Appendix 6-1*.

That examination concluded that there were several deficiencies in Hingham for the categories of neighborhood and town parks, playgrounds, boating access areas, and swimming beaches. [Since the new playground was constructed behind the Recreation Center, there is no longer a deficiency in town-wide playground facilities. Additionally, the new Ward Street Recreation Field helped alleviate playfield shortages in the southwest part of town.] Though there remain some deficiencies in these four categories, the town registers excesses in ten other categories. Excesses include the recreation categories of winter sports, fishing areas, tennis courts, playing fields, and other passive recreation activities. In summary, it appears that Hingham, as a whole, is well provided with most active recreation venues but is in need of some additional parks and, perhaps, increased public water recreation venues. In the mid-1990s, several town surveys indicated a need for a community recreation center for young adults. With the recent opening of the Recreation Center at the new Town Hall, that identified need has now been met.

Since the 1996 "*Open Space and Recreation Plan*", subsequent population growth and growth projections may indicate the need for additional playfields or other facilities in specific parts of the town in the future. Additionally, many consider the southeastern portion of town currently less well served by recreational venues compared to the remainder of the community. Therefore, that geographic equity issue may require attention as well.

#### **New Recreational Needs and Opportunities Under Consideration**

As Hingham continues to examine its future active recreational needs, and as its population expands, a number of new or expanded recreational venues may be identified. For example, if the former Weymouth Naval Air Station property is redeveloped as now is anticipated, a part of that redevelopment plan includes a large new recreation center and sports playfields that can serve the residents of Hingham as well as the residents of other adjoining communities.

In general, the Recreation Department believes that the town needs additional general purpose playfields *if* new sites can be identified - particularly in the southern portion of town. To meet new recreational needs, some have suggested that the town's landfill, which is scheduled to be closed in the near future, could potentially be redeveloped as a large playing field site. Others point out, however, that the landfill is steeply sloped and has poor access. Therefore, it may be difficult to develop for playfields.

Additionally, a private group known as the Hingham Sports Partnership believes that a new, lighted High School football stadium is needed and is now raising money to advance that proposal for a suitable location in town. Also, a number of individuals believe that there is a need for a centrally-located skateboard park and have proposed one behind the new Recreation Center.

Other potential recreational sites have also been considered. For example, the town owns a piece of open space property off White Horse Road, under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department, that cannot be developed for active recreational uses. Therefore, thought is being

given to surplusing this property, which adjoins a high value residential neighborhood, and using the proceeds to acquire other property better located and suitable for active recreation needs.

Also, on the site of the former Margetts property – across Ward Street from the Ward Street Field –the Black Rock Golf Community will be developed as a new, privately constructed 18 hole golf course and country club.

#### **Management Coordination and Maintenance Issues**

The ownership and maintenance of Hingham's various parks and recreational properties is a complex web of responsibilities that cross departmental lines. The primary owners of active recreational properties are the Selectmen, the Recreation Commission, School Committee, Conservation Commission, and the Bare Cove Park Committee. The mix of departments responsible for maintenance include the School Department, the DPW's Tree and Park Department, Trustees of the Bathing Beach, and Harbor Development Committee. The School Department has jurisdiction over all school fields from September through June while this responsibility shifts to the DPW for the summer months.

Though Hingham's Recreation Commission facilities are well cared for, there may be opportunities for better maintenance of school fields and better scheduling coordination of activities at facilities by better coordination or consolidation of these functions.

Also, many maintenance responsibilities have been assigned to the DPW. Though they have done an excellent job with the resources available, the fact remains that they are understaffed for all the responsibilities assigned them.

## II. ACTIVE RECREATION GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As documented earlier, Hingham is fortunate to have many recreational venues. In just the past several years, Hingham has added even further to its recreational resources; and even at present, still new recreational resources – such as a new privately-sponsored golf course and country club – have been recently added. That said, demand for recreational venues still remains high and is ever increasing.

Some recreational resource deficiencies were identified during the preparation of the earlier 1996 “Open Space and Recreation Plan”. However, a number of those deficiencies have now been corrected. [For example, since the 1996 Plan was prepared, Hingham has added major new recreational venues - such as the new Recreation Center, playfields and playground at the new Town Hall.] As a result of these and other recent improvement efforts, many of Hingham’s active recreational needs are now well met.

Nevertheless, as a result of continuing demand for even more recreational venues, several new potential recreational opportunities were identified during the course of this Study and are described below. Additionally, several planned recreational resource improvements that have long been planned for, but remain unimplemented due to insufficient funding, are also highlighted for action.

### **Identified Recreation Needs and Deficiencies**

Hingham’s 1996 “Open Space and Recreation Plan” defined national recreation design standards for various town population sizes as recommended by the US Heritage, Conservation & Recreation Service’s design standards study of 1970, and then compared those national standards to Hingham’s recreation venues to identify any recreation deficiencies and needs.

That examination concluded that there were several deficiencies in Hingham for the categories of neighborhood and town parks, playgrounds, boating access areas, and swimming beaches. [Since the new playground was constructed behind the Recreation Center, there is no longer a deficiency in Town-wide playground facilities.] Though there were deficiencies in these four categories, the Town registered excesses in ten categories. Excesses included the recreation categories of winter sports, fishing areas, tennis courts, playing fields, and other passive recreation activities.

In the mid to late 1990s, several Town surveys and visioning sessions also indicated a need for a community recreation center for young adults. With the recent opening of the Recreation Center at the new Town Hall, however, that identified need has now been met.

In summary, it appears that Hingham is well provided with most active recreation venues but is in need of additional neighborhood-based parks and better access to some existing facilities. Further projected population growth may indicate the need for still additional playfields or other facilities in specific parts of the town in the future.

## GOALS

As Hingham continues to examine its active recreational needs, and as its population expands, a number of new or expanded recreational goals have been identified:

***Goal 1: Provide New Recreational Venues To Expand the Variety of Athletic / Sports Options available to Hingham's citizens on a town-wide basis***

***Goal 2: Adequately Finance Improvements to Existing and Previously Planned Recreational Venues***

***Goal 3: Seek New Parks and Playground Sites in Now Underserved Neighborhoods and Densely Populated Neighborhoods; and***

***Goal 4: Improve Maintenance and Coordination of Recreational Activities at Hingham's Many Recreational Sites***

The ownership and maintenance of Hingham's various parks and recreational properties is a complex web of responsibilities that cross departmental lines. Though Hingham's Recreation Commission facilities are well cared for, there may be opportunities for better maintenance of school fields and better scheduling coordination of activities at facilities by better coordination or consolidation of these functions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

❑ **1.1: Provide lighted playing fields and a stadium for High School Use.**

A private citizens group known as the Hingham Sports Partnership believes that a new lighted High School football field /stadium is needed to support nighttime use. They are now raising money to advance that proposal. If neighborhood concerns about evening noise and lighting disturbances can be suitably resolved, support the construction of this new venue. Although the 2001 Town Meeting defeated a zoning change that would allow for the development of a lit stadium on the actual grounds of the High School, other locations should be being considered.

❑ **1.2: Provide a skateboard park.**

Some in town have advocated for a new centrally-located skateboard park to meet the demands of this increasingly popular sport. It has been suggested that this park be constructed behind Town Hall with the other playing fields located there.

❑ **1.3: Support the construction of the Weymouth Naval Air Station recreation facility.**

If the former Weymouth Naval Air Station property is redeveloped as now anticipated, a part of that redevelopment plan includes a large new regional recreation center and sports playfields that can serve the residents of Hingham as well as the residents of other adjoining communities. Support the development of this recreational opportunity and the access road to it.

❑ **2.1: Fund planned improvements at Whitney Wharf Park.**

Planned improvements for Whitney Wharf Park (now closed due to shore erosion and hazardous waste issues) include improved beach access, boat access, and picnic areas. These venues were the type of recreational amenities identified as Town recreational deficiencies in the 1996 "Recreation and Open Space Plan". Therefore, this project should be funded and implemented to help mitigate those deficiencies.

❑ **2.2: Help improve access to Bradley Woods Playground.**

Bradley Woods Playground and playfields are an important recreational opportunity for the town. Encourage planned pedestrian access to the site from other nearby areas of town.

❑ **2.3: Support and fund continuing improvements and professional staffing for Bare Cove Park / Edward Lynch Field.**

Support the continuing improvements planned by the Bare Cove Park Committee and Long Range Planning Committee for recreational use of Bare Cove Park. Consider providing funding for professional staffing of the operations of the park as is now being proposed in an outline for a long-range Management Plan.

❑ **3.1: Provide a new local park and playground for neighborhoods in the south part of Hingham.**

Though Hingham is generally well served on a town-wide basis, the southern portion of Hingham is not as well provided with neighborhood parks and playgrounds which are accessible and within walking distance of homes and expanding subdivisions.

❑ **3.2: Investigate the reuse of the town's closed landfill for active recreational opportunities.**

The closed landfill site in the southern part of town could provide a significant new opportunity for new playfields. If population continues to grow, particularly in the southern half of town, this site may provide a valuable recreational resource for the future, even if it is not developed immediately. The development of this site for active recreational opportunities may prove difficult, however, due to steep slopes and difficult access. A more thorough study of this site's potential is required.

❑ **3.3: Negotiate to acquire new land for playfields in exchange for the swap of town-owned land off White Horse Road.**

The town owns a piece of open space property off White Horse Road, under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department, which cannot easily be developed for active recreational uses. Notwithstanding a general policy of retaining town-owned land, thought is being given to selling this property, which adjoins a high value residential neighborhood, and using the proceeds to acquire other property better located and suitable for active recreation needs.

❑ **3.4: Acquire lands adjacent to Kress Field for expansion of recreational Fields.**

Support Recreation Department's efforts to acquire land adjacent to Kress Field to expand playfields in this southwestern part of town.

❑ **4.1: Increase maintenance funding for the DPW / Trees & Park Division.**

Since many maintenance responsibilities for a variety of recreational properties have been assigned to the DPW, increase that Department's staffing and maintenance budget so that they can properly carry out the mission assigned to them.

❑ **4.2: Establish a coordination process between the various Departments, Commissions, Trustees, and Committees that manage recreational properties. / Explore possible long-range consolidation of management responsibilities and functions.**

To gain better and more efficient use of existing recreational venues, convene a regular monthly meeting between department staff responsible for the management and maintenance of active recreational playfields and properties. The purpose of this meeting would be to coordinate a

variety of issues such as: maintenance and the scheduling of the use of playfields for various private organizations such as Little League.

In the longer term, explore the consolidation of the management and maintenance responsibilities for recreational properties into fewer departments, committees and commissions.

**Appendix 6-1**  
**Goals From the 1996 "Open Space and Recreation Plan"**

In 1996, a series of recreation goals were outlined in the "*Hingham Open Space Plan*". These goals listed a series of recommendations for the Recreation Commission to pursue. [A number of these goals have now been acted upon.]

*A. Organize a comprehensive recreation program through increased staffing and coordinated scheduling.*

- Provide information center and pamphlet publications on the availability of all types of town recreation opportunities.
- Promote better utilization of indoor and outdoor facilities through scheduling and space allocation in cooperation with the School Committee.

*B. Provide recreation facilities on the basis of neighborhood or multi-neighborhood needs.*

- Encourage further acquisition of properties, especially in areas of future needs.
- Expand and upgrade recreation facilities in high-density sections of town.

*C. Insure maximum use of recreation facilities.*

*D. Design job description of Recreation Director to organize and direct year round recreation program for all age groups.*

*E. Continue the comprehensive maintenance program with the town agencies, such as the DPW, Tree and Park Department and Recreation Department.*

## Section 7: HOUSING

### I: HOUSING: INVENTORY & ANALYSES

#### INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hingham is a South Shore suburban residential community. It is increasingly becoming a job center as well but not to the same extent as communities nearer the urban core of Boston. There are currently approximately 7,500 housing units in the town, of which 90% are one-family or two-family homes (about 80% one-family and 10% two-family). The remainder are multi-family dwellings, including flats and town houses – largely condominiums.

The town is an upper income community as evidenced by the median sales price of a single family home of \$424,000 in the year 2001. Although the town has only been growing slowly in the recent past, there have recently been a number of new subdivision and Comprehensive Permit applications as well as a large senior campus housing proposal and a large conventional housing proposal at the Hingham Shipyard. If most or all of these projects are implemented, the town's housing supply will increase sharply. The town has also recognized the need to encourage the development of more housing to meet recognized demographic trends and for people with low and moderate incomes and will work to meet these needs in the manner described by the goals and recommendations presented herein.

#### INVENTORY & ANALYSES

This analysis of housing in Hingham includes demographic trends affecting housing, existing conditions, current housing costs, housing needs, community goals for housing, and recommendations relating to the implementation of such goals.

The most recent data available was used wherever possible to describe the existing conditions. While some of these historical figures are not up to date, they are included to provide a sense of how Hingham has developed in the recent past, and to suggest current conditions.

#### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS

##### **Existing Housing**

As of April, 2001, there were approximately 7,522 year-round housing units in Hingham, an increase of approximately 361 units since 1990. This estimate is made by adding the number of units built since 1990 to the 1990 US Census data. Details of the 2000 US Census are not yet available. The age of the housing stock in Hingham is shown in Table 7-1. Over 70% of Hingham's housing was constructed prior to 1970. The peak decades for home construction were the 1950's through the 1980's, while the pace of construction has declined since 1990.

**Table 7-1  
Age of Housing Stock, Hingham, MA**

<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Total Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
1939 or Earlier	2369	31.5	
1940 to 1949	871	11.6	43.1
1950 to 1959	998	13.2	56.3
1960 to 1969	1051	14.0	70.3
1970 to 1979	963	12.8	83.1
1980 to 1989	909	12.1	95.2
1990 to 2001	361	4.8	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,522 units</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Source: U.S. Census, Town of Hingham Building Permit data

The types of housing structures in Hingham in 1990 and 2001 are displayed in Table 7-2. Estimates of types of housing structures in 2001 are made based upon building permit data (this can be confirmed when complete 2000 Census data is available). Eighty one per cent of the housing in Hingham is single family, while buildings with two or more units comprised approximately 19 percent of housing in 2001.

**Table 7-2  
Units By Type of Housing Structure, 1990 and 2001**

<u>Units in Structure</u>	<u>April, 1990</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>April, 2001</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single family	5753	80.3%	6090	81.0%
Two-family	704	9.8	704	9.4
3-4	138	2.0	162	2.1
5 or more	487	6.8	487	6.5
other	79	1.1	79	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,161</b>		<b>7,522</b>	

Source: U.S. Census, Town of Hingham Building Permit Data (as of April 30, 2001)

Note: There may also be an unknown number of illegal in-law apartments.

About 65% of the occupied housing units in Hingham in 1990 had three or four bedrooms. Approximately 8% percent had five or more bedrooms. There were 33 seasonal units in 1990.

**Zoning**

Existing zoning regulations require a minimum residential lot size of 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit in the Residential A District, 30,000 square feet in the Residential B District, and 40,000 in the Residential C District. The density allowed in the Residential D, E, and F Districts is one unit per 5,000 square feet of lot area (8.71 units per acre) for one bedroom and 1,000 square feet of additional lot area for each additional bedroom. Flexible residential development (cluster development) is also allowed with a special permit.

**Flexible Residential Development**

The April 23, 2001 Annual Town Meeting adopted a new Section IV-D of the Zoning By-Law called "Flexible Residential Development" to replace the former "Residential Housing Development" section and the "Residential Inclusionary Development" section. The new by-law provides an alternative to conventional subdivisions for parcels of five or more acres. It allows clustering of housing and requires a minimum of 40% of the site to be designated as open space. Density bonuses up to 35% are available, provided that one-third of the additional units are "affordable", one-third are "moderate sized", and one-third are unrestricted.

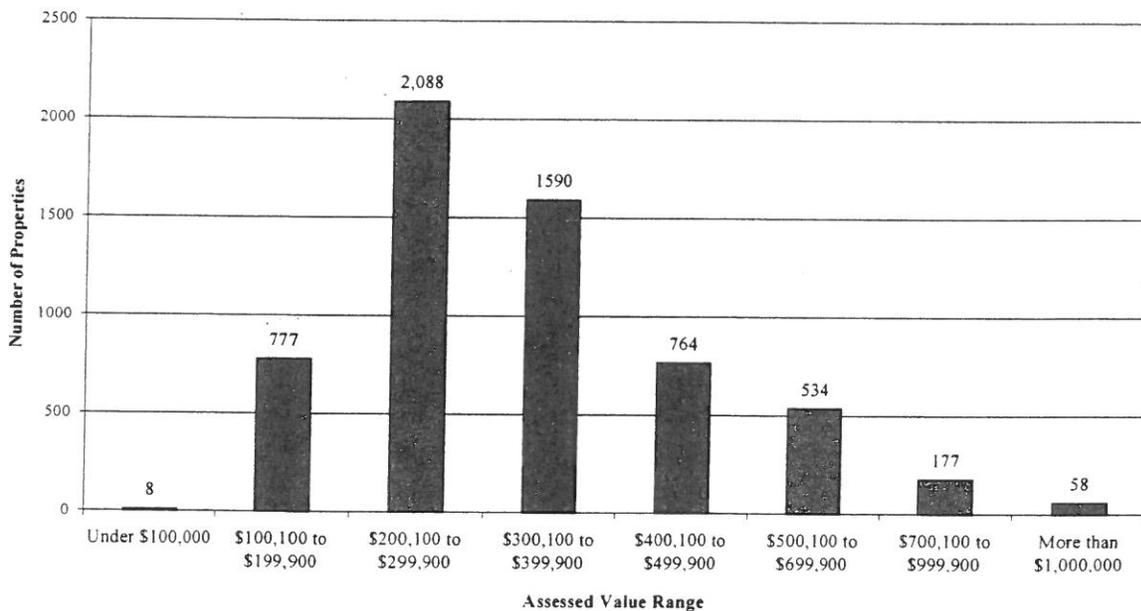
**Home Ownership**

Homeownership is higher in Hingham than in the region as a whole. Approximately 84% of housing units in Hingham were owner-occupied in 1990. A total of 1,105 units were renter-occupied, most of which were condominium rentals. The rate of home ownership is probably higher in 2001 since only 24 multi-family units have been built since 1990.

**Assessed Valuation**

The majority of houses in Hingham were valued at \$200,000 to \$400,000 by the Town Assessor in fiscal year 2001. A considerable number of homes were assessed at higher values, with a few (58) assessed at over \$1,000,000. The assessed value probably lags behind the present market value. The average assessed value of single family homes for fiscal year 2001 was \$424,000. (The median sales price of a single family home in July, 2001 was \$397,000.) The average single family tax bill was \$4,734 in fiscal year 2001.

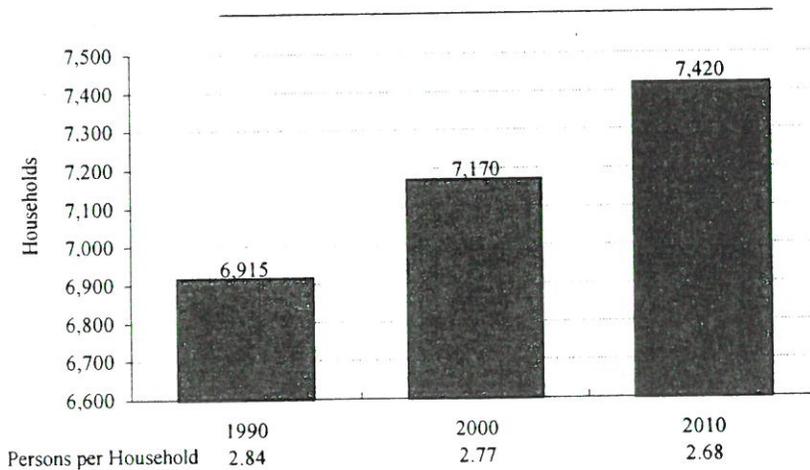
**Chart 7-1  
Town of Hingham Residential Assessed Values for FY 2001**



**Availability**

2000. This decline reflects a regional, indeed national trend, to smaller households. The chart below shows MACP projections but does not reflect Year 2000 US Census figures.

**Chart 7-3  
Household Forecast for Hingham**



Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), 1999

Note: The above estimates by MAPC may be low. Our estimate of total dwelling units in April 2001 is 7,522 units, which already exceeds MAPC's estimate of households for the year 2010.

There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of family households that are headed by females. In 1980 8.7% of the households in Hingham were headed by females; by 1990 this figure had decreased to 8.3%. This counters the statewide and national trend, in which a rise in the number of female-headed households reflects an increase in separate households. The trend in Hingham may reflect a decline in the number of families with older children, as suggested by the changing age structure. An increase in non-family households also reflects an aging population and a change in the structure of household types<sup>(1)</sup>. The proportion of households in Hingham that were not families rose from 15.1% in 1980 to 18.1% in 1990.

To conclude, trends indicate that the rate of new households in Hingham is increasing faster than the population as a whole. Households also tend to be slightly smaller than in previous years, less likely to be composed of families, and to be older. Hingham's demographics indicate a need for additional housing units for emerging new families, separate households and for the elderly.

## HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As the preceding discussion shows, housing, a basic necessity of life, has become increasingly expensive. As housing prices have risen throughout Massachusetts in recent years, more and more residents are being priced out of the housing market. Families and individuals are forced to spend an increasing share of their incomes on shelter, meaning they have less money to spend on

<sup>(1)</sup> A family household is defined by the U.S. Census as persons living together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Step families and families living with unrelated foster children are also counted as families. Non-families include single individuals, unmarried partners, roommates, and other group living situations.

other things. For some very low-income people this may mean that they do not have enough to spend on other necessities such as food, clothing, or medical care. Hingham residents are not immune to this trend.

Several groups have been more greatly affected by increasing housing costs than the population as a whole. These include young adults, the elderly, single heads of households, would-be first time homebuyers, and persons with low or moderate income. Not all of these people are eligible for, or desire, subsidized housing. They are households that have been priced out of the housing market by rapidly rising costs.

### **First-Time Homebuyers**

According to the National Association of Realtors, the rate of homeownership among young adults has declined since 1980. This can be attributed to both the increase in purchase prices for homes, and also to the increase in rents, which makes it difficult to save the money necessary for a down payment.

While incomes in Hingham may be higher than the national average, housing costs are also substantially higher. Therefore it may be assumed that would-be first-time homebuyers in Hingham are experiencing the same or greater difficulty.

### **Elderly**

Since the elderly are usually retired and living on pensions that often do not keep pace with rapidly rising costs, they are likely to be affected by increasing housing costs. Some elderly individuals and couples may be living in a large house they no longer need or want, but cannot move because there is no suitable, affordable, housing available. These people may be "house poor"; their only major asset is their house, but they may not be able to adequately maintain it, or be able to afford replacement housing if they sell it.

### **Young Adults**

Young adults, including singles and young families, frequently need to rent housing until they become more established and can save enough for a down payment on a home. Some young adults may value the mobility of a rental unit, but want to stay in their hometown. Many of Hingham's young adults cannot afford rents charged in private apartments or homes or the down payment and carrying costs of a single family home. Frequently these first time homebuyers turn to the condominium market when they are ready to purchase.

### **Low and Moderate Income Housing**

One indication of the need for housing for individuals and families with low and moderate income is the length of the waiting list for available units. As of April 2001, there were 200 elderly/disabled persons waiting for units at the 30 Thaxter Street elderly housing complex and waiting lists are closed. Preference is given to elderly persons over disabled persons and to Hingham residents over non-residents. The waiting list for the eight units of Section 8 family housing is two, but the wait is long because there is very little turnover. The wait for elderly/disabled persons who are Hingham residents for units at 30 Thaxter Street is over one year, while non-residents wait longer.

State Standards. Another way of assessing demand for subsidized units is through the standards set by the state. Section 20 of Chapter 40B of state law (often referred to as Chapter 774) sets a

standard that 10% of the housing units in a community be assisted to make these units available for people with low and moderate incomes, as determined by the State. Only 166 or 2.33% of Hingham's housing units are currently assisted for persons of low and moderate income. This percent is similar or somewhat lower than nearby suburban communities. For example, Cohasset has 2.84%, Scituate has 4.47%, Weymouth has 7.86%, and Norwell has 3.17%. Under the 10% standard, Hingham should have a total of approximately 712 assisted units available to persons of low and moderate income, a shortfall of approximately 546 units. The State guidelines are based on the 1990 U.S. Census count of year-round housing units in Hingham (7,128).

The town can broaden the definition of assisted housing by the use of the State's Local Initiative Program (LIP). LIP allows the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide technical assistance in evaluating sites, selecting developers, reviewing development programs, determining project feasibility, and monitoring compliance with regulations to communities. This technical assistance qualifies as a "subsidy" and gives local housing initiative formal standing within the comprehensive permit process.

In order to enforce Chapter 40B, the State has issued Executive Order 215, which provides that discretionary state funding can be withheld from any community that does not meet the 10% standard. In practice, the State will not impose Executive Order 215 if it deems the community is making a good faith effort to meet its obligations. In view of the current shortage of state and federally assisted units for low and moderate-income persons, it is very difficult for a community to comply. The State has also issued Executive Order 418 which will give priority in awarding discretionary funds to those cities and towns that are taking steps to increase the supply of housing for individuals and families across a broad range of incomes.

Another aspect of Chapter 40B allows the State to override local zoning, via the comprehensive permit procedure, for communities that do not meet the 10% standard. When a comprehensive permit is issued, housing may be constructed at greater densities and in different building forms than those allowed by local zoning in areas that some may feel are not well suited to this type of development. Hingham recently received five Comprehensive Permit applications, totaling over 2,300 units. One project of 24 units is currently under construction on Whiting Street and includes six affordable units. Two additional projects have recently been approved including:

- Hingham Senior Campus (Erickson Retirement Community) including:
  - 1,750 rental apartment units
  - 192 extended care units
  - 324 bed skilled nursing facility
  
- Lincoln Hill (Lincoln Hill LLC) including: 16 rental units

Scotland Green (Scotland Green LLC) (42 units) and Brewer Meadows (Brewer Meadows LLC) (27 units) are still under review. A sixth project (containing 23 units) sponsored by the Archdiocese of Boston (on French Street) has not yet been filed.

As discussed above, Chapter 40B was recently revised to provide for a Local Initiative Program (LIP) which encourages local governments to work in partnership with project sponsors. In this manner, a portion of units provided (approximately 25%) are reserved for low and moderate income persons and the community has the opportunity for input into the design and

development of the project, while avoiding lengthy litigation. The 24 unit mixed income project on Whiting Street utilized the LIP process. The Local Initiative Program is discussed further in the recommendations section.

Housing subsidy needs may be impacted by the Immigration and Welfare Reform Act enacted in August, 1996. This landmark legislation significantly changes the type, tenure and amount of welfare assistance to the poor. Although Massachusetts has had welfare reform measures in place prior to 1996, they did not go into full effect until the passage of the Federal legislation. The combination of welfare changes and reduced funding for housing at both the state and federal level are expected to challenge the capacity of local housing authorities and local communities. Some Housing Authorities are converting public housing units to ownership units for low and moderate-income people. Some communities are creating housing partnerships with State assistance to find new ways to finance low and moderate income housing, frequently including the participation of local government and the private sector. Hingham has formed a local Housing Partnership Committee under the State program and it has been active in seeking new methods to create more affordable housing.

### **Senior Housing**

As indicated above, eligible applicants for subsidized elderly housing in Hingham wait approximately one year for placement. Rent for such units is approximately 30% of gross income.

Low income housing units for elderly persons are offered at 30 Thaxter Street (84 units), including one unit for congregate housing, which accommodates six persons. Market rate and moderate income housing for elderly persons is offered at the Lincoln School Apartments. This complex contains 60 units for moderate-income seniors. Of these, some are project-based Section 8 units.

Condominiums may or may not be priced at a level that a senior couple or individual can afford if selling an existing older home. In addition, many units are not suitably designed for senior needs.

There is also a need for more senior housing in all income categories, which includes assistance in home care, meals, and medical care. This type of housing will reduce or delay the number of seniors going into nursing homes. One such project currently exists at Harbor House in the Downer Avenue area of Hingham, off of Crow Point Lane in North Hingham. It contains nursing and rehabilitation facilities plus assisted living housing units.

### **Handicapped**

The term "handicapped" includes people with a wide range of disabilities, which include physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. Each of these groups has different, but special, housing needs. Persons with mental or emotional disabilities may need a living situation that includes care. Physically challenged individuals often require special construction that includes extra-wide doors, lower counters and special bathroom facilities. These special types of housing are frequently ignored by the private sector. There is one unit of congregate housing at 30 Thaxter Street maintained by the Hingham Housing Authority, while subsidized units for disabled persons of all ages comprise 13% of the 30 Thaxter Street elderly/handicapped complex.

### **Market-Rate Housing**

The largest share of housing in Hingham is for middle and upper income families and individuals. The Master Plan must also address steps needed to protect the integrity of Hingham's neighborhoods and to determine the appropriate mix of single family and other forms of housing.

Current market-rate housing complexes (virtually all condominiums) in Hingham include Beals Cove Village and Hingham Woods off Beal Street, The Meadows off Union Street, and Hingham Commons off Main Street near Queen Ann's Corner. Approximately 500 units of new housing are proposed at the former Hingham Shipyard, including some affordable housing.

Approximately 138 units of upper market rate housing are proposed at the former site of the Hingham Crushed Stone quarry in southwest Hingham near Old Ward Street. These units are proposed to include 49 condominium units and 108 triplex units. This development is called the Black Rock Golf Community, a gated community including an 18-hole golf course and other recreational facilities.

In addition, there are a number of subdivisions throughout the town in various stages of approval, totaling approximately 140 units.

### **Housing Partnership Committee**

Hingham has formed a local Housing Partnership Committee under the state Housing Partnership Program. This Committee has been working to increase housing opportunities, especially home ownership for local low and moderate-income families and individuals. The Committee has worked on various housing issues including the "soft second" loan program, inclusionary housing, flexible housing development, surplus town land, and the Local Initiative Program to increase local control over comprehensive permit applications. This state-certified partnership makes the town eligible for certain housing development funds and will be valuable in implementing the housing element of the Master Plan.

### **Housing Map**

The Housing map (Figure 1) shows the location of existing and currently proposed subsidized housing, market rate multi-family housing, and currently pending proposals for comprehensive permits for mixed income housing.