

IPSWICH OPEN SPACE PLAN

Seven Year Action Plan, 2006-2013

Section 9 Revised 2-24-2010 – Approved by the Commonwealth 2-26-2010

SECTION 9.

The Town's concrete actions for the next seven years, with responsibilities assigned to specific Town entities, are laid out in this section. It is given in this action plan that many items will require funding. It should be understood that such actions should include attempts to obtain the necessary funding through whatever sources are most appropriate, including town, state and grant funds.

The Open Space Committee has consulted with all boards and entities named as responsible parties in the action items. All parties are in agreement that the goals, objectives and action items are worthwhile and should be pursued.

GOAL 1: PRESERVE THE HISTORIC, AGRICULTURAL, AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF THE TOWN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 2004 TOWN CHARACTER STATEMENT

Objective 1-1. Retain and promote agricultural lands and uses in Ipswich.

Action 1-1a. Research and implement programs, such as that developed by the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, that will link young farmers with agricultural land, and work with private and public land-owners in Town to make more agricultural land available for farming.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Agricultural Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-1b. Work with farmers, the state, and non-profit organizations to identify succession issues that jeopardize continued farming and to maintain farms in active agriculture.

Responsibility: Agricultural Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-1c. Work with landowners to encourage and promote agricultural restrictions under Chapter 61A.

Responsibility: Agricultural Commission, Conservation Commission, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-1d. Ensure the collection of back taxes on land taken out of Chapter 61A status for the benefit of the Open Space, Recreation, and Water Supply Protection Fund and provide an annual report of such taxes collected to the Board of Selectmen, the Agricultural Commission, the Conservation Commission, and the Open Space Committee.

Responsibility: Finance Department, Assessor's Office

Target: Annual

Action 1-1e. Develop an active relationship with Ipswich schools regarding use of local foods in the cafeterias and educational programs including recycling efforts. .

Responsibility: Agricultural Commission, Open Space Committee, Recycling Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-1f. Develop an action plan for and implement the recommendations of the Analysis of Ipswich Agriculture and Agricultural Land completed in January 2010.

Responsibility: Agricultural Commission, Open Space Committee

Target: 2010 and ongoing

Objective 1-2. Retain and protect natural and historic scenic features and archaeological sites in Ipswich.

Action 1-2a. In all proposed development projects, strongly encourage the protection of scenic vistas, and natural and cultural features through cluster development, conservation restrictions, natural buffers and similar measures in accordance with the guidelines in the Town Character Statement, particularly those in **SECTIONS 6, 7, 8 and 9.**

Responsibility: Planning Board, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-2b. Work with the current and any successor owners of the Great Estates properties (Turner Hill, New England Biolabs, and Notre Dame) to preserve the integrity of the Scenic Corridors along the roads that border these estates.

Responsibility: Planning Board, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 1-2c. Document existing historic stone walls, ancient ways, and trees along designated Scenic Roads and Corridors, trails and natural resources, and develop a map and file database for them. Develop and implement an enhanced program for the protection of these resources.

Responsibility: Historical Commission (stone walls, ancient ways), Ipswich Garden Club (trees), Dept. of Public Works (protection)

Target: Ongoing (Revision of Scenic Road by-law completed at October 2009 Special Town Meeting)

Action 1-2d. Using the DCR Scenic Landscape Inventory as a foundation, designate the Ipswich River corridor, including the islands, as a Scenic Overlay District. This would help ensure protection of the cultural, historic and natural character of the corridor. Research funding sources to accomplish this.

Responsibility: Dept. of Planning and Development, Open Space Committee

Target: 2011

GOAL 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE DRINKING WATER SOURCES

Objective 2-1. Protect water supplies from pollution.

Action 2-1a. In developments in water supply districts, require use of the Open Space Preservation Zoning Bylaw in order to minimize impervious surfaces, turf area, and pesticide and herbicide application, and further require the highest feasible quality of treated wastewater discharge.

Responsibility: Planning Board, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 2-1b. Work with large development projects to prevent degradation of surface-water, to ensure maximum water re-use, to encourage grouping of onsite septic systems, and to use other water conservation practices.

Responsibility: Planning Board, Utilities Dept., Stormwater Advisory Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 2-1c. Continue and enhance the water supply protection and water conservation programs in Ipswich to include ongoing public education on the need to conserve water as well as to protect water supplies.

Responsibility: Utilities Dept.

Target: Ongoing

Action 2-1d. Work with the Ipswich River and Parker River watershed associations and the Utilities Department on water withdrawal and permit issues to increase protection of flow, land and wildlife habitat along these rivers and their tributaries.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Utilities Dept.

Target: Ongoing

Action 2-1e. Actively discourage and penalize illegal dumping in Ipswich. Organize citizen volunteers to monitor and report dumping, and publicize such efforts.

Responsibility: Police Dept., Dept. of Public Works

Target: Ongoing

GOAL 3: PROTECT AND MANAGE CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 3-1. Permanently protect salt marshes and inland wetlands, particularly vernal pools, from the effects of development.

Action 3-1a. Continue the effort to obtain state certification of all vernal pools in Ipswich.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 3-1b. Protect important land that buffers coastal wetlands as it becomes available, through acquisition, conservation restrictions or other means, via town funds, with the assistance of land trusts, and through project review/approval, including subdivision site plan review and comprehensive permits, in anticipation of climate change impacts.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 3-1c. Foster continued experimentation with open-marsh water management as a means of both restoring salt marshes to their original state and controlling mosquitoes.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 3-1d. Distribute to property owners with conservation restrictions on their property the best reasonably available information regarding their parcel with lot lines and protection areas delineated to indicate areas where approval is required to undertake any alterations.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Open Space Stewardship Coordinator

Target: Completed as of 2010; ongoing as needed

Objective 3-2. Continue and enhance protection of wildlife habitat and riverways.

Action 3-2a. Utilize the state biomap and other resources in project review by the Planning Board.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building Inspector, Planning Board

Target: Ongoing

Action 3-2b. Work with the Town of Hamilton, the Division of Marine Fisheries and/or other EOEAs agencies, and the owners of the Willowdale dam and fish ladder on more aggressive reintroduction of the three historically present species of river herring so that anadromous fish restoration can be improved in the Ipswich River.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission

Target: Ongoing until 2014

Action 3-2c. Support the study of problems in the wildlife/human interface, particularly including beaver and deer, to reach solutions that make sense for both the human and wildlife populations.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Board of Selectmen

Target: Ongoing

GOAL 4: PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT LAND FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Objective 4-1. Develop inventory, assessment, prioritization and reporting of open space and recreation lands.

Action 4-1a. Revise and maintain the GIS open space inventory, including current status of all parcels.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Action 4-1b. Continue to refine open space evaluation criteria as needed. Develop single evaluation process between open space bond parcel evaluation process and open space guidelines of Planning Board.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Planning Board

Target: 2010

Action 4-1c. Develop process of review and enforcement of trail easements held by the Town.

Responsibility: Open Space Stewardship Coordinator, Conservation Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 4-1d. Complete inventory of existing CRs, and documentation and recording of all outstanding CRs. Improve town records of these transactions so the status of any CR can be checked and acted on without delay.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Open Space Stewardship Coordinator

Target: Completed as of 2010; ongoing as needed

Action 4-1e. Identify parcels in town that are important to protect including parcels appropriate for limited development accompanied with open space protection.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 4-1f. Support the completion of the recreation fields needs study to identify the type and number of fields needed for sports teams.

Responsibility: Athletic Fields Study Committee

Target: Completed

Action 4-1.g Seek to incorporate meeting key needs for recreation fields in the bond program and other land acquisition, management and maintenance plans. Prioritize land acquisition efforts on land usable for athletic fields.

Responsibility: Athletic Fields Study Committee, Open Space Committee

Target: 2010 and ongoing

Objective 4-2. Continue or establish effective funding mechanisms for protection of open space.

Action 4-2a. Ensure collection of revenues designated for the Open Space, Recreation, and Water Supply Fund. Provide annual report of collected funds to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee.

Responsibility: Department of Planning and Development

Target: Annual

Action 4-2b. Establish a continuing mechanism for open space protection, whether open space bond or Community Preservation Act, before current funding is exhausted.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen

Target: 2011

Action 4-2c. Take advantage of funding from federal, state or other sources, such as DCS Community Self-Help, Mass Highways or EPA, to leverage town open space bond funds to further acquire or protect priority open space, enhance recreational opportunities or protect the water supply.

Responsibility: Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: Ongoing

Objective 4-3. Develop, manage, and maintain town-owned or -controlled open space.

Action 4-3a. Develop management/stewardship plans as needed for specific large parcels requiring significant management

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Dept. of Planning and Development, Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission

Target: Ongoing

Action 4-3b. Recruit and organize volunteers as needed to help manage priority properties so identified.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Open Space Stewardship Coordinator

Target: Ongoing

Action 4-3c. Manage CRs to ensure public access where access is a condition of the CR.

Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Open Space Stewardship Coordinator

Target: Ongoing

GOAL 5: ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES APPROPRIATE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AGE GROUPS

Objective 5-1. Improve and increase recreational facilities, public and private, to meet current and future needs.

Action 5-1a. Complete the Riverwalk by connecting the new pedestrian bridge with the downtown area behind the stores on Market Street to the Caldwell block and Shurcliff Walk.

Responsibility: Dept. of Planning and Development, Riverwalk Committee **Target:** 2012

Action 5-1b. Complete the planned Argilla Road Trail and consider others (e.g., Great Neck) based on its success and cost. Elsewhere, institute a modest “Share the Road” signage program along roads commonly used by bicyclists.

Responsibility: Dept. of Public Works, Argilla Road Trail Committee **Target:** 2012

Action 5-1c. Work with current and any successor owners for continuance of public recreational uses on Great Estate properties.

Responsibility: Planning Board, Dept. of Planning and Development, Open Space Committee
Target: Ongoing

Action 5-1d. Negotiate with developers to incorporate and maintain recreational facilities when planning subdivisions.

Responsibility: Planning Board, Dept. of Planning and Development, Zoning Board of Appeals, Recreation Department
Target: Ongoing

Action 5-1e. Identify and establish a funding mechanism for development and maintenance of active recreation sites and facilities.

Responsibility: Recreation Department, Athletic Fields Study Committee, Parks & Cemetery Department, Board of Selectmen
Target: Ongoing

Objective 5-2. Improve access to recreational facilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Action 5-2a. Complete and maintain handicapped accessibility to appropriate town-owned recreational facilities and related town offices as needed and as indicated in the facility inventory in **APPENDIX F.**

Responsibility: ADA Coordinator (Health Agent), Recreation Director, Dept. of Public Works
Target: Ongoing

Action 5-2b. Continue efforts to make playgrounds accessible to persons with disabilities by replacing sand surfaces under play elements and travel paths with approved surfacing materials, and by including access to play structures and adding picnic tables that meet current regulations for accessibility.

Responsibility: Recreation Department, Parks and Cemetery Department **Target:** Ongoing

Objective 5-3. Control recreational uses to protect the integrity of land and water resources.

Action 5-3a. Enforce boating speed limits and work with boating organizations to educate boaters and jet-skiers on erosion caused by wakes on the banks of watercourses in the salt marshes.

Responsibility: Harbormaster, Waterways Advisory Committee **Target:** Ongoing

Action 5-3b. Enforce bans on motorized vehicles in off-limits areas to protect trails, prevent erosion and mitigate disturbance to wildlife.

Responsibility: Police Dept. in conjunction with state wildlife officers **Target:** Ongoing

Objective 5-4. Identify and acquire land for organized team-based sports.

Action 5-4a Identify land that meets criteria proposed by the Athletic Fields Study Committee (AFSC) that would support the construction of at least two full size soccer/lacrosse/football fields and the required off-street parking.

Responsibility: AFSC and OSC

Target: 2010 and 2011

Action 5-4b. Identify funding sources for the land acquisitions.

Responsibility: AFSC, OSC, and BOS

Target: Ongoing

Action 5-4c. Identify funding sources for the development of the new athletic fields.

Responsibility: AFSC, Recreation Department, Parks & Cemetery Department, OSC, and BOS

Target: 2012

Action 5-4d. Acquire the land for new athletic fields.

Responsibility: AFSC, OSC, BOS

Target: 2012

Action 5-4e. Develop at least two new full size soccer/lacrosse/football fields on the newly acquired land and the required off-street parking.

Responsibility: AFSC, Parks and Cemetery Department, outside contractors

Target: 2012 and beyond

GOAL 6: PROMOTE EDUCATION ON THE VALUE OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Objective 6-1. Maintain communication with the Ipswich public schools to encourage integration of open space, conservation, agriculture, and recreation values in curricula and programs.

Action 6-1a. Establish a connection with the chairperson of the Science Subject Area Committee or a designated teacher in each school to explore questions and needs, and to set up a convenient means of continuing communication, such as email.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: 2010

Action 6-1b. Serve as a resource to the schools for open space lessons and activities by providing plans, maps and information regarding town open space, and providing appropriate materials for classroom follow-up. Provide classroom demonstrations when appropriate.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 6-1c. Involve students and other youth groups in stewardship of the town's open space. (See **Action 4-3.**)

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Open Space Stewardship Coordinator

Target: Ongoing

Objective 6-2. Maintain regular communication links with citizens to promote the town's open space objectives.

Action 6-2a. Continue the education of citizens on important open space, agriculture, recreation and water conservation issues through periodic newspaper columns, letters to editors, and other media outlets.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Agricultural Commission, Utilities Dept.

Target: Ongoing

Action 6-2b. Educate the public about the network of local and regional trails

Responsibility: Ipswich Bay Circuit Trail Committee

Target: Ongoing

GOAL 7: PROMOTE A COOPERATIVE AND REGIONAL APPROACH TO OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

Objective 7-1. Assure collective and cooperative commitment by town departments, boards and staff to accomplish the objectives of this open space plan.

Action 7-1a. Conduct a series of briefings and progress reports on the open space plan for relevant town staff, boards and committees.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee, Dept. of Planning and Development

Target: 2006

Action 7-1b. Continue the practice of designating Open Space Committee members as liaisons to other boards, committees and officials with action responsibilities under this plan as a means to facilitate action item accomplishment. Have the liaisons report activities and results to the full Open Space Committee on a regular basis.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: Ongoing

Objective 7-2. Coordinate Ipswich open space and recreational planning with actions and programs on a regional basis.

Action 7-2a. Identify and establish or continue ongoing relationships with comparable officials, boards and committees in nearby towns that have open space responsibilities, as well as with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, other relevant state agencies and non-profit organizations.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 7-2b. Exchange plans, studies, reports, minutes and meeting agendas with these towns and organizations on a continuing basis so that open space planning and implementation can take place in a regional context. Put related town bylaws, open space plans and other materials on the town website.

Responsibility: Open Space Committee

Target: Ongoing

Action 7-2c. Where needed, act in concert with adjacent towns, regional planning agencies and land trusts on common open space, recreational, water supply and other relevant objectives.

Responsibility: All entities

Target: Ongoing