

# TAUNTON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1: PROTECT THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF THE CITY'S GROUND AND SURFACE WATER RESOURCES	GOAL 5: PROMOTE COORDINATED, RESPONSIBLE LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING
1. Review the DEP 303d list, Narragansett Bay Comprehensive Management Plan (Narragansett Bay Program, RI), DCR Water Assets Study, TMDL report, and other recent environmental issue reports; prioritize the most sensitive, at-risk areas, and; seek mitigation or corrective action.	1. Appoint a standing open space committee in order to work internally and intra-municipally to plan, develop, and implement projects and update the Open Space Plan as changes occur and milestones are met.
2. Assess municipally-owned properties for potential environmental issues, particularly around water resource areas, drinking water supply areas, and recreation areas/facilities, and address concerns as required.	2. Develop a specific digitized Open Space and recreation parcel database for the city so that all departments are working off of the same data when addressing acquisition, preservation, planning, management, and remediation issues.
3. Review and improve, as necessary, the existing water resources protection provisions of the Zoning Bylaws, Planning Board Rules and Regulations, etc.	3. Develop uniform prioritization criteria for a formal land acquisition/protection strategy.
4. Secure open land adjacent to important water supply areas, conservation, recreation or water access holdings, using various tools (conservation restrictions, deeded easements, purchase, etc.), and tributaries, including: sediment and debris; culverts, dams.	4. Develop a City Land Use Plan and Strategy that balances sustainable economic and housing development with preservation of open space and priority protection areas.
5. Promote public education on land and water related issues through outreach, media, printed materials, forums, workshops, seminars.	5. Create a transparent strategy, with public updates, for using industrial tax for park creation
6. Review municipal land holdings for conservation land value and status of protection.	6. Incorporate climate resilience into open space planning and land management decisions
7. Work to resolve the long-standing problems with sediment build-up and flooding due to infrastructure issues within the Mill River, Cobb Brook, other streams and tributaries, including: sediment and debris; culverts, dams.	7. When evaluating potential uses of any city property (without existing use), balance passive and active uses on properties, considering mixed uses on same property, as well as public health considerations (i.e. community garden, fitness park, etc.)
8. Implement routine maintenance plan for culverts and catch-basins to prevent blockages that cause flooding (i.e. West Water St & 5th St); prioritize undersized culverts that repeatedly flood for replacement and ensure they meet stormwater and stream crossing standards to access state funding sources.	8. Adopt the Community Preservation Act to help fund priority conservation and open space acquisition, recreational improvement, and historic preservation projects.
9. Manage invasive plant species growth, particularly in the City's lakes.	9. Review existing land use and planning regulations for the potential of exercising limiting development plans, transfer development rights, etc.
10. Assess and improve drainage systems; re-purpose appropriate City owned land for storm water storage and treatment (green infrastructure).	<b>GOAL SIX: EXPAND AND IMPROVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PROVIDE HEALTHY, LIFE-LONG EXPERIENCES FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES</b>
<b>GOAL 2: PREVENT THE LOSS OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND HABITAT</b>	1. Conduct comparison study of similar communities' budgets and staffing levels for Parks Departments, and increase Taunton's funding (currently about 1% of the municipal budget) and staff for PCPG appropriately, in order to adequately operate, maintain, and improve the park & recreation system.
1. Begin a comprehensive survey and registration process of species, habitats (including vernal pools), unique natural communities, rare, endangered, or threatened communities, etc.; pay particular attention to areas highlighted in NHESP's BioMap 2, TNC Plans, etc.	2. Establish satellite senior centers (in partnership with Taunton Housing Authority) and expand offerings for more diverse, year-round recreational opportunities for seniors (in partnership with YMCA and Council on Aging).
2. Work cooperatively to expand Taunton's Open Space Network and protect or preserve land that links existing protected areas and provides habitat connectivity and wildlife passages, without concern for municipal boundaries.	3. Increase rule enforcement and develop methods and pathways for individuals to report rule breaking and unwelcome/inappropriate conduct.
3. Identify additional funding mechanisms to help protect open space from development.	4. Install more trash cans on trails and have more consistent trash cleanups at all sites throughout the city (especially Boyden Refuge, Memorial Park, Lake Sabbatia and Hopewell Park) - this could be done as a volunteer effort or by city services.
<b>GOAL 3: PREVENT THE LOSS OF TAUNTON'S RURAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL QUALITIES AND ASSETS</b>	5. Increase sidewalk maintenance to improve pedestrian safety, ADA/elderly access, and improve the safety of crosswalks throughout the city, particularly in winter. Enforce homeowner obligations to clear high-trafficked sidewalks as well
1. Establish a prioritization process and plan for the promotion and retention of active agriculture, and the enrollment of farmland and wood lots into Ch. 61 and APR programs. Gain funding by leasing newly Ch 61A properties to farmers.	6. Implement the following maintenance priorities: recreational fishing access locations, especially at Three Mile River (Harvey Street / Woodward Spring), support current volunteer maintenance of Westville Conservation Area, more consistent trash cleanups at Boyden Refuge, Memorial Park, Lake Sabbatia, and Hopewell Park, city playgrounds, beautification of regional amenities (i.e. basketball courts in East Taunton and the softball fields near high school) and the surrounding streets to make the city for appealing to those visiting, remove fallen trees in the Three Mile River, only when they are obstructing flow, the field at Scadding Street
2. Create funding source to help acquire Ch61A properties through right-of-first refusal when opportunities arise (for example, using the roll-back taxes from removing Ch 61A parcels from protection for preservation purposes)	7. Establish one or more dog parks in Taunton ("The Bowl" in East Taunton currently under consideration; Taunton Nursing Home may also be an option)
3. Continue to promote and update, as needed, historic signage efforts to highlight and link cultural and historical assets.	8. Expand water access city-wide for fishing and boats, install new boat ramps at Lake Sabbatia, and institute/enforce parking regulations at existing boat ramps.
4. Adopt measures to protect areas of potential cultural and archaeological sensitivity through establishing a new historical district.	9. Create more picnicking appropriate areas - including flat spaces with charcoal pits
5. Work with Old Colony History Museum and other local non-profits and appropriate organizations to increase outreach and market historical / open space sites (like Soule Homestead, Plymouth Mill, Fraga Farm, etc.) for education and ecotourism to bring in revenue for additional historic preservation	10. Increase the amount of lighting at open spaces throughout the city.
6. Create a 'historic walking trail' and brochure to encourage civic engagement. Build on materials already created by organizations such as Mass In Motion.	11. Make needed improvements at the following facilities: Hopewell Field, Weir Field, Boyden Wildlife Refuge, Pleadwell Street, Olney Street, Sikorski Park, Arthur Sharpe Estate property
<b>GOAL 4: DEVELOP A CITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM (INCLUDING WALKING, HIKING, BIKING, AND WATER ACCESS FEATURES), WHERE FEASIBLE.</b>	12. Ensure that bathrooms at publicly accessible locations are unlocked during evenings, weekends, holidays, and other 'high-use' times
1. Using existing on-road and off-road trails, and the ability to tie into other municipal and regional trails, (Norton/Mansfield Rail Trail; Taunton River Trail in Dighton and Somerset); develop a plan and timetable for the creation of additional local trails and links to existing trails.	13. Establish a centralized public communication hub (i.e. page on city website) with information on existing facilities/amenities, upcoming recreational opportunities and events, ADA accessible rec facilities,, and to alert residents to new or upcoming initiatives, projects, facilities
2. Assess the ability of the City to link key open space parcels, City properties, schools, recreation facilities, etc. ("knit" together existing open space holding) with bike and pedestrian paths)	<b>GOAL 7: EXPAND INCLUSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL IN TAUNTON, WITH A FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY, AND ADA ACCESSIBILITY.</b>
3. Secure funding source for multi-purpose trail/facility planning and construction.	1. Utilize annual funding to continue to address the needs highlighted in the ADA Transition plan for Park & Recreation and Conservation facilities.
4. Develop and publish an updated and all-inclusive City trail map/brochure (build off of Mass in Motion's).	2. Green urban areas in Taunton with more open spaces, trees, and grass, including incorporating green infrastructure stormwater management
5. As streets are updated, renovated, or changed, ensure they meet Complete Streets or other relevant standards to become applicable for grant funding. Consult the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to see which streets should be updated first. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install dedicated bike paths / lanes throughout Taunton, including around the Myles Standish Industrial park, East Taunton, West Taunton, around Taunton High School, Weir Village Riverfront Park, on Joseph E Warner Blvd leading to Boyden Refuge, near the South Street Tot Lot, on County St near Bristol Plymouth Regional Technical School, Park street and Washington street</li> </ul>	3. Make the city's waterfront, including areas around the Taunton River, more inviting, engaging and accessible. Although there have been some developments, more widely distributed access locations are desired.
6. Create more paved walking trails throughout the city including downtown. Widen existing trails to support ADA accessibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install sidewalks in the following neighborhoods: Whittenton, downtown Taunton, North Oakland, around Lake Sabbatia, and around Memorial Park and the Taunton Green, and any additional areas which may need them.</li> </ul>	4. Consider geographic equity when expanding recreational and open space resources in Taunton, to ensure the city's resources are distributed fairly.
7. Continuous improvement of walking trails in wooded areas and lake areas, and expand access to benches and picnic areas	5. Improve safety and ADA accessibility, prioritizing the following sites: Patriots Park Playground Viewing deck, Memorial Park, Hopewell Park bathrooms, during public events
	6. Work with professional design companies that specialize in creating recreational spaces and activities for individuals with disabilities to create better spaces, including: sensory friendly spaces & activities, gardens available to individuals with disabilities, accessible boardwalks, clearly marked paths, ramps and boardwalks, with accessible signage
	7. Provide more public transportation to and from senior centers and living areas

# City of Taunton Open Space and Recreation Plan Action Item Map

## Legend

### Open Spaces by Primary Purpose

- Agriculture
- Recreation
- Conservation
- Recreation and Conservation
- Historical/Cultural
- Water Supply
- Parcels
- Waterbodies
- City of Taunton

### Road Network

- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads

## Action Items

- 1 Create a new dog park
- 2 Create bike trails
- 3 Establish a protected corridor of walking trails between Myles Standish Industrial Park and Watson Pond.
- 4 Improve safety and ADA accessibility
- 5 Improve these facilities
- 6 Maintenance Priority

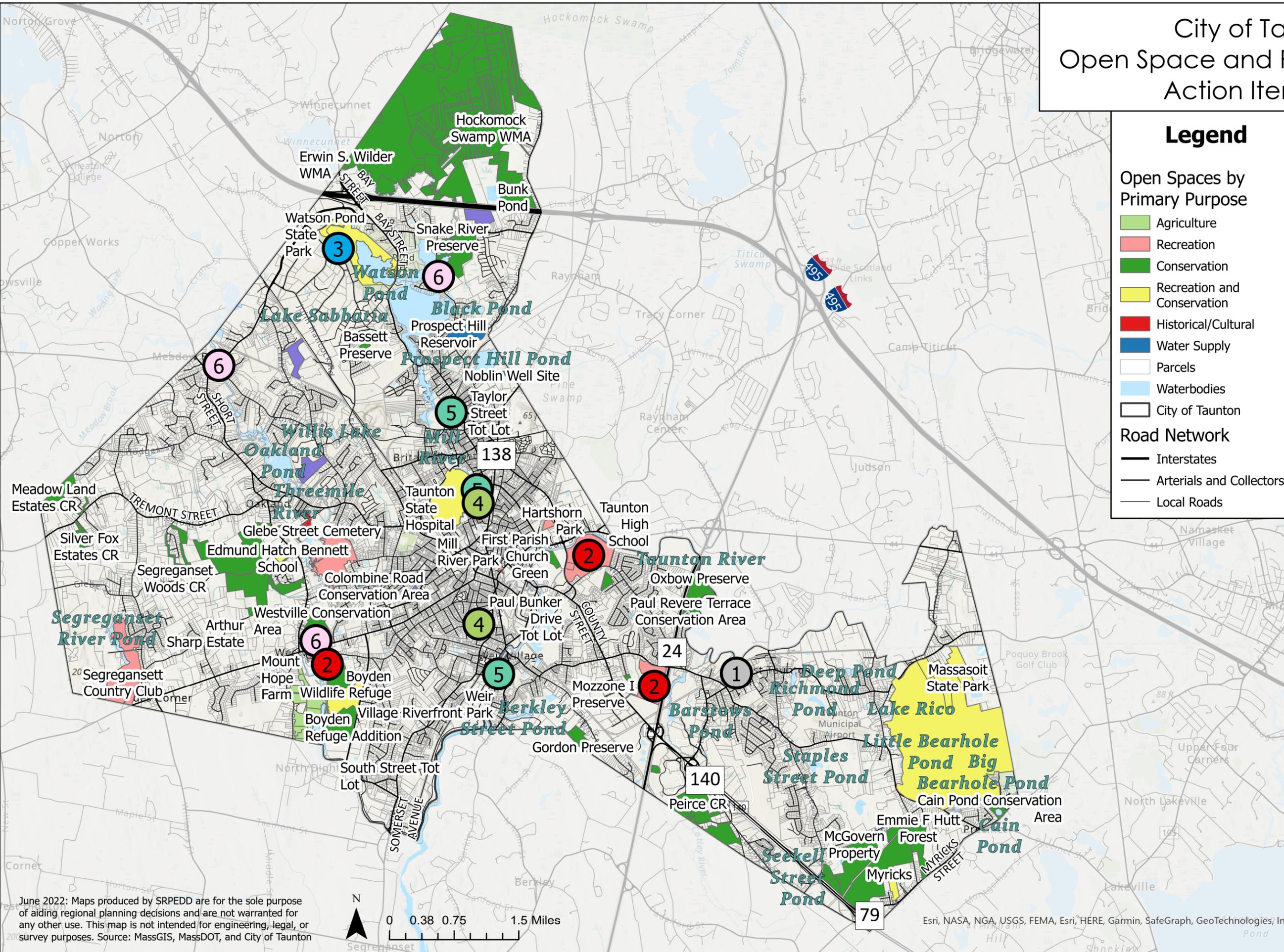
These actions represent a spatial subset of the complete action plan, which can be viewed in the final plan.



For more details and updates visit the project webpage via the QR code



Taunton OSRP



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