

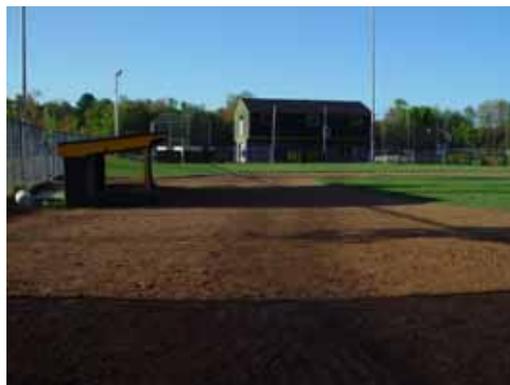
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## Open Space and Recreation

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### Introduction

According to the Massachusetts's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, open space is "conservation land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation." The Open Space and Recreation element must examine a community's desire to ensure a balance between the preservation of open space areas, and the future and current development trends of the community. Additionally, the present and future needs for recreation are assessed, along with the management of these resources. As communities seek to improve public health, the provision of recreational programs for people of all ages should be accommodated. Open space and recreational resources are addressed in this plan element while service and facilities needs will be addressed in Chapter 7 - *Public Services and Facilities*.



Communities in the Commonwealth are encouraged to develop stand-alone Open Space and Recreation Plans that includes an inventory of conservation and recreation lands, description of the community's environmental resources, and a vision of the future with goals, objectives, and a seven-year action plan. Open Space and Recreation Plans are required to be updated every seven years in order to qualify for grant programs for land acquisition or park improvements offered through the Division of Conservation Services.

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## Accomplishments since 1999

Hudson most recently finalized their Open Space and Recreation Plan in February of 2011 (originally approved in draft form in 2008). Hudson's Division of Recreation is currently working on updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan, as it expired and reached its five year mark in June 2013. The finalized 2011 plan provides a framework of accomplishments achieved since the previous version of the Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1999. Since 1999, the Town has acquired and protected various land parcels, developed new and improved old recreational sites and facilities, and achieved administrative accomplishments related to Town Hall staffing and zoning regulations. Some of the recreation, conservation, and administrative accomplishments since the 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan are described below.

### **Recreation Accomplishments**

- The development and opening of the Assabet River Rail Trail in 2005.
- The development of a multi-purpose athletic complex in the eastern end of Town – Sauta Field Complex.
- The donation of six acres of land for soccer fields in 2004 in the eastern end of Town, which were developed into soccer fields and opened in spring of 2013 – Sauta Cornfield.
- The opening of the Cellucci Skate and Splash Park on the Assabet River in 2008.
- Purchase and development (using CPA funds) of a 6.5 acre parcel along the Assabet River adjacent to Hudson High School, which will open in spring 2014 – Fossile Field.



### **Conservation Accomplishments**

- Expansion of the Town-owned Danforth Conservation Property through acquisition of the nine acre Mayo Property.
- Key land acquired along the Assabet River on the northern shores to increase protection from adverse development.
- Through two separate private projects over 22 acres were protected – one through a conservation restriction (Freeman) and the other deeded for conservation purposes (Clement Kane).
- Seventeen acres acquired adjacent to the Cranberry Well for water resources protection and recreation – Schofield Property.
- Accepted a gift of 6.5 acres adjacent to Kane and Chestnut wells – Hunter Swamp – Parker.

### **Administrative Accomplishments**

- Development of the Open Space and Residential Development (OSRD) Overlay District in 2007.
- The hiring of a Conservation Agent and full time Town Planner.
- Facilitation of agreements with developers to preserve open space and provide recreational facilities.

The Town of Hudson is active in and has made great strides towards accomplishing the community's goals and objectives related to its open space and recreational resources. This chapter serves to describe open space and recreation in the Town of Hudson along with current goals and objectives related to these resources. Much of this information is taken from the 2011 Hudson Open Space and Recreation Plan and information gathered from an Open Space and Recreation Public Forum in January 2013 which community residents attended.

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## **Open Space and Recreation Goals**

- Establish a healthy balance between development and open space.
- Provide a wide range of recreation opportunities for all residents of the community.
- Increase recreational opportunities and open space resources by encouraging multiple uses and by creating linkages between open space and recreational properties.

- Enhance administrative capacity to support the Town’s open space and recreation resources and facilities.

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## Open Space and Recreational Assets

Hudson contains a robust network of open space and recreational assets within and across its boundaries. A majority of Hudson’s land use (46 percent) consists of forest, wetlands and open space parcels (with residential land use making up the second largest land area at 38 percent). With its prime location along major routes and being almost equidistant between Worcester and Boston, Hudson is appealing to residential, commercial/industrial, and retail development. Focusing planning on open space and recreation is an important element in the Town’s future vision and needs to be balanced with increased development pressures. The following is a description of the Town’s open space and recreational assets, both privately and publicly owned.



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## Private Parcels

Hudson has 318.91 acres of land in Chapter 61, 61A or 61B.<sup>65</sup> Hudson’s eastern section of Town still retains the character of an agricultural community with a mixture of wetlands, cleared pastures, cropland and upland as well as mixed forests. Several privately owned farms on Gospel Hill are the largest open space parcels in Hudson and are located in this area, along with the Marlborough-Sudbury State Forest. Agricultural and forest areas surround the Town’s Watershed Protection District here and are immediately adjacent to two of Hudson’s major wells, Kane and Chestnut. The Charter Oak Country Club contains 208 acres of open space within the golf course boundaries. Hudson’s eastern end is a prime location for large subdivisions because of the number of acres still left undeveloped. Public sewer is not located here, requiring developers to build septic systems. However, this type of development could impact water supplies if the septic systems were to fail. Preservation and conservation restrictions on large unprotected parcels in this section of Hudson would help to protect them from development.

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<sup>65</sup> Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61, 61A and 61B is designed to encourage the preservation and enhancement of the Commonwealth’s forests, agricultural land and privately-owned recreation parcels by offering tax incentives to property owners for managing these lands for those purposes, and allowing the municipality the first option to buy (and protect) the land if landowner decides to sell.

The Assabet River is a valued feature of Hudson, flowing directly through the downtown area. Efforts are being made to increase waterfront public access. Protecting small private parcels along the river shoreline in the central and western sections of Town remain to be high priorities for conservation and recreation opportunities in order to improve public access to the river. In 2008, the Town purchased a parcel between Hudson High School and the Elks Lodge property using Community Preservation Act Funds. A third of the parcel is a pond, another third is wetlands, and the last third is upland area. The upland area would be used for recreation, while the pond and wetlands along the street would be conservation land.

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## Public and Non-Profit Parcels

Hudson's Town-owned park and recreation inventory consists of 16 sites throughout Town totaling more than 126 acres. Hudson's parks are divided into four categories:

- Athletic complexes comprised of more than 20 acres with heavy use;
- Community parks that are both active and passive areas<sup>66</sup> comprised of under 10 acres that preserve unique landscapes;
- Neighborhood parks that "...remain the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreation and social focus of the neighborhood"<sup>67</sup>; and,
- Mini parks consisting of one or two acres offering unique, limited or isolated recreation opportunities.

Two athletic complexes located in the eastern and western section of Town contains baseball, soccer and football fields, as well as playground systems and wooded picnic areas. Community parks include a public beach and a passive park area along the Assabet River offering an annual summer concert series. Fifteen parcels totaling more than 45 acres, of neighborhood and mini parks are scattered throughout Town. Total school property consists of 119.7 acres including playground systems and ball fields. When participants during the January 2013 Open Space and Recreation Public Forum were asked if they felt they had easy access to either a passive or active



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<sup>66</sup> Active recreation involves cooperative or team sports activity (playgrounds, ball fields, swimming pools, skate parks). Passive recreation includes open space characteristics of a park and are low intensity forms of recreation such as running, walking, hiking, boating, and picnicking.

<sup>67</sup> *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, page 98.

park and recreation facility within their neighborhood, 62 percent responded that they were within walking distance of these amenities.<sup>68</sup> Being located within walking distance of these amenities is important for public health and recreational needs.

Completion of the Assabet River Rail Trail has been a major accomplishment for the Town, especially relevant to recreational resources. With the development of this rail trail came additional opportunities for scenic views of the Assabet River, increased hiking, biking, walking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing, and an alternate means of transportation to Marlborough.



Walking/hiking has been cited by 58 percent of the Open Space and Recreation Public Forum participants as being the most common activity when visiting a Hudson park or open space area.<sup>69</sup> The Assabet River Rail Trail is a portion of a larger



trail network to be developed in Stow, Maynard, and Acton. The Town is currently working with departments and organizations on a Pathways Project to add art along the trail. The project creates art exhibits in the six kiosks along the trail four times a year created by school students. A mural project for the tunnel under the 290 Connector, trail markers painted with indigenous animals to identify sections of the trail, sculptures, rock paintings, refurbished railroad artifacts, and interpretive signage are all elements proposed as part of the Pathways Project.

Town-owned conservation lands consist of five large parcels and several smaller parcels totaling approximately 158 acres, mainly including wetlands and forested woodlands. The Hudson Conservation Commission administers these lands, and the Department of Public Works maintains these lands. These lands are not necessarily accessible to the public. These lands do not include water resource

<sup>68</sup> January 2013 Open Space and Recreation Public Forum Summary Report.

<sup>69</sup> January 2013 Open Space and Recreation Public Forum Summary Report.

areas, well fields, water tanks and water bodies under the administration of the Department of Public Works, which total approximately 351 acres.

More than 407 acres (mainly in the eastern section of Town) of conservation land is owned by state, federal, and land trust organizations such as Sudbury Valley Trustees, the New England Forestry Foundation, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Division of Conservation and Recreation, as well as the Town of Maynard. The Hudson Elks Lodge, Riverside Rod and Gun Club, the Hudson Portuguese Club and Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue are non-profit organizations with property in Hudson (collectively includes ten acres of unprotected open space). The Town of Hudson should investigate any conservation restrictions or protection of all these parcels and work to protect them if they are not currently.

For more information on wetland areas, water features, groundwater/drinking water supply, and plans and initiatives to protect these resources, refer to Chapter 5, *Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources*.

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## Open Space and Recreation Partnerships, Programs, and Initiatives

This section describes the partnerships and stakeholders who work on open space and recreation related goals for the Town of Hudson, recreation programs offered through the Town, and initiatives related to the open space and recreation needs and resources of the community.

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### Open Space and Recreation Partnerships

#### **Hudson Division of Recreation**

The Town of Hudson Division of Recreation is the Town's municipal department in charge of managing recreation lands, and running recreational programs in Hudson. The Division of Recreation's

Mission Statement is "to provide the residents of Hudson with a comprehensive leisure time program for those of all ages, while continually expanding and enhancing recreation facilities and opportunities keeping abreast of ever changing trends. Also to preserve open space and the natural features of Hudson



that defines its character, identity and link to the past”.<sup>70</sup> The Division of Recreation manages a robust network of recreational programs and activities year round, and has designed an informative, user-friendly website to find information and register online for these available programs and activities. Numerous programs are offered by the Division including: basketball, wrestling, swimming, tennis, track and field, football, soccer, golf, boot camp, CPR classes, weight training, field hockey, a LEGO league, softball, and more. Many residents of all ages sign up for the recreation programs.

Multiple special events and activities are run by the Division of Recreation throughout the year. The annual Recreation Golf Tournament draws almost 150 participants every spring. The Wood Park Concert Series takes place every summer on Wednesdays at the Wood Park on Park Street.



Similarly, the Cellucci Park Summer Concert Series takes place on Thursdays and is geared towards families with young children. Pumpkin Fest is an extremely popular event that takes place October of every year. With fireworks, food musical entertainment, moon bounces, provided by area non-profit organizations, and much more, the Pumpkin Fest draws thousands of people. In 2011, Pumpkin Fest drew over 5,000 people from the area.<sup>71</sup> Another popular annual event run by the Division of Recreation is the George Chiasson Memorial Fishing Derby for children up to 16 years old. Over 150 children participate in the event at Tripp’s Pond, which awards prizes for the first fish caught, the biggest fish, as well as the most fish caught in each age division.<sup>72</sup>

The Hudson Division of Recreation also manages a number of recreational facilities around the Town such as parks, athletic fields, Centennial Beach, a skate park, etc. Table 7-1 lists the recreational facilities in the Town that are used by the public. Centennial Beach is a publicly accessible beach for residents and non-residents to use. During the summer of 2012, a total of 1,370 beach passes were sold, including day and season passes for both residents and non-residents of Hudson.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Town of Hudson – Division of Recreation website.

<http://hudsonrecreation.recdesk.com/recdeskportal/Home/tabid/1092/Default.aspx>. Accessed July 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Town of Hudson Division of Recreation

<sup>72</sup> The MetroWest Daily News. *Kids angling for trout at annual Hudson fishing derby*. April 13, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Town of Hudson Division of Recreation

**Table 6-1 Hudson Recreational Facilities**

Facility	Address	Use
Apsley Park	Port and Riverview Sts	Passive along Assabet River
Assabet River Rail Trail	157 Washington Street	Bike path
Boutwell Complex	130 Chapin Road	Baseball, softball
Busch Memorial Field	69 Brigham Street	Ballfield
Cellucci Park	15 Houghton Street	Splash pad, summer concert venue
Centennial Beach	89 Fort Meadow Drive	Beach
Cherry Street Field	61 Cherry Street	Ballfield and playground
Farina Field	72 Cox Street	Ballfield
Farley Elementary	119 Cottage Street	Ballfield and playground
Forest Avenue Elementary	136 Forest Avenue	Ballfield and playground
Fossile Field	43 Brigham Street	Ballfield and fishing pond
Hubert School	119 Broad Street	Ballfield and playground
Hudson High School	69 Brigham Street	Ballfield and playground
Hudson Skate Park	29 South Street	Skate park
Intel Field	92 Technology Drive	Ballfield
Quinn Middle School	201 Manning Street	Ballfield and playground
Tripps Pond at Lamson Park	65 Green Street	Passive recreation fishing, walking trails
Liberty Park	5 Washington Street	Passive
Morgan Bowl & Track	120 Chapin Road	Ballfields, tennis, playground
Moulton's	21 Marion Street	Ballfield
Mulready Elementary	306 Cox Street	School recreation
O'Donnell Fields	69 Brigham Street	Ballfields
Riverside Baseball	120 Chapin Road	Baseball
Rimkus Clubhouse (HHS)	120 Chapin Road	Facilities for high school teams and DPW
Riverside Tennis Courts	69 Brigham Street	Tennis
Sauta Complex	538 Main Street	Ballfields and playground
Sauta Cornfield	Brook Street	Undeveloped
Warren Chamberlain Rinks	1 Municipal Drive	Skating and hockey
Wood Park	65 Park Street	Passive along Assabet River, playground and pavilion

Source: Town of Hudson Division of Recreation

<http://hudsonrecreation.recdesk.com/recdeskportal/Facilities/tabid/1096/Default.aspx>

As the Division of Recreation was in the process of updating the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan coincidental to the preparation of this master plan, the Division designed a survey which included questions on the quality of activities offered by the Recreation Department, what recreational opportunities or facilities could be added, and what residents' priorities are for maintaining open

space.<sup>74</sup> Approximately 340 people responded to the survey. Many of the residents' priorities and responses mirror the Town's goals and objectives already established for open space and recreation resources. For example, the residents' biggest priorities were to protect and preserve land around water supplies, establish facilities for the enjoyment of recreation, improve open space areas for recreation and increase maintenance of town fields.

### **Conservation Commission**

The Town of Hudson Conservation Commission is a group of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen with statutory responsibility for administering the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c. 131, s. 40. The Commission is also responsible for managing all conservation land owned by the Town, initiating new acquisitions or conservation restrictions, reviewing major development proposals, and protecting wildlife habitats.

### **Organization for the Assabet Sudbury and Concord Rivers**

The Organization for the Assabet Sudbury and Concord Rivers (OARS) is a non-profit group whose mission is to “protect, preserve, and enhance the natural and recreational features of the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers, their tributaries and watersheds, and to increase public awareness of the river’s values as important natural resources.”<sup>75</sup> As the Assabet River flows through the Town of Hudson, OARS has done work in the community relevant to the River’s water quality. One of the primary concerns for the Assabet River is that of eutrophication,



caused by excessive nutrient loading into the water from stormwater runoff, discharges from wastewater treatment plants, and presence of dams located along the River. These issues create inadequate habitats for aquatic wildlife and prevent recreational fishing to occur. Hudson has recently upgraded its wastewater treatment facility which improves the quality of effluent discharged to the River. OARS along with the United States Army Corps of Engineers plan on investigating dam removal, such as the Washington Street dam in Hudson, and will be holding workshops and community training sessions which Hudson should participate and undertake outreach to the public. For more information on the OARS work in Hudson and especially along the Assabet River, refer to Chapter 5, *Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources*.

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<sup>74</sup>The MetroWest Daily News. *Survey helps officials craft Hudson's new open space plan*. June 24, 2013.

<sup>75</sup>Organization for the Assabet River website. Accessed June 2013.

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## Open Space and Recreation Initiatives

Just as there are various partnerships and stakeholders involved with the Town of Hudson's open space and recreation resources, the Town has additionally participated in various comprehensive planning programs related to these resources. The following are some of those programs.

### ***Community Preservation Act***

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a state-wide legislation which allows communities to adopt a property tax surcharge, with revenues from this surcharge to be used for open space preservation, the creation of affordable housing, preservation of historic buildings and landscape, and the creation of recreational opportunities. Dependent on the total number of communities in Massachusetts participating in the CPA and the number of deed transactions that generate fees for the fund, the state matches the town's surcharge revenues.

At least 10 percent of the town's revenue generated annually by the CPA must be spent or reserved specifically for historic preservation, open space, and community housing. No more than 5 percent is utilized for administrative costs. The remainder of the revenue can be spent or reserved for recreation projects, in addition to historic preservation, open space, and community housing.

### **UrbanRiver Visions**

The Urban River Visioning Initiative, run by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, helps communities create visions for revitalization of their urban riverfronts. Seven communities, including Hudson, were involved in the original Urban River Visioning Initiative. Hudson was chosen for this visioning process due to the Assabet River's presence flowing through the urban downtown center of the community. During a two night community visioning session in Hudson, residents were asked to discuss ideas, goals, and potentials for the Assabet River and downtown area. Key initiatives that were discussed during the charrette included the establishment of a riverwalk below the Washington Street dam, improving the pedestrian setting of South Street and the cross connections between Main Street and the Assabet River, exploring further the potential of a town parking garage and the uses this would support, and the encouragement of growing an urban village within walking distance of Main Street through the redevelopment of old mill building sites for residential uses.<sup>76</sup> Since the visioning session, the Town has received multiple implementation grants to further the revitalization of the Assabet River. In 2005, a \$19,661 grant was used to complete design, engineering, and legal work for streetscape improvements and burying utilities. In 2006, a \$128,500 grant was used to restore canal walls and construct a canal walk along Tannery Brook. For more information on the UrbanRiver Visions initiative, refer to Chapter 5, *Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources*.

### **Community Development Plan and Community Preservation Act**

The Town's development of the Community Development Plan in Spring 2004, included a discussion on Hudson's natural resources (including open space and recreation). The Community Development Plan reiterates the Town's need to protect natural habitat areas for wildlife, maintain a balance between recreation and open space parcels, develop additional active recreation areas, and improve access to the Assabet River. Recreation and conservation accomplishments since 1999 show the importance of these resources to the Hudson community.

In 2006, Hudson accepted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) statute and approved a surcharge on real property of 1 percent. With the Town's surcharge and all state matching funds, Hudson has received \$2,314,813 in the past five

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<sup>76</sup> Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. UrbanRiver Visions website. Hudson – The Charrette and Plan Implementation. [http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/urv\\_web/Public\\_Site/Hudson.asp.htm](http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/urv_web/Public_Site/Hudson.asp.htm)

years for CPA funding, which is managed by the Community Preservation Committee. The Committee accepts applications annually for projects to spend CPA funds on, reviews these projects, and makes recommendations at the May Annual Town Meeting or the November Special Town Meeting.

The Community Preservation Committee gives preference to those proposals which address multiple general criteria, established by the Committee. The Community Preservation Plan also establishes more specific criteria and goals related to open space, historic preservation, community housing, and recreation resources. Overall, the Town's CPA goals are to protect natural features, scenic vistas, farmland, wetlands, hill top views, and other natural resources, while managing growth and maintaining the community's character. This means maintaining wildlife corridors and important habitat areas along the rivers and streams, balancing commercial and residential growth without compromising historic features and natural beauty, and offering a diverse housing stock and variety of recreational resources to all residents.

The following criteria have been applied for the use of CPA funds for open space preservation:

- Project provides protection of threatened parcels along rivers and streams, adjacent to other town owned property, near agricultural open land or undisturbed natural areas;
- Project provides connections of unique parcels for conservation and recreation purposes for enjoyment of the natural environment and/or educational opportunities;
- Project provides connections with existing trails or potential linkages;
- Project preserves scenic views;
- Project protects drinking water quantity and quality;
- Project preserves important surface water bodies, including wetlands, vernal pools and riparian zones.<sup>77</sup>

The following criteria have been applied for the use of CPA funds for recreational resources:

- Project proposes acquisition of land for active and passive recreation uses;
- Project maximizes or expands the use of town owned land;
- Project increases the range of recreation opportunities for residents of Hudson;
- Project serves a significant number of residents;
- Project jointly benefits conservation and recreation goals and objectives outlined in the Open Space and Recreation Plan;
- Project restores and rehabilitates facilities for better use.

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<sup>77</sup> Town of Hudson Community Preservation Committee. *Community Preservation Plan*. Updated January 2013.

Since the Town adopted the CPA statute, CPA funds have been used to: acquire key parcels to conserve and increase natural resources (such as the Fossile Land acquisition and Schofield Land acquisition), engineer and develop key parcels (such as the Sauta Cornfield, Cherry Street site, and Fossile Land), and expand community gardens. Other eligible potential projects that could be funded by CPA funds in the future include trail design and dredging of Tripp's Pond. CPA funds are an important financial resource used by the Town, especially for open space and recreational resources.

### **Freedom's Way Heritage Landscape Program**

The Freedom's Way Heritage Landscape Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, aimed to inventory and document heritage landscapes throughout the Commonwealth in order to become a National Heritage Area (a federal designation made by the National Park Service and Department of the Interior). The designation would recognize, preserve, promote, and interpret the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the region. In each community who participated in the Program, the methodology consisted of public meetings with residents, members from boards and commissions, and representatives from local organizations, in order to create a list of heritage landscapes in the community based on participants' input. Community members were then asked to select up to 10 priority landscapes that were considered most significant and unprotected based on the master list of landscapes. Fieldwork sessions followed the public meetings to gather information on the landscapes such as physical characteristics and issues confronting each one. In Hudson specifically, 113 total landscapes were chosen as heritage landscapes (the highest out of all communities involved) in which eight of these were considered priority landscapes.<sup>78</sup>



- Assabet River Corridor
- Central Street Neighborhood
- Downtown Hudson
- Gospel Hill
- Mass Central Railroad ROW
- Park Street/Washington Street Neighborhood
- Pleasant Street/Pearl Street Neighborhood

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<sup>78</sup> Department of Conservation and Recreation Freedom's Way Heritage Association. *Reconnaissance Phase Final Report. Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory*. Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. 2006

➤ Wood Square

This study assisted the Town of Hudson (and all communities involved) with identification of key natural landscape areas in order to better protect them as cultural, historical, and natural resources. Some of these parcels have been identified by the Town in other cases as key areas to protect.

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## Open Space and Recreation Needs

A majority of the developed land in Hudson is located in the western section of Town due to the presence of the Assabet River flowing through this area and the resource it provided to historical industry. As this area becomes more developed and dense, runoff from impervious surfaces and lawn maintenance becomes a concern for water quality of the Assabet River. Lands along the Assabet River must be protected in order to conserve the River, and increase public waterfront access.

The Town is involved with local organizations (SuAsCo Watershed Community Council, Assabet Consortium, and OARS) to help with developing solutions and techniques to improving water quality. For example, the SuAsCo Watershed Community Council has developed



posters, brochures, and public hearings to inform the public of the importance of “Keeping Stormwater Clean”. The brochures describe what to do and what not to do when caring for your lawn, garden, and vehicles. The Intel company located in Hudson has established a \$1.5 million Assabet Watershed Groundwater Recharge Fund in order to support large and small scale projects that capture, store, and recharge stormwater into natural aquifers. The Town needs to continue collaboration with these groups and work towards keeping residents informed of the potential effectiveness of water quality improvement alternatives that will also improve wildlife habitat areas. Educating the public of water quality issues and ways to improve it individually will help contribute to resolving this issue also.

Acquiring parcels that contribute to creating connections and linkages between open space and recreational areas is something the Town should be continuously achieving. During the January 2013 public forum, better connections between neighborhoods and parks was chosen as the second highest way Hudson

neighborhoods can be better served (28 percent), and connectivity of open spaces/trails was the second most important issue regarding the Town's recreational and natural open spaces (16 percent).<sup>79</sup> Many Chapter 61 and 61A parcels are located in the eastern section of Town. The Town has first right to refusal for these properties if the properties were to be sold. Ongoing discussions and good communication with present landowners of these parcels creates positive relationships and could ensure that the Town would be contacted first if the property were to be sold. Identifying preservation and conservation restrictions on parcels in the eastern more rural section of Hudson will assist in protection of these important parcels also. Development in this area could impact water supplies, and affect Hudson's rural character that remains. Connections recommended for the Town to explore between open spaces during the January 2013 public forum included a boat launch behind downtown's Fire Station along the Assabet River<sup>80</sup>, walking trail from Cellucci to Liberty Park, development of the Mass Central Rail Trail (proposed for a rapid transit rails to trails), increasing sidewalk systems, and extension of the existing Assabet River Rail Trail to Maynard and Stow.



In order to keep up with urban development in the Town while also retaining adequate open space and recreational facilities, existing facilities and areas need to be expanded upon. Properties surrounding the Town's water supplies should be investigated to better protect residents' drinking water. Vacant school lands should be greatly considered for sports field development or other opportunities. Expanding existing open space and recreational areas would also contribute to the goal of creating linkages and connections amongst these areas in the Town by decreasing the gap between one parcel to the next. Developing a more robust open space and recreational network with connections is an overall need and goal of the community.

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## Open Space and Recreation Recommendations

The following are open space and recreation recommendations established throughout this analysis that the Town should aim to accomplish to enhance the

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<sup>79</sup> January 2013 Open Space and Recreation Public Forum Summary Report.

<sup>80</sup> The Assabet River was additionally chosen as the number one spot for a boat launch in the Town of Hudson Division of Recreation survey administered Spring 2013 (42 percent of participants chose this location).

open space and recreational network and features in the community. Some of these recommendations are taken from Hudson's 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2004 Community Development Plan, and the January 2013 Open Space and Recreation Public Forum. Additional recommendations relating to recreational facilities may be found in Chapter \_\_\_ - *Public Services and Facilities*.

- OS 1. Investigate property surrounding Cranberry Well (and other wells) for Town acquisition to better protect drinking water supplies from contamination.
- OS 2. Pursue discussions with present landowners of Chapter 61 parcels, to create positive relationships while encouraging continued management of Chapter 61 lands for either agricultural, forest or recreations purposes. If the parcels were to be removed from the Chapter 61 program, it is hoped that the owner would provide advance notice to the Town prior to any contact with a potential developer of the land.
- OS 3. Consider parcels of land that may be utilized for the development of a dog park.
- OS 4. Seek out agricultural preservation and conservation restrictions on large parcels in eastern section of Town in order to protect water supplies in this area and retain Hudson's rural character in this section of Town.
- OS 5. Increase public waterfront access along the Assabet River through acquisition of parcels adjacent to the River.
- OS 6. Investigate vacant school lands for sports field development and to increase recreational opportunities.
- OS 7. Expand existing recreational facilities onto adjacent areas surrounding fields and schools.
- OS 8. Encourage multi-purpose use of facilities.
- OS 9. Continue to upgrade existing equipment at present recreation facilities.
- OS 10. Develop connections and linkages of open space and recreation areas through development of trails and acquiring parcels that would support this.
- OS 11. Create maintenance programs for existing conservation land to enhance scenic and natural areas.
- OS 12. Educate the public of the importance of protecting lands around water supplies and potential development, acquiring and expanding areas for open space and recreation, and improving water quality of the Town's water features through workshops, informational brochures, and signage. Many other outreach ideas were discussed during the January 2013 public forum, which should be explored.
- OS 13. Continue to work towards implementation of the Hudson Pathways Program. Develop educational signage for the Assabet

River Rail Trail in Hudson displaying information of the historic railroad and importance of recreational areas/trails.

- OS 14. Investigate potential for Hudson Catholic to be used as a Community Center, as there is a need for publicly accessible indoor recreational space.



Bruce Pond Railroad Bridge, Hudson, MA