5 NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Overview

Expansive views of Hundred Acre Cove. The facades of historic colonial homes. The white steeple of the Congregational Church. These are images that greet people entering Barrington on R.I. 114, the main route into Barrington from the north. The drive into town provides a picturesque snapshot of just one section of Barrington. There also are the shorelines, beaches and waters of Narragansett Bay and the Barrington and Palmer Rivers; the distinct neighborhoods of West Barrington, Hampden Meadows, Rumstick Road, and Alfred Drown; the agricultural lands in the northeast corner of town; and numerous outstanding historic buildings, including Town Hall, built in 1888. It is this abundance of natural resources, scenic landscapes and historic sites that give Barrington its special distinction, its sense of place.

One of the defining features of the community, Barrington's lengthy shoreline, also is becoming one of the most significant issues facing the Town. Going forward, risks of flooding and more frequent and damaging coastal storms are projected to rise,[1] underscoring the importance of protecting coastal and freshwater wetlands and other sensitive areas from development.

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Existing Conditions

Natural Features

Wetland Areas

Most of Barrington's 955 acres of wetlands (see **Table 1** on the next page) are on conservation land owned by the Town, the State, the Land Conservation Trust, Audubon Society or otherwise protected. There are also several significant areas of freshwater wetlands in private

Osemequin Park (left) and Hundred Acre Cove

[1]See the Natural Hazards element

Table 1: Wetland Acreage, Barrington

Classification	Acres
Emergent Wetland: Marsh/Wet	23.0
Scrub-Shrub Swamp	56.5
Forested Wetland: Deciduous	402.5
Marine/Estuarine Shore	47.7
Estuarine Emergent Wetland	422.5
Estuarine Scrub-Shrub Wetland	3.2
Total	**955.4**

Source: RIGIS (1993 Wetlands data)

ownership throughout town. The wetland areas depicted on **Map NCR-1** are an approximation of wetlands generated by the RI Geographic Information System (RIGIS); there are other sites that could be classified as wetlands, but have not yet been identified.

The largest contiguous wetlands near the shoreline are around Hundred Acre Cove, the upper Barrington and Palmer Rivers, on Narragansett Bay at the RI Country Club and Tillinghast Estate, and on Rumstick Point.

Freshwater wetlands are found throughout town. The most significant areas include the Hampden Meadows "Greenbelt" between New Meadow Road and Sowams Road, the "Brickyard Wetlands" between the Barrington Shopping Center and the YMCA, those within the Tall Pines conservation area east of Washington Road near County Road, and the Divine Vargas wetlands west of Wampanoag Trail. Though relatively smaller in acreage, there are critical wetlands along Mussachuck Creek, which feeds into the bay north of Nayatt Point, and along Annawamscutt Brook, which empties into Allin's Cove.

Within the past decade, several projects have been completed that helped restore wetlands in critical areas:

- *Allin's Cove*. The $760,000 Allin's Cove restoration project, completed in 2006, was launched in order to restore approximately 11 acres of degraded coastal wetland at the mouth of Allin's Cove, as well as stop erosion of the shoreline along Byway Road.

- *Walker Farm*. The goal of the Walker Farm Marsh restoration, completed in 2005, was to increase the acreage of marsh to 15 acres and address problems created over the years from alterations of the site, including roads and dam structures.

- *Mussachuck Creek*. A project along Mussachuck Creek at the Rhode Island Country Club was completed in 2007. The has contributed to the restoration of the Mussachuck Creek aquatic system.

On the regulatory side, Barrington has stringent wetland protections in effect, with the adoption of the Wetlands Overlay District Zoning Ordinance amendments in 1994. The regulations require issuance of a special use permit from the Zoning Board, with an advisory review by the Conservation Commission, for construction projects within 100 feet of a wetland or water body.

Since 2010, 42 special use permit applications have been before the Zoning Board for encroachment into the wetland buffer. Of these, 38 were granted, while two were denied (and two withdrawn).

Surface Water

Inland water bodies (lakes, ponds, creeks, streams) in Barrington total approximately 199 acres. The largest bodies of water include Brickyard Pond (105 acres), Echo Lake (22.5 acres) and Prince's (Tiffany) Pond (8.3 acres). Significant creeks include Annawumscutt Brook and Mussachuck Creek (discussed above).

Groundwater

Barrington's major groundwater resource, the Barrington aquifer, once provided Bristol County Water with significant quantities of wa-

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ter. The well field is within a larger area designated as the aquifer recharge (see Map NCR-1), which encompasses undeveloped areas, including woods, Veterans Park and Brickyard Pond and wetlands, as well as developed areas – neighborhoods and commercial properties along County Road and Maple Avenue. The Zoning Ordinance requires advisory review by the Conservation Commission of certain Planning and Zoning Board applications for sites within the Wellhead Recharge Overlay District.

Wildlife Habitat.

Three areas of Barrington have been identified by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program as rare or endangered species habitat areas (see Map NCR-1). The largest and most important area includes the town owned Nockum Hill and marshland to the east. This land, bounding the north side of Hundred Acre Cove, serves as a nesting habitat for the Northern Diamondback Terrapin, a Rhode Island threatened species, which inhabits saltwater and brackish marshland and coves, while nesting in adjacent open sandy areas.

Another important habitat area in Barrington is the marshland and adjacent upland along the Palmer River, which supports at least five state listed species of plants and serves as a nesting site for the Seaside Sparrow and habitat for numerous other bird species. Other habitat areas include the Providence River marsh extending northward from the mouth of Mussachuck Creek, and the mostly wetland area along the east side of the Rumstick Point peninsula, across Smith Cove from Adams Point.

Flood zones / Other Physical Constraints

Map NCR-2 depicts physical constraints to development, including the 100-year flood zone (having a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding in a given year) and the velocity zone (coastal area within the flood zone likely inundated by a wave surge during hurricanes). These areas, designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, provide for necessary floodwater retention, but also present a safety hazard to existing and potential development. Proposed construction and other land development activities are subject to stricter building codes and more restrictive zoning and subdivision requirements

In addition to flood zones, other constraints include wetlands and hydric soils (severe constraints), high water table and steep slopes (moderate constraints).

Flooding and other natural hazards are discussed in the Natural Hazards Element.

In general, the areas with the most significant constraints to development are within proximity to the shore—the Palmer, Barrington or Warren Rivers, Narragansett Bay, Brickyard Pond and Hundred Acre Cove.

Scenic Views

In January 1990, the RI Department of Environmental Management completed an inventory of scenic areas throughout the State. Barrington was included within that portion of the State defined as the Narragansett Bay Area. Three areas in Barrington are identified in the state inventory, which are also designated on **Map NCR-3**:

- Hundred Acre Cove, as seen primarily from Wampanoag Trail.
- An area in the southwest corner of Barrington that includes Echo Lake, Mussachuck Creek, which flows from Brickyard Pond to the Providence River, and a portion of the Nayatt Point area. This scenic area was described as a nice combination of open land, woodland and wetlands.
- The Smith Cove Marsh, a wetland with varied vegetation. It includes all of the marshland and coastal area between Rumstick Point and Adams Point.

Both the Echo Lake and the Smith Cove sites were defined as distinctive landscape areas, having the highest visual appeal and containing

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Figure 1: Allen-West House, George Street

Source: Town aerial photography

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a great deal of variety in form. The Hundred Acre Cove site was defined as noteworthy, an area of lesser but important scenic value.

Cultural Resources

Historic Sites and Buildings

The Town has a wealth of historically significant properties, most notably the Civic Center Historic District along County Road. This National Register District includes Town Hall, the Peck Center (Library/Senior Center), Prince's Hill Cemetery and Wood Pond. Barrington properties on the National Register (see **Map NCR-4** and **Appendix II**) have changed in recent years, with the addition of the Alfred Drown historic district in 2005 and the Jennys Lane historic district in 2008.

In December 2013, the Allen-West House (see **Figure 1**) at 153 George Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The circa 1763 house was once part of a large farmstead consisting of more than 100 acres. The area also has historic significance, which is recognized by a large stone monument installed in 1905 that commemorates the location of the Baptist church built in the 1660s.

Barrington's most treasured public spaces are located in the Barrington Civic Center National Register Historic District, which includes Town Hall, Peck Center, Prince's Hill Cemetery and Wood Pond. Projects impacting the Civic Center Historic District are reviewed by the Town Council on a case-by-case basis. Projects impacting the exterior of Town Hall or the surrounding grounds also require the involvement and approval of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, which holds a historic preservation easement on the Town Hall and surrounding property. In 2007, the Town received a $50,000 State Preservation Grant to replace the Town Hall roof and repaint the woodwork in historic colors that met the approval of this commission.

One of Barrington's most iconic structures, the 50,000-square-foot Belton Court, is listed on the National Register and formerly used by the Zion Bible Institute. Belton Court, along with the entire 40-acre Zion Bible campus, was ac-

quired at auction in 2011. Most of the buildings have remained vacant since, but the new owner is proposing a senior residential community, including restoration and re-use of Belton Court (discussed in the Housing & Neighborhoods element and Appendix III). Most of the other buildings, none historically significant, would be demolished to make room for the proposed development.

The Barrington Preservation Society, chartered by the State in 1965, is the town's principal force for historic preservation. The Society occupies space on the ground level of the Town Library. The room houses the Town Museum, archival storage of artifacts and town records.

Through its on-going Plaque Program, the society has identified 157 private and public buildings that are at least 100 years in age and retain their architectural integrity. This program led to the society initiating and supporting the effort in 2004 to list the Alfred Drown Historic District and again in 2006 to list the Jennys Lane Historic District in the National Register of Historic Sites and Places. The society has provided advice to the town on preservation issues and will continue to play an active role in the designation and promotion of additional sites for listing in the National Register.

The Town also has several historic cemeteries—including Tyler Point, Watson, Allin, Forest Chapel and Prince's Hill. The Barrington Cemetery Commission has oversight and is responsible for maintenance of these sites.

Agricultural Lands

About 314 acres are in agricultural use. The northeast section (George Street area) of Barrington is the largest contiguous agricultural area in town. The Town has zoned the area, which lacks access to city water and sewer, for single-family detached houses on large lots (Residence 40-Conservation Development) and conservation/ resource protection (Wildlife Refuge, Open Space-Passive and Conservation zoning).

The Town leases approximately 40 acres within the George Street area (see Number "2" on **Map NCR-5**) to Four-Town Farm for farming operations. These soils are considered prime farmland, classified by the State as "Agricultural Soils of Statewide Importance." The George Street area is the last remaining area where farming activity occurs on any significant scale in Barrington. The two community gardens—the Barrington Community Garden (one to two acres) at the former "Vitullo Farm" site, and the Walker Farm site (one acre) – require just a few acres. Both of these sites have prime agricultural soils, but are also within the floodplain.

Farming is discussed in the Economic Development Element.

There are many areas within Barrington with soils suitable for agricultural use according to the State; however, most of these areas are either developed residential areas or used for other purposes, such as St. Andrew's School, Haines Park, the RI Country Club, Veterans Memorial Park, Town Hall, and several cemeteries.

Issues and Opportunities

Water Quality

Surface Water

Water quality remains a concern in Barrington, where degraded conditions persist in several water bodies, including the Barrington River/ Hundred Acre Cove and Brickyard Pond.

- *Brickyard Pond.* Brickyard Pond was included in a 2007 State Department of Environmental Management study of impaired ponds. The study identified high phosphorus and low dissolved oxygen levels in Brickyard Pond, with problems linked to sources such as stormwater runoff, waterfowl, shoreline

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erosion, and internal cycling. In September 2007, the Office of Water Resources at RIDEM released a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study to address water quality concerns, predominantly phosphorous loadings, in Brickyard and other sites in Rhode Island. The Town is in the process of identifying actions to bring the Pond into compliance with the TMDL.

- *Prince's Pond.* Prince's Pond (also known as Tiffany Pond) is on the State's list of impaired waters for phosphorous and dissolved oxygen. The Palmer River (not included in the above acreage) also is listed as impaired, from the Massachusetts/Rhode Island line to the East Bay Bike Path trestle., due to nitrogen and dissolved oxygen levels and fecal coliform.
- *Hundred Acre Cove.* Hundred Acre Cove continues to be affected by increased bacterial levels, in particular due to upstream sources of stormwater runoff. A shellfishing ban in place at Hundred Acre Cove since the early 1990s remains in effect today. A RIDEM Total Maximum Daily Loads study for Hundred Acre Cove, as was completed for Brickyard Pond, is in the planning stages.
- *Echo Lake.* Recent projects have helped to improve conditions of Echo Lake. A $6 million project undertaken by the Rhode Island Country Club has helped improve flow through Mussachuck Creek to Narragansett Bay. It is hoped that the improved conditions will allow herring to reach breeding areas in Echo Lake and Brickyard Pond and provide a less conducive environment for the invasive weed phragmites.

Groundwater Resources

Proposed regulations to protect the Barrington aquifer date to the mid-1990s, when a consultant study was released recommending that the Town establish a groundwater protection overlay district.

The study included a proposed ordinance that was tabled by the Council at the time. More recently, the Conservation Commission drafted an updated ordinance establishing land use restrictions within the groundwater recharge area

The proposed ordinance, which has not been adopted, should be re-evaluated in the context of the feasibility and future need of the aquifer being brought on line as a water supply. Currently the Water Authority is proceeding with other options for secondary sources of drinking water. One of the challenges related to bringing the well field back on line is saltwater intrusion into the aquifer—which, according to CRMC, will only worsen in the future with increases in sea level (discussed in the Natural Hazards element). This issue is unrelated to previously proposed groundwater recharge land use regulations.

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Protection of Wetlands

Barrington has worked to protect wetlands through property acquisitions, engineering projects and enforcement of regulations for activities within 100 feet of a wetland or water body.

Barrington's Wetlands Overlay District was established as part of the zoning ordinance rewrite in 1994 (Article XXV). It requires the granting of a special use permit by the Zoning Board of Review, with advisory review by the Conservation Commission, prior to any development within 100 feet of either a coastal wetland or a freshwater wetland one-half acre or greater in size. The Wetlands Overlay District is more restrictive than State regulations requiring RIDEM approval for activity within 50 feet of a wetland. A 100-foot wetland setback, however, is a preferable standard in Barrington, where pressure to develop marginal sites will only increase as the community approaches build out.

The Town uses the RIGIS wetlands mapping (see Map NCR-1) as a guide for identifying

whether a proposed project could impact the 100-foot wetlands buffer. An accurate wetlands edge requires delineation in the field by a wetlands biologist; however, the Town should take steps to ensure the GIS data showing the State wetlands in relation to Town parcels is as accurate as possible.

Acquisitions of wetland areas for permanent protection have helped to ensure development will not encroach into these sensitive areas. There have been no major wetland acquisitions since 2010. The most recent wetland property acquired was a landlocked parcel donated to the Town in 2012 totaling approximately two acres, allowing for the expansion of the abutting "Hampden Meadows Greenbelt" conservation area.

Protection of Conservation Lands / Wildlife Habitat Areas

Contiguous protected open space is important for habitat purposes, such as providing areas for migratory birds. Many of the protected conservation areas in Barrington are surrounded by developed areas; however, there are a number of privately owned conservation lands that abut unprotected parcels that are undeveloped, mostly due to environmental constraints. In some cases, the ownership of parcels with conservation value is unknown.

While many of these lots of unknown ownership are either within wetlands or even submerged, making development in these areas highly unlikely, acquisition would help create a band of protected area and clarify ownership and, therefore, management responsibilities. Targeted acquisitions in other habitat areas would also provide an additional level of protection for these important sites.

Another issue relates to the management of conservation lands held in public and private ownership. The Conservation Commission and Barrington Conservation Land Trust have advocated adopting and enforcing Management Plans for Town-owned conservation lands across Barrington. Concerns include encroachments from neighboring parcels, enforcement of easements, illegal dumping and other activities, and people accessing environmentally sensitive areas.

Management plans developed for Nockum Hill and Hundred Acre Cove, the Hampden Meadows "Greenbelt," and Brickyard Pond have been partially implemented.

Comprehensive Management Plans provide a framework for the protection of publicly owned or otherwise protected conservation lands. In general, each management plan includes a description of the area's significant characteristics and features, management objectives and implementation plan. The Town owns a substantial number of conservation lands. Conservation areas in private ownership also deserve special attention, as they represent a significant amount of land area throughout town. Comprehensive Management Plans are important as they provide site-specific objectives and strategies for the continual protection of these areas. Typical elements of Management Plans include:

- Control of hydrological characteristics.
- Removal or control of nuisance, exotic, plant and animal species.
- Preservation of native vegetation.
- Maintenance of habitat corridors.
- Encroachments from neighboring parcels.
- Enforcement of easements.

The Town should also encourage development of Management Plans for privately owned conservation areas. Plans for Land Trust and Town conservation lands should articulate a consistent vision, given many of these parcels are in proximity to one another. An example is the "Sowams Woods" parcel which is adjacent to or near Town-owned open space / conservation lands. Other groups will be encouraged to develop management plans as well. For example, the

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Audubon Society owns a number of important conservation parcels, including property along the Palmer River and adjacent to Haines Park.

Preservation of Historic Sites

Of all of the historic sites in Barrington, the future of the 50,000-square-foot Belton Court (see **Figure 2**), once used for office and classroom space at the Zion Bible Institute campus, is a significant preservation issue. Zion Bible Institute in the summer of 2008 moved to a new campus in Massachusetts, after years of struggling to maintain Belton Court and other campus buildings as well as comply with more stringent fire codes. The future use of the campus and Belton Court is almost certain to change, as a developer has the campus property under a purchase and sale agreement (the issue of the development of the site is addressed in other areas of the Plan as well). Restoration of Belton Court (listed in the National Register in 1976) in an historically sensitive manner will require a significant investment.

Another important public building is the century-old Bay Spring Community Center on Narragansett Avenue. In 2006, the building was determined as eligible for nomination to the State Register by a vote of the State Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. The Town has since renovated the building, including providing ADA access to the second floor; however, no further action has been taken toward nominating the building for the National Register of Historic Places.

Potential Impacts on Community Character

An ongoing concern relates to development pressure on not only properties on the Historic Register, but also Barrington's existing neighborhoods established 50 or more years ago. For a suburban town of many single family houses, these neighborhoods represent the essential qualities that define Barrington. The replacement of smaller, older homes, such as cape cods and ranch homes that are much

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Figure 2: Belton Court at the former Zion Bible Institute campus

Figure 3: Echo Lake/Mussachuck Creek—State-Designated Scenic Area

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smaller than the average modern home, with significantly larger new houses can quickly alter the character of an established neighborhood.

With the exception of the Alfred Drown Road and Jennys Lane National Register Districts, the only privately owned residential properties with the Historic Register designation are individual homes. (The issue of tear-downs is addressed specifically in the Housing & Neighborhoods element.)

Community character is also a critical concern within a largely undeveloped section of Barrington—the rural George Street area.

In 2012, the Town adopted a new zone for this part of town—changing the area's Residence 40 zone to Residence 40-Conservation Development. The zone is intended to provide more flexible subdivision design, with the goal of preserving important open space and limiting the development footprint. The zone requires subdivisions of five or more lots to meet the requirements of the R40-CD zone, including setting aside at least 35 percent of the site as contiguous open space. To date, no proposals have been submitted that trigger the R40-CD requirements. An open question is whether the R40-CD zone offers sufficient protection of the rural character of the George Street area, as the zone retains the current Residence 40 density. There are additional measures—such as larger minimum lot size requirements—that could further protect an area with significant agricultural resources, sensitive habitat, and a historic, rural landscape reflective of Barrington's early settlement.

Protection of Scenic Views and Shore Access Points

Barrington enjoys a wealth of scenic resources, where the beauty of the natural setting has been preserved or benignly modified by patterns of development, as well as more than 20 public shore access points (see Map NCR-3). The Town's topographical character is set by the interplay between its land and waters, including the Bay, the various tidal rivers, several coves and a number of freshwater ponds. These large and small bodies of water provide vistas ranging from the expansive to the intimate that are enjoyed from both public and private land.

Three areas in Barrington are identified in the state inventory of scenic areas (1990), in terms of their size and visual qualities, constitute scenic resources that are important on a regional and statewide level (Echo Lake and Mussachuck Creek are within one of the scenic areas—see **Figure 3**, previous page). The most significant risk to these views may be cell tower installations, given the height of these structures. The Town could consider impacts on scenic resources in evaluating special use permits for cell towers.

As yet there has been no comprehensive survey of smaller scenic areas that are important on a town-wide level. Such a survey would profitably focus on the East Bay Bicycle Path corridor, especially at Brickyard Pond and the Barrington and Warren Rivers; and along certain road corridors, including Mathewson, Adams Point, Rumstick, Chachapacassett and Nayatt Roads in the southern half of town. Other scenic areas are visible from lower New Meadow Road along the Barrington River, and along portions of Wampanoag Trail, Washington Road and Middle Highway.

An inventory of scenic views should also include views from the ends of public rights of way—important view corridors that should be protected from encroachment such as from the marina expansions or extensions of docks off adjacent private parcels.

Public Access, Use of Public Waters

The Town's Harbor Management Plan contains recommendations for the Town's harbor and shoreline areas. The Harbor Management Plan touches on a wide range of issues, including several that have become topics of debate in the community. These include regulating the use of moorings, docks and access to public rights of way to the shore. The Harbor Commission oversees implementation of the Harbor Management Plan.

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Actions

Goal 1: Protect important natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, groundwater aquifers, and the salt marshes especially around Hundred Acre Cove and the Barrington and Palmer Rivers.

Policy 1.1.1: In partnership with the Land Conservation Trust and other stakeholders, protect environmentally important properties from development impacts, with emphasis on establishing contiguous habitat.

Policy 1.1.2: Improve enforcement of Barrington's local regulatory wetlands protections

Actions

A. Evaluate unprotected open space parcels and identify priority areas based on criteria including environmental, habitat values, scenic value and wildlife corridor connectivity, with goals for intended use for each parcel (conservation, habitat protection, passive recreation, water quality, etc.).
B. Seek grants and other funding sources to protect open space, including habitat areas and farmland, through acquisition and conservation easements.
C. Amend Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to establish review procedures to ensure development/subdivision proposals provide dedicated open space in a manner that is consistent with the Town's open space acquisition criteria (see Open Space & Recreation Policy 3.1.2).
E. Create an administrative mechanism to certify that projects comply with approved zoning action regarding encroachments in the Town's 100-foot wetland buffer that includes mandatory inspection by the Town Building Official / assignee prior to critical project steps.

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F. Create an electronic inventory of all properties granted variances for construction within the 100-foot setback that specifies the approval and conditions of that approval.

Goal 2: Create effective, standardized management plans to maintain values of the Town's critical cultural and natural resources.

Policy 2.1.1: Manage town owned property to ensure protection of important natural and cultural features, and develop regulations and/or techniques for the protection of such land that is privately owned, including scenic, historical and cultural sites.

Policy 2.1.2: Encourage responsible use of natural resources, including beaches, shorelines and public access points.

Actions

A. Implement or continue implementation of management plans developed for priority sites. Review and revise as necessary. These sites include:
   - Nockum Hill
   - Allin's Cove (Town and Conservation Land Trust parcels).
   - The Brickyard Wetlands (the Town-owned 10-acre site west of the Barrington Shopping Center).
   - Hampden Meadows "Greenbelt"
   - Walker Farm
   - Town beach (Town)
   - St. Andrews Farm (Town)
B. Complete management plans for other public open space areas, including:
   - The former Vitullo Farm property and the Divine Vargas Conservation area
   - Veterans Park west of Brickyard Pond
C. Work with owners of private conservation parcels to develop new or coordinate implementation of existing management plans that are consistent with those adopted for public conservation areas. Priorities include:
   - Mussachuck Creek
   - Echo Lake/Sowams Woods
   - Johannis Farm
   - Tillinghast Estate
   - Other critical privately owned natural areas
D. Annually review status of management plan implementation for all conservation areas.
E. Employ deed restrictions to ensure that high priority Town-owned conservation parcels cannot be sold or otherwise disposed of.

Goal 3: Work to protect and restore water quality, including in Hundred Acre Cove, Brickyard Pond and Prince's Pond.

Policy 3.1.1: Identify cost-effective water quality measures and include projects in capital budget planning.

Actions

A. Prioritize implementation of best management practices and other strategies recommended for improving water quality in Brickyard Pond.
B. Formalize partnership with neighboring communities to adopt measures to improve water quality in Hundred Acre Cove.
C. Develop recommendations to improve water quality in Prince's Pond.
D. Continue to implement measures to treat surface runoff in the vicinity of Town Beach.
E. Develop education/public outreach program on everyday impacts on water quality of local ponds and streams.
F. Inventory privately owned local ponds.

Goal 4: Protect critical historic properties and areas of historic significance.

Policy 4.1.1: Take proactive action to protect historic properties at risk of demolition or negative impacts resulting from development.

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Figure 4: Farm fields in the George Street area

Actions

A. Develop incentives for the restoration of Belton Court that are economically viable, and seek opportunities for gaining public access to building and grounds. (Incentives are listed in Appendix III)

B. Explore creation of a National Register District in the George Street area,.

C. Work with stakeholders to develop a management plan for the Civic Center National Register District. Stakeholders include the Preservation Society, Cemetery Commission, Garden Club, Park and Recreation Commission, veterans groups, and the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission.

D. Adopt a policy for reviewing and approving projects within the Civic Center National Register District, including an evaluation of parking and other impacts and potential maintenance responsibilities.

E. Apply for designation of the Bay Spring Community Center on the National Register of Historic Places.

F. Develop and adopt a Town Register of historic properties worthy of preservation, including historic neighborhoods.

G. Work with the Preservation Society for expansion of existing historic districts and for listing of additional residential districts in the State and National Registers. This would enable homeowners within new or expanded districts to be eligible for the Rhode Island Homeowners income tax credit equal to 20% of restoration costs.

H. Appoint a committee to study establishment of a Voluntary Historic District Commission. Such a committee could develop guidelines for restoration and protection of historic properties, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and study possible local tax incentives.

I. Adopt a stop-work ordinance which would allow a reasonable grace period for historic preservation consultation when a significant historic property is threatened with whole or partial destruction.

J. Map individual graves and graveyards located outside formal cemeteries and known archaeological sites, and adopt regulations to limit development impact on these sites.

Goal 5. Adopt protections for scenic resources.

Policy 5.1.1: Review impacts of private and public projects on scenic resources.

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Actions

A. Adopt scenic area registry and incorporate protections within Planning Board review process.
B. Identify smaller scenic areas that are important at local level, including ends of public rights of way providing views to the water.
C. Use viewshed easements around particularly important sites
D. Set standards for outdoor lighting to limit light pollution in scenic areas.
E. Adopt zoning standards for review of impacts of proposed cell towers on scenic resources.

Goal 6. Preserve the character of rural areas of Barrington.

Policy 6.1.1: Adopt measures and policies to protect rural areas, with an emphasis on preserving rural character and agricultural values.

Actions

A. Consider additional protections through zoning and other regulations to limit impacts of development on the rural character of the George Street area (see **Figure 4**, previous page).
B. Consider revising the George Street area zoning in order to preserve rural character.
C. Evaluate underground water sources and demand for water in the George Street area, including for field irrigation, to better respond to effects of drought on residents and farming activities in an area that lacks access to public water.
D. Evaluate potential options to protect agricultural lands, such as:
   - Conservation easements through the purchase of development rights.
   - Agricultural/Forest Districts, an agreement where landowner voluntarily agrees to not develop a farm or forest land for a set period of time.
E. Encourage establishment of community gardens on public lands and other areas where appropriate; maintain community gardens at the former "Vitullo Farm" (the Barrington Community Garden) and at Walker Farm.
F. Continue providing option of leasing Town properties at Nockum Hill and Vitullo Farm to enable farms to maintain presence in Barrington. Consider following:
   - Adding conditions to limit environmental impacts, such as restrictions on the application of chemicals and limitations on farming near environmentally sensitive areas.
   - Requiring provision of public access, if such access would improve connectivity to open space or for extending trails, per recommendations in Open Space plan.

Goal 7: Implement the Town's Harbor Management Plan.

Policy 7.1.1: Ensure consistency between Harbor Management Plan and planning efforts that focus on areas near the shore.

Actions

A. Implement recommendations contained in the Harbor Management Plan.
B. Include the Harbor Management Plan in assessments of the Comprehensive Community Plan implementation.
C. Work with Harbor Commission in development of open space management plans, sea level adaptation activities (see the Natural Hazards element) and other plans and projects affecting shoreline areas.

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