
Open Space and Recreation Plan

Town of Sharon, Massachusetts

Prepared by the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee



Planning Horizon 2009-2016



*WE COME AND GO, BUT THE LAND IS ALWAYS THERE,
AND THOSE WHO LOVE IT ARE ITS CARETAKERS FOR A
SHORT WHILE.*

WILLA CATHER

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*Horizons Beach- Lake Massapoag**Jeff Tatro, 2008*

Section 1 Plan Summary

The goals of the Town of Sharon's Open Space and Recreation Plan (**OSRP**) are to facilitate the preservation and protection of Sharon's natural and recreational resources, and its historic character. Sharon's natural and historic character is both a major attraction and subject of concern to the Town's citizens. This natural heritage is also central to the economy of Sharon and to the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens, but the Town is faced with continued population growth, dense development, and financial pressures on its highly residential tax base. The OSRP accordingly describes the Town's efforts and plans to protect and preserve its environmental and recreational interests, recognizing that these needs must be balanced against the competing pressures inevitably created by ongoing development. To address its goals, the OSRP incorporates public input gathered through a public survey and hearings, includes updated data that account for new and ongoing developments, and delineates appropriate objectives and proposed future actions. Since the submission of its preceding OSRP, Sharon has continued its proactive approach to land and water resource protection, while also experiencing significant changes due to new and proposed residential and commercial developments. The OSRP identifies protection of Sharon's water supply as a top priority, in addition to land preservation, enhanced community awareness of recreational opportunities, and enhancement of recreational resources.

Section 2 Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Open Space and Recreation Plan (**OSRP**) is to provide an update on the status of open space and recreation resources in Sharon, to report and summarize public opinion concerning these issues, and to establish updated goals, objectives and plans for future action. The OSRP incorporates substantial input from the OSRP Committee's regular meetings and public input from the public survey conducted and public hearings held for this purpose. The Committee believes the present OSRP will help guide the Town's future efforts to maintain and preserve recreational and open space resources effectively. Such efforts are critical given the vital importance of Sharon's unique natural character to its economy and quality of life, strongly reflected in its civic affairs and in public input solicited specifically for this OSRP. The OSRP is intended as a resource document, and both its submission by the Town and its form are stipulated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The OSRP does not include or imply authority or funding for actions, but represents an advisory compilation of relevant information and input as required. This Plan is designed to reflect the preponderant desire of the Town's residents to ensure that current open space and recreation areas will be maintained and further enhanced as needed, a view supported by the 92% affirmative response to the following question in the public opinion survey conducted for this Plan: "*Do you believe there is a need to conserve open space and natural areas in Sharon?*" ([Appendix A](#)). The OSRP is also designed to inform the Board of Selectmen of the residents' concerns and perceived needs of the community.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

The Sharon OSRP was prepared by the OSRP Committee (**OSRPC**) under the direction of the Sharon Conservation Commission, and in accordance with the *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* and guidelines in the *Open Space Planner's Workbook* (Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs). The OSRPC is a citizen group that was established to represent a wide and comprehensive diversity of civic & citizen constituencies and interests as prescribed in the *Workbook* guidelines.

Membership of the Sharon Conservation Commission:

Margaret Arguimbau, Chair

Hank Langstroth

Stephen Cremer

Janet Dunlap

Stephan Glicken, replaced by Betsy McGrath

Katherine Roth, Associate Director, Community Preservation Coalition

Christine Turnbull, Director, Moose Hill Sanctuary, Mass. Audubon Society

Gregory Meister, Agent

Irene Nasuti, Clerk

Membership of the Sharon Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee:

Margaret Arguimbau	Chair of Conservation Commission
Amanda Sloan	Planning Board member, professional planner
Fred Benjamin	Recreation Commission member
Corey Snow	Historical Commission appointee, recreation advocate
Anne Bingham	Board of Health member
Eric Hooper	Superintendent of Public Works, Water Management Advisory Committee member
Ellenor Yahrmarkt	Supervisor, Borderland State Park
Steve Pascale	Property Manager, Moose Hill Farm, The Trustees of Reservations
Michael Bossin	Economic Development Committee member; Chairman, Horizons for Youth Reuse Advisory Committee; local business owner
Keevin Geller	Economic Development Committee member, local business owner
Kurt Buermann	President, Sharon Friends of Conservation
Jeffrey B. Tatro	Scientific consultant, editor and writer; concerned citizen
Alice Horowitz	Environmentally concerned citizen
Ryan Smith	The Trustees of Reservations, Graphic Arts Specialist
April Forsman	GIS Coordinator, Town of Sharon

The OSRPC conducted bi-monthly meetings to plan and develop the present Open Space and Recreation Master Plan, hereafter called the OSRP, beginning in January 2007 and continuing until its completion. During its meetings the group reviewed the Open Space *Planner's Workbook* and *OSRP Requirements*, developed strategies for accumulating necessary information, planned and conducted public hearings, and designed, developed, and compiled and analyzed the results of a public opinion survey instrument. The Committee then compiled and incorporated all that information into the present OSRP. Many meetings were spent formulating the public opinion survey, which was mailed to every Sharon household in order to obtain citizen input ([Section 6B](#)). Three public hearings were held: the first in May 2007 in the Sharon High School library to gather concerns from residents, a second in October 2007 the same location after distribution of the OSRP public opinion survey; and the third in the Town Hall in June 2008 to review the results of the survey. In addition, all of the Committee's regular meetings have been open to the public. Prior to its final publication, the draft OSRP was released and disseminated to the appropriate boards/committees as outlined in the *Planner's Workbook*.

Section 3 Community Setting

A. Regional Context

Sharon is a historic New England town of about 18,000 residents, whose agricultural and light industrial roots date back historically to the Colonial period. It has above-average estimated median household income of \$93,282, and presently has little or no industry or large employers, but is primarily residential. Situated midway between Boston and Providence on the Commuter Rail and the Boston-Washington D.C. Amtrak lines and Interstate Route 95, it is now principally a suburban commuter community, whose residents live primarily in single-family homes. Sharon is situated on a raised plain on the southern edge of Norfolk County and occupies 24.31 square miles. It is surrounded by the more highly-developed towns of Canton, Stoughton, Easton, Mansfield, Foxboro, Walpole and Norwood.

The following services and amenities are shared by Sharon and its neighboring towns:

- A section of the Boston-Providence commuter rail service runs through Mansfield, Sharon and Canton. Each town has its own station, and the line's northern terminus is at in South Station. A planned southern extension of this line will terminate near T. F. Green Airport in Warwick, R.I., which will likely increase ridership on this line in coming years.
- An interstate highway (I-95) connects Mansfield, Foxboro, Sharon and Canton; Sharon has three access points in a southerly direction and two in a northerly direction.
- Interstate Highway 495 (I-495) lies within five miles of the town line.
- Borderland State Park is located in both Sharon and Easton, with the majority of the acreage in Sharon.
- The historic roadway, the Bay Path, runs through Canton (Washington Street), and continues southward as Bay Road to form the boundary between Sharon and the towns of Stoughton and Easton before continuing southward into Taunton as Bay Street.
- An 11-mile section of the Warner Trail, an Appalachian Mountain Club-sanctioned interstate trail, passes through Foxboro, Sharon and Canton. A section of the Bay Circuit Trail also passes through town.
- The aquifers beneath Sharon are higher in elevation than those in adjacent towns, and therefore provide water to the water supplies of adjoining towns as follows:
 - Billings Brook Aquifer to Foxboro
 - Canoe River Aquifer to Mansfield

The landscape of the Town of Sharon was clearly shaped by glacial action. Its surface varies from lowland marshes to hilltop forests, dotted by ponds and lakes and crossed by many streams. Soils are typically shallow, stony, and dry on hillsides and are richer and deeper in

drainage areas, with wetlands and the more fertile flatlands situated towards the south. Lake Massapoag, one of the State's Great Ponds, lies at the geographical center of Sharon, and is an aesthetic and recreational focal point. Climate is typical of most of Massachusetts and Southern New England. The average temperature ranges from 27° F in January to 71° F in July. Annual rainfall averages about 48 inches. Compared to surrounding towns, Sharon's relatively high elevation places it on the divide between two major watersheds, those of the Neponset River to the north and the Taunton River to the south. Accordingly, Sharon is represented on both the Neponset River Watershed Association (NEPRWA) and the Canoe River Watershed Advisory Council, the advisory body for its sub-watershed of the Taunton River.

Most of Sharon's older urban and residential development is concentrated in an area of flat-to-gently-rolling terrain, with elevations of 200 to 300 feet above sea level. Many of the newer (post-1980's) residential developments are located in the higher-elevation lands, and closer to sensitive resource areas. The Town center is located just north of the 353-acre Lake Massapoag, Sharon's central physical feature. To the northwest and southeast the topography features rugged granite hills and ledges, with hilltop elevations reaching over 500 feet, offering views of the Blue Hills and Boston to the north and Rhode Island to the south. The summit of Moose Hill, the site of a forest fire lookout tower, is 532 feet in elevation. The prospect of Rattlesnake Hill, at an elevation of 431 feet, affords views of Boston and Cape Cod.

[Sharon, MA & Surrounding Area Map](#)



Boston in the distance

Town Photo, 2006

B. History of the Community

Native American - Before English settlement, the Sharon area was inhabited by the Massachusetts and the neighboring Wampanoag tribes. An interesting rock formation off Mansfield Street is known as King Philip's Rock. Tradition has it that Metacom, sachem of the Wampanoag, also known as King Philip by the English settlers, met with other tribal leaders at this site during the Native American uprising known as King Philip's War. In 2001 the Town's Conservation Commission was able to acquire 90+ acres containing both King Philip's Rock and the nearby rock formation known as King Philip's Cave.

Colonial - The English settlement in Boston extended southward with the Dorchester Grant, which included Sharon. Later, the area south of Blue Hill became Stoughton. Sharon eventually became the Second Precinct of Stoughton in 1740, the District of Stoughtonham in 1765 and the Town of Sharon in 1783. Due to the Town's central location between Boston and Providence, during the 17th and 18th centuries it was a stopping point on the Old Post Road between the Bay Colony, later the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Providence Plantation, later Rhode Island (State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations).

Sharon's fields, cedar swamps, streams and Lake Massapoag were all important natural resources. Lake Massapoag, a Great Pond, served in Colonial days as a source of food through fishing, a power source for water-driven mills, and a source of bog iron for cannon, shot, and iron tools. Near the center of Town is located the home and farm of Deborah Sampson Gannett. Deborah Sampson was a woman who fought in the Revolutionary forces by masquerading as a male soldier during the Revolutionary War and has been named the State Heroine of Massachusetts. She is commemorated by a life-size statue of her that stands outside the Sharon Public Library, by a street that is named for her, and by the Town's most popular recreational park, also named for her. She is buried nearby in Sharon's historic Rock Ridge Cemetery.

Agricultural Era / Early 18th -19th century - The rich soil deposited by glacial activity provided the basis for a diversified farming community. Agricultural uses included farms that raised sheep, dairy cows, pigs, poultry, vegetables and orchards. Local cedars that thrived in and around Sharon's wetlands were prized for clapboard, shingles and fence posts. Lake Massapoag and its environs provided crude bog iron that was used to manufacture shot and cannon during the Revolutionary War. The rights of use for water power along Massapoag Brook, known as the six "privileges", provided limited water power for many successful manufacturing enterprises during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Sharon is also home to the first and largest of the wildlife sanctuaries owned and operated by Massachusetts Audubon Society, founded in 1916 and known as The Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the northwestern reaches of Sharon. Additional property was added over the years, and today it contains over 2000 acres. At the opposite end of town, to the southeast, lies the Ames Estate, which is listed on the National Historic Register and is now known as Borderland State Park.

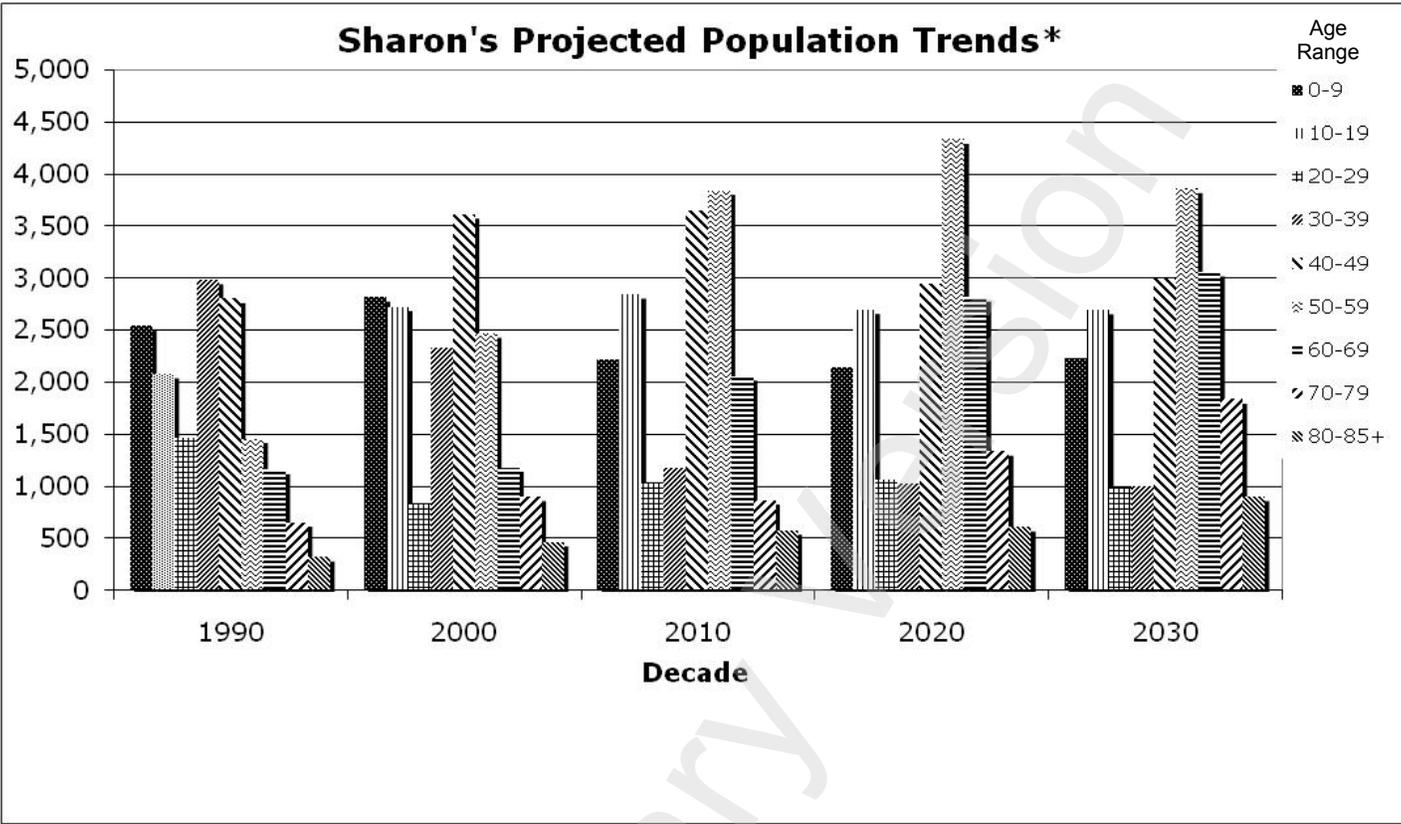
Late 19th – 20th century - Rail service originated in Sharon in 1830, and has since contributed significantly to the Town's development. Early activity centered around the train station in an area still considered the "Town Center". Subsequent development radiated outward from this point, primarily along Route 27 and Main Street, which runs diagonally, northeast to southwest. For a time there were two train stations: one that continues to serve the community today, and another formerly located at Sharon Heights, which served as a freight yard. This allowed Sharon to enter the commercial field, shipping items such as agricultural products and lake ice to Boston and providing express service to and from the city. With train and horse-drawn trolley access, Sharon's resort hotels and guest houses became a favored destination for many urban dwellers. Middle-class businessmen from Boston built summer "cottages" along Lake Massapoag and throughout the Town. During winter months Lake Massapoag became the center of activity for the cutting and storing of ice.

In 1891, Dr. Walter Griffin established the Sharon Sanitarium for Pulmonary Diseases, later re-named the Sharon Sanatorium, which had success in curing tuberculosis in afflicted members of Boston's working class. Part of the Sanitarium still stands today located on Everett Street. With the Town's growing reputation for clear, clean air, pure water and the establishment of the Sharon Sanatorium, rail service helped to promote the development of a hotel, inn and summer tourist industry which continued from the mid- to late 1800's until the 1930's. From its population of 1018 in 1800, Sharon had doubled in size by 1900.

Mid-20th – 21st century - Beginning in the late 1950's small lot development appeared on land that previously had been farmed. Zoning changes were made in the 1960's through 1970's to increase minimum lot sizes, to address both septic concerns and water resource protection issues. Subdivisions continued to appear later, carving a diagonal SW-to-NE swath through the Town. Most recently, cluster development began to be utilized in order to encourage the leaving of intact open areas. By the early 2000's, the burden of the tax base on residential property was a serious concern. This spurred interest in promoting commercial uses or other strategies to increase the tax base especially within the Town center, currently known as Post Office Square. Also, the Town's percentage of affordable housing was below Commonwealth-mandated levels, which led to the proposal and construction of multiple Chapter 40B development proposals. As population continues to increase and environmental concerns relative to air quality come to the forefront, Sharon's rail line access will continue to be a vital component of life in the 21st century. Residents who commute northward to Boston and southward to Providence will continue to enjoy the benefit of easy access to public transportation, precluding their need to commute by driving, while reducing the burden of automotive traffic.

[Historic Features Map](#)

C. Population Characteristics



*Adapted from Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Projections (1/31/2006).

Demographic Trends Sharon is one of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) communities continuing to show population growth. While Sharon's population was projected to increase to 18,235 by the year 2000, the actual 2000 Census showed it to be 17,408, having increased by 1891 (12.2%) since 1990. However, the MAPC projection of 18,315 for the year 2010 was already exceeded by 2006, when the actual population was 18,343. In addition, the MAPC projections for the years 2010, 2020, and 2030 probably need to be increased in order to reflect augmented population growth that will result from recently approved multi-unit residential projects to be constructed in Sharon. Population growth will continue to place increasing demands upon Sharon's water supply, open space, recreational resources, infrastructure and other resources. The marked projected rise in the older (over-50) age brackets suggests that the nature of demands for recreational resources and programs, housing, and services may change dramatically in coming decades. Nevertheless, Sharon already has an active "over-50" population, many members of which are active in Adult Center programs, regular outdoor exercise such as jogging, biking and trail hiking, and conservation activities and programs through organizations such as the Mass. Audubon Society and Moose Hill Reservation and the Sharon Friends of Conservation.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Sharon is a very family-oriented town where many parents come to raise their children and utilize the public school system, one of the

Commonwealth's highest-ranking as measured by standardized academic testing. This has led to tremendous demand for youth sports programs. The Town's independent youth leagues and public schools sports teams alike have created very heavy use and demand for athletic fields and facilities, carrying associated maintenance costs. Groups such as the Sharon Youth Soccer Association continue to seek additional fields with parking to satisfy unmet scheduling demands. Although the above chart projects that the student-age population will stabilize or decline in coming decades, the effects of proposed high-density residential developments could potentially augment this population stratum, depending upon how such projects are eventually approved and occupied.

Recreational Trends

Many citizens of Sharon are highly active and engaged in their environment. It is a rare outing during which one doesn't encounter a walker, runner or biker. On a sunny spring or summer day the Town's parks, trails and roadways also teem with hikers, walkers, a few horseback riders, and Lake Massapoag with swimmers, sunbathers, boaters, kayakers, waterskiers and tubers, windsurfers and sailors. In winter, cross-country skiers and snowshoers use the trails and roadsides, and the Lake is plied by ice-fishermen, skaters and winter hikers. This interest and engagement were strongly evident in the OSRP public opinion survey results, and clearly help define Sharon's appeal as a living community to many residents. Furthermore, Sharon's importance as a resource to the Commonwealth extends far beyond its own citizens in this respect, since its natural attractions draw hikers, bird watchers, kite flyers, beachgoers, triathlon competitors and nature lovers from neighboring and distant towns alike within the Commonwealth, providing opportunities for such visitors to find adventure while connecting with the natural setting in Sharon's open space and waters.



Ice fishing on Lake Massapoag

Jeff Tatro, 2009

Sharon also hosts a thriving athletics environment for competitive team sports, including sports of the public schools and independent youth athletic leagues. Among these, football, lacrosse,

softball, baseball and soccer have gigantic demand. These programs are growing, with both baseball and soccer now holding sessions in both fall and spring. Competition between sports groups for practice/play space has created heavy use of existing field areas, motivating many townspeople to seek to create new active-recreation areas.

Demand for recreational opportunities and venues seems to be burgeoning reflecting a very positive and healthy trend amongst Sharon's townspeople and its visitors. Nevertheless, a tight squeeze often exists between bikers, walkers, in-line skaters, joggers and vehicles on Sharon's scenic but narrow roads. Many trails and athletic and other recreational facilities are in need of basic maintenance or upgrades, and public opinion expressed in the OSRP survey responses and at the public hearings conducted by the OSRPC indicated widespread support for addressing these needs. Therefore, continued care and enhancement of natural recreational venues and athletic venues alike are warranted, and in turn will continue to serve and enhance the public interest within the Town and the Commonwealth.

Complementing its recreational interests and needs, Sharon's citizens, visitors and economy alike would benefit from a wider choice of appealing venues for a snack or dining after a day's activity. Public opinion to this effect was expressed in the OSRP public survey responses. According to the OSRP Public Survey results, residents recognize a need for redevelopment of areas such as the Town center to provide a variety of inviting restaurants and shops – improvements and effective space utilization that would do much to improve Sharon's appeal and its economy. Indeed, Sharon's is a classical New England town center, largely picturesque and historic, but one that prominently features multiple unused or derelict properties that detract from the area's cohesiveness and economic core. The area already features a number of attractive, quality business establishments, but lacks a critical mass as suggested by feedback in the OSRP Survey. Recent improvements to the town center's infrastructure including improved sidewalks, lighting, and a Town Clock and memorial have upgraded the area's accessibility and appeal, and redevelopment of the vacant former Wilber School into attractive housing is underway. Also, the Town hosts occasional events such as a Halloween parade and recently a summer-time "Square Jam" event that features quality live music and food offerings by local establishments, which bring activity to this key area. However, there remains a critical need for appropriate redevelopment and use of the unused properties and nearby environment as to contribute promote a thriving and attractive center of social activity and commerce. Efforts to revitalize Post Office Square are being studied as of this writing.

Grassroots Role in Open Space & Recreation Resource Management Sharon's natural and recreational resources are beneficiaries of the vigorous volunteer efforts of private citizens who belong to grass-roots initiatives and organizations. These include groups such as the Mass. Audubon Society, Sharon Friends of Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts, 4-H Club, The Trustees of Reservations, various youth and adult athletic organizations and others. Such individuals and groups provide all manner of trail work and improvements, athletic facility maintenance, and recreational and park improvements. Their efforts also achieve some visibility that helps to raise public awareness. Nevertheless, increased publicity of such groups' activities and accomplishments would serve to better promote public awareness about Sharon's recreational and open space resources, another need that was revealed in public responses to the OSRP survey. In order to marshal the resources to carry out larger-scale

improvement projects that require significant funding and resources, however, the Town will need to pursue focused objectives and seek support for these through external funding mechanisms. Such needs and objectives are described in [Sections 7](#) and [8](#).

D. Growth and Development Patterns

1. Patterns and trends

Development patterns in Sharon have changed considerably since our last OSRP. Single-family conventional subdivisions, the last sizeable example of which was the Sharon Woods subdivision consisting of 220 homes, have all but disappeared from proposed plans. Multiple recent proposals have exceeded housing units in number, and are designed as higher-density projects consisting of apartments and/or condominiums. These existing and proposed developments have been situated on land privately held as open and, though removed from the center of Town location, are located near or abutting other developed sections of Town. Examples include:

- Avalon Sharon, a completed 156-unit rental complex, formerly a Chapter 61A parcel located near the Walpole town line.
- Bella Estates, a 26-unit conservation subdivision design (CSD) single-family residential housing development on privately held open acreage amidst a residential area near the center of Town with only a small number of units completed.
- The Residences at Old Post Road, an approved 45-unit apartment complex on privately held open acreage located on the Sharon/Walpole town line.
- Sharon Commons, a proposed combination commercial and 168-unit residential development on 70 acres of privately held open acreage located near the Foxboro town line at the I-95 interchange.
- Sharon Hills, a large-scale proposal combining commercial, residential and healthcare uses, including 624 housing units and a 150-bed nursing home, located on Rattlesnake Hill, on 330 acres of privately held open acreage located on the Stoughton town line.

[Map of Proposed and Approved Developments](#)

Due to the relatively small and diminishing amount of remaining developable land, these developments are typical of those recently favored by developers proposing to build in Sharon. Residential developments currently planned and under construction will be clustered or multi-unit in design, resulting in higher population density. For example, the proposed development of Rattlesnake Hill, one of Sharon's largest remaining privately owned open areas will include 6 eight-story buildings plus an adjacent nursing home for a total of 780 residents on 87 acres. In addition, the completed Avalon Sharon and Sharon Commons, presently under construction,

are high-density residential developments, with 156 units on 25 acres and 168 units on 10 acres. The resulting increased residential densities and numbers of units per project virtually guarantees that Sharon's population growth rate projected earlier based upon conventional detached-housing subdivision developments will likely be exceeded. In addition, these developments will dramatically increase vehicular traffic throughout many areas and access routes in Sharon as a result of increased travel by new residents, commercial customers and clients, and employees of these facilities. Planned and other future roadway modifications to accommodate the increased traffic flows will likely encroach upon roadside open space areas, such as occurred when Old Post Road was widened to accommodate access to Sharon Commons.

Communities such as Sharon, having direct commuter rail access to Boston and Providence and relatively short driving distances to those cities and other employment centers, will likely continue to become even more attractive to prospective residents in the near and long-term future. In addition, four major retail developments are currently under construction or recently completed in Sharon and the neighboring towns of Foxboro, Westwood and Dedham. These will offer Sharon residents wider choices in shopping, dining and entertainment, as well as professional services, further increasing the appeal of Sharon. See *MAPC Employment Projection for Town of Sharon* ([Appendix B](#)).

As a measure to mitigate the loss of open space, zoning changes for the Sharon Hills, Avalon Sharon and Sharon Commons developments were approved based upon the preservation within each of substantial acreage of open space, conveyed to the Conservation Commission.

Another attractive strategy for future development that would favor the preservation of remaining open space in Sharon, but that to date has been underutilized, would be to reuse and redevelop existing properties. For example, after extensive study the former Wilber School on South Main Street is presently being renovated for construction of 79 apartments. Other prominent candidates for such development or reuse include the Town center and the former Sacred Heart Academy located at the Deborah Sampson Park.

Recent significant increases in taxes (12% over the past 5 years) to the residential base have brought focus to the need to supplement town revenue by expanding the commercial/industrial base. The high-density residential developments are expected to increase revenues but will increase the burden of demand for town services. Accordingly, efforts are also underway to utilize or re-use Sharon's remaining commercial/industrial land, although only a small portion of land in Town is devoted to that use. A recent accomplishment in this respect was the change of the Sansone Sand and Gravel Business to the Herb Chambers Lexus Dealership on US Rt.1 near the Walpole town line. Another was the re-zoning of residential land to accommodate the Sharon Commons Development, which has a high-density residential component but is primarily designed as a retail center. A chart of proposed developments is appended ([Appendix C](#)).

2. Infrastructure

a. Transportation –

Situated midway between Routes 128 and 495, Sharon is well served from many directions by a diverse interstate and regional transportation network. Interstate Route 95, U.S. Route 1, Route 27, North and South Main Streets, and the rail line operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provide convenient access to points north and south, including the employment and cultural centers of Boston and Providence. The path of the railway and the creation of postal roads from Boston figured prominently in the historical development of Sharon. U.S. Route 1 originated as a colonial postal route linking Boston to New York via Providence. Old Post Road is a relic of one of the original branches of this route. Across Town, forming the easterly boundary of Sharon is Bay Road, another colonial postal route linking Boston to Taunton. Historic taverns and homes dot this road. Sharon's rail line is part of AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor. On this line the MBTA provides commuter service linking Sharon to points south and north ranging between Providence Station in Providence and South Station in Boston. To accommodate growth in the commuting sector of the population and increased demand for its service, in recent years the Commuter Rail has added morning and evening express trains and late-night trains and provides holiday and weekend service. Also, the Town has recently added approximately 200 new parking spaces to promote use of the service, and nearly all available spots are routinely occupied daily.

Transportation access to Sharon is facilitated by the location of I-95 on the western edge of town, which provides easy connections to most points in town, and links to other major highways. Route 27 provides easy access to the retail and commercial outlets on US Route 1 and to the neighboring towns of Walpole, Stoughton, Brockton and other points northeast and southwest. Ready accessibility to transportation, employment and desired amenities will continue to make Sharon an attractive community in which to reside.

With Routes 1 and I-95 serving as major commuter routes, the Town can anticipate a continued increase in traffic on Route 27 and North and South Main Street. These roads link Sharon and surrounding communities to the northbound and southbound ramps of I-95 and to various points along Route 1. As the Town continues to grow, residential and commercial development along these roads will increase traffic and will further impact the character of the Town and various open space and recreation interests.

b. Water supply systems –

Sharon's water supply is a critical resource of the Town. Consequently, significant measures have been taken to assure its protection. The Water Department services about 98% of the Town's year-round residents plus the summertime population that concentrates around Lake Massapoag at several summer camps. Private wells service the remaining 2%.

The Town operates and maintains six shallow groundwater wells, four above-ground reservoir tanks and over 125 miles of water mains. The average current daily demand on the system is

roughly 1.45 million gallons per day (mgd). As a result of stringent outdoor water use restrictions, aggressive leak detection and main repair and other conservation measures, maximum daily demand has been reduced over the past 10 years from a peak of approximately 3 mgd to approximately 2.25 mgd in 2006.

In the Town of Sharon, as in most of Massachusetts, groundwater of sufficient quality, quantity and yield is usually found in stratified drift deposits. Groundwater in the stratified-drift aquifers in the Town of Sharon is unconfined. This type of aquifer is not overlain by a confining low-permeability deposit that would help to pressurize the distribution system. Recharge to the aquifer is by infiltration from precipitation, by lateral leakage from adjacent till and bedrock and from septic system discharge. Discharge from the aquifer is by leakage to the small streams and ponds in the Town, by evaporation in areas where groundwater is near land surface and by non-returned pumpage.

Sharon's water sources consist of aquifers in three separate watersheds: the Beaver Brook Watershed in the Neponset River Basin and the Billings Brook and Canoe River Watersheds in the Taunton River Basin. The Canoe River Aquifer was awarded "sole source" status, which provides for additional levels of review in certain projects that may impact its water quality. To further protect the Town's aquifers and water supply, approximately 50 acres within the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp was recently acquired.

Municipal well withdrawal is limited by DEP permit to a daily maximum of 3.12 mgd and an annual withdrawal of approximately 649 million gallons, which is considered adequate through the year 2020. Water quality is considered satisfactory. The Town currently treats the water for corrosion control and also provides for fluoridation and disinfection. Concern has been expressed that additional treatment may be necessary to meet more stringent regulations under the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Also under consideration is the issue of additional storage, a high-service zone, and identifying and protecting additional well sites.

The Town has implemented an aquifer protection plan that is incorporated in its current Zoning By-laws. Increased levels of protection may be necessary as the Town may face water quality issues as well as the need for new sources.

Three of the Town's wells are located in the Beaver Brook subwatershed of the Neponset River basin, two wells are located in the Billings Brook subwatershed of the Taunton River and one well is located in the Canoe River subwatershed of the Taunton River Basin. No new wells have been permitted during the past 10 years. Approximately 60% of annual withdrawals are made from wells in the Neponset River basin.

A portion of the Beaver Brook subwatershed aquifer is located beneath a high-development area including the town center and along South Main Street. Water quality in this aquifer has the greatest risk of degradation as a result of septic system recharge, and the water may eventually become less desirable for use. If water quality degradation occurs, the other aquifer areas in the Town will become increasingly more valuable as drinking water supply decreases, and therefore those areas are very important to protect. The Town intends to aggressively protect the recharge areas of all its municipal wells.

Final approval of the Zone II's of existing wells has been obtained from the DEP, and a continuing effort is underway to identify locations suitable for future wells. The Sharon Water Department has recently acquired more than 45 acres of watershed parcels contributing to existing wells, and plans future acquisitions.

Given the need to maintain the integrity of its water supply, in 2007 the Town participated in a pilot study, funded by a state matching grant, utilizing a Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) system developed by the Stockholm Environmental Institute. This examines the environmental effects if/when the costs of water management decisions are internalized. Consideration is focused on a holistic and comprehensive analysis of water resource management. With many upcoming development proposals signaling a high demand for this resource, this study will hopefully be a solid planning tool allowing the Town a more thorough review of projected impacts. As a result, effective remediation strategies may be identified and perhaps utilized to prioritize concerns and maintain both the quality and the quantity of the Town's water supply resources. See [Section 4A- Geology, Soils, and Topography](#)

c. Sewer/Wastewater service –

The majority of wastewater in Town is treated by on-lot septic systems. The Town has very limited areas of private sewers, no public sewers, 2 operating package wastewater treatment systems, 1 proposed system fully approved, and 3 more in the planning stages. Presently, Sharon Woods, a large development in the south of town and Avalon Sharon, an apartment/condo complex are connected to out-of-town sewers in Mansfield and Norwood, respectively. Treatment plants provide a significantly higher quality of effluent, but also allow for significantly greater density and development.

On-lot septic systems have not been a major problem for the Town, because failed systems can generally be successfully rebuilt to meet Board of Health standards. In the center of town, soils are not particularly suitable for the existing housing density. Perched conditions and minimal but an unknown number of antiquated cesspools are present within this old established area of Sharon. Consequently, the long-term groundwater quality of this portion of the Massapoag Brook watershed is questionable and presents difficulties with regard to future water supply production. Should the Town locate a site containing significant overlay depth for a new production well within this aquifer, establishment of limited sewerage practices may be necessary to insure its long-term viability. The extreme cost of sewerage this area of Town presents challenges. The Economic Development Committee has hired a consultant for the purpose of studying the Post Office Square wastewater remediation and alternatives. A more attainable and practical alternative for replacement of failed or substandard systems may be to require an overdig of the existing leaching area and incorporation of appropriate soil classes in the new leaching fields.

Concern has also been expressed regarding septic system leachate making its way to Lake Massapoag via groundwater flow from residences located near the Lake. While efforts are being made to bring these systems into compliance with Board of Health Regulations, various leaching fields are located well within the required 125 ft. setback from this important town resource, and a number of cesspools remain. Such systems probably do contribute to the

nitrogen/phosphorous loading of the Lake, increasing its potential for eutrophication. Investigation into methods of sewerage and treating wastewater from these homes has been done by the Town in the past, but the cost was judged prohibitive.

3. Long-Term Development Patterns

Sharon has grown from its early beginnings as a rural agricultural town through the 1950's to its more recent suburban-bedroom type of community. Due to the central location of Lake Massapoag and the Town's geographic location halfway between Boston and Providence, it became a very desirable place to live. It is overwhelmingly residential with a small percentage of industrial/commercial area.

Residential zones comprise most of the Town's area, covering 97% of the Town. The nine residential districts are Rural Districts 1 & 2, Single Residence Districts A & B, Suburban Districts 1 & 2, General Residence District, Professional District, and Housing Authority District. The Business Districts are A, B, C, and D. There is one Light Industrial District. There are also several overlay districts. All residential zones allow single family residences and agriculture only. The two exceptions are the Housing Authority District which allows multiple residence housing and the General Residence District which allows two family housing and hotels or boarding houses. Please see the zoning dimensional requirements sheet. Business Districts A, B, and C allow business or professional offices, retail stores, personal services, restaurants, and single and two family residences. The Light Industrial District allows industrial businesses, retail, restaurants, professional offices, and medical offices or clinics. The objective of Business District D is to promote lifestyle center development accommodating retail, office and other uses within free-standing structures reflective of traditional New England architectural style in locations where a large development area is available with suitable access to Interstate 95, impacts to neighboring residential areas can be minimized, and adverse traffic and environmental impacts can be mitigated.

There are several overlay districts such as three Historic Districts, a Groundwater Protection District, Surface Water Protection District, Senior Living Overlay District, and Sharon Commons Smart Growth Overlay District. The Historic Districts were created to preserve Sharon's Historic buildings and any changes or additions in these overlay Districts are subject to review by the Sharon Historical Commission. The Ground and Surface Water Protection Districts were created to protect Sharon's water resources. There are many restrictions on uses and clearing, impervious materials coverage, and clearing are regulated. There are lot size restrictions in these districts as well. The Senior Living Overlay District was created in order to allow an age qualified complex of independent living units and nursing home care for senior citizens and senior citizens with disabilities. The Sharon Commons Smart Growth Overlay District was created in Business District D to foster a range of housing opportunities to be proposed in a distinctive and attractive site development program that promotes compact design, preservation of open space, and a variety of transportation options, including enhanced pedestrian access to employment and nearby transportation systems.

Options to encourage economic development and greater availability of both affordable and age-qualified housing came to the forefront for consideration by Town residents. While these

new projects are hoped and projected to increase gross town revenues, the full eventual impacts of their demand upon town services and infrastructure will not be fully realized and measurable for some years, and consequently are impossible to project with any degree of accuracy.

For example, the Town still operates five schools, the same number it has operated since the mid-1960's. In the last 15 years, each of the schools has had additions constructed. At present, plans are underway for renovations to the Middle School that will incorporate added classroom space and accommodate the Early Childhood Program and School Department administrative offices. However, population patterns in recently-built and planned high-density developments will affect overall growth and development, potentially creating a need for a new school in the future.

[Zoning Map](#)

Preliminary Version

Section 4 Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

The surficial geography of Sharon consists of three main components: 1) sand and gravel deposits; 2) till or bedrock; and 3) a smaller section of floodplain alluvium that originates in the northern end of town and becomes more substantial to the south. Development has occurred in both the sand-and-gravel and the till areas, which are also responsible for Sharon's rich water supply. There are significant permanently-protected open areas containing these soils that allow for excellent recharge and purification.

Sharon is situated at the top of the Neponset and Taunton River Basin. Its groundwater aquifers are replenished solely by rain and snowmelt. Given that the Town's water supply comes entirely from groundwater sources, the recharging of those sources is vital. Development necessitates access to water, increasing demands on the Town's limited water resources. The Sharon Hills development, which is in planning at the time of writing, would be located in an area of Sharon wherein its wastewater will be discharged to an area that will not permit recharge of the water supply, due to inter-basin transfer. Essentially, water will be removed from one basin within the Town and recharged into another that is inaccessible for the Town's use, thus creating higher demand on a resource that is being depleted due to loss of recharge. Adding further stress to that condition is the increased density allowed in those developments, thus creating a greater demand for municipal water. Also, due to the presence of significant and sizeable bedrock areas atop Rattlesnake Hill, the capacity for wastewater disposal from Sharon Hills is technically challenging. Another example of inter-basin transfer is the recently-approved Avalon Sharon apartment complex. It is served by Town water, but its wastewater is piped into the MWRA sewer system in Norwood. See section [3D2b- Water Supply Systems](#)

[Soil Map](#), [Soil Codes](#), & [Surficial Geology Map](#)

B. Landscape Character

Although its character has changed somewhat due to ongoing development and will be impacted more dramatically by proposed and approved major developments, the landscape of Sharon still features rural and open areas. It is common for visitors to comment that Sharon's greenery represents a kind of oasis amongst the burgeoning growth in many towns along the Route 128 beltway.

Acres of flat, fertile productive soil farmed by Ward's Berry Farm greet those arriving from the southwest. Crescent Ridge Dairy Farm & Ice Cream Stand welcomes those entering from the northeast. Borderland State Park abuts the entryway from the south. Entering town from the

north, along Route 27, one sees a vista of forest and fields, part of Massachusetts Audubon Society's Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, that form the gateway to Sharon. Planned and existing new developments such as Avalon Sharon, a recently completed large apartment complex located near Exit 10 will alter these aspects of arrival into Sharon. Also Sharon Commons, a "lifestyle" mall located at Exit 8 of Route I-95 has preserved the 15 acres of cranberry bogs which front the mall entrance.



South Main Street Cranberry Bogs

Margaret Arguimbau, 2007

Moose Hill Sanctuary, the first Audubon Bird Sanctuary in New England, is itself a landmark, containing the second highest point between Boston and Providence, RI (Blue Hills being the highest). On the opposite side of town is located Rattlesnake Hill, from where a vista of the Boston skyline and the bowl-like geography surrounding the City of Boston can be easily discerned. It lies within a large privately owned parcel located just outside the boundaries of Borderland State Park. Rattlesnake Hill is noted for its regionally unusual geologic formations, abundant wildlife, priority habitat, significant vistas, and numerous winding cart paths and trails. As of March 2007, a private developer has been undertaking a project which will build 6 eight-story buildings plus an adjacent nursing home to house a total of 780 residents. Plans include dedicating 250 acres of the 337 acre parcel, including the hill, to be turned over to the Conservation Commission and annexed to existing open space acreage, and an additional 36 acres to be put under Conservation Restriction.

Historically, Sharon has been known for its "healing air" and exceptional water. The Town's elevation is a major factor in this. Because Sharon sits at higher elevation than the abutting towns, it receives no contributing water run-off from other towns. Sharon's large swamp areas, less visible due to their interior locations, are essential in maintaining the fine quality of the water supply; a factor that will only increase in importance as development continues and demand increases.

C. Water Resources and Watershed Components

Sharon lies at the headwaters of two large river basins, the Taunton River Basin to the south and the Neponset River Basin to the north. In the south, drainage from streams in Sharon (Turning Mill Brook, Billings Brook, Rumford River, Canoe River, Poquanticut Brook, Queset Brook and Whitman Brook) flows southward through the Three Mile, Mill and Town Rivers into the Taunton River. It eventually exits the Taunton River basin into Narragansett Bay near Fall River, Massachusetts. Drainage from Lake Massapoag, its tributaries and other streams in Sharon (School Meadow Brook, Spring Brook, Beaver Brook, Massapoag Brook, Trap Hole Brook and Hill Brook) flows northward into the Neponset River and eventually exits the Neponset River Basin at Dorchester Bay.

Billings Brook watershed The Billings Brook watershed covers a 5.09 square mile area and extends from the Town of Sharon into the Town of Foxborough, the larger portion in Sharon. This watershed drains to the south primarily by Billings Brook in its northern reaches. The source waters of Billings Brook are the wetlands to the north and northeast, including the cranberry bog ponds and Wolomolopoag Pond. There is a drop in elevation of approximately 41 feet from Wolomolopoag Pond to Gavin's Pond. South of Gavin's Pond the major drainage is the Rumford River that flows south approximately 1.4 miles through Vandy's Pond and out of this sub-basin of the Taunton River drainage area. The water elevation drop between Gavin's Pond and Vandy's Pond is approximately 19 feet.

Canoe River sub-basin Only a very small portion of the Canoe River sub-basin is actually located in the Town of Sharon. This sub-basin extends from its northernmost reaches in the Town of Sharon (also the northern extent of the Taunton River Basin) south into the towns of Foxborough, Mansfield and Norton. The northern portion of the Canoe River sub-basin is Lake Massapoag, which has an average elevation of 251 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The Canoe River flows south approximately 10 miles until it enters into Winnecunnet Pond at an elevation of approximately 70 feet above MSL.

Beaver Brook sub-basin This is a small sub-basin located just north of the Taunton-Neponset Watershed divide. The limits of this watershed lie entirely within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon. The source of Beaver Brook is both groundwater and surface runoff. Several tributaries south of Hobb's Hill contribute to the formation of Beaver Brook, which then flows north-northeasterly for approximately 1.8 miles leaving the sub-basin just south of Sawmill Pond. The elevation at Beaver Brook's headwaters is approximately 370 MSL. The elevation as the brook leaves the sub-basin is approximately 180 feet above MSL, a drop in elevation of approximately 190 feet.

Lake Massapoag The largest body of water in the area is Lake Massapoag, a 353-acre lake that features a rich history ([see Section 3B](#)) and a high level of recreational use. Subsequent to the submission of Sharon's preceding OSRP, Town officials, following public deliberations, established the priorities for the Lake's uses as follows: 1) swimming; 2) boating; and 3) fishing, while respecting the needs of the downstream watershed. Accordingly, the Lake's water quality is managed in large part by regulating its water flow through the Lake Level Policy ([Appendix D](#)).

The Lake Level Policy was established by the Town's Lake Management Committee, and is enforced by way of an Order of Condition through the Conservation Commission. To accomplish the objectives of the policy, a document entitled "Procedures and Schedules for Controlling the Water Level in Lake Massapoag" was drafted and implemented beginning in June 1992. Lake Massapoag empties into Massapoag Brook, which runs for approximately 3.5-4 miles through a number of smaller ponds: Hammershop Pond, Knife Shop Pond, Mann's Pond, and Trowel Shop Pond (aka Car Shop Pond), before finally exiting into Canton. At this time, the Town draws no water from Massapoag Brook watershed and recent research indicates that it has very low potential for a Town well.

Isolated wetlands The influence of glaciation and other geological conditions created numerous isolated wetlands throughout the Town. These wetlands vary in size, but nearly all contribute in some degree to the interests identified in the Wetlands Protection Act; MGL Ch 130 S.40. These interests include, but are not limited to, protection of public and private water supply, protection of groundwater supply, flood control, storm damage prevention, prevention of pollution, protection of land containing shellfish, protection of fisheries and protection of wildlife habitat. In addition to their local importance in detaining storm flows, recharging Sharon's aquifers and protecting ground and surface waters, many serve as vernal pools which are critical in the life cycles of amphibians and reptiles, including certain rare native species. Isolated wetlands and vernal pools have been afforded greater protection under the Town's Wetland Protection By-law.

[Aquifer/Sub-basin Map](#)

D. Vegetation

The Town of Sharon is characterized by a predominant forest cover typical of that in southeastern Massachusetts, in addition to various distinctive features. The Town abides by the [Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 87](#) as it pertains to shade trees. Shade trees are planted by the Town as memorials in parks and along roadsides.

The east side of town, from Borderland State Park to Bay Road, is characterized by its forest, including chestnut and a variety of oaks including black, red, white, and scrub. Historically, this forest was cut over for charcoal. The entire area burned in the 1950's making the present age of the forest fairly evenly distributed at 50+ years. Within this section of town, Rattlesnake Hill was named for its Eastern Timber Rattlesnakes, although none have been documented for many years. Rattlesnake Hill area, Borderland State Park, and most of Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary have been designated Priority and Estimated Habitat by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

The west side of town with its hilly terrain and most notable feature, Moose Hill, is characterized by a scenic mixed forest of hardwoods. These include Sugar Maple, Beech, White Ash and various oak species. There is also a large number of chestnuts attempting to make a comeback from the once-magnificent chestnut forest of Moose Hill. White Pine and Hemlock dominate as the evergreen species, although Eastern Red Cedar and Pitch Pine are

a common part of the landscape. The Massachusetts Audubon Society continues to update its extensive and thorough inventory of the flora and fauna within the Sanctuary.

The south side of town, noted for its flat terrain and fertile soils, includes one of Norfolk County's largest Atlantic White Cedar Swamps, which acts as a water purification system for much of the Town's water supply. In many wetland areas in this area, Red (or Swamp) Maple is the dominant species. In the drier areas, White Pine and mixed hardwoods are the most common forest type. The north section of Town is quite similar to the south, with a forest cover of White Pine and mixed hardwoods including Yellow, Black and Gray Birch, Black Cherry and American Elm, and several species of oaks.

Wetlands are vital to Sharon's surface and groundwater supply. They purify and recharge our lakes, ponds, streams, and aquifers including Lake Massapoag, Wolomolopoag Pond, and numerous man-made ponds; streams including Massapoag Brook, Beaver Brook, Billings Brook, Devil's Brook, Canoe River and numerous feeder streams; and adjacent swamps, bogs and marshes. All these wetlands support essentially every typical wetland plant, herbaceous and woody, facultative and obligatory, that is characteristic of southeastern Massachusetts.

The Town of Sharon is not aware of any rare, threatened, or endangered species of trees, however we are aware of one endangered species of grass (*Scheuchzeria palustris*).

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

1. FISHERIES - The Town of Sharon has excellent public fishing spots and a private club, the Sharon Fish and Game Club. Numerous ponds and streams are homes to a wide variety of fish. Both Lake Massapoag and Massapoag Brook are stocked by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Sport fishing is an important component of recreation and open space use and also a boon to the local economy, as fishermen from Sharon and elsewhere can be seen year-round along the shores, in boats, and out on the ice of Lake Massapoag.

2. WILDLIFE - Despite the continuing development of Sharon, there has been a resurgence of Massachusetts forest as old fields are abandoned. This encourages species such as the white-tail deer which are commonly seen in back yards, clearings and crossing roads.



Snapping Turtle laying eggs

Jeff Tatro, 2006

Amphibians & Reptiles Sharon's wetlands are vital to the protection and survival of amphibians. There are many salamander breeding sites, and many of the migratory lanes cross over roadways, among which Moose Hill Street is the most notable. American Toad,

Gray Tree Frog, Spring Peepers, Wood Frogs, Green Frogs, Bull Frogs, Pickerel and Leopard Frogs all depend upon the Town's wetlands. The numbers of reptiles seem to be decreasing. Reptiles such as Garter Snakes, Snapping Turtles and Painted Turtles are very common, while others including the Spotted Turtle, Box Turtle and the Black Racer Snake are seldom seen. Timber rattlesnakes were once found near the Borderland State Park area, although there have been no documented sightings in many years. However, Sharon's continued habitation by rat snakes, wood turtles, box turtles and Blanding's turtles indicates that it still provides needed habitat remaining to support rare and endangered wildlife. The Conservation Commission protects migratory routes and vernal pool breeding sites. At the present time, there are 23 certified vernal pools in Sharon.

Birds Within the Town, a large variety of both native and migratory species can be seen, as indicated by the recent bird count inventory conducted by the Mass. Audubon Society ([Appendix E](#)). Large species include a wide range of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. The latter include bald eagles, which have been seen at Lake Massapoag during the winter near openings in the ice. Although not residents, they are a welcome presence to the winter wildlife. Owing to its nearly 3000 acres of open space wildlife habitat, Sharon continues to attract bird and wildlife watchers from around New England. This acreage, exemplified particularly by the land within Moose Hill Sanctuary, is noted for its topographic diversity, with a mixture of geologic structure ranging from granite bedrock outcrops, solid and features derived from glacial deposition (outwash fill, moraines, sand plains, eskers, drumlins, kettle holes), wetlands, well-drained upland soils and some of the best agricultural soils east of Worcester. Because the geologic and floristic make-up of Moose Hill Sanctuary is representative of other areas of Sharon, ongoing resource inventories consisting of bird counts, recorded sightings and research performed by the Audubon Society provide a useful measure of the flora and fauna elsewhere in Town.



Bald Eagle perched by Lake Massapoag

Ilan Fisher 2009

Mammals Sharon is home to large mammals such as the whitetail deer, the eastern coyote and fox. Recently, we have had documented sightings of usually elusive species. Bobcats, fishers, and river otters have been seen in many ponds and streams, though they are considered to be transients. Smaller mammals include a wide variety of species typical to the region, including muskrats, mink, weasel, raccoon, opossum, skunks, squirrels, chipmunk, cotton-tail rabbits, woodchucks, moles, voles, field mice, bats and a host of other common species. The contiguous tracts of acreage provided by a number of large abutting parcels in Sharon creates a high-quality habitat and resource that is unique within southeastern Massachusetts. This provides a critical link within the wildlife corridor that sustains biodiversity in the region.



Fawn by Massapoag Brook

Margaret Arguimbau, 2007

Threatened, Endangered, and Species of Special Concern Within the Town of Sharon, the following animals have a status of special concern; Eastern Box and Spotted Turtles, Four-toed and Blue Spotted Salamanders, Oak and Hessel's Hairstreak and Frosted Elfin Butterflies, and Eastern Pondmussel. Species designated as threatened are Blanding's Turtle and Marbled Salamander. The only endangered species known within the Town is the Eastern Ratsnake.

Wildlife Habitat and Ecology Within Sharon's open space, the variation in elevation, soils and available moisture provide for a relatively diverse range of plant species and community representation. The existence of significant "edge" or ecotone between the different communities, such as field and forest, wetland and adjacent upland, provides significant habitat to support a variety of wildlife species. Also contributing to the diversity and vigor of wildlife populations are the networks of historic stone walls that criss-cross many forested areas including those of Moose and Rattlesnake Hills. These often form boundaries between vegetative zones such as forest and meadow, and serve to provide habitat for small mammals, snakes and other creatures that forage in the nearby forest and field communities.

Also significant to wildlife in Sharon are the various utility transmission easements that traverse the landscape. The significant impact resulting from the mechanical and chemical treatments

employed to control vegetation within these easements continues to be a concern of the Conservation Commission. Use of the transmission lines by off-road vehicles and dirt bikes continues to cause some erosion, soil compaction and negative impacts to adjoining public and private property. Nevertheless, these easements provide valuable "edge" communities that connect various plant communities and habitats. They are significant to wildlife by either directly fulfilling the food, shelter and water requirements of various species, or by facilitating easier access to these essentials when they exist in distant areas of a given species' range. Additionally, the utility easements provide permanently-maintained linkages between open space parcels. They are clearly important recreation and wildlife corridors.

Accordingly, the Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary staff has worked with the utility companies to develop a less-intrusive vegetation management plan for corridor sections traversing the Sanctuary. Further restrictions on chemical vegetative treatment, particularly near wetlands, and selected mowing have created a virtually undisturbed shrub and herbaceous layer on these rights-of-way. These efforts have vastly improved the habitat value of these corridor sections. For similar reasons, over the years the Conservation Commission has also worked to modify vegetative management plans for other corridor sections in Town. Both the Mass. Transit Authority and the utility companies have been consulted and cooperated in those modifications. Those stretches closest to wetlands, other sensitive areas, and/or adjacent to or linking public open space were prioritized for attention.

[Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Map](#)

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

1. Scenic Landscapes

Despite Sharon's proximity to the urban areas of Boston, Brockton, and Providence, and significant recent development plans, some of its more scenic and unique landscapes remain. The varied topography of the Town provides many scenic areas and vistas. At any time of year, a walk, drive or bike ride along the serpentine portion of Massapoag Avenue that follows Lake Massapoag's shoreline, provides a beautiful lakeshore vista, often featuring boaters in vessels of many kinds, a soaring osprey, or a beautiful sunset. The views from the two highest elevation points, the top of Moose Hill, situated within the Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary (**MHWS**), and Rattlesnake Hill are impressive. Rattlesnake Hill is accessed by many paths and for years people have walked to its summit to gain expansive views of land as far away as Rhode Island. Presently, the acreage surrounding this hill is under plans for development. The proposal calls for significant acreage to be kept open (250 acres donated to SCC and 36 acres protected by a private Conservation Restriction), with a cluster of high-rise buildings (up to 8 stories) and high-density residences (630 units) built on the remaining 50+ acres.



View of the corn rows at Ward's Berry Farm

Ryan Smith, 2008

Agricultural Landscape and Scenic Roads

Motorists, bikers and joggers traveling along South Main Street enjoy vistas of the large areas of fertile land farmed by the Ward family, reminiscent of Sharon's agrarian past. The forested backdrop to the fields creates a radiant autumn spectacle that can compare to any in New England. In the northern end of town there remain two working farms, Crescent Ridge Dairy and the Arguimbau Farm, both of which provide agricultural vistas with their dairy animals and their rolling pastures. The Trustees of Reservations recently established a new site, Moose Hill Farm, adjacent to Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, and initiated plans to continue agricultural activities there and encourage increased public usage of this picturesque and historically relevant reservation.

Within the Planning Board Rules and Regulations ([Appendix F](#)), the Town has designated twelve Scenic Roads. This designation affords them certain statutory protection upon submittals for development. They are mostly narrow, usually tree-lined or bordered by historic stone walls, and pass through older areas of Town. Among these, one of the most prominent is Mountain Street that remains partially unpaved but graded. If completed as planned, the proposed large-scale development known as Sharon Hills that is contained within a neighboring land parcel will surely alter Mountain Street's "dirt-road" status. Another is the Old Post Road, a historic remnant of the colonial postal "roadway" linking Boston and New York, that undoubtedly started out as a trail used by Native Americans. After land clearing for Sharon Commons, another planned large-scale development that includes retail, services and clustered residences, even less of the original road remains.

Scenic Landscapes via the Hiking Trail System

Sharon has a variety of woodland trails, including segments of certain regional trail systems (see [Unique Features Map](#)). For example, the Warner Trail, an inter-state Appalachian Mountain Club-sanctioned trail, traverses MHWS, crossing its scenic property commonly known as the Griffin land. The Bay Circuit Trail crosses the southwestern section of Town and is a link contributing to Olmstead's vision of the outer "Emerald Necklace", which extends from Plum Island, around the Boston metropolitan area, through to Duxbury.

Sharon hosts another wonderfully scenic trail, the Massapoag Trail, established in 1966. It meanders alongside the Massapoag Brook. Its length is approximately three miles. A new trail system has been established within the historic 90-acre King Philip Rock property on Mansfield Street, acquired by the Conservation Commission in 2001, and the adjoining 50 conservation-restricted acres. Several of the latter trails extend into and connect with the adjacent lands of Foxboro. Another network of several trails lies within the land owned by the former Horizons for Youth camp, recently acquired by the Town, is now accessible to Town residents for walking. These trails are connected to those in the King Philip's Rock area, although the connecting trail is in need of significant restorative work in its marshy areas. The existing trails within Sharon offer significant potential for establishing continuity through new or upgraded interconnections. Such improvements would help create an integrated Town-wide trail system that would provide synergistic enhancements of open-space and recreational interests and access.



Vista from Rattlesnake Hill

Greg Meister, 2004

2. Characteristics and Unique Geological Features

Sharon's topography has given rise to many unusual geologic features. These are described in more detail in [Section 4A](#), but some deserve mention here. The granite located at Rattlesnake Hill ([Appendix G](#)) has proven to be quite unique both in its formation and in its history. Large mounded fingers of gravel left by glacial activity are known as gravel eskers, and are found in areas of Town such as the entire northwest side of Mann's Pond, which is an esker. There is also a "quaking bog" located near Wolomolopoag Pond, now part of the Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary. Despite an appearance that that suggests this material would support body weight, the "soil" moves when stepped upon. A large area enclosed by South Main Street, Wolomolopoag Street and Lake Massapoag is known as the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. It serves as a vital wildlife habitat and as a natural filtration and recharge system for the Town's

wells. Including and near to this area is the "Sharon Plains", acres of level, fertile fields with some of the richest topsoil east of Worcester. Some of the area has been developed, but the remaining undeveloped acreage became permanently protected due to its acquisition by The Massachusetts Audubon Society (**MAS**), and it continues to be kept in agricultural use by a lease from MAS to Ward's Berry Farm.

3. Cultural and Historic Areas

The region of Sharon that features perhaps the oldest historical reference is the area that includes King Philip's Rock, an ancient Indian venue described further in [Section 3B](#). The remains of a Native American burial ground are located near this site. In 2001, the Conservation Commission, with support from townspeople, was able to complete the purchase of this unique 90-acre parcel for its preservation as open space.

Near the shores of Gavin's Pond is located the Cannon Forge Site. It was here that cannon and shot were made using iron ore obtained from Lake Massapoag, for use against the British forces during the Revolutionary War. The site is protected by an Historic Preservation Restriction held by the Town. The Massachusetts Historic Commission recognizes the nearby cranberry bogs on South Main Street as a recorded ancient archeological site.

The Town has three designated Historic Districts. One is located at the intersection of Route 27 and Bay Road (the old road from Boston to New Bedford). It includes the privately owned Cobb's Tavern, built in 1740, now used as a private residence and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of the historical items remain in its taproom, but access to it is by invitation only. Nearby, on East Street, is the homestead of Massachusetts State Heroine Deborah Sampson. She was the only female known to have fought in the Revolutionary War, by disguising herself as a male and enlisting in the Revolutionary forces as "Robert Shurtleff". The house, built in 1813 by her grandson, stands today and the land continues to be farmed.

The Town's two other Historic Districts are located in the Town center, as detailed on the [Zoning Map](#) (Section 3D). While some of the historic buildings were destroyed by fire in 1963, some still exist and are included in these districts.

The cultural and historic value of Lake Massapoag can be credited with much of the character of Sharon. In the Revolutionary War period, the Lake's sediments provided iron ore used to manufacture cannons and cannon balls for use in battle. Later, it was also responsible for many small camps and small summer homes where inhabitants of the Boston area came to escape city life. Many hotels and inns were established in Town to accommodate these summer vacationers. Many of those summer homes have been turned into year-round residences. One of the largest hotels was located on the lakefront, and was later acquired by the Town as a public facility. Recently it has been extensively renovated, and presently serves as the Town of Sharon Community Center, a recreational and office facility that also houses the Sharon Adult Center. Lake Massapoag was also the source of power that drove most of the industry during Sharon's early life, by the damming of its outflow stream to create a series of mills, and also via the commercial harvesting of lake ice during the winter months.

On land acquired by the State and annexed to Borderland State Park exists the historic Moyle's Quarry. It was from this location that granite was mined and brought by horse-drawn rail car to Canton for the construction in 1835 of the Canton Viaduct (*Sharon History*), that crosses over Neponset St. and continues to be used by the MBTA and Amtrak.

The world-renowned Kendall Whaling Museum was formerly housed in Sharon. After the passing of Mr. Henry Kendall, items from the museum were removed to the New Bedford Whaling Museum. The original museum building, which once was part of the Sharon Sanitarium for the treatment of tuberculosis, will now be used by The Trustees of Reservations as their Archives and Research Center in conjunction with their operation located at the former Kendall homestead on Moose Hill Street.

4. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The Town has within its boundaries two designated ACEC's and four areas of Estimated Habitat of Threatened or Endangered Species ([Map](#) Section 4E). Five hundred five (505) acres of the extreme northern area of Sharon lie within the Fowl Meadow ACEC (1992). Since 1988 this area has also been designated a "sole source aquifer" in the Neponset River Watershed. At the opposite end of Town, 1585 acres are located within the Canoe River ACEC (1991). This area also received designation as a "sole source aquifer" of the Taunton River Basin in April of 1993, underscoring the critical importance of its continued protection. Their soils, wetlands and water resources are essential components to downstream water supplies, both private and public.

The four areas of Sharon that have been determined to be Estimated Habitat by the Natural Heritage Program include wildlife habitat necessary for the survival of certain species believed to be threatened or endangered. The Conservation Commission, through Town Meeting vote in May of 1994, received control over a nine-acre parcel included in the estimated habitat adjacent to Briggs Pond on Bay Road. By purchasing the King Philip Rock property in 2001, and receiving a Conservation Restriction on an adjoining 50 acres, the Conservation Commission gained control over 140 acres within the Canoe River ACEC. Another 2000⁺-acre area protected by the Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary wraps around the west side of Wolomolopoag Pond and continues north, and includes the "quaking bog". The latter area is shared between Sharon at its westernmost boundary and the neighboring Town of Walpole, and will be afforded some protection by development agreements involving that site. While the designation of an ACEC does not prohibit development, it does focus increased attention and allow for closer review by interested Commonwealth agencies on projects proposed within it.

[Unique Features Map](#)

G. Environmental Challenges

A number of planned and proposed large-scale residential and commercial developments present the Town with significant environmental challenges. These challenges include:

- Groundwater issues. Due to the Town's unique location at the summit of the hydrological divide of two of the state's major river basins, those of the Neponset and Taunton Rivers, groundwater originating within Town boundaries is either recycled into the Town's aquifers after use within Town, or else flows out of Sharon via brooks and streams. To maintain its water self-sufficiency, the Town must vigilantly protect its water supply and minimize its impacts upon the groundwater supply. By doing so, Sharon maintains the advantage of not being subjected to groundwater contamination problems from adjoining municipalities, because little, if any groundwater flows into Sharon from neighboring towns.
- Wastewater generation, inter-basin water transfer, hazardous waste disposal, and resulting threats to water quality/supply continue to present challenges as the Town experiences growth.
- Population density and growth. The Town is relatively large at 25 square miles in relation to its population of about 18,000, producing a nominal population density of only about 720 people per square mile. However, excluding the permanently protected and thus non-developable open space leaves approximately 12 square miles for residence and other uses, resulting in an effective doubling of population density, to 1500 per square mile, and a corresponding increase in the environmental impact upon this more limited land area. Proposed new developments will add substantially to such impact. This will create the significant challenge of keeping the Town's infrastructure capable of handling the projected increases in wastewater, demand on the water supply, and other potentially destructive environmental impacts.
- Limited commercial and industrial-zoned land. Measured by its percentage of the tax base, such land represents only a small percentage of total land use, creating the challenge of fulfilling a perceived need to increase Sharon's commercial and industrial tax base while continuing to adequately protect its natural and recreational resources.
- Traffic. Increased traffic flow caused by increased commercial and residential development will create the challenge of addressing air pollution, increased salt applications, and petroleum runoff.
- Alternative transportation. There is room for improved facilitation of transportation methods that favor open space preservation, such as walking, bicycling, car-pooling.
- Recycling. There is room for improvement in the Town's participation in, and management of, its recycling program.

Other potential environmental problem categories that need to be considered include:

1. Hazardous waste sites and generators. Given that the large majority of the Town is residential with on-site septic systems, there is no way to track or monitor residential household chemicals and medications discharged into those systems. These may represent a significant source of hazardous risk to the groundwater. Present and planned on-site systems are not designed to provide treatment for these materials.

The state's "List of Confirmed Disposal Sites and Locations to be Investigated (**LTBI**) – August 1993" by the Department of Environmental Protection (**DEP**), Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup identified seven sites in Sharon. There has been no increase in hazardous waste sites being tracked by the DEP. Three were confirmed release sites, while one was placed in a waiver

category. There are no locations listed yet to be investigated, nor are there any previous sites that have been listed and subsequently deleted from the "List". Updated listing of the status of sites is provided in the following chart.

Site #	Name	Address	Status	LTBI/Confirmed
4-1160	Mandarin Taste	37 Pond St.	Phase 1	7/93 7/93

Petroleum release site

Response action by; Responsible Party only

Unclassified confirmed site

Gasoline released at a former gasoline station/ repair garage for a leaking underground storage tank resulting in a release to the soil and to the groundwater.

4-0261	Metal Bellows Corp.	1075 Providence Hwy	Phase 2	4/87 7/87
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Hazardous metal release Site

Response action: responsible party only

Priority confirmed site

Short term measures taken

Volatile Organic carbons (VOC's) and chlorinated solvents released at a manufacturer resulting in a groundwater release.

4-0414	Shaw's Plaza	S. Main St	Phase 2	1/88 1/90
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Hazardous Material release site

Response action by: Responsible party and EPA

Priority Confirmed Site

Short-term measures Taken

Chlorinated solvents and metals released at a commercial site from a septic tank and an unknown source resulting in a release to the soil and to the groundwater and threats to surface water and wetlands.

The Mandarin Taste Restaurant site is located in the center of Town in the Massapoag Brook surface water (upper reaches of the Neponset River Basin). It is approximately 2,100 feet from Sharon Public Water Supply Well no. 4 and the now-inactive Well no. 1, but is not indicated as being part of these wells' contributing groundwater mapping. Rather, the site is in a glacial till area that drains to Massapoag brook, and is in neither of the two (groundwater or surface water) zoning Water Protection Districts. The site had reputedly been cleaned up previously, though apparently not through the auspices of the DEP. The present owner sought a MGL Chapter 21 E certification regarding hazardous waste. Thus the site was placed in a Phase 1 investigation status in July 1993. As of this date, it has been cleaned up and poses no environmental threat.

The Metal Bellows Corp. Site is located in the western part of Town on Rt. 1 (Providence Hwy) near the border with the Town of Walpole. It is within the School Meadow Brook Aquifer (a groundwater supply source for Walpole) and in the upper reaches of the Neponset River basin.

The site is also situated in one of Sharon's groundwater zoned Water Resources Protection Districts, in a zone of medium transmissivity to groundwater movement. Contamination has been detected in the municipal wells of Walpole, resulting in this priority site instituting short-term measures to remediate the aquifer and water supply. Walpole's School Meadow Brook wells have continued to operate as a result of the short-term measures, though a permanent plan is still required by the State.

The Shaw's Plaza site is located in the southern part of Town on South Main Street near the border with the Town of Foxboro. It is located in the Billings Brook aquifer (a groundwater supply source for Sharon and Foxboro) and is in the upper reaches of the Taunton River Basin. It is located approximately 1,200 feet from the Sharon Public Water Supply Well no 5; is in a groundwater zoned Water Resources Protection district, and in a zone of medium transmissivity. Groundwater contamination has been detected by monitoring in the vicinity of the shopping plaza septic system, a requirement imposed under a Zoning Board of Appeals special permit for expansion by the Plaza. A short-term measure (contaminated groundwater withdrawal, treatment of the groundwater, and the re-injection of the treated water) is currently operating and does not appear to be effective. Sharon's Well # 5 is currently operating for this priority site and does not appear at risk under the present remediation, nor do any of the other wells drawing from the Billings Brook aquifer. The site is tracked by the USA EPA (CERCLA MAD site # 985276153, first listed 3/13/89, preliminary Assessment 6/30/89), but is not a priority Superfund site and the EPA looks to DEP to follow up.

The waived site, the fourth site, has a Site #4-0723 and is listed as the property at 33-R on East Chestnut Street. A waived site is one that DEP allows a consultant to independently investigate and propose remediation, with DEP having the opportunity to verify completion. The waiver was granted 7/17/89, it was first listed to be investigated (LTBI) 10/15/93, and then confirmed as a release site 1/15/90. A completion of remediation certification was filed with the DEP 5/3/90, and so reputedly the site is cleaned, though DEP still considers it a waived site since the completion has not been verified. Thomas Markt owned the property at the time, with heating oil (VOC's and Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons) released at a former oil storage facility underground storage tank resulting in a release to soil and groundwater. The site is in the area that drains to Massapoag Brook and is not in either of the Town's Water Resource Protection District. The site does not appear to be threat to the environment.

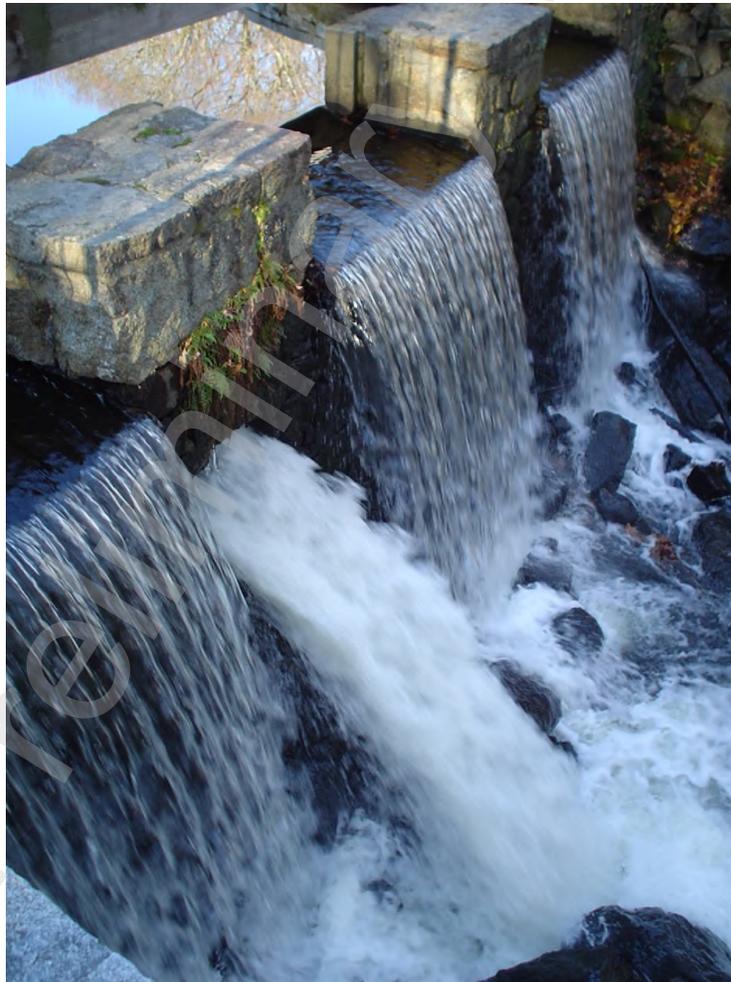
There is one generator of hazardous material, the Metal Bellows Corporation, permitted as a large generator under RCRA, currently listed as compliant with the terms of its permit.

2. Landfills. The Town's municipal landfill, on Mountain Street (the Mountain Street Landfill), east of Lake Massapoag, was located in the upper reaches of a swamp feeding Sucker Brook, a tributary to the Lake. Its elevation and cleared area afford a nice vista from the top. The Town is contemplating possible recreational uses for the land, both active and passive. Plans are dependent on the results of tests presently being performed by a private firm, Weston & Sampson, to determine the condition of the ground beneath the landfill cap. Forthcoming reports will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for review.

3. Erosion. Soil erosion is not a significant problem overall in Sharon, in part due to the presence of excellent vegetative cover throughout most of Town. The Town has a small number of working farms, with no operations bordering on any surface water bodies.

There is no commercial logging in Town other than that associated with developments and housing construction, and there is also limited personal-use harvesting under managed plans. Erosion associated with housing is effectively controlled through the permitting process administered by the Town's Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeal, and the Conservation Commission. As steeper ground areas in Town have begun to be developed, relevant Town boards will need to give increased attention to preventing erosion and protecting steep slopes.

Some erosion concerns have been expressed with regard to the shoreline of Lake Massapoag. Such erosion has been caused by wave and/or ice movement and has been problematic in certain portions of the Lake that suffer bank instability. The Town's Lake Management Committee has been addressing this erosion, and expects to deal effectively with the problems on Town-owned Lake frontage by bank stabilization. Effective control of lake levels throughout the seasons is also expected to alleviate such erosion. Also, a number of storm drains cause erosion where they empty onto steep slopes.



Mann's Pond Dam

Paul Lauenstein, 2008

4. Chronic flooding. Chronic flooding is not considered a problem in the Town of Sharon. The only water course of some flooding significance is Lake Massapoag and its outlet, Massapoag Brook. Residences along the upper reaches of the brook are relatively few and most are located reasonably high, while the lower sections of the brook within town are wetlands having no structures. Flooding along the brook occurs only during rare-event storms, and then little is threatened except two road crossings which can be circumvented relatively easily. The Town has been mapped for flood insurance purposes, and has flood protection zoning districts to mitigate building in flood-prone areas. ([See FEMA map](#)). Presently, the Commonwealth has designated Mann's Pond Dam on Massapoag Brook to be in need of repairs, and the Town hired a consultant who has prepared plans for phased repairs. A much smaller dam located on Beaver Brook is also in need of repair.

5. Sedimentation. Because Sharon has relatively few significant sources of soil erosion and deposition into its water courses, it has few sedimentation problems. Sedimentation of Lake Massapoag stemming from shore erosion has been a concern, but mitigation is under way as mentioned above.

A source of sedimentation that merits greater attention is street sanding for winter traffic safety. Older parts of Town drain directly to water courses without the benefit of retention/detention basins to provide sedimentation control. During more severe winters, some of these street catch basins become overloaded with sand, discharging it with storm flows to the drainage pipes and then to the water courses. Street sweeping is practiced by the Town, but in spite of a very active program, street sand makes its way into certain portions of Lake Massapoag, in both Massapoag and Beaver Brooks, and is thereafter deposited in the brooks' smaller downstream ponds and wetlands.

Recently during the early stages of new site development, there have been serious water run-off issues, mostly related to construction for access and installation of underground utilities/water mains on steep slopes. This is a subject that will require further attention by Town authorities. A more aggressive and regularly scheduled catch-basin inspection and cleaning program is needed to address this problem.

6. Development impact. The Town attempts to control and mitigate impacts of development primarily through its zoning bylaw and subdivision controls, administered through the Planning and Zoning Appeals Boards. Control is also exerted through the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission, which administer state laws and regulations and also local bylaws in addition to the respective Boards' rules and regulations. Much focus is given by the Town to environmental controls, as well as regulating its growth rate through local zoning.

With the recent aggressive use of Chapter 40B options for land development, accompanying impacts have risen accordingly. These include water resource issues, traffic concerns, increased student populations and burdening of the public school system and needs for infrastructure reassessment and upgrades. The past three years have seen significant impact to the Town by such proposed developments and others.

7. Ground and surface water pollution (point and non-point). A clustered development in the southern end of Town near Gavin's Pond, known as Quail Ridge, posed potential groundwater

issues. Those were addressed by connecting the entire development to a sewage system that was pumped through Foxboro to a treatment plant in Mansfield. The high-density development in the north end of Town, Avalon Sharon, has connected the sewage system of the Town of Norwood. These measures prevent groundwater contamination, but at the cost of diverting large volumes of water out of Sharon rather than recycling it back to the Town's aquifers.

Concern has also been expressed regarding septic system leachate making its way to Lake Massapoag via groundwater flow from residences located near the Lake. While efforts are being made to bring these systems into compliance with Board of Health Regulations, various leaching fields are located well within the required 125 ft. setback from this important town resource, and a number of cesspools remain. Such systems may contribute to the nitrogen/phosphorous loading of the Lake leading to increased potential for eutrophication. This was studied under funding from the State's Clean Lakes Program, through which the potential sewerage and treating of wastewater from these homes were considered but judged to be cost-prohibitive. Other concerns on groundwater pollution relate to hazardous waste sites, which do not seem to be a current problem ([Section G. 1](#)).

The Town has but one National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit administered by the DEP. This is issued to the Metal Bellows Corporation, which the Town believes to be in compliance with discharge requirements. Otherwise, point surface water pollution is not believed to be a problem in the Town.

8. Others. From the community's perspective, a primary environmental concern is the potential for degradation of Lake Massapoag. Potential problems such as algal blooms, excessive aquatic vegetation, or other indicators of eutrophication would interfere with recreational uses of the Lake. Incidences of high coliform counts and occasional resulting beach closures have been rare, probably due to the effective implementation of the Lake Level Policy and aggressive monitoring by the Town.

Recent Town purchases of land in Lake Massapoag's watershed have served to further protect its future viability. Use of alternative on-site septic systems with a secondary treatment component is a beneficial option in the replacement of shoreline cesspools and substandard and/or failing systems which the Board of Health has been implementing. There are also studies being conducted to assess the feasibility of sewerage much of the downtown area proximate to the Lake.

Based on the monitoring of algae levels in the Lake, it seems that public education regarding non-point source pollution from chemical lawn treatment and avoidance of detergents containing phosphates has been helpful in limiting the use of such products within the Lake's watershed. Because of the location of Sharon at the top of two aquifers, reduction of water use and the capture of runoff from impervious surfaces would serve to help maintain adequate lake levels. In conjunction with the Lake Level Management Policy, the Town recently promulgated local stormwater regulations as a means of helping to address those concerns.

Section 5 Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

The Town of Sharon is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, including substantial acreage of open space that complements its historical and recreational areas. *Open space* is defined here to include wetlands and open water, conservation land, agricultural land, recreation land, forest land, both corridor and small park areas, wooded buffers along roadways, and other undeveloped land of particular conservation or recreation interest. The value of open space is evident in the wide variety of ways in which it is used in Sharon, and underscored by the high level of interest and concern with which the Town's citizens regard open space. Sharon's citizenry overwhelmingly recognizes the practical value and environmental enrichment of open space. This is illustrated by the 92% affirmative response to the following question in our *Open Space and Recreation Public Survey* conducted for this Plan: "*Do you believe there is a need to conserve open space and natural areas in Sharon?*", and by other public opinion input reported in the Survey. To continue these uses, protection of open space is crucial. In Sharon, *protection* of open space is accomplished by outright Town/Conservation Commission ownership, large privately-owned open space, conservation restrictions, and zoning overlays. Large open space parcels are described below, and a tabular listing of all parcels of Conservation and Recreation interest can be found in [Appendix H](#).

A Brief History of Sharon's Open Space and Park Land

Sharon is located approximately 30 miles south of Boston. Among its many important natural sites, the centerpiece of Sharon's open space is Lake Massapoag, which is a source of recreation and scenic beauty. During summer, the Lake provides residents with a spacious area to fish, swim, boat and sail. During winter, Sharon's natural hills and smaller ponds and brooks allow residents and visitors to enjoy activities including cross-country skiing, sledding, skating and ice-fishing. The Town also has an abundance of mountain bike trails and walking trails throughout. It is also blessed with the natural beauty provided by Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary and Borderland State Park.

Sharon has other parks and playgrounds. Early on, the Sharon Civic Foundation, spearheaded by Dr. Walter Griffin, organized the construction of the Ames Street Playground. In 1930, a summertime playground program was begun that included athletics, arts & crafts, and swimming and sailing lessons.

Later, associations such as the Sharon Tennis Club, the Sharon Fish and Game Club, the Massapoag Sportsmen's Club, and others were developed to help foster and take advantage of the natural resources available to the Town. During the early 1960's, the Town purchased the former Lake Massapoag Hotel, which overlooks the Lake, and converted it into the Sharon

Community Center, which was completely renovated and re-opened in 2007. That facility is the center of the Recreation Department. It is also home to other Town departments and hosts a variety of indoor recreational activities. The facility also houses the Sharon Adult Center that provides services and activities for adults.

In 1974, the Town voted to acquire and improve the 59-acre Sacred Heart property, a former private school. The property was renamed the Deborah Sampson Park and in 1977, the Town appropriated funds to construct playing fields. During the late 1990's, the area was upgraded, redesigned, and outfield fences installed. A concession stand was recently constructed.



Deborah Sampson Park

Kurt Buermann, 2008

The Ames Street Playground was renovated in 1983. The area was landscaped and climbing structures and benches were installed to provide the youth of the Town with a safe environment in which to play. The facilities were upgraded in 1999, and four regulation-sized softball fields were incorporated into the open space. New playground equipment was installed in 2004 using funds from a Council on Disabilities grant. A new drinking fountain funded by Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds was installed in 2008.

In 1994 due to the rising interest and participation in youth soccer programs, the Town acquired land in the Sharon Woods/Gavin's Pond area and created two full-sized soccer fields.

Sharon's Open Space - Major Parcels

A. Recreation Interest

The Town uses the Sharon High School, Sharon Middle School, and East, Cottage and Heights Elementary Schools for both passive and active recreation activities. There are privately owned recreation areas also such as Spring Valley Country Club, Sharon Country

Club, Sharon Fish and Game Club, Massapoag Sportsmen's Club, and Sharon Tennis Club. The following narratives describe Sharon's most actively used parcels of open space providing a summary for each of its facilities and current uses. All public and private open space and recreation sites are listed in the inventory tables at the end of this section.

1. Former Horizons For Youth (B)*

This is a large and important parcel that includes substantial lakefront space (see photo pg. 1), and is the Town's largest and most recent open space acquisition since submission of the preceding OSRP. Following the transfer of this property by its owner, Horizons for Youth, a nonprofit environmental camp that had ceased operations, to Goodwill Industries, another nonprofit group, a public grassroots campaign mustered citizens' interest in purchase of this property by the Town to preserve it from development. The funds were approved by the Town Meeting and the purchase successfully negotiated by the Selectmen. The property was purchased with the help of Community Preservation Funds. It comprises approximately 56 acres of land, and is expected to flourish as a prime area for passive and active recreation. Already the Town leases the facility to various groups that operate day camps, including Old Colony Council, Boy Scouts of America, Chabad Center, a private dance group, Sharon Pop Warner, Sharon Lacrosse, Sharon Recreation Dept., New England Model Boat Club, and others, making use of its waterfront facility, open space and indoor facilities. Renovations to upgrade and repair the grounds and existing buildings are well underway, and have been made possible by two separate appropriations of significant funds approved through the Town Meeting. Many volunteer groups, including Boy Scouts, Camp Gannett and private citizens, have already contributed major substantial efforts to improve the property through trail and grounds cleanup, restorative work and waterfront/grounds improvement projects. This exemplifies the active interest and engagement of the citizenry of Sharon, and other environmentally-concerned citizens of neighboring towns who have also contributed to these efforts, in the preservation and enhancement of open space and recreational facilities. Such vigorous efforts to improve and restore the facilities, trails and natural setting of this property are expected to continue.



Troop 95 Scouts tackling the trails

Jeff Tatro, 2008

2. Frank I. Sullivan Recreation Area

Located on the south shore of Lake Massapoag, the Frank I. Sullivan Recreation Area is the home of the recently renovated Sharon Community Center. The outside area includes 20 acres overlooking the Lake. Access to the public beach is open to both residents and non-residents. There are boat moorings and docks from which the Recreation Dept. offers summer sailing classes. There is a volleyball court, bocce court and picnic areas, and the lakefront areas receive very high level of use for fishing by residents and nonresidents alike. The property also includes walking trails, wetlands and conservation land. The Community Center is a two-story structure that sits atop a bluff and commands a striking view of the Lake through a grove of tall pines. It is available for public meetings, club gatherings, recreational activities and social functions. This facility also houses the Sharon Adult Center that also sponsors and accommodates gatherings and activities.

3. Deborah Sampson Park

Located on East Foxboro Street, this 59-acre area provides for both active and passive activities. There are five fenced 60-foot baseball diamonds complete with dugouts. Two of the diamonds are lighted for night time use. There is a concession stand with handicapped restroom facilities and a picnic area. There are two batting cages and a grassed instructional area. There are four lighted tennis courts and a lighted basketball court and a skateboard park. The area also has a very actively used dog exercise park that was built by a private citizens interest group, an outdoor skating pond, and an exercise trail that has not recently been maintained but renovation of which by Boy Scouts is planned. These facilities have been the beneficiaries of active restoration and maintenance efforts by volunteer citizen groups including supporters of baseball and other team sports leagues, Boy Scouts, the Sharon Friends of Conservation, and others. The Sharon Garden Club installed and maintains a community garden. The former Sacred Heart School is located on the property. Built in the 1940's, this building is currently vacant but is the subject of study by a town-appointed reuse committee.

4. Memorial Park Beach

The beach is located on the north side of Lake Massapoag along Beach Street. It encompasses 14.5 acres. There is approximately 900 linear feet of beach space, a swimming dock, picnic benches, a concession stand with ADA-compliant restrooms, a play area on Pond Street and a bandstand for summer concerts. Located on the east side of Memorial Park Beach is the Town boat launch area. The area provides a boat dock and boat ramp. There is a separate launching area for canoes and windsurfing. A Flume House constructed in the 1930's provides a means to control water levels.

5. Gavin's Pond Soccer Facility

This 55.47-acre area is located on Gavin's Pond Road and was created by the Sharon Youth Soccer Association and receives such a high level of use during youth league seasons that the group still seeks additional facilities. The property holds two fenced, irrigated regulation-sized soccer fields, a concession stand and a restroom facility.

6. Dr. Walter A. Griffin Playground

This area is located on Ames Street and includes 23 acres designed for both passive and active recreation. There is a fenced landscaped playground area with plastic play structures, sand beds, swings and benches. There are 4 softball fields and a large multi-purpose field that is used for soccer, lacrosse, and Pop Warner Football. There is a basketball court and a batting cage. The area also includes access to the Hammershop Pond and Massapoag Trail.



Dr. Walter A. Griffin Playground

Kurt Buermann, 2008

There are two small wooden-framed structures. They are used for storage, ADA compliant restrooms, and also a concession stand.

7. Mountain Street Recreation Area

This is a 35-acre undeveloped elevated landfill area located on Mountain Street. There have been thoughts entertained but no actions yet taken to develop multi-purposed athletic fields suitable for football, lacrosse, soccer, and baseball. There are also considerations to install walking trails on this property.

8. Beech Tree Park

This 0.5-acre parcel of Town-owned land, formerly a house lot, abuts the Lake at the boat-launch parking area and is directly across from the recently restored trailhead of the Massapoag Trail. It was transformed into a beautiful walking area and park setting by the initiative and work of a private citizen grassroots group and other volunteers including Boy Scouts, the Sharon Friends of Conservation, local businesses and contractors, and others, with assistance from the Dept. of Public Works. There are benches, chess/checker tables, a labyrinth walkway, an open gazebo, a wooden bridge walkway leading to the Lake and winding trails that invite residents to stop, sit, walk and enjoy the area.

A more detailed description of Recreation Dept. properties and seasonal programs is appended in the Recreation Plan update of 2003 ([Appendix I](#)).

B. Conservation Interest

The total acreage set aside for conservation purposes within the Town is mainly due to the presence of two sizable *privately held* sites (listed below as #1-2), that together comprise over 3,750 acres of permanently protected open space offering passive recreation opportunities to their members and visitors. Numerous trail systems pass through their boundaries including an Appalachian Mountain Club sanctioned trail (Warner Trail, described in #3 below). Over 450 acres of open land is also protected by conservation restrictions.

Privately Owned Open Space

1. Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

Two thousand acres of open space located in the northwestern section of Town contains miles of trails, a nature center and gift shop. The Massachusetts Audubon Society, owner of the Sanctuary, conducts numerous programs including a summer camp and a variety of sessions for public school classes and field trips.

2. The Trustees of Reservations Moose Hill Farm

This 347-acre parcel of open space in the northwest corner of town contains approximately four miles of hiking trails. Among these, half are included in a "Green Dogs" program that allows its members to walk dogs on the property. Planned future programming at the property will be agriculturally-based with a focus on heritage breeds and crops, and there are plans for trail expansion.

3. Warner & Bay Circuit Trail Systems

Some trails at Sharon's Moose Hill Audubon Sanctuary are segments of the Warner and Bay Circuit Trails. The Warner Trail offers delightful and varied outdoor experiences as it stretches more than 30 miles from Canton, MA, to Diamond Hill State Park in Cumberland, Rhode Island.

The Bay Circuit Trail, first proposed in 1929, is a 200-mile outer "Emerald Necklace" to the greater Boston area that links parks, waterways and open spaces from Plum Island to Duxbury, MA. The Bay Circuit Trail also coincides with Moose Hill Audubon trails. It then follows a new Town trail, the Beaver Brook Trail, from the Sharon MBTA station and continues on to Lake Massapoag and Easton.

Public and Conservation Commission-Owned Land

Borderland State Park, over 50% of which is located within Sharon, contributes approximately 900 acres of additional protected open space. The Sharon Conservation Commission (SCC) is owner of 1700+/- acres of open space made up of parcels ranging in size between 0.5 and 158 acres. The protection has been accomplished through both donations and purchases, with

some land being given as part of development proposals. The Commission also holds Conservation Restrictions on another 300+/- acres. Listed below are details on the State Park and the major Commission-owned properties.

1. Borderland State Park

Approximately 900 acres of this 1773-acre State Park is located in the southwest portion of Sharon on Massapoag Avenue. This multi-use recreation area is open year-round, has a visitor center, a disc-golf course, 17 miles of trails for hiking and horseback riding, six ponds for fishing. Tours of its historic Ames Mansion are offered.

2. Massapoag Brook Lands

These are the first parcels acquired by the SCC in the early 1960's. They comprise a greenbelt of lands alongside four ponds and the Massapoag Brook. Within those parcels is the Massapoag Trail, established in 1965, that meanders along the ponds and brook for approximately 3 miles from the rotary at Lake Massapoag, through woodlands, ending at North Main Street.

3. Elson Property

This is a 45-acre parcel purchased in 1984 that constitutes the headwaters of Sucker Brook, the main tributary feeding into Lake Massapoag. Sucker Brook features an annual spawning run of white suckers.

4. Pozza Property

By purchasing this 25-acre property in 1998, the SCC was able to complete a planned swap of a portion with abutting owners to secure increased protected acreage along the Massapoag Brook greenbelt. Completion of this effort is expected during 2010.

5. Horizons for Youth (A)*

Over 157 acres of woodland, wetland and meadow was deeded to the SCC during the 1990's as part of the agreement with the Town concerning the construction of a single-family cluster development on the former Horizons for Youth land. *This parcel is distinct from the property designated as Horizons for Youth (B), which was purchased separately by the Town in 2007 (described under Recreation Interest, above).*

6. King Philip's Rock Property

This land was purchased in 2001, comprising 90 acres containing historical sites used by Wampanoag Indians during the 1600's. Its protection generated a 40-acre gift of adjacent land by the Perkins family and a 9-acre piece donated by the Monroe family. An adjacent 7-acre parcel was purchased by the SCC in 2008. Together, these acquisitions constitute almost 140 acres of contiguous open space land.

7. Piona Property

This property includes approximately 25 acres within the Town's Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, purchased by the SCC in 2008.

8. Billings Land

Purchased by the SCC in early 2008, this includes 10.7 acres of sloped, wooded land near the center of Town that abuts the Massapoag Brook greenbelt. It comprises 7 acres of dense mixed forest, 4 acres of wetlands, an intermittent stream, two certified vernal pools, and a walking trail.

(* Horizons parcel A was given to the Conservation Commission as part of a subdivision approval when its owner first sold some of the property in the early 1990's. Horizons parcel B was the remaining Horizons For Youth-owned land purchased by the Town in 2007 for combined conservation/recreation use.)

CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS IN SHARON, MA:

PARCEL #	ADDRESS	OWNER	HOLDER OF CONSERVATION RESTRICTION	ACRES
048038000	45 WOLOMOLPOAG ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	74.334
058025001	520-550 SOUTH MAIN ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	82.032
078006000	MOOSE HILL ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	357.708
089001001	MOOSE HILL ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	177.995
093061000	220 BILLINGS ST	ARGUIMBAU, DANIEL H.	STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS	8.863
093062000	307 EAST ST	SHARON FISH & GAME	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	21.257
093062003	307R EAST ST	SHARON FISH & GAME	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	23.781
099001000	65 BILLINGS CT	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	64.129
099006000	300 MOOSE HILL ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	130.929
103029000	300 EAST ST	ARGUIMBAU, DANIEL H.	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	25.993
110024000	100 EVERETT ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	78.071
117003000	200 EVERETT ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	28.919
118027000	113 NORWOOD ST	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	146.696
118031000	130 NORWOOD ST	ALTIERI, THOMAS P TR	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	6.160
124037000	175 UPLAND RD	MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	366.929
130031000	363 NORWOOD ST	AVALON SHARON	CONSERVATION COMMISSION	21.975

Tables included in [\(Appendix H\)](#) provide a detailed list of Sharon's publicly- and privately-owned open space and recreation parcels. These tables were developed by the Department of Public Works, Engineering Division from Assessor Department Records.

[Open Space/Recreation Map](#)

ADA Accessibility

Sharon's ADA compliance and accessibility report is provided in the Recreation Master Plan update, Appendix I, page LIV. The Town's compliance with ADA employment practices requirements is documented in the official letter given below:

[ADA Compliance Verification](#)

Section 6 Community Vision

A. Description of Process

The OSRPC used two principal mechanisms to gather public input for this Plan. First, the Committee designed, created, distributed, and collected a public opinion survey, and compiled and comprehensively analyzed the responses collected. Second, the OSRPC held two public hearings, one preceding and one following the distribution of the public survey. The first such hearing was held in May 2007 for the purpose of gathering concerns and suggested projects to be incorporated into the OSRP. The second such hearing was conducted in October 2007, following the mailing of the survey to all households within the Town, timed so as to promote maximal interest and permit the voicing of public reaction to the items addressed in the survey. A third meeting was held in June 2008 for presentation and discussion of results of the OSRP public opinion survey. In addition, the OSRPC also provided to the public the opportunity to attend any and all of its regularly scheduled meetings, notices of which were posted on the Town website.

Public Opinion Survey: Design and Strategy The OSRP public opinion survey was designed by the OSRPC to comply with the guidelines established by the Commonwealth for this purpose, and also to encourage and derive the maximal amount of relevant public feedback possible, by covering a range of topics of interest to citizens in a simple but flexible format. The survey was produced by extensive deliberations over approximately a 6-month span of regular bimonthly OSRPC meetings, and by reviewing and adapting surveys prepared by other towns and items from the preceding Sharon OSRP survey. Committee members also sought feedback on a draft version of the questionnaire from neighbors and associates on an *ad hoc* basis prior to preparing and the final version for distribution.

After extensive deliberation the Committee decided to use a paper rather than computerized online-style questionnaire, in order to avoid unfairly excluding or alienating residents who are not familiar with or do not have access to suitable computers and online resources. In so doing the OSRPC recognized that ease of survey completion and data collection and analysis for the paper format would be considerably less than if an online survey form were used. A sample survey questionnaire is appended ([Appendix A](#)).

In keeping with the mission of the OSRP and the intent of the Commonwealth's guidelines for gathering public input, the survey questions addressed a range of relevant topics. These included demographic information, opinions on the relative value and potential or best uses of open space, recreational and historical resources, water resources, residential and commercial development and growth, and preferred strategies to achieve those interests, preferences for or accessibility to local businesses, and overall sentiments about life in Sharon.

The survey included 19 numbered questions, each composed of as few as a single response item to as many as 20 individual response items, for a maximum total of approximately 100

response items per questionnaire. Multiple types of questions were included, entailing a range of response types: simple yes/no, rating and ranking choices, checklist-selection items, open-entry (fill-in-the-blank), and comment boxes. Among the 19 numbered questions, many included combinations of *objective* (yes/no, rating and ranking, checklist-selection) responses plus *subjective* (open-entry and comment boxes), while others included only a single response type. In total, 4 open-entry items and 9 comment boxes were included.

The purpose of *objective* questions was to obtain readily quantifiable information that required a minimal time investment for respondents, so that a certain minimum level of public feedback was relatively assured. The purpose of *open-response* items was two-fold: first, to solicit input for particular items of concern to respondents, or ideas and suggestions from respondents, that were not included in the lists of selections presented; and second, to elicit responses that the respondents might not otherwise have thought to mention, but were prompted by the accompanying list of choices (i.e. responses not prompted by a simple fill-in blank), or else by motivating the respondent to provide his/her own idea in response to what s/he might feel was an unduly limited range of choices or a list of "pet" items favored by the OSRPC. *Comment-boxes* solicited wide-open written entries from respondents.

The latter two response types represented forms of expression that the OSRPC recognized would be more difficult to categorize and quantify. Nevertheless, the Committee undertook that challenge in the belief that it might reveal illuminating trends, patterns or strongly prevailing opinions in public responses, while also helping to motivate some respondents who might otherwise feel that the survey represented an essentially canned questionnaire irrelevant to their own interests, or a "stacked deck" intended to produce a certain outcome or support a pre-ordained agenda of the Committee. As described below, these ideas and the approach taken proved to be strongly validated by the survey results.

Survey Distribution and Collection

One OSRP survey questionnaire was distributed to each household address listed in the Town Clerk's register, in mid-October 2007. The deadline for submission of completed questionnaires was one month later on Nov. 15, 2007. Per the instructions printed on the survey form, completed questionnaires were submitted by respondents either by leaving them in drop boxes located at public places (Commuter Rail station, Town Hall, Public Library, Eastern Bank, and Sharon Credit Union) or by regular U.S. mail to the address printed on the back of the questionnaire (printed in a manner that allowed refolding to reveal the specified address, sealing and mailing). Questionnaires were completed and submitted anonymously by respondents.

Data Entry and Analysis

When all submitted questionnaires had been collected, each was assigned a sequential number to permit tracking of its entry into the database and error-checking for its corresponding data line (*case*) as needed in the final data file. Teams of one or two OSRPC members recorded the data from each questionnaire by computer keyboard entry into a database form created by an OSRPC member for that purpose, including the summarized text of open-entry and comment boxes. A spreadsheet model was developed by another OSRPC member for analysis and graphical or tabular display of the compiled data from the database,

and after the entry of all data into the database was completed, the data were exported to the spreadsheet to compute summary statistics and present these in tabular and/or graphical form as appropriate. The OSRP Public Survey results are presented in graphical and tabular form in [Appendix A1](#). The entire survey response data set, including all case-wise data and summary statistics, can be obtained through the Conservation Commission. ([Appendix A2](#)). (To view the entire data set in Microsoft Excel format, [click here](#).)

Subjective response items were analyzed by listing the responses according to the total number received for each. This was possible because for a given response item many respondents entered the same specific words or thematic responses. Open-entry responses were tabulated. Comment box responses were also tabulated, after first assigning them to categories, likewise possible because many respondents entered similar responses to a given question or response item (e.g. "taxes!!"; "High taxes"; etc., in response to Question 16: *What do you like least about living in Sharon?*). All individual responses to every item and questionnaire collected are provided in the [survey response data set](#) ([Appendix A2](#)). Because the data are arranged case-wise, they can be examined and further analyzed by interested readers to determine the response patterns for individuals or demographic groups, or other patterns present in the data.

Synopsis of survey results (Numbered survey questions referred to as **Q#**)

Response rates, demographics, validation (Q17-19)

- Among the approximately 6000 surveys distributed, a total of 827 respondents returned at least a partially completed survey questionnaire, for a response rate of ~14%.
- Based on demographic data reported by respondents, a total of nearly 2,400 of the Town's approximately 18,000 residents (~13%) are represented in the results, because most households have multiple members whose numbers and age ranges were provided by the respondents.
- Most surveys were completed fully or almost fully, and many or most included considerable detailed responses of all types. Many or most questions were completed by more than 600 to nearly 800 respondents.
- The numbers of submitted questionnaires received from each of the Town's 5 voting precincts were essentially equivalent, indicating that that total representation was equivalent from these 5 geographic areas of Sharon, so that no precinct had undue influence upon the results (range 102-135 per precinct; not all respondents completed this item; (**Q19** in [Appendix A1](#)).
- Completed questionnaires represented households including a well-balanced distribution of household members' ages (29% 0-18, 18% 19-40, 37% 41-60, 17% over 60) that closely matched the age distribution in US Census data of the year 2000 (32% 0-19, 18% 20-40, 35% 40-59, 15% over 60) shown in the MAPC data in Sec. 3C (**Q17** in [Appendix A1](#)).
- Responses to the question *How long have you been a Sharon resident?* (**Q18** in [Appendix A1](#)) revealed a marked trend: the longer a resident had resided in Sharon, the more likely s/he was to complete and submit the survey. This suggests either that residents' interest in open space and recreational affairs, or the character of Sharon, grows with residents' time in town, or perhaps that longer-term residents had more time available to complete such a survey. We did not analyze whether there was an association between age and length of residence, but it could be estimated from the data provided in the [survey response data set](#) ([Appendix A2](#)).

Based on the robust response and the representative demographic balance reflected in these results, and also on the depth and quality of the other data received and described below, the OSRPC considers the results of the public opinion survey to be an unmitigated success. They reveal the strong sense of connection townspeople feel both for their environment and town affairs. It also represents a better-than-anticipated response for this type of undertaking, given that it required active participation, awareness of the survey's availability and deadline for completion, considerable thought and effort, and decisive action for fulfillment (i.e. return of the questionnaire by the designated means) by busy residents, and thus reflects the high level of engagement of the citizenry that Sharon is fortunate to have.

The substantial depth of data providing the basis for analyses shown here and in [Appendix A1](#) (typically many hundreds of responses per question or response item) indicates that the observed results are meaningful and strongly representative of public opinion trends, even though the survey sample was not selected in a strictly scientific manner. Recognizing that the survey would inevitably select for those residents who were sufficiently interested and willing or able to expend the effort to complete it, the OSRPC sought to minimize any biases by providing ample opportunity in the questionnaire for expression of negative as well as positive opinions about open space and other issues of the respondents' choosing, and also to complete as few questions as they chose -- and respondents fully exploited those options. Indeed, it is interesting and worthwhile to peruse the wide range of individual personal opinions expressed in the open-entry and comment-box items displayed in the [complete table of results \(Appendix A2\)](#).

Open space and land use issues (Q1-6,10-11)

- Q1 & Q2 As mentioned, 92% (705 of 769) respondents indicated a need to preserve open space (Q1). In Q2, respondents assigned high priorities to each of the 6 different types of resources listed (historic buildings or places, farmlands, open space water, recreational and esthetics/hiking each received average ranking of 1.74 or greater on a scale of 1-3, 1 signifying very important). Each response item was ranked by at least 782 respondents. Among these, OS water was designated most important, averaging 1.2, while the next nearest averaged 1.56. The responses indicate a favorable, broad and high level of public interest in preservation issues.
- Q3 – Q6 This 4-question series asked respondents' favored approaches to land preservation overall (Q6) and with respect to their own land holdings (Q3), Town actions (Q4), and state government-level actions (Q5).

In a series of possible personal actions (Q3) suggested for preserving open space that included contributing land, rewriting the respondents' own deeds, or selling their land at bargain prices, responses averaged 50-71% "No" vs. only 9-30% "Yes". "Yes" and "No" responses were nearly equally weighted regarding donation of a conservation restriction or selling one's own land at market value to preserve it, while a majority of respondents (53% "yes" vs. 26% "no") favored Town-supported land acquisitions, consistent with the Town's recent experience seen in actual voter approvals of Town land acquisitions. Substantial numbers of respondents indicated "Unsure" in response to these questions, and in open-entry

and comment-box responses many respondents indicated that their own land holdings were too small for practical relevance. Many indicated that they supported, while many others opposed, Town land acquisitions either in principle or because of anticipated effects on tax rates or interference with other Town priorities. Many indicated that their choices in real situations would depend upon the particular circumstances.

Among a series of 5 hypothetical Town actions to preserve open space (Q4), total numbers of responses per option listed ranged 651-723. Two options were ranked most favorably (both at 1.5 on a scale of 1-3; 1 signifying strongly favored): "Zoning for open space conservation", and "Mandated dedication of open space by developer". The latter is consistent with the agreements recently negotiated by the Town for the proposed Sharon Hills and Sharon Commons developments. Average ranking for other choices ranged 1.9-2.1. Comments provided were overall similar to those for Q3.

Over 690 responses were received for each in a series of 3 hypothetical state-level actions to preserve open space (Q5). Among these, property tax-reduction programs and outright land purchases by state government were ranked favorably (1.6 and 1.7 on a scale of 1-3, 1 signifying strongly favored). Comments offered included indications of a need for more information, self-reliance for the Town vs. the role of the Commonwealth, financial concerns, general support for preservation, and others.

In Q6, a series of 6 distinct approaches to land use generated between 309 and 554 responses each, with average rankings ranging 1.8-2.2 on a scale of 1-3, 1 signifying strongly favored (respondents were asked to rank their top 3 choices of the 6 listed). Among these, the options somewhat favored, and equally so (ranked 1.8 each on average), were further acquisition of conservation land, farmland preservation and increasing commercial development. Underscoring this trend, further analysis of the individual ranks assigned by respondents showed that increasing commercial development and further conservation received by notable margins the greatest numbers of ranks of 1 (241 and 228 respectively). These results indicate respondents' desire to balance open space and economic development needs, consistent with the Town's recent experience in these areas in town elections and Town Meeting actions. Recreational use of the Mountain Street landfill site was least favored, and received a relatively greater proportion of most-negative ranks of 3. Several residents who live near the landfill site also voiced such disfavor at an OSRP public hearing.

Q10 & Q11 asked respondents about open space and recreation areas in Sharon that they value, and sought their opinions on a list of potential Town initiatives. In nearly 1400 individual open-entry responses (Q10), respondents indicated strong appreciation (approx. 100-450 responses each) of Town open space and recreation lands, and of four specific sites: Lake Massapoag/Bandstand; Moose Hill Reservation and Moose Hill Farms, Borderland State Park and the Ames Street playground. In Q11, which sought ranking of a series of suggested initiatives along with open entries and comments, on a rating scale of 1 (high) to 5 (low), respondents ranked their own open-entries highest (68 responses averaging 1.7), indicating their enthusiasm for contributing their own ideas to the planning process. Among 7 potential initiatives for improvements listed in Q11, establishment of a walking/biking greenway (687 responses, avg. rating 1.97) and improvements to the Town's Memorial Beach (635

responses, avg. rating 2.4) were rated most favorably, indicating wide public support for these initiatives. A wide range of ideas was represented in 68 open-entry responses and 117 comments submitted. Among these, the creation of sidewalks and bike/walking paths in various places, creation of new parks, playing fields or open space areas, beach improvements and swimming pool were most frequently supported; a number of tax-related and non-tax-related unfavorable opinions towards such initiatives were also given. Also, a few residents attending OSRP public hearings voiced concerns about the need to account for ongoing maintenance costs of existing open space, the costs of any potential new open-space initiatives, and concern that the present OSRP might impart spending authority, which is not the case. ([Open Entries from Q11](#))

Recreation issues Q7-11

Q7 inquired in a Yes/No format about the adequacy of facilities and maintenance for 9 different recreational subjects, and sought open-entry suggestions and comments. This question generated tremendous interest, including 11,024 individual responses including over 200 comments and open-entry responses.

Overall, most respondents indicated that most of the facilities or programs and opportunities listed, and their maintenance, were adequate. The rich amount and depth of information provided in Q7 should be interpreted with care, however. For example, there were many responses per item queried, but given the wide range of activities and sports represented, the constituency for any given sport or activity naturally represented only a minor subset of respondents, more limited than other survey questions that concerned broader issues of land use. Therefore, the preponderant indication that facilities are adequate for many of these sports and activities probably reflects that only a minority of residents (respondents) actually use, and are thus closely familiar with, the condition of a given athletic or recreational venue or facility, because they don't participate in that sport or activity. Availability of the indicated range of facilities, in a condition consistent with public safety, is nonetheless extremely important to a town with such diverse interests as those represented in Sharon, and this conclusion is supported by the extensive response elicited by Q7.

Items in Q7 that inquired about playgrounds, athletic fields and swimming/boating facilities generated well over 1,300 responses per topic. Queries about tennis and basketball courts and organized recreation programs received nearly 1200 responses per topic subject, and over 900 responses addressed skateboard park facilities. Also, residents voiced concerns at the OSRP public meeting about inadequacy of availability of soccer and baseball fields given extremely high demand levels and the destructive impact of multiple-sport uses of many fields. They also expressed dissatisfaction about the condition and quality of the Town's skateboard park, and provided some suggestions. A soccer field initiative has since been considered by Town Meeting, without resolving the perceived need as the initiatives were not approved even though the initiative was to be funded privately. The need for facility upgrades, improved maintenance and additional athletic fields was voiced by OSRP public hearing attendees.

The subject most widely indicated as inadequate in Q7 was biking opportunities, as this was the only topic for which responses of "inadequate" (338) outnumbered those of "adequate"

(329). The areas receiving the next most frequent indications of dissatisfaction were walking/hiking trails (493 "adequate" vs. 215 "inadequate") and picnic areas (475 "adequate" vs. 182 "inadequate"), indicating relatively strong interest in these forms of recreation. The OSRPC believes that the fairly common perception that walking and hiking trails are not adequate reveals several different insights. First, there is strong recreational interest in walking or hiking, which is a healthy trend. Second, this was nevertheless taken as one indication of a need for increased public awareness about open space and recreational resources and opportunities, because in fact Sharon already has many beautiful and varied hiking trails, although they would benefit from improvements, maintenance, increased visibility and increased connectivity in many areas. Existing trails are distributed through many areas in Town, prominently including (but not limited to) Moose Hill Reservation, Borderland State Park, Moose Hill Farm, and the newly acquired former Horizons for Youth camp property. Alternatively, perhaps not all those who wish to walk for recreation are eager or able to do so on woodland hiking trails, so this sentiment may reflect a desire for more sidewalks to provide safe walking, as expressed in a large number of comments on this topic (42 of 187 total comments submitted). ([Comments from Q7](#))

Q8 Asked what recreation opportunities they would like to see made available (Q8), a total of 279 respondents listed items including a public swimming facility, biking lanes/paths/trails, athletic programs and fields, ice skating facilities, trails, canoe and kayak rental facilities, and a number of others. Several respondents indicated the Town's offerings are already adequate. Attendees at the OSRPC public hearing similarly voiced their desire to see a biking trail established to encircle Lake Massapoag.

Q9 A question about recreational use of Lake Massapoag (Q9) indicated that 61% of the 780 respondents use the Lake, underscoring its central recreation value and attraction to residents. Its most popular uses were swimming and various boating sports. Among respondents who do not use the Lake, lack of interest ranked highest as the reason. Water quality ranked second-highest among these, a fact that the OSRPC believes reflects inadequate public awareness about the verified high quality of the Lake's water, achieved by management as specified by the Lake Level Policy, which includes regular monitoring and testing.

Q10 & Q11 responses were described under *Open space and land use issues (Q1-6,10-11)* above.

Growth, development, commercial issues Q12-14

A vast majority of respondents (92% of 756 total) indicated the Town should use its Master Plan to guide its growth (Q12); a need that will be addressed through the existing Executive Order 418, Community Development Plan of 2004. In a question that asked their preferred avenues for growth of the Town (Q13), respondents ranked redevelopment of existing commercial space as their most preferred (avg. rank 1.8 among 5 choices), followed by new commercial space development (avg. rank 2.2); results are based on approximately 700 ranking choices per item listed. Asked in a checklist-format question what types of businesses they would like to see in Town (Q14), respondents strongly favored restaurants

(565) and small retail shops (565); "office space" was the next most preferred, while elder care, agriculture, indoor sports and light industry each received 320-341 responses. ([Open Entries from Q14](#))

Life in Sharon (Q15,Q16)

Respondents provided a rich array of comment-box responses to this two-question series about what they like most and least about living in Sharon. Fortunately, things liked (total of 1,308 for 700 respondents) outnumbered those disliked (total of 1,022 for 690 respondents) according to respondents. ([Open Entries from Q15](#) and [from Q16](#))

- Prevalent responses among things liked included natural, open space and recreational features and character or atmosphere of the Town, the townspeople, schools, commercial-residential ratio and transportation/location features (**Q15** in [Appendix A1](#)).
- The hands-down most prevalent item disliked was taxes, while others included government services, too few retail and dining establishments, development issues, and the townspeople (**Q16** in [Appendix A1](#)).

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The Town of Sharon has significant acreage permanently protected as open space. Ninety-two percent (92%) of 834 public survey respondents indicated their common desire to protect that particular characteristic of the Town. Based upon complete review of input gathered in that survey and upon additional public input expressed at public hearings held by the OSRC for that purpose, and after further deliberations by the OSRC, Open Space and Recreation goals are formulated as follows and further discussed in [Section 8](#):

- To preserve and maintain high quality and adequate quantity of Sharon's water resources
- To continue land preservation and maintenance efforts
- To promote and expand community education and involvement concerning open space and recreational resources
- To improve resource utilization and public benefit by increasing and expanding recreational facilities and programs
- To reconvene the OSRPC annually to review goals and progress

Section 7 Analysis of Needs

A. Description of Process

To assess the Town's future needs with respect to open space and recreation interests, the OSRPC carried out many months of deliberations at its regular meetings. During this time, the Committee reviewed public input received at its open meetings and in the OSRP public opinion survey. In addition, the Committee reviewed and discussed other information not generally known or appreciated by the public, such as the status of various land parcels and watershed and septage/sewage data, that are known to agencies with OSRPC representation, such as the Dept. of Public Works and the Conservation Commission. The Committee also created or updated the maps and resource inventories included herein, which helped to shape its assessment of the Town's needs.

In keeping with guidelines established in the Commonwealth's *OSRP Requirements* and *OSRP Planner's Workbook*, the OSRPC's efforts in needs assessment were both balanced and supported by representation on the Committee by Dept. of Public Works employees having relevant expertise and official responsibilities, and by its inclusion of members from the Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Board of Health, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, Historical Commission, members of the local business community, leadership of volunteer conservation groups, and managers of major land parcels and entities including Borderland State Park and Moose Hill Farm, as well as other environmentally-concerned citizens having complementary expertise in data analysis and other areas.

Through this assessment process, the OSRPC has developed a list of recommendations of needs that should be addressed by the Town of Sharon in the future, given below.

B. Needs

Resource Protection Needs

- Protection of wetlands, water resource areas such as the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, and sole-source aquifer areas by consistent application of our resource protection rules, regulations and by-laws and also by acquisition of properties by outright purchase, development right purchase, and conservation restriction or easements.
- Prevention or minimization of further inter-basin transfers of water originating in Sharon's watersheds, which have the potential to impact the Town's water supply, through judicious review and exercise of appropriate caution when considering the permitting of projects whose water usage would cause such effects.
- To continue efforts in land preservation, especially for targeted parcels as shown on [Map](#) in Section 8.

Community Needs

- Because results of the OSRP public opinion survey indicated that even many interested residents are insufficiently informed about certain recreational resources available in Sharon, there is a need to promote increased awareness of the existence, location and opportunities for use of public open space, including trails, playgrounds and recreation areas.
- To provide, or upgrade where needed, ADA-required access features for recreational and open space resources.
- To create a bike lane, especially around Lake Massapoag, to permit increased and safer biking opportunities.
- To preserve, protect and create more opportunities for enjoying open space and recreational areas.
- Sharon is located within the southeastern region in the SCORP document, but is not referenced in the SCORP document.

C. Management Needs and Potential Changes of Use

- The newly acquired former Horizons for Youth (B) site is expected to experience evolving changes in use and thus may require a change in management needs.
- The Rattlesnake Hill property, now owned by Brickstone Corp., may similarly require a change in management needs if the large-acreage parcel intended for preservation included in the Town's agreement with the developer eventually is acquired by the Town as provided, if and when the development is constructed as planned.
- The Mountain Street former landfill site may experience a change of use if agreement can be reached about its potential uses. This would create new needs for appropriate care and management of the site.
- Concerning the cranberry bogs on South Main Street, there will be a need to monitor the lease agreement with the growers who manage the bogs, after the bogs become the property of the Conservation Commission.
- To consider mounting a designated effort to maintain and integrate trails where possible into the Town-wide trail system, particularly in view of the potential increases in open space areas anticipated during the next few years.
- Changes of use that may occur in situations such as conversion of open space to 40B residential developments, and a continuing public interest in converting open space to active recreation uses for new athletic fields, would modify future land management needs.

Section 8 Goals and Objectives

1. To preserve and maintain high quality and adequate quantity of Sharon's water resources

- a. To encourage water conservation measures including public education efforts to reduce pollution, by coordinating with the Water Department, Board of Health and/or external resources.
- b. To maintain the viability of Lake Massapoag for water quality, and support efforts to eradicate fanwort and other invasive species, securing any assistance and available funding needed.
- c. To purchase remaining watershed parcels and property important to existing and/or future Town wells where possible.
- d. To develop a management plan for the South Main Street cranberry bogs, located up-gradient of wells 5 and 7, to become effective when they become Town land.
- e. To develop and implement an improved catch basin management plan.

2. To continue land preservation and maintenance efforts

- a. To procure and preserve, where possible, remaining open space parcels that become available, including those indicated on the [Targeted Parcel Map](#), by utilizing all options: purchase, donation, bargain sales, and Conservation Restrictions.
- b. To complete the transition of the South Main Street cranberry bogs to Conservation Commission ownership and continue the leasing agreement, which provides for the bogs to be managed, maintained and harvested in the future.
- c. To promote and achieve adequate maintenance and upkeep of existing open space areas and trails, by maintaining and enhancing Sharon's excellent level of citizen participation in open space preservation and management. This will be done through continued and expanded effective partnerships with volunteer groups including local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops and others, encouragement of participation by environmentally-concerned private individuals, and by enlisting support where possible and as needed from the Department of Public Works or from programs such as summer internships.

3. To promote and expand community education and involvement concerning open space and recreational resources

- a. To increase public awareness of open space and recreational resources including trails, lands, and recreational opportunities, with the assistance of available grants through sources including the Commonwealth Greenway Trail Grants Program to develop informational programs, publications, and web-based media on a continually updated basis.

- b. To coordinate with Town webmaster, local cable TV, and Sharon Advocate (local newspaper) to advertise open space and recreational programs in order to promote community education and awareness.
- c. To create a Recreation/Open Space bulletin board and events calendar for outdoor and indoor activities and programs, including maps of their locations; and to recruit volunteer liaisons to provide and to update regularly such information.
- d. To improve the management of the Town's recycling program with the assistance of the DEP.

4. To improve resource utilization and public benefit by increasing and expanding recreational facilities and programs

- a. To achieve the development and utilization of the Mountain Street Landfill acreage, including necessary research to determine its best appropriate uses.
- b. To develop a beneficial utilization plan for the Sacred Heart building complex, incorporating public input on this subject obtained through means including public responses to the OSRP survey ([Appendix A](#)).
- c. To assist the continued efforts of the Horizons for Youth Reutilization Advisory Committee to develop beneficial plans for mixed use of the Horizons for Youth (B) facility, and by enlisting the assistance of the Recreation Department in order to obtain input from other Town departments, committees, local conservation groups and community interest groups that will facilitate development of such usage plans.
- d. To incorporate long range plans and accomplish future projects where possible as outlined in the Executive Summary - Rec. Master Plan Update ([Appendix I](#)).

5. To reconvene the OSRPC annually to review goals and progress.

- a. Review progress on the various planned actions.
- b. Recruit and train new OSRP members as needed.
- c. Keep the OSRP's information current.

[Targeted Parcels Map \(2 pg. .pdf Document\)](#)

Section 9 Seven-Year Action Plan

To achieve the goals and objectives described in [Section 8](#), the OSRP Committee proposes the series of planned actions shown in the following chart, and recommends that these form the focus of the Town's efforts in open space and recreation issues during the coming seven years.

Flexibility and readiness to adapt plans based on new or changing conditions will be essential to the success of many of these planned actions. Also crucial in many cases will be the availability of funding, whether through the Town, through private donations or through external grants awarded by the Commonwealth or other sources for the targeted purposes. The OSRPC has strived to achieve a workable framework of objectives and actions, and believes that accomplishing the outlined actions will be feasible within the available seven-year time frame if necessary funding is available. Because many of the planned actions involve regular updating or ongoing maintenance or other such efforts, many of the indicated schedules span most of the 7-year period preceding submission of the next Plan update.

The Committee hopes and anticipates that citizen volunteers and Town officials and representatives of its various boards will continue to work cooperatively in the interest of reaching the goals. Such cooperation will be particularly important for planned actions such as the systematization of signage and marking of trails, promotion and increased residential practice of recycling, and improving usage of newer recreational areas. The Recreation Department, Recreation Advisory Board, and the Conservation Commission, with the help of the Board of Selectmen and DPW, will spearhead or coordinate many of the proposed actions, eliciting townspeople's support as needed.

Goal 1: Preserve and maintain high quality and adequate quantity of water resources

Actions	Schedule
Promote improved and more widely-practiced water conservation measures among residents, by continuing to provide updated and innovative strategies and Information formulated by the Water Dept. and Water Management Advisory Committee in their water conservation brochure distributed with residential water bills.	Ongoing
Completion of the hydrological study and mitigation efforts, currently underway and being performed by private contractor-consultants, to restore and maintain optimal water levels and prevent further net depletion within the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp	Ongoing, to be completed by Conservation Comm./DPW
Continue monitoring by the Lake Management Committee of fanwort and other invasive species problematic to Lake Massapoag, and to request eradication measures when necessary.	Ongoing spring/fall as needed 2009- 2016
To facilitate continuity of management of the South Main Street cranberry bogs, which will transition to Town ownership as part of the Sharon Commons development agreement. The Conservation Commission will meet with present owners and lessees of the bogs to review past management practices and develop future plan for water usage and control mechanisms.	Spring 2009—Spring 2010
The Conservation commission will meet with Dept. of Public Works Superintendent and Highway Supervisor to discuss and propose updated and/or alternate methods for the present street catch basin management plan in order to further reduce sedimentation.	2009-10

Goal 2: Continue land preservation and maintenance efforts

Actions	Schedule
Continue protecting targeted parcels of open space by purchase, restriction/easements or combination thereof. The Conservation Commission will do so by contacting and negotiating with the parcel owners whenever possible.	Ongoing/all years
Conservation Commission will develop with owners of the cranberry bogs a timeline and execution plan for the required exchange of the bogs to Conservation Commission ownership.	Spring 2009- 2010
Through both Dept. of Public Works and volunteer groups, maintain and upgrade existing open space areas and trails, and improve and systematize their posting and marking.	2009-2016
By coordinated efforts of the Conservation Commission, Sharon Friends of Conservation, Boy Scouts and other groups, to marshal and encourage volunteer efforts to establish new trails, and enhance the connectivity between existing trails and the continuity and integration of Sharon's hiking trail system.	Fall 2009-2016

Goal 3: Promote and expand community education and involvement concerning open space and recreation resources

Actions	Schedule
Design and incorporate into the Town website new information about the locations and features of existing and new open space areas, trails, and active recreation areas	2009 - 2010; update 2012
Through coordinated effort of Recreation Dept. and Conservation Commission, to establish a site at which to post a list of activities and locations for public access to open space and recreation resources, and update the postings regularly	All years beginning 2009
Meet with members of the Recycling Committee and appropriate DPW personnel to develop methods of improving the level of participation in the Town's recycling program	2010
Explore the feasibility and methods of incorporating information on open space areas and trails locations into the Recreation Dept.'s activities program brochure that is mailed to residents semi-annually, and initiate the regular inclusion of this information	Spring 2009 / ongoing
Under the guidance of the Horizons for Youth Reuse Committee, to increase and improve residents' awareness, access and recreational use of the Horizons for Youth property and facilities, including buildings, camp facility, waterfront and canoeing/boating resources	All years

Goal 4: Improve resource utilization and public benefit by increasing and expanding recreational facilities and programs

Actions	Schedule
Review completed research of usage capability for Mountain Street Landfill and formulate possible recreational uses; e.g., baseball diamond, football practice site, walkways	2009 / ongoing
Submit pertinent survey information to the Sacred Heart Reutilization Committee to assist them in developing planned uses for the building/property; e.g., added gymnasium space, fitness center	Spring 2009-2010
Under the leadership of the Horizons for Youth Reutilization Advisory Committee and using comments and ideas submitted by residents, including those in the OSRP public opinion survey, develop usage plans that maximize open space and recreational value of this resource.	Spring 2009-2016
Continue to address Future Plans listed in the <i>Executive Summary Rec. Master Plan Update (Appendix I)</i> ; e.g., a possible walkway from Deborah Sampson Park to Memorial Park Beach to the Massapoag Trail, improvements to the Exercise Trail at Deborah Sampson Park, and add a third soccer field at the Gavin's Pond Soccer Complex.	Spring 2009 / ongoing

Goal 5: Reconvene the OSRP Committee annually to review goals and progress

Actions	Schedule
<p>Review progress on the various planned actions for Goals 1-4, reassess and update the proposed objectives and actions as needed in light of changing circumstances, and enumerate any new land use issues, proposed developments, demographic and water use trends and evolving needs and concerns.</p> <p>Recruit and train new OSRP members as needed to replace any retiring members.</p> <p>Overall, keep the OSRP's information current and effect a smooth transition when the time comes to develop the next required Plan submission.</p>	<p>Annually, January 2010-2016</p>

[Action Plan Map](#)

Section 10 Public Comments

A. Description of Process

The EOEEA received a draft Plan version in December of 2007 for its review and to inform it of the ongoing efforts of Sharon's Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee (OSRPC). The Committee continued to meet regularly through 2008 until the final draft was made available online to all organizations needing to submit a written comment according to the *Open Space Planners Workbook*. These organizations included the EOEEA, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and the Town's Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, Board of Health, and Planning Board. All written responses received are included in this section.

[Letter from Conservation Commission](#)

[Letter from Recreation Department](#)

[Letter from Board of Health](#)

[Letter from Planning Board](#)

[Letter from Board of Selectmen](#)

[Letter from EOEEA](#)

[Letter from MAPC](#)

Section 11 References

Bibliography

Goldson, J. (2008). [Town of Sharon Community Preservation Plan](#).

Sharon Historical Society. (2005). *Sharon, Massachusetts A History*. Boston, Massachusetts: Blue Mustang Press.

Wright-Pierce. (2008). *P.O. Square Wastewater Management Study Report 2*.

Useful Websites

[Town of Sharon Home Page](#)

[Sharon Conservation Commission](#)

[Sharon Friends of Conservation](#)

[Sharon Recreation Department](#)

[Recreation Advisory Committee](#)

[Sharon Board of Health](#)

[Sharon Historical Society](#)

[Massachusetts Audubon Society- Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

[Borderland State Park](#)

[Trustees of Reservations- Moose Hill Farm](#)

[Warner Trail](#)

[Bay Circuit Trail](#)

[Neponset River Watershed Association](#)

[Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee](#)

[Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#)

[Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#)

[Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program](#)

[MassGIS Online Data Viewer \(view maps online\)](#)