

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Burrillville is located within the sphere of the out-migration of population from the central cities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. Similar to other Rhode Island suburban/rural communities, it has enjoyed the feeling of open space for many years. However, with the increases in population, more and more land is being utilized for homes, business, industry and roads. In some instances, the spacious feeling has begun to disappear.

In 1960, the population of the Town was 9,116 while in 1970 it increased to 10,087, which represented a 10.6 percent increase. Since the early 1980's, the Town, along with the rest of the State, has been in the midst of an upswing in building activity. The number of single-family residential building permits rose from 47 in 1982, to 228 in 1986. In 1980, the Town's population reached 13,164, an increase of 3,077 or 30.5 percent from 1970, while by 1990 the population reached 16,230 for an increase of 3,066 or 23.3 percent. More recently, however, the 2000 census showed Burrillville to actually decrease by 2.7 percent down to 15,796 from 1990. The town views the decrease as a minor fluctuation in the overall growth of the State, and will continue to aggressively provide adequate recreational opportunities for future populations.

Notwithstanding development, Burrillville still has a significant amount of undeveloped land and must continue its effective program of land and water acquisition for recreation, conservation and open space purposes. Burrillville is rich in natural resources: valuable wetlands for flood control, groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, high quality surface water, and unique historical areas. The Town's natural environment adds immeasurably to its property values and quality of life. Additionally, open space lands contribute revenue to the Town, whereas the services required by residential development actually cost more than the tax revenues generated by residential land uses. Although many large areas of undeveloped land exist in Burrillville, the environment is experiencing direct and indirect impacts from residential and other forms of development. Proper use and protection of natural resources may require greater initial expense, but it is generally far less costly to anticipate environmental problems and take measures to avoid them than to correct past mistakes.

Although Burrillville is largely undeveloped, population centers and economic activity are concentrated in a series of villages separated by open farmland and woods. Suburban style subdivision development in and immediately surrounding the villages is fairly intensive. Thus, in providing for the recreational needs of its residents, the Town is confronted by both urban and rural situations. This context complicates the issue of developing rational open space and recreation standards for the Town.

There are a number of farms, orchards and forested areas in Town that are rapidly deteriorating by either: not being worked by newer generations or being consumed for residential development. These lands have been, and will continue to be, subject to the pressures for development. When development occurs, the spacious characteristics of the Town will diminish. Agricultural land uses improve our community's quality of life and are among the reasons that Burrillville's tourist economy is growing.

This Recreation Conservation & Open Space Plan is intended to serve as a rational guide for

future decisions on meeting the Town's recreation and open space needs. It is part of, or a sub-component of, the Town's Comprehensive Plan and should be viewed in that context. It was also prepared to maintain Burrillville's eligibility in State and Federal outdoor recreation and open space grant programs. Most importantly, the Plan was prepared to promote the protection of the Town's natural resources, to provide meaningful recreation opportunities in the villages and the rural portions of Town, to enhance the rural character of our community, and to improve the overall quality of life for Town residents and the tourists that enjoy visiting Burrillville.

II. PHYSICAL & SOCIAL CONTEXT

Location - The Town of Burrillville is located in the extreme northwestern corner of Rhode Island. It abuts the Towns of Thompson, Connecticut to the west, Douglas and Uxbridge, Massachusetts to the north, North Smithfield, Rhode Island to the east and Glocester, Rhode Island to the south. Burrillville is approximately 22 miles from Providence and 25 miles from Worcester, Massachusetts. The Town is influenced by regional, not just Rhode Island, growth trends.

Land Use Patterns - Burrillville experienced an early agricultural phase, industrialization in the nineteenth century, and continued residential and industrial growth in the twentieth century. Topography played a major role in Burrillville's development. Glacial deposits, scouring of the soil as glacier retreated, and long periods of erosion gave Burrillville an irregular topography, which impacted settlement patterns and land use. A number of streams and small rivers cross the Town, and small bodies of water include a number of natural lakes and several man-made reservoirs. The presence of moving water across the Town's landscape encouraged settlement and played an important role in industrial development before the advent of steam. The higher, rugged areas remained more thinly populated than the lower, broader, river valleys.

The eighteenth century settlement pattern of the Town was characterized by a rural population scattered about the Town with farms located on land best suited for cultivation. Farming continued into the twentieth century, and farm complexes remain important in defining the Town's character. Barns, corncribs, sheds, stone walls, orchards, and open fields are among the agricultural resources common to the rural landscape.

As agriculture prevailed in the eighteenth century, industry dominated in the nineteenth century. Aided by improvements in transportation and technology, sleepy hamlets became bustling mill villages that saw dramatic changes in physical form. Improvements in transportation began in 1805 with the construction of Douglas Pike (Route 7). Railroad service, from Providence in 1873 and from Woonsocket in 1893, came later, and, indeed, its late arrival may well have limited the Town's growth potential in the nascent years of industrialization. Greater access to Burrillville followed the advent of the automobile and an improved road network, including the Victory Highway (1922 et seq., Route 102), the refurbished Louisquisset Pike (Route 146), and Interstate Highways 95 and 195 to the south and east.

In addition to the mills, the villages that grew around them included mill offices and other auxiliary structures, dams, raceways, bridges, shops, institutional buildings, workers' housing, mill

superintendent's housing, and occasionally mill owner's housing. Most of these villages remain, but many of the early mills themselves have been lost to fire.

The Town's rural character attracted new institutional use, including a tuberculosis hospital (now the Zambarano Hospital Complex) at Wallum Lake in the 1890's; Casmir Pulaski Memorial State Park in the 1930's, and the creation of several State Management Areas. Burrillville continued to develop in the twentieth century. The presence of Austin T. Levy and his Stillwater Worsted Company had a profound effect on the Town. Not only did Levy purchase and operate existing mills, but also built large amounts of new worker's housing. Levy also recast the Village of Harrisville in a "New England Village" mode through his contributions of the Town Hall, The Assembly, and the Jesse M. Smith Library.

As the State underwent extensive suburbanization after World War II, Burrillville became home to a large number of new suburban residents. The construction of new houses, most of which are strung out along the Town's many roads, is a trend dissimilar to the strong village settlement pattern which characterized Burrillville's historic development.

Recent Land Use Trends – As Burrillville continues to suburbanize, the total acreage dedicated to land uses such as residential should increase. As shown on Table VIII-1, a substantial amount of Burrillville remains largely undeveloped and forested. However, the demands associated by large lots and frontages within the F-5 zoning district leave little land for development ‘by-right’ without having to file dimensional variance petitions. The F-5 zone district therefore limits the potential for access to land locked parcels which may be prime for recreation development, which reinforces the continued need for access easements.

The newer 2004 Land Use data was calculated utilizing RIGIS Land Use (Code95). The RIGIS data was then compared to Land Use data obtained from the Town Assessor's 2004 CAMA Data. Both data sets were compared to 1990 in effort to find comparable measures. Local GIS parcel data is aggressively updated and considered most accurate. Roughly 30 percent of the Town's land area is currently utilized as residential, which increased 10.2 percent since 1990. Nearly 25 percent of the town's land area is utilized as conservation land; a large percentage of which RIDEM Game lands in addition to local Farm Forest and Open Space.

**Table VIII-1
 Land Use Trends 1990 to 2004**

1990		Percent of Total	2004		Percent of Total	Percent Change
Residential (1)	10,313	28.1	Residential (1)	9,258	30.6	(10.2)
Commercial	563	1.5	Commercial (2)	828	2.7	47.1
Industrial	148	0.4	Industrial (3)	120	.4	(18.9)
Gov't/Institutional	1,459	3.9	Gov't/Institutional (4)	178	.6	(87.8)
Recreation (2)	1,916	5.2	Recreation (5)	3,122	10.3	62.9
Conservation (3)	7,355	20.0	Conservation (6)	7,401	24.5	06
Agriculture (4)	1,006	2.7	Agriculture (7)	1,499	5	49
Undev'd Land	11,014	30.0	Undev'd Land (8)	5,259	17.4	(52.3)
Streets	900	2.4	Streets (9)	872	2.9	(3.1)
Other (5)	1,998	5.4	Other (10)	1,695	5.6	(15.2)
Total	36,672	100.00	Total	30,232		(17.6)

1990 Notes:

- (1) In zoning districts with five-acre minimum lot sizes, full parcel acreage was counted, i.e., if a parcel of 20 acres was zoned for five acre minimum lot size, the full 20 acres was included in the above calculations.
- (2) Per the 1987 Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Plan.
- (3) Includes land taxed under the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act.
- (4) Observation indicates there is more agricultural land than is included on the tax roll.
- (5) Other category includes utilities and tax classification "other improved land."

2003 Notes:

- (1) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004 RI State Codes: 01, 02, 03, 11, 23 and 97. (1966 figure was 768, the 1990 figure was incorrect –not data source could be found.
- (2) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Codes: 04, 05 and 06.
- (3) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95.
- (4) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95
- (5) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95 – included lakes.
- (6) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Code: 33 – includes all FFOS properties
- (7) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code95
- (8) Burrillville Tax Assessor, 2004, RI State Codes: 13, 14, and 15.
- (9) Burrillville GIS Parcels Map, 2004.
- (10) RIGIS Land Use, Data set Code 95

According to Table 1 above, recreational land uses increased by over 1,200 acres between 1990 and 2004. This large differential may be due to different methodologies used in either the 1990 compilation or RIGIS Code95 Land Use compilation.

Population - The Town of Burrillville has and will continue to experience the pressure of the suburban movement of people from the core cities in the regional Metropolitan area despite the recent decrease in population as of 2000. Burrillville has been absorbing a part of the population losses experienced by the cities of Providence, Hartford, Worcester and Woonsocket. This loss is,

in part, due to the desire of people to move from the older cities to the more attractive amenities associated with the suburbs.

Burrillville's population has grown by 6,680 people since 1960, adding approximately 73 percent more residents than lived in Town in 1960. Between 1960 and 1970, the Town added fewer than 1,000 new residents. Between 1970 - 1980, and 1980 - 1990, over 3,000 new residents moved to Town each decade. However, a slight decrease in population leaves the town at 15,796 as of 2000. (Table 2).

**Table 2
 Population Growth
 1960-2000**

Year	Population	Percent Change	Numeric Change
1960	9,116	n/a	n/a
1970	10,087	10.7	971
1980	13,164	30.5	3,077
1990	16,230	23.3	3,066
2000	15,796	(2.7)	434

Population in Burrillville is expected to continue to grow, although at a somewhat slower pace than the last 20 years. Table 3 shows the estimated projections.

**Table - 3
 2000 Population Projections for Burrillville**

Year	Projected Population	Percent Change
2000	15,796	
2005	16,183	2.45
2010	16,469	1.76
2015	16,928	2.78
2020	17,439	3.01
2025	17,876	2.50
2030	18,195	1.78

Source: 2000, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning projections

Burrillville has an older population than the State as a whole, with a median age of 37.5 years compared to the State's 36.7 years. In 2000, 28.2 percent of the Town's population was under age 18, compared to 27.0 percent Statewide. Burrillville had a lower percentage of elderly residents than the State in 2000; 11.3 percent compared to 14.5 percent (see Table 4). This may indicate that Burrillville has seen a recent influx of empty nesters since 1990.

Table 4
Age Distribution of Burrillville Population

Area	Under Age 18 (1)	Age 64 and over (2)	Median Age
Burrillville	28.2 %	11.3 %	37.5
Rhode Island	27.0 %	14.5 %	36.7

Source: Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning, 2000

The boundaries of the Planning Districts in this Plan were redrawn from those used for the 1990 data. The new recreational planning districts coincide with Burrillville’s three Census Tracts: 130.02, 130.01 and 129. The previous method went so far as to split the census tract’s blocks up and apportion blocks into various districts. Since 1990, the 2000 census data categorizes block groups differently and it is no longer possible to update the populations as previously constructed.

Moreover, splitting census tracts and their respective block group areas randomly into districts does nothing for trying to establish levels of service for each respective district. The new method is provides an accurate picture of the town, by grouping the town’s two main villages of Harrisville and Pascoag into census tract 129, while the remaining two tracts: 130.01 and 130.02 respectively split the town from west to east along route 98. Additionally, the new method will be less prone to statistical error by simplifying the data collection and analysis process.

For planning purposes, the Town of Burrillville has been divided into three districts as illustrated on Map 1. These planning districts, as shown below, were delineated to conform to the U.S. 2000 Census tract lines.

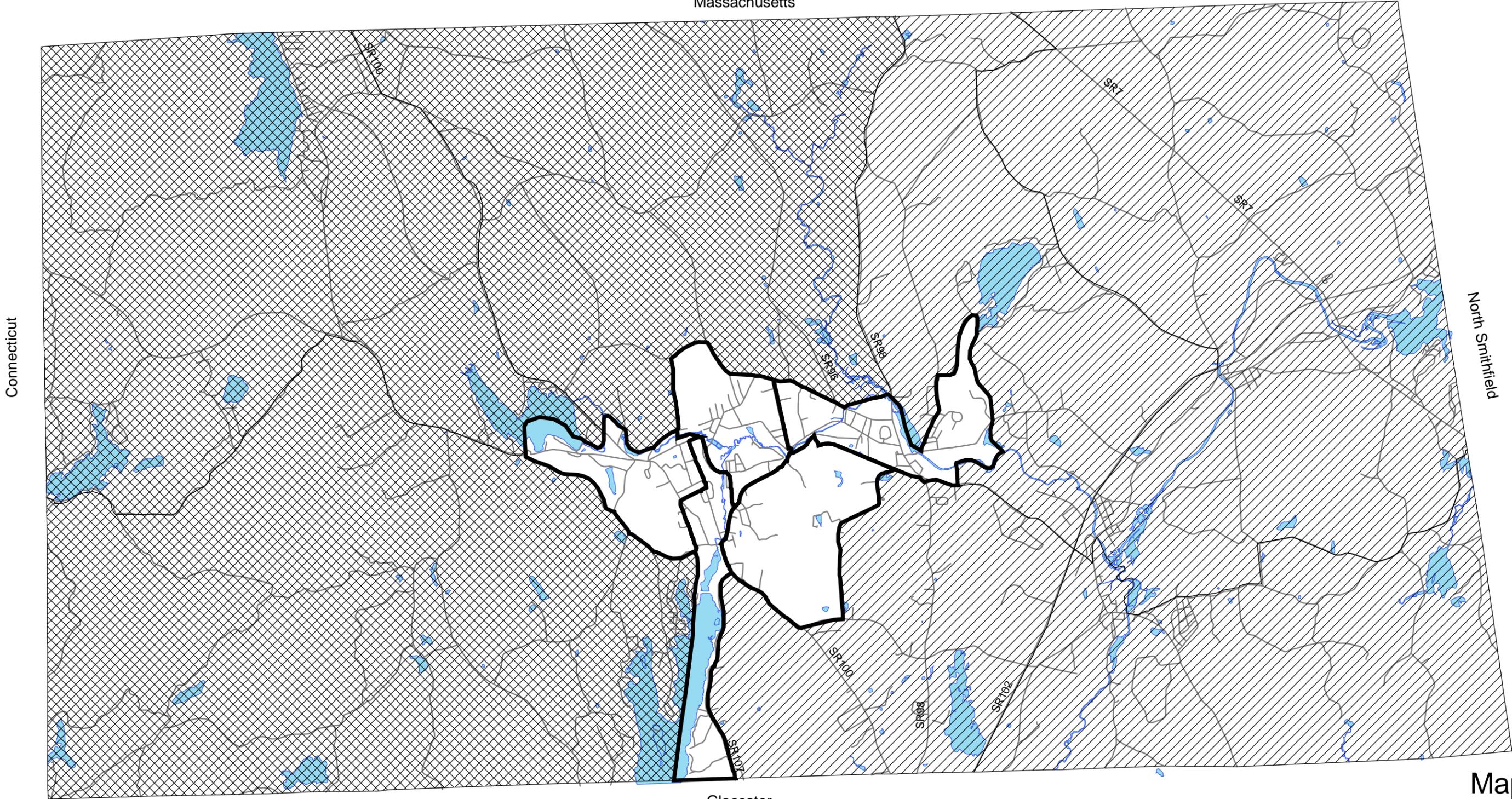
Planning Districts	Census Tract	Neighborhoods
I	130.02	Glendale, Nasonville, Tarkiln, Mohegan, Spring Lake
II	130.01	Wallum Lake, Buck Hill, Jackson
III	129	Harrisville and Pascoag Villages

These districts realistically represent existing neighborhood and village identity. While the 2000 population of these districts is somewhat less than that of 1990, it is expected that the outlying areas will grow at a rapid rate along with Harrisville and Pascoag which are subject to the new village planned development overlay zone.

Population Distribution - In order to better understand where the population is living in Burrillville, an analysis of population distribution was performed. Based on census tracts and planning districts described earlier, the distribution is shown on Table 5.

Recreational Planning Districts

Massachusetts



Connecticut

North Smithfield

Gloucester

Source; Burrillville Planning Dept., July 2004

Map 1

Legend

- roads
- water
- District II
- District I
- District III

0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

Table 5
Summary of Population by Planning District
1990 and 2000

Year	Population
Planning Dist. I	
1990	7429
2000	7402
Planning Dist. II	
1990	3317
2000	3358
Planning Dist. III	
1990	5484
2000	5036

III. RESOURCE INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

Conservation, Open Space and Recreational Resources – The Town’s parcel-specific Geographic Information System (GIS) was utilized to prepare the inventory of open spaces for recreation and conservation purposes. The two earlier Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plans relied upon discussions with the owners of facilities to identify the name of the facility, its location, type of facility, service area, ownership, and acreage. The Town’s GIS, populated with the Assessor’s database and updated on a weekly basis is more accurate than previous means used. However, because an alternative system was used, we cannot provide accurate statistical data comparing the amount of land currently available as open space to the amount previously available.

The following five categories are used in this Plan to classify conservation, open space and recreation facilities and areas.

Recreation Area - This type of facility includes major public parks, neighborhood parks, mini-parks, playfields, playgrounds, tot lots, and large private recreational facilities such as campgrounds and golf courses. The major emphasis is on active recreation.

Water Access Area - This type of facility includes beaches, fishing areas, boat access, marinas and right-of-ways to the water.

Open Space/Conservation Areas – These areas include forestlands, rare plant/wildlife preservation areas, and multi-purpose management areas.

Wellhead Protection - This type of facility includes land owned by Water Districts or Associations specifically for wellhead protection purposes.

Other Areas - This type of facility includes school sites, historic sites, scenic areas, roadside rests, commercial recreation facilities and facilities which do not fit another category.

The information presented in Table 7 shows that 10,467.1 acres of land are committed for recreation and conservation purposes in the Town. Of this amount, 679.7 acres are actually developed for recreational purposes. The balance, 9,787.4 acres, is undeveloped recreation or conservation land. Table 7 on the following pages, presents the data in summary form by planning district.

Table 7
Outdoor Recreation & Conservation Facilities Inventory
(Active and Passive Land Areas Identified in Acres)

PLANNING DISTRICT I

Site	Map & Lot No.	Facility or Location	Active Area	Passive Area	Type	Service Area	Owner
1	113-2 113-4 113-7	Branch River Park	18.9	45.7	Recreation	Town	Town
2	93-2 93-6 93-40 93-41 93-77 93-127	Spring Lake Beach	6.8	17.2	Water Access/Recreation/Camping Vacant-used for parking OS/Conservation	Region	Town
3	110-5	Spring Lake Boat Ramp	0.2	0.0	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
4	---	Black Hut Mngmnt Area	0.0	1188.2	OS/Conservation	State	State
5	26-1	Audubon Society lot	0.0	64.6	OS/Conservation	Town	Private
6	12-5 29-29 46-1	Screech Hole Bog	0.0	38.7	OS/Conservation	Private	Private
7	27-11	Iron Mine Road lot	0.0	0.1	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
8	132-5 149-23	Nasonville Water District	0.	17.1	Wellhead Protection	Neighborhood	Private
9	130-50	Glendale Association	0.0	.1	Wellhead Protection	Neighborhood	Private
10	166-10	Snizek Property Donation	0.0	4.9	Water Access/Recreation	Town	Town
1	162-50	Police Station Area	0.0	18.6	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
2	196-69	Burrillville Little League	4.1	0.0	Recreation	Town	Private
21	126-4	Preservation Society lot	0.0	6.5	OS/Conservation	Private	Private
11	39-1 39-6	Round Top Fishing Area	108.0	26.5	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
13	23-2, 40-1,	Wallum Lake Rod & Gun Club	69.0	177.3	Recreation OS/Conservation	Region	Private

	40-2, 40-3, 40-4, 40-5						
20	39-2	Round Top Road lot	0.0	.1	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
3	236-4	Country View Country Club	132.4	0.0	Recreation	Region	Private
4	197-3 198-14 199-34 233-31	Addeville Game Farm	0.0	943.2	Recreation	Region	Private
2	144-22 144-31 161-5	Burrillville High School	10.0	36.0	Recreation	Town	Town
3	144-26	Burrillville Tennis Courts	1.0	0.0	Recreation	Town	Town
9	161-6 161-15	RR ROW (Clear River Drive)	0.0	44.4	Other	Town	Town
10	248-1	Steere Farm Road lot (next to Steere Farm Elementary)	0.0	.9	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
12	160-45 160-188 177-25 177-42 178-43	Harrisville Fire District	0.0	43.0	Wellhead Protection	Neighborhood	Private
16	162-83 162-84 162-84	Whitney Estates	0.0	6.1	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Private
17	177-57	Hemlock Farms	0.0	39.1	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Private
18	177-44	Hemlock Farms-land dedication	0.0	6.8	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
5	232-14	Maureen Circle-Donation	0.0	2.4	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Town
6	271-2	Girl Scouts of RI	0.0	9.5	OS/Conservation	Private	Private
7	230-14	Crystal Lake Golf Course	239	0	Recreation	Region	Private
TOTAL			589.4	2737.0			

*5.6 ac. are owned by Harrisville Fire District for Wellhead Protection.

PLANNING DISTRICT II

Site	Map & Lot No.	Facility or Location	Active Area	Passive Area	Type	Service Area	Owner
8	244-8 244-9 245-1	Echo Lake Campground	125.6	0.0	Recreation	Region	Private
8	108-1	Nipmuc River Flowage Lot and Trail	0.0	229.7	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
4	225-22	Casmir Pulaski State Park Geo Washington	0.0	2970.0	Recreation OS/Conservation	State	State

		Mngmnt Area					
5	224-1	Land Abutting State Mngmnt Area	0.0	2.1	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
6	100-1 118-1 51-1 68-1 68-2	Buck Hill Management Area	0.0	1905.6	OS/Conservation	State	State
7	150-5	Wakefield Pond Boat Ramp	0.3	1.0	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
8	51-15	Zambarano Memorial Hospital	0.0	340.0	Recreation-Other	State	State
9	---	Buck Hill Family/Boy Scouts Campgrnd/Feinstein Camp	175.0	1443.7	Recreation	Region	Private
10	---	State of RI/Angell Street lot	0.0	2.5	OS/Conservation	State	State
11	189-1	Brown University lot	0.0	53.4	OS/Conservation	Private	Private
12	---	South Shore Road lot	0.0	20.6	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
13	86-1	Lot off East Wallum Lake Road	0.0	5.0	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
14	135.4	Stag Head Drive lot	0.0	.2	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
19	19-3	Douglas Town line (sliver lot)	0.0	.6	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
1	156-59	White Mill Park	1.5	22.2	Recreation	Neighborhood	Town
TOTAL			302.4	6996.6			

PLANNING DISTRICT III

Site	Map & Lot No.	Facility or Location	Active Area	Passive Area	Type	Service Area	Owner
1	143-30	Freedom Park	2.0	0.0	Recreation	Neighborhood	Town
4	142-7	Eccleston Field*	9.3	0.0	Recreation/Wellhead	Town	Town/Private
5	142-100	William L. Callahan School	0.0	1.0	Recreation/Other	Town	Town
6	159-25 160-10	Austin T. Levy School	4.0	.5	Recreation-Other	Town	Town
7	160-183	Assembly Bldg/Library	0	.5	Other	Town	Town
15	140-54	Fairbanks Avenue lot	0.0	.1	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
1	157-78	Hauser Memorial Field	9.1	0.0	Recreation	Town	Town
2	157-36	Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge	1.0	0.0	Recreation: Community Rec. Center	Town	Town
	175-29	Veteran's Memorial Park	0	.21	Recreation	Town	Town
4	174-117 175-30	Pascoag Bridgeway	0.0	1.1	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Town
10		Harrisville Mill Pond	0.5	0.0	Water	Region	State

		Ramp			Access/Recreation		
	TBD	Harrisville skate park	.2	0	Outdoor recreation	Region	Town
6	---	Pascoag Fire District	0.0	28.9	Wellhead Protection	Neighborhood	Private
7	191-113	Union Pond Boat Ramp	0.0	2.2	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
14	126-3	Fiddler's Green-Phase I	0.0	13.0	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Private
15	143-18	Fiddler's Green-Phase II	0.0	3.5	OS/Conservation	Neighborhood	Private
2	139-19	Wilson's Reservoir Ramp	0.5	0.0	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
3	139-23	Land Abutting Boat Ramp	0.0	.2	Water Access/Recreation	Region	State
9	175-81	Spring Street lot	0.0	.1	OS/Conservation	Town	Town
TOTAL			26.6	51.31			

GRAND TOTAL FOR 1999	918.4	9784.91	
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Recreational Resources - In order to better assess the quantitative and qualitative value of the resources identified in the inventory process, we have broken the data into three groupings. The first consists of active recreational resources available primarily to Town residents at no cost. The second group is a listing of open space and recreational resources utilized by more than just the citizens of Burrillville and may involve an entry fee. These are identified as Regional Facilities. Finally, we have compiled a Listing of Conservation and Open Space Lots once again aimed at the local residents.

These listings will become more important in later sections of this Plan where we identify and analyze conservation, open space and recreation needs.

While Table 7 may give the impression that Burrillville has a substantial amount of recreational land and facilities, in fact the number of Town-owned active recreational facilities available at no cost is limited. Table 8, below, identifies these areas by the type of facility and its expected service area. It should be noted that the type of facility listed is based upon its major category, and that a facility may contain more than one use.

Table 8: Recreational Facilities by District			
	Active Area	Type Facility	Service Area
Planning District I			
Branch River Park	18.9	playfield	Town
Burrillville High School	10.0	playfield	Town
Burrillville Tennis Courts	1.0	tennis	Town
Burrillville Little League	4.1	playfield	Town
Total	34		
Planning District II			
White Mill park	1.5	playlot/park	Town
Total	1.5		
Planning District III			
Freedom Park	2.0	playlot	Neighborhood
Hauser Memorial Field	9.1	playfield	Town
Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge*	1.0	indoor facility	Neighborhood
Eccleston Field	9.3	playfield	Town
Skateboard Park	.2	Outdoor facility	Town
Austin T. Levy School	4.0	playground	Neighborhood
Total	25.4		
Grand Total	61.1		

* The Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge is the Town's Community Recreation Center.

Compared to the 61.1 acres of active recreational areas, the Town owns a considerably larger amount of land for conservation or passive recreational purposes. More specifically, as previously listed in Table 7, the Town owns 461.01 acres of undeveloped open space for conservation purposes.

Existing Natural Resources – Burrillville is rich with natural resources as the following sections discussing vegetation and wildlife, surface and ground waters, and visual resources illustrate. This section also includes a discussion of how these resources are managed/maintained.

Vegetation and Wildlife - The current vegetation and animal populations of Burrillville's uplands reflect the past use of the land, and the past uses were determined largely, by the underlying soils. Forests were cleared in areas where the soils were suitable for crop and livestock. These areas are mainly found in the valleys. Stone walls found in second growth forests are evidence that much of Burrillville's land had once been cleared for agricultural uses.

Farming has not been a staple of the Burrillville economy since the early 19th century. Despite a current, small agrarian population, the protection of farms was rated highly in a public opinion poll performed in 1990 under the Town's Comprehensive Planning efforts. Therefore, it is important for the Town to look upon farming as something other than a transient use, soon to be replaced by urban development.

The interspersed of forests and fields increases the value of each for wildlife. Stonewalls dividing

fields are often lined with native trees and shrubs, becoming narrow ribbons of woodland crisscrossing the agricultural land. These field borders, and upland areas associated with them, support a variety of wildlife including pheasants, quail, red tail hawks, sparrow hawks, doves, and woodcock.

In addition to avian species, these areas are also inhabited by a number of mammals common to Rhode Island, i.e., fox, rabbit, skunk, woodchuck, deer, etc. Wetlands and the land immediately surrounding them are often left in their natural state and provide another valuable type of wildlife habitat. Animals utilizing these habitats include wood ducks, black ducks, mallards, snipe, rails, herons, kingfishers, marsh hawks, muskrats, mink and otter. The safe movement of wildlife throughout the Town is of concern, especially as the outlying areas become more developed.

Rare and Endangered Species and Habitats - The status of species of plants and animals suspected of being rare or declining has been monitored for the past two decades by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program (NHP). There are approximately 48 species of plants and animals in Burrillville which the NHP has cataloged and considers current. Species are assigned to one of seven status categories. The Federally Endangered and Federally Threatened species are given the highest status in regard to protection, followed by State Endangered, State Threatened, State Interest, Species of Concern and State Extirpated species. There are no known Federally Endangered or Federally Threatened species in Burrillville. However, there are a number of state status species in the Town.

The Natural Heritage Program has inventoried habitats where rare species are found and have made management recommendations to ensure their continued survival in those habitats. Sites of particular importance in Burrillville include:

- The Clear River area provides habitat for a number of state-listed rare plants and animals. In fact, one of the State's most rare freshwater turtles has been known to inhabit the Clear River and has been found in the Town's Nipmuc Drainage property.
- The wetland in Leeson Brook, contained within the Buck Hill Management Area, is a site for nesting Great Blue Herons.
- The Pulaski/Washington State Forest Complex provides a large, relatively undisturbed forest habitat for several rare birds and amphibians.
- The wetland just west of the North Smithfield line and contiguous to the Massachusetts border, generally known as Screech Hole Bog, contains a rare Level Fen community, several rare plant occurrences, and one of the few remaining populations of a rare invertebrate.
- The Cedar Swamp Pond and Croff Farm Brook complex represents one of the most significant areas of biological diversity in Rhode Island. At least 15 state listed rare species have been identified in this area including such species as Black Spruce, American Larch, and Creeping Snowberry, commonly found much farther north. These species co-occur with Inundated Homes Rush and the Horsetail Spike-Rush, a regionally rare Coastal

Plain Species which range southward to the Gulf Coast.

All of the sites listed above would benefit from additional protection in the form of protective zoning, placement of conservation restrictions, or acquisition of buffer zones.

Surface Water Resources - Burrillville is included in the Blackstone River Basin, one of three major drainage basins in Rhode Island. Portions of western Burrillville are in the Five Mill River sub-basin which is part of the larger Thames River Basin. The majority of land area in Burrillville drains to the Clear River or to brooks which eventually flow into the Clear River. The flow from the Clear and Chepachet Rivers join in eastern Burrillville to form the Branch River which flows generally easterly out of Burrillville and joins the Blackstone River in North Smithfield.

While much of the Clear River in Burrillville is classified as A or B (good quality), several reaches of the Clear River in Burrillville are contaminated by wastewater discharges. In fact, according to DEM's 1998 inventory of waterbodies impaired by pollution, the Branch River, Clear River and Tarkiln Brook are impaired. The Branch River contains biodiversity impacts, pathogens, and metals (Cu,Pb); the Clear River contains biodiversity impacts, nutrients, and metals (Pb); and Tarkiln Brook is adversely impacted by a nearby hazardous waste site. DEM has determined that these waters do not meet Rhode Island Water Quality Standards and that a strategy to address the two Rivers is planned by DEM for the future (approximately in the years 2005-2010). A solution for attaining water quality standards has been determined and is underway for the Brook; however, DEM predicts that the standards will not be met within the next two years.

There are several small brooks in Town, most of which originate in wetlands or ponds and flow into neighboring towns in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Several of these brooks have been given water quality classifications of A or B.

Table 9 Small Brooks & Watercourses			
Name of System	Origin	Destination	Class
Chockalog River	Cedar Swamp & Green River, Mass.	Nipmuc River	A
Croff Farm Brook	Wetlands System in Buck Hill	Whitman Pond, CT	B
Keech Brook & Pond	Pond & Wetlands in Glocester & Burrillville	Quaddick Reservoir, CT	B
Tarkiln Brook	Paine Brook & Wetlands in Glocester & Burrillville	Slatersville Reservoir	B
Leeson Brook	Wetlands in Buck Hill Management Area	Cold Spring Brook & Croff Farm Brook	A
Cold Spring Brook	Wetlands in Buck Hill Management Area	Wallum Lake	A
Dry Arm Brook	Round Pond	Clear River	B
Iron Mine Brook	Wetlands Pulaski State Forest	Clear River	B
Leland Brook	Wetlands near Pulaski State Forest	Wilson's Reservoir	B
Mowry Brook	Wetlands north of Stone Dam Road	Clear River	B
Round Top Brook	Chase Pond, Mass.	Nipmuc River	A
Herring Brook	Spring Lake	Clear River	B
Hemlock Brook	Wetlands in Mass.	Clear River & Tinkerville Brook	A
Tuckey Brook	Wetlands east of Black Hut Management Area	Branch River	B

Source: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Water Resources Division.

Burrillville's landscape is dotted with lakes and ponds. Most are manmade, but some are natural water bodies left by the receding Laurentide glacier. The Pascoag Reservoir is the largest water body, approximately 424 acres in Burrillville. None of these surface water bodies are utilized for drinking water supply. They are used for a variety of other purposes including boating, fishing, swimming and other active and passive types of recreation. Unfortunately, because many waterbodies were created to power the mills and involved creating dams and flooding land, Burrillville will continue to face property rights issues. A prime example involves Pascoag Reservoir, where the owner of the land under water is contesting the rights of the people who use the water's surface. While this matter remains unresolved as this document is being completed, it serves to document an issue that the Town will need to ultimately address.

Below is a list of water bodies two acres or larger in size.

Water Body	Area (acres)	Water Quality Class
Pascoag Reservoir	424	B
Wallum Lake	275	A
Wilson's Reservoir	109	B
Spring Lake	95	B
Wakefield Pond	76	B
Slatersville Reservoir	67	B
Sucker Pond	55	B
Unnamed Water Bodies	54	B
Wilbur Pond	23	B
Round Pond	15	B
Peck's Pond	13	B
Big Round Top Pond	7	A
Ross Pond	4	B
Chapham Pond	3	B
Gilleran Pond	3	B
Little Round Top Pond	2	B
Tarkiln Pond	n/a	B
Total Area	1225.0	n/a

Source: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Water Resources Division.

Groundwater Resources - The Town of Burrillville is underlain by the Upper Branch River Groundwater Reservoir, an extensive primary recharge aquifer with a water-saturated thickness of ten feet or greater. This groundwater aquifer is classified by RIDEM as GAA, indicating "groundwater resources that are known, or presumed, to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment."

Burrillville is one of 14 Rhode Island communities which depend entirely upon groundwater for its drinking water source. There are three production wells in the Harrisville Fire District, which draw water from the Clear River Aquifer. The Pascoag Fire District also has two operating wells in the Clear River Aquifer. The balance of the Town is dependent upon private wells.

Burrillville's Aquifer Overlay District governs uses and lot size dimensions over the Town's aquifer. To date, the District has served as an effective tool for protecting water quality. The Town is currently exploring the expansion of the District to include the wellhead protection areas.

Visual and Aesthetic Resources - The Town of Burrillville is characterized by areas of unique natural beauty. Views of rural areas, ridges, historic districts, farmlands, wetlands and wooded areas, together with rivers, ponds, reservoirs, and streams give the Town its special character. An inventory of the Town's scenic landscapes was compiled as part of a Statewide study by the RIDEM Planning and Development Department. Approximately 4,800 acres on eight sites were

identified by the State as noteworthy or distinctive within Burrillville. These sites include:

- Hospital and grounds around Wallum Lake;
- The sequence of old farms and fields on East Ironstone Road;
- Views of woods around Round Lake;
- Pine forests and shoreline of Wakefield Pond;
- East Wallum Lake Road at Wilson's Reservoir with its surrounding pine forests and interesting shoreline; and
- The noteworthy vegetation and residential development on Colwell Road.

Other important views and vistas not identified in the State's inventory include:

- The view from Benson Mountain located within the Buck Hill Management Area;
- The area along Knibb Road and Jackson Schoolhouse Road;
- The mill pond and waterfall at East Avenue in Harrisville;
- The entire length of East Avenue (the State's consultant has suggested that East Avenue likely meets all the criteria associated with a Scenic Roadway);
- The ledges and Clear River in the historic Village of Pascoag;
- The view of Spring Lake from the Overlook Deck at the Spring Lake Beach Recreation Facility;
- White Mill Park located at the intersection of Route 100 and East Wallum Lake Road in Pascoag, and continuing north along East Wallum Lake Road;
- Route 102 in its current, undeveloped state is a scenic highway; and further development of the highway should maintain, to the extent possible, the currently existing scenic vistas;
- The Oakland Triangle (corner of Whipple Avenue and Victory Highway); and,
- The Snake Hill ledges in Mapleville as seen from the Mapleville Bridge looking north.
- Garvy Ledges (Reservoir Road, across from Union Pond boat ramp

Additional scenic landscapes found off the beaten path are recognized to exist throughout the Town, and should receive equal treatment to those identified above on a case-by-case basis in terms of future preservation efforts.

Property and Program Management Resources - Historically, the Town has had little input as to how the State Management areas are operated. However, because such large amounts of land have already been taken off the Town's tax role, Burrillville will be requesting that the State allow the Town to convert several small parcels of land from passive to active recreational uses. Similarly, unless private recreational areas or land dedicated as open space cause complaints from the neighbors, the Town does not get involved with the operations of those properties either. The Town's primary responsibility concerns active recreational areas owned by the Town.

Public access is encouraged on land, especially parks and playgrounds owned by the Town.

Attached is Table 11, identifying uses permitted on public, private and state-owned areas. Generally, the following uses are not permitted on Town-owned land: all-terrain vehicles, including mountain bicycles and snowmobiles, open fires, and overnight camping.

Table 11. Activities Permitted in Town-owned Parks & Open Spaces
 intended for Public Use

Location/Facility	tennis	basketball	use of play structures	jogging/walking	football	soccer	golf	horseshoes	picnic benches/tables	baseball/softball	volleyball	swimming	fishing	hunting	picnic w/o fire	ice skating	skateboarding	horseback riding	cross-country skiing	bicycling	rollerblading/skating	canoe/kayak launch	indoor programs	handicap accessible	wellhead/water protection	conservation	all terrain vehicles	
White Mill Park			X	X			X	X							X								X					
Branch River Park	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X									X				X					
Hauser Field		X	X	X						X													X					
Spring Lake Beach											X	X			X							X	X					
Eccleston Field		X			X	X				X							X											
Freedom Park			X						X														X					
Gazebo/Town Common									X														X					
Snizek Park									X				X											X				
A.T. Levy School			X							X													X					
Steere Farm School			X		X	X				X													X					
High School	X			X	X	X			X	X						X			X				X					
Mapleville Little League Field				X					X	X																		
Nipmuc Park				X											X							X						
Wallum Lake Property (Neri)				X									X		X							X						
Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge																						X	X					
Activities permitted in State-owned Parks & Open Spaces Intended for Public Use																												
Spring Lake Boat Ramp													X									X						
Black Hut Management Area				X										X												X		
Harrisville Mill Pond Ramp													X									X						
Round Top Fishing Area				X					X				X									X				X		
Union Pond Boat Ramp													X									X						
Wilson's Reservoir Ramp													X									X						
Casmir Pulaski State Park				X					X				X							X		X						
Geo Washington Mngmnt				X					X									X	X	X						X		
Buck Hill Management				X					X				X	X				X								X		
Wakefield Pond Boat Ramp													X									X						
Zambarano Memorial Hospital																									X			
Angell Street lot on Wallum Lk													X									X						

Table 11. Activities Permitted in Privately-owned Parks & Open Spaces
 intended for Public Use

Location/Facility	tennis	basketball	use of play structures	jogging/walking	football	soccer	golf	horseshoes	picnic benches/tables	baseball/softball	volleyball	swimming	fishing	hunting	picnic w/o fire	ice skating	skateboarding	horseback riding	cross-country skiing	bicycling	rollerblading/skating	canoe/kayak launch	indoor programs	handicap accessible	wellhead/water protection	conservation	all terrain vehicles
Audubon Society Lot																										X	
Screech Hole Bog																										X	
Nasonville Water District																								X	X		
Glendale Association																								X	X		
Casino Park										X																	
Country View Golf Club						X																					
Addeville Game Farm													X													X	
Girl Scouts of RI																										X	
Harrisville Fire District																										X	
Wallum Lake Rod & Gun Club												X	X													X	
Fiddler's Green Phase I																										X	
Fiddler's Green Phase II				X									X										X			X	
Whitney Estates				X																						X	
Hemlock Farms																										X	
Burrillville Historical Society Lot																										X	
Pascoag Fire District																								X	X		
Echo Lake Campground				X								X	X							X		X					
Buck Hill Family Campground		X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Boy Scouts		X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Feinstein Youth Camp			X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X										X	X		X	
Brown University Lot																										X	
Crystal Lake Golf Course							X																			X	

Source: Burrillville Department of Parks & Recreation, July 2004

Note: The following activities are NOT permitted in any Town-owned Park or Open Space: picnic w/fire, snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicles , motorboat launch

The Town's Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for recreational functions, activities, assets, and resources within the Town of Burrillville and not under the control of the School Department. In order to better anticipate intensive usage of the parks, larger groups are required to complete and submit application forms indicating when and how a park will be used. Additionally, regulations for park usage have been promulgated involving the use of alcoholic beverages, property damage and cleanup, and the need for a police officer to manage traffic at the site. The Town's Recreation Commission, comprised of Town Council-appointed citizens, oversees and recommends policies to the Director of Parks and Recreation. Together, the Director and Commission are responsible for the Town's comprehensive recreation program and, along with the Department of public works, the maintenance and operation of the Town's recreational facilities.

While the Department of Parks and Recreation determines infrastructure and maintenance needs, the Town's Department of Public Works is responsible for the implementing the improvements. Similar to other municipalities, Burrillville's School Department has its own maintenance staff. Burrillville recognizes the opportunity for improved coordination of playing fields maintenance and use between the Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of public works and School Department, and will be reinitiating discussions for improvement through a Fields Study Committee.

Burrillville's Conservation Commission is primarily involved in the management of the undeveloped Nipmuc Property and Town-owned land abutting Wallum Lake.

The Town of Burrillville Police Department is responsible for the general surveillance of the entire Town's active and passive recreational facilities and properties.

IV. NEEDS ANALYSIS

There has been an increased demand for outdoor recreational facilities throughout the United States during the past decade. Factors identified which have created the additional demand are: population increase, the increased amount of leisure time, the rising standard of living, the interest to preserve the natural landscape and the preservation of open space to separate intensive development. Recent surveys have shown that the "quality" of the recreational experience is becoming more important.

Recreational Standards and Analysis - The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards published in the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Planning Manual, as amended, for playgrounds, playfields and neighborhood parks were examined for this study, to determine the need for these facilities. These standards range from 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population. In this Plan, Burrillville has again (similar to the 1993 Plan) adopted the 6.25 acres per 1,000 persons as a standard. One of the reasons why the lower standard was adopted was for financial reasons – Burrillville continues to struggle to stabilize its tax rate and cannot afford to put aside any more money than it currently does to purchase and maintain open space. Another reason for using the lower standard is Burrillville's

setting. The NRPA standards are best suited for homogenous urbanized or suburbanized areas. Burrillville's old mill villages, with their relatively dense development, need public recreation and open spaces per the NRPA recommendations, but the outlying rural areas with large lots and informal use of privately owned fields, trails, and swimming holes do not fit well with national standards. Mini-parks and playlots are needed in the older villages but not in the other parts of Town. As the Town continues to grow, however, care must be taken to insure that the recreation functions of play lots, play areas and major parks are provided to meet to recreation needs of future residents. For example, play lots and play areas can be located within playfields and playgrounds where such areas are dictated by neighborhood requirements.

Burrillville, similar to many Rhode Island communities, has experienced the impact of increased population due to the movement of people from the core cities of Rhode Island. Population to be served is the basis used to determine recreational needs. In addition, because of the increased concern for the environment and with ecology, there are areas in Burrillville that are preserved for conservation and open space purposes. Thus, outdoors-recreational facilities for the Town of Burrillville shall use as criteria the demand created by the local population and the preservation of open space for environmental and ecological objectives.

Recreation Needs by Planning District - Table 12, illustrates the present and projected area needs for playgrounds, playfields and neighborhood parks, based upon the standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 persons. The amount of land used in this table, 61.4 acres, represents only Town-owned property available for use at no charge presently developed for active recreational purposes.

Private or State-owned property is intended to serve the recreational needs of not only Burrillville residents, but also regional and even statewide needs. Most of the private and state-owned areas are included by the State in determining recreation needs on the State level. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, only those areas and needs under the jurisdiction of the Town of Burrillville are considered.

Based on the standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 people, Table 12 identifies the Town's projected recreational needs by planning district as of year 2000.

Table VIII-12
 Recreational Needs by Planning District

Year	Population	Land Required to Meet Standards	Existing Property	Deficit/Surplus
Planning Dist. I				
1990	7429	46	119	73
2000	7402	46	119	73
Planning Dist. II				
1990	3317	21	0	(21)
2000	3358	21	0	(21)
Planning Dist. III				
1990	5484	34	30.5	(4.5)
2000	5036	31	30.5	.5

Source: U.S. Census of population, 2000; Burrillville Planning Department, 2004.

The figures shown in this Table indicate that Planning Districts 2 and 3 are deficient in land needed for recreation purposes.

While the above analysis shows a significant need for additional recreational facilities, there are a number of Recreation, Conservation and Open Space facilities and areas in Town, which are identified as "regional" facilities. These were not included in the "town" side of the ledger however, their existence must be recognized. While they cannot be conveniently calculated into our Needs Assessment, Burrillville residents do utilize these facilities. Again, this is one of the reasons why the Town has adopted a recreation standard at the lowest end of the scale. Planning District II for example, is of low density residential (rural) and contains two of the town's largest State Management Forests, which makes its deficit of 21 acres misleading.

Conservation and Open Space Needs - The emphasis in the prior section of this report was placed on a quantitative analysis of active outdoor recreation facilities. In addition to active recreation facilities, the Town recognizes environmental quality and passive recreation opportunities as an important component of the outdoor recreation experience.

A greater portion of Burrillville is presently undeveloped. In fact, the Town's Comprehensive Plan identified approximately 12,660 acres of land as conservation lands or undeveloped as of 2004. Based on the Town's Geographic Information System and as identified in Table 7, the State owns 6,518.4 acres of forest, park or wildlife management areas in Town. While these areas are principally conservation areas by nature, they also function as action recreation areas for hikers, horseback riders and mountain bike enthusiasts. Another 3,388.8 acres are privately owned and used for conservation, including wellhead protection, purposes.

Conservation and open space needs cannot be measured by a quantitative standard, but must be based upon a community policy to protect the natural resources which exist in the Town. Such areas can also serve to provide relief from flooding, particularly in those areas designated as swamps, riverbanks or wetlands. A policy to protect, or acquire where necessary, all existing

wetlands is in order, where opportunities for such action is available. Similar to open space land, wetlands and watercourses provide essential open space in forested or urbanized environments. Rivers and their banks serve also as greenway corridors both for recreational uses of the river and conservation functions as wildlife corridors.

Burrillville is dotted with ponds and lakes of various sizes. Surrounding many of these are summer cottage colonies previously held in single ownership. The tenants leased small cabins or cottages for summer use. Recently many of the small cottages have been sold and seasonal structures converted to year-round homes. This situation presents both recreational and environmental problems. First, access to natural resources is limited to a few private landowners. Secondly, the small lots could and do permit an intensive form of development resulting in the pollution of the ponds and lakes.

In addition to the open space and rural character issues, water resources have special inherent characteristics that have been documented as providing highly valued visual experiences. Steps must be taken to preserve the natural and aesthetic values these water resources offer and make them accessible to the public.

A detailed inventory and evaluation of Burrillville's visual resources is beyond the scope of this study. Such an endeavor requires a separate comprehensive study that should be, undertaken in the future. However, for the purpose of developing a Town policy toward visual quality, a generalization of important elements is provided.

Visual resources, simply defined, are represented by the character of the physical environment and the perception we have of that particular environment. Research into human perception has established that visual quality in the environment makes a significant contribution to a community's overall quality of life. The character and interplay between topographic features, natural and manmade landmarks, the form of open space and development, as well as historic and culturally meaningful structures and sites, creates a community identity or "sense of place".

Open space is especially critical in Burrillville to:

- Provide cleared undeveloped open spaces in a landscape dominated by forested or urbanized areas;
- Create unique edges between forests and cultivated or pastured fields;
- Maintain the rural character that is Burrillville's visual and cultural heritage; and
- Provide visual counterpoint to the urbanized image generated by commercial development.

Too often, concern for the visual environment has been dismissed as being a nonessential issue in land use decision-making. Such an attitude is both archaic and unresponsive to public need. This fact is clearly demonstrated by citizen outcry against development projects that fail to fit into the character of the Burrillville landscape. Additionally, the erosion of the visual and cultural character of a community can have not only psychological impacts, but also very real economic impacts through depreciated real estate and failing marketability to prospective new businesses and residents.

The citizen survey indicated that the characteristics of Burrillville which people liked best were visual qualities: its small town character and natural beauty.

Protection of visually important spaces may be achieved through a variety of techniques, including purchase, easement, tax incentive programs and development regulations.

V. RECREATION, CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following represents the Town's goals and objectives relating to recreation, conservation and open space preservation:

GOAL: Provide for active and passive recreational areas and activities to meet the needs of Burrillville's residents.

- Develop more recreational facilities and programs in response to the Town's increasing population
- Maintain and expand existing recreational facilities and programs
- Coordinate recreational planning efforts between the Schools, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation Department and Planning Department
- Link recreational facilities through pedestrian-friendly greenway corridors
- Ensure that the needs and recreational interests of residents of all social and age groups and abilities are considered to the fullest extent possible in developing recreational facility plans
- Maximize the use of water bodies for recreational activities
- Provide recreational opportunities in proximity to all residential areas in Town

GOAL: Encourage the use of regional recreation and conservation facilities as a means of promoting the growth of the tourism economy in Burrillville.

- Support the development of private and state recreational establishments in appropriate areas
- Maintain natural aesthetic amenities around dams, water bodies, buildings, etc.
- Maintain scenic roadways and vistas
- Preserve farmlands
- Disseminate information that identifies the location of properties that can be used for passive or active recreational purposes, and how and when they can be used
- Coordinate efforts to promote use of recreational facilities with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission and other regional or statewide organizations

GOAL: Protect natural resources.

- Plan for the protection of complete ecological units
- Preserve flora and fauna species and habitats through the development of contiguous greenway corridors
- Preserve undeveloped lands around waterbodies
- Improve surface and groundwater quality
- Preserve unique geological and natural features
- Maintain representative elements of the natural environment while developing the built environment
- Limit development in wetlands, floodplains and on soils not suitable for development
- Assist the State with the enforcement of environmental protection regulations

VI. ACTION PROGRAM

The Town of Burrillville has had the foresight to make significant acquisitions of land to ensure that recreational, conservation and open space opportunities will be available to all residents. This effort must be continued.

The Town should develop existing sites within a comprehensive coordinated framework to insure that facilities are developed based upon usage. This can be best accomplished by frequent review of studies and development of priorities within the financial capabilities of the Town.

One of the most feasible methods to ensure comprehensiveness with respect to planning and its implementation is through utilization of an effective Recreation Capital Improvements Program. In this manner, there is sufficient amount of time for the community to determine the needs, make adjustments if necessary, establish priorities, and find the means of implementation. In some instances, implementation of the Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan means that the local financial resources will have to be made available.

The Town should continue its efforts to acquire or control water bodies, wetlands, and streams. The State Guide Plan Element 155, Report #84 titled "A Greener Path ... Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future" (dated November 1994) contains a compendium of acquisition and regulatory strategies useful in preserving land for recreation and conservation purposes; the listing is contained in Appendix X of this Plan.

Of the various land protection tools available, the Town does currently offer Cluster Zoning and Residential Compounding as alternatives to Conventional Zoning. Additionally, persons wishing to subdivide their property are required to dedicate land for the provision of recreation, open space or conservation. If the developer cannot dedicate land, the Planning Board may require the

developer instead to pay a fee in lieu of land. Developers have historically chosen to not dedicate land and the Town has chosen not to accept land (due to anticipated maintenance and liability issues). However, in anticipation that the Town may wish to create small play areas, or in order to preserve environmentally sensitive areas (when applicable), the Town should consider the acceptance of land dedications.

It is recommended that land and water bodies be acquired for passive recreational and/or conservation purposes in addition to land acquired for intensive recreational activity and, where appropriate, farmlands and orchards be included in this acquisition/preservation program.

As identified in Section IV, the following needs have been identified by district:

- **Planning District I, Glendale-Nasonville, Oakland-Mapleville**, currently maintains a 42.5-acre surplus of land. Branch River Park, Spring Lake beach and the High School facility are the largest areas which help to satisfy the district's LOS from a population perspective; yet, all three sites are more than ½ mile from the Villages of Oakland and Mapleville.
- **Planning District II, Bridgeton-Wallum Lake**, currently has a 21-acre deficit that is somewhat misleading in terms of need due to low-density population on large lots over a large area in addition to the Buck Hill Management and George Washington Management Areas.
- **Planning District III, the Pascoag and Harrisville areas**, have a shortfall of six acres. The development of the Harrisville Skate Park will alleviate the shortfall by providing much needed active recreation.

Burrillville's greatest active recreational needs are in Districts II and III.

Five Year Action Plan – The actions proposed to meet the goals and objectives identified in the previous section are identified below. Based on the Town's experience with its previous Plan, we have found that certain activities require a significant amount of time to fully implement. Therefore, Year One of the Action Plan contains the greatest amount of proposed items and Year Five the least, with the assumption that certain items initiated in Year One may only be realized in the latter years of this Plan.

Year One Action Items – Year 2005

1. Acquire Peck's Farm (Boys & Girls Club) adjacent to the Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge - to be funded with grants (*Planning District III*) ONGOING
2. Initiate discussions with the State regarding the possible development of State-owned land for active recreational purposes (*Planning Districts I II*) ONGOING
3. Initiate discussions with the YMCA in order to have one of their facilities located in Town (*All Districts*) (COMPLETED)
4. Re-institute the Fields Study Committee and implement their recommendations (*All*

Districts) COMPLETED

5. Request that the R.I. Canoe and Kayak Association create a map of canoeable rivers (*All Districts*)
6. Resurface the tennis courts at the High School (*Planning District I*) COMPLETE
7. Complete the on-going, funded projects – construction of the Hauser Field walking path (*Planning District III*), Spring Lake Beach (*Planning District I*) ONGOING
8. Assist the Conservation Commission in creating trails on the Nipmuc property (*Planning District II*) COMPLETE
9. Facilitate the creation of a land trust (*All Districts*) COMPLETE
10. Explore acquiring land abutting Branch River Park in order to develop additional multipurpose recreational facilities (*Planning District I*)
11. Request that the Wild Plant Society (or similar organization) inventory endangered wildflowers (*All Districts*)
12. Explore acquiring the Neri property on Wilson's Reservoir (*Planning District II*) Ongoing
13. Explore acquiring Sweet's Hill on East Avenue (*Planning District I*) Ongoing
14. Realign Mowry Road (Snizek Park) to create a passive park near Tarklin Pond with a handicapped accessible fishing area (*Planning District I*) ONGOING
15. Identify & develop a roller blade/skateboard park/ramp facility (*Planning District III*) ONGOING

Year Two Action Items - Year 2006

1. Convert the Pascoag Fire District land on North Main Street into a pedestrian park (*Planning District III*)
2. Explore recreational opportunities for the land donated by the State to the Town at Spring Lake (*Planning District I*) COMPLETE
3. Install lights at the tennis courts at Branch River Park (*Planning District I*)
4. Create an Adopt-a-Spot program (*All Districts*) ONGOING

Year Three Action Items - Year 2007

1. Creating an active recreation facility near the Police Station (*Planning District I*) ONGOING

Year Four Action Items - Year 2008

1. Develop an all purpose gym (Senior/Teen center) next to the Beckwith-Bruckshaw Lodge (*Planning District III*) ONGOING

Year Five Action Items - Year 2009

In addition to these items, the Town will continue to pursue the following efforts that were deemed “ongoing”, i.e., to begin implementation in Year 1 and to be completed by the fifth year of this plan.

- Continue to pursue the creation of a bike path (*All Districts*) ONGOING
- Create handicapped accessible canoe/kayak “put-ins” and “take-outs” (*All Districts*)
- Continue implementing the recommendations of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Zoning Study to implement creative zoning techniques to protect natural resources (*All Districts*)

Beyond the five year implementation program, the following other needs were identified:

- Explore acquiring (or having DEM purchase development rights) the “Ronzio lot” on Knibb Road (*Planning District II*)
- Acquire the Schofield/Gillis property along Jackson Schoolhouse Rd. Map 188, Lots: 7,10 and 3 (*Planning District II*)
- Acquire the Oakland Triangle (*Planning District I*) ONGOING – to preserve through private development
- Explore acquiring the Brothers of the Sacred Heart property (*Planning District I*)
- Explore the Knights of Columbus property (*Planning District III*)
- Construct a swimming pool (*All Districts*) – Acquiring land adjacent to Beckwith/Bruckshaw Lodge.