

Town of Winchendon

Open Space and Recreation Plan
1999



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Section 1: Plan Summary

The 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* is an essential part of Winchendon's planning efforts, because townspeople see our open space and recreation resources as essential to our own quality of life and also to attracting the visitors and new businesses that will bring new vitality to our local economy.

Winchendon's current patterns of open space and development reflect our historical periods of agriculture, industrial production based on our forestry resources, industrial decline, and suburbanization. These historic waves of development were shaped by a landscape rich in water and forestry resources. Now our scenic rural landscape and relative affordability is attracting housing development to serve people who work in the greater Worcester and Boston areas. At present housing development occurs along roadways on "Approval Not Required" parcels. Large interior parcels await subdivision when the potential for ANR lots is consumed. At build-out Winchendon will look more suburban, with homes developed in areas that are now forest or open field. Through our land use regulations, the community hopes that this residential growth will be balanced with more industrial development northwest of the Town Center and more business growth along major roadways. Moderate to severe soil limitations will limit development to some extent, but there will still be a significant change in the landscape. Especially startling is the fact that forest and farm parcels currently assessed under Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B comprise almost 24% of the land in Winchendon.

With more residents and less available open land, there will be increased demand for recreation facilities, and conserved land will be needed to maintain Winchendon's traditional access to forests, streams, and open spaces. Already townspeople have noted the lack of public access to the River and the ponds in Town. The lack of public access to formerly undeveloped lands will grow even more acute and the Town becomes more suburban. Since Winchendon intends and expects to remain a town of working families and others with modest means, residents will have few alternatives to lands and facilities that are open to the public. The significant conservation and park lands owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Government will be even more valued by residents and visitors, but there will also need to be an increase in locally owned facilities in order to keep pace with residents' and visitors' other recreational needs.

Winchendon tends to have a younger population with more children than surrounding communities, and our residents also tend to have lower incomes. Like our neighbors, we also have a growing population of seniors. Our teens are a group of special concern; they need choices for healthy activities in addition to organized sports.

In response to this situation, the Town of Winchendon's *Open Space and Recreation Plan* stresses:

1. Protecting the quality and quantity of water resources, and increasing the public's ability to gain access to and enjoy these resources.
2. Conserving open space resources, increasing townspeople's and visitors' access to and enjoyment of them, and connecting them with recreation facilities.
3. Increasing the Town's programs and capacity for management.

Key objectives in the Five-Year Action Plan include:

- Continued upgrading or replacing of failed on-site septic systems.
- Extension of the sewer system.
- Working with the Town of Ashburnham to protect and treat our shared source of municipal water.
- Continuing to improve enforcement of regulations.
- Examining the implications of having almost a quarter of the land in town being classified under agricultural and forestry property tax programs.
- Identifying and targeting future land acquisitions and easements to accomplish the Plan's goals.
- Appointing a Recreation Commission to spearhead communications and cooperation with Clark Memorial and local sports leagues, and also to lead planning efforts for recreation and open space.
- Developing the North Central Pathway.
- Developing a park for teen skateboarding, inline skating, and non-motorized biking.
- Continuing to develop a neighborhood playground system.
- Monitor the increasing needs of seniors for an organized center, and considering options for meeting those needs.

To accomplish this action plan the community will need to mount a continuous, coordinated volunteer effort. We will need to call on the expertise and assistance of regional allies. We will need funding from the grant programs whose doors are opened through adoption and approval of our *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Eventually Winchendon will need to increase the paid staff support for Town boards who administer and implement the programs and regulations desired by the community.

The action plan will be worth the effort, because it is essential to our future health and well-being. Our children will benefit from a cleaner environment and healthier activities. Our teens are currently at particular risk, so their having choices for safer and healthier activity will be particularly important. The natural enhancement of the town as a whole will increase property values. Working on this plan and enjoying the improvements and programs gained will help bring people together. Current and future residents and visitors will know and enjoy Winchendon's resources and special character.

A. Statement of Purpose

The 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* ("OSRP") is comprehensive current version of our Town's May 1987 OSRP. Growing out of the community's shared vision of the future we desire for Winchendon, the Plan is an essential part of our overall planning and growth management efforts. Townspeople see our open space and recreation resources as essential both to our own quality of life and also to attracting the visitors and new businesses that will bring new vitality to our local economy.

The *Plan* is intended to be a realistic, action-oriented document that reflects the needs, hopes, resources, and priorities of the Town of Winchendon.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Funded by the Town of Winchendon, the 1999 OSRP project was spearheaded by the Open Space and Recreation Committee:

David A. LaPointe Selectman	Mary Haskins Conservation Commission
Deborah Kane Clark Memorial Center	David Sandmann Superintendent of Schools
John Normandin Finance Committee	Roger Tobia Business Community
Robert Defeo Land Preservation efforts	David Shipman Zoning Board of Appeals
Arthur Rocheleau Business Community	Roy Gilbert Community Development Department

The 1999 OSRP Project was facilitated by Jeanne Armstrong of LandUse, Incorporated, with assistance from Frederick Taintor and Christine Wrigley of Whiteman & Taintor.

The Committee began by reviewing the goals and objectives of the 1987 Plan, noting where progress had been made and where refinements might be needed in light of changes since 1987. Committee

members took on the task of updating information available through local sources, while the consultant sought updated information from regional and state sources.

Early in the project (June 10) the Committee convened a community forum to review and discuss the goals and objectives of the 1987 Plan. Approximately thirty residents reviewed the recommendations of the 1987 Plan and considered the progress the community had made on those recommendations. Participants then broke into work groups to consider and record answers to the following questions: What are the special aspects of Winchendon's landscape that give our town its own special character? Which of the 1987 goals are still on target? Which need to be adjusted or dropped? Are there additional needs and opportunities that should be added? What needs relating to open space and recreation do you think are especially important to address in this 1999 Plan? Upon reconvening, participants compared notes from the working groups to see where there was general consensus. The results were incorporated into Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

Based upon this guidance from the community, the project team worked over the summer to gather relevant new information and to consider potential actions to achieve the community's preliminary restatement of goals and objectives. As word spread about the project, letters were received from other Town boards and from community people suggesting needs that could be addressed through the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. A draft of the OSRP was produced in late August to reflect this effort.

In September the Committee met to review and consider the August draft, identify remaining data to complete the inventories in Section 5, and agree on the guidance needed from the community at the second community forum. On October 7th the second community forum reviewed the project's findings, confirmed the Plan's Goals and Objectives as stated in Section 8, and agreed on the actions steps of the Five-Year Plan which is detailed in Section 9.

All the Committee's working meetings were advertised public meetings and were open to participation by interested citizens and members of other town boards. The Plan's Appendix includes a compendium of newspaper articles, fliers that were distributed throughout the community, and postings of project meetings. Copies of the Plan's successive drafts were circulated among Town boards and made available at the Town Library.

The *1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan* reflects the consensus reached through this inclusive participatory process.

A. Regional Context

Winchendon is located in north central Massachusetts in Worcester County, one of three towns in the county that border New Hampshire. Ashburnham lies to the east and Royalston to the west. This location offers forest and water resources and relatively gentle topography. Native Americans visited Winchendon to enjoy these resources, especially a spring that was believed to have healing properties. During colonial times small numbers of European Americans came to form small farming communities. The Industrial Revolution brought major changes as nineteenth century manufacturers were drawn by local water power resources, and the railroad passed through, connecting Winchendon with business and tourist travel. The earlier farming based settlement pattern gave way to mill villages. In recent decades a suburban flavor has been added as increasing numbers of residents live in Winchendon but commute to work in employment centers located in central and eastern Massachusetts.

As detailed below, over the years these settlement trends have brought to Winchendon successive waves of hard working people seeking to build a productive life for themselves and their children. An affordable community, Winchendon has traditionally been home to residents who average lower income and less educational attainment than Worcester County and the state. Over the past decade the community has begun to catch up in these categories, but townspeople's relatively limited incomes still mean that they depend heavily upon recreation resources and facilities that are open to the public at little or no cost.

The Millers River is the dominant water body flowing from Ashburnham in the east through the entire town and continuing in a southwesterly course into the Chicopee and then the Connecticut Rivers. Hurricanes in the 1930s produced significant flooding down river in the Athol area and prompted federal officials to institute impoundment strategies along the Millers River system. Subsequent flood control efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers resulted in impounded ponds in Winchendon. Denison State Park, a very large conservation holding on the town's western border, was created as a watershed protection measure.

Winchendon is served by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and is actively involved in the region's planning efforts. As of August 1998 Winchendon MRPC has submitted applications for assistance with two major regional planning efforts relating to open space and recreation resources: (1) a regional access and management plan for natural resource and recreation areas, and (2) a growth

management plan for the Millers River Watershed Basin. Both of these regional planning efforts will help Winchendon implement its goals of increasing access to recreation areas and stimulating tourism. Town leaders look forward to participating actively in these regional efforts.

Our three Massachusetts neighbors are the City of Gardner and the Towns of Templeton and Ashburnham. Gardner's most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in September 1994. Like Winchendon, Gardner is a community with both a vibrant industrial heritage and vital natural resource systems. More than half of the northern boundary of the city's Water Supply Protection District lies along the Winchendon/Gardner border. This district protects surface water resources in Gardner that include Cowee Pond, Perley Brook Reservoir, and Crystal Lake. Continuing to monitor and protect the quality of surface water resources is one of the goals of Gardner's Plan¹. Winchendon's major community goal of continuing to protect the quality and quantity of water resources is consistent with the concerns of our neighbors to the south. Another of Gardner's goals is to expand and improve existing recreational resources owned by the City, with a key objective being to develop a bike trail linking Winchendon and Gardner's downtowns and major open space parcels². This goal works in tandem with Winchendon's goal of increasing townspeople's and visitors' access to and enjoyment of open space resources and linking these resources with recreation facilities. [Please see Sections 6 and 8.] Winchendon and Gardner are working closely together to achieve the North Central Pathway along an abandoned railroad bed.

At this time neither Ashburnham nor Templeton has a current Open Space and Recreation Plan, although both towns are currently working on one. Winchendon will provide all three Massachusetts neighbors with copies of our draft plan.

B. History of the Community

The earliest known people to live in and around Winchendon were Pennacooks who hunted and fished here and are believed to have regarded "Yellow Spring" as having special healing capacities. More than 300 years ago the Pennacooks moved to Canada, and the Nitmucks came to regard this as their territory. During this time it is believed that the glacially deposited formation known as "King Philip's Rock" in the Birch Hill area was a meeting place of these people, who continued to seek out the healing Yellow Spring.

In 1735 a six-mile square grant was allocated to 60 veterans and descendants of veterans of the Colonial army's 1690 expedition to Canada during what became known as the French and Indian Wars. The

¹ *Gardner Open Space Plan*, September 1994, pg. 63.

² *ibid*, pg. 61.

veterans were from the Town of Ipswich in eastern Massachusetts, so the grant-created place was named "Ipswich, Canada" until 1764, when it was incorporated as Winchendon. Colonization was slow due to the risks posed by frontier warfare, so the first permanent settlement in town was not until 1752. Old Centre was originally the center of the colonists, and this quiet area still contains physical remembrances of this period: The Day House, the Moses Hale house, Reverend Brown's parsonage, the First Congregational Church, the Burying Ground, and the Training Field on Hall Road where local Minutemen trained before and during the Revolutionary War.

Birch Hill near Lake Denison was the site of the second permanent settlement. Sparked by the Baptist Church's establishment of the "Society House", the community of New Boston became a flourishing agricultural community whose form evolved with economic times through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the 1930's New Boston was designated as a flood control reservoir by the United States government. The community was bought out and dispossessed. Now little besides the cemetery is left of this once thriving community.

During the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution brought both manufacturing and the railroad to Winchendon. In 1816 textile manufacturing began drawing power from the Millers River, and as the years passed the town's forests provided materials for a series of specialty woodworking. Early on Winchendon became so large a manufacturer of shingles that it became known as "shingletown." As the century progressed proliferating mills specialized in wooden tubs, pails, chairs, barrels, and clothes pins. Following the Civil War twelve local wooden ware factories produced 9/10 of the state's wooden ware. Winchendon also became known as "Toy Town" due to the Converse Company's world reputation for quality wooden toys.

The Cheshire Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad was opened for business into Winchendon in 1847. This easier means of transporting materials and finished goods accelerated the expansion of Winchendon's industrial base. Between 1870 and 1875 three other railroads entered Winchendon, improving shipping conditions even more. Essential to the growth of local manufacturing were the waves of Irish, French Canadian, and Italian immigrants who came by rail to work in the mills. Winchendon's vibrant industrial period superimposed a mill village pattern of development over the agricultural pattern (see subsection 3-D, below). This period also saw the population shift to one dominated by mill workers and mill owners. Leading families who gained wealth through the millworks left their mark by donating civic facilities such as schools, libraries, the Town Hall, and Clark Memorial. Winchendon Academy was also founded by a local mill owner.

Meanwhile, with the railroad arrived tourists. Since pre-colonial times people had traveled to the area to visit the healing Yellow Spring. During the nineteenth century "Spring Village" housed facilities to

serve visitors to the healing spring until the spring was interrupted by an artisan well. The railroad shifted the center of tourism. The Monadnock House (later known as the Tremont House) was built in 1860 to serve visitors arriving at the nearby train station. Carriage rides were also arranged from the hotel to visit scenic Mount Wachusett. More than 130 years later in the late 1990s town leaders see the now-abandoned railroad bed as the site of a new regional bicycle path that will again bring visitors to town. This North Central Pathway will connect downtown Gardner with downtown Winchendon, with views of natural resource areas along the way.

During the twentieth century Winchendon experienced a long decline of local industry as did many other New England mill towns. By the 1980s and 1990s townspeople saw suburban housing development for exurbanites from Greater Boston become the new wave of change to be reflected in the landscape. By the late 1990s Winchendon's relative affordability has attracted new residents who have come to the region for employment at such emerging employment centers as Devens.

C. Population Characteristics

The Town of Winchendon has seen a significant increase in several population groups over the last decade. The population as a whole has grown just over 9% between 1990-2000. The age group between 45-54 saw a 57% increase and the 15-19 year-old age group saw a 54% increase. This pattern most likely indicates the addition of many families to the Town of Winchendon, parents with one or several children moving to this community for work, the school system, affordable housing or a combination of other reasons. This pattern is also evidenced by an increase in two other age groups, the 10-14 year olds (43%), and the 35-44 (40%) age group. The percentages for the aforementioned age groups were significantly higher than both Massachusetts and the United States. Town officials observed that since 1990, Winchendon's strong market for affordable homes had been attracting families with children to the community. With such an influx of families, local efforts to meet recreation needs have been hard pressed to keep pace with the demand for recreation areas and facilities.

Other population increases include the 55-59 (31%) and 75-84 (18%) age groups. While the population in Winchendon flourished in some demographic groups, the most significant decrease, was in the 20-34 year old bracket. The group of 20-24 year olds decreased by 32% between 1990-2000 and residents 25-34 decreased 25%. Another decrease, 21% was children under the age of five. These very strong population percentages highlight that a number of open space and recreation needs will garner attention in the near future. Not only are there the needs of school children, but also of an increasingly older population. Organized adult sports, walking and jogging trails, playgrounds, parks, sports facilities (tennis courts, basketball courts), playing fields, a swimming facility, an active senior center and other activities are typical kinds of recreation opportunities that municipalities try to offer to their residents.

The 1987 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*³ reported that on average, residents of Winchendon were poorer than those living in surrounding communities, the county and the state. The percentage of Winchendon residents below the poverty level in 1980 was the highest among area towns: 10%, compared to an average of 8%. The 2000 census still puts 10% of the residents at 10% compared to Worcester County at 9.2% and the State at 9.3%. The percentage of low and moderate-income persons was significant (42.8%). There was an evident increase between 1980-1990 in educational attainment among Winchendon residents over the age of 18 even though the community still lagged behind the state and county in this regard. Only 23% of Winchendon residents over the age of 18 had not completed their high school diploma, compared to 22% for the county and 19% for the state. Of this same age group in Winchendon 12% had received a bachelor's or graduate degree, compared to 20% for the county and 25% for the state. There was additional progress made between 1990 and 2000, where

³ Town of Winchendon, *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, May 1987, pp. 9 - 10.

Winchendon residents have dramatically increased their level of educational attainment in some categories. The number of residents who have only completed the 8th grade or less decreased nearly 50% during the past decade, which is a decrease at almost twice the rate of the state and a third the rate of Worcester County. While Winchendon's "high school graduate" and "some college, no degree" categories did increase a considerable amount compared to the state and county, the town lags behind in the number of advanced degrees that residents have obtained. They are on par with Bachelor's Degree attainment, but there was a decrease in the number of residents who hold a Graduate or Professional Degree while Massachusetts saw an increase over 38% and Worcester County over 36%.

The majority (27%) of residents according to Census 2000 are working in the "management, professional and related" occupation field compared to 22% in 1990. Twenty-four (24%) percent are in the "production, transportation and material moving" trade which is an increase of 6% since 1990, and 21% are in "sales and office occupations." The 1987 Open Space and Recreation Plan⁴ reported that Winchendon residents were generally employed in jobs not requiring an extensive formal education. The 2000 data indicates that times have changed with more and more residents using college degrees to find employment. One-third of Winchendon residents employed in 1980 were working in the blue-collar occupations labeled "operators, laborers, and fabricators". This was a very high percentage in comparison with the county (22%) and state (17%) at the time.

Unemployment levels in Winchendon have traditionally been higher than state unemployment levels during every year since 1983 except for 1993. Throughout the entire north central region, the manufacturing industry for example has consistently diminished, taking away some of the highest paying jobs. Winchendon in the past has been heavily manufacturing job reliant and experienced a job loss during the 1980s of about 5.7%.⁵ Because it is a smaller town, the loss of even a few plants in the 80s made a significant impact on the job base that was not made up elsewhere. Today, Winchendon has even fewer jobs than it did in the 1980s and while the rest of the state continues to see employment growth, communities in this area like Winchendon are struggling to find employment for local residents.

Approximately 6.8% (the same as Worcester County), down from 9.1% in 1990, of families in Winchendon are living below the poverty level.⁶ The adjacent towns of Templeton (7.4%) and Gardner (7.0%) have a higher number living below poverty while Royalston (5.4%) and Ashburnham (4.8%) are slightly better off. The Town of Winchendon's family poverty level is just higher than the state's at 6.7%. Winchendon's median household income of \$43,750 was 86% of the state median household income and 91% of Worcester County's. The average single-family home value in Winchendon rose to

⁴ op cit, page 10.

⁵ Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

⁶ MISER, Census 2000, Summary File 3

\$165,000 in 2003, a 37% increase since 2000.⁷ Although this is a significant increase, home values are still not as high as other parts of the state therefore making Winchendon appear to be more affordable than other towns.

Since 1990, Winchendon’s median age went up from 31.2 to 35, which is slightly younger than the state average of 36.5. This is consistent with Winchendon's attractiveness to people seeking affordable starter homes with a greater proportion of children. The proportion of pre-school and school-aged children has decreased since 1990 when 30% of Winchendon’s population was in that age group. Now, ten years

Table: Age Group Comparison

Age Group	Winchendon			Massachusetts	United States
	1990	2000	% Change	% Change	% Change
Under 5	876	690	-21.2%	-3.69%	4.5%
Age 5-9	815	803	-1.5%	13.97%	13.5%
Age 10-14	628	903	43.8%	23.89%	19.9%
Age 15-19	490	755	54.1%	1.42%	13.9%
Age 20-24	580	391	-32.6%	-21.29%	-0.3%
Age 25-34	1697	1264	-25.5%	-15.85%	-7.6%
Age 35-44	1285	1809	40.8%	15.74%	20.1%
Age 45-54	774	1215	57.0%	45.54%	49.4%
Age 55-59	327	429	31.2%	22.31%	27.9%
Age 60-64	304	345	13.5%	-9.63%	1.8%
Age 65-74	602	539	-10.5%	-7.0%	1.6%
Age 75--84	301	356	18.3%	18.1%	34.3%
85 years+	126	112	-11.1%	26.6%	37.6%

Source: Census 2000, Summary File 1

later, those children are in the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups, which is evidenced in Census 2000. It is also clear that families are not having children at the rate they were ten years ago. This could be attributed to a number of reasons like personal goals, the cyclical economy, being worried about providing for a family or even fear of unemployment.

Town officials have observed that since 1990 Winchendon's strong market for affordable homes has continued this trend of attracting families with children to the community. Although the recreation needs of older residents are also of concern, local efforts to meet recreation needs have been hard pressed to keep pace with the demand for recreation areas and facilities to meet the growing demand of families and children.

⁷ Banker and Tradesman

D. Growth and Development Patterns

1. Pattern and Trends. Old Centre was the center of Winchendon during its agricultural period of the first 50 years following settlement by European Americans. Now regulated as a Historic District, Old Centre is still quietly intact. Old Centre is the only one of Winchendon's villages with a traditional New England Common. The second major agricultural community at New Boston flourished during the nineteenth century but has now virtually disappeared as the result of the watershed protection efforts that lead to the establishment of the large Lake Denison area along Winchendon's western boundary. Winchendon's other villages sprang from and were shaped by the industrial revolution, so they center around water features rather than a traditional New England green.

The early nineteenth century saw outlying villages appear near water features. Spring Village began as the site of the healing spring, but later a mill village grew up here, and the name was changed to Winchendon Springs. Bullardville is believed to have been named after a resident who had a small mill site in the early 1800s, and Waterville was named after the feature that made it a center of wooden tub and pail manufacturing.

"The City" (or "The Village") was another small cluster of buildings that sprang up around a tannery constructed on the Millers River (down the hill from what is now Front Street) during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Commerce and civic life began to shift toward this area during the decades that followed, and when the railroad station was opened there in 1847, the center of town life had permanently left the Old Centre and moved here.

Mill villages, forests, and a few farm fields still comprise the prevailing pattern of development in Winchendon. Because of its relatively isolated location, Winchendon has only relatively recently experienced the arrival of suburban development. Between 1985 and the early 1990s the town's growth rate far outstripped the state, country, and immediate region. In the period from January 1, 1980, through June 30, 1988, the Town issued 583 new housing starts. Of these 2/3 (407 permits) were issued during 1985 - 1988.⁸ The 1990 Census revealed that Winchendon's population had grown by 25.4% over the previous decade to a total of 8805. This paralleled the trend seen throughout the Montachusett region: during the 1980s the population of very rural towns such as Phillipston and Hubbardston grew by more than 50%, while the more settled rural communities of Ashburnham, Winchendon, and Groton shifted from rural toward suburban, with respective population increases of 33.3%, 25.4%, and 22.1%. The average percent increase for the Montachusett Region during the 1980s was 10.5%.⁹ The predominant land use changes were the conversion of agricultural, open space and forest to residential

⁸ Town of Winchendon, *Massachusetts Small Cities Program Special Fund Application*, 1989, page 3.

⁹ Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, *1990 Regional & Community Statistics*, August 1993.

use. The real estate slump of the early 1990s, however, removed the pressure of exurbanites seeking affordable homes, and the Town Census of 1995 recorded a drop in population to 8326¹⁰.

By summer of 1998, however, development was booming. Rather than subdivisions, however, the pattern of development is to avoid the costs of creating a new road and instead to build houses along outlying roadways through the creation of "ANR" lots. Seeking affordable starter homes, new residents come from outside the region and from outside Massachusetts because they have found jobs in the greater Boston region. The local housing market is showing the impact of new employment opportunities at Devens. The growth rate of the late 1990s is exceeding that of the 1980s. In 1997, for example, 200 new ANR lots were recorded. The southern portion of town contains more opportunities for ANR development. Large parcels of land are being purchased, apparently to hold for future development. One example is a 130-acre parcel off Town Farm Road. Another lies along North Central Street and includes an historic farm.

Build-Out Analysis

The Massachusetts EOE office, in response to municipalities wishing to change and enhance their development and growth patterns sponsored build-out studies for all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the data and maps created is to visually demonstrate current developed and undeveloped land in each town under zoning regulations, and then to illustrate what the landscape would look like if all the remaining undeveloped land were completely "built-out" under existing local zoning. This analysis lets towns take a close look at their land use development patterns and how they may continue to evolve in the future. It is on this kind of information that important regulatory and policy changes can be made. An additional purpose of this study was to encourage towns and cities to work together as they plan for the future.

The Town of Winchendon's build out analysis was completed in 2001. Using minimum lot sizes for each zoning district, projections for housing and commercial/industrial uses were made for as of right development only. The projections combined with recent Census data provide the basis for the build out. Winchendon's demographic projections at build out are fairly extreme. Using current zoning and other regulations, the build out data indicates that Winchendon has 17,700 acres of developable land. According to the analysis, the Winchendon's population in 2000 was 9,611 people and at build out it increases to 34,415. Students went from 1,964 currently to 7,245 at build out and residential units increased from 3,660 currently to over 13,000 at build out.

¹⁰ Toy Town Partnership Committee, *Toy Town Partnership Economic Development Strategy*, 1996, Analysis page 1.

It is important to not that these numbers will not be realized for a number of economic and market reasons. However, it provides a snapshot of the possibilities so that the Town of Winchendon can understand the potential ramifications of its current zoning.

2. Infrastructure.

a. *Transportation system*¹¹. Winchendon is located on both State Route 12 and State Route 202, which provide access north to New Hampshire and south to Route 2. Route 2 serves as the major east-west route for the northern region of Massachusetts. There is no major north-south highway in this section of the state.

Due to the rural nature of the community, the major form of transportation is the private auto. The 1987 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* reported that secondary local roads suffered from lack of maintenance and were in poor condition. The Town has made good progress since then in resurfacing outlying roadways.

There is limited public transportation service for Winchendon by way of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) which stops in three locations in town, seven times daily. The Council on Aging provides seniors with in-town van service. The Community Action Committee and the Gardner/Athol Area Mental Health Association make on-call van service available to Winchendon residents.

These limitations on transportation options make it difficult for some residents to reach and enjoy the community's open space and recreation resources. Limited transportation options also deter visitors and thus are a constraint to the community's effort to increase tourism.

b. *Water supply system.* The 1987 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* identified water supply as a critical issue facing the town. At that time Winchendon had no existing active municipal groundwater supplies, relying solely on a surface water reservoir in Ashburnham [Upper Naukeag Lake] for its drinking water supply. The Town had recognized the need to delineate aquifers and identify areas favorable for high yield well development. In 1986 a *Test Well Exploration and Hydrogeologic Mapping Study* was conducted. Test well explorations and seismic surveys were performed, and additional measures were recommended to further characterize aquifers in order to establish protection measures and to identify well sites to develop a local water source. (See Map 3, *Water Features.*)

¹¹ Town of Winchendon, *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 1987, page 11

Since they could be used to augment that source, however, Winchendon is protecting them as a reserve. Winchendon and Ashburnham are jointly constructed a \$6 million treatment plant for the surface water reservoir, which the two towns share for their water source. Since Winchendon's 1987 OSRP a safe yield analysis was performed, and this determined a 1.7 million gallon per day average safe yield. At present Winchendon draws an average of 700,000 gal./day, and Ashburnham draws an average of 250,000 gal./day.

As of summer 1999, the Town's water system serves approximately 2,000 customers in the town center. These include both homes and businesses. The existing water distribution system includes water mains that are 80 to 100 years old. Under certain conditions water is discolored from sediments in the pipes. The Department of Public Works¹² estimates that approximately 5,600 residents are served by the system, leaving approximately 4,000 residents in outlying areas who depend upon private wells for their water. Clearly the quantity and quality of groundwater resources is extremely important to these well-dependent residents.

c. *Sewer service.* The 1987 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* also identified the clear potential need to extend the current sewer system. Although the village center in Winchendon is served by sewer facilities, more and more residential development is occurring outside this area. Moreover, the *Toy Town Partnership Economic Development Strategy Plan*¹³ identified attraction of new industrial firms as one objective which would necessitate identification of sites and infrastructure improvement, including extension of the present sewer system.

Winchendon is in the construction phase of a \$15 million upgrade of both the sewerage collection system and the treatment plant. At present the treatment plant has a 500,000 gallon per day capacity, while the demand has averaged 600,000 gallons per day since the plant came on line. The current project will upgrade the plant's capacity to 1.2 million gal./day. A significant portion of Winchendon's excess sewer demand is attributable to inflow and infiltration problems, and the current improvements to the collection system will address this "I&I" problem. Over the 1998 - 1999 winter months the Town conducted a house to house survey for illegal connections into the sewer system. The Town will start with a volunteer program to remove these connections by offering cash incentive to assist property owners with the costs of cutting off the connections. After a few months the Town will shift to a more enforcement-oriented approach. The combination of upgrading the treatment plant, improving the collection system, and moving assertively to shut illegal connections will bring the sewer system into compliance and also is expected to create a reserve of capacity for future demand.

¹² Interview with Michael Murphy, August 24, 1998.

¹³ op cit, 1989, Core Action #3.

One intent of the efforts to address I&I is to mitigate pollution of Whitney Pond and the Millers River, both of which are closely connected with the town center that is served by the sewer system. As improvements are achieved in the water quality of these key resources, opportunities will be created for public access to them for recreational purposes.

Looking ahead, Town officials have identified the Maple Street/Spring Village area and a section of Waterville as places where extending the sewer system could address the problems posed by failures of residential septic systems.

3. Long-term development patterns.

[See Map 1: Zoning]

a. *Local Land Use Controls.* Winchendon's Zoning Bylaw divides the town into nine zoning districts, with overlay districts superimposed over portions of other districts in order to protect wetlands, water supplies, and flood prone areas. There are four residential districts: Rural, Rural Suburban, Suburban, and Neighborhood. Three non-residential districts distinguish between Highway Commercial, Neighborhood Business, Downtown Business, and Industrial. The Planned Development District regulates the closely developed area that is focused around the Millers River, Whitney Pond, and the traditional Downtown Business area. The Zoning Bylaw's dimensional and density regulations are presented in the following figure.

**Figure 2:
Table of Dimensional & Density Regulations of the Zoning Bylaw
Town of Winchendon**

[Source: Town of Winchendon Zoning Bylaw, section 4.3]

District	Min. Lot Area [sq.ft.]	Front-age	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback	Max Bldg. Stories	Max. Bldg. Height	Max. Bldg. % of lot (1)
R1 Rural	87,120	200	40	25	50	2 1/2	35'	15
R2 Rural Suburban	60,000	175	40	25	50	2 1/2	35'	15
R3 Suburban	43,560	150	40	25	50	2 1/2	35'	15
R4 Neighborhood	21,780	125	30	15	40	2 1/2	35'	25
C1 Highway	75,000	250	75	25	25	3	45'	45
C2 Neighborhood	22,500	150	30	15	30	3	45'	40
C3 Down-town	10,000	75	none	5	20(2)	3	45'	70
I Industrial	43,560	150	40	25	50	none	50'	none
PD Planned Develop.	15,000	75	10	5	20(2)	3	45'	70

- (1) Includes accessory buildings
(2) Except where building extends more than lot

Winchendon's residential zoning districts seek to correlate density with proximity to the Town Center and to infrastructure. Neighborhood Residential (1/2 acre minimum lot size) includes traditional neighborhood areas and potential neighborhood areas nearest the Town Center. Suburban Residential (1 acre minimum) lies further out but is still relatively well served by roadways. Rural Suburban (1 1/2 acre minimum) is still further away from the Town Center, and Rural Residential (2 acre minimum) is in the outlying areas and also around such special resource areas as Lake Monomonac and Stoddard Pond.

Business districts correlate with Winchendon's traditional village settlement pattern and also seek to take advantage of potential markets offered by roadway access. Downtown Business lies at the heart of the Town Center. Neighborhood Business allows mixed residential and commercial uses and is located near Neighborhood Residential, Suburban Residential, and access roadways into town. Highway Commercial lies along the main tourist route into town (portions of Route 140).

Industry has been the mainstay of Winchendon's economy and society since the Industrial Revolution, and the Industrial District designates an area to encourage continued industrial development. Located northwest of the Town Center, this district provides adequate roadway access and could be served by future extensions of the sewer and water systems. There are wetlands and some areas between the 100 year flood limit and the 500 year flood limit, but these areas are protected through the Wetlands and Flood Conservancy overlay districts. The second Industrial District is located in the southeastern corner of town with good access to Gardner and Ashburnham.

The Planned Development District is closely associated with the Downtown Business District, the Millers River, and Whitney Pond. The District provides very close administration of land use regulations in this complex area of traditional village development and natural resource systems.

b. *Scheduled and Proposed Subdivisions.* As noted above, current development consists of ANR residential lots. Two proposed plans are currently before the Planning Board: The Brown Street proposal with 37 lots and the White Plains plan with 2 lots. There are three scheduled subdivisions (1) Toytown Heights with 12 lots, (2) Cahill Lane with 4 lots and (3) the 20 unit Phase II of Watatic Woods between Maple and Glenallen Streets. This will bring Watatic to its scheduled total of 40 units.

c. *Expansions to infrastructure.* The improvements to the water and sewer systems described above will improve the capacity of those two systems, but no geographic extension of service is scheduled at present. One of the community's economic development goals is to attract industrial development to the Industrial District northwest of the Town Center, and the potential need to extend sewer service to such development has been noted.

d. *Winchendon at buildout under current zoning.* At buildout Winchendon will look more suburban, with homes developed in areas that are now forest or open field. Through our land use regulations, the community hopes that this residential growth will be balanced with more industrial development northwest of the Town Center and more business growth along major roadways. The moderate to severe soil limitations described in Section 4, below, will limit development to some extent, but there will still be a significant change in the landscape. With more residents and less available open land, there will be increased demand for recreation facilities, and conserved land will be needed to maintain Winchendon's traditional access to forests, streams, and open spaces. Already townspeople have noted the lack of public access to the River and the ponds in Town. The lack of public access to formerly undeveloped lands will grow even more acute as the Town becomes more suburban. Since Winchendon intends and expects to remain a town of working families and others with modest means, residents will have few alternatives to lands and facilities that are open to the public. The significant conservation and park lands owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Government (see Map 4, below) will be even more valued by residents and visitors, but there will also need to be an increase in locally owned facilities in order to keep pace with residents' and visitors' other recreational needs.

In terms of the community's cultural heritage, the two historic districts will help cushion the impact of growth on the Old Centre and the Town Center, but without assertive efforts Winchendon will likely lose at least some of the cultural, historical, and archeological resources identified on Map 2, *Special Landscape Features*.

Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils, and Topography

In general, Winchendon's 42.53 square miles feature a topography of gently rolling slopes of less than 10%. Elevations range from 200 feet in the lowlands to 1,287 feet at the summit of Mount Pleasant in the south central part of town.

Most Winchendon soils are direct results of glacial action. They consist of deposits of glacial till (unsorted mixtures of materials such as clay, sand, gravel, and boulders) or "thin" soils developed from exposed bedrock following the glaciers' retreat. In the river valleys there are bedded layers of soil material resulting in major groundwater aquifers, good drainage, and fertile conditions. In most other areas the soils are stony, relatively poorly drained, and shallow to bedrock or "hard pan" layers. As the result of this pattern of glacial action and deposition, Winchendon's soil base is a complex mix of soil types, featuring a range of composition and slope. Soil series found in Winchendon include: Hollis, Scituate, Ridgebury, Whitman, Hinckley, Merrimac, Sudbury, Walpole, Scarboro, Windsor, Ninigret, Woodbridge, Canton, Paxton, Deerfield, Wareham, Millis, and Au Gres. Also present are areas of shallow or deep muck, and freshwater marsh¹⁴.

[See Map 2A: Soil Suitability]

As is shown by Map 2A, *Soil Suitability*, Winchendon's combined soil types feature moderate to severe limitations to development because of poor capacity for on-site septic disposal. A 2001 study determined that about 20% of the septic systems failed or required major repairs. Without sewer service, even moderate sized developments are likely to be constrained by this soil base. Small scale development, however, is able to find a site that "perks" on most properties, so the future pattern of development in Winchendon will most likely continue to be scattered along roadsides, on fields, and in wooded areas.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, *Soils and Their Interpretations For Various Land Uses, Town of Winchendon Massachusetts*, February 1972.

B. Landscape Character

[See Map 2: Special Landscape Features]

Winchendon's physical landscape base and cultural history have resulted in a beautiful New England landscape of wooded hills, open fields, flowing water, serene ponds, and village centers. As shown on Map 2: *Special Landscape Features*, when townspeople are asked to list the features that make Winchendon special, they think of this combination of natural and cultural features. Key geologic features include Mt. Pleasant and Birch Hill, the sites of Winchendon's two early settlements: Old Centre and New Boston. King Philip's Rock is unique because of its association with the area's pre-Columbian past. Hydrologic features are also key, as is discussed below. Scenic resources include Murdock Farm, the rural entryways of Route 140 and Middle Winchendon Road, and the Water Tower Overlook. Because hills and water resources historically determined the sites of Winchendon's major settlements, the community's cultural and historic resources cluster on Mt. Pleasant (Old Centre) and in the Town Center where the Millers River broadens into Whitney Pond.

**Figure 3:
Special Landscape Features**

[Key to Map 2]	
<u>Geologic Features</u>	<u>Cultural, Historic, and Archeological Resources</u>
1. Mt Pleasant	13. Old Centre
2. Birch Hill	14. Militia Training Ground
3. King Philip's Rock	15. Militia Cemetery
	16. Spring Village
	17. Lake Dennison Recreational Area
<u>Hydrologic Features</u>	18. Veterans Park
4. Lake Monomonac	19. Toy Town Horse
5. Millers River and Watershed	20. Old Murdock
6. Whitney Pond	21. Town Hall
7. Hunt Pond	22. North Central Pathway
8. Stoddard Pond	23. North Central Pathway
	24. Converse Gardens
<u>Scenic Resources</u>	25. Benjamin Hill Trail
9. Murdock Farm	26. Poland School
10. Middle Winchendon Road	27. Medical Center
11. Route 140 Entryway	28. Winchendon School Hiking & Ski Trail
12. Water Tower	

Source: Community Forum June 10, 1999

C. Water Resources

[See Map 3: Water resources]

Winchendon lies in the watershed of the Millers River, which flows through the town on its way west into the Chicopee River, which in turn flows into the Connecticut River. The Millers River flows into Winchendon from Ashburnham in the east. The North Branch originates at Lake Monomonac, flows southwest through Winchendon Springs (formerly "Spring Village") and on to join the Millers River at Whitney Pond, just east of the Town Center. Due to this confluence, historic ponding for mills, and the subsequent railroad bed there is a complex of ponds in the Town Center area before the River continues on its meandering course westward. West of the Town Center Tarbell Brook flows into the River, having followed a course south from New Hampshire and through Bullardville. As the Millers River approaches Winchendon's southwest corner, it is joined by the Otter River which flows north from Templeton.

Winchendon is abundantly endowed with water resources including lakes, rivers, aquifers, and wetlands. The Millers River, Lake Monomonac, Lake Denison, Whitney Pond, and Stoddard Pond are among the major local water bodies. There is no formal public access to any of these resources other than to Lake Denison by way of the State Park facilities. Traditionally townspeople have enjoyed ice-skating on the portion of Whitney pond that lies south of the railroad bed, and through the courtesy of waterside landowners passage for ice racing has also been allowed. There is a lot of water that the community can enjoy looking at, but there is no place to swim, even at Lake Monomonac which is the largest water body in town. With success of continued efforts to mitigate pollution problems, the water quality of the Millers River and associated ponds will continue to improve, and townspeople will feel even more acutely the lack of public access to these natural resources.

Areas of high aquifer favorability have been determined in Winchendon, but as is explained below, these potential sources of drinking water have been judged to be of insufficient volume to replace the Town's surface source in Ashburnham.

Winchendon is enforcing the state wetlands regulations regarding replication by square footage, so as to achieve no net loss of wetlands. Generally, in fact, new wetlands are being created or regenerated as the result of water tables rising from rainfall and run-off from residential development. It is difficult to request reliable computation of increase in peak flows from applicants for individual house lots. This is one area of growth management that the Town is still working on.

[See Map 3A: Flood Plains]

As is shown by Map 3A, *Flood Plains*, areas prone to flooding are closely associated with the Millers River and its tributaries. Other than flood plains within the complex hydrologic system of Denison State Park, the width of flood plains tends to be relatively constrained by Winchendon's hilly topography. Townspeople report that recent experience with flooding has been limited to briefly flooded areas in the Town Center that result from unusually intense downpours of rain.

D. Vegetation

Winchendon's predominant vegetation is characterized by mixed hardwood-softwood forest. The forested areas are second growth stands because of agricultural and lumbering activities in the region. Where softwood stands are dominant, vegetation is primarily white and red pine. Many of these stands are the result of reforestation efforts on state-owned lands. The mixed stands include beech, oak, maple, white birch, white pine, spruce, and hemlock.

The streams and rivers often have sandy flats along their banks which support pine woods that are dominated by white pine with occasional red pine and red oak. Younger communities on these sites are generally composed of hardwood species such as aspen and birch. Occasionally hemlock, yellow birch, and beech are found in the flats which typify the original northern hardwood forest type found on these sites.

The upland areas of the region support coniferous species such as hemlock on the moist sites. On the drier sites hardwood communities dominate including oak, maple, and birch.

Understory vegetation includes rhododendron, mountain laurel, and high bush blueberry. In the Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area specifically, management practices have transformed the flora from mature stands of hardwood and pine to meadows, fields, and brush, greatly enhancing the diversity of wildlife populations.

Within town limits there is much tree cover, and the landscape is fairly evenly forested. The only marked trails through these woods, however, are the ones at Lake Dennison Recreation Area and the Winchendon Academy's cross country running and cross country ski trail. Although a private institution, the Academy allows the community to enjoy this trail.

There are two rare species occurrences in Winchendon of Bartram's Shadbush (*Amelanchier bartramiana*), which is listed as State Threatened. The two locations are not presently under

conservation protection. In a letter dated September 21, 1998, Cindy Campbell, Environmental Review Assistant of the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program notes:

The vegetation of Winchendon reflects the cool, wet conditions that prevail in northern Worcester County. The plant communities are typical of more northern areas than are found in much of Massachusetts. There are some very good examples of cool wetland communities including bogs, cold conifer forests, and mixed conifer hardwood forests. Targeting areas with good examples of these types of natural communities for protection will help maintain the biodiversity of the town and state.

Ms. Campbell also observes:

Management and monitoring of conservation lands become important as acquisition and protection are accomplished. All wetlands particularly need to maintain their natural hydrologic regime, including normal fluctuations and connections with the uplands and other wetlands. Water quantity and quality are ongoing issues for wetlands. We strongly recommend monitoring conservation land, and removing non-native species before they become a problem and impact native species.

Important reference materials available to the Town as preservation and management efforts proceed are the *Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas* and the *Estimated Habitats of Rare, State-listed Wetlands Wildlife and Certified Vernal Pools*.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Winchendon has a rich and diverse wildlife population. Many common mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and insects of central Massachusetts are found in the wooded areas and along the lakes, rivers, and streams. These include: beaver, muskrat, raccoon, kingfisher, deer, rabbit, grouse, woodcock, pheasant, and many species of duck and fish. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks the Millers River and other tributaries with salmon and trout. Birch Hill Management Area is intensively managed for the recreational enjoyment of wildlife including bird watching, nature studies, photography, hunting, and fishing. It is believed that the river, streams, and water bodies in Winchendon provide corridors for wildlife migrations.

In the above-referenced letter from Cindy Campbell of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program reported:

Two Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) heronries have been reported in Winchendon, one still active (it is not unusual for Great Blue Herons to abandon old heronries as conditions change). Great Blue Herons have been increasing in population and are not considered to be rare by the state, but as with all other migratory non-game birds, they

and their nests are protected. The town's wetlands also support what appears to be a good population of Wood turtles (*Clemmys insculpta*) (a state Species of Special Concern) and some Elderberry Long-horned beetles (*Desmocerus palliatus*) (also a Species of Special Concern). In the early 1990s a Northern Spring Salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*) was reported, but further intense searches failed to find additional individuals in Winchendon (this rare species is more likely to be found in less acidic waters than occur in Winchendon, so its absence is not surprising).

Overall, Ms. Campbell observes that:

Winchendon contains a great deal of appropriate native biodiversity within its varied topography and provides important habitat for many common species as well as the rare species discussed above. Vernal pools provide critical habitat for some specialized species, and indicate the likely existence of others (and since hundreds of vernal pools have been identified and certified in a nearby town, the entire area appears to be rich in this wetland habitat). Protecting additional area around estimated habitats is one way of improving wildlife populations: size and continuity of open space is particularly important for supporting wildlife populations. Preventing habitat fragmentation is vital in protecting the ecosystem.

The Conservation Commission reports two vernal pools located off Teel Road. They are protected through the Conservation Commission's authority and associated state and local regulations.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

1. Scenic landscapes. Winchendon is located in the Central Upland physiographic region of the Department of Environmental Management's inventory of scenic landscapes. That 1981 assessment identified no distinctive landscapes in Winchendon¹⁵.

At the June 10, 1998, Community Discussion townspeople identified numerous scenic landscape features as shown on Map 2: *Special Landscape Features*. These include the hydrologic features of Lake Monomac, Millers River and its watershed, Whitney Pond, Hunt Pond, and Stoddard Pond. Scenic resources that were identified include Murdock Farm, the Route 140 entryway, Middle Winchendon Road, and the Water Tower Overlook.

2. Major characteristic or unusual geologic features. Townspeople identify as most noteworthy geologic features Mt. Pleasant, Birch Hill, and King Philip's Rock. Mt. Pleasant and Birch Hill are the

¹⁵ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, *The Massachusetts Landscape Inventory*, 1981, Pub.# 16,666-270-25-5-91-C.R., pg. 118.

sites of Winchendon's two early settlements: Old Centre and New Boston. King Philip's Rock is unique because of its association with the area's pre-Columbian past.

3. Cultural, archeological, and historic areas. Cultural and historic resources include Old Centre, the Militia Training Ground, the Militia Cemetery, Spring Village, Denison State Park, Veterans Park, the Toy Town Visitors' Center, Old Murdock, Town Hall, Front Street, the North Central Pathway, Converse Gardens, the Medical Center Fireplace, Winchendon School Hiking and Ski Trail, Benjamin Hill Trail, and Poland School. While the former spring at Spring Village is known to have attracted native Americans with its healing properties, no specific archeological sites have been identified in Winchendon.

4. Areas of critical environmental concern. At present there are no known listed or proposed areas of critical environmental concern ("ACECs") in Winchendon.

G. Environmental Problems

1. *Hazardous waste sites.*^{16, 17} As of late July 1998 there are 27 sites in Winchendon where spills or other discharges of hazardous materials have been listed with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and are somewhere in the process of cleanup. The sites are scattered in the more developed parts of towns, and the substances involved are usually diesel fuel, #2 fuel oil, or other petroleum-based products. Winchendon's Fire Chief reports that no reports have been made for industrial plants that are still active in town. The White Mountain Freezer Plant did have a reported waste site, but the mitigation required by DEP was performed when the plant was sold.

As the first call agency, Winchendon's Fire Department gets involved with the issue of hazardous spills at the front end when the urgent need is to capture and contain the problem. Most of local fire fighters have had hazardous materials training to the first responder level and operational level. Some of the senior officers' training has gone on to the mitigation level, although they are not hazardous materials technicians. Recognizing their limitations as first responders, local fire fighters concentrate on isolating, protecting, evacuating, and containing. Then they call in support. The Winchendon Fire Department approaches local mitigation very proactively and immediately involves the district's "Haz. Mat." truck. The Department also has regional supervisory resources available through the Fire Marshall's Office.

¹⁶ Files of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Department of Environmental Protection Central Regional Office, August 1999, including *Standard Release Report* of 7/27/98.

¹⁷ Interview with Fire Chief Dennis M. Dowd, August 1999.

Standard local practice is to address hazardous release problems as they occur. Currently the Department is involved with three such mitigative actions that have to do with fire hazards. The Fire Chief is aware of no current problem that threatens a water resource.

2. *Landfills*. The Town's landfill was closed in 1999 in accordance with plans submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection. All requirements were strictly adhered to during the operational phase of the shut down preventing any environmental concerns. The landfill is closed and is not accepting any waste since that time. The Town's created a transfer station that became operational as of November 1, 1999. Mandatory recycling will commenced at that point.

3. *Erosion*¹⁸. The most frequent type of development in Winchendon is residential, and most of orders of conditions for individual house lots call for the addition of top soil, seeding, and mulching to immediately stabilize slopes in order to avoid erosion.

At present the particular erosion problem confronting Winchendon is the presence of open gravel pit areas that were not regrassed after removal of vegetation. The Town has adopted more stringent requirements in recent years as part of the gravel permit process, but policing of this situation is very difficult. A new bylaw has been adopted that would require owners of gravel pits to resod and regrass. The Town is defending this bylaw in court.

At present no water resource is particularly endangered by the threat of erosion. One gravel operation did enter the water table, and that matter has been taken to court.

4. *Chronic flooding*¹⁹. Winchendon is not troubled by chronic flooding as frequently as it is by seasonal high water tables that interfere with on-site septic disposal systems. Similarly, high water tables contribute to the inflow/infiltration problems being addressed by current improvements to the sewer system.

The Town Center is the area of Winchendon that has experienced the most problems relating to flooding. Periodically sewer surcharging occurs in the business area. Recently severe thunderstorms have precipitated serious but brief flooding in the downtown area. Materials have been washed into businesses and the cellars of residences. The pattern of these occurrences has been for water to overflow briefly, then be gone by the next day.

¹⁸ Interview with Robert Mackie, Conservation Agent, Winchendon Building Department, August 1999.

¹⁹ Interview with Steve Calishman, Town Sanitarian, August 1999.

The Town is enforcing the provision of the Massachusetts Wetlands Act that requires the replacement of flood plain volume to compensate for any loss created by building in the flood plain. Consequently, Winchendon is experiencing no new net loss of flood plain. Flood insurance regulations and reviews related to the sale of property add to the sensitivity to the problems created by building in flood plains.

5. *Sedimentation.* Avoiding sedimentation is one of the main considerations of the Conservation Commission during its review processes. Mitigation measures to avoid erosion and sedimentation are a regular component of orders of conditions.

6. *Development impact.*²⁰ New development in Winchendon is mainly residential, where the issue of on-site septic systems poses the largest potential cumulative impact upon natural resource systems. All the area's design engineers and sanitarians have embraced the new Title V regulation and work carefully to identify the height of the water table at each site. A lot of the land in Winchendon does perk despite a seasonably high water table. As a consequence the Town frequently sees the installation of septic systems that require a large amount of fill to allow construction: mounded systems of one to three feet. Land is relatively inexpensive in Winchendon, so developers are willing to put the extra money required into building these mounded septic systems. Winchendon is one of the few areas in the region where developers are building and selling starter homes for less than \$300,000.

One of the reasons land is relatively inexpensive in Winchendon is that so many "ANR" lots are still available. (See Section 3.D., *Growth and Development Patterns.*) As more residential development occurs along the edges of Winchendon's outlying roads, the community is experiences a steady loss of the town's rural scenic character.

7. *Ground and surface water pollution: point and non-point.*²¹ Long time industrial buildings are generally located in the downtown area where they are served by sewer. Winchendon's ground and surface water pollution problems arise from past residential construction. For a relatively small town with a relatively small population, Winchendon has seen a large number of septic system repairs resulting from the new Title V septic system inspections in conjunction with the selling of homes. Problems with septic system failure can be traced back about 15 years and result from the way things were done then. In many cases the high groundwater level was not correctly established. Other systems exhibit problems of inferior materials. Winchendon is getting this situation under control through the combination of I&I improvements and Title V enforcement for new construction and resale of houses. In addition, at the upper end of Woodlawn Ave and Oakland Street the neighborhood is willing to pay

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

for a sewer line extension to resolve failing and nonexistent systems. The Board of Health has requested DEP permission to tie this new line into the existing sewer system.

Winchendon received and managed a \$200,000 Betterment Program of low (5%) interest loans to assist property owners in resolving waste water problems on their properties²². The Town has specified its priority areas to be along the Millers River, and also the Maple Street/Route 202 area in Winchendon Springs. The Betterment Program was urgently needed, because these are problematic areas where remediation will be expensive, but where the local average income is low to moderate. Problems include some residential systems that discharge directly into the River and others that frequently fail due to being located in high water tables. The Board of Health is addressing these issue along with the Department of Environmental Protection, which has made an inspection of the area and stated by letter that the situation must be rectified immediately. Up to twenty septic systems can be brought up to standard through the Betterment Program as long as the property owner is income eligible. Property owners who do not avail themselves of the 5% loan program must go to a bank. The Town completed design specifications in 2002

Around Lake Monomonac there are difficulties with meeting the distance requirements between private wells and septic systems. It is very difficult to address these problems, because they arise from a long history of lots that are too small, difficult soils, and challenging topography. The Board of Health tries to be fair to all parties, and they have allowed local upgrade requirements (of septic systems being within 50 to 100 feet of a well) but only after having checked for a number of substances in the well to be sure that there are no negative impacts. Lake Monomonac itself has been minimally impacted by the nearby development. Since there is no public beach on the Lake, the water quality is not tested weekly, but periodic testing indicates good background quality.

²² Interview with Roy Gilbert, Director of Community Development, August 1998.

Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

This section provides information about Winchendon's current open space. The inventory matrix and maps include parks, forests, wildlife management areas, conservation lands, and significant other open space parcels drawn from data provided by the Town and the MassGIS.

Determination of each site's access, features/facilities and current use were based on observation of the Town.

The Open Space Matrix column headings are defined as follows:

- Site Name: Names of the open space site.
- Map/Lot #: Site location in accordance with the local maps and GIS.
- Size[Acres]: Gives the site's acreage or an approximation in cases of the non-park and playground parcels. One acre is 43,560 square feet or 1/640 of a square mile.
- Access: Indicates if the public can use the site via public transportation.
- Features/Facilities: Short description of the site's physical features
- Current Use: Current known use of the site

Definition of Open Space

In this plan, the term "open space" was defined as all parks, forests, trails, playgrounds, and fields of significant size owned and managed for recreation, agriculture or conservation uses.

Conservation Lands

Currently there are no lands under the control of the Conservation Commission.

Park and Recreation Lands

Park and Recreation parcels are generally located fairly close to the Town's center with the exception of the North Central Pathway. This is a recreational trail totaling 62.2 acres and runs 7.01 miles spanning the Town of Winchendon. Five additional parcels total 67.8 acres and offer a variety of recreational opportunities for the residents of Winchendon.

A. Protected Parcels

Figure 4: Town-Owned Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

Location	Map/ Lot #	Size [Acres]	Access	Features/Facilities	Current Use
N. Royalston Rd	1/39	16.55		Forested	Conservation
West Street	1/98	.122	West Street	Forested	Easement
Rear N. Ashburnham Rd.	3/6	65.00		Forested	Land-locked
Shady Glen Tr.	M17/1 3	.28		Forested. Next to White Pond near Ray Plastics	No designated use
Hall Rd.	8/38	3.3		Old Centre Burial Grounds.	Historical Society
New Boston Rd.	10/ 44&4 5	9.43	State Road	Forested	Undeveloped
Town Farm Rd	11/39	40.70	Town Farm Road	Forested	Undeveloped
Town Farm Rd.	11/99	50.00	Town Farm Road	Forested	Undeveloped
Happy Hollow Rd.	88/6	12.00		Forested	Undeveloped
Woodlawn Ave.	2D4/6	.29		Open field. Adjacent house lots	Undeveloped
Maple Pl.	3D1/4 0	.11		Trees. Adjacent house lots	Undeveloped
River St.	4C4/1 7	1.22		Forested	Undeveloped
River St.	4C4/3 0	.50	River St.	Forested	Undeveloped
River St.	4C4/4 8	.37	River St.	Forested	Undeveloped
Hale St.	4D4/1	1.65		Forested	Undeveloped
Rear Pearl St.	5A2/2 1	.98		Forested	Undeveloped
Pearl St.	5A2/2 4	1.89		Forested	Undeveloped
Rear School St.	5A2/ 109	.56		Forested	Undeveloped
Webster St.	5A3/ 185	6.02		Open area	Undeveloped

Grove St.	5B2/3 1	.12	Grove St.	Open space next to softball field. Adjacent house lots.	Municipal
Murdock Ave.	5B2/3 7	3.50	Murdock Ave.	Park	Soldiers Monument Park.
Pleasant St.	5B2/ 284	1.567	Pleasant St. & Front St.	Open field, some trees. Adjacent house lots, Library	
Front St.	5B2/ 321	.06	Front St.	Open field. Toy Horse. Adjacent bank building.	Town Horse
Central St.	5B3/1 9	.016		Forested.	No designated use
Off Elm St.	5B3/ 93& 94	.45		Forested.	Undeveloped
Off Elm St.	5B3/9 9	.03		Forested.	Undeveloped
Spring Pl.	5C3/3 2	.26		Forested.	Undeveloped
Spring St.	5C4/2 1	.36		Forested. Adjacent house lots.	Undeveloped
76 Hale St.	7A4/1 0	.07		Forested.	Undeveloped
290 Main St.	7A4/4 6	.282		Forested.	Undeveloped
Old Centre	8B3/5	1.49		Open green. Old Centre Church adjacent.	Parks & Playground
Old Centre	8B3/1 2	15.50		Open field surrounded by trees.	Municipal
Baldwinville Rd.	8B3/1 5			Open green.	Common
Lake Monomonac	M1/3	.73		Forested.	Undeveloped
Lakeview Dr.	M17/ 1 & 2	.43		Forested.	Undeveloped
Lakeview Dr.	M17/3	.289		Forested.	Undeveloped
Shady Glen Tr.	M17/ 10, 11, 12	.956		Forested.	Undeveloped
W. Shore Dr.	6/19	.17		Forested.	Undeveloped

Spring St.	6/73	28.40		Forested.	Undeveloped
N. Ashburnham Rd.	6/80	1.50		Forested.	Undeveloped
N. Ashburnham Rd.	6/82	37.10		Forested.	Undeveloped
New Boston Rd.	7/2	3.80		Forested.	Undeveloped
Brooks Rd.	4/8	.58	Brooks Rd.	Open field surrounded by trees. Adjacent house lots.	Undeveloped
Off River St.	4/26	13.30	Walking path	Open field surrounded by trees. Landfill adjacent	Undeveloped
River St.	4/27	23.80	Walking path	Open field surrounded by trees.	Undeveloped
Brooks Rd.	4/28	3.02	Walking path	Open field surrounded by trees.	Undeveloped
River St.	4/29	5.79	Walking path	Open field surrounded by trees.	Undeveloped
Total Acres:		354.542			

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 5:
State-Owned Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

Map/ Lot #	Size [Acres]	Access	Use Area
1/58	52.0	Brooks Rd.	Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area [BHWMA]
4/1	27.7	Through Parcel 1/58	BHWMA
4/2	95	River St.	BHWMA
4/3	64.6	Brooks Rd.	BHWMA
4/80	32.0	River St.	BHWMA
4/81	11.6	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/83 through 87	67.9	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/88	not avail.	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/92	6.9	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/94 through 97	34.14	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/98	8.0	Sibley Rd.	BHWMA
4/101	6.5	Sibley Rd.	BHWMA
4/102	84.8	Through Parcel 4/101	BHWMA
6/86	22.5	North Ashburnham Rd	BHWMA
7/4 through 8	12.63	New Boston Road	BHWMA

7/9 & 10	53.0	Sibley Road	BHWMA
7/12 & 13	66.9	Sibley Road	BHWMA
7/42 & 43	66.65	No access	BHWMA
7/44	28.0	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
7/47 & 48	55.75	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
7/50	95.97	Burgess Rd.	Otter River State Forest
7/61 through 63	23.01	Burgess Rd.	Otter River State Forest
7/72	16.8	Joe Alger Rd.	BHWMA
7/93	4.1	Baldwinville State Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/96	6.8	Baldwinville State Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/122	.17	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/266	1.353	No access	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
B4/5	9.1	Baldwinville State Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
9/23 through 25	72.9	Spring Street	State Wildlife Management Area
9/39	80	Spring Street	State Wildlife Management Area
10/3	2.78	No access	State Wildlife Management Area
10/22	121.9	Baldwinville State Rd.	Otter River State Forest
10/47	126.7	No access	Otter River State Forest
10/49 & 50	5.01	No access	Otter River State Forest
10/51	6.81	Baldwinville Rd.	Otter River State Forest
10/55	.690	Stoddard Rd.	Otter River State Forest
10/59 & 60	6.36	Baldwinville State Rd.	Otter River State Forest
11/52	53.5	Baldwinville State Rd.	Otter River State Forest
12/37	174.5	Mellen Rd.	Winchendon State Forest
13/1	2.3	Baldwinville Rd.	Otter River State Forest
M9/1	1.6	Glenallen St.	State Wildlife Management Area
5C-2/34 & 35	37.8	Benjamin St.	State Wildlife Management Area
5D-1/23	.2	Butler Rd.	State Wildlife Management Area

Total Acres:	1,646.293
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[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 6:
Federally Owned Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

Map/ Lot #	Size [Acres]	Access	Use Area
1/38	19.94	Royalston Rd. North	Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area [BHWMA]
1/70	.38	Royalston Rd.	BHWMA
1/71	.54	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
1/74	3.97	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/23	.670	River St.	BHWMA
4/30	5.29	River St.	BHWMA
4/31	13.81	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/34 & 35	17.71	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/36	22.73	Off Brown St.	BHWMA
4/56 through 58	12.59	River St.	BHWMA
4/60	4.9	River St.	BHWMA
4/62 & 63	21.15	River St.	BHWMA
4/64	9.14	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/65	1.78	River St.	BHWMA
4/66	10.28	No access	BHWMA
4/68	8/52	Off River St.	BHWMA
4/69	18.68	New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/70 & 71	8/27	River St.	BHWMA
4/90	2.3	Off New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/93	10	Off New Boston Rd.	BHWMA
4/103	175	Sibley Rd.	BHWMA
4/106	2.16	Sibley Rd.	BHWMA
4/107	9.16	Hale St.	BHWMA
5B-3/20	.52	Central St.	
5B-3/ 152	.28	Beech St.	
5C-3/ 145	.23	High St.	
7/1	11.74	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/3	5.5	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/14	50.18	No access	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/15	31	Dennison Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/16	22.16	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/19	22.69	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/38 & 39	89.64	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/40 & 41	60.33	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area

7/45 & 46	1.58	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/49	53.82	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/51	33.72	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/54	2.62	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/57 & through 59	39.93	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/60	1.31	New Boston Rd. & Burgess St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/64 through 71	91.72	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/73 through 76	91.53	Joe Alger Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/77	2.37	Dennison Lake Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/78 through 82	56.83	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/83	3.48	Royalston Rd. (South)	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/84	1.72	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/86	88.43	Main St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/87	6.76	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/88	28.46	Alger St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/89	3.98	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/90	51.9	Main St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/90	11.25	No access	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/92	3.63	Royalston Rd. (South)	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
7/95	40.4	Baldwinville State Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
9/42	1.275	Spring St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/1	210.3	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/2	.42	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/4	12.5	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/5	10.24	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/6	2.39	Goodnow Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/7 through 13	52.89	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/14	36.83	Dennisen Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/15 & 16	19.45	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/17 through 21	608.99	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/23	14.99	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/24	28.21	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/26 through 28	24.0	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/29	11.99	Flagg Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/30	16.64	No access	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/31 & 32	13.41	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/33	12.6	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/34 through 36	67.92	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/37	1.46	Royalston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/38	1.5	Templeton Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/39	13.3	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/42	3.09	No access	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/43	68.83	Royalston Line	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10/46	4.41	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area

10/48	3.50	Baldwinville Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10A-3/1 & 2	78.3	Dennison Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10A-4/1 & 2	30.52	Dennison Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10A-4/6	35.28	Dennison Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10B-3/1, 2 & 3	25.81	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10B-3/4 thru 11	2.01	Dennison Lake	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10B-3/12 thru 17	80.75	New Boston Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10B-4/6	.07	Alger St.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
10B-4/7	3.71	Baldwinville State Rd.	Lake Dennison Recreation Area
Total Acres:		2607.012	

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

B. Unprotected Parcels

The following figures list properties whose current use and appearance contribute to Winchendon's rural character and recreation opportunities, but whose uses or ownership could change according to the needs of their owners.

**Figure 7:
Other Public, Private and Non-Profit Properties
Of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

Property Owner	Map/ Lot #	Size [Acres]	Access	Natural Features	Current Use(s)	Zon -ing
Calvary Cemetery	5C-4/2	12.4	Glenallen St.	Hills Homes adjacent.	Cemetery	R-3
City of Gardner	12/59	18.54	Unpaved road	Forested	Undeveloped	R-1
City of Gardner	14/7	52.4	Unpaved road	Forested	Undeveloped	R-1

Clark Memorial	5B-3/ 46 & 47	16.744	Central St & Summer St.	Large level field Adjacent commercial (recently upgraded) (used by private and public schools) (plan to resurface 2 courts & add basketball courts	<u>Outside</u> Baseball field 2 soccer fields playground seasonal ice rink 4 unused tennis courts <u>Inside</u> gym, gymnastics, aerobics, basketball soccer swimming pool nautilus free weights	C-3
Eugene M. Connor American Legion	5A-2/ 4	10.9	Route 12	Large level field surrounded by woods Residential area	Softball field used by Little League <i>[parking?? other services??]</i>	R-3
New England Wildflower Assoc.	1/45	84.53	West St.	Fragile area of a variety of flora and fauna. Residential area	Open to public for hiking, but not strongly encouraged	R-1
St. Mary's Catholic Society	5B-2/ 73	2.0	Spruce & Summer Street	Grassy level field Adjacent residences & commercial garage	Church	C-3
Town of Templeton	13/ 212	.703	Otter River Rd.			R-1
Total Acres:		515.954				

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 8:
Parcels Under Chapter 61**

Property Owner	Map/#	Size [Acres]	Access	Natural Features	Zon- ing
Galat, Edmund & Jane	11/38	55.90	Mellen Rd.	Forested	R-1
Hokkanen, Lauri	11/98	42.00	Town Farm Rd.	Cleared for power lines. Perimeter heavily wooded	R-1
Hollingsworth, Schuyler	6/7	242.51	Tolman Rd & Access Rd.	Forested. Lake on lot. Small clearing for gravel pit.	R-1
Hunt, James (Estate of)	8/33	5.40	Hall Rd.		R-3
Jacobs, Sandra	2/10	27.00	Landlocked on Mass. side near Robbin Rd.	Forested.	I
Hunt, James (Estate of)	9/2	23.00			R-3
Klockars, William & June	8/48	42.00	Teel Rd & Cummings Rd.	Perimeter is wooded. New lots eastern portion. Wetlands on southeast and south central lot.	R-2
Parker, Rayford	11/14	27.00	Joslin Rd.	Forested	R-1
Parker, Rayford	11/17	87.50	Baldwinville Rd.	Forested Some wetlands	R-1
Parker, Rayford	11/21	5.00	Baldwinville Rd.	Forested	R-1
Parker, Rayford	11/152	7.19	Landlocked	Forested	R-1
Shaw, Walter & Victoria	6/64	80.90	Landlocked	Forested	R-1
St. Pierre, Roland & Elaine	11/95	13.477	Town Farm Road	Cleared for power lines. Perimeter forested	R-1
St. Pierre, Roland & Elaine	13/29	41.39	Town Farm Rd. & Mill Glenn Rd.	Forested	R-1
Thompson, Donald	8/71 & 72	31.13	Alger St.	Forested	R-2 & R-3
Thompson, Donald	8/73	21.52	Alger St.	Forested	R-1 & R-3
Boucher, Richard & Janet	1/44	48.76	Royalston Rd. North & Bosworth Road	Forested	R-1

Brown, Byron & Ruth	1/52	34.82	Royalston Rd. North & Bosworth Road	Forested	R-1
Finch, Henry & Helen	2/6	19.75	Robbins Rd.	Forested	I
Galat, Edmund & Jane	8/55	56.20	Landlocked	Forested	R-2
Desmarais, Harvey & Helen	1/2	55.70	Bosworth Rd.	Forested with natural clearings. Small areas of wetlands	R-1
Desmarais, Harvey & Helen	1/ 53 & 54	53.02	Bosworth Rd.	Forested	R-1
Desmarais, Harvey & Helen	1/56	124.00	Royalston Rd North	Forested. Small areas of wetlands	R-1
White, Shirley	2/38	38.98	Elmwood & Forrestal Rds.	Meadow. Partially cleared for farming -- used by Murdock Farm	R-2 & R-3
Beals, Philip	12/14	52.60	Teel Rd.	Forested	C-1 & R-3
Beals, Philip	12/ 56 & 57	118.3	Teel Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	12/58	19.52	Teel Rd.	Forested	R-1 & R-3
Beals, Philip	3/7	388.0	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/10	22.00	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/18	26.00	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/33	36.60	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/79	22.50	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/85	91.50	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	6/88	199.30	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1

Beals, Philip	6/90	.20	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	9/26	210.48	No. Ashburnham Rd.	Forested	R-1
Beals, Philip	12/4	88.90	Raymond Rd.	Forested. Small portion wetlands	R-2
Beals, Philip	12/13	13.30	Gardner Rd.	Forested	C-1 & R-2
Beals, Philip	5D-4/ 7	87.00	Hall Rd.		R-3
Beals, Philip	8A-3/ 8	68.50	Hall Rd.	Forested. Small pond/marsh	R-3
Bingham, David & Donald	8A-1/ 15	24.86	Landlocked	Forested	R-3
Hill, John	13/28	40.10	Russell Farm & Mill Glenn Roads	Forested. Large wetlands south side of lot.	R-1
Hill, John	3A-1/ 1	55.16	Crosby Rd. (landlocked on Mass side)	Forested	R-2
Nineteenth Hill Forest, Inc.	8/91	60.0	Old County Rd.	Forested Small stream runs southeast to northwest.	R-2
Nineteenth Hill Forest, Inc.	9/74	489.75	Teel Road	Forested with small natural clearing. Small brook runs through lot.	R-2
Nineteenth Hill Forest, Inc.	1/1	223.00	Bosworth Rd.	Forested with small natural clearings. Small areas of wetlands	R-1
Amann, Laila Ellen	13/32	23.721	Russell Farm Rd.	Cleared for meadow. Small house on lot. Potential for farming.	R-1
Belletete, Andre P.	2/28	144.36	Forristal Rd.	Forested	R-2
Mroz, Ann G.	12/29	115.00	Gardner & Raymond Roads	Significant wetlands. Forested with small natural clearing east portion.	R-1
White, Joseph (Estate of)	2/32	15.00	Crosby Rd.	Forested	R-2
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3/3	109.00		Forested	R-1
White, Joseph (Estate of)	6/1	82.00	Rear Glenallen St.	Forested	R-1
White, Joseph (Estate of)	6/65	61.00	Landlocked (Rear N. Ashburnham Rd.)	Forested. Small wetland	R-1
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3A-1/9	60.41	Landlocked (Near Forristall Rd.)	Forested	R-2

White, Joseph (Estate of)	3B-1/ 4	7.62	Crosby Rd.	Forested	R-2
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3B01/ 5	2.87	Crosby Rd.	Forested	R-2
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3B-1/ 7	43.50	Crosby Rd.	Forested	R-2
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3C-1/ 1	25.15	Landlocked (Near Elmwood Rd.)	Forested. Small portion of wetland.	R-2
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3C-1/ 2	40.75	Elmwood Rd.	Forested. Small portion of wetland.	R-3
White, Joseph (Estate of)	3D-1/ 1	64.00	Elmwood Rd.	Forested. Small portion of wetland.	R-3
White, Joseph Boston Safe	3B-1/6	2.50	Rear Elmwood Rd.	Forested	R-3
White, Joseph Boston Safe	3B-1/ 8	76.98	Glenallen St.	Forested	R-2
White, Joseph Boston Safe	3C-1/ 3	5.00	Landlocked (Rear Elmwood Road)	Forested	R-2 & R-3
White, Joseph Boston Safe	3C-1/ 4	30.844		Forested	R-2 & R-3
Kostick, Glenn	2/15	74.050	Landlocked on Mass. side (Rear Lincoln Avenue)	Forested	I
Kostick, Glenn	2/12	83.440	Landlocked (Rear Robbins Rd.)	Forested. Small portions of wetlands.	I
Kostick, Glenn	2/65	42.590	Lincoln Ave.	Forested. Small portions of wetlands.	I
Kostick, Glenn	2/74	1.180	Lincoln Ave.	Forested	I
Pearson, Joanne	7/118	12.349	Baldwinville State Rd.	Forested	C-2 & R-3
Murphy, Herbert & Jane	8/12	75.30	Doyle Ave, Hitchcock Ave. & Hale St.	Forested. Small portion of wetland.	R-2
Jonas Damon Realty	1/25	6.73	School St.	Forested	I
Jonas Damon Realty	2/1	147.70	Robbins Rd.	Forested	I
Jonas Damon Realty	2/93	7.14	School St.	Forested with street side cleared	I
Harris, Warren	11/41	90.0	Town Farm Rd.	Forested	R-1

Harris, Warren	13/75	103.0	Mill Glenn Rd.	Forested with numerous wetlands	R-1
Harris, Warren	13/43	1.366	Russell Farm Rd.	Forested	R-1
Harris, Warren	13/ 44 & 60	110.83	Russell Farm Rd. & Otter River Rd.	Forested	R-1
Total Acres:		5,187.097			

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 9:
Parcels Under Chapter 61A**

Property Owner	Map/#	Size [Acres]	Access	Natural Features	Zon- ing
Bibeau, Steven	2/33A	14.21	Crosby Rd.	Meadow, mostly cleared for farming. Surrounded by forest	R-2
Bibeau, Steven	2/147A	15.518	Crosby Rd.	Small house. Cleared farm fields. Surrounded by forest	R-2
Bibeau, Steven	2/155A	6.108	Forrestall & Crosby Rds.	Forested	R-2
Cook, Ann Marie	10A-4/ 10	.50	Rice & Alger Rds.	Forested.	R-3
Doody, Henry L.	8/67A	3.50	Hitchcock & Joslin Roads	Active farmland. Perimeter heavily wooded	R-2
Doody, Henry L.	8/68A	68.00	Hitchcock & Joslin Roads	Forested	R-3
Fincke, Ellen Jean	8/47A	67.30	Cummings & Old County Roads	Forested with small portion of wetland	R-2
Girouard, Kenneth, Raymond & Francis	2/2A	4.211	Forristall Rd.	Dairy Farm	R-2
Girouard, Kenneth, Raymond & Francis	2/48A	35.30		Dairy Farm	R-2
Girouard, Kenneth, Raymond & Francis	2D-4/ 2	177.88	Elmwood Rd.	Dairy Farm	R-3
Girouard, Kenneth, Raymond & Francis	3B-1/ 1	5.133	Landlocked (Off Elmwood Rd)	Dairy Farm	R-2
Jaarsma, Charles	4/19A	20.229	Brooks Rd.	Meadow, heavy brush, small trees. Potential for farming	R-1
Jaarsma, Charles	4/22A	10.827	River St. & Brooks Rd.	Meadow. Potential for farming.	R-1
Jaarsma, Charles	4/24A	9.50	Trotting Park Rd. & River St.	Forested. Abuts landfill	R-1
Jaarsma, Charles	4/73A	6.25	River St.	Partially cleared. Surrounded by forest.	R-1
Whitaker, David	8/34	7.00			R-3
Whitaker, David	8/156	2.273			R-3
Blasco, Maureen, Gamble, Chaless	4/ 6A	13.73	River St. & Brooks Rd.	Partially cleared. Potential for farming Small house & barn. Surrounded by forest.	R-1

Blasco, Maureen, Gamble, Chaless	4/77A	28.00	River St.	Partially cleared Surrounded by forest.	R-1
Desmarais, Harvey & Helen	1/53A	2.10	Bosworth Rd.	Forested	R-1
Desmarais, Harvey & Helen	1/54A	12.60	Bosworth Rd.	Forest with small natural clearing. Small wetland.	R-1
Whitaker, Raymond & Phyllis	5A-1/ 36	89.0	Kemp St.		R-3
White, Shirley	2/37	34.0	Elmwood & Forrestal R.	Farmhouse southwest corner of lot. Mostly cleared for potential farmland. Surrounded by forest	R-3 & R-3
Tarleton, Charles	12/54	67.90	Gardner Rd.		R-1
Smith, David	13/18A	42.50	Otter River Rd.	2 active farms: Smith Cheese Farm & Otter River Farming	R-1
Pinaeult, Kimberly	7/17	15.88			R-1
Galat, David	11/35A	53.60	Mellen Rd.	Farmland & pasture. Farmhouse. Large portion ponds & wetlands. Surrounded by forest.	R-1
Byrne, James & Robert	1/10A	71.00	Harris Rd.	Meadow. Potential for farming. Site of historic farm. Surrounded by forest.	R-1
Breault, Joseph	11/31A	83.18	Town Farm Rd.	Forested	R-2
Jonas Damon Realty	1/9A	8.16	Harris Rd. & West St.	Forested. Small wetlands	R-1
Total Acres:		975.389			

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 10:
Parcels Under Chapter 61B**

Property Owner	Map/#	Size [Acres]	Access	Natural Features	Zon- ing
The Winchendon School	5C-3/ 101B	26.70	From all sides	Private school and public 18-hole golf course	R-4
The Winchendon School	5C-4/ 17B	106.10	Hall Road	Private school and golf course	R-3
The Winchendon School	5D-4/ 9B	12.80	Ash St.	Private school and golf course	R-3
Harding, Wayne & Mary	8/32B	19.594	Old County & Teel Roads	Field surrounded by woods. Potential for farming	R-2
Sibley, Valorie	6/15B	8.73			R-1
Total Acres:		173.924			

[Source: Assessors Records and Field Survey]

**Figure 11:
Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest,
Summary of Acres by Category**

Inventory Category	Acreege	Percent of Total Inventoried Acres
Town-Owned	354.542	3.1
State-Owned	1,646.293	14.3
Federally-Owned	2,607.012	22.7
Other Public, Private, & Non-Profit Properties	515.954	4.5
Chapter 61 Parcels	5,187.097	45.3
Chapter 61A Parcels	975.389	8.5
Chapter 61B Parcels	<u>173.924</u>	1.5
Total	11,460.211	

C. Implications

Slightly less than 16% of Winchendon's land mass is conserved through State or Federal ownership. As Figure 11 shows, State and Federal holdings comprise almost 36% of the acres included in the inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest. The Federal lands and the great majority of the State lands are focused at the western edge of town around the Lake Dennison Recreation Area and the Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area. The remaining State holdings are found in three pockets along the Millers River. The Town's holdings comprise only 2.76% of land in Winchendon, or 6.3% of inventoried acres.

It is startling to realize that fully 23.28% of the lands in Winchendon (53.4% of inventoried acres) are classified as Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B. As Map 4 shows, these "Chapter" lands are distributed in large blocks throughout Winchendon and comprise much of the open fields and green forests that townspeople associate with our rural environment. As property owners' needs change, and as the market for developable land strengthens, townspeople must be aware that large blocks of forests and fields could be placed on the market for development. In fact, some of these lands lie in areas that the town has planned for industrial or suburban residential development. There may be other lands that the community wishes to maintain as open space and/or recreational sites. If they are "Chapter" lands, there would be a window of opportunity for the Town to exercise its first option to purchase property being removed from Chapter status. This window is brief, however, so the community needs to be clear about its priorities for acquisition of open lands and to be ready to move quickly when opportunities arise.

The majority of recreational facilities enjoyed by townspeople are made available through Clark Memorial, the American Legion, and the Winchendon School. The generosity of these members of the community has enabled the Town of Winchendon to offer very limited recreation facilities on municipal land.

Section 6: Community Goals

A. Description of Process

The *1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan* project began with the Project Committee reviewing the goals and objectives of the 1987 Plan. While the Committee found that progress had been made on a number of the objectives and others needed adjustment to take into account new information, Committee members felt that the overall goals still reflected townspeople's general desires. It was agreed that one of the key items on the agenda of the June 10 Community Forum should be to provide townspeople with the opportunity to review and discuss the general goals from the 1987 Plan, so that these members of the community could confirm them, suggest refinements, and/or add new goals to the list.

At the June 10 Community Forum approximately 25 residents reviewed the draft community goals, confirmed that they are still on target, and made suggestions regarding ways to achieve the goals. The following is a statement of the Community Goals that were confirmed at the June 10 Community Forum. The Community Forum's recommendations regarding ways to achieve the goals are reflected in Section 8 (Goals and Objectives) and Section 9 (Action Plan).

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

After considering the characteristics and resources that make Winchendon a desirable place to live, work, and visit, and after discussing what we want Winchendon to be like in the future, the community of Winchendon wishes to accomplish the following overarching goals through our planning and actions relating to open space and recreation.

Goal One

Water resources have always been a major reason people have come to Winchendon. In precolonial times people came to fish, camp near drinking water, and to seek out the healing Yellow Spring. Later settlers also relied on water to drink, irrigate crops, provide fish, and meet household needs. Then the potential for water power spawned a flourishing industrial base that reshaped the community. Now the scenic qualities of our water resources contribute to our quality of life and will be critical to a revitalized tourist base. Many households in town still rely on tapping clean groundwater with private wells.

For all these reasons, a major goal of our open space and recreation planning is to continue to protect the quality and quantity of water resources, and to increase where appropriate the public's ability to gain access to and enjoy these resources. Specific areas of concern include:

- the quality of surface and subsurface resources for both enjoyment and drinking water
- wetlands
- increased recreation potential
- regulation of inappropriate land uses to avoid or mitigate loss of water quality.

Goal Two

Being a town comprised predominantly of mill villages clustered around streams and rivers, Winchendon has been able to take for granted the surrounding forested hills, open fields, and scenic views. With the bursts of suburban development in the both the 1980s and 1990s, townspeople have begun to realize that open space resources can indeed be lost to development.

A second major goal of the community is to conserve open space resources, increase townspeople's and visitors' access to and enjoyment of them, and to connect them with recreation facilities. Specific areas of concern include:

- preservation of open spaces that especially contribute to Winchendon's character as a scenic, historic town
- developing a linked system of open spaces and recreation, integrating activities where appropriate
- preserving wildlife habitats and rare plant habitats

Goal Three

Winchendon is a small New England town with a traditional form of government that relies on citizen volunteer officials. While the Town has in recent years increased the level of support staff, nevertheless townspeople are concerned about how the Town can manage and administer the implementation of their open space and recreation goals. In recent years Town Meeting has adopted a number of provisions for local regulations aimed to protect key resources, but whether and how to improve the Town's capacity for growth management is also a matter of concern.

Thus a third major goal addresses the improvement of Town programs and capacities. Issues to address include:

- maintain and improve municipal recreation facilities
- funding sources and alternative, low-cost means for protection of environmentally sensitive areas
- expanding the scope of Town recreational programs, facilities, and personnel

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

- Winchendon's most pressing concern relating to the protection of natural resources is continued efforts to protect and improve the water quality and quantity. This will involve a continued effort to resolve the problem of substandard or non-existent on-site septic disposal systems, with first priority going to areas in closest proximity to the Millers River, Lake Monomonac, and Whitney Pond. Next priority should be given to areas of failed or non-existent on-site septic disposal systems affecting other major water bodies in town.
- Closely related to this need is the continued effort to improve sewer and water systems as needed to avoid pollution into surface and ground water resources. Over time the community needs to work to extend the systems as needed to mitigate problems in other resource areas.
- A third set of efforts relating to water quality are those to prevent the release of hazardous wastes and to deal promptly and effectively with releases that occur.
- Protection and improvement of water quality and quantity will also contribute in the longer term toward the conservation of wildlife habitat and ecosystems.
- The Town also needs to continue our efforts to achieve revegetation of former sand and gravel operations. Using the regulations already in effect, Town officials can specify and enforce extraction permit requirements for protection of natural resources during sand and gravel operations and revegetation as operations are completed.

B. Summary of Community's Needs

- Completing plans and implementation of the North Central Pathway leads the Town's list of projects to meet the community's recreation needs. The Pathway will open the way for regional access to Winchendon's scenic resources, provide a major new recreation amenity for townspeople, and can spark an effort to extend a system of marked paths throughout the community.

- Gaining public access to water resources is a major need of the community, one which will take years to accomplish. That access needs to be designed so as to avoid detracting from the quality and appearance of the resources. The Town will need to consider adequate parking, restroom facilities, sitting areas, and other services and amenities appropriate to each site. Townspeople put special priority on creating a town beach. A system of marked and maintained trails should be part of the access to water resources.
- Facilities for active recreation as needed to augment the facilities currently available and to keep pace with the growing population. There is need for a combination of recreation opportunities and programs for families with children and for seniors, beginning with improvements to what we already have. Especially pressing is the need for teens to have opportunities for active recreation other than organized sports, for example paved areas for biking, skate boarding, and roller blading.
- A Senior Center will be needed to serve the community's growing population of seniors. This would need to meet the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, be large enough to hold a meeting of 100 people, and have cooking and food service facilities. Air conditioning would be highly desirable. The Center would be a place for seniors to go daily for socializing and companionship. There is a desire to develop a centrally located walking track which seniors could use for exercising. If it were large enough, others in the community could enjoy it, too. Such a facility needs to be well graded and well designed with a cushioned base similar to the track at the new school.
- Installing and maintaining benches and other amenities along Central Street and in shopping centers would allow townspeople to rest and enjoy the activity.
- Section 5's inventory shows how vulnerable to change is the rural landscape that we take for granted. There is a pressing need to prioritize lands for acquisition for recreation and conservation purposes, and for rural landscape preservation. Since the community cannot afford to buy all property that may be of particular concern, the effort needs to consider other strategies such as scenic easements and acquisition of development rights.

How do our recreation needs compare with the region's? The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs spearheads the state's consideration of open space and outdoor recreation needs, policies, and programs. A major planning tool is the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation

Plan, called the SCORP. The most recent SCORP was published for the years 1988 - 1992²³. As summarized on pages 96 and 97 of that document, one of the highest priorities for Central Massachusetts was the need for an increased emphasis upon water-based recreation facilities, specifically boating and swimming. This certainly is consistent with Winchendon's high priority on gaining public access to local water resources. Residents would like to have a town beach, and also to at least be able to boat on Lake Monomonac. The SCORP describes that people in our region are dissatisfied with the travel time required to reach resource-based activities such as hiking, camping, and picnicking. Here in Winchendon we are fortunate to have the Otter River State Forest and Lake Dennison Recreational Area so close by, but residents would still like to have more trails linking our residential areas to our local scenic areas. Central Massachusetts residents reported to the SCORP very high levels of dissatisfaction with cross-country skiing. In Winchendon we are fortunate that the Winchendon Academy makes its trail available to the community, so local residents do not report a need for more cross country ski trails at this time. Similarly, the SCORP notes a regional deficit in golf courses, but our community enjoys the Academy's course.

C. Management Needs, Potential Changes of Use in Resource Areas.

In recent years Winchendon has added good Town bylaws and zoning provisions, but there is a need for the community to step back and consider the whole packet of growth management and resource protection regulations. A good first step will be the Town's participation in the 1998 - 1999 Montachusett Regional Growth Management Plan project. This regional effort, along with the 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* and 2001 Master Plan for Winchendon will together serve as guides for future growth.

The Town also needs to consider how to gain more effective administration and enforcement of the regulations that we already have. The boards responsible for land use management will need more staff to assist them as the town continues to grow and as development pressures increase. Without adequate enforcement, Winchendon will suffer the loss of natural and cultural resources during the development process.

Winchendon is fortunate to enjoy the recreational programs and facilities of Clark Memorial. There are also volunteer-run sports leagues who provide organized sports. There is, however, a need for a board or commission who formally represents the Town to assist with cooperation and communication among the groups active in recreation, some of whom rely on the use of Town property and facilities. Such a

²³ EOE, *For Our Common Good: 1988-1992*, Boston, 1988.

group could lead the planning, management, and oversight of possibilities for conservation and recreation properties.

Section 8: Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Continue to protect the quality and quantity of the Town's water resources.

Objectives from the 1987 Plan that have been accomplished:

To continue to identify and evaluate potential groundwater aquifers.

To identify areas favorable for high yield well development.

Adoption of the Aquifer Protection Overlay District in Zoning Bylaw

Objectives:

1. Continue to improve existing water quality of lakes and ponds through such strategies as upgrading or replacing failed septic systems, expansion of the sewer system, and incorporating this objective into municipal and regional plans.
2. Continue to work with the Town of Ashburnham to protect the quality of shared surface water resources.
3. Continue to protect the quality and quantity of the Town's wetland resources by continuing to improve enforcement of regulations that pertain to wetlands.

Goal #2: Enhance the recreational potential of the Town's water resources, including Lake Monomonac, Whitney Pond, and the Millers River.

Objectives:

1. Provide public access to major water bodies in town.
2. Identify and target future land acquisitions or easements to accomplish this goal.
3. Develop and maintain recreational improvements, such as a Town beach, the North Central Pathway, and a landing at the Jamison parcels.

Goal #3: Preserve wildlife habitats and natural resources, including rare plant habitats.

Objectives:

1. Examine the implications of the large acreage of lands in Winchendon that are classified under the agricultural and forestry property tax programs, and consider the community's options relating to these parcels in the context of the Town's open space and recreation goals.
2. Promote and institute land management practices to protect rare species and encourage a diversity and abundance of plant and animal populations.
3. Educate the community to increase awareness of the value of these natural resources.
4. Investigate funding sources and alternative, low-cost means for protection of environmentally sensitive zones.

Goal #4: Preserve open space throughout the Town which protects and enhances the visual quality and historic character of the Town.

Objectives:

1. Pursue this goal through a comprehensive plan for the Town and through regional planning efforts.
2. Continue to support Town growth management policies which protect open space, including cluster zoning, planned development, and historic districts.
3. Identify necessary maintenance and site improvements as appropriate to enhance the visual quality of existing Town open space, such as the Town Commons or Militia Training Field.
4. Identify any key parcels for future acquisition to preserve visual quality.
5. Educate the community to increase their understanding of the value of historic preservation.

Goal #5: Develop a linked system of open space and recreation facilities.

Objectives from the 1987 Plan that have been accomplished:

To investigate the feasibility of connecting the abandoned railroad beds into a multiple use trail system.

If deemed feasible, to pursue donation or acquisition of the abandoned railroad beds.

Objectives:

1. Identify potential land acquisitions that serve as trail linkages, including connecting routes to New Hampshire, Templeton, Ashburnham and Gardner.
2. Identify and implement non-acquisition means of linkage such as conservation easements.
3. Establish a trail system on Town land, possibly through a youth summer work program.
4. Educate the community in regard to the availability, location, and appropriate use of natural resource areas.
5. Design and construct North Central Parkway.

Goal #6: Improve and expand the scope of recreational facilities and programs for all Winchendon residents.

Objectives from the 1987 Plan that has been accomplished:

Work with the Clark Memorial to coordinate recreational facilities and programs and minimize duplication.

Upgrading playground facilities at Clark Memorial and Memorial School as part of a neighborhood playground system.

Two new softball fields at Old Murdock as part of expanding athletic fields.

Objectives:

1. Secure local support for a more active role for Town government in the provision of recreational activities by creating a Town Recreation Commission with an operating budget.
2. Develop a park for teen skateboarding, inline skating, and non-motorized biking.
3. Continue efforts to gain Town support of the Clark Memorial through local appropriations or through other resources.
4. Continue to work with the Clark Memorial to improve existing recreational facilities.
5. Continue to develop a neighborhood playground system to improve availability and access for users, especially children.
6. Continue to expand the availability of athletic fields and other facilities, including a fitness course, while keeping maintenance within a limited budget.
7. Continue to reassess needs of residents (including elderly persons and persons with handicaps) for additional activities, and develop specific programs to meet these needs.

8. Mobilize community efforts on specific recreation projects, and keep efforts and results highly visible.
9. Identify funding sources for developing recreational facilities.
10. Monitor the increasing needs of seniors for an organized center, and consider options for meeting these needs.

Goal #7: Integrate recreation and conservation activities as appropriate.

Objectives:

1. Evaluate Town open space in order to develop management plans which ensure natural resource protection while enhancing recreational access for purposes such as swimming and hiking.
2. Develop long-range maintenance and funding programs.

Section 9: Five-Year Action Plan

[See Map 5: Action Plan]

Goal #1: Continue to protect the quality and quantity of the Town's water resources.

Objective 1.1: Continue to improve existing water quality of lakes and ponds through such strategies as upgrading or replacing failed septic systems, expansion of the sewer system, and incorporating this objective into municipal and regional plans.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Extend sewer to serve Maple Street, Elmwood Road and Glenallen Street.	Board of Health	<u>Year 1</u> : Start plans [After Year 5:] Implement when treatment plant upgrade is complete
Incorporate objective into Regional Growth Management Plan.	Office of Community Development & Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Start <u>Year 2</u> : Complete
Incorporate into Town's Master Plan	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Start <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Objective 1.2: Continue to work with the Town of Ashburnham to protect the quality of shared surface water resources.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Complete negotiations & planning for new Water Filtration Facility	Board of Selectmen as Water Commissioners	[Under way] <u>Year 3</u> : Complete
Support Ashburnham's efforts to protect the watershed the water source	Board of Selectmen as Water Commissioners	[On going]

Objective 1.3: Continue to protect the quality and quantity of the Town's wetland resources by continuing to improve enforcement of regulations that pertain to wetlands.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Evaluate options & choose regulations that will protect wetlands better during the development process.	Conservation Commission & Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Start process <u>Year 3</u> : Report findings.
Consider costs and advantages of hiring support staff for better enforcement of regulations.	Conservation Commission & Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 2</u> : Start process <u>Year 4</u> : Act on findings.

Goal #2: Enhance the recreational potential of the Town's water resources, including Lake Monomonac, Whitney Pond, and the Millers River.

Objective 2.1: Provide public access to major water bodies in town.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
[See following objective]		

Objective 2.2: Identify and target future land acquisitions or easements to accomplish this goal.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Inventory promising parcels and talk with owners about easements, donations, use of friendly eminent domain proceedings.	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 2</u> : Complete inventory, begin conversations with owners.
Acquire properties that will meet this need.	Board of Selectmen	[On-going]
Acquire public access for boating on Lake Monomonac.	Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin inquiries <u>Year 4</u> : Complete acquisition of property or easement.

Objective 2.3: Develop and maintain recreational improvements, such as a Town beach, the North Central Pathway, and a landing at the Jamison parcels.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Complete North Central Pathway	Winchendon's Pathway Coordinator	[Under way] <u>Year 3</u> : Complete
Achieve a boat ramp onto the Miller's River/Whitney Pond at the Jamison parcels.	Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 1</u> : Start <u>Year 4</u> : Complete

Goal #3: Preserve wildlife habitats and natural resources, including rare plant habitats.

Objective 3.1: Examine the implications of the large acreage of lands in Winchendon that are classified under the agricultural and forestry property tax programs, and consider the community's options relating to these parcels in the context of the Town's open space and recreation goals.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Establish a Working Group to evaluate properties.	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 2</u>

Objective 3.2: Promote and institute land management practices to protect rare species and encourage a diversity and abundance of plant and animal populations.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
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Hold a joint meeting of the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission to discuss how to advance this objective.	Conservation Commission and Planning Board	<u>Year 2</u>
Incorporate this objective into the Town's Master Plan	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Objective 3.3: Educate the community to increase awareness of the value of these natural resources.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into Schools' curricula.	School Department	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process <u>Year 5</u> : Complete
Disseminate materials through sports clubs.	[Ask Snow Bound Club]	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process <u>Year 5</u> : Complete
Incorporate into self-guided walks along North Central Pathway.	Winchendon's Pathway Coordinator	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process <u>Year 5</u> : Complete

Objective 3.4: Investigate funding sources and alternative, low-cost means for protection of environmentally sensitive zones.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Seek funding from Department of Environmental Management to start implementing this plan.	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin [On-going]

Goal #4: Preserve open space throughout the Town which protects and enhances the visual quality and historic character of the Town.

Objective 4.1: Pursue this goal through a Master Plan for the Town and through regional planning efforts.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate this goal into the Regional Growth Management Plan.	Director of Community Development & Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u>
Incorporate this goal into a Master Plan for the Town.	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Objective 4.2: Continue to support Town growth management policies which protect open space, including cluster zoning, planned development, and historic districts.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate this goal into a Master Plan for the Town.	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete
Examine the costs and benefits of hiring paid staff to support the Town's planning and administration.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Report findings & recommendations to Town.
Initiate & carry out a regular program of training for members of Town boards so they can increase the effectiveness of administration relating to the laws the Town already has. Start with the modules of the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative.	Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process [On-going]
Increase communication and cooperation among Town boards. Make the Vice Chairman of each board responsible for exchanging minutes & coordinating with other boards.	Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process [On-going]

Objective 4.3: Identify necessary maintenance and site improvements as appropriate to enhance the visual quality of existing Town open space, such as the Town Commons or Militia Training Field.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
With funding through sponsorship by local businesses, work with the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce to produce and distribute a new town map showing key sites and amenities.	Members of the Chamber of Commerce	<u>Year 1</u> : Start process <u>Year 2</u> : Begin distribution.
Create and install a system of directional signs and site identification signs.	Director of Community Development.	<u>Year 2</u> : Start process <u>Year 4</u> : Complete installation

Objective 4.4: Identify any key parcels for future acquisition to preserve visual quality.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate this objective into the inventory and followup initiated for Objective 2.2, above.	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 2</u> : Complete inventory, begin conversations with owners.
Acquire properties or easements that will meet this need.	Board of Selectmen	[On-going]

Objective 4.5: Educate the community to increase their understanding of the value of historic preservation.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Include historic properties in the new town map sought through Objective 4.3, above.	Historical Society.	<u>Year 1</u> : Start process <u>Year 2</u> : Begin distribution.
Incorporate consideration of historic resources into the Town's Master Plan.	Planning Board & Historical Society	<u>Year 1</u> : Start process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Goal #5: Develop a linked system of open space and recreation facilities.

Objective 5.1: Target future land acquisitions that serve as linkages.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Compare results of parcel inventory for Objectives 2.2 and 4.4, above.	Planning Board Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete
Incorporate findings into the Town's Master Plan	Planning Board Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Objective 5.2: Identify and implement non-acquisition means of linkage such as conservation easements.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate these means into the steps following up the inventories of Objectives 2.2, 4.4, and 5.1.	Planning Board Board of Selectmen	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process [on-going]
Initiate discussions with Mt. Grace Conservation Trust regarding how they might assist with implementation.	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 2</u>

Objective 5.3: Establish a trail system on Town land, possibly through a youth summer work program.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Encourage as an outgrowth of volunteer efforts related to the North Central Pathway	Clark Memorial	<u>Year 2</u> : Start process [on going]

Objective 5.4: Educate the community in regard to the availability, location, and appropriate use of natural resource areas.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into the Master Plan process	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process [on-going]

Goal #6: Improve and expand the scope of recreational facilities and programs for all Winchendon residents.

Objective 6.1: Secure local support for a more active role for Town government in the provision of recreational activities by creating a Town Recreation Commission with an operating budget.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Bring to Town Meeting an article for establishing a Recreation Commission with members who represent the sports leagues, Clark Memorial, and other groups key to the community's recreation programs and opportunities.	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u>
Develop a budget for the Commission and gain Town Meeting support.	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 4</u>

Objective 6.2: Develop a park for teen skateboarding, inline skating, and non-motorized biking.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Identify a site and gain funding	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> : Identify site <u>Year 2</u> : Gain funding
Build the structures	Industrial Arts class	<u>Year 3</u>

Objective 6.3: Continue efforts to gain Town support of the Clark Memorial through local appropriations or through other resources.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Examine alternatives and report to the community.	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Report findings

Objective 6.4: Continue to work with the Clark Memorial to improve existing recreational facilities.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Develop and implement a joint work plan.	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 2</u> : Begin [on-going]

Objective 6.5: Continue to develop a neighborhood playground system to improve availability and access for users, especially children.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Create Neighborhood Task Forces to help determine needs and plan for playgrounds.	Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> [on-going]
Seek support and funding through grants	Neighborhood Task Forces & Director of Community Development	<u>Year 1</u> [on-going]

Objective 6.6: Continue to expand the availability of athletic fields and other facilities, including a fitness course, while keeping maintenance within a limited budget.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into work plan	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 2</u> [on-going]

Objective 6.7: Continue to reassess needs of residents (including elderly persons and persons with handicaps) for additional activities, and develop specific programs to meet these needs.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into work plan	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 2</u> [on-going]

Objective 6.8: Mobilize community efforts on specific recreation projects, and keep efforts and results highly visible.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into work plan	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 2</u> [on-going]

Objective 6.9: Identify funding sources for developing recreational facilities.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Monitor potential sources and inform Recreation Commission.	Director of Community Development	[on-going]

Objective: 6.10 Monitor the increasing needs of seniors for an organized center, and consider options for meeting these needs.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Maintain communications with Council on Aging and Housing Authority regarding this concern.	Director of Community Development	[on-going]

Goal #7: Integrate recreation and conservation activities as appropriate.

Objective 7.1: Evaluate Town open space in order to develop management plans which ensure natural resource protection while enhancing recreational access for purposes such as swimming and hiking.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Incorporate into Master Plan process	Planning Board	<u>Year 1</u> : Begin process <u>Year 3</u> : Complete

Objective: Develop long-range maintenance and funding programs.

Next tasks to undertake for this objective	Who in town will spearhead effort	Target years for start and completion
Initiate communication and coordination among Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Clark Memorial, Department of Public Works, Director of Community Development, local civic groups	Recreation Commission	<u>Year 3</u> [on-going]

Conclusion

Participants at the October 2, 1999, Community Discussion agreed on the following:

What it will take to accomplish this action plan

The community will need to mount a continuous, coordinated volunteer effort. We will need to call on the expertise and assistance of regional allies such as the Mt. Grace Conservation Trust and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. We will need funding from the grant programs whose doors are opened through adoption and approval of our *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. Eventually Winchendon will need to increase the paid staff support for Town boards who administer and implement the programs and regulations desired by the community.

Why it will be worth the effort

This action plan is essential to our future health and well-being. Our children will benefit from a cleaner environment and healthier activities. Our teens are currently at particular risk, so their having choices for safer and healthier activity will be particularly important. The natural enhancement of the town as a whole will increase property values. Working on this plan and enjoying the improvements and programs gained will help bring people together. Current and future residents and visitors will know and enjoy Winchendon's resources and special character.

Section 10: Public Comments

The following written comments were received during the Open Space and Recreation Plan information gathering process.

Section 11: References

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- Winchendon, Town of, *Zoning Bylaw*, amended through June 6, 1994.
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- Winchendon Assessor's records.

Appendices