



# SHERBORN, MASS.

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

2007



# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Plan Summary</b>	4
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	A. Statement of Purpose	5
	B. Planning Process and Public Participation	6
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Community Setting</b>	
	A. Regional Context	7
	B. History	10
	C. Population Characteristics	12
	D. Growth and Development Patterns	14
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Environmental Inventory and Analysis</b>	
	A. Geology, Soils, and Hypsography	22
	B. Landscape Character	31
	C. Water Resources	32
	D. Vegetation	38
	E. Fisheries and Wildlife	40
	F. Scenic Resources	43
	G. Environmental Issues	45
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest</b>	47
	A. Private Parcels	57
	B. Public and Non-Profit Parcels	59
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Community Vision</b>	
	A. Description of Process	64
	B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals	65
<b>Section 7</b>	<b>Analysis of Needs</b>	
	A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs	66
	B. Summary of Community Needs	68
	C. Management Needs	69

<b>Section 8</b>	<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	71
<b>Section 9</b>	<b>Five-Year Action Plan</b>	
	A. Vision	72
	B. Five-Year Action Plan	73
	C. Review of 1996 OSRP	80
<b>Section 10</b>	<b>Public Comments</b>	82
<b>Section 11</b>	<b>References</b>	93
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>A. Public Participation</b>	
	Public Meeting, January 26, 2006	
	Public Forum, February 28, 2006	
	Eagle Scout Survey 2006	
	<b>B. Public Participation Publicity</b>	
	<b>C. Rare and Endangered Species</b>	
	<b>D. Handicapped Accessibility</b>	
	<b>E. Analysis Maps</b>	

## List of Maps

<u>Map Name</u>	<u>After Page</u>
Current Zoning	21
Developed Land	21
Developable Land	21
Surficial Geology	25
Soil Constraints on Septic Systems	27
Poor Filter and Hydric Soils	29
Agricultural Soils	29
Watersheds, Wetlands, and Surface Water	33
Aquifers	33
Rare Species Habitat	40
Scenic and Historic Resources	44
Open Space	47
Recreation Land	63
Proposed Action Plan	71

### Appendix E

Aquifers and Developable Land
Aquifers and Soils
Protected Open Space and Rare Species Habitat
Scenic Resources and Protected Open Space

## List of Tables

<u>No.</u>	<u>Table Name</u>	<u>Page</u>
3-1	U.S. Census Population and Density of Sherborn and Surrounding Towns	12
3-2	U.S. Census Ethnic Diversity of Sherborn	12
3-3	Median Income	13
3-4	Population and Number of Households	14
3-5	Number of Building Permits	15
4-1	Soil Constraints on Septic Systems	26
5-1	Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest	48
5-2	Private Parcels	58
5-3	Public and Non-Profit Parcels	60

### Appendix C

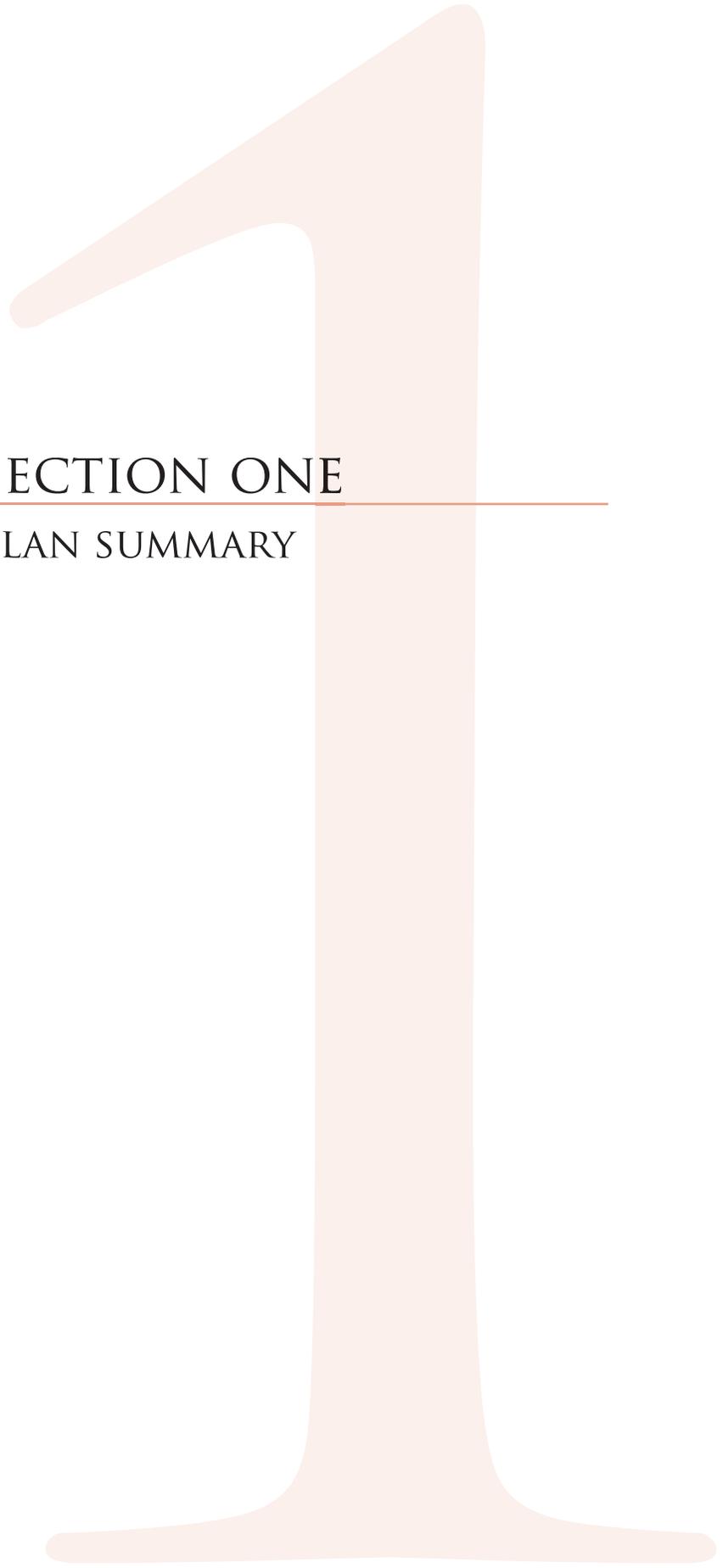
C-1	Rare and Endangered Plant Species in Sherborn
C-2	Rare and Endangered Animal Species in Sherborn



# SECTION ONE

---

## PLAN SUMMARY



## **Plan Summary**

Documenting the community's desire to preserve the rural character of Sherborn – its small town qualities, its many scenic roads, the abundance of open space and opportunities for hiking, horseback riding or cross-country skiing on its many trails – is the primary aim of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. Sherborn's character is what makes the town an enjoyable place for its residents to live and raise families.

Sherborn has retained its rural character principally because lands have been acquired as protected open space and because the difficulty of establishing septic systems in Sherborn's soils (e.g., high groundwater, bedrock, wetland, dense soils) has tended to slow growth.

Approximately thirty percent of Sherborn's total area is currently undeveloped but developable under current zoning, assuming compliance with state and local septic and wetland regulations. This percentage includes lands temporarily protected by Chapter 61 programs. Section 8 of this report presents three broad goals that represent residents' expressed concerns and priorities for protecting Sherborn's resources, along with sixteen objectives formed to guide achievement of these goals. It also proposes a vision for Sherborn's open space in which existing open space is connected, forming bands that follow the northwest-to-southeast trend of Sherborn's valleys and ridges. Bands of open space alternate with bands of existing or future residential development.

Bringing about such a vision requires that Sherborn take creative, pro-active steps. Recommended actions include adopting the Community Preservation Act, acquiring and protecting additional open space, actively encouraging landowners to place conservation restrictions on their properties, and involving as many residents as possible in Sherborn's planning process by scheduling discussions and workshops.

## **B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals**

In reviewing the goals identified by participants at the Open Space and Recreation Plan workshops and forum, a vision of Sherborn emerged. Residents place high importance on the rural character and natural resources of their town. They see preservation of open space as a key to maintaining those values. The following broad and general goals reflect this vision.

- Preserve Sherborn's natural resources.
- Preserve Sherborn's rural character.
- Maintain scenic views enjoyed from public areas and roads.
- Continue to build and maintain greenbelts and trail systems.
- Enhance active and passive recreation opportunities available to residents of all ages and interests.
- Create a pedestrian-friendly town center.

Residents hope to see dedicated involvement on the part of town boards, organizations, schools and individual citizens to use all tools available to retain the character of their home town.

Sherborn will inevitably experience change throughout its future and that change should be in a desirable direction. Detailed planning can help accomplish this.



# SECTION EIGHT

---

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives have been derived from the 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 2001 General Plan, public workshops and forums, input from town boards, and analysis conducted by the Conway School of Landscape Design Team.

The following list presents open space goals along with their more specific objectives. The numerical sequence of these goals is not intended to be a rank order but is included for cross-reference use. The actions to achieve these goals and objectives are listed in Sherborn's Five-year Action Plan (Section 9).

Recognizing the community's desire to protect and acquire land for resource protection, preservation of rural character, and recreational opportunities and providing ways to reach these goals, is the overall objective of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### **1. Protect Sherborn's Natural Resources**

- 1-A. Protect groundwater quality and quantity to ensure a safe drinking water supply
- 1-B. Preserve, extend and create wildlife corridors
- 1-C. Protect habitat diversity for wildlife, especially for endangered species

### **2. Preserve Sherborn's Rural Character**

- 2-A. Preserve scenic areas and views
- 2-B. Preserve Sherborn's historically agricultural heritage
- 2-C. Promote active farms and backyard agriculture
- 2-D. Encourage an attractive, pedestrian-friendly town center
- 2-E. Discourage sprawling suburban development patterns

### **3. Enhance Recreational Opportunities, Passive and Active**

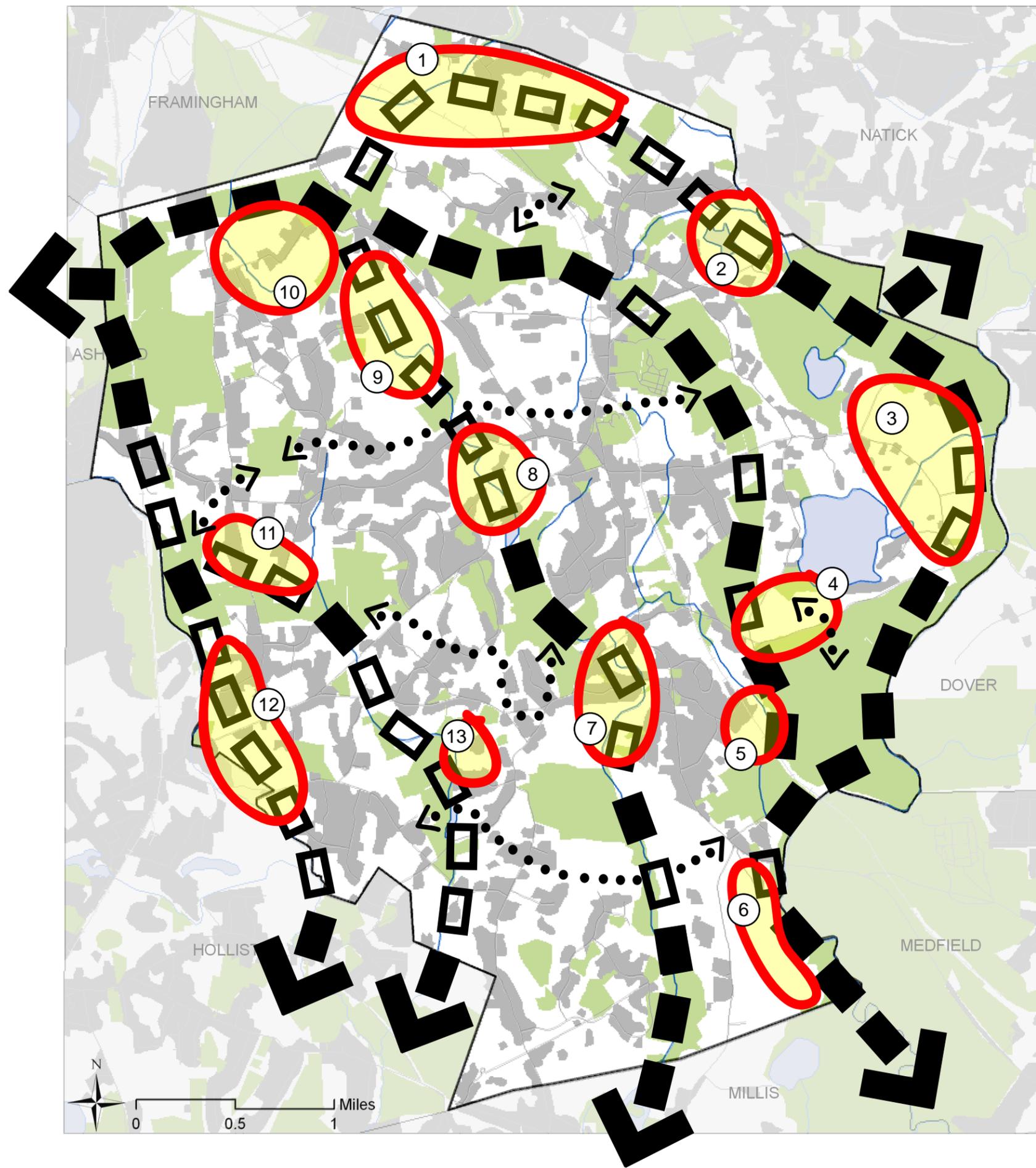
- 3-A. Improve town walkability
- 3-B. Improve knowledge of passive recreational resources
- 3-C. Acquire easements to trails on private land
- 3-D. Extend and create new trails and trail links
- 3-E. Expand active recreation fields
- 3-F. Create a management and maintenance plan to improve recreation lands
- 3-G. Improve handicap accessibility to public facilities



## SECTION NINE

---

### FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN



**Legend**

- Proposed Corridor
- Unprotected Segment of Corridor
- Potential Trail Link
- Critical Area for Protection
- Existing Protected Open Space
- Existing Developed Land

**Reasons for Protection**

All identified areas are unprotected land linking existing open space.

1. Unprotected habitat
2. Unprotected habitat
3. Unprotected aquifer  
Poor filter soils overlay aquifer  
Unprotected scenic area
4. Unprotected aquifer  
Poor filter soil overlaying aquifer
5. Unprotected aquifer
6. Unprotected aquifer
7. Unprotected aquifer  
Unprotected habitat
8. Unprotected habitat  
Unprotected scenic area
9. Unprotected habitat
10. Unprotected scenic area
11. Unprotected scenic area
12. Unprotected habitat
13. Unprotected habitat

**Proposed Action Plan**

Corridors of open space run north-south through Sherborn, following the natural river ways and form of the land. These corridors provide habitat and permit movement for wildlife, as well as providing various opportunities for human recreation.

Critical areas of concern are unprotected resources including rare and endangered species habitat, Aquifer protection zones, and scenic areas. Along with these specific areas, the whole town of Sherborn should be treated as an aquifer recharge area and protected accordingly.

Potential trail links have been identified by Sherborn residents and assessed by the Conway School of Landscape Design Team. These links generally run east-west, connecting to areas throughout the larger identified corridors.

**Open Space and Recreation Plan Update 2006  
Sherborn, MA**

Prepared By:  
Ian Hodgdon  
Hannah Whipple  
**Conway School of Landscape Design**

## A. Vision For Sherborn

**The *Action Plan* depicts a vision for the open space of Sherborn. A vision plan represents a statement of a desired future that can guide and direct dedicated people to carry out the many tasks necessary to bring about their goals.**

Proposed corridors of protected open space run north-south through Sherborn, following the natural river ways and the form of the land. These corridors provide habitat and permit movement for wildlife; they also provide various opportunities for human recreation. Potential trail links generally run east-west, connecting to areas throughout the larger identified corridors.

Critical areas of concern have been identified for protection through an extensive analysis of Sherborn's resources. Maps of these analyses can be found in Appendix E.

## B. Five-Year Action Plan

**This Five-Year Action Plan identifies specific tasks for accomplishing each objective in order to reach the Open Space and Recreation goals of Sherborn. Also included is a schedule for completing each task and the groups recommended for implementing them. All of the following goals, objectives, and actions are subject to funding and appropriation.**

### **Key to Groups responsible for implementing action items**

AHRC	Ad-Hoc Road Committee
BOH	Board of Health
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Commission
CMD	Community Maintenance and Development
FPAC	Farm Pond Advisory Committee
GPC	Ground Water Protection Committee
HC	Historical Commission
HDC	Historic District Commission
LAC	Land Acquisition Committee
OSC	Open Space Committee
PB	Planning Board
RC	Recreation Committee
SF	Sherborn Farmers
SFTA	Sherborn Forest and Trail Association
SL	Sustainable Lifestyles
SRLF	Sherborn Rural Land Foundation
TFC	Town Forest Committee
TR	Town Residents
TW	Tree Warden
WAC	Western Avenue Committee
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

Objective	Actions	When	By Whom
<p>1-A. Protect groundwater quality and quantity to ensure a safe drinking water supply</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enact bylaws and regulations to protect groundwater.</li> <li>2. Support Sherborn's more appropriate than Title 5 septic regulations.</li> <li>3. Acquire and protect open space in sensitive aquifer recharge areas.</li> <li>4. Continue to explore regulatory and other methods of minimizing chemical and pesticide use on both public and private land.</li> <li>5. Continue to educate residents about groundwater protection and the importance of regular testing of well water.</li> <li>6. Monitor activities along town borders impacting groundwater.</li> <li>7. Support regional water protection by working with the Southwest Area Planning (SWAP) sub-region.</li> <li>8. Monitor adherence to groundwater protection legislation and regulations proposed by the state.</li> <li>9. Protect Farm Pond and reacquire water rights.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and implement control mechanisms to minimize chemical, pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer use in areas immediately surrounding Farm Pond.</li> <li>b. Educate residents regarding proper protection of the Farm Pond watershed.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		<p>PB, GPC, BOH</p> <p>BOH</p> <p>LAC, CC, SRLF</p> <p>BOS, GPC, SL, FPAC</p> <p>GPC, CC, FPAC</p> <p>GPC, WAC, CC, BOS GPC, CC</p> <p>GPC</p> <p>BOH, BOS, FPAC, CC, GPC, TR</p>

Objective	Actions	When	By Whom
1-B. Preserve, extend, and create wildlife corridors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect parcels of land connecting existing protected open space both in Sherborn, and in neighboring towns.</li> <li>2. Incorporate wildlife corridor protection principals into land use decisions to foster biodiversity.</li> <li>3. Use zoning and other land use policies and regulations to provide incentives to preserve open space when development occurs.</li> </ol>		<p>LAC, CC, SRLF, PB</p> <p>LAC, CC, PB</p> <p>PB</p>
1-C. Protect wildlife (flora and fauna) habitat diversity, especially for rare and endangered species	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect parcels containing rare and endangered species habitat.</li> <li>2. Protect parcels connecting already protected open spaces.</li> <li>3. Create a plan for the removal of exotic invasive species by volunteers.</li> <li>4. Continue to educate residents on the importance of biodiversity.</li> </ol>		<p>LAC, SRLF, CC</p> <p>LAC, SRLF, CC, OSC</p> <p>CC, TFC</p> <p>CC, OSC</p>
2-A. Preserve scenic areas and views	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect land valued as highly scenic, as well as land in the viewshed of highly scenic properties.</li> <li>2. Adhere to Scenic Road Act.</li> <li>3. Support new road tree policy and regeneration.</li> <li>4. Update bylaws to preserve visual resources at new development sites through site design and layout.</li> </ol>		<p>LAC, PB, CC, SRLF, TR</p> <p>TW, PB</p> <p>TW, PB</p> <p>PB</p>

Objective	Actions	When	By Whom
2-B. Preserve Sherborn's historically agricultural heritage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create educational programs on agricultural practices at working farms.</li> <li>2. Lease town-owned land for farming.</li> <li>3. Encourage Community Supported Agriculture.</li> <li>3. Encourage greater coordination between town and existing farms and farmers for future planning.</li> <li>4. Hold farm events and activities, such as a grange festival.</li> </ol>		<p>OSC, SL, SF</p> <p>SF, BOS, LAC SF, OSC, SL</p> <p>SF, OSC, PB</p> <p>SF, TR, SL</p>
2-C. Promote active farms and backyard agriculture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage Community Supported Agriculture.</li> <li>2. Create a buy local campaign and publicize the availability of locally grown produce.</li> <li>3. Create agricultural education programs.</li> <li>4. Hold annual farm events and activities, such as a grange festival.</li> <li>5. Consider establishing an Agriculture Commission.</li> </ol>		<p>SF, OSC, SL</p> <p>SF, OSC, SL</p> <p>SF, OSC, SL</p> <p>SF, TR, SL</p> <p>BOS, OSC</p>
2-D. Encourage an attractive and pedestrian-friendly downtown	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a Design Review Committee to be involved with development during early phases.</li> <li>2. Link trails to town center.</li> <li>3. Incorporate traffic-calming devices downtown.</li> <li>4. Maintain sidewalks and improve crosswalks.</li> <li>5. Encourage parking areas behind businesses and green spaces in front.</li> </ol>		<p>PB, OSC</p> <p>SRLF, LAC, PB, SFTA PB, BOS, AHRC</p> <p>PB, AHRC, BOS, CMD OSC, PB</p>

Objective	Actions	When	By Whom
2-E. Discourage sprawling suburban development patterns	1. Promote village development patterns consistent with Sherborn’s historically rural character through flexible zoning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage use of open space subdivision bylaw.</li> <li>b. Create incentives for this type of development.</li> </ul> 2. Educate developers and prospective land owners on culture and character of the town.		PB       PB, BOS, OSC, TR
3-A. Improve town walkability	1. Link trails to town center.  2. Maintain sidewalks and improve crosswalks.  3. Educate residents about existing trails.  4. Contact and educate landowners regarding the creation of trails over private land.  5. Obtain trail easements.  6. Continue to support the Upper Charles Rail Trail.		PB, SFTA, OSC, LAC, SRLF BOS, CMD, PB SFTA, CC, OSC SFTA, OSC     LAC, CC, PB, SRLF PB, BOS, SFTA, OSC
3-B. Improve knowledge of passive recreational resources	1. Educate residents about passive recreational resources.  2. Improve signage and trail markers.		OSC, SFTA,CC     CC, SFTA, OSC
3-C. Work to retain access to trails on private land	1. Educate landowners on limited liability for recreational use of land.  2. Obtain trail easements.  3. Encourage deeded trail easements as a condition of sale.  4. Work cooperatively with landowners.		SFTA, OSC     SFTA, LAC, SRLF SFTA, SRLF, TR   SFTA, TR, OSC

Objective	Actions	When	By Whom
3-D. Extend and create new trails and trail links	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include trail requirements in subdivision regulations.</li> <li>2. Educate residents about existing trails.</li> <li>3. Contact and educate landowners regarding the creation of trails over private land.</li> <li>4. Obtain trail easements.</li> <li>5. Continued to support the Upper Charles Rail Trail.</li> <li>6. Continue to develop a volunteer program for trail upkeep.</li> </ol>		<p>PB</p> <p>SFTA, CC, OSC</p> <p>SFTA, CC, OSC</p> <p>LAC, CC, PB, SRLF</p> <p>PB, BOS, SFTA, OSC</p> <p>SFTA, OSC, CC</p>
3-E. Expand active recreation fields	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Through a best use analysis (of both existing protected land and potential future protected land), identify possible locations for new playing fields.</li> <li>2. Continue to coordinate with surrounding towns for regional playing fields.</li> </ol>		<p>RC, LAC</p> <p>RC</p>
3-F. Create a management and maintenance plan for the improvement of recreation lands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a realistic and effective maintenance budget.</li> <li>2. Create a committee responsible for the management of playing fields.</li> <li>3. Educate residents on supporting maintenance and management of fields.</li> <li>4. Coordinate groups and organizations to help with playing field improvements through volunteer work and fund raising.</li> </ol>		<p>RC, CMD, BOS</p> <p>RC</p> <p>RC</p> <p>RC, TR</p>
3-G. Improve handicap accessibility to public facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporate handicap accessibility into any new or renovated recreational facilities.</li> </ol>		<p>RC, FPAC</p>

## **Prioritized Land Acquisition or Protection Guidelines**

1. Land important to protecting groundwater quality and quantity.
2. Land connecting existing protected open space.
3. Land that preserves or extends the trail system in Sherborn and to neighboring towns.
4. Land that preserves scenic areas and views.
5. Land with active or passive recreation potential.
6. Destination points.
7. Land that will improve the design of downtown.
8. Land needed to increase the pedestrian friendliness of downtown or to improve traffic patterns.
9. Land that contributes to Sherborn's rural atmosphere, including farmland.
10. Land that preserves wildlife and plant habitat diversity.