



# TOWN OF HAMILTON

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

**Virtual Community Meeting**

*April 2, 2020*



# Tonight's Agenda



- **Presentation**

- Introduction and Process Review
- Overview of demographic and land use trends
- Select parks and open spaces in Hamilton
- Seven-year Action Plan Highlights

- **Virtual open house activities**

- Prioritize OSRP Goals
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) Analysis



# Introduction

- What is “open space?”
- Why complete an OSRP?





# What is “open space?”

- Refers to conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, neighborhood parks, natural features, and green buffers
- The term can also refer to vacant or undeveloped lands with conservation or recreation potential
- Open space varies by ownership, level of protection, and use



# Types of Recreation

- Open spaces can be utilized for either passive or active recreation
- In general, passive recreation requires minimal facilities/development and is often less costly and has less of an environmental impact
  - *Examples:* **walking, running, hiking, fishing, cross country skiing**
- Active recreation involves structured activities which require specialized parkland development and management
  - *Examples:* **playgrounds, sports/ball fields, swimming pools**

# Why complete an OSRP?



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## Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Hamilton

Hamilton Open Space Committee  
Hamilton Conservation Commission  
Hamilton, Massachusetts  
May 2009

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- An Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) provides information about the community, its environmental and recreational resources, and what residents want to achieve in the **next 7 years**
- OSRPs help encourage community protection and stewardship of these vital resources
- Completion of an OSRP makes municipalities **eligible to apply for State grants** through the EOEEA to acquire and improve land for conservation and recreation

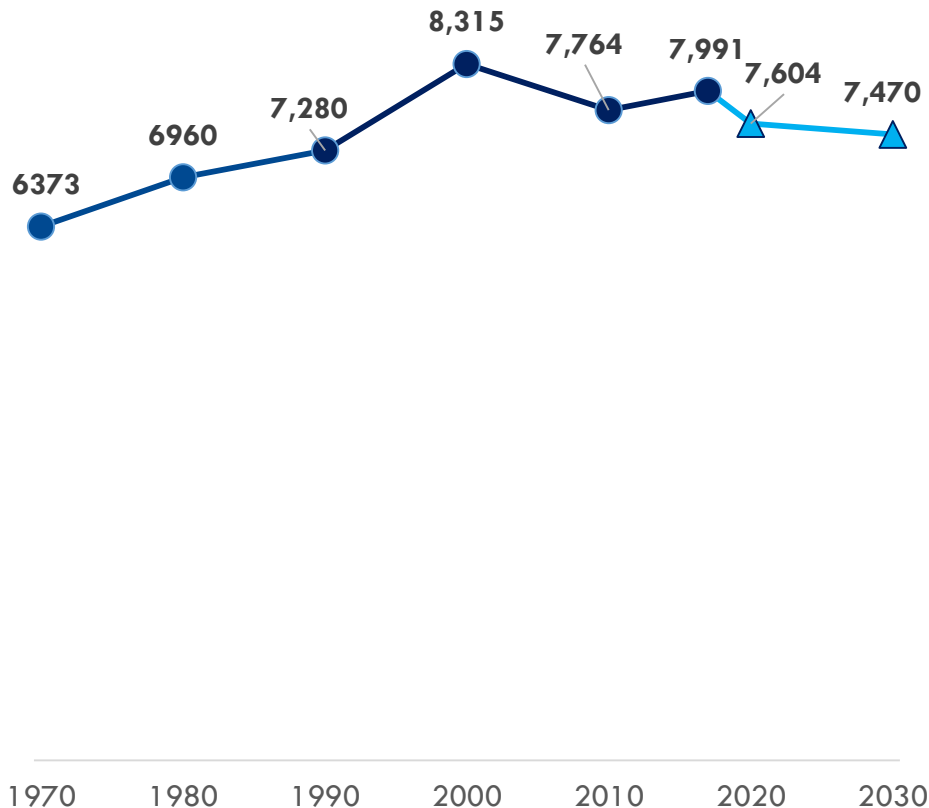


# Data Trends

- Population and Households
- Land Use



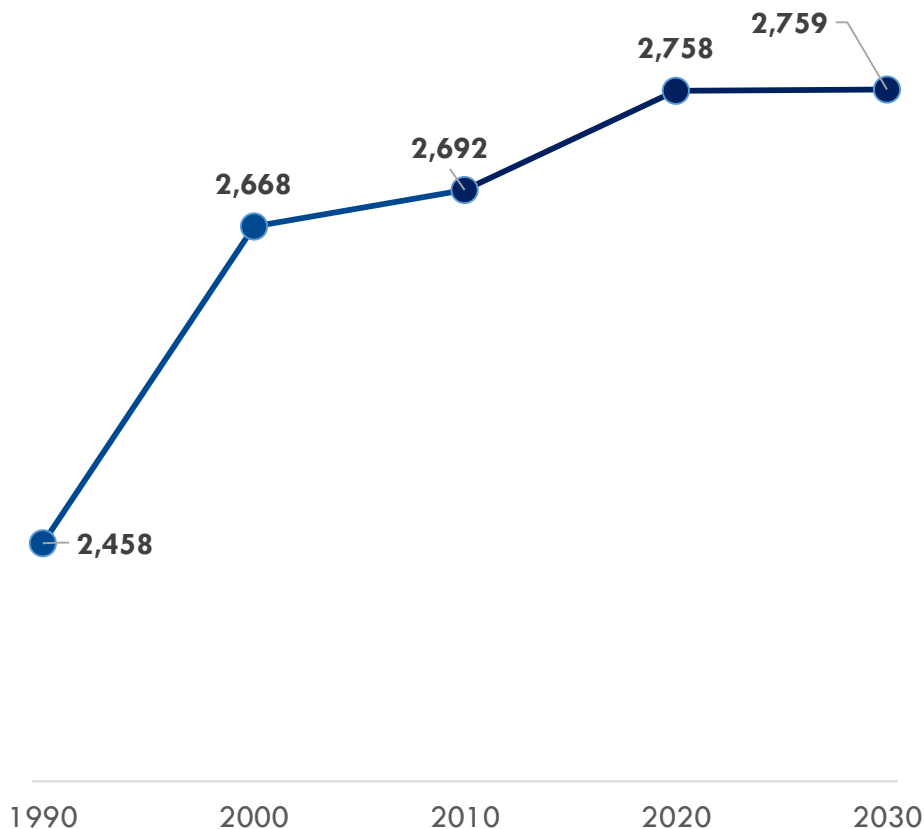
# Population



- Total town population increase steadily between 1970 and 2000, before falling by approximately 6.65%
- MAPC's "Stronger Regions" scenario projects a decrease in the total town population through 2030

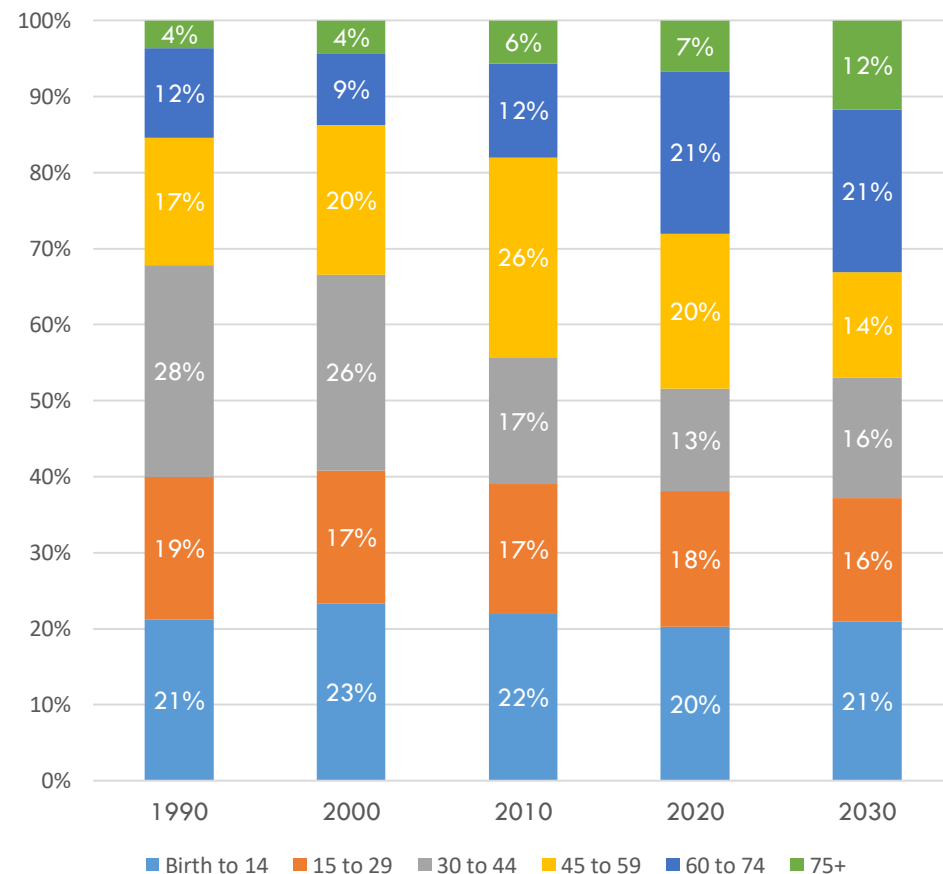


# Households



- “A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit.”
- Although Hamilton’s population decreased between 2000 and 2010, the number of households in town remained largely stable, with a modest increase.
- If household growth continues to outstrip population growth, more housing units will be required

# Age Cohorts



- More than 40% of all households in Hamilton have children under the age of 18, which is almost double the number of households with seniors 65 and over.
- Different user bases use recreations spaces with variable frequency and for a range of activities.

# Age Cohorts



- *Example: Facilities required by a large youth sports organization differ from those enabling individual or small group passive recreation activities pursued by older residents.*



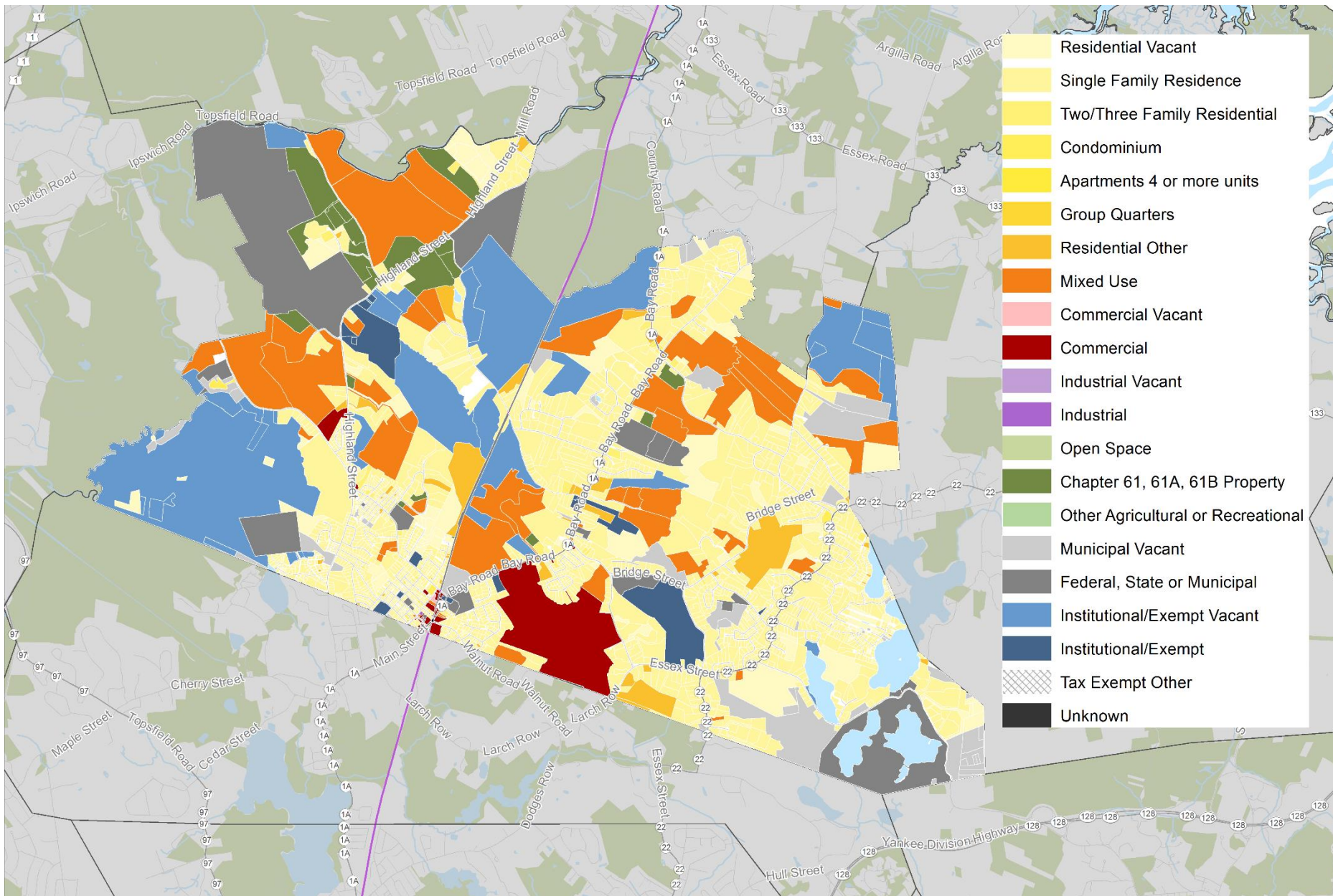
# Land Use



Property Type	Acres	% Total
<b>Residential</b>	<b>3,812</b>	<b>39.98%</b>
Single Family	2,962	31.06%
Residential Condominium	8	0.08%
Two/Three Family	42	0.44%
Apartments with Four to Eight Units	0.2	0.00%
Multiple Houses on one parcel	205	2.15%
Other Residential	39	0.41%
Vacant - Developable	223	2.34%
Vacant - Undevelopable	333	3.49%
<b>Commercial/Industrial</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>3.10%</b>
Commercial/Retail	295	3.09%
Industrial	1	0.01%
Vacant - Developable	1	0.01%
Vacant - Undevelopable	0	0.00%
<b>Mixed Use</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>10.78%</b>
<b>Chapter 61</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>6.78%</b>
<b>Exempt</b>	<b>3,192</b>	<b>33.48%</b>
Public	1,402	14.70%
Institutional	1,790	18.77%
<b>Other</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>5.88%</b>
Right-of-Ways	318	3.34%
Water	222	2.33%
Unknown	21	0.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,535</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- The listed spatial footprint of commercial/industrial development in Hamilton is somewhat deceptive. 267 of the total 296 acres are accounted for the by Myopia Hunt Club, which is assigned a commercial land use code.
- The only industrial parcel in town is the site of a telephone relay tower.
- The “Mixed-Use” land use category includes parcels coded as “Primarily Residential, Some Agricultural” and “Primarily Residential, Some Forest” which account for the majority of the land in that category.
- “Exempt” land is that which belongs to an entity exempt from paying property taxes. This includes significant publicly owned open spaces, e.g. Bradley Palmer State Park, and open spaces owned by private conservation organizations, e.g. Essex County Greenbelt Association.









# Open Space

- Inventory Overview
- Key parks and open spaces



# Open Space



<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% Total</i>
<b>Public</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>34%</b>
Municipal	590	18%
Regional School District	43	1%
State	493	15%
<b>Private</b>	<b>2,202</b>	<b>66%</b>
Land Trust; Conservation Organization	1,585	48%
Other (e.g. private education)	617	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>100%</b>

- Open space under “fee simple” ownership
- This data does not account for conservation restrictions, although there is some overlap.
- According to state records, there are 44 recored CRs in Hamilton covering 1,745 acres

# Open Space



<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>% Total</i>
<b>Protected</b>	<b>2,571</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Limited Protection</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>100%</b>

- Land specifically acquired for conservation and recreation purposes are considered protected by “Article 97” of the State Constitution
- Lands purchased for general municipal purposes are not protected by Article 97, but are considered to have limited protection due to their public ownership
- Privately owned lands can be fully or partially protected

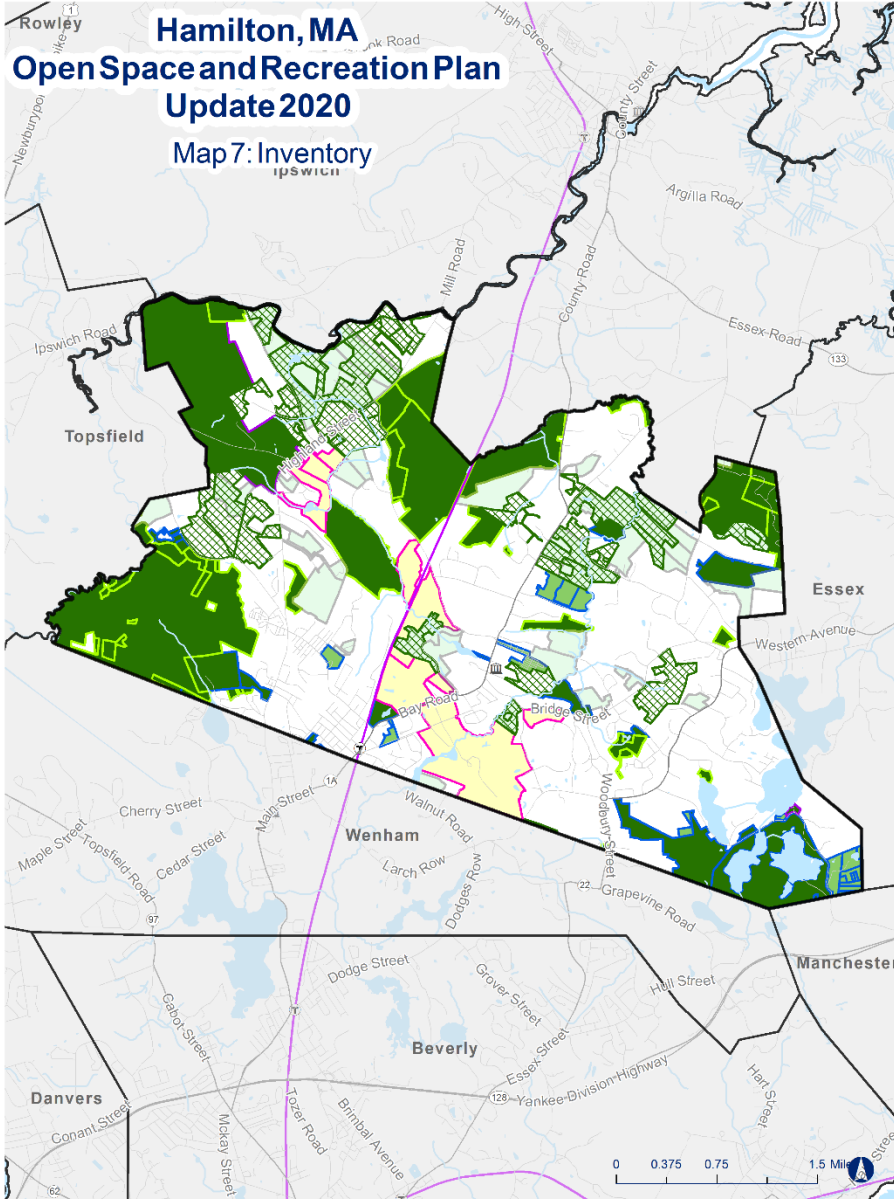


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# Key Sites





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# Key Sites







# Seven-year Action Plan Highlights

- Goals, objectives, sample action



# Recent Accomplishments



- Purchased 52-acre Donovan Fields and Woods, which now housing a multi-purpose athletic field and baseball diamond as well as a nature trail.
- The Hamilton-Wenham Recreation Department engaged Gale Associates to assist the joint Department with the development of a recreation facilities needs assessment and master plan.
- Accepted gift of 27-acre Patton Homestead, which includes a historic home and restricted open space with riverwalk and canoe launch
- Patton Park's playground equipment, landscaping, and athletic facilities have been updated and maintained through a major fundraising program by the Friends of Patton Park Playground and Town funding
- The Town has used Community Preservation Act funding to complete regular removal of invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed, on Town owned conservation land
- The Town made its most significant acquisition of open space ever at Sagamore Hill, adding 170 acres in Hamilton. This acquisition was part of the largest open space project in Essex County, with the Essex County Greenbelt Association organizing private landowners and the Towns of Hamilton, Ipswich, and Essex to protect 600 acres, with hiking trails and views of Ipswich Bay.
- The Board of Selectmen adopted a Land Acquisition Policy to set out a “clear and uniform method for acquiring interests in real property for open space preservation, water supply protection, recreation or municipal purposes.”
- The Joint Recreation Department has begun to implement recommendations from the Recreation Master Plan Report for the Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, including funding for the design and permitting of the redevelopment of the football field and track at the High School.

# Seven-year Action Plan



- **Goal #1: Preserve and protect the Town's open space and natural areas that provide opportunities for passive recreation (walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, enjoyment of nature, etc.), drinking water supply, wildlife and plant habitat, agriculture and forestry, and rural scenic character of the Town.**

**Objective 1.1 Identify priority parcels for protection, and develop strategies for conservation, including partnerships and funding sources.**

Explore opportunities to purchase or preserve Meadowbrook Farm property on Essex Street

**Objective 1.2 Protect priority parcels through acquisition, conservation restrictions, agricultural restrictions or other means.**

Acquire parcels along Lake Drive, including Audubon and Ricker lots.



# Seven-year Action Plan



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**Objective 1.3 Maintain and enhance existing trail networks and maintain trail connectivity.**

Maintain Cutler Park; replace signage, benches, and improve pond access to pond.

**Objective 1.4 Educate citizens on the need for, and benefits of, open space acquisition and protection and build support for key acquisitions**

Hold public events to discuss plans and goals with the public, in order to encourage support for open space planning.

# Seven-year Action Plan



- **Goal #2: Provide, expand and maintain adequate facilities and resources for active recreational opportunities for all residents.**

**Objective 2.1 Acquire and develop additional playing fields to meet the high demand for youth and adult sports.**

Continue efforts to install a turf playing field at the high school.

**Objective 2.2 Redevelop and maintain existing athletic fields including developing turf field(s) and consideration of lighting to extend use.**

Determine maintenance needs of grass fields and allocate resources accordingly.

# Seven-year Action Plan



- **Goal #3: Provide adequate, dedicated funding sources for open space and recreational facility acquisition and maintenance.**

**Objective 3.1 Explore with other Town boards the creation of a Town conservation fund**

Set up and annually appropriate funds into a dedicated conservation fund.

**Objective 3.2 Work with Community Preservation Committee on funding for priority acquisitions and projects**

Engage with CPC to potentially request funding for the Meadowbrook property

**Objective 3.3 Work with local conservation organizations on partnerships to fund and acquire priority parcels (including through state grants)**

Seek support from private partners to coordinate acquisition of the Meadowbrook property



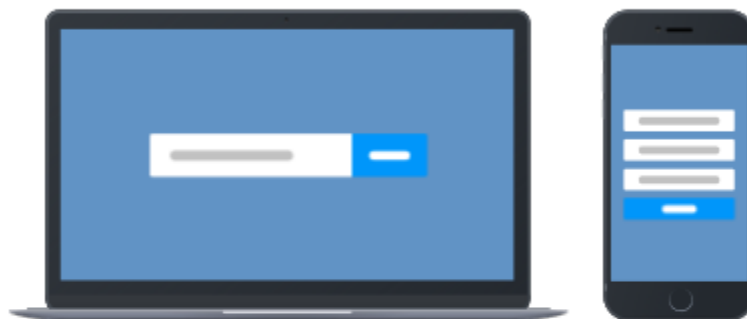
# Questions?



# Open House Activities



## Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **JOES930**
- 3 Respond to activity