

## SECTION 2

## INTRODUCTION



*Chatham Harbor*

*Source: Chatham Chamber of Commerce Website*

# PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

## A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Open Space and Recreation Plan is to provide a framework and guide for responsible conservation and recreation planning in the Town of Chatham. Major objectives are the conservation of Chatham's natural resources and the provision of ample public recreational opportunities.

When the last Open Space and Recreation Plan was written in 1985, a building boom was in full force and Chatham's landscape was changing rapidly. Today, over 20 years later, development continued though at a lesser rate and the amount of remaining developable land is a fraction of what it once was. Nonetheless development and its associated impacts remains the greatest threat to the Town's open space and recreation resources. Open space planning efforts must continue to keep pace with this reality while finding more creative ways to accomplish the same goals.

In spite of these pressures, the Town of Chatham has been extremely proactive in its efforts to preserve and manage its natural resources. In the last 20 years, many acres have been protected for passive and active recreation, open space, and water resource protection. Complete lists of all existing conservation and recreation lands in Chatham are included in the Appendices.

In addition to the Town's efforts, private land protection has been spearheaded by the Chatham Conservation Foundation with support from the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. The Chatham Conservation Foundation actively seeks to permanently protect land with significant natural and scenic resource values using techniques such as land donations, conservation restrictions (also known as conservation easements), trade lands, and other conservation methods.

Conservation and recreation planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need to respond appropriately and creatively to the changing natural and cultural landscape. In addition to continued efforts to preserve the remaining open space, many towns in the region, including Chatham, are rewriting the rulebook for conservation by razing abandoned buildings, reclaiming and cleaning up contaminated sites and reusing the land for conservation and recreation related purposes. Recent trends toward reclaiming developed lands known as "undevelopment" and the greening of contaminated sites, known as "Brownfield redevelopment," will need to continue and be built upon. Though Chatham has employed some of these strategies, there is room to do more. For example, decisions regarding the use of the former landfill and other properties still need to be made. Such creative approaches to land protection will enable conservation and recreation resources to keep pace with the increased demands and impacts of development while simultaneously improving the quality of life.

Open space includes a variety of land types that provide numerous benefits to the Town and its residents and the regional community in terms of aesthetics, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and economic vitality. It also plays an integral part in shaping community identity. As open space disappears due to encroaching development, visual amenities and valuable natural and historic resources are lost forever. In addition, the demand on the remaining open spaces increases, thereby threatening the capability of the land to support human land uses while maintaining its ecological integrity. This Plan includes:

- an analysis of the town's natural and cultural resources (including scenic resources, unique environments and environmental problems);
- an inventory of conservation and recreation lands currently owned by the state, town and private nonprofit groups;
- an analysis of community open space and recreation needs; and,
- an outline of the community's goals, objectives and proposed actions to fulfill those needs.

This *2008 Town of Chatham Open Space and Recreation Plan* update builds on the earlier plan (revised 1985). It incorporates the goals of protecting natural resources, conserving open space and providing a varied recreation program. The Plan is designed to meet the state's current *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* and to be consistent with the Town of Chatham's 2003 Comprehensive Plan (CP) (completed May 13, 2003). For consistency, whenever possible, these findings and recommendations have been incorporated into this *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. This plan is also meant to be consistent with the 1988 Growth Policy Plan, the Pleasant Bay Resource Management Plan, the 2005 South Coastal Harbor Management Plan, and the Cape Cod Commission's 1996 Regional Policy Plan. Collectively, the information contained in these documents provides a basis upon which to guide the town.

Approval of this updated *2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan* by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (DCS) will enable the town to be eligible for land acquisition and recreation facility reimbursement funding through programs such as Self-Help, Urban Self-Help and the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund.

## **B. Planning Process and Public Participation**

This Plan has been updated by Jeff Thibodeau, Principal of *Helios Land Design [a subsidiary of Helios Cape Cod, LLC]* (the "Consultant"), with direct guidance and input from the Departments of Health and Environment, Community Development, and Parks and Recreation. The 2008 Plan builds on the 1985 Plan, which was written by the Open Space and Recreation Plan Ad Hoc Committee. Substantial change has occurred in the town's open space and recreation status in the 20 years since the last Plan update and the Plan has been almost completely rewritten to reflect that change. Nonetheless, many of the goals remain the same.

During the summer of 2005, the town began to readdress the need for an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan that would reflect its current identity and vision. The Town prepared and distributed a Request for Proposals, and subsequently hired a consultant. After an introductory meeting with town staff in December 2006, a project kickoff meeting was held in January, 2007. Representatives from various town departments were invited as Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Planning Workgroup members.

These individuals together comprised the Open Space and Recreation Planning workgroup. During the kickoff meeting, the work plan was refined, working group tasks were defined and assigned, and a rough schedule was established. It was decided that much of the information necessary for the Plan update existed and could be used as a basis for the update. Foremost among these were the Town's existing *1985 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, and the *Town of Chatham 2001 Draft Comprehensive Plan (for background information)* and the *2003 Comprehensive Plan* (formally adopted). Secondary documents that provided important background information included *A Comprehensive Vision for Open Space: A Plan for Chatham, Massachusetts* (by Rachel Sinclair), *Inventory of Town Parks Properties* (by Nick Wilkoff, Intern, August 1997), *Analysis of Open-Space Town Properties – Summer 1996 & Summer 1997* (by Nick Wilkoff, Intern in coordination with Margaret Swanson, former Town Planner), and the *South Coast Harbor Management Plan* (Prepared by Ridley & Associates, Inc.).

Between January and August 2007, the group met regularly and communicated via phone and email several times per month to share information, assign tasks and review drafts. The information needed for most of the Plan was found in existing reports, databases and websites and was inserted and/or adapted to this Plan. Other sections of this Plan required new research. The overall 2008 Plan was compiled, formatted and written by the Consultant, with the editing assistance of this workgroup.

In April, 2007, an in-house Draft Plan was submitted to the Health and Environment, Community Development, Conservation and Parks and Recreation Departments for review and comment. In September 2008 staff completed final plan editing and mapping to develop the Public Review Draft for comments. Comments and changes to the Public Review Draft were received and changes incorporated. The edited Final Draft Plan, completed in 2008, was submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, and the Cape Cod Commission (Regional Planning Agency) (see list in Section 10) for letters of review. A public meeting was also held to solicit review, comment and approval of the Final Draft Plan. Once all comments had been received and incorporated into the Plan, it was then submitted to the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) for acceptance.

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* and the *Open Space Planner's Workbook - Companion to the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements*, were used as guides for preparing the Plan.

Public input was sought through a public survey and public meeting(s). Survey distribution was begun on June 8, 2007 with a survey submittal deadline of July 6, 2007. Surveys were directly mailed to a random sampling (500) of all Chatham household (3,611) in were also made available via the following

- Town Office Buildings;
- Town of Chatham website;

- Town of Chatham cable public television broadcasts; and
- Chatham Edition of the Cape Cod Chronicle Newspaper.

A total of 117 surveys were returned and subsequently tabulated by the town. Results are included in the Appendices and discussed in Section 6. Table 1, *Chatham Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey*, shows the original survey form that was distributed.

**Table 1: Chatham Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey**

<b>Open Space and Recreation Survey</b>			
<b>1. Please check the TOP 5 recreational facilities you feel are needed in the Town:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Bike Trails <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Play Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Family Picnic Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Fields for soccer, football, baseball etc <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Course <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking and skiing trails <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Skating rink <input type="checkbox"/> Large park w/ many facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Parks <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Amphitheater <input type="checkbox"/> Public access to waterbodies <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Center <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pool <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis courts <input type="checkbox"/> Town common improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
<b>2. What should the Town's policy be in regards to Open Space and Conservation?</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Preserve existing maintenance levels with no further expansion of facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve existing maintenance levels and expand recreational facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Improve maintenance levels with no further expansion of facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Improve maintenance levels and expand recreational facilities			
<b>3. What is your favorite historic, open space, or recreational facility in Chatham?</b>			
<b>4. In preserving open space, how important is each of the following?</b>			
	Important	Neutral	Not Important
Places of historic value	_____	_____	_____
Places of scenic beauty	_____	_____	_____
Water Supply Protection	_____	_____	_____
Wildlife protection	_____	_____	_____
Recreation	_____	_____	_____
<b>5. Please rank the following methods you would support the Town using to preserve and purchase open space and recreation areas (1 most preferable, 7 least preferable):</b>			
Purchases by the Town or State	_____		
Gifts from Residents	_____		
Tax on Real Estate Sales over \$150,000	_____	_____	
Zoning Controls	_____		
Purchasing the development rights	_____		
Grants from State/ Federal	_____		
Tax Title	_____		
<b>6. Do you feel that Chatham is doing a good job in protecting?</b>			
	Yes	No	No Opinion
Groundwater	_____	_____	_____
Surface Waters	_____	_____	_____

Wetlands                    \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_  
Forest / Uplands        \_\_\_    \_\_\_    \_\_\_

**7. How important is it to you for the Town to acquire and preserve conservation areas?**

\_\_\_    Very Important                    \_\_\_    Less important                    \_\_\_    Neutral  
\_\_\_    Important                                \_\_\_    Not at all important

**8. Are you satisfied with the amount and quality of active & passive recreational areas in the Town for:**

	Yes	No	No opinion
Adults 18-45	___	___	___
Adults 45 and over	___	___	___
Children	___	___	___

**9. To preserve open spaces in Chatham, would you:**

	Yes	No	Maybe
Contribute some land to the Town	___	___	___
Donate money to buy land	___	___	___
Rewrite your deed to limit future use	___	___	___
Sell land to the Town at a bargain price	___	___	___
Sell land to the Town at fair market value	___	___	___
Vote for a Town supported land acquisition	___	___	___

**10. What age group do you fall within?**

	Yes	No
Adults 18-45	___	___
Adults 45 and over	___	___
Children	___	___