

PREFACE

Open space means different things to different people. To some it is a field for youth soccer on Saturday mornings or little league baseball on an early summer evening. To others it is a quiet place to take a short walk and sit on a bench. Playgrounds, climbing structures, sandboxes, and basketball courts have always been an essential component of urban parks. The recent growth of “rails-to-trails” bike paths has reminded us that our open spaces can also serve other functions, such as providing transportation alternatives. And even in a built-out town like Winthrop, there are a few remaining wild places, reminding us of the natural landscapes and ecological systems underlying the community.

The purpose of this Plan is to bring together all of these notions of Open Space in a comprehensive fashion, to assess the current state of the Town’s open space and recreational opportunities, and to develop an implementable plan to address current and future needs. This document represents a physical plan for Winthrop’s shared open spaces as well as an organizational plan to provide guidance for the public and private groups that steward them.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan is guided by the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan requirements for eligibility of Self-Help and Urban Self-Help Grants administered by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services. It has been prepared in conformance with the guidelines in the 2001 Open Space Planners Workbook. This Open Space and Recreation Plan’s acceptance by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services makes Winthrop eligible to compete for such funds, which the Town can use for land acquisition and improvement of parks and open space. This Plan is also useful as a community information resource and as a guide for government planning.



Photographs by Frank Quimby

CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Town of Winthrop Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee

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Sean Driscoll - Director of Parks and Recreation

Richard Honan - Chairman, Winthrop Beautification Committee

Scott McGovern - Winthrop Chamber of Commerce

Larry Holmes - ADA Coordinator/Veterans Agent

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This Open Space & Recreation Plan represents an update of the material collected, analyzed and presented in the Town's 1997 Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan. Where no updates were necessary, sections from that draft plan have been excerpted into this plan.

SECTION 1: PLAN SUMMARY

It is the overwhelming desire of the Open Space Committee, acting on behalf of the Town of Winthrop, to adopt an Open Space and Recreation Plan that will help preserve, protect, enhance and, whenever possible, increase the amount of open space within the limited confines of our small community. In the ten years since its last Open Space Plan was completed, the Town has made significant progress in its attempt to provide the residents with as many recreational outlets as possible. They include:

- The acquisition of the Fort Heath property and its conversion to a magnificent park with an unequalled view was truly a milestone;
- A total renovation of Coughlin Playground and Crest Avenue Park was accomplished along with improvements at the Dalrymple and E. B. Newton Schools' Playgrounds;
- A committee was formed to determine what improvements were necessary and feasible for Ingleside Park and conceptual designs and cost estimates were prepared. The estimated cost was \$1.4 million and various funding sources were used to complete the newly improved park ;
- A grant from the Metropolitan District Commission brought funds for improvements, including handicap accessibility, to local beaches, two of which are now completed Yirrell and Donovan's;
- A grant was obtained from the Department of Environmental Management to inventory and assess the coastal access ways which have long been neglected but which are making a comeback due to the clean up of Boston Harbor;
- New soccer fields were constructed at the Fort Banks Park;
- An historic survey was done with a grant from the Massachusetts Historic Commission;
- The slope on the drumlin on Cottage Hill where the water tower is situated was stabilized and a pathway was constructed at the base as an extension of Winthrop Shore Drive;
- Both French Square and Metcalf Square were renovated as part of our Center Revitalization project, and
- Land known as "Fishermen's Bend" was acquired by tax title and is under the stewardship of the Conservation Commission. \$35,000 in funding from the Seaport Advisory Council is being used to fund a Harbor Assessment and Harbor Plan to be completed in Fall 2004.

Many of these projects were identified in the last Plan and Winthrop is proud that they were able to be implemented. We are, however, far from finished and cannot become complacent. It is hoped that this new, improved Open Space and Recreation Plan will serve as a valuable tool to remind ourselves and make others aware of what limited space and resources we have and the importance of taking care of them.

This new Plan establishes an updated set of goals and objectives, to be implemented by the Five Year Action Plan. The main areas of emphasis include:

- Continued stewardship of Belle Isle Marsh and planning for new nature walks and access to this valued environmental resource;
- Establish an ongoing Beach Maintenance Program;
- Develop plans for a Harborwalk;
- Consider recreational opportunities at the Shirley Street Trestle;
- Establish a Park Facilities Improvement Program that plans for and constructs upgrades at the following parks within the next five years:
 - Massa Playground
 - Daw Playground
 - Pico Playground and Beach

An Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee has been appointed and will have responsibility for overseeing implementation of this Plan.

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to document the findings and recommendations of the Town of Winthrop's Open Space and Recreation Committee. This Committee was established by the Board of Selectmen in the late spring of 2003 with the specific assignment to prepare an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town.

The planning process was designed to incorporate a broad range of recommendations from a variety of Town officials and agencies, civic organizations and interested citizens. Letters were sent to these groups inviting participation in the process. In response to this invitation, a core group of planners emerged with representation from the following groups:

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Grants/Procurement Officer | Barbara McNeil |
| ■ Conservation Commission | Karen Winn-Sordillo |
| ■ Planning Board | Paul Des Jardins |
| ■ Parks and Recreation Department | Sean Driscoll, Director |
| | Jill Caputo, Assistant Director |
| ■ Winthrop Chamber of Commerce | Scott McGovern |
| ■ ADA Coordinator/Veterans Agent | Larry Holmes |
| ■ Economic Development Consultant | Paul Rupp |
| ■ Beautification Committee | Richard Honan |

Meetings of the Committee began in the spring and continued regularly until a rough draft Plan was prepared in the fall of 2003 with the final draft being completed by December 2004. The scope of work undertaken by the Committee and the methodology utilized to prepare this document are explained as follows:

The first task taken on by the Committee was to research previous documents relating to open space and recreation planning for the Town of Winthrop. There were basically three such documents that could be readily identified. The first was the Town's Master Plan, the second was a Park Study Plan and the third was the draft 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Essentially, this Plan is an update and expansion of the original 1997 draft.

The Town's Master Plan was prepared by the planning firm of Draveau, Bender & Associates in 1959. Although seriously outdated at the time of this writing, the Master Plan does provide some insight into the open space and recreational priorities of the late 1950's. The plan emphasized the development of tot lots, playgrounds and playfields as the major recreational needs of the community. Except for maintenance and care of the existing small neighborhood parks, the need for additional park lands was rationalized out of the Plan on the basis that the Town's numerous beaches would serve the community's passive recreation needs.

The Winthrop Park Study was prepared in 1975 by the planning firm of Gardiner Associates. This actually represents a more detailed analysis of active and passive recreation needs within Winthrop. The Plan was developed through community surveys, input from local officials and civic organizations as well as public meetings. The Park Study and the previous Open Space Plan provided a list of priority sites for immediate development. These documents provided the present Open Space Committee with invaluable insight into Town recreational needs as they were very thorough and detailed. A copy of the Park Study can be found in Appendix B.

A needs assessment survey was conducted by the Committee in February and March of 1997. The survey was designed to assess existing recreational facilities and identify future needs.

The survey utilized (See Appendix C) was similar to one prepared by a student intern, assigned to the Town by the Suffolk County Conservation District back in 1985. The Community Development Office handled distribution and collection of the completed surveys through its Town Hall office. Circulation was to as wide a variety of residents as possible, unlike the previous one which primarily queried families with school-aged children. It was, however, never intended to represent the sole method for analyzing and assessing community needs.



*Aerial view of Winthrop
Photograph by ESS Productions, Revere, MA*

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY SETTING

Located in Suffolk County, the Town of Winthrop is predominately a residential community with 73.7% of its land zoned for residential uses. Geographically, the Town forms the northern tip of Boston's inner harbor. Situated on a peninsula, Winthrop is physically isolated from the closest neighboring communities of East Boston and Revere by the Belle Isle Inlet tidal marsh.

History of the Community and Regional Context

Historically, Winthrop's development has been closely tied to development trends associated with the economic growth of business in the greater Boston area. Settled in 1630 (and named for John Winthrop a former governor of Massachusetts) with its foundation as an agricultural community, Winthrop remained an isolated appendage to the Town of Chelsea for almost two hundred years. In 1852, the so-called "Little Republic" won its petition for incorporation and became a Town in its own right. Today, it is the only community in Suffolk County that still retains a Town Meeting form of government.

In the late nineteenth century, Winthrop began its metamorphosis, from a sparsely settled agricultural community to the densely developed "bedroom" community that it is today. This type of development can be associated with the thriving economic growth of the City of Boston and the transportation revolution, which opened the suburbs to the City's workers. In Winthrop, the key to change was the Narrow Gauge Railroad. The Narrow Gauge and its network of stations throughout Winthrop brought the Town within commuting time of Boston proper. By the mid 1920's Winthrop's isolationist development pattern had been broken. In 2000, with a population of nearly 11,733 persons per square mile, the Town is one of the most densely populated communities in the nation.



Winthrop Town Center Photo by Frank Quimby

Given this density of development and the geographic size of the community (1.6 square miles), open space in Winthrop is at a premium. Under development pressure from a growing Boston area workforce, the Town now has the lowest percentage of developable land in the metropolitan Boston region at only three acres. Also according to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), Winthrop has the capacity for an additional population of 190 people and 83 housing units until it is "built out." There is no commercial or industrial floor space existing in Winthrop where expansion is an option. The minimal land

zoned for commercial and industrial uses is already limiting, so any additional business development would have to occur through redevelopment. The Town's active and passive recreational needs have historically been addressed through a small network of neighborhood parks and playgrounds. The vast majority of these facilities contain less than an acre of land and the largest does not exceed ten (10) acres. Furthermore, some of the largest tracts of open space remaining within the Town's limits are privately owned and technically developable.

The issues and impacts associated with further residential development in Winthrop, led to the passage of a building moratorium in April of 1985. Although this action of the Annual Town Meeting did not receive the approval of the Attorney General's Office as a valid Home Rule Petition, it did, nonetheless, signify a public's mandate that remaining open space should be preserved in a natural state. In its broadest sense the Town meeting vote called for the development and implementation of the open space planning process contained within this document.



Salt Marsh—Photo by Frank Quimby

As stated previously, Winthrop is a residential community. Geographically the Town forms the northern border of the entrance to Boston Harbor. As a peninsula, the Town is physically isolated from Revere and East Boston by the Belle Isle Inlet Tidal Marsh, the last urban estuary in the Greater Boston Area and the most significant regional environmental feature found in Winthrop. Winthrop is a part of the Mystic River Watershed, which is approximately 76

square miles and extends to twenty-one municipalities north and west of the City of Boston. Because of its location, it is one of the most urban and densely populated watersheds in Massachusetts. Within the watershed, there are forty-four lakes and ponds and numerous bike paths. The entire future for this watershed changed instantly with the construction of I-93 in the 1960s when many wetlands were filled in, thereby changing its course. Along the Mystic River today, where once used to be working tide mills, brickyards and tanneries are houses, parks, businesses and abandoned buildings.

Although physically isolated, the relative separation of Winthrop from other parts of Greater Boston is negated by severe impacts from two major regional institutions: Logan International Airport and a newly expanded and greatly enlarged and upgraded Deer Island Sewage Treatment Facility (the Deer Island House of Correction having been relocated in December of 1991). Both of these facilities require close proximity to the core metropolitan area while simultaneously necessitating isolation to impact the smallest number of persons. Win-

The following definition of “open space” is to be used throughout this Open Space and Recreation Plan:

“Publicly owned, undeveloped land that is primarily vegetated, or paved areas that serve a recreational or cultural purpose. This includes, but is not limited to, parks, playgrounds, community gardens, walking or biking trails, cemeteries, civic plazas, and playing fields, regardless of the level of protection. Also included as open space are certain water bodies with recreational use. Not included in this definition, but recognized for their potential usefulness as open space, are certain privately owned properties, such as lawns, memorial sites, and other landscaped areas.”

throp has, therefore, suffered severe impacts with the siting of these facilities and yet, the Town has no jurisdictional controls over either institution. Winthrop has only two land access routes that allow residents to travel in and out of town. Some Deer Island traffic passes through town and major air traffic approaches to Logan are frequent occurrences.

The center of Winthrop is five (5) miles by road from the State House in Boston. Due to its proximity to Boston, Winthrop has special appeal as a residential community. Its North Shore location gives it not only easy access to Boston but also gives residents easy access to a number of ocean beaches, preserves and marinas. Its location and proximity to regional amenities have resulted in growth pressure for more residential development in a predominantly residential town.

During the period from 1990 to 2000, the Town's housing stock decreased by .6% to a total of 8,067 units. The 2000 Census showed a vacancy of 224 units, or 2.85% of the total year round housing available. The number of vacant units in 1990 was 507, which represents a 44% decrease in unit availability during the last decade. The homeowner vacancy rate is .4% and the rental vacancy rate is 2.0%, which both represent dramatic decreases since 1990. This shortage in housing supply continues to put pressure on the community for further residential development and redevelopment. Given the fact that most of the Town's remaining privately owned open space is technically developable, it is reasonable to expect that development pressure will continue unless the Town takes steps to preserve open space and curtail development.

The issues and impacts of housing are immense, playing a more dominant role in Winthrop than in other communities. Though a town, Winthrop's density results in needs similar to larger cities. However, unlike its neighbors and larger cities, the Town's development, and consequently, its tax base, is almost totally dependent upon residential property. Winthrop is both an urban and bedroom community. The tax rate for residential, industrial, commercial, personal property and open space dropped from \$15.80 in 2002 to \$10.25 in 2003, and

single-family homeowners paid an average of \$3,086 for their property taxes with an average property value of \$301,000. The average property value dramatically increased to over \$300,000 in 2003 from a much lower average of \$185,000 in 2002.

Winthrop has limited local employment opportunities and no major employers. Its employment base is predominately from retail and service jobs. The Town has no industry and only modest commercial development. Therefore, to protect the future health of the community, Winthrop has made an active effort to preserve and maintain its existing housing and related neighborhood conditions.

As an older community, Winthrop faces a number of problems that are beyond the Town's financial capability. Winthrop is frequently perceived as an middle to upper class community. While many of the Town's socio-economic and housing characteristics are solidly middle class, the perception of it as predominately upper class is in contrast to reality. Winthrop has a substantial lower middle class population, who face the economic strains and financial uncertainties resulting from lower income status. Approximately 5.5% of the population is living below poverty level with senior citizens 65 and older and female head of household families are more severely affected. Town wide, nearly 60% of Winthrop's families and almost 70% of the households make below \$75,000 per year (US Census, Summary File 3). Providing open space and recreation opportunities for residents living in Winthrop is important to continue in part because of the low cost to the participant. Attending a summer concert in the park, using a slide or swing set, walking along the beach and joining a soccer league all encourage civic participation in the community as well as limit the cost burden of an activity.



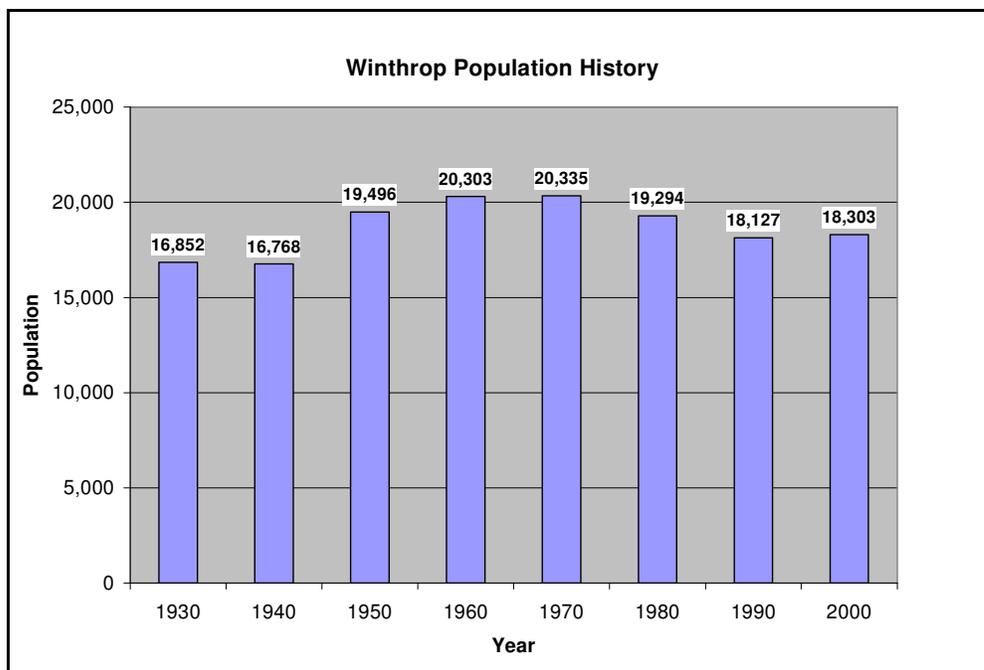
Winthrop Ballfield—Photo by Frank Quimby

This general picture of Winthrop provides the basic assumption for the Town's conservation, open space and recreation planning. The Town cannot be complacent. There is ample reason to assume that development pressure and the eventual division of remaining land could gradually transform Winthrop. The Town can guide and mitigate that change to some extent by planning. It must consciously identify the lands it most wants to preserve or regulate, and devise the means for doing so. This Open Space and Recreation Plan is intended as a major step in that direction.

Population: Trends and Capacity

Population trends have great relevance to open space planning, as they determine the degree of development pressure on remaining open land, and the levels of demand for recreation facilities. The history of population trends in Winthrop indicates that several changes are necessary.

Population figures from the US Census show that Winthrop experienced a steady increase in population during the decades from 1920 to 1970. The most significant change in population occurred during those years following World War II. In contrast to this growth pattern, more recent census data indicates a 12% decline in population from 1970 to 1990. The first increase in nearly 30 years is evidenced between 1990 and 2000 with Winthrop showing an approximate 1% growth in population. Much like Suffolk County as a whole, Winthrop suffered from a mass exodus of its residents leaving for the outer suburbs of the City of Boston until this recent turnaround. The following chart shows the variations that have occurred in the Town's population since 1930.



Based on U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 Data in Winthrop, the Age Profile of the Town's Population is as follows:

Table: Comparison Population by Age

Age Group	Winthrop		% Change	Massachusetts	United States
	1990	2000	1990-2000	% Change	% Change
Under 5	929	906	-2.5%	-3.69%	4.5%
Age 5-9	769	947	23.1%	13.97%	13.5%
Age 10-14	755	1,020	35.1%	23.89%	19.9%
Age 15-19	914	900	-1.5%	1.42%	13.9%
Age 20-24	1,416	970	-31.5%	-21.29%	-0.3%
Age 25-34	3,664	2,820	-23.0%	-15.85%	-7.6%
Age 35-44	2,681	3,248	21.1%	15.74%	20.1%
Age 45-54	2,017	2,697	33.7%	45.54%	49.4%
Age 55-59	819	1,029	25.6%	22.31%	27.9%
Age 60-64	863	742	-14.0%	-9.63%	1.8%
Age 65-74	1,771	1,443	-18.5%	-7.0%	1.6%
Age 75-84	1,077	1,140	5.8%	18.1%	34.3%
85 years +	452	441	-2.4%	26.6%	37.6%

Source: US Census, Summary File 1

The median age in Winthrop is 39.9 as compared to 36.5 for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Between 1990 and 2000, there was an increase in the school age population in children ages 5-14. A slight decrease in population has happened between children less than 5 years of age, and in those aged 15-19. Senior citizens 65-74 have also decreased in Winthrop, while the number of people 75 and older has for the most part, stayed the same. The increase in the majority of school age children puts more demand on the Town to provide active recreational activities both during and after school. The middle-age categories between 35-59 have also increased during the past decade and Winthrop must work to offer them recreational opportunities that they would enjoy as well. Whether it be an adult soccer league, walking path or pocket park, ensuring that there are opportunities for everyone is always a balancing act.

According to the 2000 Census, median household income in Winthrop has increased to \$53,122 compared to \$37,240 in 1990. Median family income also increased to \$65,696 from \$45,677 in 1990. Winthrop has higher income averages in comparison to Massachusetts as a whole which in 2000 had a median household income of \$50,502 and a median family income of \$61,664. The Town of Winthrop does have a high presence of low and moderate-income residents indicating that there may be financial restrictions placed on creating more private recreational opportunities, which places a greater demand on local government to provide this essential service. However, taxation limits imposed by Proposition 2 ½ restrict the opportunity for such expenditures in the foreseeable future.

Population Density

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the population density in 1990 was 12,368 persons per square mile (land area). In 2000, that number decreased to 11,733 persons per square mile, which makes Winthrop the fifth densest municipality in Massachusetts.

Density implies a concentrated demand for recreation. However, due to this population density, there remains very little undeveloped land in the Town, and thus, the "site selection process" for new facilities is largely a matter of making the best of those few sites that are available. The only advantage to this density factor is that small size and high density mean that any new facilities (recreational) will be easily accessible to large numbers of residents.

In 2001, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs completed build out studies for all of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. The purpose of this study is to inform municipalities of how much potential developable land exists under current zoning regulations. This information is relevant to open space and recreation because it helps indicate opportunity areas for where additional amenities could be located while informing the user where existing open space needs to be protected. According to the build out information, the Town of Winthrop can accommodate 190 more residents, 24 additional students in the K-12 school system, 83 residential units and has only 3 more developable acres in the entire town. Water capacity could increase only by 14,255 gallons per day and there is no potential new commercial or industrial buildable floor area at all.

Because of its proximity to Boston, Winthrop grew before many other towns in Massachusetts did. Before 1940, almost 60% of the current housing stock was already built and by 1960 the number was nearing 80%. If Winthrop is to start updating its available housing stock or other amenities, the Town will need to look towards redevelopment instead of new development. The Town is essentially built out.

Transportation Networks

Winthrop is a member community in the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) service area, established to assure adequate mass transportation facilities in the metropolitan area. The MBTA provides bus and train service in various combinations to Winthrop and 78 other municipalities in the area. Not surprisingly, the transportation amenities in Winthrop are minimal. There is no train service directly in Winthrop. There are two bus lines that circle the town and also connect to the Blue Line which offers service into Boston and Logan Airport. The average travel time to work for residents here is 30 minutes with 61% of workers driving to work alone, 21% using public transportation and 11% carpooling. The public roads in Winthrop are generally in good condition and meet the requirements of auto, truck and bus transportation.

Because Winthrop is considered to be in the Greater Boston metropolitan area, it has convenient rail, highway and air access. The major roadway in Winthrop is State Route 145.

Rail

The MBTA train service provides indirect access to Winthrop via the Blue subway line. Winthrop residents may choose to pick up the Blue Line at Suffolk Downs, Beachmont, Revere or Orient Heights Station and take it into Boston. From Orient Heights specifically, the travel time is approximately 11 minutes, and there are 434 spaces at that particular station which can be used for a fee of \$2.50 per day. Should residents wish to take the commuter rail to North Station or the North Shore, the closest platform is in Chelsea on the Rockport line to which one must drive. There are no parking spaces, and it is not handicapped accessible. Rail connections may be made at North Station in nearby Boston for all parts of the United States and Canada.

Highway

The network of numbered highways serving the Winthrop area may be best understood by consulting a Massachusetts road map. The only highway serving Winthrop is State Route 145. Other nearby routes include the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate Route 90), Route 128, I-93, Route 1, Route 1A and farther west, I-495 and Route 2. Winthrop is in a convenient location to East Boston and Revere, however, it is also a peninsula and requires more patience to access some of these roadways.

Bus

The Paul Revere Bus Company serves Winthrop with connecting service to the Orient Heights station of the Blue Line in East Boston. Another type of service called THE RIDE is provided by the MBTA and serves as a paratransit service for the elderly and disabled.

Other

Established trucking firms provide competitive freight service locally and to long-distance points. The Boston docks, Boston rail, bus and truck terminals, and the Logan International Airport are all easily accessible from Winthrop, thus providing ocean, land and air carrier service.

Water Supply

Winthrop is a member community of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). As such the Town receives its water from a system owned and operated by the MWRA.

Sewage Disposal System

Winthrop residents are acutely aware of the sewage disposal system servicing the Town. As a member community, Winthrop is serviced by the MWRA collection system. Disposal of treated sewerage for the MWRA system is handled at the Deer Island Treatment Plant, which was upgraded as part of a \$3.8 billion program to help clean up Boston Harbor. Interestingly, Deer Island was an island until a hurricane in 1938 filled in the space between the island and mainland with beach erosion. Today, Deer Island comprises 210 acres, two thirds of which are taken up by the wastewater treatment plant. In total, the plant cleans the sewage of 43 communities in Massachusetts that all together total a population of over 2.5 million people. The beauty of the Deer Island facility is that it has enabled the cleanup of Boston Harbor and its beaches and begun the process of environmental preservation and restoration. The rest of Deer Island is used for recreation totaling about 60 acres of public open space including 2 miles of trails and a 2.6 mile walkway that are commonly used for walking, jogging, fishing and sightseeing. Due to the proximity of the plant and its impacts on Winthrop, the community has an above average understanding of the problems associated with large metropolitan disposal systems and its benefits.

Land Use Patterns

Winthrop's land use patterns are graphically displayed on the Town of Winthrop's zoning map (See Map 5). Winthrop has the lowest percentage of developable land in the metropolitan area. According to the EOEAs buildout study, there is very little developable land left in Winthrop, who consequently should begin looking towards more redevelopment opportunities. Commercial land is confined to neighborhood-based centers, the largest of which are located in the so-called "center" area of Winthrop and the Shirley Street and Highlands area of the Town. The rest of the Town is predominantly residential with a variety of housing types.

The total acreage of the Town of Winthrop is 1,024 acres based on 1.6 square miles. The major uses of land in Winthrop are for residential and transportation purposes. Fifty-eight percent (58.1%) of the land is dense residential and 15.3% is used for transportation amenities like roadways. Since 1971 there has been a minimal increase in the amount of land used for residential dwellings, but 35 acres of ocean were filled in to build an extension to Logan Airport, which resulted in a 2.60% increase in the land used for transportation.

Of the remaining 25.9%; commercial property occupies 4.0% of the total acreage; industrial 0.1%; recreation, participant, spectator and water-based land is 10.1%; water 0.6%; salt water wetlands 4.3%, urban open land represents 3.4%; waste disposal 0.6% and other open land totals 6.7%. There is no agricultural or forested land in Winthrop. Open land is land lying idle in the midst of urban areas, awaiting an opportune time for development, including land that has been

cleared for urban development of an unknown kind. This differs from the category of urban open land, which is considered to be parks, cemeteries or defined public squares. Urban open land can be categorized as open space, which also pertains to greenspace, recreational areas and forested agricultural land.

The acreage that water covers decreased from 5.2% to 2.6% in the years between 1971 and 1990 because of the expansion of Logan Airport. Currently, there are 64 acres of water and wetlands in Winthrop. Lewis Lake Park is the only water body completely in the Town's border. There has been an increase of 1.2% of land used for outdoor recreation since 1971 (due to the building of a public landing and the creation of Fort Heath Park).

SECTION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Topography

Winthrop's terrain is fairly level except for some slight elevations up to about 50 feet in the northeastern part of the Town (i.e. Cottage Hill and the Highlands sections of Winthrop). The land in Winthrop is mostly settled and has a tidal shoreline of 8.3 miles that borders the Belle Isle Marsh. On the south, west and east, it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean.

Climate

Winthrop's weather varies sufficiently during the year to include conditions typical of all four seasons. The mean temperature in January is 28.6 degrees, while the mean for July is 73.5 degrees. The normal precipitation for Winthrop is 41.5 inches annually. The area receives an average of 40 to 60 inches of snow during a typical winter.

Landscape Character

As a peninsula with a tidal shore line of 8.3 miles and bounded by the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation, the last remaining salt marsh in the metropolitan area, Winthrop's character is determined in a large part by its surroundings. The Belle Isle reservation preserves 152 of the 241-acre marsh and the species that live within it. Magnificent views of the marsh, the Atlantic Ocean and the City of Boston abound from nearly every spot along the shoreline in Winthrop.

The cliff on which Fort Heath Park is situated overlooks the Belle Isle Marsh and also offers a breathtaking view to the North and East. Cottage Hill, site of the "landmark" red, white and blue water tower, affords views in all directions. Belle Isle Marsh Reservation is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is under the care and custody of the Department of

Urban Parks and Recreation (DUPR - formerly the Metropolitan District Commission). This ecological treasure has approximately 1000 acres of salt marsh, shallow subtidal channels and tidal flats.

Water Resources

The water quality of Winthrop beaches are in the midst of a remarkable comeback thanks to the clean up of Boston Harbor and the changes affected by the operation of the Deer Island Sewage Treatment Plant. The largest beach runs along Winthrop Shore Drive and is under the care of the DUPR, which has committed \$7 million for restoration and refurbishing. Winthrop officials and residents will be included in all phases of the work which will hopefully convert this beach from its poor condition to usable, clean and safe open space.

A grant from the DUPR in the amount of \$650,000 has allowed the Town to make major improvements and provide handicap accessibility to Yirrell Beach. It is now in excellent condition and serves as a major beach access spot for all residents. Winthrop is also constructing a walkway behind Cottage Hill and has made improvements to Donovan's Beach, a small neighborhood beach located on the inner harbor.

A Coastal Access Grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR – formerly the Department of Environmental Management) has allowed the Town to survey and assess the many coastal access points throughout Winthrop. It is estimated that there are 20 such sites, primarily on the inner harbor. The Town is committed to the restoration of these sites.

Vegetation

Peat at the Belle Isle Marsh is at least twenty-five feet deep; an indicator of how long the marsh has existed. Vegetation includes cord grass, marsh hay, salicornia and common reeds and seabeach needlegrass. Cord grass only grows where it is flooded daily by the tides. Marsh hay grows on higher ground, where it is flooded only at the highest or spring tides. According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, “seabeach needlegrass was found in two areas of Winthrop in the late 1800s, but has not been recorded from there more recently. Its habitat is open, sandy areas behind beaches such as sand dunes, habitat that has been lost in Winthrop over the past century, and what is left is heavily used for recreation.” These grasses are the basis of the salt marsh food chain. The tides that help them grow are the connection between the marsh and the ocean.

Fisheries and Wildlife

Common wildlife such as ducks and geese favor the Lewis Lake area. Belle Isle Marsh is a critical stopover on the Atlantic Flyway and many birds depend on its existence for successful migration. Some of the migratory birds seen at Belle Isle Marsh in general include glossy ibis, red-breasted merganser, greater yellowlegs, black-bellied plover, mallard, snowy egret, great blue heron, loon, marsh hawk, semipalmated sandpiper and green-winger teal. Other rare species that have been documented in the Town of Winthrop include the: piping plover, upland sandpiper, common tern and least tern. According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program “the best remaining wildlife habitats in town are on the Boston Harbor Islands: Snake Island has a nice salt marsh, with adjacent sand bar and mud flats that are used by resident and migrating shorebirds. Unfortunately, the aggressive invader Common Reed, has taken over portions of the salt marsh and mud flats and it should be controlled where it is taking over the best remaining biodiversity areas in Winthrop.”

Sport fishing is enjoying a renewed popularity from all areas of the Winthrop shore both on the inner and outer harbor. The two fish most commonly found in the Belle Isle Marsh are mummychogs and sticklebacks. They have special qualities that enable them to live on the marsh. They can survive in very little water and in either fresh or salt water. They survive although eaten by many larger animals, birds and fish, in the marsh.

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Be it on the Boston Harbor side with a panoramic view of Logan Airport and, beyond it, the Boston skyline, or on the ocean side with the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean stretching seemingly forever, the views from Winthrop are mesmerizing. Changes in seasons and weather conditions provide variety; however, daily sunrises along

Winthrop Shore Drive and sunsets viewed from the Public Landing on anywhere along the inner harbor never cease to attract their fair share of fans.



Deer Island Path—Photo by Frank Quimby

As an added bonus for the Town of Winthrop, on April 29, 2000 the initial building and dedication of the Winthrop Greenway took place. The Greenway is a natural trail that goes from the East Boston border, along the Belle Isle Marsh, around the Winthrop Cemetery and ending at Argyle Street. The Friends of Belle Isle applied to the Gulf of Maine Council for a \$9,900 grant for the develop-

ment of the Greenway and subsequently was awarded their request as one of the 84 funded projects. The path itself is not paved, but weeds, branches and other dead materials were cleared by a group of volunteers to form the base. Future plans for the path include the installation of signs that will help users identify the types of vegetation and animal species commonly seen in the area and at Belle Isle Marsh.



Ferry Landing—Photo by Frank Quimby

There are two historic resources in Winthrop, the Edward B. Newton School and the Deane Winthrop House, currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Edward B. Newton School was nominated for inclusion and added to the list in 1997. The Deane Winthrop House (c. 1637) has been on the list since 1990 as one of the first period buildings in Eastern Massachusetts.

A survey funded by the Massachusetts Historic Commission has identified other possible sites and areas that will be explored if funding becomes available.

Environmental Problems

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is responsible for keeping a database and enforcing the cleanup of sites that are contaminated with toxic or hazardous waste and brownfields. As of January 6, 2004, there are 45 sites on this list. Brownfields are considered to be “abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination,” according to common definition. They can unfortunately create serious environmental and health threats to a community, are visually unappealing and developers traditionally shy away from them. Due to Winthrop’s large number of commercial and industrial activities and the fact that it is primarily built out, there are a number of these cleanup sites. Oil and hazardous material are the two most common chemical types that qualify these 45 sites as contaminated and in need of cleanup. Deer Island, several gas stations like Mobil and Cumberland Farms, marinas and the former town land fill now used as a cemetery are some examples slated for remediation. The DEP database only reports on sites in the Commonwealth where a spill has actually been reported. Many more contaminated sites may exist in Winthrop.

Erosion on Cottage Hill, another underlying issue, was recently addressed with a slope stabilization program undertaken with funds from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

SECTION 5: INVENTORY OF LANDS OF OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION, AND RECREATIONAL INTEREST

This section provides information about Winthrop's current open space and recreational resources. The inventory matrix and neighborhood maps on the following pages include parks, playgrounds, and significant open space parcels from site visits and a survey done in 1997, updated in 2003.

The goal of listing and categorizing these properties is to provide a comprehensive inventory of the places and properties in the Town with current or future potential use for conservation, gardening, and/or active or passive recreation. It is understood that some of the properties contained herein may fall short of an idealized notion of open space in one respect or another—the sites may be in poor condition, currently paved, inaccessible to all residents at present. By listing these properties and acknowledging them for what they are, the inventory serves as an important tool for present and future planning: as a record of those locations presently in use and as a guide to highlight places in need of further protection, enhancement, or other attention.

In total, the inventory lists 46 public and 4 private properties with an approximated combined area of just over 225 acres. This number is only approximate in part due to the fact that Belle Isle Marsh is partly in Winthrop and partly in East Boston. The acreage represents approximately 22% of the Town's total land area, although this figure is not entirely useful, as it merges so many different considerations. Depending on the particular issue at hand, one can distill the inventory down in a number of ways—by ownership, current use, level of protection, accessibility, and so on. The tables here provide some basic breakdowns of this information.

The roughly 219 acres of active recreation sites can be broken down as shown in the table on the next page. Determinations of each site's condition, recreational potential, and public access (via public transportation) were made based on observation in 1997, updated by the Town's consultant, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Open Space Committee.



Winthrop Aerial—Photo by ESS Productions

Table: Recreation Land for Town of Winthrop

Description	Area (Sq. Meters)	Area (Acres)	Percentage of Land Area
Open Land (no vegetation)	173,259	43	3.3%
Participant Recreation	389,197	96	7.4%
Spectator Recreation	27,639	7	0.5%
Water-Based Recreation	116,524	29	2.2%
Urban Open	178,499	44	3.4%

Source: MassGIS, 1999

The Open Space Matrix column headings are defined below.

- *Location:* Names the open space site.
- *Acres:* Gives the site's acreage or an approximation in cases of the non-park and playground parcels. One acre is 43,560 square feet or 210' by 210'.
- *Control:* Indicates the owner of the property and the agency or department responsible for managing and maintaining the parcel.
- *Use:* Identifies whether the site is primarily used for active or passive recreation, gardening, landscaping, memorial site, or other use.
- *Condition:* Describes the general physical condition of the site, based on park and playground criteria, if applicable, or aesthetic and functional criteria.
- *Recreation Potential:* Suggests the potential for expansion of recreational uses or whether it has any recreation potential as yet unfulfilled (high, medium, or low).
- *Public Access:* Indicates if the public can access the site via some form of transportation, including as a pedestrian.
- *Funding:* Lists the type (if any) of grant or funding received to purchase or maintain the land and the type.
- *Ownership:* Indicates the entity that owns the parcel
- *Degree of Protection:* Indicates if the site, either by virtue of the fact that it has received state or federal funding, is protected from sale and building development
- *Comments:* Any additional relevant comments.

Table: Open Space Properties by Level of Protection

Level of Protection	Acres	% of Total Open Space	% of Total Town Area
IN PERPETUITY	265.02	99.0%	20.5%
TEMPORARY (CHPT. LANDS)	0	0.0%	0.0%
LIMITED (OTHER THAN BY TIME)	1.46	0.5%	0.1%
NONE	1.09	0.4%	0.1%
UNKNOWN	0	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	267.57	100.0%	20.7%

Source: MassGIS, Land Use Data 1999

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services, land within a community is protected (or in perpetuity) if it is owned by the local Conservation Commission, a state conservation agency, a nonprofit land trust or if the town received state or federal monies for the improvement or purchase of the land. Private property can also be permanently protected if there is a deed restriction, if the land is listed as having an Agricultural Preservation restriction or if DEP has placed a restriction on the property for wetland conservation. Typically, land owned by other agencies like the Recreation Commission and the local system is not permanently protected.

Nearly 99% of the open space in Winthrop, regardless of ownership is protected which translates to just over 20% of the entire land area in Town. This is important to note because as mentioned earlier, Winthrop is virtually built out, so the more protection a piece of land has now, the better chance there is of it remaining that way in the future.

Another breakdown of open space that is important is accessibility. Although nearly 99% of Winthrop's is protected, ownership of the land and use of the land will determine how usable the properties actually are for the public.

Fortunately, over 98% of the open space and recreation facilities in Winthrop are open to the public. In the future, every effort should be made to continue this trend and to maintain and protect the resources that are accessible.

Finally, highlighting the primary purpose of open space in Winthrop gives a clearer picture of what future needs might be. For example, should more of the open space be conserved, open for recreation or designated as historic? The current purpose listing is on the next page.

Table: Open Space by Access

	Acres	% of Total	% of Town Area
OPEN TO PUBLIC	263.21	98.4%	20.3%
NOT OPEN TO PUBLIC	3.27	1.2%	0.3%
LIMITED PUBLIC ACCESS (MEMBERSHIP ONLY)	0	0.0%	0.0%
UNKNOWN	1.09	0.4%	0.1%
TOTAL	267.57	100.0%	20.7%

Source: MassGIS, Land Use Data 1999

Table: Open Space by Primary Purpose

	Acres	% of Total	% of Town Area
RECREATION	170.59	63.8%	13.2%
CONSERVATION	55.29	20.7%	4.3%
RECREATION & CONSERVATION	0	0.0%	0.0%
HISTORICAL/CULTURAL	39.97	14.9%	3.1%
AGRICULTURAL	0	0.0%	0.0%
WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION	0.63	0.2%	0.0%
UNKNOWN	1.09	0.4%	0.1%
TOTAL	267.57	100.0%	20.7%

Source: MassGIS, Land Use Data 1999

ADA Accessibility of Open Space

Many of Winthrop’s recreational open space are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. (It is the desire of the Open Space and Recreation Committee to ensure that in the future, all of the recreational open space in Winthrop be accessible.) Current park and playground renovation complies with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and parks renovated since 1994 are ADA accessible.

The ADA Coordinator of Winthrop is Larry Holmes who has an office in Town Hall, he also serves at the Veterans Agent. The ADA Self-Evaluation is in Appendix C.



Local Park—Photo by Frank Quimby

Town of Winthrop Open Space & Recreation Plan 2005-2010

TOWN OF WINTHROP											
INVENTORY OF PUBLIC PROPERTIES											
#	Location	Acres	Control	Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Funding	Ownership	Degree of Protection	Comments
1	Snake Island*	4	Conservation	Island	Good	None	No	Town & Federal	Town	High	Small island off shore in inner harbor - recently upgraded
2	Coughlin Playground	9.8	Selectmen	Playground Ballfields	Good	High	Yes	Town & MWRA	Town	High	Fully renovated and handicap accessible
3	Point Shirley Beach	5.5	Selectmen	Beach	Good	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Clean up of Boston Harbor has helped
4	Yirrel Beach	1	Selectmen	Beach	Excellent	High	Yes	Town & State	Town	High	Newly renovated and handicap accessible
5	Public Landing	7	Selectmen	Park & Other	Fair	High	Yes	Town & State	Town/State	High	Publicly owned boat landing with benches and scenic view
6	Terrace Avenue Gardens	0.4	Selectmen	Green Space	Fair	None	N/A	Town	Town	High	Embankment on west side of Cottage Hill drumlin
7	Water Tower	0.2	Selectmen	Other	Excellent	None	N/A	Town & MWRA	Town	High	Coastal property recently stabilized
8	Beacon Circle	0.07	Selectmen	Green Space	Excellent	None	N/A	Town	Town	High	Traffic rotary
9	Massa Playground	0.6	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground	Fair	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	Small playground and tot lot in design phase
10	Railroad Right of Way off Shirley Street	0.75	Selectmen	Other	Poor	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	Old Narrow Gauge Railroad bed
11	Winthrop Shore Drive Beach & Cliffwalk	7	State	Beach	Poor	High	Yes	State	State	High	Largest beach in Winthrop - Control by DUPR - due for \$7M renovation
12	Beach Road	0.5	Selectmen	Green Space	Good	None	N/A	Town	Town	N/A	Traffic island
13	Summit Avenue Green	0.18	Selectmen	Green Space	Good	None	N/A	Town	Town	N/A	Center strip in road
14	Crest Ave Playground	0.4	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground & Park	Excellent	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	Small playground
15	Pond St Playground	0.4	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground	Poor	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Park & Basketball court
16	Fort Heath Park	3.6	Selectmen	Park	Excellent	None	Yes	Town & EOE A	Town	High	Passive Park
17	Hartford Beach	0.25	Selectmen	Beach	Fair	None	Yes	Town	Town	High	Small rocky beach
18	Belle Isle Cemetery Annex	12	Cemetery Dept	Cemetery	Excellent	None	Yes	Town	Town	High	Cemetery
19	Fort Banks School Playground	10.3	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground, tot lots & fields	Excellent	High	Yes	Town & MWRA	Town	High	Large multi-use area
20	Veterans Field	8.3	School	Playfield	Fair	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	Adjacent to High School - multi uses
21	Little League Field	1.5	Selectmen	Playfield	Good	High	Yes	Private	Town	Moderate	Baseball Field
22	Miller Field	4	School	Playfield	Fair	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Football field

Town of Winthrop Open Space & Recreation Plan 2005-2010

TOWN OF WINTHROP											
INVENTORY OF PUBLIC PROPERTIES											
#	Location	Acres	Control	Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Funding	Ownership	Degree of Protection	Comments
23	Winthrop Golf Club	50.5	Selectmen	Golf Course	Excellent	High	Partial	Private	Town	Moderate	Private golf course on land leased from Town
24	Lewis Lake	8	Selectmen & Conservation	Other	Fair	High	Yes	Town & Mass Bays	Town	High	Tidal inlet abutting golf course
25	Daw Playground	0.2	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground	Poor	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Small playground
26	Lewis Terrace	0.07	Selectmen	Green Space	Good	N/A	N/A	Town	Town	N/A	Small green space
27	Thornton Park	0.4	Selectmen	Green Space	Good	N/A	N/A	Town	Town	N/A	Large green space
28	Railroad Right of Way off Sea View Avenue	2	Selectmen	Other	Poor	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Old Narrow Gauge Railroad bed
29	Pico Playground and Beach	0.7	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground	Good	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	Neighborhood playground
30	Egleton Park	0.05	Selectmen	Green Space	Excellent	N/A	N/A	Town	Town	N/A	Green space on cul-de-sac
31	French Square	0.11	Selectmen	Park	Good	High	Yes	Town & MSCP	Town	High	Small revitalized park in center of business district
32	Main Winthrop Cemetery	12	Cemetery Dept	Cemetery	Good	None	Yes	Town	Town	High	Cemetery
33	Winthrop Common/ Metcalf Square	0.25	Selectmen	Park	Excellent	High	Yes	Town & MSCP	Town	High	Small green space across from Town Hall
34	Walden Street Basketball Courts	0.4	Selectmen & Recreation	Playfield	Good	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	Basketball courts with lights & bleachers - to be replaced
35	Ingleside Park	10	Selectmen & Recreation	Playground, Field & Park	Good	High	Yes	Town & Massport	Town	High	Large park with ball field & playground
36	Brookfield	1	Selectmen	Park	Fair	Passive	Yes	Town & Massport	Town	High	Enclosed drainage ditch adjacent to Ingleside Park
37	Donovan's Beach		Selectmen	Beach	Excellent	High	Yes	Town & State	Town	High	Small neighborhood beach with new improvements
38	Belle Isle Marsh	251**	State	Salt Marsh	Excellent	High	Yes	State	Town	High	ACEC - Tidal Marsh - last urban estuary in Metro Boston area
39	Fishermen's Bend	7.5	Selectmen	Other	Fair	High	Yes	Town	Conservation	High	Combination marsh and other recently acquired by Town
40	Revere Street	22	State	Mixed	Fair	High	Yes	State	State	Moderate	Natural site with some wetland; acquired from Neponset Associates

Town of Winthrop Open Space & Recreation Plan 2005-2010

TOWN OF WINTHROP											
INVENTORY OF PUBLIC PROPERTIES											
#	Location	Acres	Control	Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Funding	Ownership	Degree of Protection	Comments
41	Cummings School Park	1	School	Playground	Good	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	
42	Deer Island*	60	MWRA & City of Boston	Passive	Excellent	High	Yes	City & MWRA	City & MWRA	High	MWRA Wastewater Treatment Facility site
43	Skating Rinks		Town	Skating	Poor	High	Yes	Town	Town	Moderate	
44	WHS tennis courts		Town	Tennis	Fair	High	Yes	Town	Town	High	
45	George St. Parcel		Town	Parking	Fair	Yes	Yes	Town	Town	Low	Parking lot with recreation potential for pocket park
46	Fort Banks bankers		Town	N/A	Poor	Yes	Yes	Town + State (?)	Town	Moderate	Sealed WWII era fortification - potential for recreation/historical uses
* Part of Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area											
** Most of this acreage is in East Boston - DUPR Reservation is 152 acres											
*** Public Shore access points: Somerset Ave, Bartlett Road, Cottage Park Road, Sargeant Street, Court Road											

Town of Winthrop Open Space & Recreation Plan 2005-2010

TOWN OF WINTHROP						
INVENTORY OF PRIVATE PROPERTIES						
#	Parcel Identification	Owner/Address	Acres	Zoning	Degree of Protection	Site Characteristics
A	Pleasant Court	Albert DiFlumeri Richard DiFlumeri 18 Amelia Avenue Winthrop, MA 02152	1.4	Business	Low	Undeveloped natural site adjacent to the Belle Isle Marsh. Owner has sought zoning change to subdivide land for residential development
B	Morton Street	Frank A. Bonacorso One Seal Harbor Road Winthrop, MA 02152	1.9	Light Manufacturing	High	Undeveloped filled area adjacent to Belle Isle Marsh. Currently used for open storage. Owner has proposed rezoning for residential use. MDC has considered purchasing
C	Banks Street	Leon A. Duval 14 Yvonne Street Rochester, NH 03863	1.2	Light Manufacturing	Low	Partially developed area adjacent to Belle Isle Marsh. Lite manufacturing plant sited on adjacent land.
D	Woodside Park	deeded to several homeowners		Residential	Low	Small mowed park

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY GOALS

As previously stated, the Open Space and Recreation Committee consisted of eight members from a variety of boards, committees and departments. Responsibility for collection, dissemination and collation of information was assigned to the representative of the Community Development Office due to her daily presence in Town Hall, her accessibility to both the committee members and the public and her experience and involvement with all the projects mentioned here.

Once a new Open Space and Recreation Survey was created (Appendix C), it was distributed through the Community Development Office to a variety of residents. An attempt was made to reach both single individuals and families of all age groups in order to gain an insight into everyone's ideas and wishes.

The results of the survey were tallied and, for the most part, the wishes of the residents bore out the earlier findings of the Park Study Plan and Open Space Plan with the exception that the need for a swimming pool was nearly eliminated (due to the emergence of a cleaner Boston Harbor, this no longer seems to be a top priority) and the added desire for areas for bikes and skating. Some recurring ideas included:

1. A high priority for most residents is the improvement and upgrading of the Town's neighborhood parks and beaches.

2. There was a general expression of concern for the preservation of open space and the expansion of passive recreational opportunities.

3. Bike paths, jogging and/or walking paths and skating (both ice skating and in-line skating) facilities were among the new amenities which respondents would like to see developed now.

4. Many respondents suggested that the Town's currently organized activity programs, although quite comprehensive and inclusive already, should be expanded even further.

Recognizing that Winthrop does not have sufficient land for some of the more standardized methods of providing recreational needs, it was decided that a practical approach would be integral to any future planning process.

The practical approach assumes that abstract, statistical analysis of recreational "demand" and needed facilities is not always especially relevant or practical in the face of certain limitations. In Winthrop's case, the major limitations are land and financial resources. Therefore, the approach taken by the Committee is considered basic to a decision making process, which attempts to design realistic programs with viable goals and timetables.

The Open Space and Recreation committee working on this document has

identified the open space needs of the Town and established a realistic action plan to meet those needs. The Committee cannot reverse development trends of the past but it has worked towards preparing a viable plan, which will preserve the Town's remaining open spaces in the future.

Commonwealth Sustainable Development Principles

In 2004, the state adopted a set of Sustainable Development Principles designed to guide state and local government in caring for the built and natural environment by integrating policies on energy, environment, housing, and transportation. The principles, established by the Massachusetts Office of Commonwealth Development, will encourage smart growth and preservation of open space. Several goals established in this Plan relate to protecting and preserving natural resources in Winthrop, they are:

- To protect and enhance the quality and integrity of all conservation land and open space for public use and enjoyment.
- To preserve scenic quality of town.
- To promote public awareness of conservation and recreation, use of recreation areas and programs offered.
- To coordinate Winthrop's recreation and open space planning and activities with those of neighboring communities, as well as regional, state and federal activities.
- To work with the state to protect coastal areas.
- To protect wildlife and wild plants to preserve the diversity of health and natural community ecosystems.

With respect to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, several of the principles are relevant to the goals and objectives and in the Five-Year Action Plan:

- *Restore and enhance the environment* – The Town has open space resources that have special environmental and ecological significance such as Belle Isle Marsh and beach properties. The Plan includes action items to restore these resources and enhance public access to them through public improvements to clean up and remediate the areas.
- *Increase job opportunities* – By redeveloping certain areas such as the railroad right-of-way along the Old Narrow Gauge railroad bed and the proposed new ferry terminal, jobs can be created while improving recreational opportunities. Both Snake Island and Deer Island are part of the new Boston Harbor Islands National Recreational Area, another economic development prospect.
- *Plan regionally* – Both the state and federal government own open space and recreational property in Winthrop that have regional significance (Belle Isle Marsh and the National Recreation Area). It is important for Winthrop to work cooperatively with government at all levels as well as with adjacent cities and towns.

SECTION 7: NEEDS ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT

Among the more widely used methods for determining recreational need is the application of regional population-based standards to the community being assessed. These standards are typically based on a set of assumptions which presuppose that the demographic make-up of the study community is essentially the same as the rest of the region.

This comparison of recreational standards from the National Parks and Recreation Department, as they apply to the Town of Winthrop indicated an overall need for more recreational development. However, standards such as these cannot be taken too literally, particularly when dealing with the limited resources of the study committee. In Winthrop's case, the application of these standards is immediately negated by the total land area available for development. Given the limitations of recreational standards application in Winthrop, this type of demand analysis is best used as a benchmark against which other methods of analysis can be critiqued.

In determining recreation needs, the Committee, therefore, worked with the following sources of information: earlier research documents (i.e. Master Plan and Park Study Plan and 1986 Open Space Plan); survey data; open space inventory; and public participation. Incorporation of these processes for demand analysis formed the basis for the Town's needs identified in this study. The Study committee's findings are outlined in subsequent paragraphs of this section.

One of the Town's major identifiable needs is the improvement of existing recreational facilities. The maintenance and upgrading of existing neighborhood parks and playgrounds was identified in all facets of the demand analysis process as a significant area of need as was the need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A full ADA Transition Plan was completed in 1997 and an update was completed in April of 2001. According to this update, the majority of playgrounds and parks in Winthrop are still handicapped inaccessible with the exception of Ingleside and Coughlin Parks and Crest Avenue playground which are both accessible. Donovan's Beach is accessible and Winthrop Beach will all be accessible after slated construction is completed, and to date, some of this work has been done. Other improvements include Town Hall which is now fully accessible (it includes elevator access, accessible restrooms and counters) with the exception of the Building Department. The Senior Center also has some outstanding issues that are expected to be soon resolved. Overall, improvements have been made, but there is still more ADA accessibility work to be done.

Like other communities, Winthrop, in spite of its geographic size, can be divided into neighborhoods. Growth of these neighborhood units was primarily influenced by the development of the old Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn Railroads. The stations of the so-called "Narrow Gauge" served as the center for the establishment of business, social and religious organizations which form the nuclei of neighborhood development.

Concurrent with the growth of neighborhoods, Winthrop experienced the development of a network of neighborhood based parks and playgrounds. This network constitutes the Town's fundamental means for satisfying recreational demand. Substantiation of the need for a neighborhood park improvement program is unequivocally demonstrated in a comparative analysis of past and present conditions of these facilities.

This would indicate an apparent need for both an immediate neighborhood park improvement program as well as a future replacement reserve program. Although there is an annual appropriation for this type of restitution, it is obviously not enough to sustain a realistic program. This is, in part, evidenced in an examination of the recreation budget for the last five year period. The appropriation for replacement equipment has remained at the same level of funding in spite of inflation indexes which would indicate the reduced buying power of this budget. Obviously, if this level of funding continues without any adjustment for inflation, maintenance of the neighborhood parks and playgrounds will continue to deteriorate. Another major need cited in community surveys and other demand analysis is related to the inadequacy of the types of public facilities which belong to the community.

In Winthrop, there is a definite value judgment that, even if the present recreational facilities were fully equipped and maintained, there is still a need for additional ones. Types of facilities noted most frequently by survey respondents include: jogging and/or walking paths, picnic areas, outdoor ice-skating and areas for rollerbladers and/or skateboarders. The Lawrence N. Larsen Athletic Facility, an indoor ice rink, was completed in 1974. Located on Pauline Street in Winthrop and operated by the school department, it currently serves as an indoor recreational ice skating facility for residents and other nearby communities. The rink can seat 776 people and has a skating capacity of 250. However, due to the need for revenue to keep up the facility, public skating hours have been reduced.

Another area of concern that was clearly identified in the demand analysis was the need for preservation of undeveloped open space. This concern extends to the conservation and preservation of both wetlands and developable open space. Areas cited for preservation include the undeveloped properties abutting the Belle Isle Marsh, the underdeveloped



Trestle—Photo by Frank Quimby

property abutting the old Narrow Gauge Railroad trestle adjacent to Winthrop Harbor and the area known as Fisherman's Bend. Comments on future use of the properties would indicate a desire for Town use of the land areas for either conservation or passive recreation.

Finally, the need for more and varied organized recreational activities was identified as a growing community concern. Although this need was generally recognized as being applicable to a number of age groups, the teenage population was identified most frequently by respondents in the study survey.

The findings of the Study Committee's demand analysis demonstrates that a number of priority needs exist within the Winthrop community. However, identification of needs is not enough. Needs must be recognized in the formulation and acceptance of policy which is incorporated into a viable action plan. These steps are addressed in the next sections of this report. The policies identified and the plan presented are a response to the identified needs contained herein. However, the final test of community attitudes and the viability of any plan is always a direct reflection of the willingness of the community to finance as well as to seek funding for the implementation of a recreation plan.

The efforts of Winthrop detailed in the Open Space and Recreation Plan are not just local in nature. In 2000, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts produced a document called the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) in 2000. The SCORP is a document that also looks at open space and recreation, but from a regional perspective. The purpose of the plan is to help direct the best investment of funds and effort towards protecting and enhancing recreation resources.

The Town of Winthrop is located in the Metro Boston Region of the document which is subsequently the smallest region in the entire SCORP. Although the Metro Boston Region has the smallest amount of open space in acres, it has the third largest percentage of total land area dedicated to recreation and open space. Needs that exist in this region from a financial standpoint are creating additional access for people with disabilities, maintaining and restoring existing facilities and maintaining and creating additional public transportation opportunities to recreation areas. From a facilities standpoint, the study finds that additional tennis and basketball courts are needed in the region as well as new facilities for walking, biking and swimming.

SECTION 8: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals in this section of the plan are policy statements. They pertain to the protection, wise use and qualitative improvement of open space and recreational resources in the Town of Winthrop.

The goals were arrived at through a critical assessment of needs by the local boards with jurisdiction or interests in open space and recreation. Identification of the existing and potential resources and the expressed values and creative input of the Town of Winthrop were also major factors in the formulation of the goals and objectives.

In meetings sponsored by the Open Space Committee and also as a part of the Community Development Plan Process, local boards and concerned residents discussed the political, financial and physical realities of achieving these goals and implementing the objectives. Discussions emphasized consistency and compliance with State and regional policies pertaining to the protection, enhancement and conservation natural resources, open space and recreation areas.

The cited objectives are presented as recommendations of actions that may be implemented within a reasonable time frame. Little emphasis on major capital outlays or municipal expenditures was discussed at this particular time. The realities imposed on planning by financial resources is seen as the Action Plan presented later in this document.

To implement these actions will require cooperation and communication between those public entities with jurisdiction over the open space and recreation areas in town. The support of the citizens of the Town is essential to coordinate efforts to achieve these goals and objectives and to promote and maintain community pride and respect for conservation areas. It is the ultimate goal of this Committee to improve the quality of life in Winthrop.

GOAL 1: TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY OF ALL CONSERVATION LAND AND OPEN SPACE FOR PUBLIC USE AND ENJOYMENT.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify all existing and potential open space and establish a comprehensive conservation/recreation plan to provide a vehicle for obtaining open space and conservation land as future opportunities arise.
2. Utilize areas abutting Boston Harbor as open space resources.
3. Investigate and pursue eligibility for State and Federal funding programs, as well as, private sources of funding for future land acquisition or improvements of recreation areas.

4. Set in place a mechanism by which the Town may be eligible for funding to purchase surplus Federal or State property, if it were to become available.
5. Set in place a mechanism by which the Town may purchase vacant, undeveloped private property, particularly properties bordering on wetlands or otherwise environmentally sensitive areas.
6. Encourage private landowners to consider gifts of land, conservation/public access easements and use of tax incentive programs to protect their land from development.
7. Continue to vigorously enforce Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c. 40 § 131).
8. Consider applicability of new or innovative zoning bylaws that help to preserve and enhance open space.
9. Promote connectivity between open spaces, parks, playgrounds, walkways and paths.

GOAL 2: TO ENSURE PROVISION OF AMPLE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN.

OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate conditions and potential for improvements to existing facilities and programs.
2. Address needs of commonly under prioritized groups such as elderly, special needs and handicapped.
3. Create new programs and play areas suitable for teenagers including skating parks.
4. Develop programs and organized recreational activities for all age groups.
5. Use information obtained in ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan to identify park areas and recreational facilities where access to disabled is not provided, or where physical barriers exist.
6. Identify park or recreational areas where there is potential to provide or construct access for disabled people.
7. Where possible, adapt parks to meet the needs of disabled people by constructing ramps, railings, walkways, and signing.
8. Coordinate with the Commission on Disabilities to address the special needs or physical education/recreation for the handicapped.

GOAL 3: TO MAXIMIZE USE OF EXISTING PUBLICALLY OWNED OPEN SPACE FOR BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop program of park improvement and restoration.
2. Develop walking/jogging paths.
3. Maintain and improve sea walls and access ways to beaches.
4. Improve and update recreation facilities on school property.
5. Create dog parks.
6. Develop and provide pedestrian and bicycle access to a series of coastal walkways and cliff walks.
7. Recognize and investigate the potential for non-traditional facilities to provide active and passive recreation.

GOAL 4: TO PROMOTE LOCAL EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE RESPECTFUL USE OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND RECREATION AREAS.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote public awareness and community pride in parks and recreation areas by use of posters, signs and educational programs. Also utilize public services of youth groups such as boy/girl scouts, etc.
2. Sponsor litter cleanup and field day programs with schools, youth groups and civic organizations.
3. Undertake creative site planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities to discourage vandalism.
4. Increase and maintain security in open spaces, park areas and recreational facilities.
5. Provide increased lighting in park areas and recreational facilities.
6. Promote and encourage voluntary compliance with use regulations.

GOAL 5: TO PRESERVE SCENIC QUALITY OF TOWN.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and map scenic areas susceptible to development and make efforts to preserve these areas.
2. Make efforts to prevent destruction of scenic areas as a result of State or Federal activities.
3. Expand efforts of local civic groups and schools for town beautification.
4. Create cliffwalks and small vistas at scenic locations.

GOAL 6: TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION, USE OF RECREATION AREAS AND PROGRAMS OFFERED.

OBJECTIVES

1. Use print, broadcast and visual media to keep public informed of conservation related issues and recreational events and programs.
2. Promote public awareness of need for citizen support for protection of open space and improvements to recreational facilities. Emphasize appropriate use and respect for such areas through community outreach.
3. Work with the leadership of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area to promote the use of the area for open space and recreation.
4. Work with School Committee to incorporate environmental education curriculum into public schools and/or develop extra-curricular activities related to conservation projects.
5. Create signage to help people identify and locate local open space and park areas.

GOAL 7: TO COORDINATE WINTHROP'S RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES, AS WELL AS REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL ACTIVITIES.

OBJECTIVES

1. The Conservation Commission and Recreational Department will inform neighboring communities and outside groups of Winthrop's Open Space and Recreation activities and plans.
2. Increase coordination with the City of Boston and the Friends of Belle Isle Marsh in planning enhancements, publicizing events, and educational activities.
3. Coordinate with the National Park Service in developing plans for the future of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area.

GOAL 8: TO WORK WITH THE STATE TO PROTECT COASTAL AREAS.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify any coastal lands to be protected and pursue acquisition of those parcels.
2. Use Self Help, Urban Self Help and/or Land and Water Conservation Funds or other resources to acquire such areas.
3. Promote the policies set forth by Mass Coastal Zone Management.
4. Revegetate eroded areas where needed with conservation planting programs to protect sensitive areas as well as enhance the aesthetics of the beach areas.

GOAL 9: TO PROTECT WILDLIFE AND WILD PLANTS TO PRESERVE THE DIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND NATURAL COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEMS.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to work toward the preservation of Belle Isle Marsh, Fisherman's Bend and Snake Island.
2. Coordinate with state and federal agencies to support management practices on public lands that protect threatened species and ecosystem types and aid in their recovery.
3. Promote where possible land management practices which provide for a diversity and abundance of plant and animal populations.

GOAL 10: TO PROMOTE COOPERATION BETWEEN TOWN BOARDS WITH JURISDICTION OVER OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AREAS AND WORK TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN.

OBJECTIVES

1. Create a standing Open Space and Recreation Committee to coordinate implementation of this Plan.
2. Work with appropriate private groups or public agencies to develop management and maintenance plans for each public land area.
3. Effectively enforce rules and regulations pertaining to use of open space and recreation areas.
4. Prioritize open space and recreation as a Town concern and as an important factor to be considered in future land use decision making, such integration is an essential component of community development.

SECTION 9: FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Five Year Action Plan is often the most difficult component of an Open Space Plan. Unlike the lofty goals and objectives of the previous sections, here is where the rubber meets the road, where our planning ideals are translated into concrete actions. An Action Plan can be difficult to commit to as well, and problematic to review over time: items that have been accomplished fade from view, while the more intractable problems continue to haunt us. Financial and political trends may change, advancing some items while leaving others high and dry. For these reasons alone, many communities are hesitant to put in writing the full scope of their intentions.

In contrast, the following action plan intends to deliver on the promise of the goals and objectives throughout this process, with an ambitious program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next five years. There are many public and private groups and agencies already involved in open space activities in Winthrop, generating a high level of activity on these issues. However, while much progress has been made addressing the goals and objectives of the previous plan, much work still needs to be done, especially in the areas of communication and coordination.

These actions are targeted to physical as well as the organizational issues confronting the Town. The five-year action plan described in this section works to correct these “process” problems, while still maintaining a focus on the substantive issues of open space and recreation preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management and maintenance. Some of these actions are already well underway; others are ongoing but need additional support.

YEAR 1

1. Work in conjunction with the Recreation Commission and Town's Department of Public Works to establish a Park Facilities Improvement Program. Scope of work will include establishment of a priority list of proposed improvements, identification of cost and financial resources available, and recommendations on budget preparation and management.
2. Keep findings of ADA Transition Plan up-to-date regarding handicap accessibility requirements and implement as improvements to parks are made.
3. Investigate State, Federal and private funding mechanisms that could be utilized to acquire undeveloped privately owned properties for preservation as open space and conservation areas.
4. Develop plans and investigate possible funding sources for a Harborwalk to include the Shirley Street Trestle.

5. Initiate action to obtain funds for the planning and implementation of other various park improvement projects. Utilization of funds will include identification of priority projects, commencement of design as may be appropriate, and/or project start-up.
6. Initiate dialogue and planning on the construction of a nature walk around the perimeter of Belle Isle Marsh abutting the cemetery. Research should focus on feasibility and cost.
7. Initiate Beach Maintenance Program. Program to be established through cooperative effort with the DUPR due to their control of Winthrop Beach (Winthrop Beach Renourishment program).
8. Continue working with the Winthrop Beautification Committee, Chamber of Commerce Clean Up Committee and other Town groups with a vested interest in beautification programs.
9. Review findings of Coastal Access Study and begin application for additional funds from DEM next year.
10. Continue planning for an in-line skating park and dog park.
11. Commence improvements and upgrades construction for Massa Playground. Begin planning for improvements to Daw and Pico Playgrounds.

YEAR 2

1. Continue educational curriculum in schools relative to studies in ecology and conservation.
2. Assess Park Facilities Improvement Program initiated in Year 1, review budget requirements and make recommendations as necessary to enhance the program.
3. Commence work on design of priority sites for reconstruction and improvement as identified in Year 1. Apply for funding for implementation of design.
4. Evaluate feasibility of constructing of a nature walk around the perimeter of Belle Isle Marsh abutting the cemetery. Commence action as appropriate to the results of this evaluation.
5. Prepare budget requests as appropriate to support planned actions during the next fiscal year.
6. Evaluate findings about in-line skating and dog park locations.
7. Commence improvements and upgrades construction for Daw Playground.

YEAR 3

1. Continue assessment of Park Facilities Improvement Program and make recommendations on program scope and budget based on priorities identified by the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Based on that assessment, identify next set of priorities for work on design and implementation of improvements at parks and playgrounds in need of upgrades.
3. Prepare budget requests and seek funding as appropriate to support planned actions for the projected priority improvement projects.
4. Continue Coastal Access Improvements as prioritized.
5. Commence improvements and upgrades construction for Pico Playground.
6. Rebuild basketball court at Crest Avenue Playground

YEAR 4

1. Continue assessment of Park Facilities Improvement Program and make recommendations on program scope and budget based on priorities identified by the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Based on that assessment, identify next set of priorities for work on design and implementation of improvements at parks and playgrounds in need of upgrades.
3. Prepare budget requests and seek funding as appropriate to support planned actions for the projected priority improvement projects.
4. Commence improvements construction where fiscal resources permit.
5. Continue Coastal Access Improvements as prioritized.
6. Commence improvements and upgrades construction for Pico Playground.
7. Rebuild basketball court at Crest Avenue Playground

YEAR 5

1. Continue assessment of Park Facilities Improvement Program and make recommendations on program scope and budget based on priorities identified by the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Based on that assessment, identify next set of priorities for work on design and implementation of improvements at parks and playgrounds in need of upgrades.
3. Prepare budget requests and seek funding as appropriate to support planned actions for the projected priority improvement projects.
4. Commence improvements construction where fiscal resources permit.
5. Prepare five-year update to this Plan
6. Continue Coastal Access Improvements as prioritized.
7. Commence improvements and upgrades construction for Pico Playground.
8. Rebuild basketball court at Crest Avenue Playground

SECTION 10: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Copies of this Draft Plan have been distributed, in addition to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Division of Conservation Services, to the following boards, commissions and agencies for comment. Their comments, when received, will be taken under advisement and included in this section of the final Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Town of Winthrop:

- Board of Selectmen
- Conservation Commission
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Planning Board
- Board of Health
- Board of Appeals
- School Committee
- Historic Commission
- Beautification Committee
- Chamber of Commerce

Department of Urban Parks and Recreation

Metropolitan Area Planning Council



*Aerial view of Winthrop
Photo—by ESS Productions, Revere, MA*

APPENDIX A: MAPS

APPENDIX B: OPEN SPACE INVENTORY MATRIX

APPENDIX C: ADA SELF-EVALUATION

ADA GRIEVANCE POLICY – TOWN OF WINTHROP

The Winthrop Board of Selectmen have adopted and instituted this grievance policy in order to fulfill the community's obligations under Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. This policy establishes a process that is open to any individual who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies, or the provision of services, programs, activities, or public events, by the Town of Winthrop.

The Making of a Complaint

Complaints against the Town or any of its officers, employees, agents or service contractors, should be submitted in writing. Alternative means of filing a complaint, including but not limited to a confidential interview, a tape recorded description of the complaint, or an affidavit prepared on behalf of an aggrieved party are available to persons with disabilities upon request.

Complaints shall be filed by the aggrieved party and/or his or her representative within 60 calendar days of an alleged violation, and they shall be directed to the attention of:

Mr. Lawrence S. Holmes
 ADA Coordinator
 Town Hall
 1 Metcalf Square
 Winthrop, MA 02152

How the Complaint Will Be Handled

Within 15 calendar days after receiving a complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the aggrieved individual to discuss the complaint and possible ways of resolving it, including mediation services. During this meeting, the ADA Coordinator will attempt to obtain sufficient information to answer the complaint as provided below if mediation is declined by either the aggrieved party of the individual(s) against whom a complaint has been made. This is to ensure that handling the complaint is not unduly delayed.

The decision to utilize mediation will first be made by the aggrieved party, who may accept or reject the same within 5 calendar days of meeting with the ADA Coordinator. It is the Coordinator's responsibility to then notify the Town officer, employee, agent, or services contractor of both the complaint and the aggrieved party's request for mediation. The Town officer, employee, agent or services contractor will then have 5 calendar days from the date of notification by the ADA Coordinator to decide whether to participate in mediation. The ADA Coordinator will arrange for qualified mediation services when both parties agree to utilize this mechanism for complaint resolution.

If either the aggrieved party or the individual(s) against whom a complaint has been made declines mediation, then the complaint will be handled through the following process. This process remains available if mediation is attempted and fails to produce a mutually acceptable resolution. Mediation is not mandatory and the decision to forego it will not in any way influence how the ADA Compliance Coordinator evaluates and decides to resolve the complaint.

No later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the initial complaint (or after receipt of notification that mediation failed to produce a mutually acceptable resolution), the ADA Compliance Coordinator will respond to the aggrieved party in writing or, where appropriate, in an accessible format requested by that party. The ADA Compliance Coordinator's response will offer one or more options to resolve the complaint and explain how and why those options were chosen.

Appeal of the ADA Compliance Coordinator's Response

If the ADA Compliance Coordinator's response does not satisfactorily answer the complaint, the aggrieved party and/or representative may appeal the decision to the Board of Selectmen or their authorized designee, within 15 calendar days after receiving the ADA Coordinator's response.

Within 15 calendar days after receiving the appeal, the Board of Selectmen or their designee, will meet with the aggrieved party to hear the complaint and consider ways of resolving it. No later than 15 days after this meeting, the Board of Selectmen, or their designee, will make a written response to the aggrieved party. They will make their response in an accessible format where appropriate.

Records of all written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator and any subsequent appeals shall be retained by the Town of Winthrop for at least three years from the date of the last action on a complaint.

Town of Winthrop – Board of Selectmen Policy of Nondiscrimination Against Persons With Disabilities

The Town of Winthrop does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to or operations of its programs, services or activities. The Town of Winthrop does not discriminate on the basis of disability in their hiring or employment practices.

This Notice is intended to meet a requirement of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be conveyed to the Town of Winthrop's ADA Coordinator.

Mr. Lawrence S. Holmes
ADA Coordinator
Town Hall
1 Metcalf Square
Winthrop, MA 02152
617-846-3065

Individuals who need auxiliary aids in order to effectively communicate and participate in programs and services of the Town of Winthrop are welcome to make their needs known by contacting the ADA Coordinator.

This notice is available in large print, on audiotape and in Braille from the ADA Coordinator.

Functions of the ADA Coordinator

Listed below are examples of when the ADA Coordinator would be active in assisting residents with their disability needs.

Winthrop owns several fully developed park and playground facilities. At scattered locations throughout town, eight of these recreation sites offer comparable programs at a neighborhood service area scale while one supports community-wide use. Given the substantial equivalency of the neighborhood playgrounds and Winthrop's very small size, the Town has met its reasonable accommodation duty by making at least one of its smaller park facilities and its community-wide recreation center accessible to persons with disabilities.

The centerpiece of Winthrop's public open space system is Ingleside Park, which supports a wide range of community activities, festivals, special events, and programs. Centrally located, in close proximity to three of the Town's school buildings and with on-street parking available, Ingleside Park enjoys nearly constant use by persons of all ages. It has playground equipment for young children, a rollerblade court and park furnishings. By virtue of its size, Ingleside Park provides a natural setting for public events and is the only outdoor recreation facility in Winthrop that truly meets the criteria for a multi-purpose community service facility. It has been completely renovated and is now accessible for all ages, containing easily accessible paths through the park. Playground equipment meets all current codes.

Coughlin Park Playground on Bay View Avenue is barrier-free. The pathways into and around the playground are wheelchair accessible, as are the various amenities that were built into the park by Massport, which designed and constructed this facility as part of its compensatory obligations for the impact of Logan Airport on the Town of Winthrop. The problem with Coughlin Park is its location. Jets flying into and out of Logan so frequently pass over the Point that the constancy and volume of noise make recreational use of the playground undesirable. As a result, Coughlin Park is significantly underutilized and does not afford equal recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Crest Ave. Park has also been renovated in 2000 and is now barrier free and accessible to persons with disabilities. It contains 2 accessible parking spaces and easily accessible paths through the park. Playground equipment meets all current codes.

Hannaford Park has 1 accessible parking space.

Viewing the remaining Winthrop's parks and playgrounds from both Section 504 and ADA vantage points, the following can be said about these facilities.

- 1) There is no accessible parking or drop-off area.
- 2) They all lack barrier-free paths of travel into and around the parks (the barriers range from steepness of slopes to surface material on pathways, and lack of ramps where needed).
- 3) Playground equipment, which in most cases is old but clearly used, is inaccessible.
- 4) Parks that include outdoor basketball and tennis courts, playing fields, and other spaces for organized recreation activities lack seating areas to accommodate persons with disabilities.
- 5) Public amenities such as picnic tables, playground equipment and furnishings are inaccessible.

The other parks and playgrounds considered in this Plan include:

- 1) Massa Playground on Park Street, which has outdoor basketball courts, various playground equipment and park amenities. Massa Playground is used by neighborhood residents and the Winthrop Recreation Department for its summer playground program. Partially bordered by public sidewalks, the Playground has no designated handicapped parking nor a barrier-free path of travel into the facility. The sidewalks are not ramped for use by persons in wheelchairs.
- 2) Norman Daw Playground, with assorted playground equipment, a sandbox, park benches and the like, is another neighborhood-service recreation facility that also double as a summer playground program site. Its accessibility problems include lack of designated parking, clear path of travel, modified playground equipment, and accessible amenities.
- 3) Pond Street Park, with outdoor basketball courts, playground equipment, park benches, and a limited parking area. It is used by area residents and the Winthrop Recreation Department for the summer playground program. Pond Street Park lacks designated parking, a clear path of travel, modified playground equipment, and accessible amenities.
- 4) Hannaford Park, which differs from the other parks cited above because it is not a combination park/playground area but a scenic park with magnificent views across the ocean. Winthrop uses Hannaford Park for such events as summer concerts. As such, this facility can also be said to provide community-wide use but unlike Ingleside Park, Hannaford is not a multi-purpose outdoor recreation area. Hannaford Park needs an established seating area for persons with mobility impairments so they can equally enjoy the special events and programs held here.
- 5) Pico Park, a small neighborhood playground bordering the ocean, lacks designated parking, a clear path of travel, modified playground equipment, and accessible amenities.

To provide equal participation opportunities for adults and children with disabilities, the Town needs to undertake the following park and playground modifications:

- Hannaford Park should be modified with designated seating areas for persons with disabilities.

Town of Winthrop - Inventory of Facilities
Recreation Department/Conservation Commission

<u>Location</u>	<u>Parking Spaces</u>	<u>Ramps</u>	<u>Public Phones</u>	<u>Water Fountains</u>
Ingleside Park	No	Yes	No	No
Massa Playground	No	No	No	No
Daw Playground	No	No	No	No
Crest Avenue Park	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pond Street Playground	No	No	No	No
Coughlin Playground	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pico Playground	No	No	No	No
Walden Street Basketball Courts	No	No	No	No
Fort Heath Park	Yes	No	No	No
Lewis Lake	No	No	No	No

<u>Location</u>	<u>Toilet Facilities</u>	<u>Picnic Areas</u>	<u>Trails</u>	<u>Play Areas</u>
Ingleside Park	No	Yes	No	Yes
Massa Playground	No	No	No	No
Daw Playground	No	No	No	No
Crest Avenue Park	No	No	No	Yes
Pond Street Playground	No	No	No	No
Coughlin Playground	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Pico Playground	No	No	No	No
Walden Street Basketball Courts	No	No	No	No
Fort Heath Park	No	No	No	No
Lewis Lake	No	No	No	No

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS/NOTES

Approximately 15 persons attended the August 21, 2003 Natural Resources and Open Space Forum at the Winthrop Senior Center, conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council as part of the Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan process.

Attendees reviewed the following list of priority areas, added additional goals and specific environmental issues that need to be addressed to the lists. Next, each attendee prioritized their concerns by voting on the top three goals and top three environmental concerns. Workshop participants then brainstormed specific open spaces or natural areas that they felt the Town should work to enhance in the future. They used maps that showed natural resources and existing open space. Each attendee was given 5 dots, worth \$10,000 to spend in an area. The top three results were considered the priority areas/actions.

The following higher ranked goals and priorities were discussed:

Open Space and Recreation

Upgraded maintenance of parks, ongoing maintenance of ball fields (8 Votes)
 Town should take a lead role at MDC site – Zoppo land (8 Votes)
 Trestles are opportunities (8 Votes)
 Acquire and develop Mirak space (7 Votes)
 Better pedestrian and bicycle connections (4 Votes)
 Listing of public access ways (4 Votes)

Natural Resource Issues

Protect Belle Isle Creek/Marsh (15 Votes)
 Address leaking landfill (14 Votes)
 Prevent erosion and sedimentation in harbor (7 Votes)

Priority Natural Resource and Open Space Areas For Attention

Morton Street and Fishermen's Bend – clean up rear of properties that abut the open space – (12 Votes)
 Mirak property – (11 Votes)
 Commercial waterfront properties – work with owners when they redevelop to improve waterfront access with walkways – (11 Votes)
 Landfill / recreation area – (11 Votes)
 Logan Airport (#7 on map) – (11 Votes)
 Town Center gateway – clean it up – (5 Votes)

In November 2003, another public meeting was held at Winthrop Town Hall to discuss and review the Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan. Consultant McGregor & Associates, P.C. gave a brief overview presentation of the plan's goals, needs for the future and a skeleton of the Five Year Action Plan.

Improving local parks, preserving open space, expanding passive and active recreational opportunities, connecting parks and beaches and further expanding organized activity programs are all important goals identified in the plan.

Some of the immediate needs that Winthrop has include: immediately improving existing recreational space and facilities, implementing a program to enhance parks and playgrounds as they deteriorate in the future, adding facilities like jogging and walking paths and dog parks and adding more organized recreational activities. The Five Year Action Plan serves as an organized outline of which activities the Town of Winthrop should undertake first and how long the activity should continue over the five years.

This public meeting was attended by twelve people and town committees represented were the School Committee, Beautification Committee, Parks and Recreation, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.

APPENDIX E: CENSUS DATA & EOE A BUILDOUT

APPENDIX F: COMMENT LETTERS