

# Town of Dighton

## Open Space and Recreation Plan

### 2021 -2028



# **TOWN OF DIGHTON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN 2021 - 2028**

**Prepared by the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee**

Members of the OSRPC have included: Ellen Bidlack (Chair), Jessica Daly (Assistant and Secretary), Kevin Smith, Jr., Ed Paluch, Joe Tamarkin, David Rosa, Dennis Govoni, Tom Bourquin, and Heidi Baacke. Selectman Brett Zografos provided a great deal of support and technical assistance.

## **Technical Assistance provided by:**

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)

Special thanks to the many individuals, organizations, and agencies who gave their time and shared their knowledge of the Town and its surroundings, including:

- The Dighton Conservation Commission
- The Dighton Planning Board
- The Dighton Stormwater Committee
- The Dighton Community Preservation Committee
- The Dighton Highway Department
- The Dighton Trails Committee
- The Dighton Parks & Recreation
- The Dighton Board of Selectmen

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## SECTION 1: PLAN SUMMARY

The purpose of this 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan is to provide a blueprint for responsible conservation and recreation planning in the Town of Dighton. The goals and objectives of the plan include:

- developing an accessible, connected open space and trail network
- promoting public and environmental education through partnerships and collaboration
- preserving and protecting Dighton’s natural resources, cultural resources, and providing ample public recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Another goal of the Open Space Committee was to make the 2021 Plan more visible, available, and more user friendly (an Action Plan that is shorter and more direct). All of this is being done in an effort to better engage not only the community, but also other potential partners in support of, and involvement in, the stewardship of the natural, cultural, and recreational assets of the Town.

The 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan is written to be consistent with the state’s current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements, as well as with the Town’s current Master Plan. Approval and certification of the updated 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (EEA), Division of Conservation Services (DCS) enables the Town to become eligible for land acquisition and recreation facility reimbursement funding through grant programs administered by DCS.

### **What’s in the Plan?**

The core elements of the Open Space and Recreation Plan include:

- An overview of the Town’s natural and cultural resources, including: critical green infrastructure our wetlands, waterways, forests, and soils
- The public services that they provide aesthetically, in combating the impacts of climate change, scenic resources, unique environments, environmental challenges to conservation practices and community resilience.
- 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.
- An outline of the community’s goals, objectives and the actions proposed to meet those needs.

The Town’s environmental challenges, found in Section 4 of this document, are discussed in terms of their impacts, but also in terms of finding solutions that will help to make our community more resilient (able to recover quickly from adversity). This is particularly important as storm frequency and intensity, flood and drought cycles, vector borne diseases (via ticks, mosquitoes), and numerous threats to plants and trees, are magnified by climate change.

The key word in the new Open Space and Recreation Plan is “action.” The Open Space and Recreation

Committee wants this to be an active, living plan, not a static reference document. The Action Plan, found in Section 9 of this document, is representative of the comments received from the Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey, comments received during the Committee’s interviews with other departments, boards, commissions, and committees and, input from public working meetings. All of these opportunities for public input yielded specific comments, particularly on public support for: the need for better connectivity town-wide in order to access conservation and recreation assets; a need for improved wayfinding signage; improved website utility (facility maps, descriptions); the need for ADA based improvements to our parks, recreation, and conservation facilities, and; the need for more environmental education and collaboration.

The Committee has accomplished a great deal, but there is still a great deal to be done. There is a place for anyone and everyone to become involved in the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Our plan has no life without community involvement . . . that is what will make and keep this a living document. And, as tasks are completed, we will be looking to update the current plan as well as look ahead to see what opportunities arise to help meet our stated goals and objectives.

## SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

### A. Statement of Purpose

The Open Space and Recreation Plan is intended to present and discuss a coordinated set of measures that will help the Town of Dighton protect, preserve, and increase its conservation, open space and recreation assets and resources. The purpose of the plan is to provide the citizens of Dighton with a document that is comprehensive, readable, and easily understood, and accurately conveys the policies and actions necessary to meet the changing physical, cultural, environmental, and social needs of the community.

An important part of updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan was to understand and document the steps taken, and progress made by the Town, in addressing the previous plan’s goals, objectives, and recommended actions. Overall, Dighton has continued to make gains in preserving open space, largely through the efforts of its Conservation Commission and other town boards and departments, as well as its emerging partnerships with local and regional non-profit and natural resource-based organizations. Dighton has also benefited from the resourcefulness and dedication of its Highway Department in both its work and pursuit of grant funding to address a multiplicity of needs.

The following are just some of the highlighted actions, initiatives, and partnership activities undertaken by the Town in an effort to address specific tasks outlined in the goals and objectives of the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan.

#### Conservation/Open Space:

- Continued its acquisition of land around Broad Cove and established viewing areas and a major access point, the Broad Cove Nature Trail, off of Route 138.
- Participated, with outside partners, to acquire the culturally significant field area adjacent to the historic Council Oak land.

#### Parks and Recreation:

- Improvements were made to the courts adjacent to the old Police Station, and to Central

Playground adjacent to Town Hall and the Old Town Hall;

- The Town secured a grant to complete an ADA needs assessment for all of its outdoor recreation assets.

Implementation:

- Town Meeting passed the Community Preservation Act and the Town established a Community Preservation Committee;
- The Planning Board promotes the use of its Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Bylaw as a primary option for new residential subdivision proposal;
- Town Meeting passed a Right-to-Farm Bylaw and the Town established an Agricultural Commission to help preserve the culture and practice of agriculture in town;
- The Town completed a Master Plan update;
- Hired the Town's first Administrator;
- The Town created a Stormwater Committee;
- The Town appointed an Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee.

Pathways and Greenways:

- The Selectmen appointed the Dighton Trails Committee to explore local and regional multimodal trail options;
- The Trails Committee prepared a local map and recommendations for town routes as well as ideas for town inclusion in the regional Taunton River Trail Plan.

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

The process of the creation of a long-range plan is almost more important than the document itself. The process allows for public participation and general education on issues and a means for all involved to reach a consensus on these issues.

With the knowledge of the importance of process in plan development, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) was established in order to update the 2003 plan. Members of the OSRPC have included: Ellen Bidlack (Chair), Jessica Daly (Assistant and Secretary), Kevin Smith, Jr., Ed Paluch, Joe Tamarkin, David Rosa, Dennis Govoni, Tom Bourquin, and Heidi Baacke. Selectman Brett Zografos provided a great deal of support and technical assistance. The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) was hired to provide technical assistance and coordinate the drafting of the plan.

The OSRPC, throughout the course of preparing the plan, has conducted over two dozen meetings. All working meetings were held in the Town Hall, which is an accessible facility, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, after which meetings were conducted via Zoom, and open to the public. These meetings were used to update attendees on the work that had been completed to date, scrutinize that work, and to formulate new tasks moving forward. In addition, the OSRPC took the time to conduct a series of special topic meetings and interviews with the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Community Preservation Committee, Parks and Recreation, and Pathways Committee. The OSRPC also made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen. Some of these meetings were also available on cable, and all of them were open to the public.

The first task of the OSRPC was to develop an “Open Space and Recreation Survey” in order to gauge the public’s satisfaction with the current state of conservation, open space, and recreation programs and policies within the town, as well as to help chart a course for the future of these programs. The resulting survey was publicized in the local paper, and was also distributed through the mail, the Senior Center, the Town Hall, posted on the Town website, and made available through the OSRPC’s respective member organizations.

### **C. Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation**

In order to ensure meaningful involvement in the planning process, special attention was given to efforts to reach out to the entire community in the best ways possible. Enhanced outreach in these areas included local cable access postings of meetings and events, as well as postings on the Town website (including the survey with a link to complete it online if desired).

Dighton does not contain a federal or state designated environmental justice (EJ) community. The Committee, and the Town, did however, work with members of the Dighton Inter-tribal Council/ Taunton River Stewardship Council throughout this process as well. This cooperation was one of the key factors that led to the Town’s purchase of the land adjacent to the Council Oak field.

## **SECTION 3: COMMUNITY SETTING**

### **A. Regional Context**

The Town of Dighton is a small, historic town located along the Taunton River in southeastern Massachusetts. Incorporated in 1712, Dighton is located 40 miles south of Boston and 13 miles east of Providence, Rhode Island. It is bordered by Taunton on the north, Berkley and the Taunton River on the east, Somerset and Swansea on the south, and Rehoboth on the west and northwest. Dighton is approximately forty (40) miles south of Boston and thirteen (13) miles east of Providence, Rhode Island. Dighton is connected to the larger southeastern Massachusetts region via the east-west Route 44 in the northern part of town and the north-south Route 138 in the eastern part of town. Dighton encompasses 22.4 square miles of land and lies primarily within the Taunton River watershed.

### **B. History**

Dighton’s earliest settlement was by the Pocasset tribe, which was decimated by a number of pre 1675 epidemics. The neighboring town of Taunton was sold to the colonists by King Philip in 1663. An additional precinct known as the South Purchase was acquired in 1672, including the present Dighton. The Council Oak Tree located in the “middle of the largest open field” is still an important meeting place of Dighton’s Tribal Council. With the onset of King Philip’s War in 1675, development of the new tract was slow. It’s first home was not built until 1680 by Jared Talbot, with others soon to follow.

Dighton was established as a separate town in 1712. It was named for Frances Dighton Williams, wife of Richard Williams who was among the first families to settle there. During its early colonial period from 1680 to 1775, the settlers devoted the majority of their efforts to subsistence farming on abandoned native planting grounds adjacent to the Cedar Swamp and along the Taunton River.

As early as the mid-1690s the Coram Shipyard is reported to have been in operation on present day Water St near the east end of Main Street. The town’s population increased to 1174 by 1760s and to 1420 by 1776 and three major nodes of settlement took hold. The first extended from the mouth of the

Segregansett River to the Old Town Landing, at the bottom of present day Hart Street and included the Coram Shipyard and the Dighton Wharves area. The second grew in present North Dighton, where an iron forge and sawmill, a gristmill, cider mill and blacksmith shop were established on the Three Mile River. The third settlement took hold on the Segregansett River near Williams Street where a gristmill, sawmill and fulling mill were built around 1740.

The Federal Period from 1775 to 1830 saw an increase in maritime industry in Dighton, with the Dighton Wharves Historic District a key factor in that growth. The shipbuilding and maritime trade became more central to the local economy. In 1789 Dighton became a customs port for incoming ships from the West Indies and Europe. This continued until 1834, when Fall River usurped the role because of its larger harbor and better transportation route access.

Several small cotton mills were established in 1810 and 1812, the start of a textile industry that would take better hold in the 1830s, the start of Dighton's Early Industrial Period (1830-1870). Two cotton mills on the Three Mile River and an 1862 woolen mill started by William Cobb were soon the town's largest industries. The Mount Hope Finishing Company, a bleaching facility, was founded in 1901 in North Dighton and became a stronghold of the local economy.

Another key industry was a paper mill at North Dighton, started in 1850 and a major employer into the early twentieth century. Strawberry farming also took root in the 1850s and 1860s, eventually leading to a sizeable truck-farming industry which continues to the present day.

The Early Modern Period (1915-1946) saw little new industry or population growth. The town had by now become a quiet rural community with a number of market farms and dairy farms and a few pockets of light industry. Due to its remoteness from established urban centers, there has not been much industry locating in Dighton. The agricultural landscape continues to dominate the town's visual character today.

The Dighton Historic Commission was established in 1973. The Commission began to inventory the historic resources in town using the Massachusetts Historical Commission's inventory forms. The historical significance of over 100 structures has been documented. This led to the establishment of two National Historic Districts: The Thomas Coram Shipyard Historic District on Water Street, and the Dighton Wharves Historic District on Pleasant Street both in the south end of town along the Taunton River. The Segregansett Schoolhouse, one of 13 one room schoolhouses in Dighton was saved from being moved and restoration work is nearing completion.

## C. Demographic Profile

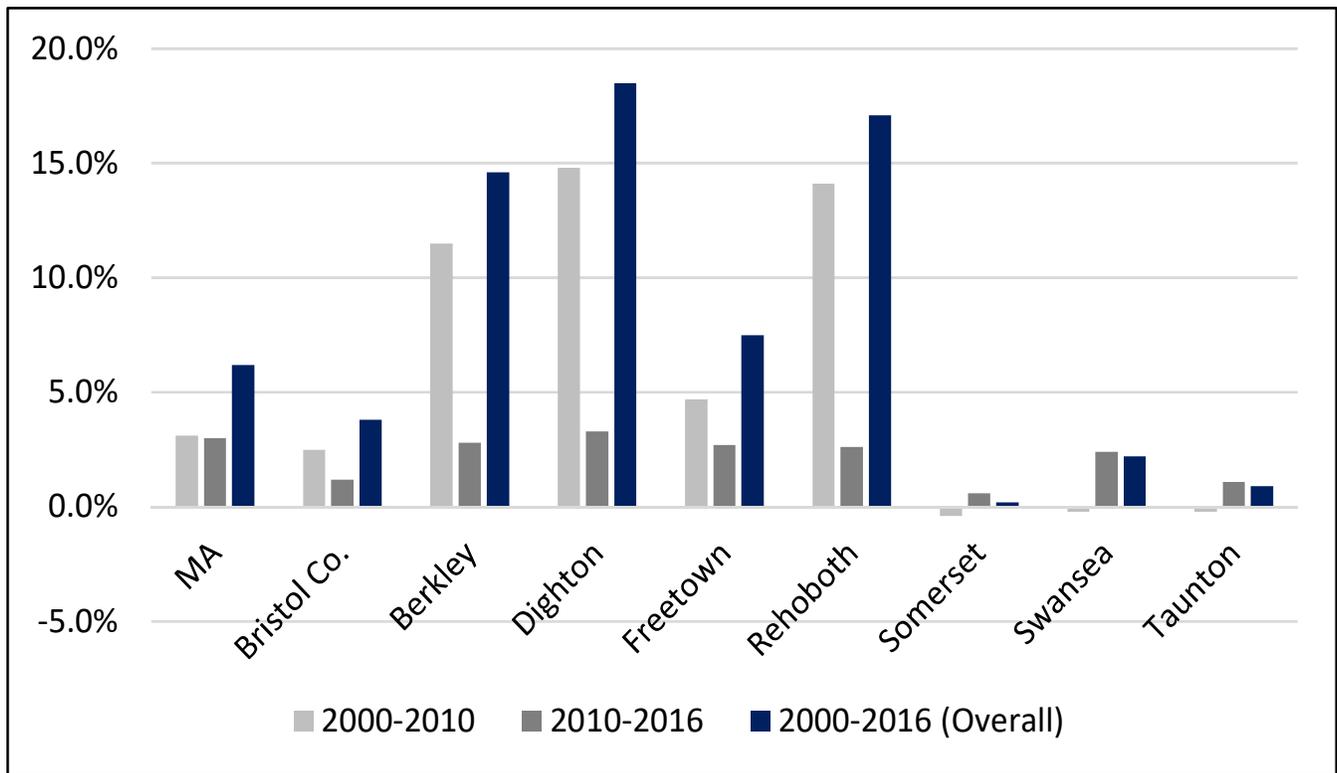
The development of an Open Space and Recreation Plan necessitates the recognition of the town's population growth, age structure, racial and ethnic composition and household characteristics.

### 1. POPULATION TRENDS

From 2000 to 2016, Dighton's population increased almost 19%, from 6,175 residents to approximately 7,320 residents. This growth rate was five (5) times higher than that of Bristol County (3.8%) and three (3) times higher than the Commonwealth (6.2%) during the same time period. During this period, Dighton's population also grew at a faster rate than any of its neighboring communities. Dighton's rapid population growth during this period may be attributed to a number of factors, including its considerable amount of developable land, quality schools, municipal water and sewer infrastructure, and semi-rural character.

**Figure 1: Population Growth Rate, 2000-2016**

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*



**Table 1: Total Population Change, 2000-2016**

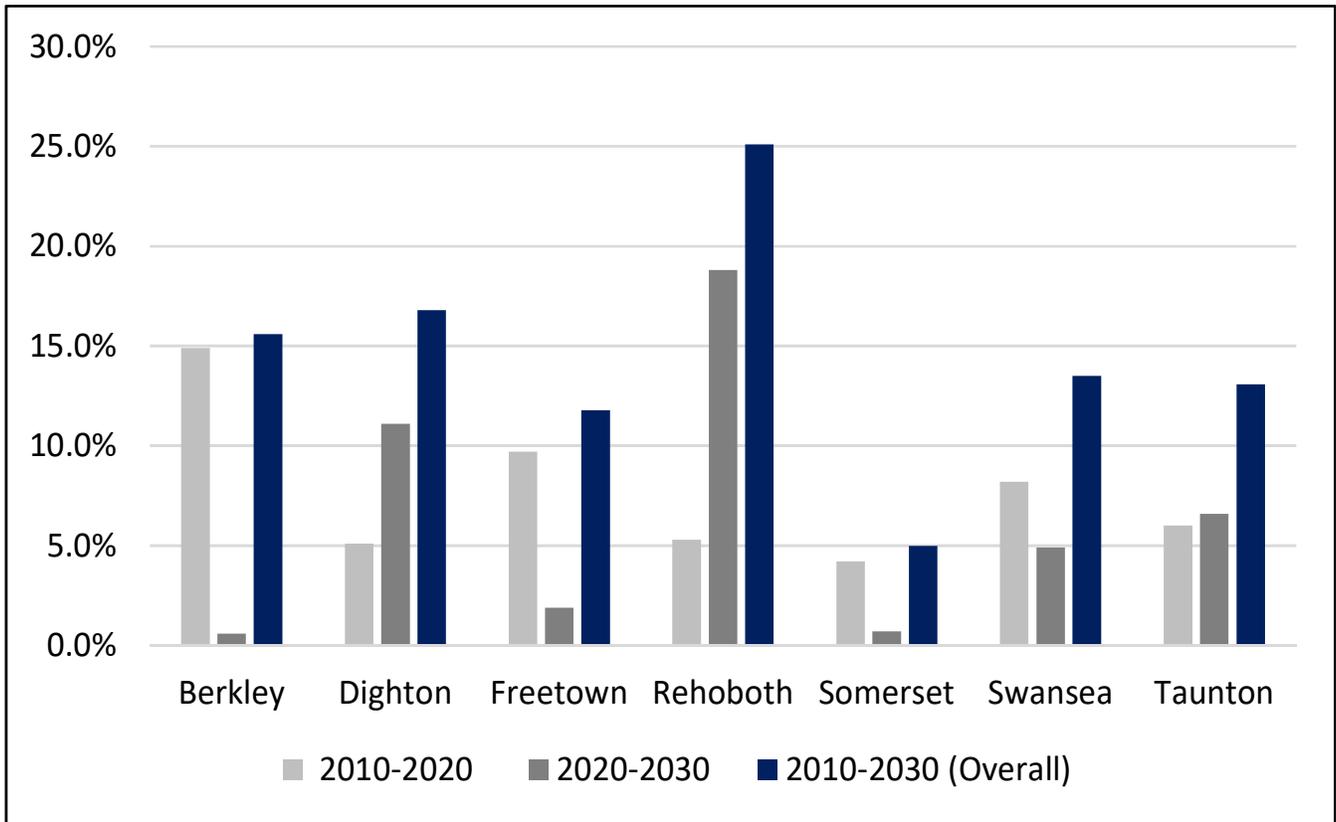
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Jurisdiction	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Overall Change 2000-2016
Massachusetts	6,349,097	6,547,629	6,742,143	3.1%	3.0%	6.2%
Bristol County	534,678	548,285	554,868	2.5%	1.2%	3.8%
Berkley	5,749	6,411	6,589	11.5%	2.8%	14.6%
<b>Dighton</b>	<b>6,175</b>	<b>7,086</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
Freetown	8,472	8,870	9,111	4.7%	2.7%	7.5%
Rehoboth	10,172	11,608	11,914	14.1%	2.6%	17.1%
Somerset	18,234	18,165	18,279	-0.4%	0.6%	0.2%
Swansea	15,901	15,865	16,249	-0.2%	2.4%	2.2%

## 2. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections from the UMass Donahue Institute and MassDOT indicate that Dighton will grow at the second fastest rate among its neighboring communities from 2010 through 2030, trailing only Rehoboth. The projections indicate that Dighton’s population will increase almost 17% during this period, from 7,086 residents to 8,274 residents.

**Figure 2: Projected Population Growth Rate, 2010-2030**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, UMass Donahue Institute, MassDOT*



**Table 2: Population Projections, 2010-2030**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, UMass Donahue Institute, MassDOT*

Community	2010 Count	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	Change 2010-2020	Change 2020-2030	Overall Change 2010-2030
Berkley	6,411	7,366	7,411	14.9%	0.6%	15.6%
<b>Dighton</b>	<b>7,086</b>	<b>7,444</b>	<b>8,274</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
Freetown	8,870	9,729	9,913	9.7%	1.9%	11.8%
Rehoboth	11,608	12,224	14,522	5.3%	18.8%	25.1%
Somerset	18,165	18,937	19,077	4.2%	0.7%	5.0%
Swansea	15,865	17,171	18,008	8.2%	4.9%	13.5%
Taunton	55,874	59,253	63,169	6.0%	6.6%	13.1%

The consideration of the status and direction of the growth of its population is of vital importance for the preparation of Dighton’s Open Space and Recreation Plan. Only then can the plan be responsive, accommodating and provide for all of the varied needs and demands of the community.

### 3. POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE

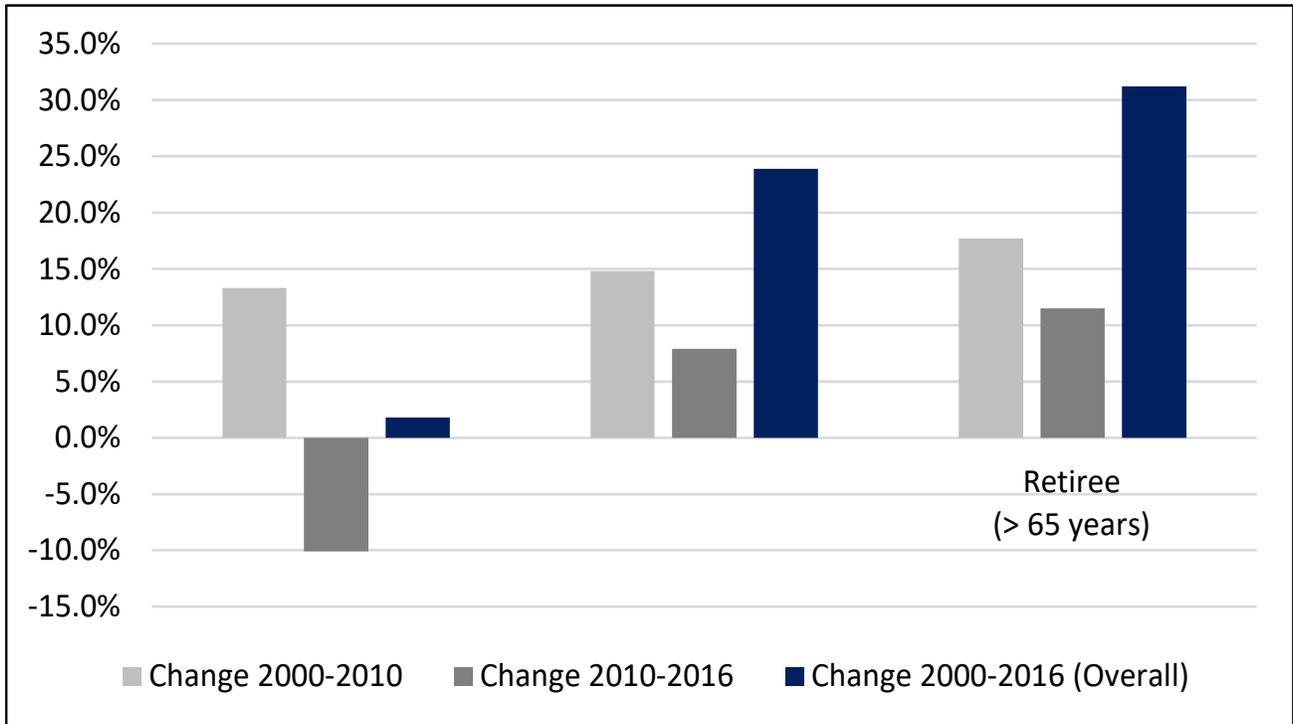
A comprehensive grasp of the age profile of the town’s population is a good guide in the preparation and assessment of the respective community members’ needs. Between 2000 and 2016, Dighton’s

median age rose by almost five (5) years from 38 to 42.6. During this same time period, the retirement-age population (greater than 64 years old) grew at a rate of approximately 31%, 7% more than the working-age population (20-64 years old). The school-age population (less than 20 years old) grew at a far slower rate - just 2% between 2000 and 2016.

The aging of Dighton’s population is further evidenced by examining individual age cohorts. Age cohorts that experienced the largest increases between 2000 and 2016 were the 60 to 64-year-old age cohort (95%), the 55 to 59-year-old age cohort (67%), and the 65 to 74-year-old age cohort (56%).

**Figure 3: Dighton Population Change by Age Group, 2000-2016**

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*



**Table 3: Dighton Population Change by Age Group, 2000-2016**

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Age Group	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Overall Change 2000-2016
School-Age (< 20 years)	1,757	1,990	1,789	13.3%	-10.1%	1.8%
Working-Age (20-64 years)	3,626	4,164	4,492	14.8%	7.9%	23.9%
Retiree (> 64 years)	792	932	1,039	17.7%	11.5%	31.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,175</b>	<b>7,086</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>

**Table 4: Dighton Population Change by Age Group, 2000-2016**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Age Group	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Change 2000-2016
Under 5 years	357	384	447	7.6%	16.4%	25.2%
5 to 9 years	466	478	508	2.6%	6.3%	9.0%
10 to 14 years	516	559	377	8.3%	-32.6%	-26.9%
15 to 19 years	418	569	457	36.1%	-19.7%	9.3%
20 to 24 years	248	352	380	41.9%	8.0%	53.2%
25 to 34 years	727	600	881	-17.5%	46.8%	21.2%
35 to 44 years	1,150	1,119	931	-2.7%	-16.8%	-19.0%
45 to 54 years	901	1,255	1,229	39.3%	-2.1%	36.4%
55 to 59 years	359	421	601	17.3%	42.8%	67.4%
60 to 64 years	241	417	470	73.0%	12.7%	95.0%
65 to 74 years	397	540	620	36.0%	14.8%	56.2%
75 to 84 years	300	258	310	-14.0%	20.2%	3.3%
85 years & over	95	134	109	41.1%	-18.7%	14.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,175</b>	<b>7,086</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>

#### 4. RACE AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Categories of race and ethnicity have changed the composition in cities and towns across the Commonwealth and the country over the years.

In Table 5, Dighton’s race and ethnic population from the 2000 to 2016 are illustrated below.

**Table 5: Race and Ethnic Composition: Dighton, 2000-2016**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Race/Ethnic Group	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Change 2000-2016
Total	6,175	7,086	7,320	14.80%	3.30%	18.50%
White	6,039	6,848	6,902	13.40%	0.80%	14.30%
Black	33	56	179	69.70%	219.60%	442.40%
Asian	30	47	0	56.70%	-100.00%	-100.00%
Other Races	73	135	239	84.90%	77.00%	227.40%
Hispanic	66	104	72	57.60%	-30.80%	9.10%

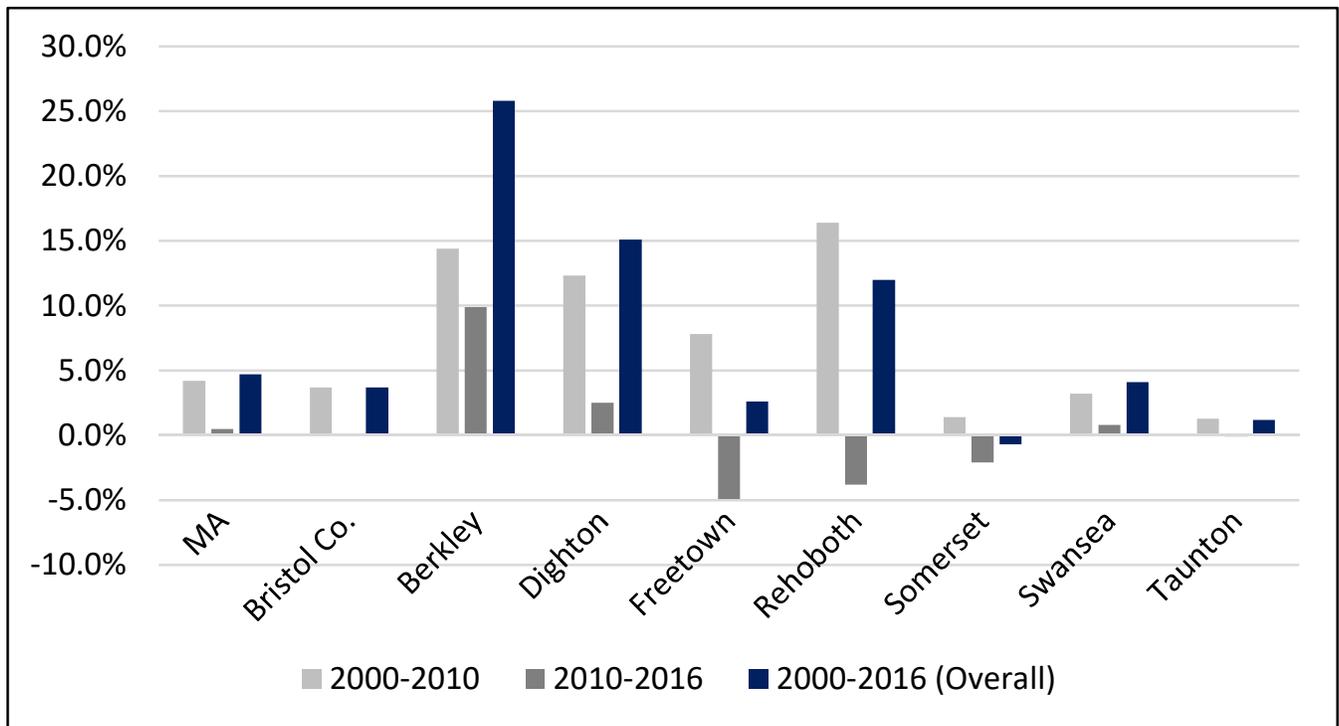
Dighton’s population remained predominantly White, but changes occurred in the town’s various racial and ethnic population composition. While high percentage changes of some non-white populations of the town from 2000 to 2016 (Table 5) far exceeded the overall rate of increase in the town’s total population, the high percentage change does not represent a significant change in the numbers of the specific ethnic and racial groups in town relative to the overall population.

The growing diversity of the racial/ethnic population in Dighton may indicate varying interests and appetites for open space and recreational choices. Therefore, the planning exercise for the town has to acknowledge the changes in racial and ethnic composition of the town, in order to project the trajectory for future growth among these sub-populations.

## 5. HOUSEHOLD GROWTH

From 2000 to 2016, the total number of households in Dighton increased approximately 15.1%, from 2,201 households to approximately 2,533 households. This growth rate was four (4) times higher than that of Bristol County and three (3) times higher than that of the Commonwealth during the same time period. The number of households in Dighton also grew at a faster rate than all of its neighboring communities, with the exception of Berkley.

**Figure 4: Household Growth Rate, 2000-2016**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*



**Table 6: Household Growth Rate, 2000-2016**

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

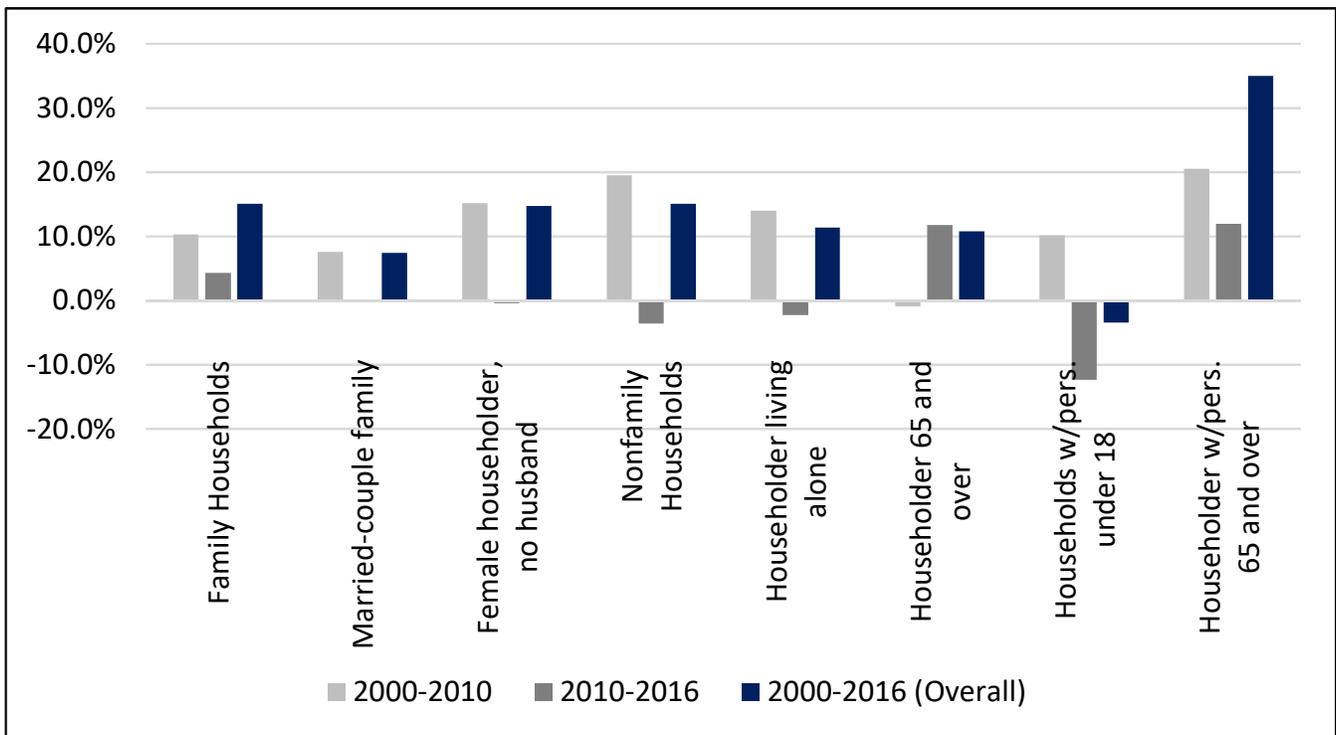
Jurisdiction	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Overall Change 2000-2016
Massachusetts	2,443,580	2,547,075	2,558,889	4.2%	0.5%	4.7%
Bristol County	205,411	213,010	212,933	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%
Berkley	1,843	2,109	2,318	14.4%	9.9%	25.8%
<b>Dighton</b>	<b>2,201</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>2,533</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
Freetown	2,932	3,162	3,008	7.8%	-4.9%	2.6%
Rehoboth	3,523	4,101	3,944	16.4%	-3.8%	12.0%
Somerset	6,987	7,087	6,935	1.4%	-2.1%	-0.7%
Swansea	5,888	6,079	6,130	3.2%	0.8%	4.1%
Taunton	22,045	22,332	22,307	1.3%	-0.1%	1.2%

## 6. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Between 2000 and 2016, household types became more diverse in terms of its members. Specifically, the number of householders living alone grew 11% and households headed by a female with no husband present grew at a rate of approximately 15%. Additionally, the overall aging trend, previously revealed in the population figures, is mirrored in the significant rise in households with individuals 65 years and older (35%). A great challenge for town open space and recreation planners includes anticipating the demands and sustenance of single householders with young children and adults 65 years and older.

**Figure 5: Dighton Household Types, 2000-2016**

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*



**Table 7: Dighton Household Types, 2000-2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Household Types	2000	2010	2016	Change 2000-2010	Change 2010-2016	Change 2000-2016
Family Households	1,718	1,895	1,977	10.3%	4.3%	15.1%
With own children under 18	823	885	790	7.5%	-10.7%	-4.0%
Married-couple family	1,419	1,527	1,524	7.6%	-0.2%	7.4%
With own children under 18	681	712	713	4.6%	0.1%	4.7%
Female householder	217	250	249	15.2%	-0.4%	14.7%
With own children under 18	112	125	50	11.6%	-60.0%	-55.4%
Nonfamily Households	483	577	556	19.5%	-3.6%	15.1%
Householder living alone	414	472	461	14.0%	-2.3%	11.4%
Householder 65 and over	213	211	236	-0.9%	11.8%	10.8%
Households w/pers. under 18	891	982	861	10.2%	-12.3%	-3.4%
Households w/pers. 65 & over	555	669	749	20.5%	12.0%	35.0%
Average household size	2.78	2.83	2.85	1.8%	0.7%	2.5%
Average family size	3.17	3.25	3.21	2.5%	-1.2%	1.3%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2,201</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>2,533</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

## D. Socioeconomic Profile

People's socio-economic status, most notably, education and income, tend to govern tastes and preferences for any choices in daily life. This is also true for their inclinations and fondness for certain recreational activities.

### 1. INCOME

From 1999 to 2016, Dighton's median household income increased 58%, from \$58,600 to \$92,818, the second highest increase amongst its neighboring communities, trailing only Berkley. This rate also surpassed that of Bristol County (36%) and the Commonwealth (41%) during the same period.

**Table 8: Median Household Income, 1999-2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Jurisdiction	1999	2016	Change 1999-2016
Massachusetts	\$50,502	\$70,954	40.5%
Bristol County	\$43,496	\$59,343	36.4%
Berkley	\$66,295	\$95,186	43.6%
<b>Dighton</b>	<b>\$58,600</b>	<b>\$92,818</b>	<b>58.4%</b>
Freetown	\$64,576	\$91,618	41.9%
Rehoboth	\$65,373	\$90,394	38.3%
Somerset	\$51,770	\$68,900	33.1%
Swansea	\$52,524	\$77,531	47.6%
Taunton	\$42,932	\$54,785	27.6%

From 1999 to 2016, Dighton experienced a large increase in the number of high-income households, with households earning \$150,000 to \$199,999 increasing almost 310% and households earning

\$200,000 or more increasing 3,000%\* . In total, approximately 45%, or 1,130, households in Dighton earned more than \$100,000 in 2016. Conversely, approximately 9%, or 216, households in Dighton earned less than \$25,000 in 2016, highlighting the fact that there are still a number of lower-income households in town.

**Table 9: Dighton Household Income Distribution, 1999-2016**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Income Range	1999	2016	Change 1999-2016
Less than \$10,000	56	77	37.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	85	64	-24.7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	181	75	-58.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	250	235	-6.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	264	279	5.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	644	297	-53.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	412	376	-8.7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	224	587	162.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	72	295	309.7%
\$200,000 or more	8	248	3000.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,196</b>	<b>2,533</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

Planning for Open Space and Recreation can only be most effective when the socio-economic characteristics of the town residents are carefully considered. Both education and income are factors that determine and guide the residents’ taste and preferences for the health facilities, recreational amenities, or infrastructure that they may utilize.

**2. POVERTY STATUS/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

While Dighton is a relatively affluent community, approximately 3.9% of the population is living in poverty. However, people 65 years and over are twice as likely to live in poverty than the rest of the adult population. In 2018, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, a single person living in poverty has an annual income of \$12,140 or less and a family of four living in poverty has an annual income of \$25,100 or less.

According to current Census 2010 block group data, Dighton has no federal or state certified environmental justice (EJ) population. The criteria for determining EJ populations include: income - those making 65% or less than the statewide median household income; minority – where 25% of the residents identify as a race other than white, and; English language isolation – where 25% of households have no one over the age of 14 who speaks English only, or very well.

The nearest EJ population to Dighton is found near the downtown area of neighboring Taunton.

**Table 10: Dighton Poverty Rates, 2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Age Group	Age Group Population	Below Poverty	
		Number	Percent
Under 18 years	1,597	43	2.7%
18 to 64 years	4,648	163	3.5%
65 years and over	1,013	75	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,258</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

### 3. OCCUPATION & LABOR FORCE TRENDS

In 2016, approximately 36% of Dighton’s employed population had an occupation in the “management and professional” sector and another 24% of the population had an occupation in the “sales and office” sector. All but five (5) industries saw a decrease in employment from 2000 to 2016, the largest of which, in terms of real numbers, was the manufacturing sector, which experienced a loss of 138 jobs or 28.9%. The industry that experienced the largest increase during this period was the traditional high-paying professional, scientific, management and administrative sector, which experienced a 166% increase.

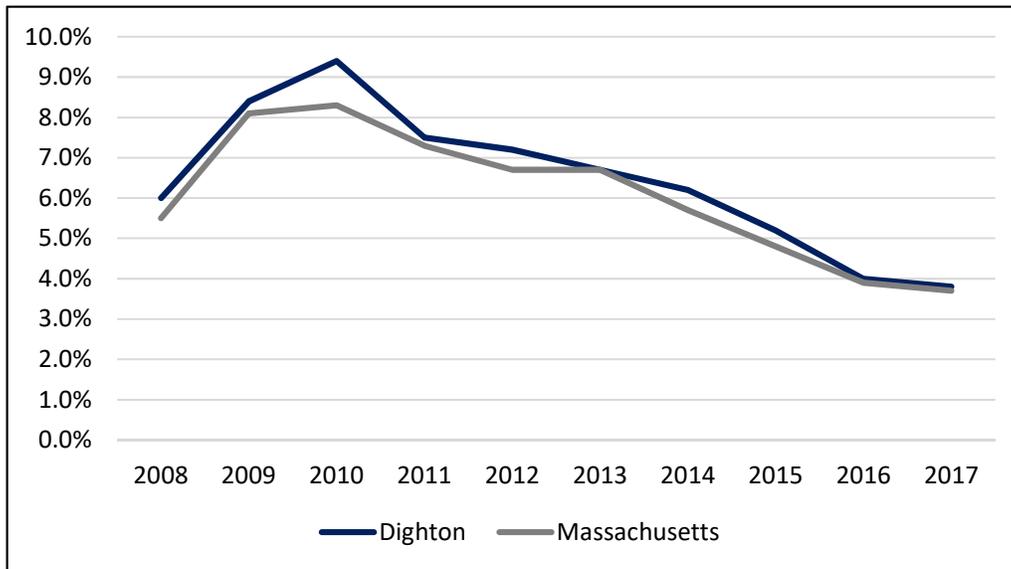
**Table 11: Dighton’s Occupation and Industry Trends, 2000-2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Occupation & Industry	2000	2016	Change 2000-2016
<b>Occupation</b>			
Management, professional, and related occupations	1,141	1,391	21.9%
Service occupations	512	617	20.5%
Sales and office occupations	776	945	21.8%
Natural resources, construction and maint. occupations	435	536	23.2%
Production, transportation, and mat. moving occupations	425	394	-7.3%
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>3,289</b>	<b>3,883</b>	<b>18.1%</b>
<b>Industry</b>			
Construction	293	399	36.2%
Manufacturing	477	339	-28.9%
Wholesale trade	156	104	-33.3%
Retail trade	333	343	3.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	226	309	36.7%
Information	78	48	-38.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	141	184	30.5%
Professional, scientific, mgmt., and admin. svcs.	125	332	165.6%
Educational, health and social svcs.	941	923	-1.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accomm. & food svcs.	163	339	108.0%
Other services (except public administration)	178	174	-2.2%
Public administration	178	389	118.5%
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>3,289</b>	<b>3,883</b>	<b>18.1%</b>

In terms of employment, Dighton’s annual average unemployment rate has closely mirrored the

Commonwealth's over the past 10 years. Dighton's unemployment rate peaked in 2010 at 9.4% as a result of the economic downturn of the mid-to-late-2000s, but has steadily declined to 3.8% in 2017.

**Figure 6: Dighton vs. State Unemployment Rate, 2008-2017**  
*Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development*



#### 4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT & SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

From 2000 to 2016, the level of educational attainment among Dighton's residents has increased prominently, with increases occurring in the number of high school and college graduates (at all levels); the largest increase occurred in the number of people who have obtained graduate or professional degrees, which doubled during this time. Dighton also experienced large decreases in the number of people who have not graduated high school. In general, planning for open space and recreational activities should consider the implications and effects of the town members' educational achievements in order to anticipate their recreational preferences.

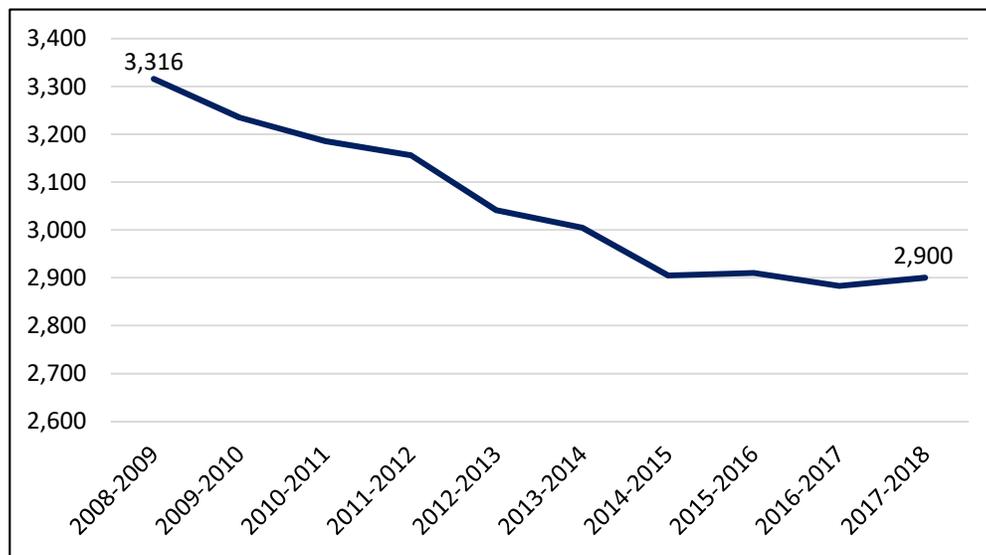
**Table 12: Dighton Educational Attainment, 2000-2016**  
*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Level of Education	2000	2016	Change 2000-2016
Less than 9th grade	187	97	-48.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	398	202	-49.2%
High school graduate	1,259	1,921	52.6%
Some college, no degree	885	1,021	15.4%
Associate's degree	362	447	23.5%
Bachelor's degree	695	781	12.4%
Graduate or professional degree	341	682	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,127</b>	<b>5,151</b>	<b>24.8%</b>

The Town of Dighton is in a regional school district with the neighboring town of Rehoboth. There are a total of five (5) schools in the district, one (1) elementary school and one (1) intermediary school each in Dighton and Rehoboth and a joint high school in Dighton. Students who reside in Dighton also

have the opportunity to attend two other regional high schools - Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School in Taunton and Bristol County Agricultural High School in Dighton. Figure 6 shows that the total number of students enrolled in the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District has declined over the past ten years. The decline in school enrollment is not an anomaly, as many surrounding communities are also experiencing a decline in school enrollment due to a variety of factors, including more students attending vocational schools, charter schools, out-of-district public schools, and private and parochial schools. Also, there are fewer school-age people in general.

**Figure 7: Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District Student Enrollment, 2008-2018**  
*Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*



Overall, the economic features of Dighton should be considered in planning for the community’s open space and recreation. Not only do these features influence residents’ needs and demands for pastime activities and leisure facilities, but also their affordability and preference for their own and their children’s recreational options as well.

## E. Housing Profile

### 1. HOUSING TYPES

Approximately 82% of the housing units in Dighton are single-family, detached homes (1-unit per lot), while the remaining 18% are in structures containing more than one unit. From 2000 to 2016, Dighton’s housing stock grew 19.2%, with detached single-family units comprising the largest number of new housing units, at 72.8% or 319 of the 438 new units. During this same time period, other housing types grew at a faster pace, but resulted in a smaller number of units.

**Table 13: Dighton Housing Types, 2000-2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

Housing Types	2000		2016		Change 2000-2016
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1 unit, detached	1,918	84.1%	2,237	82.3%	16.6%
1 unit, attached	45	2.0%	55	2.0%	22.2%
2 units	104	4.6%	210	7.7%	101.9%
3 or 4 units	117	5.1%	63	2.3%	-46.2%
5 to 9 units	55	2.4%	104	3.8%	89.1%
10 to 19 units	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	N/A
20 or more units	0	0.0%	24	0.9%	N/A
Mobile Home	41	1.8%	25	0.9%	-39.0%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,280</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,718</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>

## 2. HOUSING OCCUPANCY & TENURE

Approximately 93% of Dighton’s 2,718 housing units were occupied and 7% were vacant in 2016. Of the occupied housing units, 90% were owner-occupied and 10% were renter-occupied. The percentage of renter-occupied housing units has decreased by 40% since 2010.

**Table 14: Housing Occupancy & Tenure in Dighton, 2000-2016***U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016)*

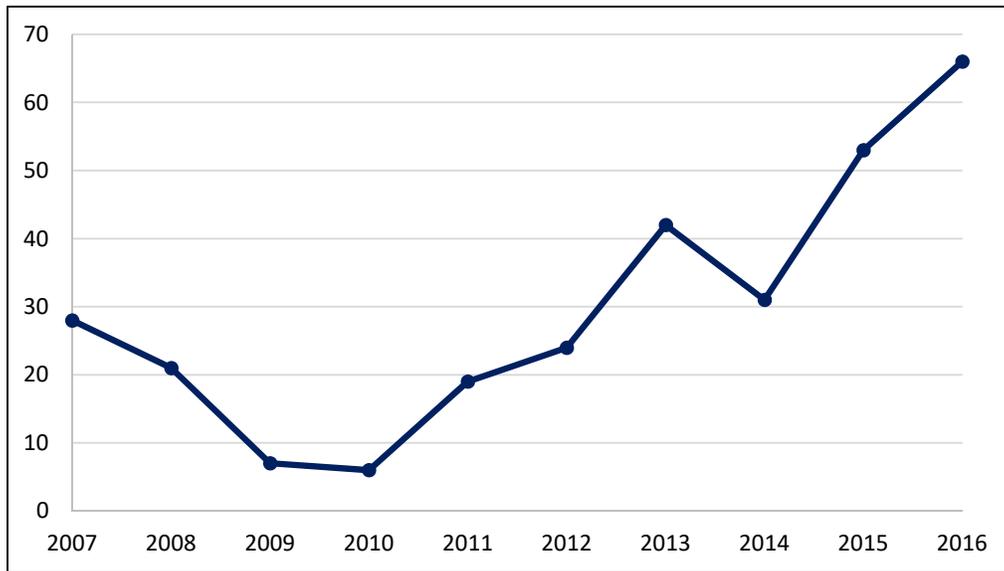
Housing Occupancy & Tenure	2000		2010		2016	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Housing Occupancy</b>						
Total Housing Units	2,280	100.0%	2,591	100.0%	2,718	100.0%
Occupied Housing Units	2,201	96.5%	2,472	95.4%	2,533	93.2%
Vacant Housing Units	79	3.5%	119	4.6%	185	6.8%
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	0.4%	N/A	0.9%	N/A	2.3%	N/A
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	4.1%	N/A	7.3%	N/A	21.5%	N/A
<b>Housing Tenure</b>						
Occupied Housing Units	2,201	100.0%	2,472	100.0%	2,533	100.0%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,849	84.0%	2,104	85.1%	2,288	90.3%
Average size of owner-occupied unit	2.91	N/A	2.95	N/A	2.95	N/A
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	352	16.0%	368	14.9%	245	9.7%
Average size of renter-occupied unit	2.13	N/A	2.15	N/A	1.93	N/A

## 3. BUILDING PERMITS

According to the Massachusetts State Data Center, a total of 297 residential building permits were issued in Dighton between 2007 and 2016. The number of permits issued peaked in 2016, indicating that the town’s residential housing market has fully recovered from the economic downturn of the mid-to-late 2000s, when the number of permits were at their lowest. Despite the issuance 297 permits over the 10-years span, only 2 permits were for multi-family housing.

**Figure 8: Dighton Residential Building Permit Data, 2007-2016**

*UMass Donahue Institute, Massachusetts State Data Center*

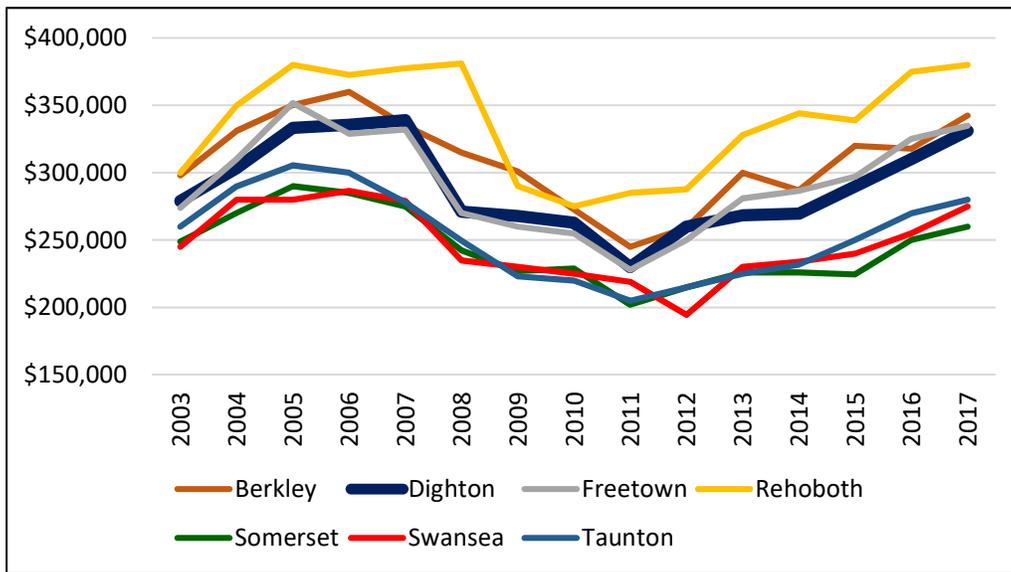


#### **4. HOUSING SALES**

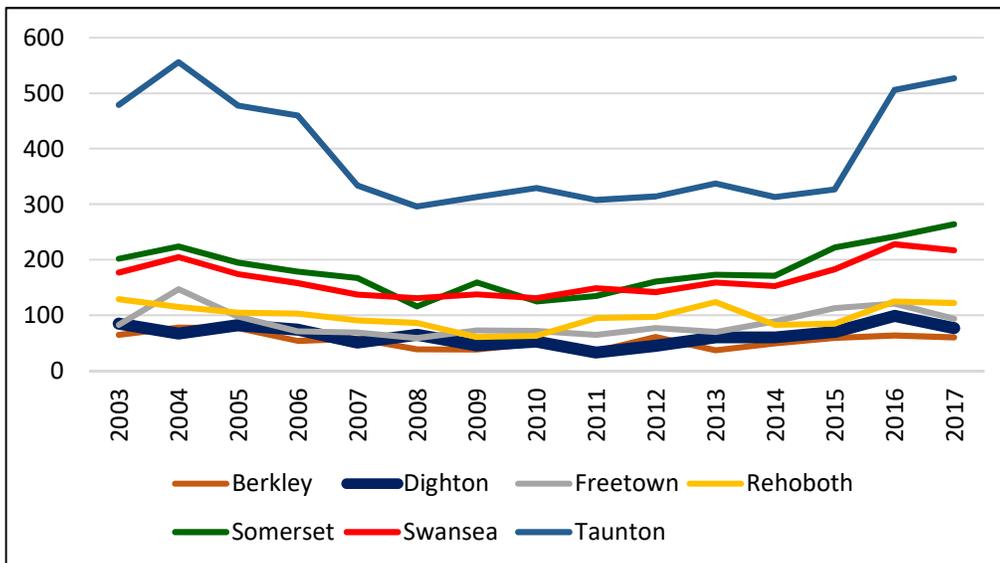
From 2003 to 2017, Dighton’s median sales price for a single family home was the fourth highest when compared to its neighboring communities. Rehoboth, Berkley, and Freetown had a median sales price that was higher than Dighton’s during that period, with Freetown’s only being the slightest bit higher. Thus, Dighton may attract families who strive for good housing and a suburban quality of life. In order to meet this demand as well as provide established town residents with their open space and recreation needs, Open Space and Recreation Plans must have a satisfactory grasp of the town’s overall housing market. Factors, such as a supply of adequate types of housing to shelter all types of households and family structures and the costs involved need considerable attention in this plan.

The number of single-family home sales in Dighton and in most other communities also continue to rebound in the aftermath of the economic downturn of the mid-to-late 2000s; they have either surpassed or are rapidly approaching levels of the early-2000s.

**Figure 9: Median Sales Price of Single-Family Homes, 2003-2017**  
*Warren Group/Banker & Tradesman*



**Figure 10: Trends in Single-Family Home Sales, 2003-2017**  
*Warren Group/Banker & Tradesman*



## F. Growth and Development Patterns

### Patterns and Trends

The Massachusetts Audubon Society’s (MAS) Losing Ground: Planning for Resilience report (2014), contains a statistical profile of land use trends in all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts between 2005 and 2013. In the context of the Audubon report, natural land is defined as forest, wetland, and water; open land is defined as agricultural areas, bare soil, or low vegetation, and; developed land includes low density residential and commercial/industrial/high density residential development. Most of this recent development has occurred throughout town, with proposed solar field development becoming more prominent in recent years. The 86 acres developed between 2005-2013 represented a decrease in comparison to the amount of land consumed by development during the previous MAS

reporting period (241 acres in 2005).

Presently, about 19% of the land in Dighton (2,653 acres) has been developed for residential, commercial, agricultural, or other purposes. Forest, wetlands, and open space presently account for about 81% of the land in Dighton (11,499 acres). Of Dighton's total of 14,188 acres, 418 acres (3%) are permanently protected.

The decline in the amount of active agricultural land in Dighton and communities throughout southeastern Massachusetts, reflects the region's aging farming population and the trends in the lifestyle choices of their heirs. Many older farmers are retiring and their farms are not being retained for agricultural purposes by their heirs. For those who do continue to farm the land, diversification, value-added products, and specialty crops have made agriculture an economically viable pursuit.

The Town adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in April of 2010, and has used it to facilitate historical restoration (Winslow Davis House and one room Schoolhouse), recreational facilities improvements (Somerset Ave. tennis courts, North Dighton Playground), public access (Pleasant Street Boat Ramp), and agricultural preservation (match for the Araujo Farm Agricultural Preservation Restriction). The Dighton Conservation Commission has partnered with SRPEDD and the Taunton Industrial Development Commission to preserve the culturally and historically significant Council Oak field.

## **Infrastructure**

### **a) Transportation**

Dighton has limited access to the regional transportation infrastructure. While there are no four-lane highways in Dighton, the Town has two secondary (two lane) state highways, Route 44 (E-W) which afford the Town access to Providence and Taunton, and Route 138 (N-S), which is the roadway that provides access to Route 44 into Taunton and Route 24. The Dighton Highway Department maintains approximately 60.3 miles of town roads and associated infrastructure. The Town is considered to be within the South Coast Rail Corridor although the closest anticipated rail station will be located in Taunton. By virtue of its location, Dighton is considered a remote town within Bristol County.

The MBTA, since the mid 1990's, has engaged in a very long, studied, and at times, controversial planning process to restore commuter rail service between Fall River, New Bedford, and South Station in Boston. This process took shape in the form of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan (2009). The route alignment plan has been vetted publicly through two extensive federal, state, and local review processes. The preferred alignment would bring the rail from Boston, through Stoughton, Easton, and Taunton before splitting off to New Bedford and continuing on to Fall River. Some preparation work for the proposed rail expansion has been done in New Bedford and Fall River, at the ends of the line, but the entire project may not be realized until 2021 or later.

The Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority, GATRA, headquartered in neighboring Taunton, is the local transit agency, and provides direct service to the Route 138 corridor. GATRA also provides pick-up/demand ride services based upon eligibility.

Bicycle and pedestrian connections and improvements have long been discussed in Dighton, largely in conjunction with the Taunton River Trail Project, which has been part of the SRPEDD Bikeway planning efforts for over two decades. Because of its rural character, including the Route 138 corridor, narrow local roads, and densely forested areas, safety issues present a major hurdle to development of interconnected sidewalks and shared use pathways/bike lanes in some areas.

Since 2017, two major changes have occurred that will change the potential for these on-road and

off-road shared use facilities in Dighton: first, SRPEDD, working with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), National Park Service (NPS) and, the Taunton River Stewardship Council, secured a \$200,000 Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grant to design and engineer a shared use path through Sweets Knoll State Park, along the Taunton River, in Dighton, and; second, is the formation of a formal Dighton Pathways Committee by the Town. The Pathways Committee has been working with the Dighton Open Space Committee, Dighton Highway Department, Taunton Pathways Committee, Town of Somerset, and SRPEDD to help plan connections up and down the proposed trail route.

#### b) Water

The Dighton Water District provides town water to residents and businesses in town via five (5) gravel packed wells, three (3) of which are located off of Cedar Street and two (2) of which are located off of Walker Street. The District is served by a 1.5 million gallon-per day Water Treatment Plant on Williams Street. The District also has emergency interconnections to Somerset and Taunton should the need arise.

The North Dighton Water District (established in 1912 as the North Dighton Fire District Water Department by an act of the state legislature) serves all properties located within the village bounded by Lincoln Street and Forest Street, and is collectively owned by all residents in the District. The North Dighton Water District purchases all of its water from the City of Taunton. Currently, there are 375 residential and 12 commercial accounts within the District.

#### c) Sewer

Dighton depends primarily on on-site wastewater disposal systems throughout town. The Town does have a Sewer Commission and Department. North Dighton is connected to the Taunton Wastewater Treatment Plant along the Three Mile River corridor, and along Route 138 to the center of town.

### **Long-Term Development Patterns**

#### a) Zoning

The majority of Dighton is zoned Residential/Agricultural, with Commercial and Industrial areas along the Route 138 corridor. The Town does have a Water Resource Protection District to protect its municipal wells and recharge areas. The Town also has a Conservation Subdivision bylaw (by special permit), with environmental performance standards and landscaping requirements, to attempt to balance its desire to conserve its natural, cultural, and historical assets with development. Both of these measures should be updated to encourage the use of more nature based planning/solutions as well as more contemporary open space and residential design practices.

In July of 2009, and again in July of 2014, Dighton passed amendments to its Floodplain Districts in order to comply with the new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Draft (2009) and Final (2014) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for the town. The adaptation of supplemental language relevant to the updated maps and reconfigured flood zones provides an additional planning tool for flood prone/at risk areas as well as keeps local homeowners eligible for the state and federal flood insurance programs.

To meet the challenges of flooding and stormwater management, Dighton created a Stormwater Committee. The Stormwater Committee is made up of representatives from all applicable municipal boards, commissions, and departments. The Stormwater Committee has prepared a Stormwater Bylaw, is working on Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation Plans, and is working with

SRPEDD, Mass Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, and Manomet to undertake a comprehensive bylaw review in order to promote and incorporate best environmental practices.

#### b) Priority Protection/Priority Development Areas

Another effort undertaken by the Town, in conjunction with the South Coast Rail Project, and tied to local zoning and planning protocol, is the designation and mapping of Priority Development (PDA) and Priority Protection Areas (PPA) within the community. This community driven planning exercise was originally conducted in 2008 by the three regional planning agencies serving the thirty-one (31) communities addressed in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan. In 2013, the regional planning agencies, including SRPEDD, revisited the original process and choices as part of a five-year update process.

PDAs are areas that are appropriate for increased development or redevelopment due to several factors, including: good transportation access; available infrastructure (primarily sewer and water); an absence of environmental constraints, and; local support. PDAs can range from a single parcel to many acres, and can include small scale infill, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, transit facilities, or other such projects.

PPAs are areas that are important to protect due to the presence of significant natural or cultural resources, including, but not limited to: rare and endangered species habitats; areas critical to water supply; historic areas; scenic vistas, and; agricultural areas. PPAs can also vary greatly in size, from small species dependent areas, to large expanses of intact habitat. These sites may be candidates for protection through acquisition, conservation restriction, or other means. In Dighton, these PPAs occur largely around fairly intact water, wetland, forest, and water supply protection areas, some of which are important to the Town of Somerset's water supply, as well.

A community's Priority Area designations can guide municipal decisions about zoning revisions, infrastructure investments, and conservation efforts. In addition, these Community Priority Area designations are used as the foundation for developing Regional and State Priority Area designations. Finally, in the fall of 2010, the Patrick Administration issued Executive Order 525 (E.O. 525) providing for the implementation of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan and Corridor Map (including PPAs and PDAs) through state agency actions and investments. These state actions have the potential to help leverage local and private investments in the priority areas. (see PPA-PDA: Dighton Community Priority Areas, Appendix C)

## SECTION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY

### A. Topography, Geology and Soils

Dighton is located within the Narragansett/Bristol Lowland Sub-region of the Northeastern Coastal Zone Ecoregion. This sub-region has flat to gentle rolling plains, underlain by both sedimentary and igneous bedrock, with soils derived from an extensive cover of glacial deposits. There is an abundance of wetlands, some cropland, pasture, and some cranberry bogs in the (Taunton-Dighton-Norton) region, along with the many rivers and tributary streams that drain this area.

Elevations in Dighton are relatively low with smooth contours. The topographic differential is only 198 feet where the highest point in town is the summit of Richmond Hill at elevation 198 feet above mean sea level and the lowest point is the mean sea level at the Taunton River. Most of the town is 100 feet above mean sea level or greater and characterized by hilly, often rocky land. In terms of land slope,

Dighton is relatively flat with a few moderately sloping hills in the central and eastern sections of the town. The gradient of most land is between 3 and 8 percent; less than one percent of the total land area has a slope of greater than 15 percent.

Geological deposits in Dighton can be divided into two types – hard bedrock and surficial material. Dighton is located entirely within the Narragansett Rift Basin that consists primarily of Pennsylvanian aged (approximately 300 to 290 million years BP) meta- sedimentary rocks. The dominant type of rock in Dighton is called the Dighton Conglomerate, which is coarse-grained, classic sedimentary rock composed of rounded to sub-angular rock fragments larger than 2 mm, commonly with a matrix of sand and finer materials (often referred to locally as “puddingstone”). The other type of bedrock found in Dighton is called the Rhode Island formation which consists of grayish sandstone, greenish siltstone and (lesser amounts) black shale and coal.

Surficial geologic deposits are primarily glacial in origin but there is also some recent alluvial or floodplain deposits along the Taunton River, organic deposits in swamps and bogs, and human transported materials. Glacial deposits in Dighton consist of till, fluvial, and lacustrine materials. Till covers approximately 69% of Dighton, most of which is located in upland areas, particularly on oval-shaped hills called drumlins, such as Hunters Hill in central Dighton. Till has a very firm or dense layer referred to locally as “hardpan” that has very slow permeability and often causes water to perch above it. Fluvial deposits, also called “outwash”, consist primarily of stratified layers of sand and gravel with minor amounts of silt and clay. Fluvial soils cover approximately 14% of Dighton, primarily along the Taunton River and in valleys. These soils have rapid permeability and are often associated with aquifer recharge areas. Lacustrine is fine (silt and clay) textured material deposits in glacial lakes that have now drained or filled with sediments. The Lacustrine deposit is of relatively low permeability meaning that water does not readily travel through it; therefore, the Lacustrine deposit is the area where percolation from rainfall is expected to accumulate. In terms of soil, Dighton’s soils are primarily wet and stony in the many low-lying swampy areas. Wet or hydric soils are soils that are saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. They are generally associated with wetlands and are subject to protection under state and federal laws. Approximately 36% of Dighton is covered by hydric soils. Stony and sallow soils are characterized by a rocky surface, with bedrock, believed to be within several feet of the surface. These soils are relatively difficult to develop both because of the high cost of ledge excavation and the high water table in shallow soil. As for farmland soils, according to the 1981 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service soil survey approximately 22% of Dighton was covered by prime farmland soils.

## **B. Landscape Characteristics**

Dighton is characterized by three types of dominating landscapes, the river corridor, agricultural landscapes west of the Taunton River particularly along Elm and Smith Streets, and the industrial landscape in North Dighton. While its rivers, wetlands, and forests offer critical habitat to wildlife and important ecological functions such as carbon sequestration and stormwater filtration, open spaces and farmlands, which define the rural character of the town, provide scenic attractions.

Land use patterns in Dighton are interesting to note as the town is divided into squares by the road system with three main north-south routes, four or five east-west routes, and almost no other roads carving up the landscape. The Taunton River forms the eastern boundary of Dighton and is traversed by the Berkley-Dighton Bridge. As the Taunton River is central to the town’s identity, the river corridor as a whole could be considered the town’s most significant landscape.

There are two National Register of Historic Districts within Dighton’s waterfront, the Wharves Historic

District and the nearby Coram Shipyard Historic District (see more detail in the Historic Resources section). Broad Cove is a natural cove on the Dighton/Somerset border adjacent to the Dighton waterfront. It is a highly visible and ecologically valuable area that may have archeological resources associated with either Native American use or with its more recent history as part of Dighton Rock Park, an early 20th century trolley park. It is also a popular local fishing area and functions as a town gathering place.

Richmond Hill, located along Elm Street (also known as Old Bristol Path), is the highest point in Dighton, characterized by huge outcroppings of conglomerate rock known as puddingstone. Another significant landscape feature is the Council Oak Field. This area was traditionally a meeting ground for surrounding sub-tribes of the Wampanoag tribe and was the site where European settlers purchased the land that became Dighton from King Phillip in 1663. The huge oak on the site, which is estimated to be 500 years old, was struck by lightning and is now dying. Adjacent cornfields were used by Native Americans and later by white settlers. With the loss of the oak, this ethnographic landscape is important primarily for its strong associative value.

The industrial landscape in North Dighton is primarily represented by the Mount Hope Finishing Company complex located south of the Three Mile River Dam. The Mount Hope Finishing Company was established by Joseph Milliken in 1901 and remained active until 195 when a strike forced the company to relocate to North Carolina. During its heyday in the 1920's, Mount Hope claimed to be one of the largest textile companies in the country, stretching over ¼ mile along Spring Street in the village of North Dighton.

The area is a well-preserved early 20th century industrial village with mill buildings, housing, and parks that appear to have been planned as a unit and retain a high level of integrity, except that in 2009 a portion of the old mill building complex that was most affected by high heating and maintenance costs was demolished by the current owner. At the wider part of the Three Mile River with dam and falls is the Harodite Finishing Company, located across the river in Taunton. Part of the dam and falls is in Dighton and the relationship of the two finishing companies (Harodite and Mount Hope) is visual as well as historical.

While these natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources are valued very highly by Dighton residents as expressed in the public outreach process, the preservation of rural landscapes, agricultural heritage, and places of historic and cultural interests has consistently been considered as an important attribute of living in Dighton.

## C. Water Resources

### 1. WATERSHED

The Town of Dighton divides neatly into two major watersheds, the Taunton River watershed and the Mount Hope Bay/Narragansett Bay watershed. Most of the town is located within the Taunton River watershed with drainage provided by several rivers, brooks, and streams. The northwest to southeast flowing Segregansett River and its tributaries drain a large part of Dighton into the Taunton River. The southwestern and extreme western part of the town drains into the Narragansett Bay Drainage Basin via the Coles River and low-lying wetland systems.

### 2. SURFACE WATERS

Surface water within the Dighton town boundaries covers about 0.4% of the town's total area, or

about 58.2 acres according to land use data provided by MassGIS. All surface water in Dighton is within the Taunton River watershed, except for a portion of the town in the southeast that is within the Narragansett Bay watershed. Surface water flows in an easterly direction throughout most of the town with a small amount of drainage flowing southwest to the Coles River.

The largest rivers in Dighton, the Taunton River, the Three Mile, Segregansett River, and the Coles River, extend beyond the town boundaries. The Taunton River, which empties into Mount Hope Bay, forms the eastern border of Dighton with Berkley. The Three Mile River, which is a major tributary of the lower Taunton River, forms part of the northern border of Dighton with Taunton. The Segregansett originates from a spring in neighboring rural western Taunton, and the Coles River runs through Swansea to the Narragansett Bay.



## RIVERS

### TAUNTON RIVER

The Taunton River is the longest undammed coastal river in New England. It stretches for approximately 40 miles from the confluence of the Town River and the Matfield River in Bridgewater to

the broad estuary at Mount Hope Bay. Its main stem is tidally influenced from East Taunton to Mount Hope Bay and saltwater intrusion extends upriver to the Dighton, to the confluence of the Taunton and Three Mile River. Named “the Great River” by early Europeans, the Taunton River supported early riverfront settlements and mill villages along the river that later evolved into the cities of Taunton and Fall River. At the turn of the 19th century the Taunton River was home to major resorts in Dighton and Assonet featuring amusement rides, picnic areas, dance pavilions, and clambakes. The River had a prominent role in late-19th century recreational activities. Small pleasure crafts filled the river, canoe houses and yachting and boat clubs were built along its riverbanks. In addition, the Taunton River is home to an incredible diversity of vegetation and wildlife habitats. It is considered by federal, state, and local environmental agencies and organizations to be one of the most ecologically diverse rivers and river corridors in the state. This, along with its prominent role in the history, culture, recreation, and economy of its mainstem communities, earned the Taunton River its designation as the first Massachusetts Heritage River in 2002, and federal Wild & Scenic River designation in 2009.

### SEGREGANSETT RIVER

This river originates in west Taunton and runs across Dighton as a major tributary of the Taunton River. It drains in a southeasterly direction into the Taunton River. Currently this is the Town of Somerset’s source of drinking water, where the Somerset Water Department manages and owns nearly 184 acres of land along the river banks for watershed protection purposes.

### THREE MILE RIVER

This river is also a major tributary of the Taunton River that drains in a southeasterly direction and runs across the northeastern political boundary between North Dighton and Taunton. Remnants of major industry can be found along the river banks. A relatively new herring run was built on the stretch along Lincoln Avenue. In 2008, following a three-year campaign led by a coalition of citizens from Norton, Taunton, and Dighton, working with the regional planning agency, the Three Mile River Watershed was declared an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. In Dighton, this area includes the Three Mile River corridor in North Dighton, leading to the confluence with the Taunton River.

### COLES RIVER

This is the only river in Dighton that is not part of the Taunton River Watershed. Rather it is a tributary of the Narragansett Bay Watershed and therefore drains there. This river flows from the southwestern portion of Dighton into the Town of Swansea. The Dighton Water District manages and owns the Town’s Cedar Street wells, which are located just east of the Coles River.

### BROAD COVE

This brackish cove, located on the southern political boundary of Dighton and the Town of Somerset, along the Taunton River, is a great local fishing spot. Broad Cove is an important part of the Taunton river as it contains a large amount of the river’s salt marsh. For many years Dighton Conservation Commission and the Town of Somerset have been working to purchase all the land around Broad Cove. The town of Dighton currently owns 48 acres around the cove. The goal of these land purchases has been both to protect the fragile wetlands of Broad Cove and to provide recreation opportunities for residents. Currently, the Towns of Dighton and Somerset are working on developing a hiking trail around the cove, including an elevated boardwalk and observation platforms.



*Natural Green Infrastructure: marsh during high tide at Broad Cove on the lower Taunton River, east side of Route 138 in Dighton.*

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### 3. FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The 100-year floodplains delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps generally surround the rivers throughout Dighton. These floodplains in Dighton are protected by a Flood Hazard Overlay District (FHOD), which encourages non-intensive uses such as agriculture, forestry, and recreation. Vulnerable areas in Dighton include the Lincoln Avenue, Briggs Street, Spring Street, areas along the Segregansett River, and land along the Taunton River in places like Tricentennial Park, and the lower fields at Bristol County Agricultural High School.

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### 4. EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION

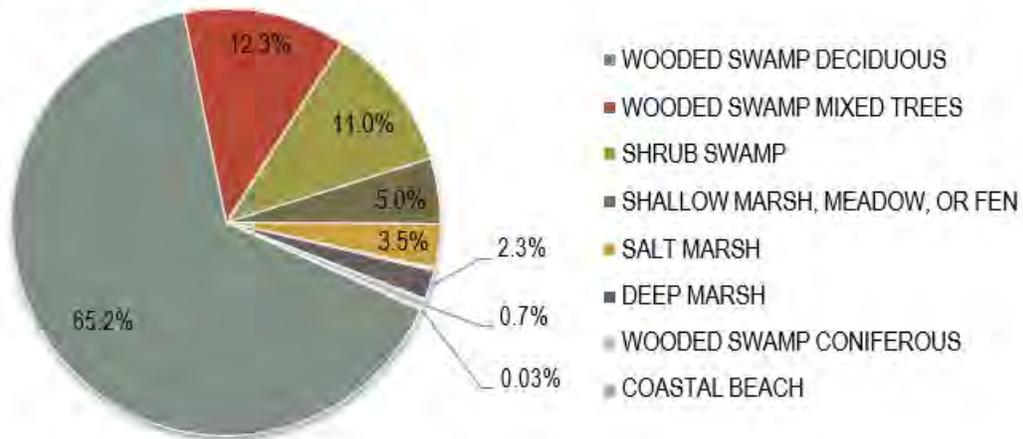
Erosion is a problem on the shoreline along the lower Taunton River estuary, and along the tidally influenced Segregansett River, particularly resulting from storm surge and flood events. The Dighton Boat Ramp area is also susceptible to erosion, as is the seawall area at Lincoln Avenue.

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### 5. WETLANDS

Wetlands are another important water resource in Dighton that play a significant role in the protection of public and private water supply, flood control, prevention of pollution, and provision of wildlife habitat. According to the latest (January 2009) Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Wetlands datalayer provided by MassGIS, there are approximately 2314.5 acres of wetlands, excluding open water, that are subject to protection under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act (MGL Ch. 131, Sec. 40) in Dighton. The majority of the wetland resources in Town are wooded swamp deciduous (65.2%) and wooded swamp mixed trees (12.3%) wetlands as shown in Figure 4-1.

**Figure 4-1 Wetland Types in Dighton, MA**



Source: MassGIS

The Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act requires a 100-foot buffer zone around protected wetland areas, with the exception of perennial rivers and streams, which have 200 feet of riverfront jurisdiction per the Massachusetts River Protection Act. The Town of Dighton has been proactive in terms of wetland protection. At the Town’s 2001 annual meeting, the Town’s people voted to adopt local wetlands protection bylaws. No subsurface sewage disposal system will be permitted within the 100-foot buffer zone of any wetland or within 200 feet of any perennial stream. No dwelling or structure shall be built less than 50 feet from the outer edge of any wetland. In addition, a 25-foot minimum undisturbed vegetated buffer zone will be required to protect wetlands and wildlife. The Dighton Conservation Commission is responsible for the local administration, implementation, and enforcement of the wetland protection bylaws.

## 6. PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

Dighton Water District receives water from 5 active wells located in the town of Dighton and water purchased from the Taunton Water Department. The wells from the Dighton Water District are within two Zone II protection areas and an IWPA. The Zone II area for the Walker Street wells extends in to the Town of Taunton and the Zone II for the Cedar Street wells extends into the Town of Swansea. Each of the wells has a Zone I of 400 feet. These wells are located in an aquifer with high vulnerability to contamination due to the absence of hydrogeological barriers, such as clay, that can prevent contaminant migration. Dighton Water District has been experiencing water quality problems at the well sources and in the distribution system, primarily caused by contaminants like iron, manganese and natural organic matter. Source Water Quality data from previous studies did not implicate risks of non-compliance for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Synthetic Organic Compounds (SOCs) which usually originate from manufactured solvents, petroleum byproducts, pesticides, and herbicides and migrate to a well through the porous aquifer material such as sand and gravel. Chloroform was detected at concentrations well below what would be considered a risk. Small amounts of Inorganic heavy metals have been reported. Additional data also revealed that these well supplies have very low or non-detectable levels of nitrate/nitrite, which usually originate from surface disposal of human waste, livestock yards and agricultural areas with fertilizer application.

The existing well supply in Dighton is inadequate to meet projected growth and demand on the

water system without addition of new well supply(s). The 2001 report of the Dighton Water District recommended increasing water supply capacity through either identification of a new source of supply within the Cedar Street well aquifer or at another site in Dighton.

## D. Vegetation and Wildlife

Dighton has the typical plant communities found in the Taunton River Corridor, such as forested riparian wetlands, non-forested riparian wetlands like floodplain meadow, shrub swamp and shallow marsh, forested and non-forested palustrine wetlands, and various upland forested and non-forested plant communities.

### 1. FOREST AND TREES

Forests are mostly central hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. It is a goal of the town to increase tree health and address tree mortality through collaboration with state and national organizations. This involves an increased understanding of the potential changes to the specific woodland systems in Dighton due to the impacts of climate change.

The town is looking to promote actions that will encourage the ongoing preservation, maintenance and planting of trees in the community, and, forest stewardship.

### 2. ESTIMATED HABITATS/RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

According to the 2012 report of BioMap 2, a comprehensive biological resource inventory program led by the Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, Dighton has a total of 5 species of Conservation Concerns included on the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) list based on their rarity, population trends, and threats to survival.

#### SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN OBSERVED IN DIGHTON INCLUDE:

##### Insects

a. Butterflies

[Hessel's Hairstreak](#), (*Callophrys hesseli*), SC

b. Amphibians

[Marbled Salamander](#), (*Ambystoma opacum*), T

[Four-toed Salamander](#), (*Hemidactylium scutatum*), Non-listed SWAP

c. Fishers

[Atlantic Sturgeon](#), (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*), E

d. Birds

[Barn Owl](#), (*Tyto alba*), SC

e. Plants

Long's Bitter-cress, (*Cardamine longii*), E

E = Endangered

T = Threatened

SC = Special Concern

S1 = Critically Imperiled communities, typically 5 or fewer documented sites or very few remaining acres in the state.

S2 = Imperiled communities, typically 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.

S3 = Vulnerable communities, typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.

The fauna of Dighton is linked directly to the quantity, quality, and diversity of soils, water, and vegetation. The NHESP has mapped out Priority and Estimated Habitats of Rare and Endangered Species to indicate the geographic extent of the habitat of state-listed rare species. Priority Habitat areas are the filing trigger for project proponents, municipalities, and all others for determining whether or not a proposed project or activity must be reviewed by the NHESP for compliance with MESA and its implementing regulations.

BioMap 2 further identifies Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscape in Massachusetts cities and towns. The latest BioMap2 report indicates that Dighton has a total of 2,752 acres of Core Habitat and 5,473 acres of Critical Natural Landscape, of which 5.4% and 3.2%, respectively, are protected (see Primary Wildlife Habitats Map).

## **E. Vernal Pools**

Vernal pools are another important component of Dighton's ecosystem. As temporary bodies of fresh water, vernal pools provide critical habitat for many vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife species. Many of the species which are entirely dependent on vernal pool habitats are listed by the state as rare species. According to the latest data from MassGIS, there are 10 vernal pools in Dighton that have been officially certified by Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to date. In addition, another 202 potential vernal pools have been identified through interpretation of aerial photographs.

## **F. Coldwater Fisheries Resources**

In October of 2014, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) provided communities with another important conservation planning tool, an online map of Coldwater Fisheries Resources (CFR). Coldwater streams are state classified as Critical Areas, and they are certified by DEP under its "Outstanding Resource Water" Programs. These streams provide important habitat for a number of species, including trout. Trout are a very important indicator species in gauging the health of a coldwater stream as they are typically more sensitive to changes in temperature, water quality, and stream flow within their resident streams. The CFR database is derived from fish samples collected annually by DFW staff biologists and technicians. The hope is to update the database as new streams are sampled annually by staff.

The current CFR database shows a state certified coldwater fishery, running the length the Segregansett River from its source in Taunton, to its confluence with the Taunton River, in Dighton. Threats to CFRs include roadway runoff, cutting of streamside vegetation, and other activities that can reduce the amount of shading and increase the stream's temperature. Small breaks in streamside vegetation can affect the entire reach of a coldwater stream. An even greater threat to CFRs may be the general lack of awareness of where these critical resources are located within the Dighton area.

## G. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

### 1. TAUNTON RIVER: A STATE HERITAGE RIVER, FEDERAL WILD & SCENIC RIVER, AND PART OF THE STATE'S WAMPANOAG COMMEMORATIVE CANOE PASSAGE

*Taunton River.* The Taunton River is the longest undammed coastal river in New England at approximately forty miles with a watershed that drains 562 square miles and touches forty-three cities and towns. It is tidal up to Taunton's Weir Village Riverfront Park, which is fourteen miles north of Mount Hope Bay. It is a federally-designated Wild & Scenic River (2009), state-designated Heritage River (2002), and is part of the state designated Wampanoag Commemorative Canoe Passage (1976), a water route used by the Native Americans to travel from Massachusetts Bay in Scituate to the Mount Hope / Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. The river is a major recreational resource, classified as fishable and swimmable (Class B) and has numerous public access points.

### 2. THREE MILE RIVER AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC)

The Three Mile River flows approximately eight miles in a southwest direction from the confluence of the Rumford and Wading rivers in the Town of Norton, through the City of Taunton and the Town of Dighton, where it converges with the Taunton River. The Three Mile River watershed is rich in history, biology, scenery and recreation, fisheries and agriculture. Perhaps the most important feature of the Three Mile River Watershed is its function. Draining from the Rumford and Wading River Watersheds to the Taunton River, the Three Mile River is a critical link between a state designated ACEC (the Three Mile River ACEC), a federally designated Wild & Scenic River (the Taunton River), and a federally recognized estuary and embayment (Narragansett Bay).

According to GIS data, the final designated Three Mile River Watershed ACEC boundary includes approximately 14,276 acres. The approximate acreage located in each municipality is as follows:

Dighton - 125 acres

Norton - 5,400 acres

Taunton - 8,751 acres

### 3. THE LOWER TAUNTON RIVER CORRIDOR

The Heritage Landscape Inventory boundaries for the Lower Taunton River corridor include an approximately 3-mile long section of the river and its adjacent land in Dighton. Land adjacent to the Lower Taunton River in Dighton is largely unspoiled with long stretches of undeveloped open land and marsh in the northern half of the corridor, as well as along the Berkley side of the river. Historic land use along much of the Lower Taunton River was agricultural. With its gently rolling agricultural fields, the Bristol County Agricultural High School campus is a reminder of the river's historic, pastoral landscape. The Berkley~ Dighton Bridge offers extended views of the river to the north and south.

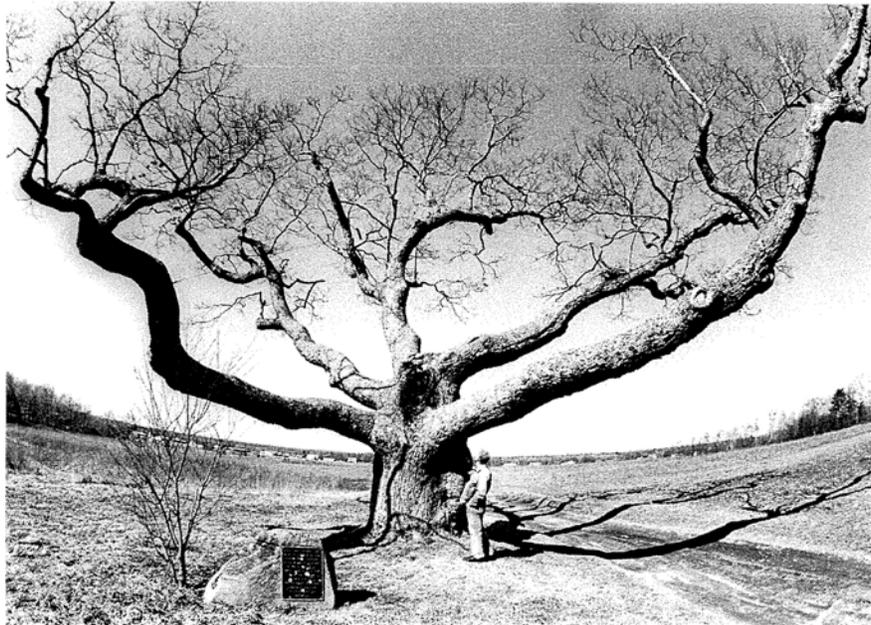
One of the important structural features contributing to the topography in the Lower Taunton River drainage is the Dighton Syncline, one of three east-northeast trending ridges in the Narragansett Basin. The approximate location of this syncline is marked by the hilly, upland terrain several miles west of the Lower Taunton River in the towns of Dighton and Rehoboth.

There are 5 Massachusetts Historical Commission Resource Areas in Dighton that fall within the Lower Taunton River corridor: Center Street Area, Segreganset, Main Street Area, Bridge Village Historic District, Dighton Wharves Historic District, and Coram Shipyard Historic District. The latter two areas are National Register Historic Districts.

#### 4. THE COUNCIL OAK AND COUNCIL OAK FIELD

Dighton Council Oak was located on a 0.5-acre parcel, adjacent to a 8+ acre agricultural field (part of the historic Council Oak Field) owned by the Town of Dighton, in the southeastern section of the town. The tree was situated in an open field, just north of Main Street between Elm Street and Milk Street, on a south-facing plateau, affording panoramic, scenic views. The Taunton River lies just over a mile to the east and Sally Richmond Brook (with reservoir) to the south.

Over the last 43 years, the Council Oak has been gradually declining. The tree suffered unrecoverable damage caused by Hurricane Gloria and other storms. In recent years, lightning struck the oak leaving only a portion of its substantial trunk. The Council Oak stood in the center of a rich agricultural area located at the edge of “the old Indian Settlement,” reportedly the only Native American settlement of any size in Dighton. Historically referred to as the “Old Field,” this large cleared area was situated between the Segregansett River and Muddy Brook. The field extended roughly one mile west of Elm Street, which approximates the alignment of a Native American trail later known as the “Old Plymouth to Bristol Path” or “Old Bristol Path.” Councils and powwows were held at the tree. Traditional accounts reported Great Sachem Massasoit gave the order to feed the Pilgrims from under Dighton Council Oak. Additionally, Massasoit would meet under the tree with his two sons, King Phillip and Alexander. King Phillip visited the Council Oak to hold council with the Pocassetts, the group believed to have had their settlement in Dighton. Also referred to as the Charter Oak, the tree marks the site where the Dighton Charter was signed in 1663.



*Dighton Council Oak and Chief Windsong Blake, Assonet Band, ca. early 1990s.*

*Photograph by Raven Littleriver.*

## H. Environmental Challenges

### 1. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

Dighton, as many communities, has a number of contaminated sites resulting from former industrial uses. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP) has currently inventoried 40 reportable chemical releases from 1993 through the present in Dighton, most of which

are associated with oil or hazardous materials. One such site is the Zeneca Inc. site, which is still in cleanup process.

While these sites are in various stages of remediation, most are in the Response Action Outcome (RAO) compliance status, meaning that immediate actions were taken on these sites that were sufficient to contain the spill to the point of posing no significant risk to the public. Three of the 40 sites in Dighton are currently listed as Mass DEP Tier Classified Chapter 21E sites that have not achieved a permanent cleanup within a year of being reported.

## **2. WATER POLLUTION**

Water pollution, in both surface water and ground water, is a growing concern in Dighton as in many other communities. Small sources of contamination such as failed septic systems, golf courses, construction sites, residential lawn manicuring and hazardous waste sites pose a staggering threat to Dighton's water resources. Nonpoint source pollution (NPS pollution) generally exists in Dighton as well which usually comes from many diffuse sources. It is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground while picking up and carrying away natural and human-made pollutants and eventually depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground waters.

## **3. DEVELOPMENT IMPACT**

Though Dighton has seen slower growth compared to its neighboring towns, new developments over the years are encroaching on what Dighton is known for, its rural setting. Unplanned and uncontrolled new development will always have negative impacts on the town's natural resources. For example, to meet building codes and Title V restrictions basement floor and septic systems must be located at an elevation above high water table. In most case large amounts of fill are needed to increase the elevation of land, which destroys natural low land areas where surface water runoff would be filtered before entering water supply areas.

## **4. IMPACT OF THE DESALINATION PLANT**

The first desalination facility in Massachusetts, the Taunton River Desalination Plant, was developed in North Dighton in 2008 by Aquaria Water LLC, in order to provide high-quality drinking water to the City of Brockton, MA, which has suffered from long term water supply shortage, as well as the surrounding communities in Southeastern Massachusetts. This desalination facility, located on south of the confluence of Three Mile River and Taunton River, operates at a 5 to 10-million-gallon-per-day capacity and utilizes reverse osmosis to produce potable water from a tidal reach of the Taunton River. The distribution system involves 16-mile long, 20-inch diameter water pipeline that extends from the Taunton River Desalination Plant in Dighton through the City of Taunton and Towns of Raynham, Easton and West Bridgewater, connection to the City of Brockton's municipal water system.

There are a number of environmental concerns associated with the operation of the desalination plant, including but not limited to effects of brine discharge on water quality and aquatic resources, impacts from withdraw on aquatic resources in Taunton River such as the entrapment of organisms on exclusionary screening device, direct impacts on wetlands and endangered plant species. There are a number of water quality, fisheries, and vegetation monitoring programs in place to evaluate the security of the water supply and measure the impacts on the Taunton River. Further mitigation efforts are needed to ensure protection of lands along the riparian corridor of the River at a regional level.

## **5. CREATING A MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITY**

Resilience is essentially the community's capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover

from significant multi-hazard threats (severe storms, flooding, etc.) with a minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment. Ecological and economic resilience go hand in hand.

In the Open Space and Recreation Plan, an inventory of our natural resources/natural green infrastructure includes a network of wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitats, forests, agriculturally significant soils, and other natural areas that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, and sustain air and water quality. Our natural green infrastructure also contributes to the general health and quality of life of the community, provides recreational opportunity, and supports our cultural/heritage landscapes.

Low Impact Development (LID) planning practices, such as the use of bioretention, infiltration, porous pavement, rain gardens, and other engineered systems, are designed to mimic natural processes/natural green infrastructure, and can provide many environmental, social, and economic benefits (stormwater/flood control, urban heat island mitigation, energy demand reductions). The great opportunity here is to employ the natural green infrastructure and connectivity planning of our open space with the areas that would benefit from these engineered mitigation practices.

In terms of building community resilience, open space has become even more valuable for its function, particularly where we can retain large intact areas and native vegetation. How we plan for and prioritize our open space acquisition and preservation going forward, particularly in the most vulnerable parts of our community (coastal areas, flood prone areas, vulnerable populations), should be central to all of our municipal planning.

Some of the measures that our town can take to become more resilient include:

- A. Complete the field inventory of culverts and bridges to rank and prioritize projects for increased flooding resiliency and storm-hardening, followed by design and implementation of priority re-sizing or replacement projects. Road stream crossings town wide should be monitor and repaired and replaced as necessary to adapt to increasing stream flooding. Green infrastructure, Low-Impact Design, and other nature-based solutions will be integrated with hard-infrastructure improvements to establish approaches that will be robust in the face of natural hazards and climate-change scenarios.
- B. Conduct dam assessments, identify privately-owned dams, and study feasibility of dam removals where other aging, public or privately-owned dams may pose a threat of failure and flooding, or where removal may have significant positive impacts on stream habitat and aquatic organism passage or for increasing flood storage and flood control possibilities. Identify owners of private dams throughout Town. Study risk/cost/benefit for dams town wide and formulate maintenance and action plan.
- C. Evaluate options for Muddy Cove Brook Dam, including repair, improvement, or removal.
- D. Study the Segreganset River hydrological system to understand potential ongoing/future stream migration and to inform future improvements and adaptations in road/stream crossings, buffer regulations, land conservation actions and other adaptation methods.
- E. Conduct strategic planning to support regional agriculture in the face of climate change. All of the identified hazards (flooding, ice and snow, drought and extreme precipitation, and extreme weather events) have the potential to significantly impact agricultural production, with corresponding threats to livelihoods and food availability. Planning should address hazard resiliency and approaches to support local agricultural adaptation in the face of climate change impacts by providing outreach, information and connect growers with local

buyers to shorten supply chains.

- F. Increase tree health and address tree mortality through collaboration with state and national organizations to understand the forecast of changes to the specific woodland systems in Dighton and to plan for actions that will minimize negative impacts to infrastructure and environment.
- G. Assess cost-effective green infrastructure opportunities for stormwater management to develop a list of specific priority projects where reduction of stormwater runoff could mitigate flooding risk without the need to conduct expensive culvert replacement and resizing projects. Assess feasibility and cost, rank priority projects in terms of climate resilience potential, and develop concept designs for key projects. Review Town regulations and update as necessary to support green infrastructure and low-impact development approaches. Identify potential funding sources.
- H. Increase public awareness programs related to vector-borne diseases, such as EEE, West Nile, and Lyme Disease, to educate residents on the risks and warning signs of these diseases. This should include programs targeted at residents to increase awareness of new diseases and encourage early testing. Develop local funding and resources to make it easier for residents to have ticks tested when a biting tick is found.
- I. Develop a comprehensive tree and forests management program to identify, remove, and replace problem trees, preserve intact forests and street tree cover, provide guidance and resources for gradually moving toward more climate-resilient trees and forest communities (e.g. species that will tolerate warmer temperatures), and develop guidelines to manage conversion of forest land (e.g. solar guidelines).
- J. Seek to establish resilient natural infrastructure to meet the effects of climate change
- K. Engage the community in exploration of stormwater management approaches for the Three Mile River watershed, focusing on upstream green infrastructure and stormwater reduction. Identify approaches to stormwater management consider the Town's future land use plans and coordinate with the City of Taunton.
- L. Address flooding on Route 138 near Muddy Cove Brook, Broad Cove, Bachelor Brook, the Segreganset River and at the Dighton/Taunton line. Consider options for bridge and culvert repair or replacement. Green infrastructure, Low-Impact Design, and other nature-based solutions should be explored to establish approaches that will be robust in the face of natural hazards and climate-change scenarios.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY**

Environmental equity considers the distribution of the conservation, recreation and open space resources in a community, with particular consideration given to availability to populations who are underserved or live in state recognized Environmental Justice areas. While Dighton contains no Environmental Justice populations, the Open Space Planning Committee realizes that the grid style layout of Dighton's road network, along with its largely rural and forested landscapes, create some access/equity issues (primarily distance related), there are discussions to create new opportunities in town, as well as to increase the quality, capacity, and physical accessibility to existing facilities.

## SECTION 5: INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Open space preservation is critically important. It affords the local population an opportunity to enjoy the benefits of more rural landscapes and associated activities as well as relief from the constraints of excessive urbanization. Open space also serves a vital role as a buffer between land uses, for flood control, community resilience, and as habitats for desirable plant and wildlife species.

Protected land includes:

- A. Any land that is specifically designated for conservation purposes under MGL Chapter 40, Section 8C (Conservation Commission Act), contains a conservation restriction under MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33, designated for conservation or recreation purposes purchased with LAND grant funds (or former Self Help or Urban Self Help Grant funds funding under MGL Chapter 132A, Sections 2B and the implementing regulations 301CMR7.00)
- B. State-owned wildlife habitat land and water department land held for aquifer protection, and recreation land is protected under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution. All other municipally-owned land is defined as land not committed to conservation purposes, or parks not dedicated under MGL Chapter 45, Sections 3 and 14, and therefore are not protected under Article 97.
- C. The majority of land acquired using the aforementioned laws and funding sources consists of municipal and government land holdings and is referred to as “public open space land” in this document. There are private landowners, like land trusts, whose land is also permanently protected and open to the public. This land is referred to as ‘private open space land” in this document.

Sometimes the term “conservation” land is used when residents are looking for information about wetlands. This is a very common mistake. Conservation land is land that is owned or managed by the Conservation Commission while wetlands describe the physical and biological characteristics of land regulated under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act. While some wetlands might be protected as conservation land, not all conservation land contains wetlands. When purchasing property, it is prudent to conduct due diligence and research the property at the Town Hall, particularly if the real estate agent or the seller mentions “conservation” land or wetland.

The distinction between active and passive recreation (defined below) has not always been clear to the public or local officials, but it is very important when dealing with land under the management of the Conservation Commission or under the management of the Recreation Commission. By law, only passive recreation is allowed on land owned or managed by the Conservation Commission.

**Passive Outdoor Recreation**, per the MA Division of Conservation Service’s (DCS) recently revised definition (per 301 CMR 5.00), is any outdoor activity that occurs in a natural setting with minimum disturbance of the natural and cultural resources, and that is consistent with quiet enjoyment of the land including, but not limited to, hiking, nature study, outdoor education, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, trail bicycling, hunting, fishing, picnicking, canoeing, ice-skating, community gardening in existing fields, swimming in a natural water body with minimal site development, or informal sports activities on an open natural field. For the purposes of eligibility and reimbursement under these regulations snowmobiling may be considered passive outdoor recreation if the municipality determines that it is compatible with other activities. Facilities necessary to support

passive recreation with a minimum of disturbance to the natural and cultural resources, such as natural surface trails and wood roads, and appropriately-scaled parking areas, bathrooms, and nature centers, are considered consistent with passive outdoor recreation. Passive outdoor recreation areas may also be managed for sustainable forestry and farming, including community farms and forests.

The definition of **Active Outdoor Recreation** has also been revised by DCS (per 301 CMR 5.00) to include any outdoor recreation that occurs in parks and requires significant alteration of the natural landscape to provide playground or active sports facilities, such as: tennis, basketball or other court sports; ballfields; swimming pools or spray pads; paved bike or walking trails; golf courses; marinas; enclosed dog parks; boat rentals; concession stands; community gardens; outdoor skating rinks; bathroom buildings; bleachers or stands, or; other developed facilities needed for active outdoor recreation.

A conservation restriction is a deed restriction that permanently protects property as open space. Landowners can donate a conservation restriction to the Conservation Commission; sometimes the development rights can be sold to the Conservation Commission instead. The DCS, acting on behalf of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), approves the language of the restriction and the owner records the conservation restriction at the Registry of Deeds with the property. Even if the property changes hands the restriction will remain in place. A number of land owners place conservation restrictions on their property to ensure that their family's land will remain in its natural state even after they have passed.

#### *OPEN SPACE AND LAND INVENTORY*

Open space includes a variety of land types that provide numerous benefits not only to the Town and its residents, but to the region as a whole. Open space value includes aesthetics, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and economic vitality. It also plays an important part in shaping community identity and enhancing the quality of life.

An inventory of lands that are important to the Town in terms of their current status as either open space and/or recreational areas. Private sites have been included in this inventory, although the open space or recreational use of these sites is not guaranteed. These undeveloped parcels may provide aesthetic appeal, may contribute to the Town's rural character, or may be an important part of the Town's natural resource base.

The Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) defines protected lands as lands that are public or semi-public parcels that are permanently reserved for conservation purposes (not all publicly owned land falls under this category).

Unprotected lands contain a mixture of Town owned and private land. Town owned land is all land not committed for conservation purposes. Private land refers to land enrolled in MGL Chapters 61, 61A, 618, and other private lands that add significantly to the open space profile of the Town.

The unprotected lands in the Town have been divided into six sub-categories:

- park and recreation land
- conservation land
- multi-purpose open space land;
- Chapter 61B Recreation Lands;
- Chapter 61A Agriculture Land; and,

- Chapter 61 Forest Lands.

The owner, location, map and parcel, size of the parcel, recreational potential, public and handicapped access, current use of the site, degree of protection, condition, means of purchase (grant source, etc.), and zoning, for each parcel, is included in the **Inventory of Lands of Conservation Interest in Appendix D** of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### *CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS*

It is not commonly known that land purchased or designated and used for conservation purposes is not always protected in perpetuity from development. The best way to ensure a parcel's perpetual protection is to place language in the deed to that effect. Such language is known as a "conservation restriction, or CR)", and is one of the major land protection tools being used today. A conservation restriction may be owned by a non-profit land trust or another non-profit organization including the town itself; it does not necessarily have to be held by the owner of the land. In many cases, a land trust may hold a conservation restriction on land that is owned by a private landowner or even on land that is owned by the town or state. Conservation Restriction may vary in duration and therefore expire after a period of time (often referred to as a "sunset clause"). In order to ensure perpetual protection, a permanent conservation restriction should be assigned to the deed and recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

It is very important to remember that land used for conservation and recreation is not always protected and can be developed by the municipality at any time, provide the appropriate legal steps are followed. According to state law, land acquired for the purposes of natural resource protection cannot be converted to any other use without the following actions:

1. The matter must be taken up at Town Meeting or City Council and pass by a 2/3 vote;
2. the city/town must file an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with EEA's MEPA Unit; and,
3. the matter must pass by a 2/3 vote of the Massachusetts Legislature.

Finally, if the land was acquired with assistance from one of the EEA's Division of Conservation Service's funding programs, the converted land must be replaced with land of equal monetary value and recreational or conservation utility.

These steps are meant to ensure that land acquired for conservation and recreation remains protected, however if these steps are adhered to, it is possible to change a parcel's designation and that possibility scares many open space planners. It is conceivable that future politics and municipal land use needs may change a city or town's approach to conservation and recreation parcels, and develop them for other purposes. Also, many parcels do not have clear deed language, or even if they do, their land use status not always known by land planners. Therefore, for the purposes of open space planning, these parcels must be perceived and treated as unprotected land until a thorough deed examination is conducted. The Town should research all publicly owned land to establish its land use (conservation and recreation) status. Lands that are not legally protected in perpetuity should have a permanent conservation restriction assigned to their deed and recorded with the Registry of Deeds.

Conservation Restrictions are the easiest and most reliable means of ensuring the perpetual protection of land. The Town should work in conjunction with land trusts and other private land conservation organizations to acquire conservation restrictions on all unprotected municipal lands.

### *AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION UNDER MGL CHAPTERS 61, 61A, AND 61B*

The agricultural and horticultural land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61A is designed to encourage the preservation of the state's valuable farmland and promote

active agricultural and horticultural land use. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long-term commitment to farming. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification. Under Chapter 61, a city or town is also given an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any purpose other than to continue raising farm products.

Eligible property must consist of at least 5 contiguous acres of land under the same ownership and be “actively devoted” to agricultural or horticultural land use under Chapter 61A. Land is used for agricultural or horticultural purposes if it is used primarily and directly to raise or grow the following for sale in the regular course of business:

- Animals, including, but not limited to dairy cattle, beef cattle, poultry, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules, goats, bees and fur-bearing animals, or products derived from the animals.
- Fruits, vegetables, berries, nuts and other foods for human consumption, feed for animals, tobacco, flowers, sod, trees, nursery or greenhouse products.
- Forest products under a forest management plan approved by the State Forester (see Chapter 61 discussion).

Land is also used for agricultural and horticultural purposes if it is used primarily and directly in a manner related to the production of the animals or crops and that use is necessary and incidental to the actual production or preparation of the animals or crops for market.

For the land to be considered “actively devoted” to a farm use, it must have been farmed for the two fiscal years prior to the year of classification and must have produced a certain amount of sales. The minimum gross sales requirement is \$500 for the first 5 acres of productive land. That amount is increased by \$5 for each additional acre of productive land being classified, unless the additional acreage is woodland or wetland. In that case, the amount is increased by only \$50 for each additional acre.

The minimum gross sales requirement for land being used to cultivate or raise a farm product that takes more than one season to produce its first harvest is satisfied if the land is being used in a manner intended to produce those sales within the product development period set by the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission for the particular crop or animal.

Buildings and other structures located on the parcel, as well as any land on which a residence is located or regularly used for residential purposes, do not qualify for classification and continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

#### *FORESTED LAND UNDER M.G.L. CHAPTER 61*

The forest land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 is designed to encourage the preservation and enhancement of the state’s forests. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long term commitment to forestry. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for non-forestry uses.

Eligible parcels must consist of at least 10 contiguous acres of land under the same ownership and be managed under a 10-year management plan approved and certified by the State Forester in order to qualify for and retain classification as forest land under Chapter 61. Buildings and other structures

located on the parcel, as well as the land on which they are located and any accessory land, do not qualify for classification and continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 allows landowners to reduce the property tax burden on their woodlands if they are willing to keep the forested land undeveloped and in wood production. Land certified under Chapter 61 is taxed at 5 percent of fair market value or at \$10 per acre, whichever is greater. In addition, a products tax of 8 percent is charged on the stumpage value of any wood cut from the property.

To qualify for Chapter 61, landowners must have 10 or more contiguous acres of private woodland managed for wood production under an approved long-term forest management plan. The plan must be approved by the DCR service forester and then filed with the local board of assessors. To continue in the program, the plan must be renewed every 10 years. As part of the agreement, the town receives an option to purchase the property if the owner decides to sell to someone other than a relative.

Generally speaking, if the land is not kept in wood production for at least 10 years, the costs incurred will be greater than paying the normal tax bills as they come due. If landowners choose to remove their land from Chapter 61 prior to the 10-year anniversary, they must repay all the taxes which were avoided and a 14 percent interest penalty.

#### *RECREATION LAND UNDER M.G.L. CHAPTER 61B*

The recreational land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61B is designed to encourage the preservation of the Commonwealth's valuable open space and promote recreational land uses. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long term commitment to preserving land in an undeveloped condition or for use for outdoor activities. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any purpose other than to maintain it as open space or for recreational use.

Property must consist of at least five contiguous acres of land under the same ownership in order to qualify for and retain classification as recreational land under Chapter 61B. The land must fall into one of the following two categories to qualify:

1. It must be maintained in a substantially natural, wild or open condition or must be maintained in a landscaped condition permitting the preservation of wildlife and natural resources. It does not have to be open to the public, but can be held as private, undeveloped, open space land.
2. It must be used for certain recreational purposes and must be open to the public or members of a non-profit organization. Recreational purposes include land used primarily for any of the following outdoor activities, so long as they do not materially interfere with the environmental benefits of the land: hiking, camping, nature study and observation, boating, golfing, non commercial youth soccer, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, skiing, swimming, picnicking, private non-commercial flying, hang gliding, archery, and target shooting. Buildings and other structures located on the land, as well as the land on which a residence is located or regularly used for residential purposes, do not qualify for classification and will continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

Under Chapter 61B, the owner still pays an annual property tax to the city or town in which the classified land is located. However, the tax is based on the commercial tax rate for the fiscal year applied to the value of the land for recreational purposes, rather than its fair market value as would be

the case if the land were not classified. The value of the land for recreational purposes is determined annually by the assessors and cannot exceed 25 percent of the fair market value of the land. The property tax is due in the same number of installments and at the same time as other local property tax payments in the city or town. Interest is charged on any overdue taxes at the same rate applicable to overdue local property taxes.

The city or town has an option to purchase any classified land whenever the owner plans to sell or convert it to a residential, commercial or industrial use. The owner must notify by certified mail the mayor and city council or the selectmen, assessors, planning board and conservation commission of the city or town of any intention to sell or convert the land to those uses. If the owner plans to sell the land, the city or town has the right to match a bona fide offer to purchase it. If the owner plans to convert the land to another use, the city or town has the right to purchase it at fair market value, as is determined by an impartial appraisal. The city or town may also assign its option to a non-profit, conservation organization. The owner cannot sell or convert the land until at least 120 days after the mailing of the required notices or until the owner has been notified in writing that the option will not be exercised, whichever is earlier. This option is not available to the city or town and the notice requirement does not apply if the recreational use is simply discontinued, or if the owner plans to build a residence for his or her use, or the use of his or her parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother or sister, the surviving spouse of any of those relatives, or an employee working full time in the recreational use of the land.

To ensure the continued protection of all Chapter 61 properties, the Town's Conservation Commission and the Recreation Department, in cooperation with the Assessor, should conduct an annual review (including interviews with owners) of all Chapter 61 properties to assess which properties should be pursued for potential acquisition. By conducting these reviews annually, the town can develop a ranking and prioritization system for potential acquisition. This will provide a rationale and clear direction for the town in its pursuit of securing the funding necessary for land purchases.

#### *PRESERVING OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE AND WORKING FARMS*

The rich agriculture heritage of Dighton continues although in a diminished capacity over the years. Between 1986 and 2003, Dighton lost at least five farms to residential development, which resulted in the permanent altering of over 300 acres of mostly prime agricultural land. Encouraging Chapter 61A enrollments is a technique that can be used to prevent this erosion of agricultural land, but it is more likely to slow the process than to stop it. There are currently a variety of active small farms in town and according to the latest Chapter 61A inventory approximately 684.3 acres of land is devoted to agriculture and horticulture uses, representing a nearly 40 percent (421.8 acres) decline from the 2003 inventory.

In order to help address this issue, in 2003, the Town worked through the state legislature to establish a land acquisition fund through Chapter 61 **Withdrawal Tax**. Whenever any of the land is withdrawn or removed from classification, whether or not it is subject to the purchase option and notice requirement, a withdrawal penalty tax must be paid. The owner must pay a rollback tax for a five or ten-year period depending on which program the land is classified in. Rollback tax is the difference between the amount the owner would have paid in property taxes if the land had been taxed at its fair market value and the amount of taxes he has paid under chapter classification. Interest charges are applicable on rollback in some instances. In 61A and 61B programs, an alternative conveyance tax is due when the land is sold or converted to a non-qualifying use within ten years on the beginning of the fiscal year it was first classified and the conveyance tax is greater than the rollback tax that would have been due.

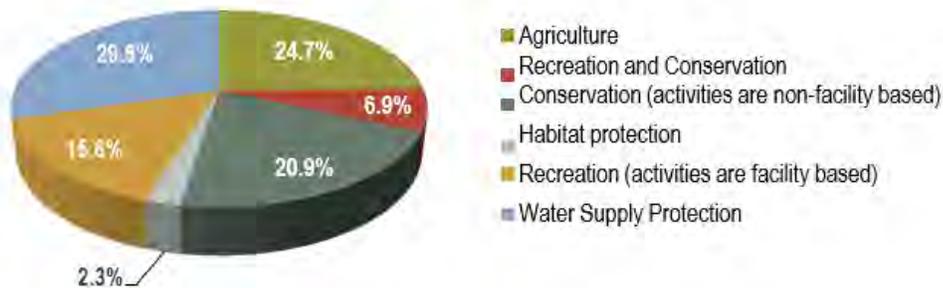
Another available tool to protect agricultural resources is through use of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. In June of 2018, the Town voted to use \$83,000 in Community Preservation funds to match \$207,000 in APR funds received from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to secure the 20.6 acre Araujo Farm, which preserves the working farm in perpetuity. Prior to the Araujo APR, only one property, the 9.3-acre portion of Mount Hope Farm located on S. Walker Street inside Dighton on the Dighton/Taunton line, was under an APR in Dighton. The remaining land (127 acres), located in Taunton, is also under an APR. The restriction is held by Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. This is a conservation option available to other willing property owners who meet the APR program’s criteria.

In 2018, the Town also passed a “Right-to-Farm” bylaw and created an Agricultural Commission to help farmers work more seamlessly with federal, state, and local regulatory bodies, as well as to promote local agriculture and sound agricultural practices. The Agricultural Commission would also like to reach out to farmers about their land conservation options, by bringing in groups like the Wildlands Trust to provide local forums for farmers. The Town should also seek to encourage the redevelopment of abandoned/brownfield sites in order to steer development away from valuable agricultural land, natural lands and open space.

**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

Dighton has a total of 821 acres of protected and recreational open space within and across its boundaries. Nearly 30 percent or 243.3 acres of the open space areas are dedicated for water supply protection; another 25 percent or 202.4 acres are used for agricultural purposes while 171.4 or 20 percent of the total open space areas are for conservation uses. Recreational areas where activities are facility-based account for more than 15 percent of all the open space areas in town. Land devoted to recreation/ conservation uses and habitat protection purposes account for 6.9 percent and 2.3 percent respectively (see Figure 5-1).

**Figure 5-1 Open Space Resources by Primary Purpose, Dighton, 2013**



In the MassGIS open space database there are three privately-owned open space properties in Dighton. Two of these properties are permanently protected, including the 9.3-acre section of Mount Hope Farm on the northeast corner of town, which has an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) and the 19.1 acres of land located on Center Street that is preserved with a Conservation Restriction (CR). The third property is the portion of the Segregansett Country Club that is within Dighton and is located on Winthrop Street. Among these properties, the Mount Hope Farm and the Country Club properties are also enrolled in Chapter 61A and 61B programs respectively.

There are several other private recreational facilities in Dighton that are only accessible to members, including the Poppasquash Swim Club located on Horton Street, and the Shaw’s Boat Yard and the Taunton Yacht Club located at the end of Main Street on the banks of Taunton River.

## *PUBLIC AND NON-PROFIT PARCELS*

Besides properties in private ownership, Dighton has a total of 778.8 acres of public and non-profit land that's designated for open space, conservation, and recreation uses.

The Town of Dighton owns 344.4 acres of land, totaling 32 sites throughout town that consist of schools, fields, forests, wetlands and water supply protection zones, and other recreational and municipal facilities such as the Town Hall and the Town boat ramp (see Figure 5-3). Nearly half of the town-owned open space parcels are for conservation purpose, such as the Town Forest and areas around Broad Cove Marsh. Most of these conservation areas are accessible to the public for passive recreation uses such as hiking, nature appreciation, etc. While some of these conservation lands like the areas around Broad Cove Marsh are protected in perpetuity, most others including the Town Forest only have limited protection.



*Central Park*

Dighton's town-owned park and recreation inventory consists of eleven sites totaling 113.9 acres. These include the Little League fields, Dighton Elementary and Middle School, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School Fields, Town Offices, Town boat ramps, and Helen Lane Field. It should be noted that these facilities do not serve all the neighborhoods equally. During the first Master Plan Public Forum on January 29, 2014, participants were asked whether and to what level they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds and ballfields. While the majority, nearly 80 percent of all the participants, responded that they are either very or somewhat satisfied, 16 percent of the participants said they are not satisfied. Particularly, people said there needs to be more recreational amenities, such as playgrounds, neighborhood parks, etc. for families with smaller children in North Dighton and other parts of town in general.

In addition to conservation land and recreation land, Dighton owns another 59.4 acres of water supply protection zones managed by the Town of Dighton Water District. These permanently protected parcels are concentrated between Cedar Street and the town boundary between Dighton and Swansea and no public access is allowed in these areas.

Other open space areas in public and non-profit ownerships include 193.1 acres of agricultural land owned by the Bristol County Agricultural High School, 183.9 acres of water supply protection land owned by the Town of Somerset, the 54 acre Sweets Knoll State Park owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of State Parks and Recreation, and the 3.4 acres of Wayne M.

Philbrook Preserve owned by Wildlands Trust. Except for the water supply protection zones, most of these areas are publicly accessible to some level, and all of these resources are protected either in perpetuity or with some form of restriction or limitation.



*Bristol County Agricultural High School*

## SECTION 6: COMMUNITY GOALS

### Description of the Process

The process of establishing goals for open space and recreation planning in Dighton was previously discussed in Section 2 of this plan. In addition to the community-wide survey, public presentations, and interviews with boards, committees and commissions in town, the process also consisted of regular working meetings and a review of what has been accomplished since the completion and certification of the previous plan. All Committee working meetings and public forums were held in accessible meeting rooms at the Dighton Town Hall. A number of the interviews with local officials were also broadcast and replayed on local cable.

### Progress Made Since the 2003 Open Space and Recreation Plan

So much has changed in Dighton, particularly in the past dozen years. A great deal of this change is either directly tied to the town's conservation, recreation and open space efforts, or has been a result of regional partnerships, and the efforts of individuals.

- The establishment of Sweets Knoll State Park by MA DCR
- Development of some on-road elements of the regional Taunton River Trail
- Rehabilitation of several parks around the town
- State designation of the Three Mile River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Federal designation of the Taunton River as Wild & Scenic
- Continued acquisition of and improvements to property around Broad Cove
- The Town adopted the Community Preservation Act and created a Community Preservation Committee

- The Town hired its first Town Administrator
- The Town created a Trails Committee
- The Town created a Stormwater Committee
- The Town passed a Right to Farm Bylaw and created an Agricultural Commission
- Acquired the agricultural parcel that is part of the culturally and historically significant Council Oak field area
- Developed a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)/Hazard Mitigation Plan
- The Town received a grant to conduct an ADA survey of facilities
- The Town established a Disability Committee
- The Town completed the restoration and update of the Old Town Hall, including meeting space and additional office space for Town departments

### Open Space and Recreation Goals

Four (4) categories of Goals emerged from the working sessions, interviews, and the public response and comments collected on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Public Survey. Each of these four categories has one or more specific goals (and a corresponding set of objectives as presented in Section 8 of this plan).

#### Parks and Recreation

- Goal- Continue to improve the quality of our parks and park system

#### Pathways and Greenways

- Goal- Continue to enhance our network of pathway and greenway facilities
- Goal- Create a “sense of place” through promoting awareness of our assets

#### Conservation and Open Space

- Goal- Preserve, protect, and expand the conservation, open space, and natural green infrastructure assets of the Town

#### Implementation

- Goal-Implement the Goals, Objectives, and Actions recommended in the Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Goal- Address the recommendations of the ADA Plan

## SECTION 7: ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

### **A. Conservation and Resource Protection Needs**

Over the past several years, the Conservation Commission, aside from meeting its responsibilities under the Wetlands Protection Act, has also been working with other municipal boards, commissions, departments, and committees, to protect and increase the conservation and open space assets of the Town. Recently, these efforts have also included partners such as the Taunton industrial Development

Commission and the Taunton River Stewardship Council. The Commission has also used its land acquisition fund judiciously over the years, acquiring or contributing towards the acquisition of key properties on Broad Cove and an outstanding cultural/agricultural landscape adjacent to the historic Council Oak. As part of these efforts, the Commission has also developed public viewing and access sites around Broad Cove, and has been consulting with the Town of Somerset about developing inter-municipal facilities around Broad Cove. The attention to the Broad Cove area also reflects the Commissions current priority to preserve and protect salt marsh.

In order to further protect the quality and quantity of Dighton's water resources, the Commission should assess and prioritize the acquisition/permanent protection of open space in significant watershed areas. This assessment should not only include land that meets conservation and passive recreation needs, but also the critical green infrastructure that provides river and stream buffers, preserves critical habitat linkages and function, provides stormwater filtration and flood storage, and protects recharge areas near existing and future potential water supply sites. Healthy environmental systems require a network of vital connections that help to preserve the services that these systems provide to our cities and towns (water quality, air quality, fish and wildlife habitat, etc.). By protecting and restoring naturally functioning ecosystems, we can work with nature and the resilience built-in to our existing green infrastructure to enhance the overall health and resiliency of our town.

This approach can complement regulatory measures currently being employed by the Planning Board (as well as those recently recommended to the town by Mass Audubon and the Resilient Taunton Watershed Network - RTWN), and should be employed as part of a comprehensive natural resources protection/smart growth strategy.

Another part of a more comprehensive municipal natural resources protection strategy would be to develop management plans for all of the Conservation Commission's holdings. This could be part of an ongoing effort and involve other conservation partners such as the Wildlands Trust. The process should begin by addressing municipal lands (and Conservation Restrictions) held in areas recognized as critical to the town's natural resources and green infrastructure network. If parcels already have management plans, they should be revisited in order to see if they are still appropriate, and if they are being addressed.

## **B. Parks & Recreation and Community Needs**

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Massachusetts Outdoor 2017, is a five-year plan developed by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The plan is required for state participation in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants programs. The SCORP also provides an overview of the recreational preferences of the citizens of each geographic region of the Commonwealth as determined through a public participation and outreach process. The profile of recreational use afforded by the SCORP also provides municipalities with a planning tool for addressing the future needs and uses of our outdoor recreational resources.

The SCORP's summary of information, collected at both public events and through other methods of survey (online and telephone), showed that people participate in outdoor activities primarily for physical fitness, but also to be close to nature. Despite having access to nearby facilities, lack of time (55%) was the number one reason that people gave for not using these facilities more often. While recreational programs were also important to responders, 88.2% that it was either somewhat or very important to have more programs for those aged 4 to 12 years, and 91.2% responded similarly regarding programs for teens.

Survey data also indicates that: water based activities, such as boating – canoe, kayak, power boat; fishing; swimming – at beaches, lakes, rivers, pools, paddle boarding, tubing; and, trail-based recreation, such as hiking, biking (on and off-road), cross-country skiing, walking/jogging on trails, and mountain biking, provide the most popular recreational outlets for families in the regions. The SCORP also revealed that the types of projects that respondents would like to see funded in the future are: trails (hiking, biking, paved walkways, trails for people with disabilities); playgrounds (for ages 2-5, for people with disabilities, for ages 6-12, and for ages 6 months-2 years), and; water (swimming pool, canoe/kayak access, and fishing areas).

Finally, it should also be noted that the SCORP also called out the need to recognize and address the needs of underserved populations (citizens with disabilities, teens, and senior citizens) and areas of a community (areas that are lacking facilities, environmental justice neighborhoods) when planning for and designing parks and conservation areas.

A good part of the SCORP summary reflects Dighton’s recreation preferences and goals. Based upon both the Open Space and Recreation survey and feedback at community meetings, the top choices for the types of recreation facilities that are needed or should be expanded in Dighton included: nature/hiking/walking trails; bike paths; improved water/beach access, and; more diverse passive and active recreation programs and facilities for people of all ages and abilities.

Dighton’s town-owned park and recreation inventory consists of 9 sites totaling 113.9 acres. These include the Little League fields, Dighton Elementary and Middle School, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School Fields, Town Offices, Town boat ramps, and Lane field. It should be noted that these facilities, primarily located along the east side of the town and in some parts of the west of town, don’t serve all the neighborhoods equally. During a town Master Plan Public Forum on January 29, 2014, participants were asked whether and to what level they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the amount of recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds and ballfields. While the majority, nearly 80% of all the participants, responded that they are either very or somewhat satisfied, 16% of the participants said they are not satisfied. Particularly, people said there needs to be more recreational amenities, such as playgrounds, neighborhood parks, etc., for families with smaller children in North Dighton, west Dighton, and other parts of the town in general. This situation, in large part, persists, and was evident during the public question and answer sessions with Parks and Recreation in 2019 (and was reflected in the responses to the Open Space and Recreation Plan survey as well).

Some of the specific ideas supported by Parks and Recreation include: restoration of the parks in North Dighton designed by the Olmstead firm; trails on Horton Street; construction of a Boardwalk on Broad Cove Conservation land; trail development in the Town Forest (off of Chestnut Street) and, most importantly; improved office space in order to better serve the public as well as operate more effectively and efficiently.

### **C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use**

It is critically important that the Town preserve open space that not only serves conservation and recreation purposes, but also functions as part of a green infrastructure network that will make the town more resilient to the predicted impacts of climate change (increased tidal/coastal flooding, storm surge, heavy precipitation events, rising temperatures, and air quality impacts). The ability to assemble open space in a manner that preserves intact, contiguous habitats and ecosystems is a functional consideration of our green space that should be knit into all of our planning documents (Master Plan, Municipal Vulnerability/Hazard Mitigation Plan).

Any vulnerable, significant conservation land that is not currently permanently protected should be placed under protection by the most appropriate means available (transfer to the Conservation Commission; Conservation Restriction, either held by the Town or assigned to a non-profit partner, etc.). The appropriate departments/commissions within the town should research the deeds of the property under their control, including the acquisition history of each. Identify the parcels that have affirmative Town Meeting Votes stating that the subject property is to be dedicated to either conservation or recreation use, and determine that the deed reflects the purpose of the acquisition. If research reveals that the accompanying deed does not reflect the intent of the acquisition, the situation may be remedied by recording a corrective deed (it is recommended that the authorizing Town Meeting Vote is recorded as an adjunct to the corrective deed).

The Town should also develop a prioritization methodology/system for the evaluation and acquisition of open space, and complete its plans for the protection of vulnerable water resource areas.

### Special User Group Needs

#### *SENIORS*

Dighton's situation is similar to state and national trends in that its population is aging and remaining more active than in years past. Between 2000 and 2016, Dighton's median age rose by almost five (5) years from 38 to 42.6, higher than the state median age which is 39.1 years. During this same time period, the retirement-age population (greater than 64 years old) grew at a rate of approximately 31%.

While the Town does provide recreational opportunities, people in this age group, both in surveys and in discussion during the Open Space Committee's working meetings, are looking for increased outdoor activities for seniors, such as walking, hiking, passive recreation, and safe and accessible shared use parks.

#### *CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES*

The Town has just completed a self-evaluation and transition plan for its recreational facilities as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These plans are developed in conjunction with a municipally appointed ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator is responsible for working to bring all municipal services, infrastructure, and buildings into compliance with the Act. The ADA Coordinator is not responsible for privately owned facilities.

The ADA Transition Plan contains an inventory of the public recreation facilities of the Town of Dighton (exclusive of the School Department facilities; the School Department must conduct their own assessment and prepare a Transition Plan for their facilities). The Transition Plan takes inventory of the improvements needed to bring a facility into ADA compliance, as well as the costs associated with making these improvements. In order to meet ADA standards, all future recreation facilities should be planned, designed, and constructed with the needs of citizens with disabilities in mind in terms of access, physical use, and ability to view events and cultural/scenic landscapes.

The Town, recognizing the need to implement its new ADA Transition Plan, has recently appointed an ADA Committee to work with the Town's new ADA Coordinator.

## SECTION 8: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Parks and Recreation

## **Goal 1: Improve the quality of our parks and park system.**

### Objectives:

- A. Find appropriate office space/facilities for Parks & Recreation
- B. Improve maintenance/planning
- C. Improve infrastructure- sidewalks, paths, crosswalks, access points, parking
- D. Address needs detailed in the ADA Transition Plan
- E. Add comfort stations/restrooms where necessary and feasible
- F. Address priority security and safety concerns where noted by the public
- G. Maintain existing trees, and plant additional trees (for shade, water retention, etc.)
- H. Develop and install consistent wayfinding signs for all Town-owned conservation and recreation properties
- I. Develop educational opportunities/materials/kiosks within the park system
- J. Develop new parks in town where needed

## **Pathways and Greenways**

### **Goal 1: Work, through the Dighton Trails Committee, to develop new greenway and trail connections**

#### Objectives:

- A. Partner with the City of Taunton, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Town of Somerset, and SRPEDD to connect to Sweets Knoll State Park and Taunton River Trail
- B. Work with the Town of Somerset on a feasibility study for the entire Broad Cove Boardwalk and access project
- C. Work with the Taunton Pathway Committee, DCR, SRPEDD, and others, to promote advocacy and awareness
- D. Work with the Highway Dept. and local, regional, state, and federal partners to create trailheads, parking areas, and informational kiosks on Town-owned land adjacent to existing and proposed trail spurs

### **Goal 2: Create a “Sense of Place” through promoting awareness of our assets**

#### Objectives:

- A. Develop and install consistent wayfinding signs for all Town-owned conservation and recreation properties
- B. Develop a physical and web based Trail/Open Space/Canoe Guide for the Town
- C. Develop and install informational kiosks at unique cultural and natural resource areas

## Conservation and Open

### Goal 1: Preserve, protect, and add to the Conservation, Open Space, and natural green infrastructure assets of the Town

Objectives:

- A. Review the deeds of all properties held in conservation, parks & recreation, watershed lands, and Conservation Restriction (Article 97 Lands) and take corrective action if/when necessary
- B. Propose sites for new entry level farmers, established farmers, and community gardens
- C. Complete the proposed Boardwalk at Broad Cove to enhance local river access
- D. Explore legislative and other action necessary to complete the Dighton segment of the Taunton River Trail (Blueway/Greenway)
- E. Assess the open space needs of underserved populations within the Town to address equity issues
- F. Develop a method of prioritization for the acquisition of property/open space
- G. Complete the protection strategy for vulnerable green infrastructure assets

## Implementation

### Goal 1: Implement the Goals, Objectives, and Actions recommended in the Open Space and Recreation Plan

Objectives:

- A. Designate the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee to work with other boards, committees, and commissions, to monitor and help to implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan
- B. Review the Town's Subdivision Control Regulations and Zoning in respect to Open Space
- C. Develop more environmental education programs
- D. Cultivate and sustain partnerships with conservation, open space, and recreation agencies, organizations, and interests
- E. Work with the appropriate local, state regional and federal partners to promote programs and regulations that ensure equal access to quality, life-long opportunities for people of all ages, regardless of ability or economic status
- F. Led by the Stormwater Committee, implement the conservation, open space, and green infrastructure related action items in the Town's MVP Plan

## SECTION 9: ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan items contained in Section 9 are the result of a rigorous public survey process, a public forum, and Committee review. These Actions are not listed in a particular order of priority or in a chronological sequence. The Action Plan is meant to be flexible and responsive, as some of these

Actions listed are in the process of being addressed, while others will be addressed as opportunities present themselves. The Actions are also organized in a format that is designed to be user friendly in grants/proposal writing.

- 1. Action:** Prepare a Master Plan for Broad Cove  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Recreation, Trails Committee, Planning, Open Space, Taunton River Stewardship Council (TRSC), SRPEDD, Save the Bay, others as needed  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective B; Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective C  
Potential Funding Sources: TRSC, MVP, DCS, CPC, other state and federal grants/programs
- 2. Action:** Develop a Town Trail/Canoe/Open Space Guide (physical and web based)  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Recreation, Public Works, Trails Committee, Open Space, SRPEDD, TRSC  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 2, Objective B  
Potential Funding Sources: DCS, Mass Trails, TRSC, CPC, other state, federal grants/programs
- 3. Action:** Improve opportunities for the development of shared use paths (SUP) at Horton Street and Chestnut Street (Town Forest), including ADA accommodations where feasible  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Recreation, Public Works, Selectmen, Trails Committee, Open Space, ADA Officer, National Park Service (NPS), others as needed  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal1, Objective D; Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives C and D  
Potential Funding Sources: DCS, Mass Trails, CPC, NPS Community Assistance Program, others
- 4. Action:** Improve Town Landing off of Pleasant Street  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Open Space, Harbormaster, Public Works, TRSC, NPS, others  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective D  
Potential Funding Sources: MVP, CPC, NPS, TRSC, DCS, other
- 5. Action:** Conduct a review and comprehensive update of the Zoning Bylaw  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Planning Board, ZBA, Conservation, Open Space, Stormwater Committee, Building Inspector, Board of Health, Agricultural Commission, Historical Commission, Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN), SRPEDD  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective B  
Potential Funding Sources: local, DLTA, RTWN, SRPEDD, other
- 6. Action:** Incorporate Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) as an update to any previous conservation subdivision provisions  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Planning Board, others as necessary (see above)  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective B  
Potential Sources of Funding: local, DLTA, RTWN, SRPEDD, other
- 7. Action:** Conduct a comprehensive bylaw review focused on reduced vulnerability and improved resiliency  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Stormwater Committee, Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (SRPEDD, Mass Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, Manomet) others as needed

- Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objectives B and F  
 Potential Sources of Funding: Southern New England Watershed Grant Program (SNEP)
- 8. Action:** Develop a Regional Projects Addendum to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)/Hazard Mitigation Plan  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Stormwater Committee, Somerset, Swansea, Berkley, SRPEDD, state MVP Program  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective F  
 Potential Funding Sources: state MVP Planning Grant Program, SRPEDD
- 9. Action:** Incorporate provisions for Shared Use Paths (SUP) in the development process whenever and wherever environmentally and economically feasible  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Planning, ZBA, Trails Committee, Conservation, Building Inspector, Public Works, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective E
- 10. Action:** Work with neighboring communities to complete the development of the Dighton links to the Taunton River Trail and connections to the South Coast Bikeway  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Trails Committee, Conservation, Recreation, Public Works, TRSC, Taunton Pathways Committee, South Coast Bikeway Alliance, SRPEDD, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objectives A and B  
 Potential Funding Sources: Mass Trails, DCS, Mass DOT, TRSC, NPS, SRPEDD, other
- 11. Action:** Develop and map additional bicycle and SUP facilities throughout the Town of Dighton (i.e. – Brook St., Hart St., Lewis St., Spring St., etc.)  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Trails Committee and others as above  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective B  
 Potential Funding Sources: as above
- 12. Action:** Develop trail connections throughout town in order to improve public safety and accessibility to town assets and facilities  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: as above  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives C and D; Pathways/Greenways. Goal 1, Objective D  
 Potential Funding Sources: as above
- 13. Action:** Develop a method of prioritization for land acquisition, including our natural green infrastructure/lands that provide critical natural services (flood control, water supply protection/recharge, cooling, buffers, habitat linkage, etc.)  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Planning, Open Space, Selectmen, Recreation, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objectives F and G
- 14. Action:** Retain productive agricultural soils and promote the practice of agriculture in Dighton  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Agricultural Commission, Selectmen, Planning, Conservation, Open Space Committee, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective B  
 Potential Funding Sources: DCS, MDAR, CPC, USDA, TRSC, other

- 15. Action:** Preserve Cultural, Historic, and Heritage Landscapes assets in the Town of Dighton  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Historical Commission, Historical Society, Conservation, Planning, ZBA, Building Inspector, CPC, Agricultural Commission, Dighton Inter-tribal Council, DCR Preservation Program, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective A; Pathway/Greenways, Goal 2, Objective C  
 Potential Funding Sources: CPC, DCR, TRSC, NPS, Mass Cultural Council, MHC, other
- 16. Action:** Develop community education programs and materials to promote conservation and environmental awareness as well as opportunities for stewardship  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Open Space Committee, Stormwater Committee, SRPEDD, Agricultural Commission, TRSC, TRWA, Bristol Aggie, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective I; Implementation, Goal 1, Objective C  
 Potential Funding Sources: DCS, TRSC, SRPEDD, MDAR, other
- 17. Action:** Protect and preserve surface and groundwater resources, including important recharge and future potential water supply areas  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Water District, Public Works, Stormwater Committee, Conservation, Planning, ZBA, BOH, DEP, others as needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objectives F and G; Implementation, Goals B and F  
 Potential Funding Sources: DCS, DEP, CPA, other
- 18. Action:** Continue to update the ADA/504 Transition Plan for all Town Conservation, Park and Recreation holdings  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Recreation, Open Space Committee, Selectmen, ADA Compliance Officer, Disability Committee, others as appropriate/needed  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective D; Implementation, Goal 1, Objective E; Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective E  
 Potential Funding Sources: local
- 19. Action:** Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for Parks and Recreation  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, Finance Committee, Recreation, Town leagues, programs, others as appropriate  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives A - J
- 20. Action:** Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, Recreation, Highway Dept., others as necessary and appropriate  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives A - J  
 Potential Funding Sources: local, grants programs
- 21. Action:** Develop the North Dighton playground area (improving and adding an additional playground)  
 Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, Recreation, Highway Dept., DCS, others as necessary and appropriate  
 Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives B and J

Potential Funding Sources: DCS, local, other grants programs

- 22. Action:** Develop and install uniform wayfinding signage for all Town-owned properties  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, Open Space Committee, Trails Committee, Highway Dept., all Town Depts., Boards, Commissions with property interests, others as necessary and appropriate  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective H; Pathways/Greenways, Goal 2, Objective A  
Potential Funding Sources: local, state, other grants programs
- 23. Action:** Promote community clean-ups in our neighborhoods, parks, and recreation facilities  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Highway Dept., Open Space Committee, Recreation, local businesses, regional businesses/institutions/entities, others as appropriate  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective B  
Potential Funding Sources: local, businesses/institutions/other entities
- 24. Action:** Address Environmental Equity needs  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Open Space Committee, Recreation, Selectmen, ADA Coordinator/Committee, Trails Committee, others as appropriate and necessary  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective E  
Potential Funding Sources: local, DCS, Complete Streets, other grants programs
- 25. Action:** Construct the boardwalk at Broad Cove with Somerset  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Conservation, Highway Dept., Open Space Committee, Somerset Conservation, Somerset Planning, Selectmen (Dighton and Somerset), SRPEDD, Taunton River Stewardship Council (TRSC), ADA Coordinator/Committee, others as appropriate and necessary  
Goals/Objectives/ Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective B; Conservation/Open Space, Goal 1, Objective C  
Potential Funding Sources: local, TRSC grants, DCS, Mass Trails grant, other grants programs
- 26. Action:** Seek a shared management agreement with DCR for Sweets Knoll State Park  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, EEA/DCR  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective A
- 27. Action:** Find a permanent office/space for the Parks & Recreation Commission  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, Parks & Recreation  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective A  
Potential Funding Sources: local, state, other grants programs
- 28. Action:** Implement the recommendations of the ADA Transition Plan  
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Selectmen, ADA Coordinator/Committee, Recreation, Conservation, Highway Dept., Trails Committee, others as appropriate and necessary  
Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective D; Implementation, Goal 1, Objective E  
Potential Funding Sources: local, federal, DCS, Massachusetts Office on Disability, Mass Trails, CPC
- 29. Action:** Provide increased recreational opportunities to accommodate people of all ages and abilities

Local Lead/Potential Partners: Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Committee, ADA Coordinator/Committee, Highway Dept., Trails Committee, others as appropriate and necessary

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective E

Potential Funding Sources: local, CPC, state, federal, regional, non-profit, other grants programs

**30. Action:** Develop a community park in west Dighton

Local Lead/Potential Partners: Recreation, Conservation, Open Space Committee, ADA Coordinator/Committee, Highway Dept., others as appropriate and necessary

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Parks/Recreation, Goal 1, Objective J

Potential Funding Sources: DCS, CPC, local, state, federal, regional, non-profit, other grants programs

**31. Action:** Create a trail head with small parking area (4 to 5 cars) behind Alice's Last Stop on Somerset Ave to include trail kiosk with info and a trail cut to the east leading to the Taunton River water's edge

Local Lead/Potential Partners: Trails Committee, Highway Dept., SRPEDD, TRSC, Selectmen, ADA Coordinator/Committee, others as appropriate and necessary

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective D

Potential Sources of Funding: Complete Streets Program, DCS, TRSC, Mass Trails, Massachusetts Office on Disability, local, federal

**32. Action:** Create a trail head on Sandpiper Lane with kiosk and short trail leading to the Commonwealth of MA Railroad Right-Of-Way

Local Lead/Potential Partners: Trails Committee, Conservation, Selectmen, Planning, Highway Dept., ADA Coordinator/Committee, neighbors/abutters, others as appropriate and necessary

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective D

Potential Funding Sources: DCS, Mass Trails, TRSC, DCR, local, non-profit

**33. Action:** Conduct a feasibility study for the construction of a short foot bridge over the 3 Mile River north of the Princess House Co-Op property connecting to Taunton.

Local Lead/Potential Partners: Trails Committee, Highway Dept., Conservation, Selectmen, others as appropriate and necessary

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Pathways/Greenways, Goal 1, Objective A

Potential Funding Sources: local, state, federal, non-profit

**34. Action:** Evaluate options for Muddy Cove Brook Dam, including repair, improvement, or removal.

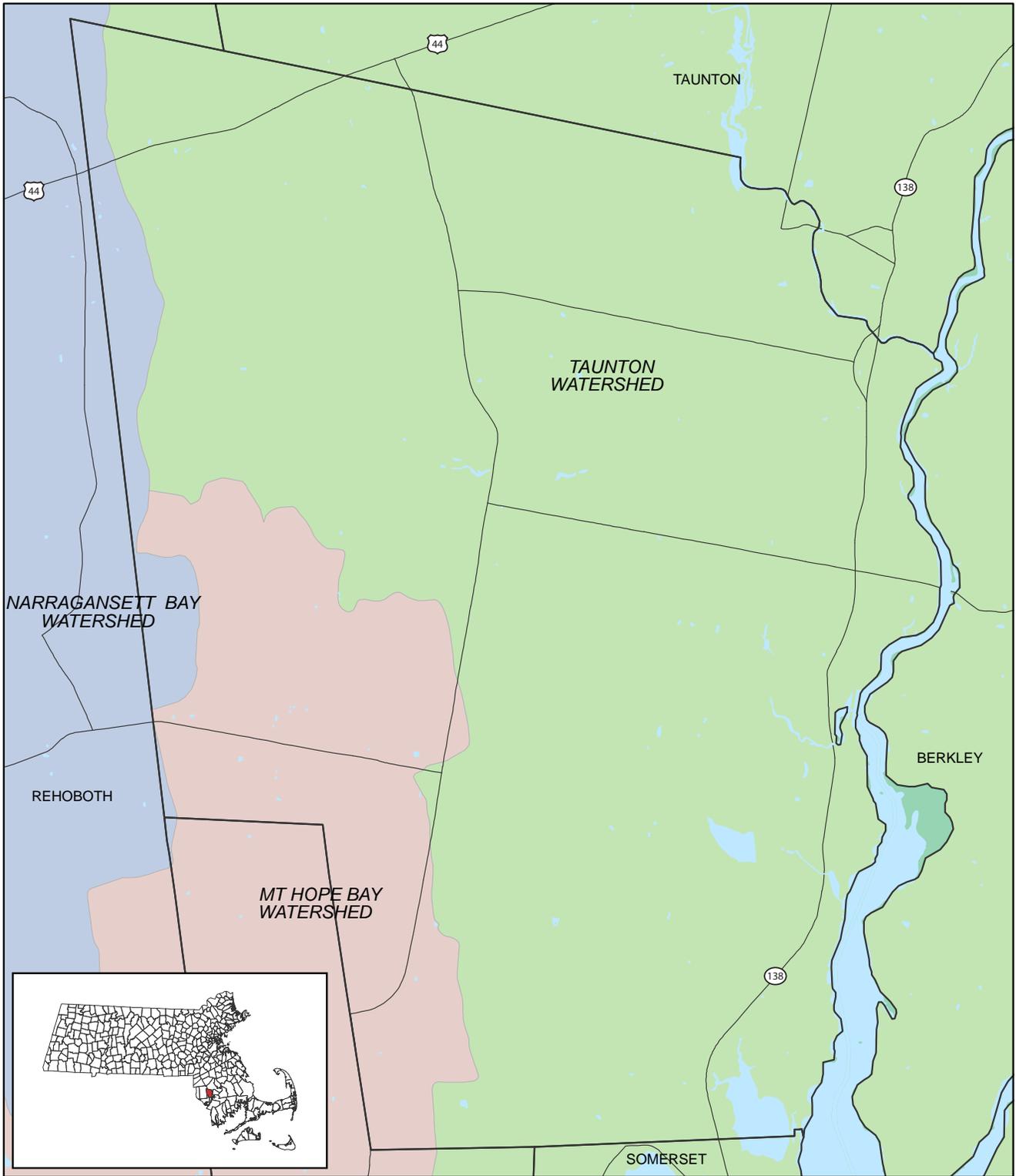
Local Lead/Potential Partners: Stormwater Committee, Selectmen, SRPEDD, DER, others as appropriate and necessary.

Goals/Objectives/Needs Addressed: Implementation, Goal 1, Objective F

Potential Funding Sources: State MVP, federal, local, non-profit

## SECTION 10: MAPS

- Regional Context
- Environmental Justice Areas
- Zoning
- Land Use
- Surficial Geology
- Prime Soils
- Hydric Soils
- Farmland Soils
- Water Resources
- FEMA National Flood Hazards
- Green Infrastructure
- Wildlife Habitat
- Scenic Resources and Unique Environments
- Open Space Map (both Municipal map and State/County/Federal/Other map)
- Action Map

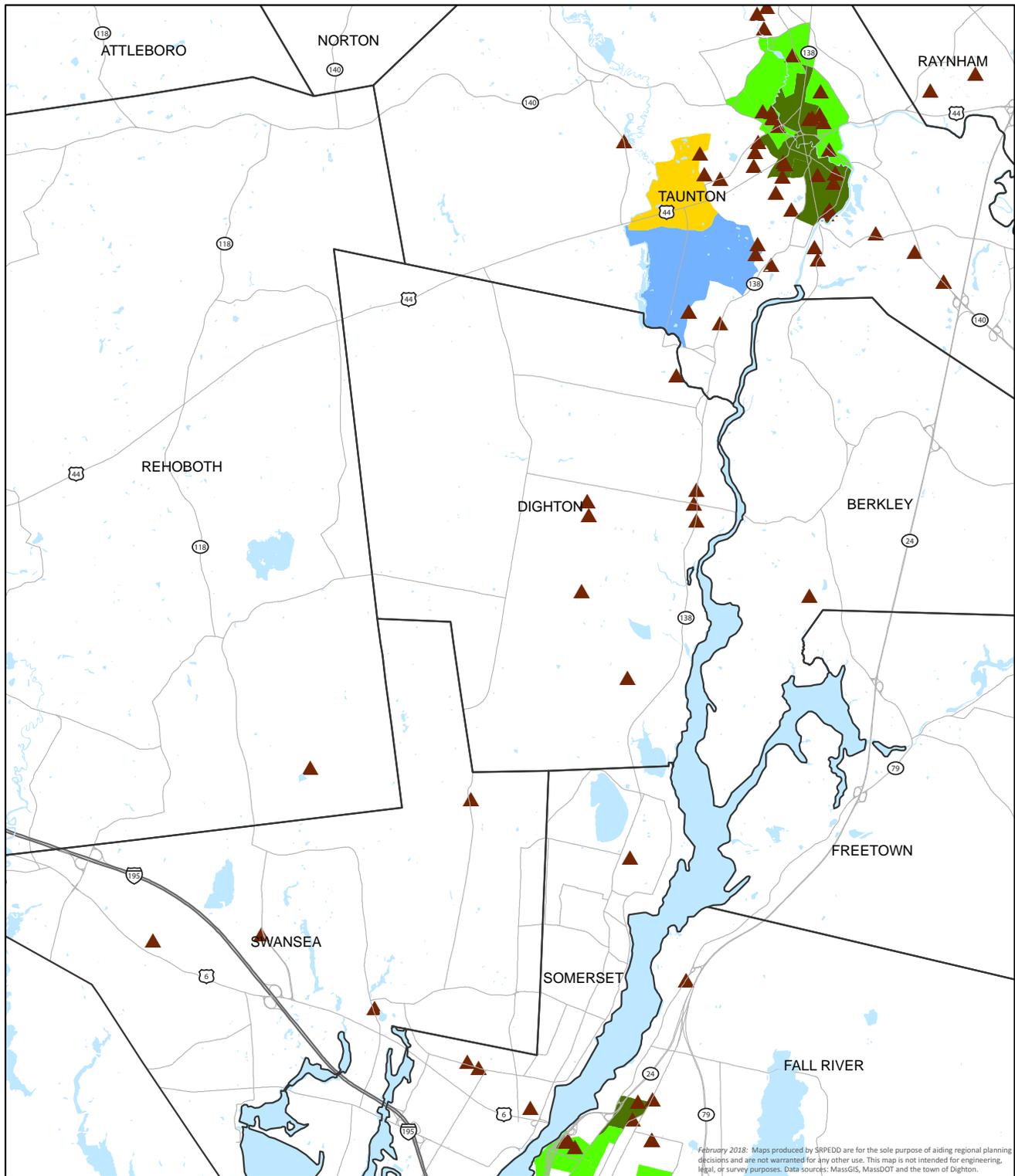


**Town of Dighton**  
 Open Space and Recreation Plan - Regional Context Map

- Legend**
- Mt. Hope Bay Watershed
  - Narragansett Bay Watershed
  - Taunton Watershed
  - Municipal Boundaries
  - Interstates
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Local Roads

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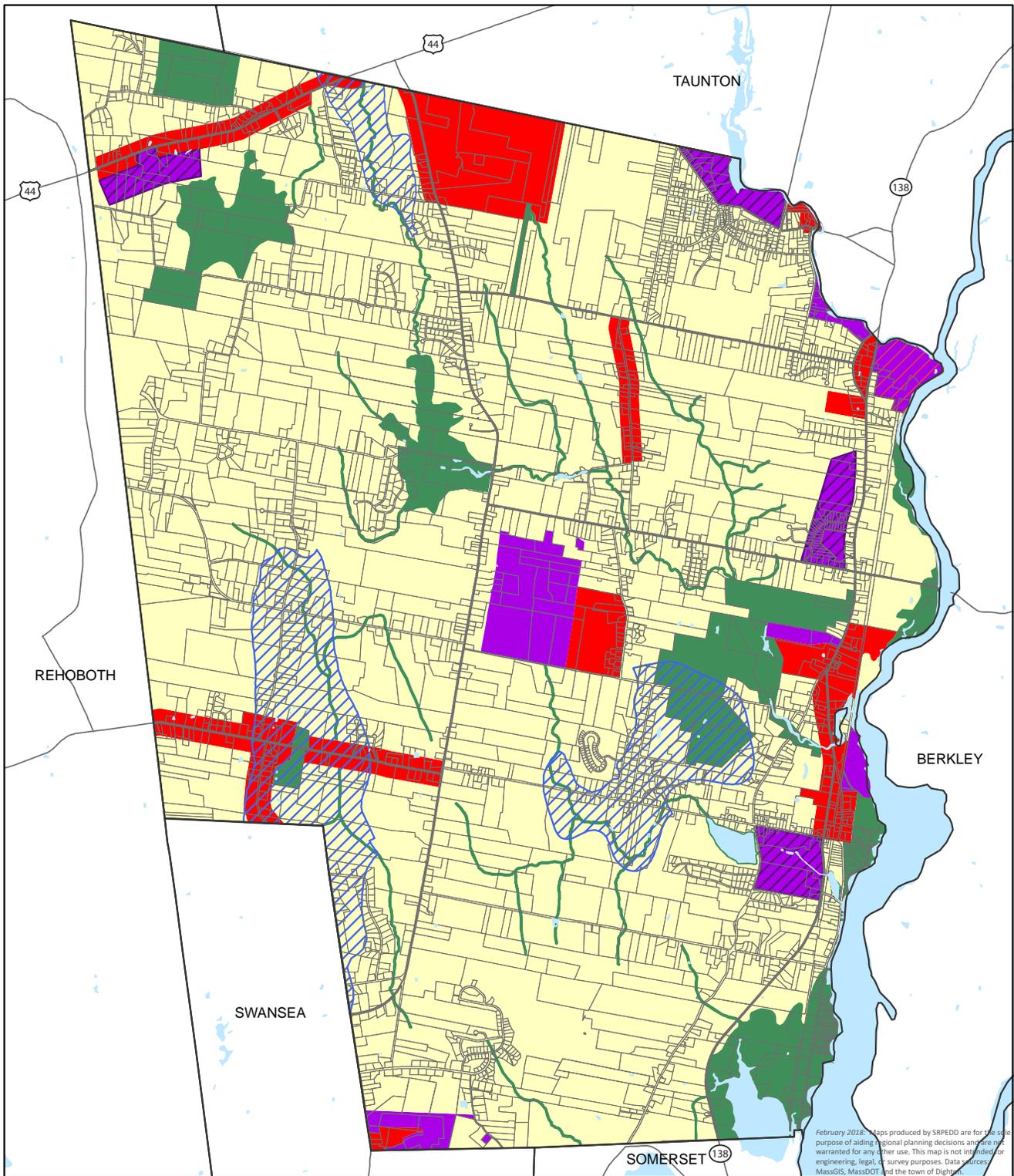
## Town of Dighton

### Open Space and Recreation Plan - Environmental Justice Map

- Legend**
- Minority
  - Income
  - English Isolation
  - Minority and Income
  - Minority and English Isolation
  - Income and English Isolation
  - Minority, Income and English Isolation
  - Subsidized Housing (SRPEDD)
  - Municipal Boundaries
  - Interstates
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Local Roads

MassDEP Environmental Justice 2010 Populations - EJ Criteria, by Block Group

0 0.25 0.5 1  
Miles



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# Town of Dighton

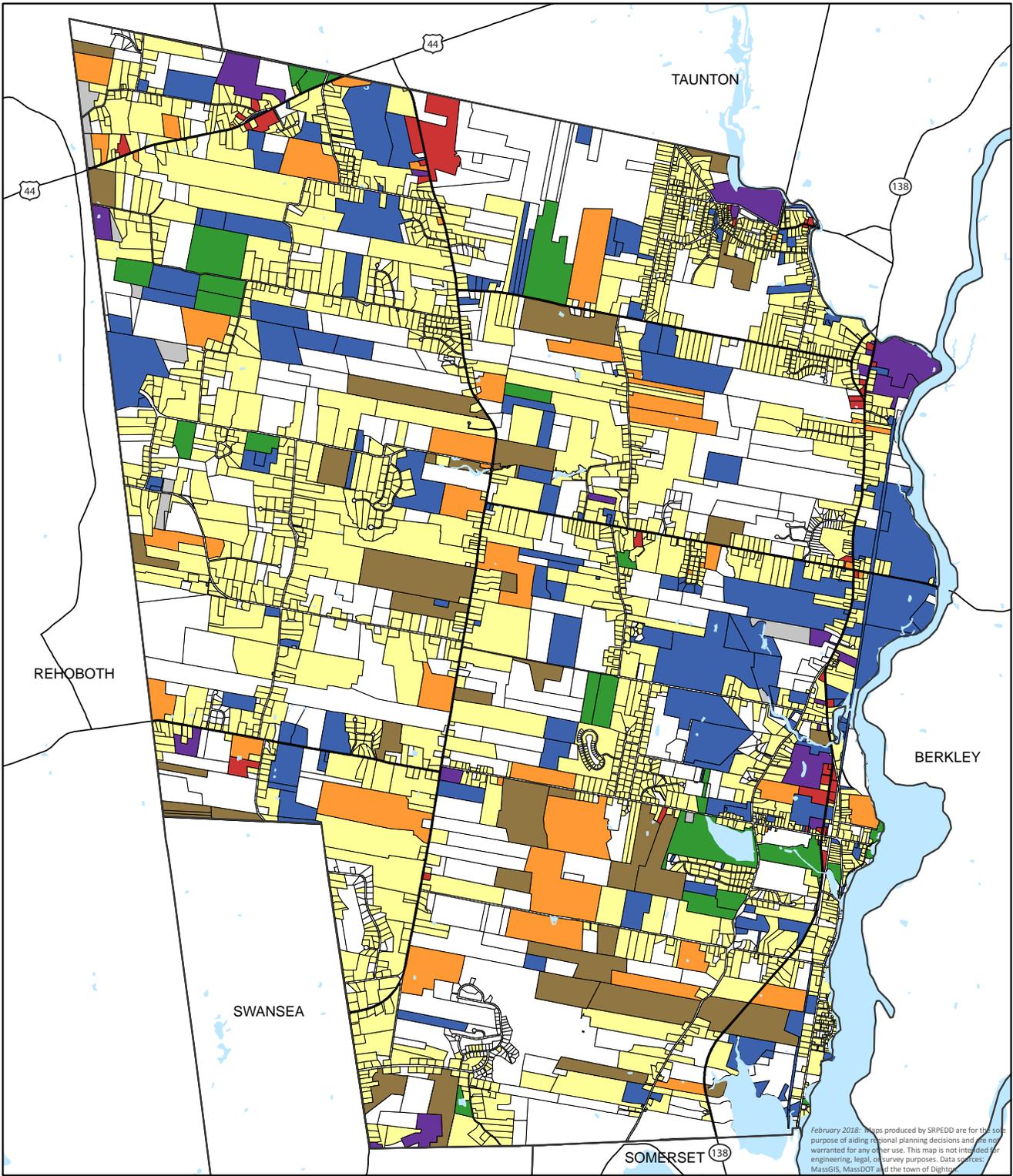
## Open Space and Recreation Plan - Zoning Map

### Legend

- |                               |                                     |                      |                          |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Residence/Agriculture - RE/AG | Industrial Overlay District - IOD   | Municipal Boundaries | Interstates              |
| Residence/Conservation - RC   | Aquifer Overlay District - AOD      | Water Bodies         | Arterials and Collectors |
| Business - B                  | Medical Use Overlay District - MUOD |                      | Local Roads              |
| Industrial - I                |                                     |                      |                          |

1 mile



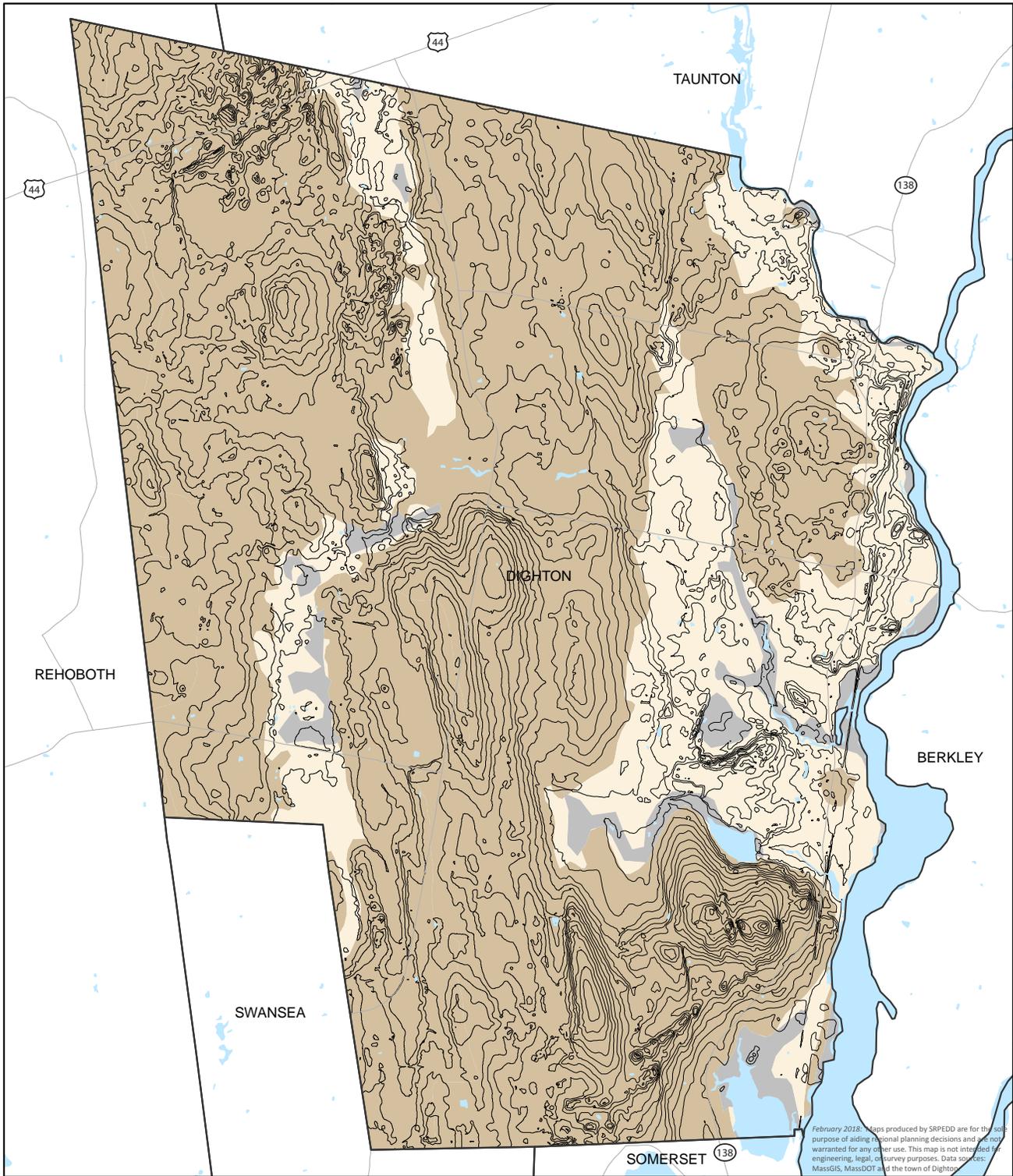


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**Town of Dighton**  
 Open Space and Recreation Plan - Land Use Map

- Legend**
- Vacant or No Data
  - Agricultural
  - Institutional
  - Municipal Boundaries
  - Mixed - Use
  - Commercial
  - Water
  - Interstates
  - Residential
  - Industrial
  - Utility and Transportation
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Open Space and Recreational
  - Local Roads





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## Town of Dighton

### Open Space and Recreation Plan - Surficial Geology Map

#### Legend

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Sand and Gravel Deposits | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 3 Meter Contours | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 2px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Interstates              |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #c08040; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Till or Bedrock          | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Municipal Boundaries     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Arterials and Collectors |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #a0a0a0; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Floodplain Alluvium      |  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Local Roads              |

1 mile



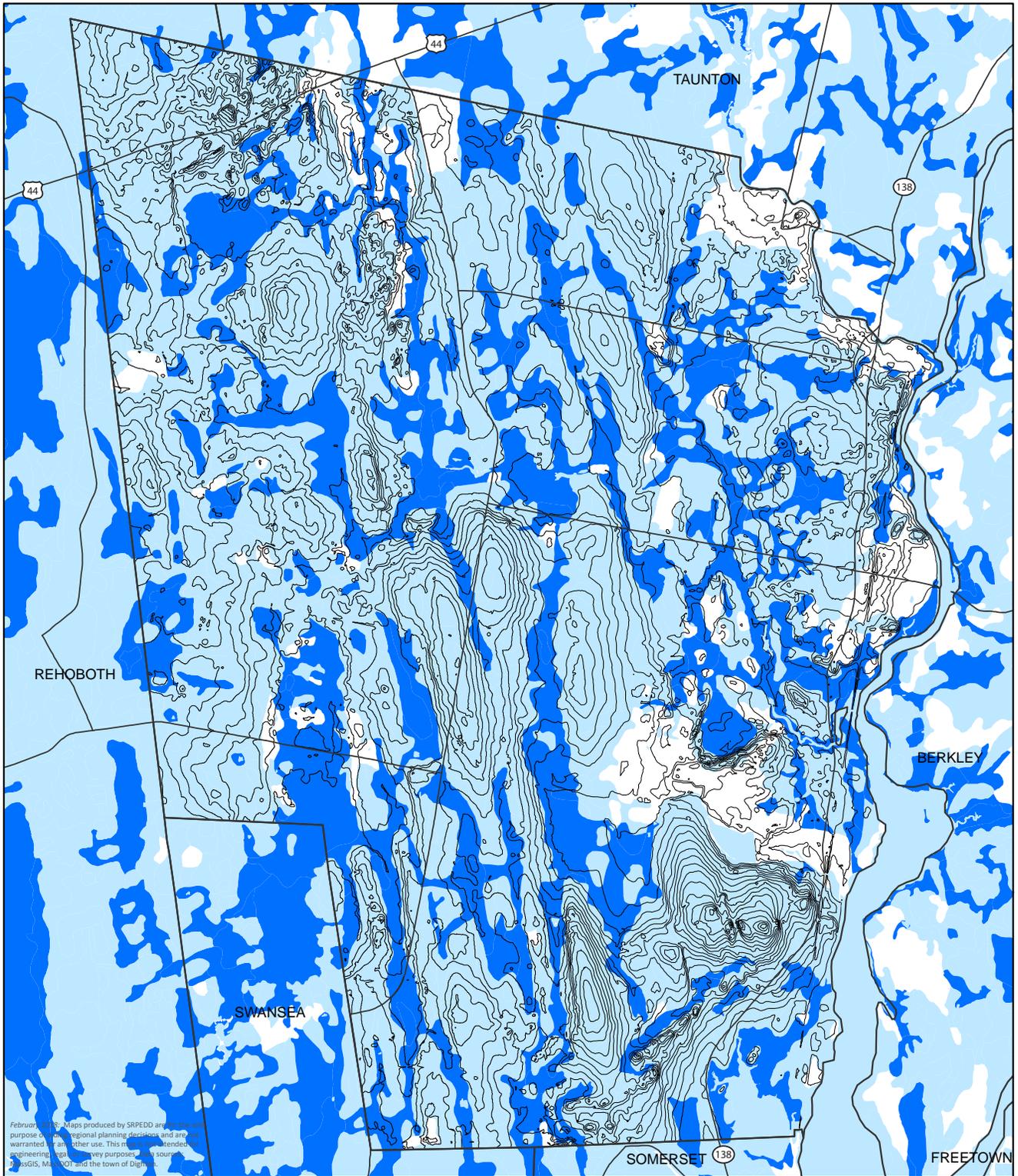


# Town of Dighton

## Open Space and Recreation Plan - Farmland Soils Map

- Legend**
- All prime and Statewide Significance
  - 3 Meter Contours
  - Municipal Boundaries





February 2018: Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the use of regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is intended for engineering, legal, and survey purposes. Data sources: MASSGIS, MAPINFO, and the town of Dighton.

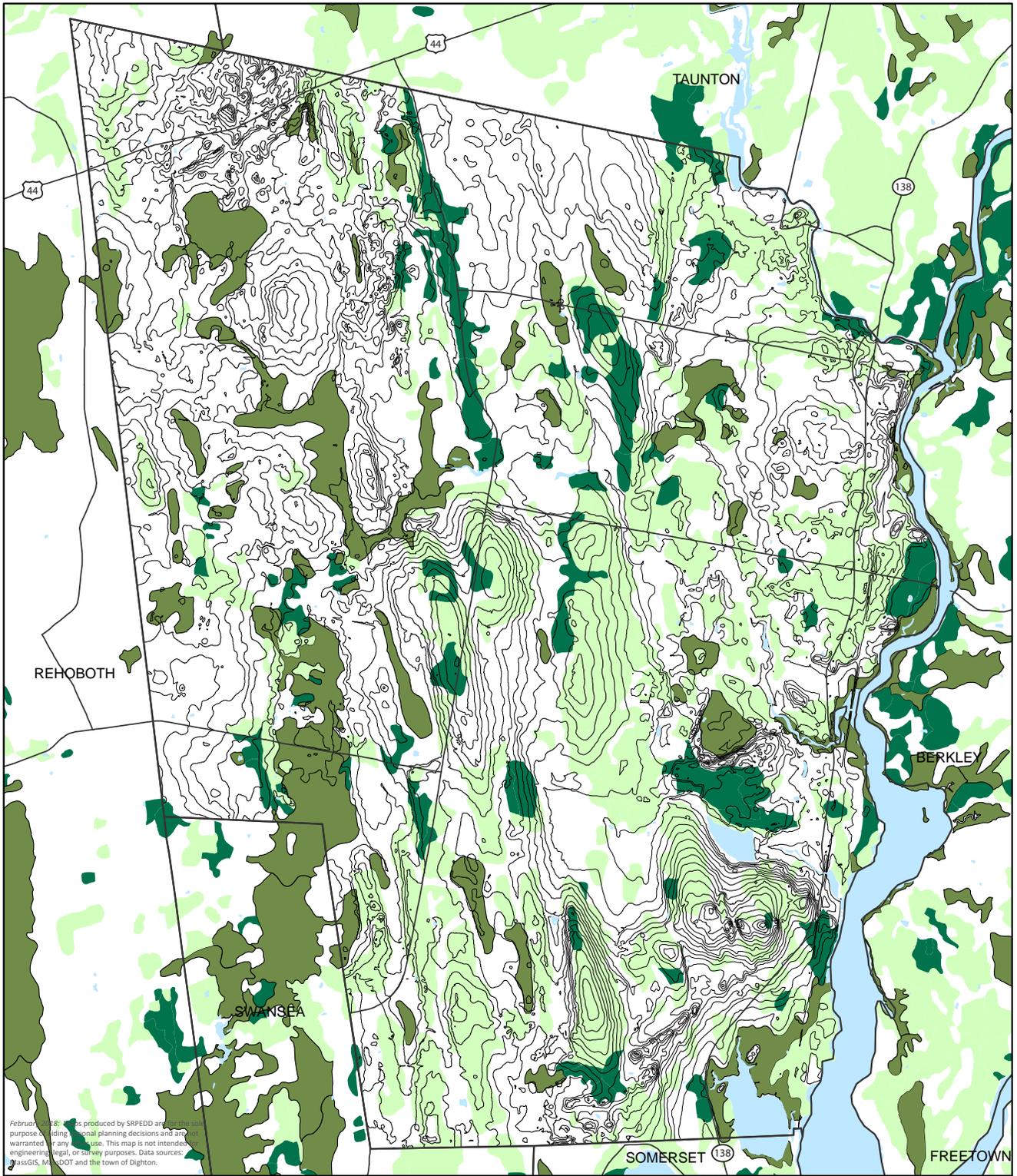
## Town of Dighton

### Open Space and Recreation Plan - Hydric Soils Map

#### Legend

- All Hydric
- Partially Hydric
- 3 Meter Contours
- Municipal Boundaries

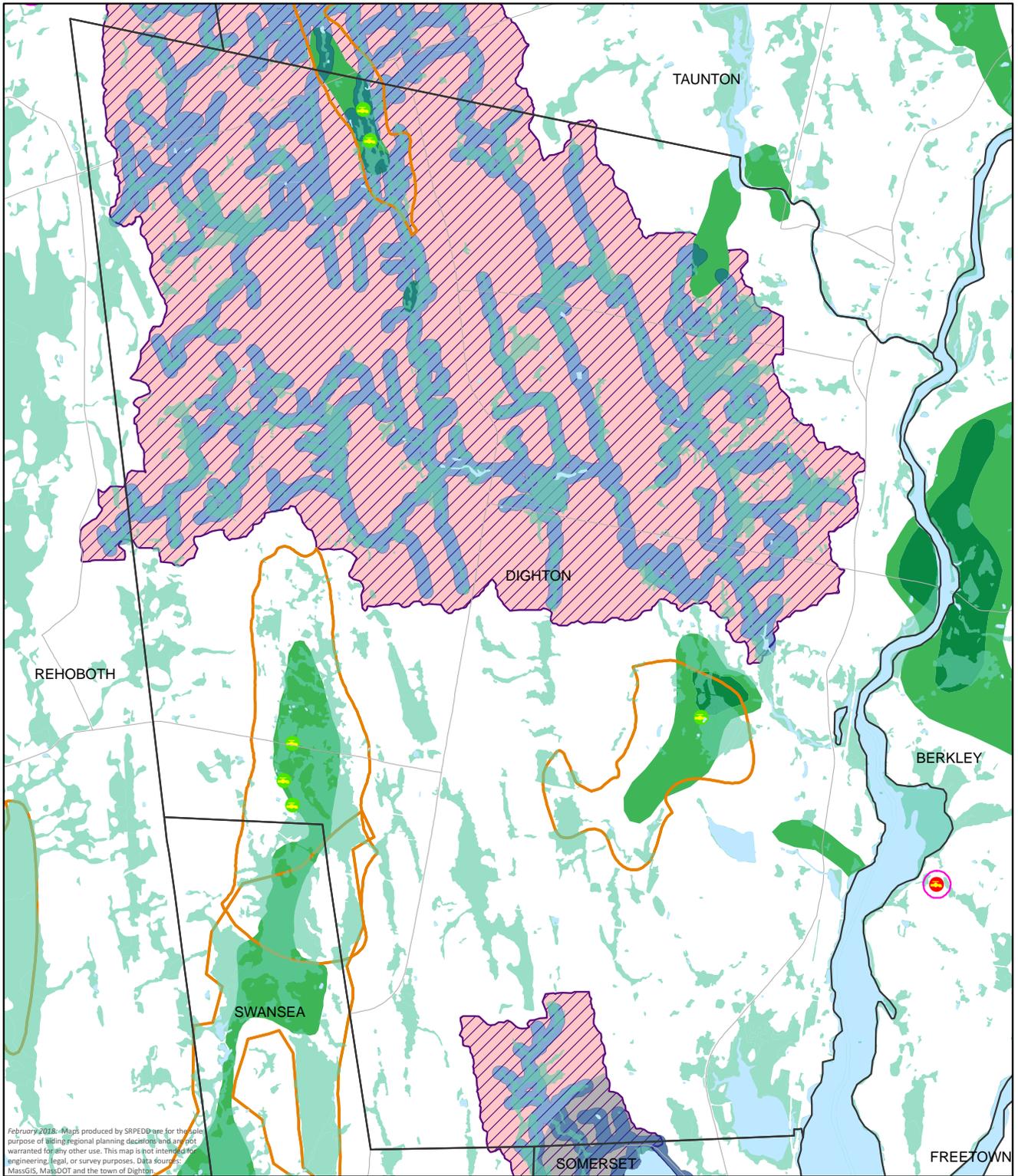
1 mile 1



**Town of Dighton**  
 Open Space and Recreation Plan - Farmland Soils Map

- Legend**
- All areas of prime farmland
  - Farmland of unique importance
  - Farmland of statewide importance
  - 3 Meter Contours
  - Municipal Boundaries





## Town of Dighton

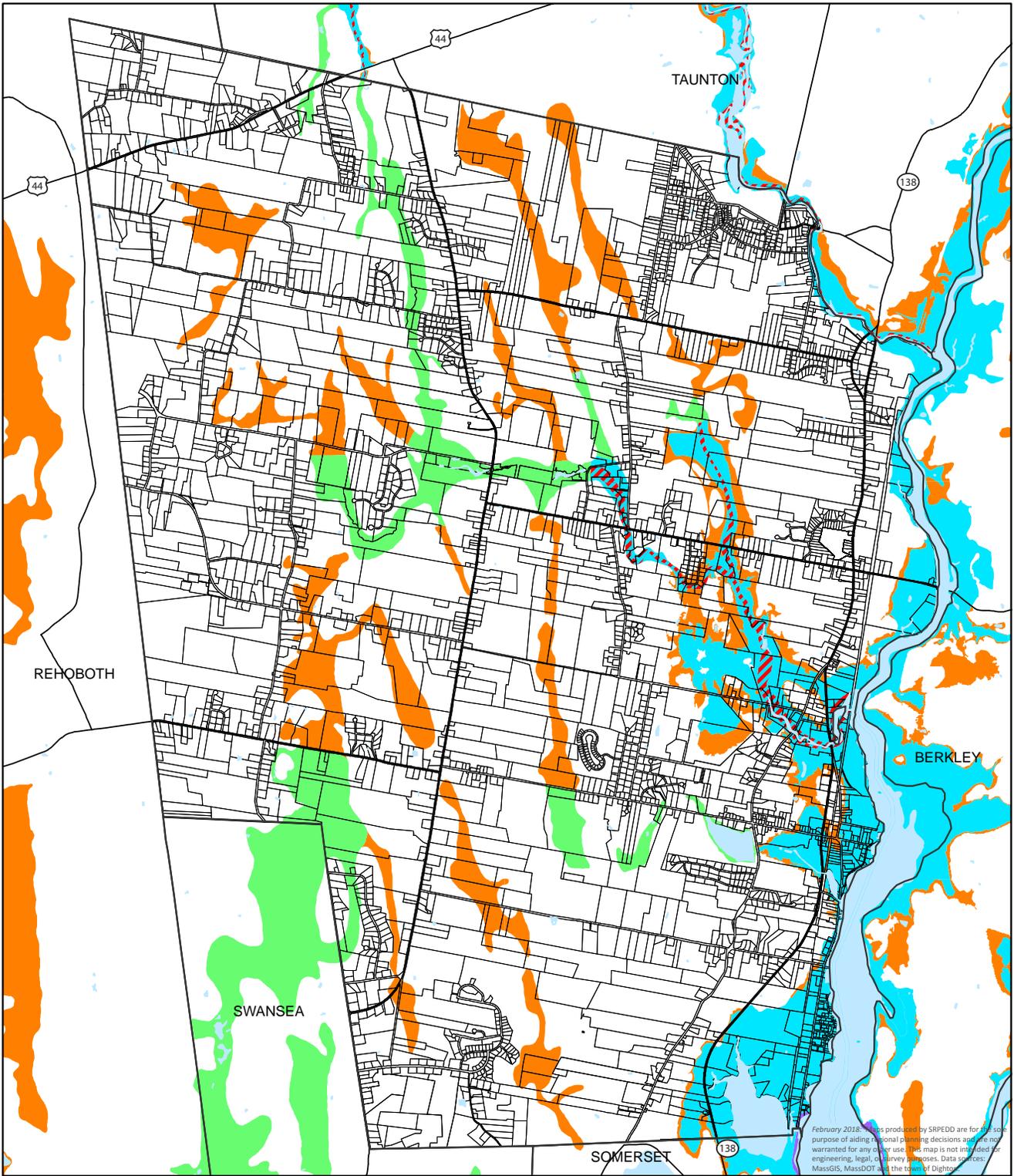
### Open Space and Recreation Plan - Water Resources Map

**Legend**

- DEP Approved Zone II
- IWPAs
- Wetlands
- Outstanding Resource Waters
- ZONE A
- ZONE B
- ZONE C
- Aquifers**
- High Yield
- Medium Yield
- Community Groundwater Source
- Non-Community Groundwater Source
- Waterbodies
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads

1 mile





February 2018 maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding personal planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes. Data sources: MassGIS, MassDOT, and the town of Dighton.

# Town of Dighton

## Open Space and Recreation Plan - FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer Map

### Legend

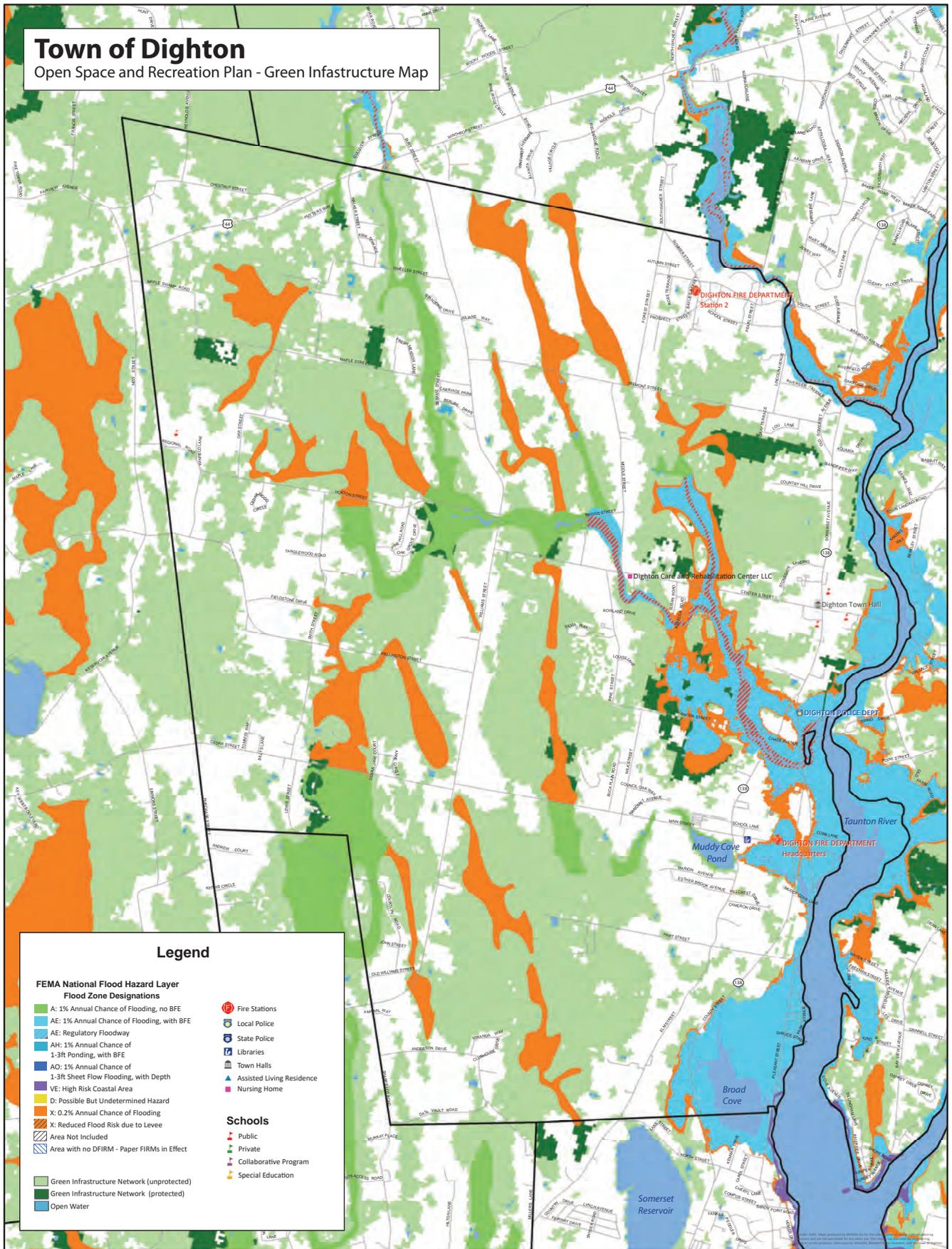
#### Flood Zone Designations

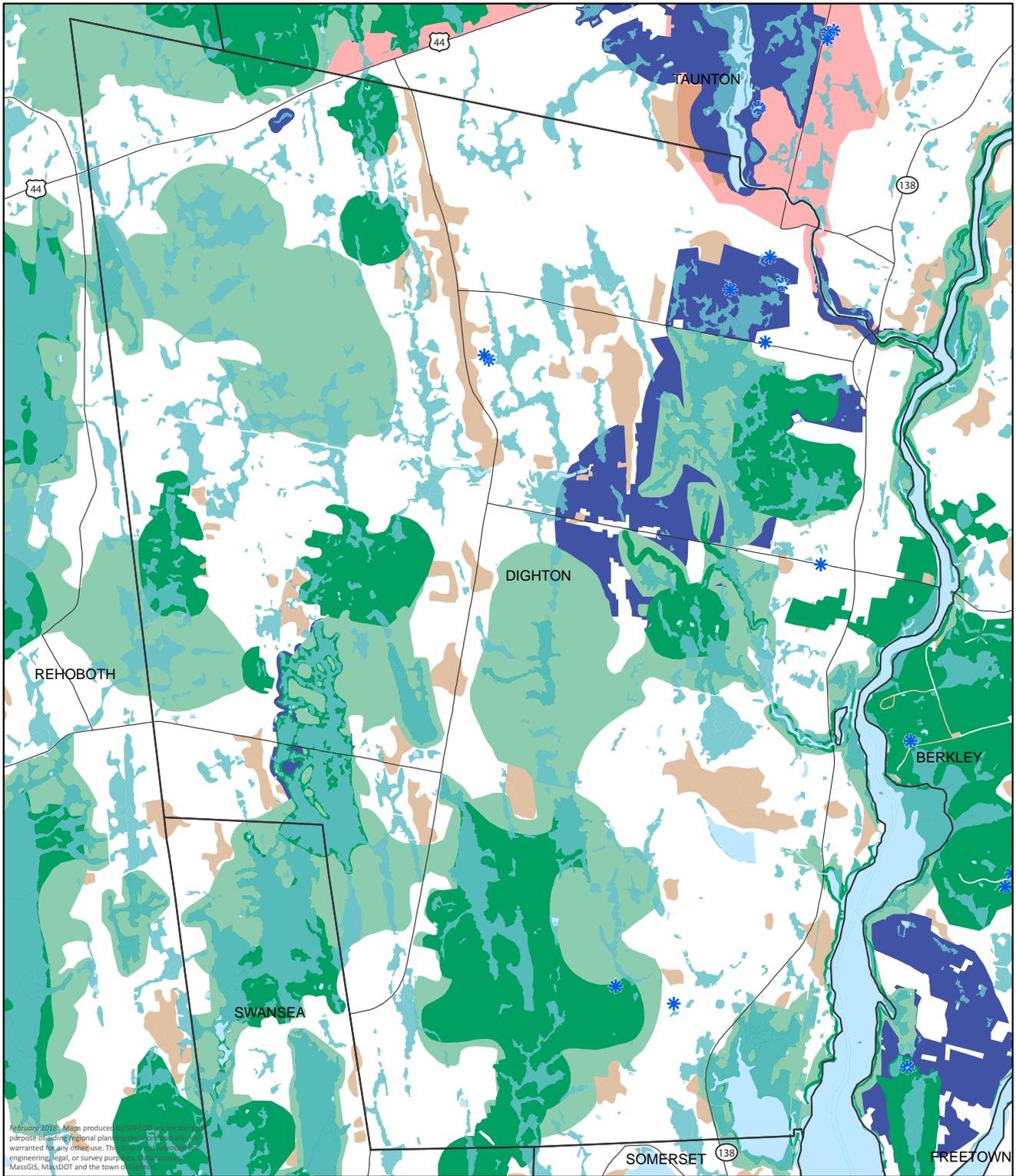
- A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
- AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
- AH: 1% Annual Chance of 1-3ft Ponding, with BFE
- AO: 1% Annual Chance of 1-3ft Sheet Flow Flooding, with Depth
- VE: High Risk Coastal Area
- D: Possible But Undetermined Hazard
- X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding
- X X: Reduced Flood Risk due to Levee
- Area Not Included
- Area with no DFIRM - Paper FIRMs in Effect
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads

1 mile 1

# Town of Dighton

## Open Space and Recreation Plan - Green Infrastructure Map



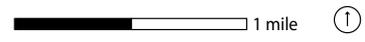


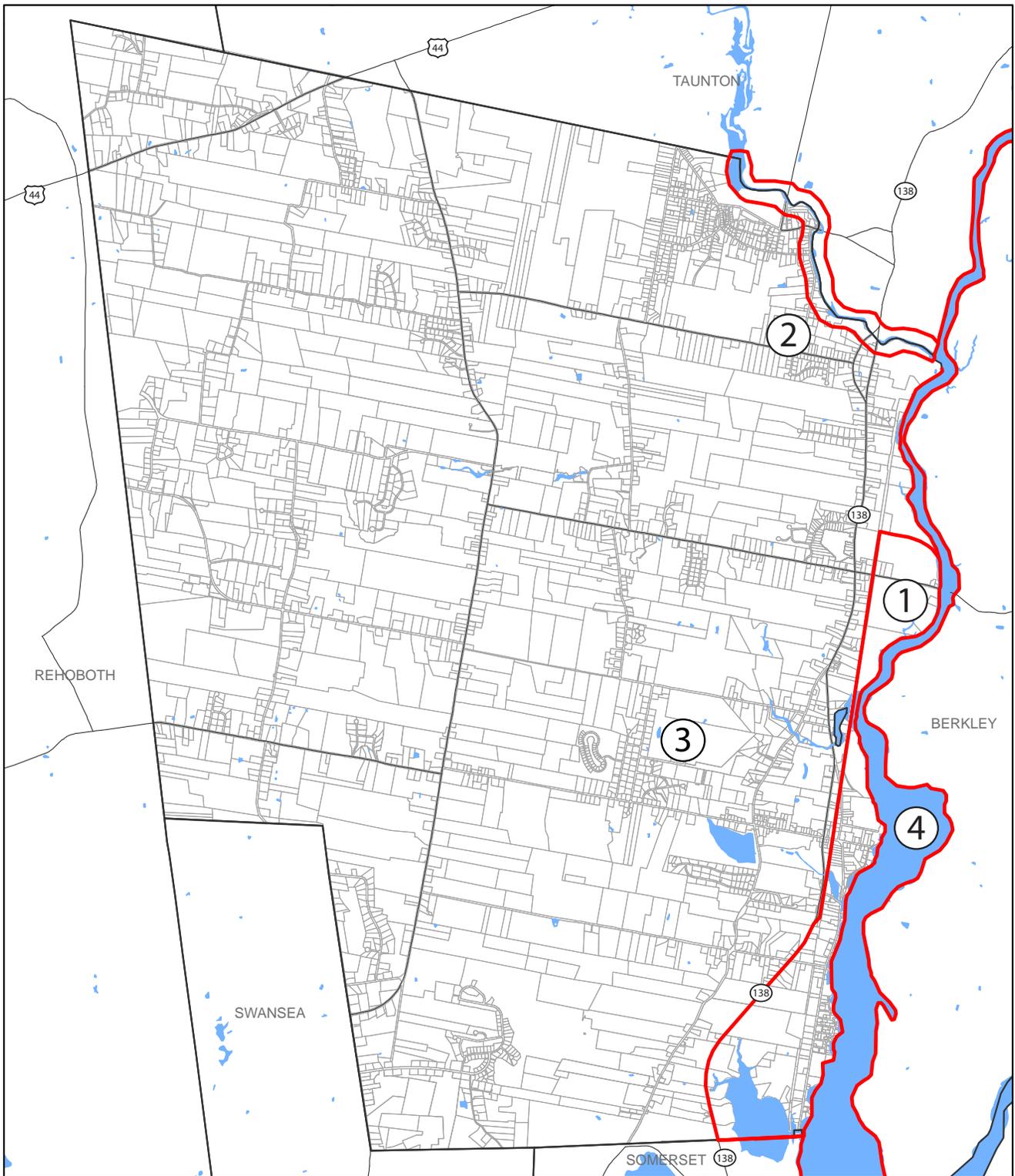
## Town of Dighton

### Open Space and Recreation Plan - Habitat Map

**Legend**

- BioMap2 Core Habitat
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species
- Prime Farmland
- ACECs
- Municipal Boundaries
- Wetlands
- Waterbodies
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools





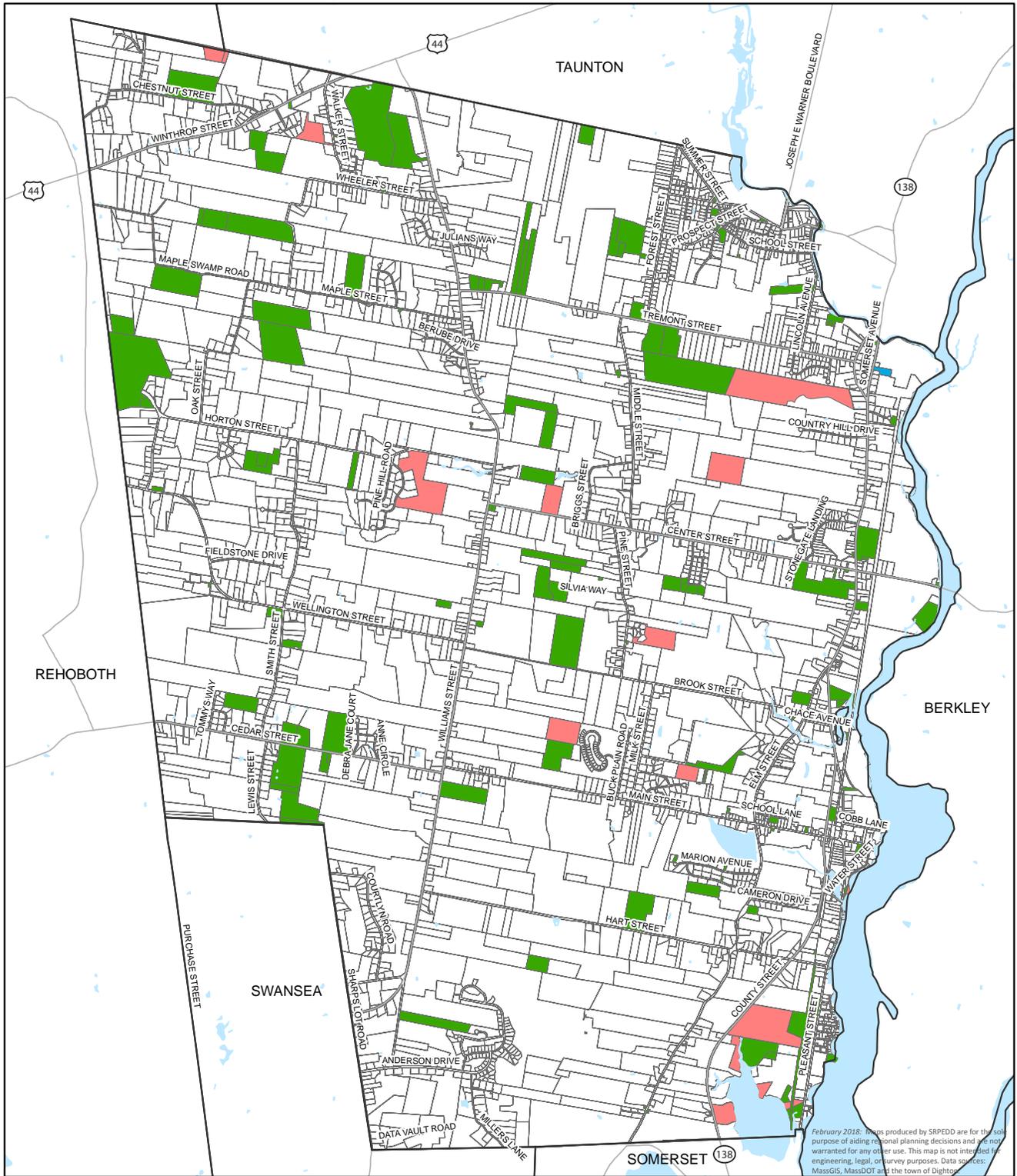
**Town of Dighton**  
 Open Space and Recreation Plan - Scenic and Unique Environments

February 2018: Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes. Data sources: MassGIS, MassDOT and the town of Dighton.

**Legend**

- ① Lower Taunton River Area
- ② Three Mile River ACEC
- ③ Council Oak/ Council
- ④ Taunton River
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads





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# Town of Dighton

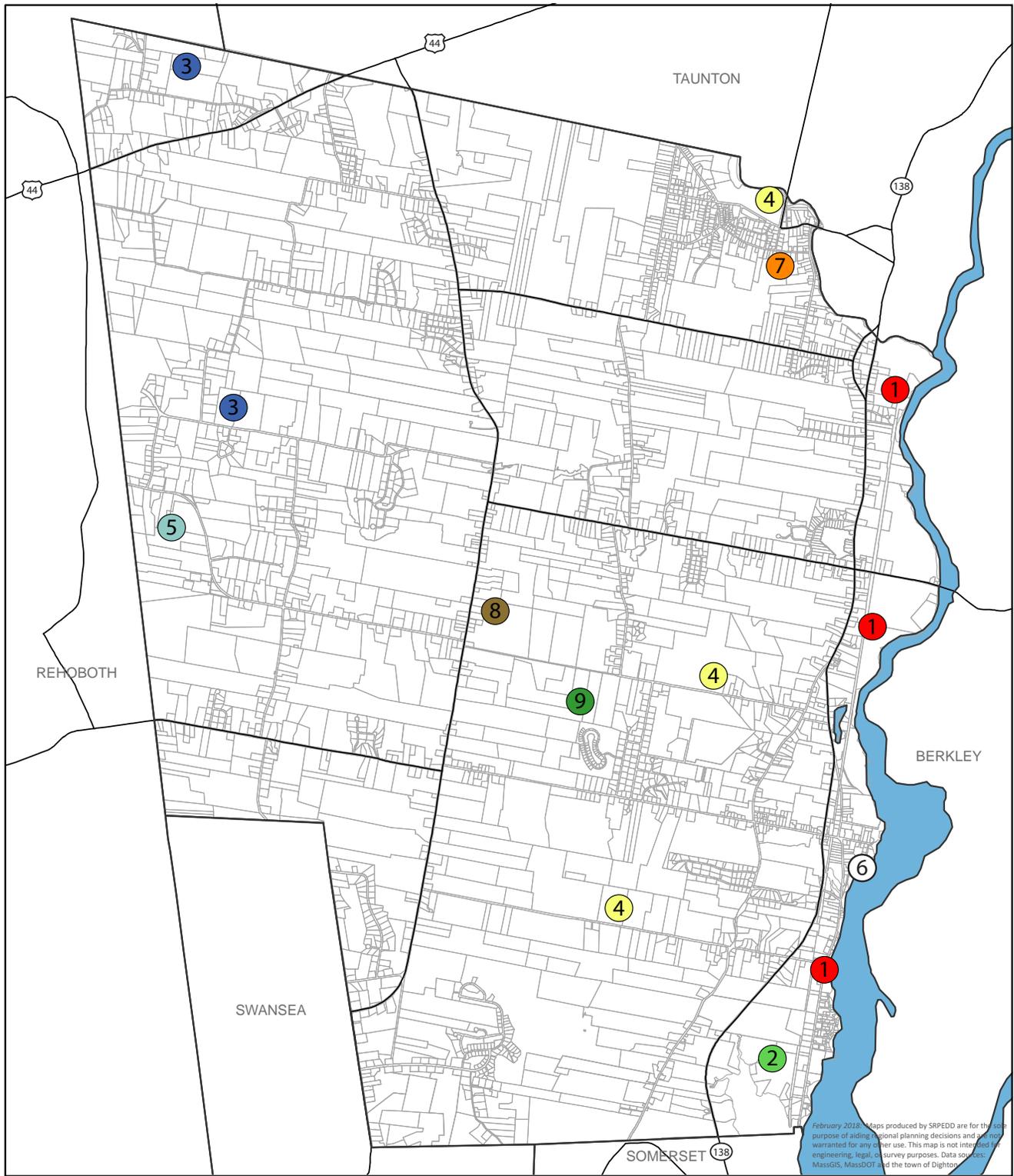
## Open Space and Recreation Plan - Town Owned Land Map

### Legend

- Town of Dighton
- Dighton Water District
- Dighton Conservation Commission
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads

1 mile





February 2019. Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes. Data sources: MassGIS, MassDOT and the town of Dighton.

### Town of Dighton Open Space and Recreation Plan - Action Map

#### Legend

- ① Complete the shared use path links to the Taunton River Trail
- ② Complete the Broad Cove Boardwalk /Access Project
- ③ Develop shared use paths at Horton and Chestnut Streets
- ④ Develop bicycle and shared use path features throughout Dighton
- ⑤ Develop a community park in West Dighton
- ⑥ Evaluate options for the Muddy Brook Cove Dam area
- ⑦ Develop the North Dighton Playground area
- ⑧ Retain productive agricultural soils townwide
- ⑨ Preserve and protect surface and groundwater resources townwide
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads

1 mile ①

## SECTION 11: REFERENCES

### Print, Personal Meetings, and Correspondence

1. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Conservation Services, The Open Space Planner's Workbook, March, 2008.
2. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2017, December, 2017.
3. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife and Certified Vernal Pools, 11th Edition, June 1, 2003; 12th Edition, October 1, 2006; 13th Edition October 1, 2008.
4. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Species of Special Concern, 2010.
5. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Losing Ground, 2020.
6. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Historic and Archaeological Resources of Southeastern Massachusetts, 1985.
7. Massachusetts Historical Commission, MHC Reconnaissance Survey Reports, December, 2001.
8. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, BioMap 2, Dighton, MA, 2012
9. Town of Dighton, 2014 Master Plan.
10. Mass GIS, Land Use data.
11. Assessor's data, Town of Dighton.
12. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service, West Wareham Field Office, agricultural data and personal communication.
13. Kuhn, Anne, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Research and Development (ORD), personal communication .
14. Payne, Maggie, Soil Scientist, USDA, NRCS, personal communication.
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16. Chase, Brad, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, personal communication.
17. Lambert, Beth, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, personal communication.
18. Bancroft, Julia, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, personal communication.
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20. U.S. Census Data 2010, Town of Dighton, SRPEDD Data Center.
21. American Community Survey Data 2013-2017, SRPEDD Data Center.
22. Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) Data, SRPEDD Data Center.

23. Walberg, Eric, Manomet, personal communication.
24. Warns, Danica, Shaping the Future of Your Community Program, Massachusetts Audubon Society, personal communication.
25. Jones, Jaqueline, South Coast Bikeway Alliance, personal communication.
26. Desrosiers, Roger and Donna, Dighton Inter-tribal Council, personal communication.
27. Jahnige, Paul, DCR, personal communication.
28. McPherson, Kate, Save the Bay, personal communication.
29. MacFaden, Scott, Wildlands Trust, personal communication.
30. Chapman, Priscilla, and Silva, Steve, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, personal communication.
31. Duarte, Phillip, Taunton Pathways Committee, personal communication.
32. Durfee, Nancy, Town Planner, Somerset, MA, personal communication.
33. Gray, Jon, Dighton Agricultural Commission, personal communication.
34. Town of Dighton, CRB/Hazard Mitigation Plans, 2020.

### **Web-Based Sources of Material and Data**

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs [www.mass.gov/envir](http://www.mass.gov/envir)

Department of Environmental Protection [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program [www.nhesp.org](http://www.nhesp.org)

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program [www.nbep.org](http://www.nbep.org)

Resilient Taunton Watershed Network [www.srpedd.org/rtwn](http://www.srpedd.org/rtwn)

Division of Ecological Restoration [www.mass.gov/der](http://www.mass.gov/der)

Department of Conservation and Recreation [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr)

Department of Fish and Game [www.mass.gov/dfg](http://www.mass.gov/dfg)

MA Coastal Zone Management [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/czm)

Southeastern Regional Planning [www.srpedd.org](http://www.srpedd.org)

Massachusetts Audubon Society [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org)

The Nature Conservancy [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org)

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov)

MA Department of Agricultural Resources [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr)

US EPA [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences [www.manomet.org](http://www.manomet.org)

South Coast Bikeway Alliance [www.southcoastbikeway.com](http://www.southcoastbikeway.com)

**APPENDIX A**

**ADA TRANSITION PLAN**

## **Section 504 ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan**

In December of 2019, the Town of Dighton was awarded a \$35,000 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Dighton used the money to conduct a self-evaluation of certain town-owned properties and develop a Transition Plan for future improvements, including its outdoor Parks, Recreation, and Conservation facilities.

Achieving ADA compliance is also one of the top priorities listed in the Town's recently updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. The town hired KMA to conduct the evaluation and put together a Transition Plan.

The Transition Plan for these Conservation, Park and Recreation facilities was developed in accordance with the protocol presented in Appendix H of the state's Open Space and Recreation Planner's Handbook (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services, rev. March 2008). Individual facility sheets were developed for each of the facilities. All facility inventory sheets will be on file in the Town Offices, with the ADA Coordinator. Implementation of the individual facility transition plans that make-up the Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan is the responsibility of the controlling department, board, or commission. In some instances, such as where the Town has Management Agreements in place with the state, the planning, scheduling, and implementation of these facility plans will be conducted on a partnership basis.

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## DIGHTON OUTDOOR PARKS, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FACILITY AUDITS

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*KMA audited the following outdoor facilities:*

Broad Cove Nature Trail
Central Playground
Courts by Old Police Station
G. Lopes Complex
Karl Spratt Jr. Memorial Field
Lane Field
Lions Club Pavilion
North Dighton Field
Palmer Street Playground
School Street Playground
Tricentennial Park

## BROAD COVE NATURE TRAIL

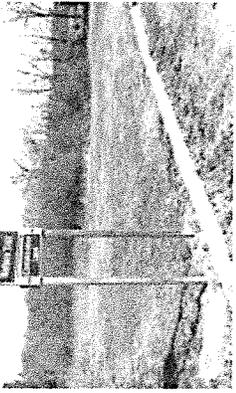
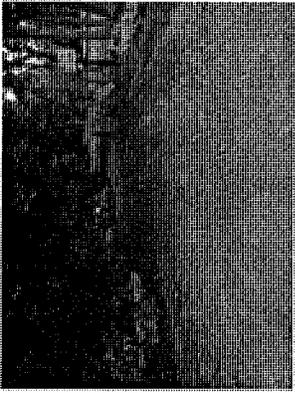
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AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020 & JUNE 9, 2020



KMA reviewed two entrances at the Broad Cove Nature Trail: the entrance off Hart Street and the West Entrance. Both entrances consist of an unpaved parking area with adjacent trailheads. No designated accessible parking spaces and no accessible routes are provided.

# BROAD COVE NATURE TRAIL

#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking – Hart Street Entrance &amp; West Entrance</b>                      Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking spaces, as well as its associated sign and access aisle.                      Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle                      Est. Quantity: 4 (2 spaces + 2 aisles)</p>	\$6,000
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route – Hart Street Entrance &amp; West Entrance</b>                      An accessible route is not provided to the trail.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required.                      Unit Cost: \$1,000 ea.                      Quantity: 2</p>	\$2,000

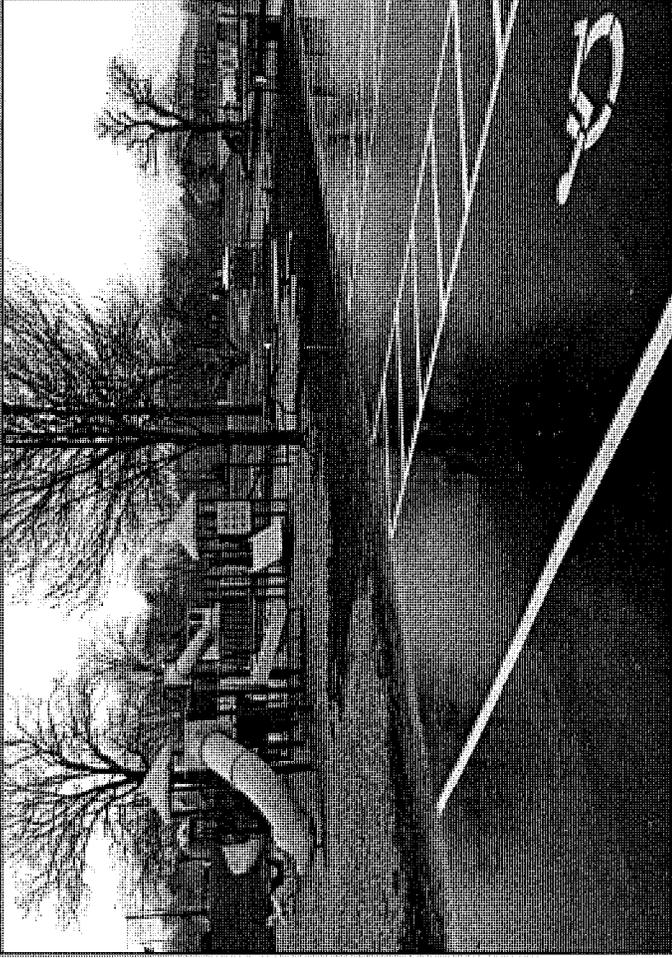
**TOTAL FOR BROAD COVE NATURE TRAIL:**

**\$8,000**

## CENTRAL PLAYGROUND

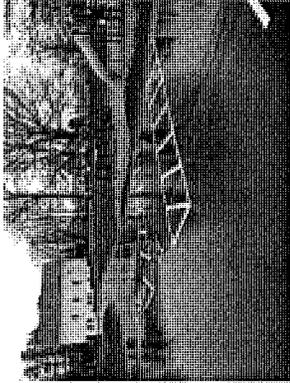
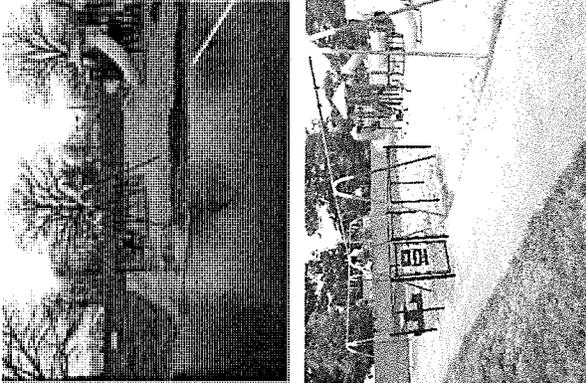
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*AUDITED ON: APRIL 03, 2020 & JUNE 9, 2020*



Central Playground is located along Somerset Avenue. The site consists of an open green space, a playground, a gazebo, picnic table seating, and surface parking, including two designated accessible parking spaces. There is no accessible route from the public right-of-way to the site.

# CENTRAL PLAYGROUND

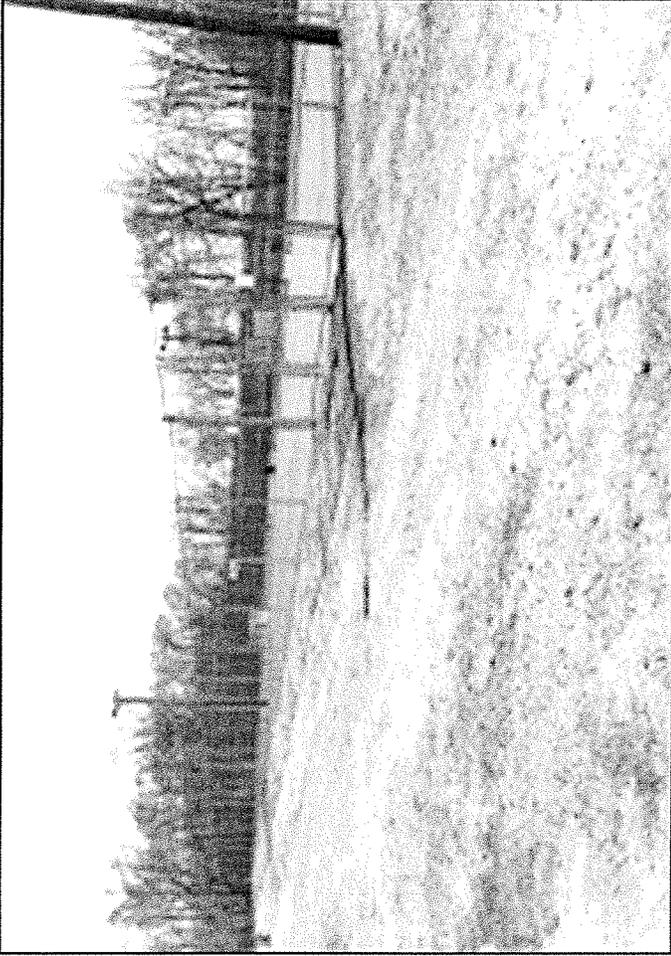
#	<b>Barrier Statement</b>	<b>Photo</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b>                      The parking lot lacks a van accessible parking space. The access aisle is &lt;96" wide, @ 60".</p>		<p>Restripe an existing parking space to add a van accessible space, as well as its associated sign and access aisle.                      Unit Cost: \$150 per space or aisle                      Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p>	\$300
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b>                      An accessible route is not provided to the playground.                      The playground lacks ground-level play components and an accessible route between elements.                      The gate to the enclosed area lacks the required minimum 10" AFF of smooth surface along the bottom of the push side.  <i>Note: there is an accessible swing area at the playground.</i></p>		<p>Provide an accessible route to the playground. Additional study required.                      Unit Cost: \$5,000                      Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide ground-level play components at the playground. Additional study required.                      Unit Cost: \$1,000                      Quantity: 1</p> <p>Install a kick plate that is minimum 10" tall on the bottom of the push side of the gate.                      Unit Cost: \$250 ea.                      Quantity: 1</p>	\$6,250

3.	<p><b>Outdoor Seating</b> The picnic table is not accessible.</p>	No Image	<p>Provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$250
<b>TOTAL FOR CENTRAL PLAYGROUND:</b>				<b>\$6,800</b>

## COURTS BY OLD POLICE STATION

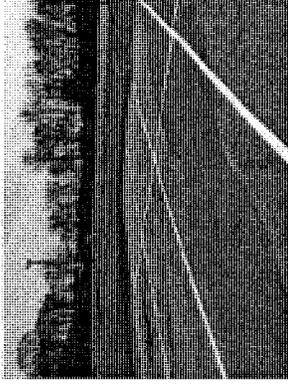
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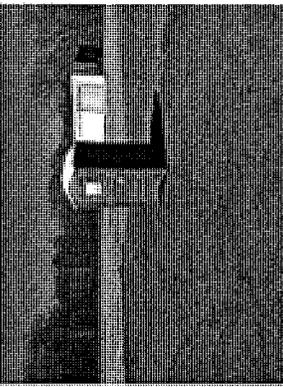
*AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020 & JUNE 9, 2020*



The courts by the Old Police Station are located along Somerset Avenue. The site consists of a parking lot, a seating area, two tennis courts, a basketball court, a multi-purpose court, a portable toilet room, and surface parking. No accessible parking or accessible routes are provided.

**COURTS BY OLD POLICE STATION**

#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided.</p>		<p>Restripe an existing parking space to add a van accessible space, as well as its associated sign and access aisle. Unit Cost: \$150 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p>	<p>\$300</p>
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the courts, the bleachers, the picnic tables, or the portable toilet room.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000 Quantity: 1</p>	<p>\$5,000</p>

3.	<p><b>Seating Area</b> The outdoor tables lack an accessible seating location.</p>		<p>Provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Est. Quantity: 1</p>	\$250
4.	<p><b>Portable Toilet</b> An accessible portable toilet is not provided.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible portable toilet located on an accessible route. Unit Cost: \$1,500 per season Est. Quantity: 1</p>	\$1,500
5.	<p><b>Gates</b> The gates lack the required minimum 10" of smooth surface along the bottom of the push side.</p>		<p>Install a kick plate that is minimum 10" tall on the bottom of the push side of the gate. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Quantity: 2</p>	\$500
<b>TOTAL FOR COURTS BY OLD POLICE STATION:</b>				<b>\$7,550</b>

## G. LOPES LITTLE LEAGUE COMPLEX

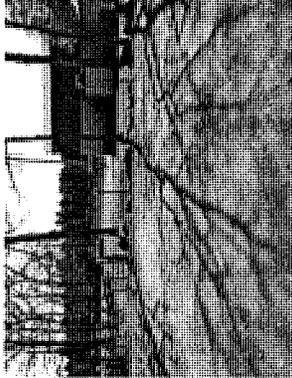
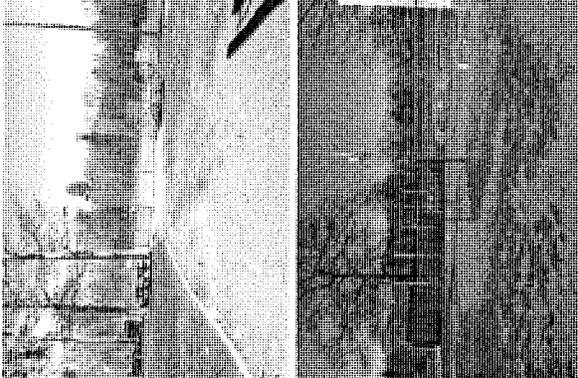
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*AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020*



The G. Lopes Complex is located at 2580 Maple Swamp Road. The site consists of several athletic fields, a set of toilet rooms, a concessions pavilion, outdoor seating, and surface parking, including three designated accessible parking spaces.

**G. LOPES LITTLE LEAGUE COMPLEX**

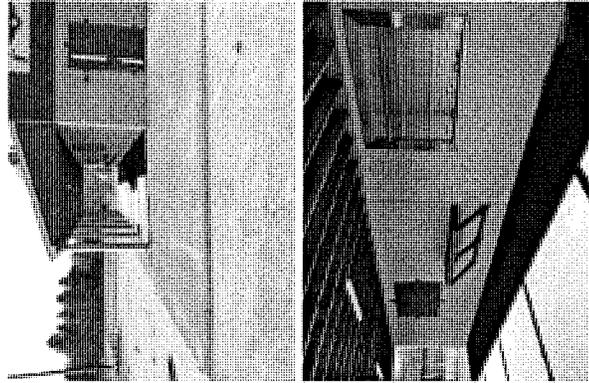
#	<b>Barrier Statement</b>	<b>Photo</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b>                      The designated accessible parking provided lacks striping, a stable, firm and slip resistant surface. The signs are mounted &lt;60" AFF to the bottom edge of the sign.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add accessible parking spaces (including at least one van space), as well as their associated access aisles.                      Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle                      Est. Quantity: 5 (3 spaces + 2 aisles)</p> <p>Reinstall the signs at min. 60" AFF, measured to the bottom of the sign, including a van accessible sign.                      Unit Cost: \$100 ea.                      Quantity: 3</p>	\$7,800
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b>                      An accessible route is not provided to the fields, the benches, the bleachers, the toilet rooms, the picnic tables, or the service window.                      The outdoor tables lack an accessible seating location.                      A wheelchair space is not provided at the bleachers.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required.                      Unit Cost: \$10,000                      Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance.                      Unit Cost: \$250 ea.                      Est. Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide an accessible wheelchair space on an accessible route next to the bleachers.                      Unit Cost: \$25/SF                      Quantity: 20 SF</p>	\$10,750

3.

**Service Window**

The service area is not located on an accessible route due to a vertical change in level >0.25" AFF, @ 2".

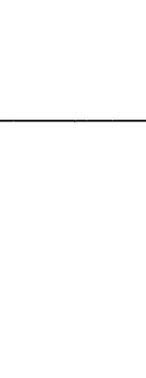
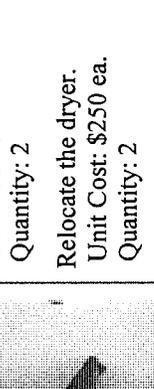
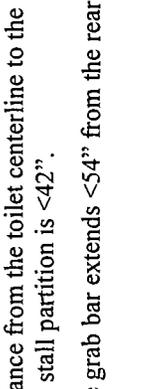
The service window and the counter are >36" AFF, @ up to 39".



Coordinate with mitigation above regarding proving an accessible route.  
Unit Cost: \$0  
Quantity: -

Lower the service window and counter to max. 36" AFF.  
Unit Cost: \$3,000  
Quantity: 1

\$3,000

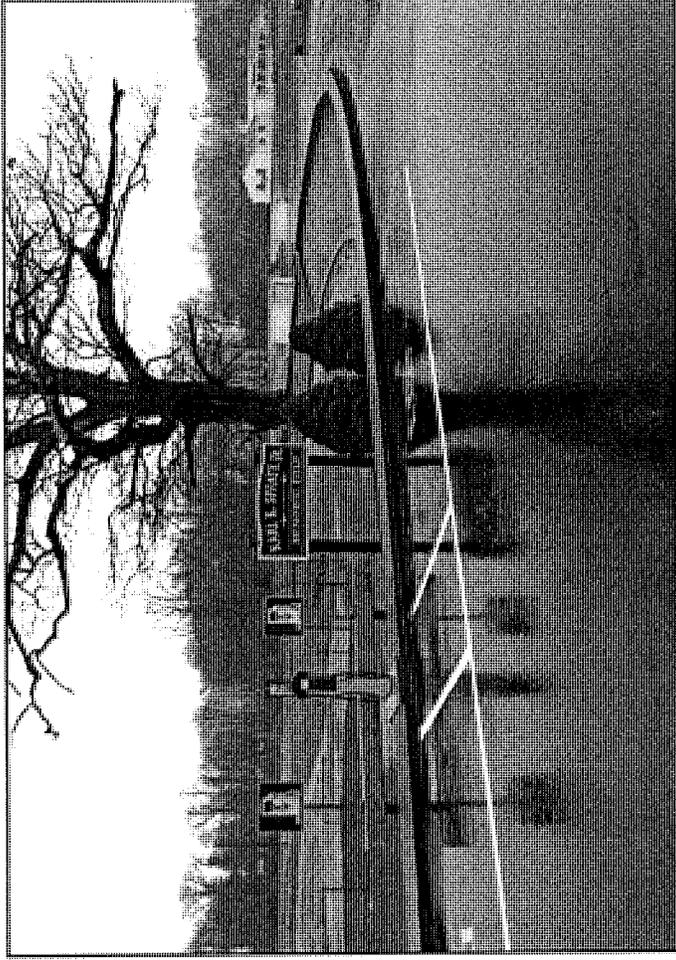
<p>4. <b>Toilet Rooms (2)</b></p> <p>The signs are not located on the latch side of the door.</p> <p>The knee clearance at the sink is &lt;27" AFF, @ 25".</p> <p>The mirror is &gt;40" AFF to the bottom of the reflective surface, @ 43.5".</p> <p>The dryer protrudes &gt;4" into the circulation space, @ 8".</p> <p>The distance from the toilet centerline to the adjacent stall partition is &lt;42".</p> <p>The side grab bar extends &lt;54" from the rear wall, @ 48".</p> <p>The coat hook is &gt;48" AFF, @ 65".</p>	   	<p>Install tactile/ Braille signage on the latch side of the door. Coordinate with location and height requirements. Unit Cost: \$100 per sign Quantity: 2</p> <p>Raise the vanity to provide the required knee clearance. Unit Cost: \$750 ea. Quantity: 2</p> <p>Lower the mirror. Unit Cost: \$50 ea. Quantity: 2</p> <p>Relocate the dryer. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Quantity: 2</p> <p>Relocate the stall partition. Unit Cost: \$900 ea. Quantity: 2</p> <p>Install a 42" min. side grab bar, located 12" from the interior corner of the wall. Unit Cost: \$50 ea. Quantity: 2</p> <p>Install a coat hook mounted no higher than 48" AFF. Unit Cost: \$50 ea. Quantity: 2</p>	<p>\$4,300</p>
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**TOTAL FOR G. LOPES LITTLE LEAGUE COMPLEX: \$25,850**

## KARL SPRATT JR. MEMORIAL FIELD

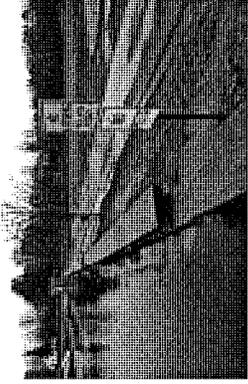
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*AUDITED ON: APRIL 03, 2020*



Karl Spratt Jr. Memorial Field is located behind Town Hall off of Somerset Avenue. The site consists of an open green space and an athletic field enclosed by a running track and stepped seating. Surface parking is available at adjacent Town Hall. KMA did not observe any designated accessible parking spaces serving the field. There is no accessible route provided from the public right-of-way to site elements.

**KARL SPRATT JR. MEMORIAL FIELD**

#	<b>Barrier Statement</b>	<b>Photo</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided. <i>Note: Accessible parking is available at adjacent Town Hall. However, KMA observed most people park along perimeter of field to access the site.</i></p>	<p>No Image</p>	<p>Stripe a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking space and its associated access aisle. Unit Cost: \$300 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle) Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign. Unit Cost: \$100 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$700
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the track or field.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000</p>	\$5,000
3.	<p><b>Stadium Seating</b> The stadium lacks the total number of required accessible seating spaces.</p>		<p>Provide the required number of accessible seats. Further design study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000</p>	\$5,000

<p>4. <b>EV Charging Stations</b> The EV charging controls are &gt;48" AFF.</p>		<p>Relocate the controls to max. 48" AFF. Unit Cost: \$1,000 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	<p>\$1,000</p>
<p><b>TOTAL FOR KARL SPRATT JR. MEMORIAL FIELD:</b></p>			<p><b>\$11,700</b></p>

## LANE FIELD

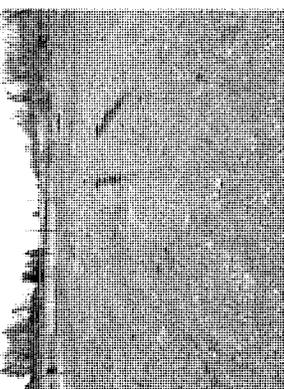
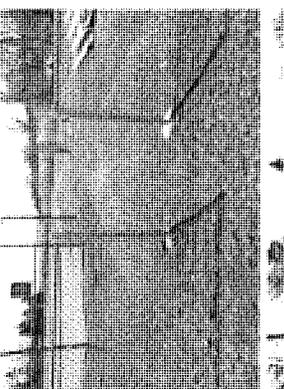
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AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020



Lane Field is located on Main Street. The site consists of an open green space, a playground, benches, and a baseball field. KMA did not observe any designated parking spaces or accessible spaces serving the field. There is no accessible route from the public right-of-way.

# LANE FIELD

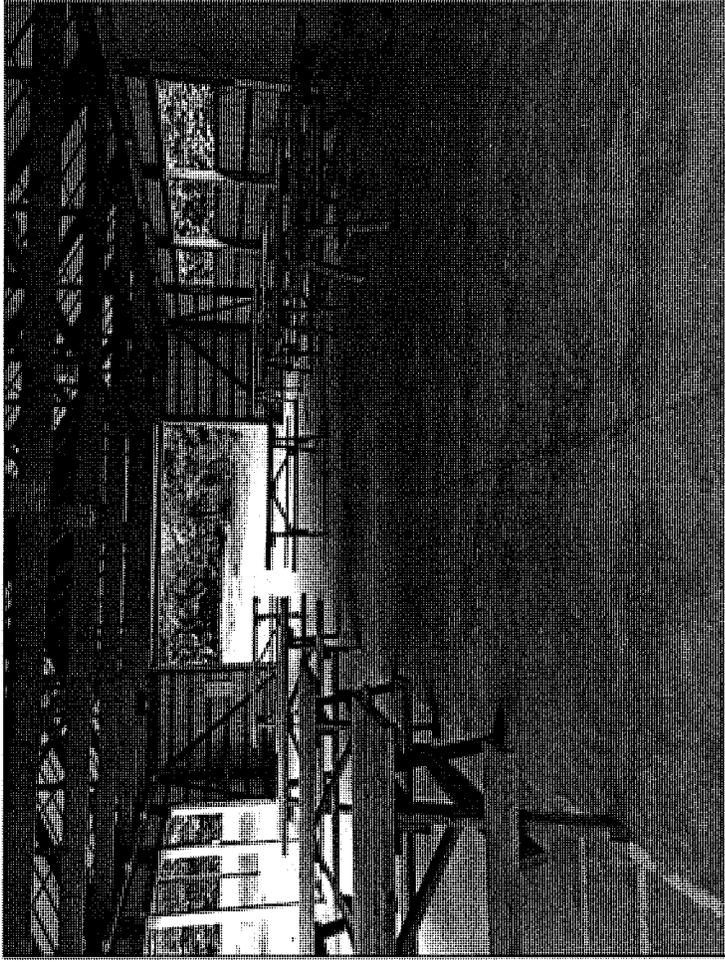
#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking space and its associated access aisle. Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p> <p>Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign. Unit Cost: \$100 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$3,100
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the baseball field, the bleachers, the playground, or the benches. A wheelchair space is not provided at the bleachers. The playground lacks ground-level play components and an accessible route between elements.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000 Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide an accessible space on an accessible route next to the bleachers. Unit Cost: \$25/SF Quantity: 20 SF</p> <p>Provide ground-level play components at the playground. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$1,000 Quantity: 1</p>	\$6,500

**TOTAL FOR LANE FIELD:**

**\$9,600**

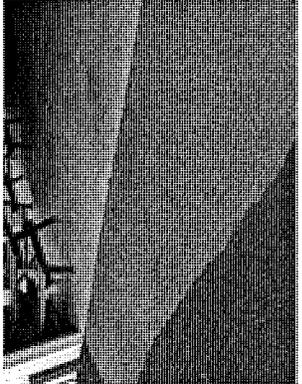
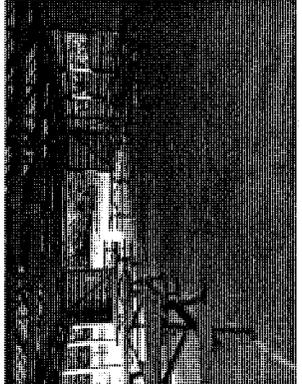
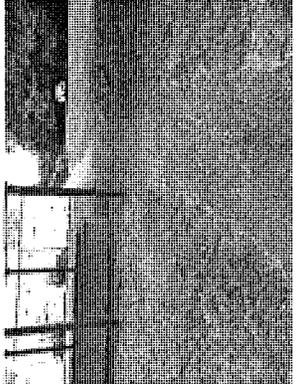
## LIONS CLUB PAVILION

AUDITED ON: JUNE 9, 2020



The Lions Club Pavilion is located behind Old Town Hall. The site consists of a covered seating area, a portable toilet, and a grilling area. KMA was informed on site that the Lions Club Pavilion shares parking with the adjacent Town facilities.

**LIONS CLUB PAVILION**

#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
3.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> The walkway leading into the pavilion has running slopes &gt;5%, @ up to 9.4%.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$1,000 Quantity: 1</p>	<p>\$1,000</p>
4.	<p><b>Seating</b> There are no accessible seating spaces provided.</p>		<p>Provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Est. Quantity: 1</p>	<p>\$250</p>
5.	<p><b>BBQ Area</b> The BBQ area is not on an accessible route. The paved path at the back has running slopes &gt;5%, @ up to 7.7%. The BBQ area lacks an adjacent level clear floor space.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$1,000 Quantity: 1  Provide an accessible space on an accessible route next to the BBQ. Unit Cost: \$25/SF Quantity: 20 SF</p>	<p>\$1,500</p>

TOTAL FOR LIONS CLUB PAVILION:

\$2,750

**NORTH DIGHTON FIELD**

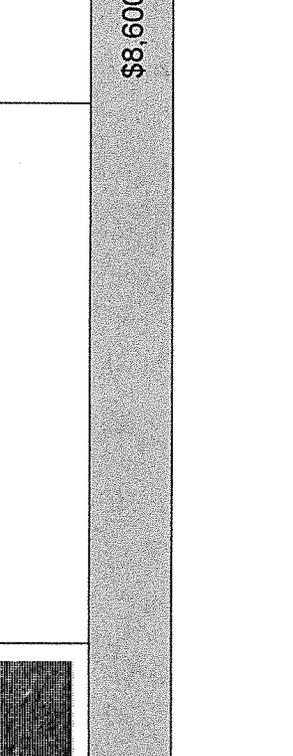
AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020



North Dighton Field is located at the intersection of Prospect Street and School Street. The site consists of a baseball field and a basketball court. No designated accessible parking is provided.

**NORTH DIGHTON FIELD**

#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b>                      Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking space and its associated access aisle.                      Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle                      Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p> <p>Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign.                      Unit Cost: \$100 ea.                      Quantity: 1</p>	\$3,100

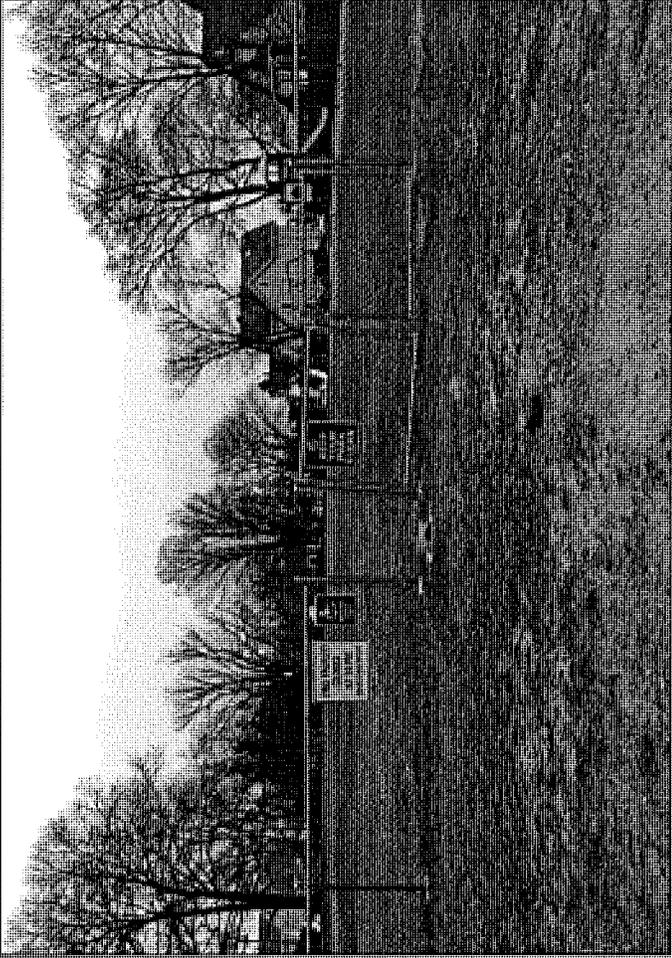
<p>2.</p> <p><b>Accessible Route</b></p> <p>An accessible route is not provided to the baseball field, the basketball court, or the bleachers.</p> <p>A wheelchair space is not provided at the bleachers.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required.</p> <p>Unit Cost: \$5,000 Est. Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide an accessible space on an accessible route next to the bleachers.</p> <p>Unit Cost: \$25/SF Quantity: 20 SF</p>	<p>\$5,500</p>
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TOTAL FOR NORTH DIGHTON FIELD: \$8,600

## PALMER STREET PLAYGROUND

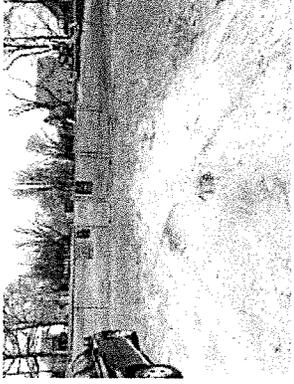
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*AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020*



Palmer Street Playground is located at the intersection of Palmer Street and School Lane. The site consists of a playground and a basketball court. There is no designated accessible parking or accessible routes provided on site.

**PALMER STREET PLAYGROUND**

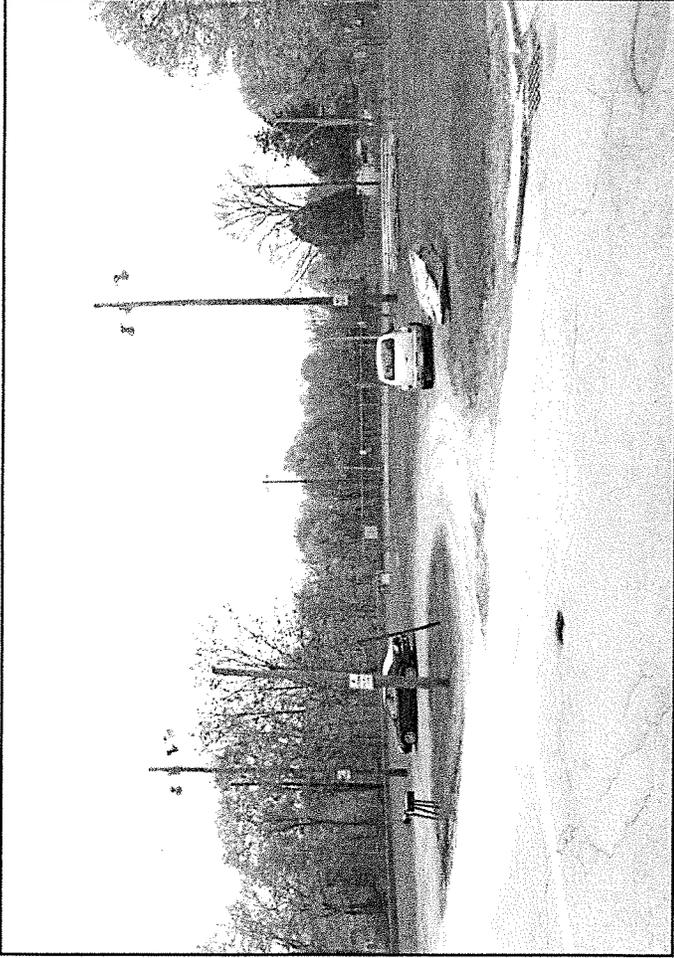
#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking space and its associated access aisle. Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p> <p>Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign. Unit Cost: \$100 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$3,100
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the playground or outdoor seating. The playground lacks ground-level play components and an accessible route between elements.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route to the playground and seating. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$1,000 Quantity: 1</p> <p>Provide ground-level play components at the playground. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$1,000 Quantity: 1</p>	\$2,000

3.	<p><b>Outdoor Seating</b> The picnic tables are not accessible.</p>	No Image	<p>Provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance. Unit Cost: \$250 ea. Est. Quantity: 1</p>	\$250
<b>TOTAL FOR PALMER STREET PLAYGROUND:</b>				<b>\$5,350</b>

## SCHOOL STREET PLAYGROUND

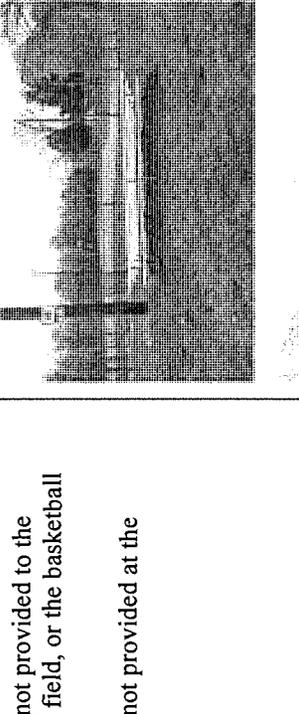
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AUDITED ON: MAY 11, 2020



School Street Playground is located at the intersection of Prospect Street and School Street. The site consists of a baseball field, a basketball court, and an unpaved lot used for parking. There are no designated accessible routes provided from the parking area to and within the site.

# SCHOOL STREET PLAYGROUND

#	<b>Barrier Statement</b>	<b>Photo</b>	<b>Proposed Mitigation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>	<p>No Image</p>	<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking spaces and its associated access aisle. Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p> <p>Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign. Unit Cost: \$100 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$3,100
2.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the bleachers, the baseball field, or the basketball court. A wheelchair space is not provided at the bleachers.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000</p> <p>Provide an accessible wheelchair space on an accessible route next to the bleachers. Unit Cost: \$25/SF Quantity: 20 SF</p>	\$5,500

**TOTAL FOR SCHOOL STREET PLAYGROUND:**

**\$8,600**

## TRICENTENNIAL PARK

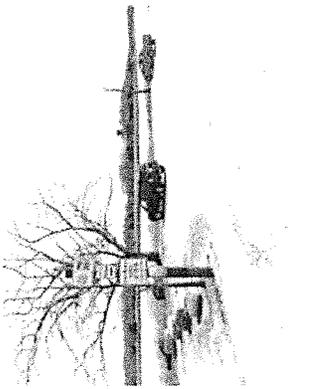
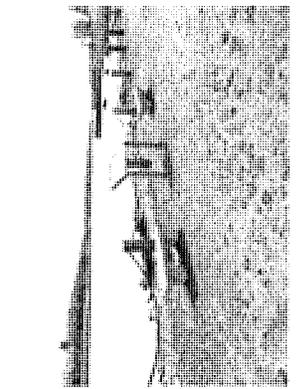
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AUDITED ON: MARCH 21, 2020 & JUNE 9, 2020



Tricentennial Park is located along Pleasant Street. The site consists of a park and an unpaved lot used for parking. There are no designated accessible routes provided from the parking area to and within the site.

**TRICENTENNIAL PARK**

#	<i>Barrier Statement</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Proposed Mitigation</i>	<i>Cost</i>
3.	<p><b>Accessible Parking</b> Designated accessible parking is not provided and the parking surface is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.</p>		<p>Pave a portion of the parking lot to add a van accessible parking space, as well as its associated sign and access aisle. Unit Cost: \$1,500 per space or aisle Est. Quantity: 2 (1 space + 1 aisle)</p> <p>Install a sign at the head of the designated van accessible space, @ min. 60" AFF to the bottom of the sign. Unit Cost: \$100 ea. Quantity: 1</p>	\$3,100
4.	<p><b>Accessible Route</b> An accessible route is not provided to the benches, picnic tables, or description placard. The accessible seating spaces at the picnic tables lack the required stable, firm, and slip resistant surface below.</p>		<p>Provide an accessible route. Additional study required. Unit Cost: \$5,000 Est. Quantity: 1</p> <p>Pave the areas at the accessible seating spaces to provide at least one table, and no less than 5% of the total number of tables, that provides compliant knee and toe clearance. Unit Cost: \$500 ea. Est. Quantity: 1</p>	\$5,500

**TOTAL FOR TRICENTENNIAL PARK:**

\$8,600

**TOTAL FOR DIGHTON EXTERIOR AREAS:**

\$103,400

# Town of Dighton

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Hiring Policy</b>
<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Upon Approval</b>
<b>Revisions</b>	
<b>Board of Selectmen Approval Date</b>	

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## **PURPOSE & SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent and equitable procedures for the recruitment and selection of qualified candidates for all regular positions in the Town of Dighton.

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## **APPLICABILITY**

The Board of Selectmen serves as the appointing authority for the Animal Control Officer, Administrative Assistant, Building Commissioner, Council on Aging Director, Executive Assistant, Fire Chief, Health Agent, Highway Superintendent, Police Chief, Town Accountant, Town Administrator, and Veterans' Agent. The Board of Selectmen also approves all hires for positions that fall under any collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).

This policy applies to the recruitment and staffing of all full-time and part-time compensated positions in the Town of Dighton, excluding elected officials and employees of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District. Positions covered by a CBA are subject only to those portions of the policy that are not distinctly regulated by a CBA. Hiring processes for the Fire and Police Departments differ from the procedures laid out in this policy.

To the extent permitted by law, individual employment agreements (new, updated, or extensions) entered into after the effective date of this policy, with employees who are subject to this policy, must follow all the provisions of this policy.

This policy is intended to be consistent with any and all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. If any part of this policy is inconsistent with the law, that part of the policy shall be considered invalid and the remaining provisions of the policy shall be construed so as to be consistent with the law.

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## **POLICY**

A. The primary goal of the Town of Dighton in the employment process is to fill vacancies with the most qualified candidates available. The Town will adhere to the principles of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).

B. The Town's policy is to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Town's commitment to ADA compliance and inclusion for all, and the comparable state law in all phases of the hiring process, including making reasonable accommodations to enable applications with disabilities to obtain access to Town facilities for the purposes of seeking employment and, if hired, to perform the essential functions of the position.

C. The hiring procedures outlined in the title of this policy sectioned Provisions shall be followed in order to appoint both internal and external candidates to vacant positions in Town service.

D. It is the policy of the Town to post and/or advertise all vacant paid positions.

E. Department Heads are required to act consistently with this policy and shall ensure this policy is implemented within their respective departments.

F. In the event of an error or violation of this policy, either intentional or unintentional, the Town Administrator must be immediately informed. He/she will identify and implement the proper corrective measure(s). A violation of this policy, whether intentional or unintentional, shall not change this policy nor set a precedent in any future application of this policy.

G. All hiring recommendations by a Town board or commission are subject to the Open Meeting Law where applicable, specifically regarding Selection Committees and posting requirements. Please see the Town Clerk for assistance or inquiries.

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## **PROVISIONS**

A. Department Heads, as well as boards and commissions, must follow procedures in place and seek approval from the Board of Selectmen to hire and/or fill vacancies.

B. Department Heads must review the current position description on file to ensure it is current and accurate for posting and/or advertisement purposes. They shall work with the Town Administrator if job description updates are needed, which must be approved by the Board of Selectmen. Job descriptions for union employees must also have approval from the respective unions.

*C. Posting and Advertising*

- i. The position description presently on file with the Town Administrator is the official description of the duties and responsibilities of the position;

- ii. The Department Head will work with the Town Administrator to prepare a job posting based on the official posting description, grade, and salary information. All postings and advertisements shall be in a format that will include at least the following information:
  - a. Position title;
  - b. Salary or salary range;
  - c. Minimum qualifications;
  - d. Department/location of job;
  - e. Brief description of essential duties;
  - f. Address and/or email address to submit application;
  - g. Materials required for application;
  - h. EEO/ADA statement;
  - i. Deadline for filing application;
  - j. Any other information deemed necessary by the Board of Selectmen and/or the Town Administrator;
- iii. All postings will be completed using the format available in the Town Administrator's Office;
- iv. All applications must be submitted through the Town Administrator's Office;
- v. The Town Administrator shall review each job posting for accuracy and consistency with this policy and the position description. Final approval is required by the Board of Selectmen prior to posting. If updates to a job posting or position description are needed after prior approval from the Board of Selectmen, the updates shall require approval;
- vi. Once reviewed and approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Department Head or the Town Administrator shall post and/or advertise the job opening(s) in appropriate locations, including the Town's website. Qualified internal applicants are encouraged to apply;
- vii. If the position is to be advertised externally, which shall be decided by the Board of Selectmen in consultation with the Town Administrator, the Department Head shall work with the Town Administrator to prepare the text and content of the external advertisement. The Town Administrator shall review for appropriateness and consistency. Once the final posting and/or description is approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Department Head or Town Administrator shall place the advertisement in the appropriate outlets, such as newspapers, trade journals, Town or other recruitment websites, social media, and/or other medium that meets their needs. Generally, all costs for advertising will be the responsibility of the department with the vacancy.

#### *D. Employment Applications*

- i. All applicants shall have the opportunity to self-identify as having protected group status by filling an EEO Self-Identification Form. The decision as whether or not to identify is up to the applicant. The Self-Identification Form should be forwarded to the Town Administrator. However, as part of the Town's commitment to Equal

Employment Opportunity, hiring departments may request information regarding the forms;

- ii. No applicant shall be considered without a complete application package, which may include an employment application, resumé, cover letter, and any other applicable material(s) as defined/indicated in the job posting;
- iii. Applicants for positions that require degrees, licenses, and/or certifications must provide copies or proof of those materials, or shall provide written authorization to the Town Administrator allowing for verification of such information prior to beginning employment;
- iv. All application materials, including the protected EEO Self-Identification Form, resumé, cover letter, award letter, and application shall be kept in the selected candidate's personnel file in the Town Treasurer/Town Collector's Office.

#### *E. Screening & Interviewing*

- i. In the event of a vacancy below a Department Head in any office under the authority of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, Department Head, and any other personnel deemed necessary by the Town Administrator, in consultation with the Board of Selectmen, will screen resumes based on criteria in the job description and posting;
- ii. Department Heads shall work with the Town Administrator to:
  - a. Develop standard selection questions and use the same questions for all candidates;
  - b. Select qualified candidates for interview and send a letter (or email) to candidates whom were not selected for an interview in a timely fashion;
  - c. Notify candidates selected for a second interview by either telephone or email;
  - d. Select candidates for final interviews, contact references where appropriate, and conduct final interviews;
    - i. Interviews of finalists conducted by Town boards or commissions are subject to the Open Meeting Law;
  - e. Select final candidate(s);
    - i. When filling a Department Head vacancy, finalist candidates will be recommended to the Board of Selectmen for final interviews;
    - ii. Ideally, there will be no fewer than two candidates for final interviews.
    - iii. The Board of Selectmen, in consultation with the Town Administrator, shall appoint a Department Head by majority or unanimous vote
  - f. Department Head shall review potential job offer with Town Administrator;
  - g. Notify unsuccessful candidates by telephone, email, or mail;
  - h. All communication to the candidates or others asking about the hiring process will be made through the Town Administrator's Office and responded to by either the Town Administrator or the Board of Selectmen Executive Assistant;

- i. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint to fill the vacancy and approve the job offer based on the recommendation of the Department Head and the Town Administrator.
- iii. In the event of a vacancy of a Department Head, the Board of Selectmen may opt to appoint a Screening Committee to conduct interviews, to which the Town Administrator shall be a member. Screening Committees are subject to the Open Meeting Law and interviews must be conducted at a duly posted meeting in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A. The Screening Committee shall submit no fewer than two candidates to be interviewed by the Board of Selectmen at a public meeting.
- iv. If the Board declines to appoint a Screening Committee, the Town Administrator shall work with appropriate personnel in consultation with the Board of Selectmen to conduct interviews utilizing upon the process set forth in this policy.
- v. For positions below the level of Department Head, the Town Administrator, Department Head and any other personnel deemed necessary by the Town Administrator shall conduct interviews and provide a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.
- vi. All union positions are ratified by vote of the Board of Selectmen, including those in the Fire and Police Departments.

#### *F. Job Offers*

- i. For starting salary, the Department Head shall not make a commitment until prior written approval is obtained from the Town Administrator;
- ii. The Town Administrator shall consult with the Board of Selectmen prior to any initial or final job offer or starting or final salary in order to ensure consistency and compliance with existing Town personnel policies, practices, precedents, and/or procedures;
- iii. All job offers are conditional, as prospective employees may be required to submit to and pass certain required physicals and checks, including CORI screenings or bond requirements, to be conducted by the Town Administrator, Department Head, or the state. For positions subject to Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) regulations, a pre-employment drug test will be ordered.
- iv. Final job offers/award letters shall be communicated in writing and shall contain certain minimum information;
  - a. The Town Administrator shall be consulted in utilizing the standard letter;
  - b. The Board of Selectmen or the Town Administrator shall sign the final job offer/award letters.
- v. Town of Dighton service shall be recognized for the purposes of longevity or vacation accrual.

#### *G. Hiring Documentation*

- i. The following documentation shall be compiled by the Department Head and forwarded to the Town Administrator prior to the employee's first day of work for

inclusion in the employee's personnel file, which shall be kept in the Town Treasurer/Town Collector's Office:

- a. Payroll change form;
- b. Conditional job offer letter;
- c. Employment application, resumé, and cover letter;
- d. Reference letters and/or telephone reference check reports;
- e. Any other form required for the purposes of a background check (if applicable).
- f. Signed acknowledgement forms

#### *H. Orientation & Training*

- i. During the first week of employment, the employee must meet with the Town Administrator and or the Town Treasurer/Town Collector to discuss benefits and retirement. The employee shall be required to complete and/or submit any and all required documentation to the Town Treasurer/Town Collector, or in certain instances the Town Clerk.
- ii. New employees shall also be required to sign acknowledgement forms for the following employee-related Town policies, as well as any new policies that may be adopted by the Board of Selectmen in the future:
  - a. Anti-Harassment Policy;
  - b. Social Media Policy;
  - c. Computer Use & Electronic Communication Rules & Regulations;
  - d. Personnel Records Policy;
  - e. Drug Free Workplace Policy;
  - f. Tobacco & Smoke-Free Workplace Policy.
  - g. Receipt of Conflict of Interest Law
- iii. An online Conflict of Interest Law training program must be completed as a new hire and then every two (2) years subsequently. Once completed, the Certificate of Completion must be printed and submitted to the Town Clerk.

#### *I. Benefits*

- i. Non-union, benefited employees hired after the approval of this policy shall be provided the following benefits:
  - a. Accrual of sick time at a rate of one (1) day per month of actual work performed, for a total of twelve (12) days a year;
  - b. Sick leave is cumulative from one year to the next, with a maximum accumulation of one-hundred twenty-five (125) days;
  - c. Employees shall earn no more than five (5) weeks vacation during their tenure with the town;
  - d. Employees shall receive a total of three (3) personal days each year. They are not cumulative from year to year and they expire at the end of the fiscal year.
- ii. Union employees shall receive the benefits afforded to them in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

- employee shall be required to complete and/or submit any and all required documentation to the Town Treasurer, or in certain instances the Town Clerk.
- ii. New employees shall also be required to sign acknowledgement forms for the following employee-related Town policies, as well as any new policies that may be adopted by the Board of Selectmen in the future:
    - a. Anti-Harassment Policy;
    - b. Social Media Policy;
    - c. Computer Use & Electronic Communication Rules & Regulations;
    - d. Personnel Records Policy;
    - e. Drug Free Workplace Policy;
    - f. Tobacco & Smoke-Free Workplace Policy.
    - g. Receipt of Conflict of Interest Law

*I. Benefits*

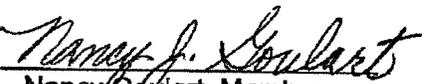
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  - a. Accrual of sick time at a rate of one (1) day per month of actual work performed, for a total of twelve (12) days a year;
  - b. Sick leave is cumulative from one year to the next, with a maximum accumulation of one-hundred twenty-five (125) days;
  - c. Employees shall earn no more than five (5) weeks vacation during their tenure with the town;
  - d. Employees shall receive a total of three (2) personal days each year. They are not cumulative from year to year and they expire at the end of the fiscal year.
- ii. Union employees shall receive the benefits afforded to them in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

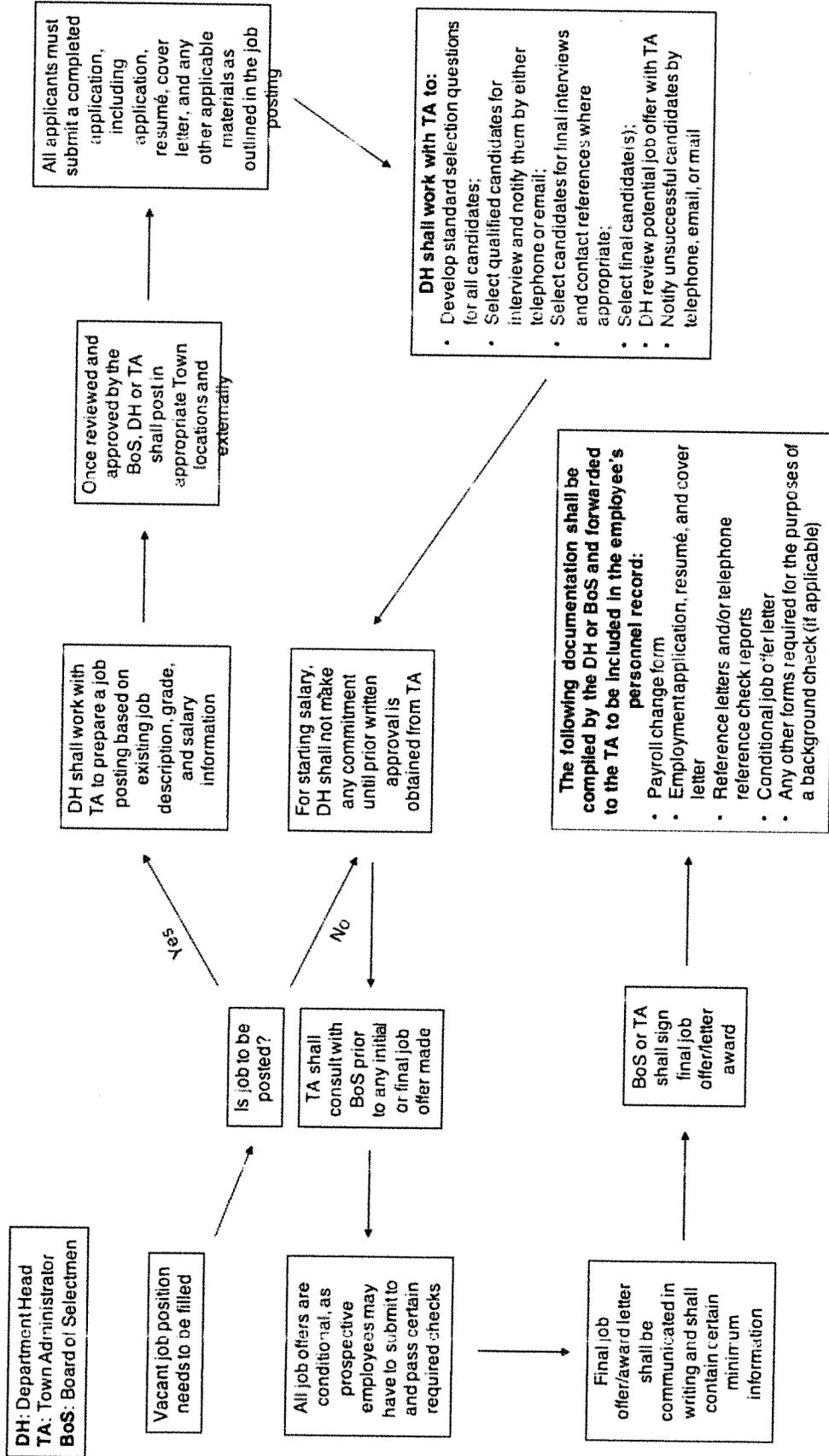
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**SIGNATURES**

  
Kenneth Pacheco, Chairman

  
Brett Zografos, Ph.d Clerk

  
Nancy Goulart, Member



# Town of Dighton

## Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Self-Identification Form

*(Completion of this form is voluntary)*

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The Town of Dighton is an equal employment opportunity employer. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, citizenship status, or any other protected characteristic. Certain laws and regulations regarding equal employment opportunity, and/or affirmative action, require us to compile, maintain, and report certain information on employees. In order to comply with these laws and regulations, we are requesting your cooperation in completing this voluntary EEO Self-Identification Form. The information on this EEO Self-Identification Form is being requested and will be used solely for record keeping and reporting purposes. Submission of this form by you is voluntary. Please be assured that you will not be subjected to any adverse treatment if you do not provide the information requested. In the event that you do provide the information requested, the information and this form will be processed and maintained separately from your employment application forms and your personnel file. If you choose not to self-identify your race/ethnicity at this time, the federal government requires your employer to determine this information by visual survey and/or other available information. For the purpose of this form, please indicate the group in which you appear to belong, identify with, or regarded in the community as belonging. However, only count yourself in one ethnic/minority group.

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### **Gender:**

Male     Female     I do not wish to provide this information

### **Race & Ethnic Identification:**

Hispanic or Latino

*A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.*

White (Not Hispanic or Latino)

*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.*

Black or African-American (Not Hispanic or Latino)  
*A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.*

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Not Hispanic or Latino)  
*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.*

Asian (Not Hispanic or Latino)  
*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.*

Native American or Alaskan Native (Not Hispanic or Latino)  
*A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.*

Two or More Races  
*All persons who identify with more than one of the above six races.*

I do not wish to provide this information

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

### **BIOMAP 2 Summary**



## Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed *BioMap2* to protect the state's biodiversity in the context of climate change.

*BioMap2* combines NHESP's 30 years of rigorously documented rare species and natural community data with spatial data identifying wildlife species and habitats that were the focus of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's 2005 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). *BioMap2* also integrates The Nature Conservancy's assessment of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems and landscapes across the Commonwealth, incorporating concepts of ecosystem resilience to address anticipated climate change impacts.

Protection and stewardship of *BioMap2* Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape is essential to safeguard the diversity of species and their habitats, intact ecosystems, and resilient natural landscapes across Massachusetts.

## What Does Status Mean?

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife determines a status category for each rare species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), M.G.L. c.131A, and its implementing regulations 321 CMR 10.00. Rare species are categorized as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern according to the following:

- Endangered species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.

**BioMap2**

CONSERVING THE BIODIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS IN A CHANGING WORLD

MA Department of Fish & Game • Division of Fisheries & Wildlife • Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program • The Nature Conservancy

Get your copy of the *BioMap2* report! Download from [www.mass.gov/nhESP](http://www.mass.gov/nhESP) or contact Natural Heritage at 508-389-6360 or [natural.heritage@state.ma.us](mailto:natural.heritage@state.ma.us).

- Threatened species are likely to become Endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
- Special Concern species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become Threatened in Massachusetts.

In addition NHESP maintains an unofficial watch list of plants that are tracked due to potential conservation interest or concern, but are not regulated under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act or other laws or regulations. Likewise, described natural communities are not regulated by any law or regulations, but they can help to identify ecologically important areas that are worthy of



**Natural Heritage  
& Endangered  
Species Program**

**Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife**  
1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough, MA 01581  
phone: 508-389-6360 fax: 508-389-7890



protection. The status of natural communities reflects the documented number and acreages of each community type in the state:

- Critically Imperiled communities typically have 5 or fewer documented good sites or have very few remaining acres in the state.
- Imperiled communities typically have 6-20 good sites or few remaining acres in the state.
- Vulnerable communities typically have 21-100 good sites or limited acreage across the state.
- Secure communities typically have over 100 sites or abundant acreage across the state; however, excellent examples are identified as Core Habitats to ensure continued protection.

In 2005 the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife completed a comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) documenting the status of Massachusetts wildlife and providing recommendations to help guide wildlife conservation decision-making. SWAP includes all the wildlife species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), as well as more than 80 species that need conservation attention but do not meet the requirements for inclusion under MESA. The SWAP document is organized around habitat types in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. While the original BioMap focused primarily on rare species protected under MESA, *BioMap2* also addresses other Species of Conservation Concern, their habitats, and the ecosystems that support them to create a spatial representation of most of the elements of SWAP.

### ***BioMap2*: One Plan, Two Components**

*BioMap2* identifies two complementary spatial layers, Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape.

Core Habitat identifies key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare species and other Species of Conservation Concern, as well as a wide diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. Protection of Core Habitats will contribute to the conservation of specific elements of biodiversity.

Critical Natural Landscape identifies large natural Landscape Blocks that are minimally impacted by development. If protected, these areas will provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances in a rapidly changing world. Areas delineated as Critical Natural Landscape also include buffering upland around wetland, coastal, and aquatic Core Habitats to help ensure their long-term integrity.

The long-term persistence of Massachusetts biological resources requires a determined commitment to land and water conservation. Protection and stewardship of both Critical Natural Landscapes and Core Habitats are needed to realize the biodiversity conservation vision of *BioMap2*.

### **Components of Core Habitat**

Core Habitat identifies specific areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of rare species, other Species of Conservation Concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems.

#### **Rare Species**

There are 432 native plant and animal species listed as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) based on their rarity, population trends, and threats to survival. For





Table 1. Species of Conservation Concern described in the State Wildlife Action Plan and/or included on the MESA List and for which habitat was mapped in *BioMap2*. Note that plants are not included in SWAP, and that marine species such as whales and sea turtles are not included in *BioMap2*.

Taxonomic Group	MESA-listed Species	Non-listed Species of Conservation Concern
Mammals	4	5
Birds	27	23
Reptiles	10	5
Amphibians	4	3
Fish	10	17
Invertebrates	102	9
Plants	256	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>62</b>

*BioMap2*, NHESP staff identified the highest quality habitat sites for each non-marine species based on size, condition, and landscape context.

### Other Species of Conservation Concern

In addition to species on the MESA List described previously, the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies 257 wildlife species and 22 natural habitats most in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. *BioMap2* includes species-specific habitat areas for 45 of these species and habitat for 17 additional species which was mapped with other coarse-filter and fine-filter approaches.

### Priority Natural Communities

Natural communities are assemblages of plant and animal species that share a common environment and occur together repeatedly on the landscape. *BioMap2* gives conservation

priority to natural communities with limited distribution and to the best examples of more common types.

### Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. *BioMap2* identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

### Forest Cores

In *BioMap2*, Core Habitat includes the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development, providing critical habitat for numerous woodland species. For example, the interior forest habitat defined by Forest Cores supports many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development, such as the Black-throated Green Warbler, and helps maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

### Wetland Cores

*BioMap2* used an assessment of Ecological Integrity to identify the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

### Aquatic Cores

To delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic





Species of Conservation Concern, beyond the species and exemplary habitats described above, *BioMap2* identifies intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur.

### Components of Critical Natural Landscape

Critical Natural Landscape identifies intact landscapes in Massachusetts that are better able to support ecological processes and disturbance regimes, and a wide array of species and habitats over long time frames.

### Landscape Blocks

*BioMap2* identifies the most intact large areas of predominately natural vegetation, consisting of contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats such as barrier beaches and salt marshes.

### Upland Buffers of Wetland and Aquatic Cores

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers.

### Upland Habitat to Support Coastal Adaptation

*BioMap2* identifies undeveloped lands adjacent to and up to one and a half meters above existing salt marshes as Critical Natural Landscapes with high potential to support inland migration of salt marsh and other coastal habitats over the coming century.

The conservation areas identified by *BioMap2* are based on breadth and depth of data, scientific expertise, and understanding of Massachusetts' biodiversity. The numerous sources of information and analyses used to

### Legal Protection of Biodiversity

*BioMap2* presents a powerful vision of what Massachusetts would look like with full protection of the land most important for supporting the Commonwealth's biodiversity. While *BioMap2* is a planning tool with *no regulatory function*, all state-listed species enjoy legal protection under the [Massachusetts Endangered Species Act \(M.G.L. c.131A\)](#) and its implementing regulations ([321 CMR 10.00](#)). Wetland habitat of state-listed wildlife is also protected under the [Wetlands Protection Act Regulations \(310 CMR 10.00\)](#). The *Natural Heritage Atlas* contains maps of [Priority Habitats](#) and [Estimated Habitats](#), which are used, respectively, for regulation under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and the Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on rare species regulations, and to view Priority and Estimated Habitat maps, please see the [Regulatory Review](#) page at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dig/dfw/natural-heritage/regulatory-review/>.

***BioMap2* is a conservation planning tool that does not, in any way, supplant the Estimated and Priority Habitat Maps which have regulatory significance. Unless and until the *BioMap2* vision is fully realized, we must continue to protect our most imperiled species and their habitats.**

create Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape are complementary, and outline a comprehensive conservation vision for Massachusetts, from rare species to intact landscapes. In total, these robust analyses define a suite of priority lands and waters that, if permanently protected, will support Massachusetts' natural systems for generations to come.





## Town Overview

Dighton lies within the Bristol

Lowland/Narragansett Lowland Ecoregion, an area of flat, gently rolling plains. Forests are mostly central hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. There are numerous wetlands, some cropland/pasture, and many cranberry bogs. Many rivers drain this area.



## Dighton at a Glance

- Total Area: 14,188 acres (22.2 square miles)
- Human Population in 2010: 7,086
- Open space protected in perpetuity: 400 acres, or 2.8% percent of total area\*
- BioMap2 Core Habitat: 2,725 acres
- BioMap2 Core Habitat Protected: 146 acres or 5.4%
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape: 5,473 acres
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape Protected: 176 acres or 3.2%.

## BioMap2 Components

### Core Habitat

- 1 Exemplary or Priority Natural Community
- 1 Forest Core
- 11 Wetland Cores
- 3 Aquatic Cores
- 8 Vernal Pool Cores
- 5 Species of Conservation Concern Cores\*\*
  - 1 bird, 2 amphibians, 1 fish, 1 insect, 1 plant

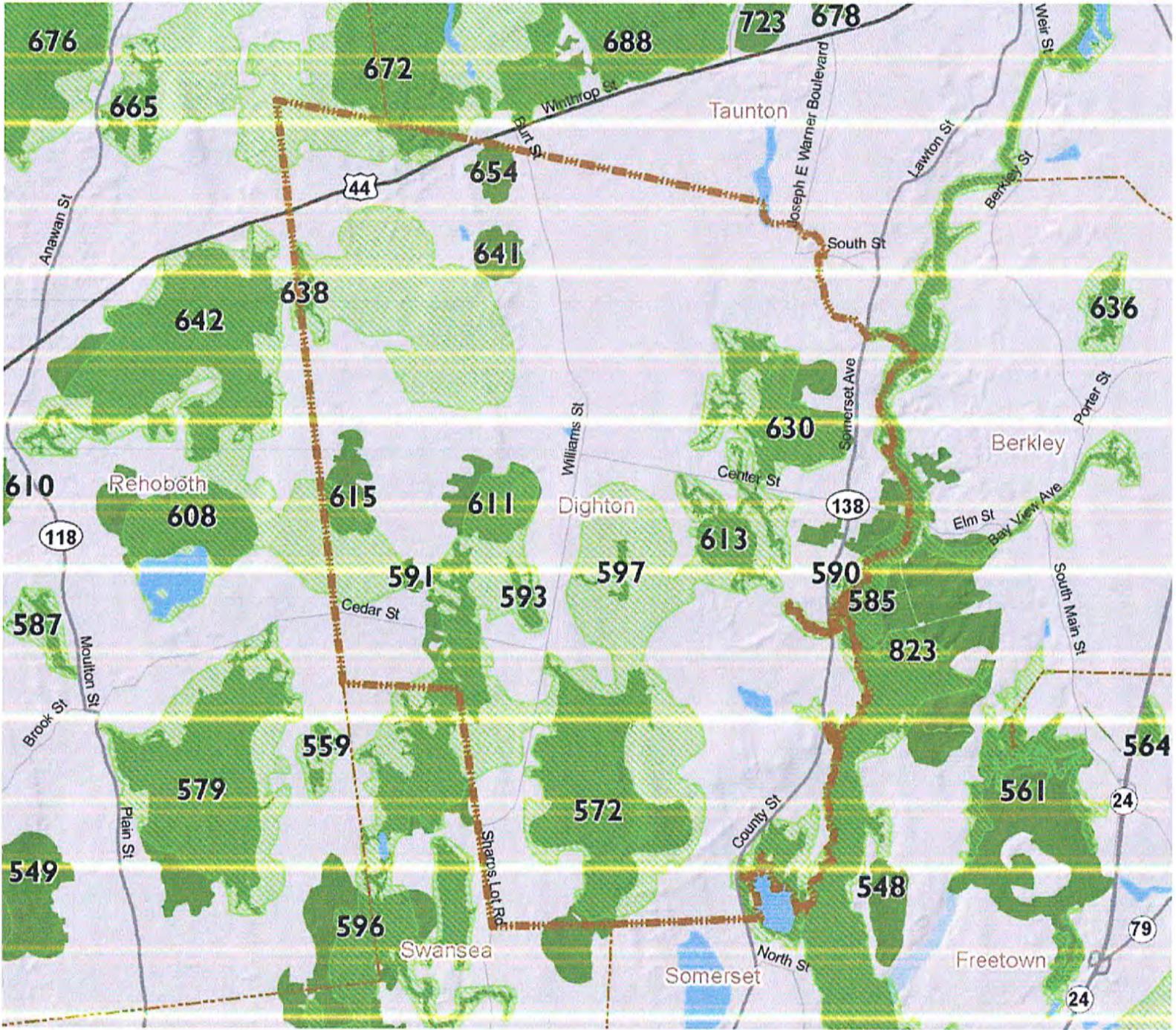
### Critical Natural Landscape

- 3 Landscape Blocks
- 10 Wetland Core Buffers
- 2 Aquatic Core Buffers
- 4 Coastal Adaptation Areas

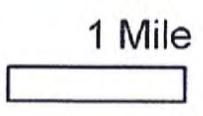
\* Calculated using MassGIS data layer "Protected and Recreational Open Space—March, 2012".

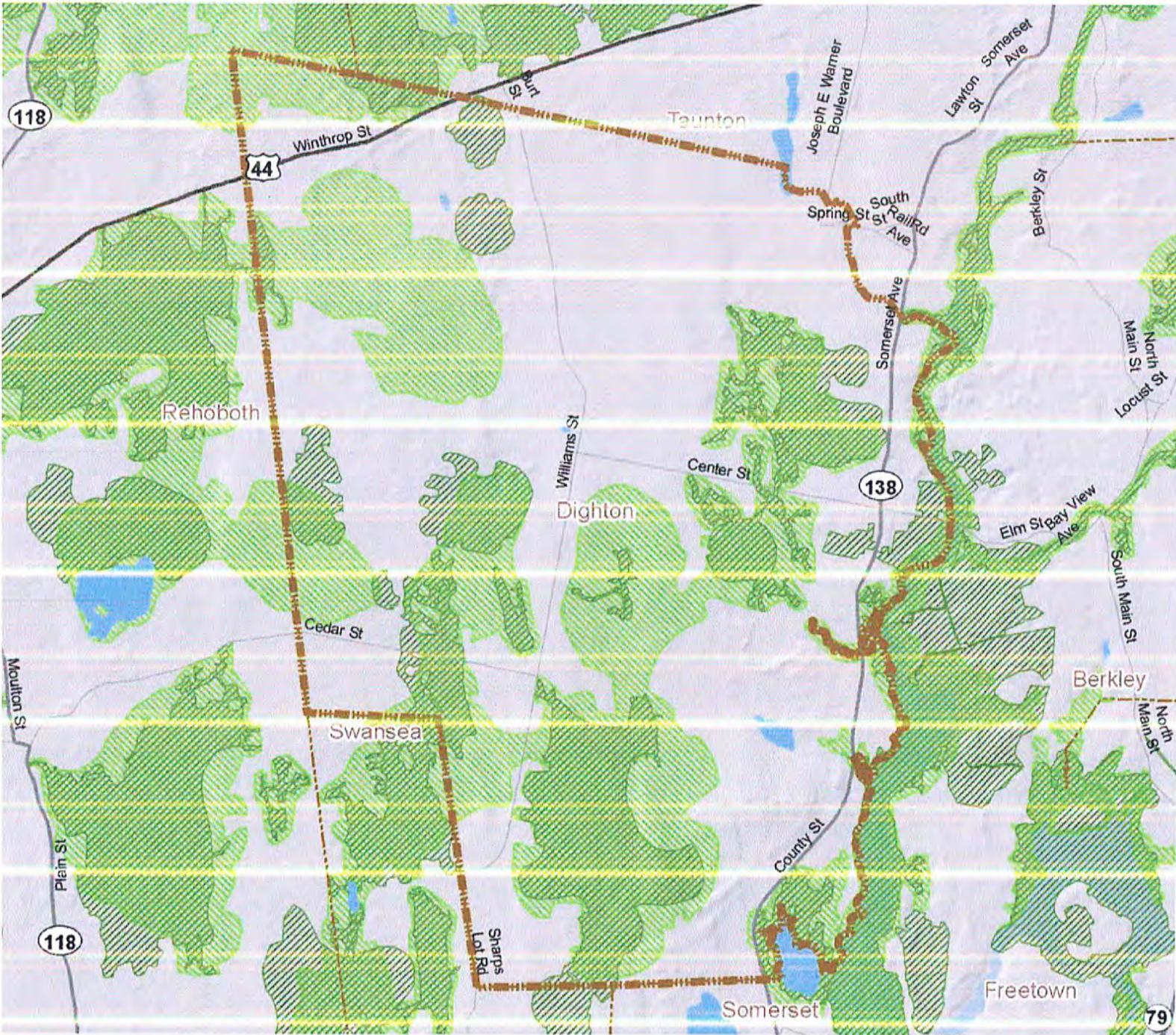
\*\* See next pages for complete list of species, natural communities and other biodiversity elements.



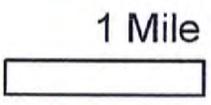


- BioMap2 Core Habitat
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape





-  BioMap2 Core Habitat
-  BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape



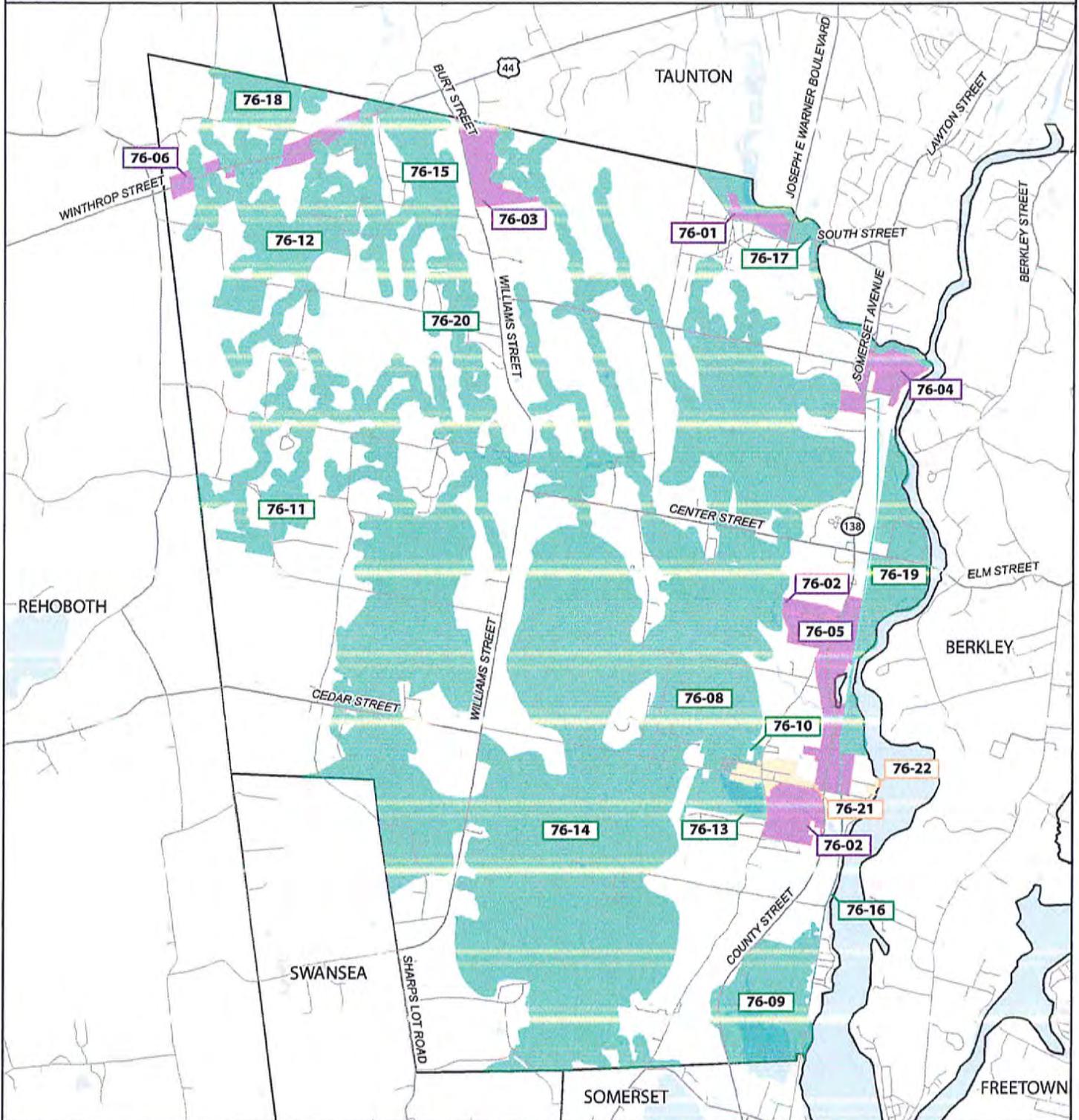
## **APPENDIX C**

### **2013 Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (PDA-PPA): Dighton Community Priority Areas Summary**

# Town of Dighton Community Priority Areas, 2013

- Priority Development Areas (PDAs)
- Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)
- Combined PDA/PPA
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads
- Water

This map is for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and is not warranted for any other use. June 2013



**2013 Dighton Community Priority Area List**

<b>ID Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>
76-01	Dighton Industries	Development	27.75
76-02	Dighton Power and Advanced Loose Leaf	Development	17.49
76-03	Manheim Site	Development	71.53
76-04	Maxaldan Corporation Complex	Development	73.83
76-05	Route 138 Business District	Development	165.10
76-06	Route 44 Business Corridor	Development	54.10
76-07	Zeneca Property	Development	70.53
76-08	Aquifer Overlay District	Protection	406.70
76-09	Broad Cove	Protection	260.01
76-10	Council Oak	Protection	56.74
76-11	Horton Farm	Protection	66.28
76-12	Maple Swamp	Protection	206.66
76-13	Muddy Cove	Protection	68.35
76-14	Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap 2 Corridor	Protection	3,624.84
76-15	Segregansett River Aquifer	Protection	135.31
76-16	Taunton River Trail	Protection	16.45
76-17	Three Mile River ACEC	Protection	94.62
76-18	Town Forest	Protection	90.29
76-19	Waterfront Protection Area	Protection	218.45
76-20	Zone A Surface Water Protection	Protection	1,628.35
76-21	Main Street	Combined	36.52
76-22	Shaw's Boatyard	Combined	3.55

**TOWN OF DIGHTON**  
**SOUTH COAST RAIL CORRIDOR PLAN**  
**PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT & PROTECTION AREAS FIVE-YEAR UPDATE**

**INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the updated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) in the town of Dighton. This community-driven land use planning exercise first took place in 2008, when three Regional Planning Agencies, SRPEDD, MAPC, and OCPC, worked alongside local residents, business owners, officials, and organizations to designate the areas that were most important for development or preservation in each community. All thirty-one (31) South Coast Rail (SCR) Corridor communities participated in this project in 2008 and again in 2013.

In 2013, the three Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) revisited these 31 communities to review and update the 2008 designations. Updates took into account new data that became available over the last five years as well as new municipal priorities. The “Five-Year Update” process was an opportunity to confirm choices made during the 2008 process, to revise previous designations, and to make new choices that acknowledged new conditions. During this review process, the SRPEDD website provided current information to the public, including a calendar of SCR Five-Year Update meetings and a resource library of relevant information sheets and maps.

*What are Priority Development Areas (PDAs)?*

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are areas that are appropriate for increased development or redevelopment due to several factors including good transportation access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single parcel to many acres. Potential development ranges from small-scale infill to large commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use projects. Town and village centers, Chapter 40R Districts, industrial parks, and proposed commuter rail station sites are typical examples of PDAs.

*What are Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)?*

Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) are areas that are important to protect due to the presence of significant natural or cultural resources, including endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, historic resources, scenic vistas, and farms. Like PDAs, the PPAs can vary greatly in size. Sites may be candidates for protection through acquisition or conservation restrictions.

### *What are Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (Combined Areas)?*

In Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas, communities welcome development; however, the development is expected to be sensitive to its site and the surrounding area. This may include development that complements the older structures within a historic district or low impact development that protects nearby water resources or biodiversity.

### *What do PDAs and PPAs do for my city or town?*

A community's Priority Area designations can guide municipal decisions about zoning revisions, infrastructure investments, and conservation efforts. For example, some communities choose to incorporate these designations into their Master Plan. Also, municipalities are implementing these designations using technical assistance available through State funding programs such as the South Coast Rail Technical Assistance and District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA).

In addition, the Community Priority Areas serve as the foundation for developing Regional and State Priority Area designations. Lastly, through Executive Order 525 (see below), the Patrick Administration asked certain state agencies to consider priority areas when making funding commitments.

### *Regional and State Priority Areas*

The Community Priority Areas are essential to the process of determining the Regional and State Priority Area Maps. Local designations determined to be of regional significance through a regional screening process, including public input received at regional public workshops, make up the Regional Priority Areas map. In turn, the Community and Regional Priority Areas are the basis for the State Priority Area Map.

### *Executive Order 525 (E.O. 525)*

In fall 2010, Gov. Patrick issued Executive Order 525 (E.O. 525) providing for the implementation of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan and Corridor Map (Corridor Plan) through state agency actions and investments. The Executive Order calls for state investments to be consistent with the Corridor Plan's recommendations to the maximum extent feasible. These state actions have the potential to leverage local and private investments in the priority areas. The Executive Order also directs state agencies to conduct a retrospective analysis to determine how consistent their actions and investments in the region have been with the Corridor Plan goals.

## PRIORITY AREA REVIEW PROCESS

SRPEDD staff worked with cities and towns to review their Priority Areas identified in 2008. Amendments to Priority Areas included delineating more precise boundaries using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. RPAs used interactive GIS maps to present over forty layers of information including, but not limited to, ortho photography, parcel lines, zoning districts, state program areas (such as Growth District Initiative and Chapter 40R sites), and designated resource areas (such as high-yield aquifers, Zone II aquifers, BioMap 2 Core Habitats, and rivers and streams with their associated wetlands). Communities also worked to clarify the stated purpose for each Priority Area.

The process included a series of three meetings:

**#1: Introductory meeting:** A Regional Planning Agency staff member visited with Boards of Selectmen and Mayors to reintroduce the land use planning process that took place in 2008 and the reasons for conducting the Five-Year Update of Priority Area designations.

**#2: Preliminary Meeting:** SRPEDD staff facilitated a 2-3 hour working session with municipal staff and/or board and committee/commission members to review each priority area. Staff incorporated interactive GIS maps depicting various data layers (see Appendix) to inform discussions and decision-making. This preliminary process of updating the 2008 Priority Area designations had the following general guiding principles in mind:

- Incorporating changes in municipal priorities, needs, and desires
- Understanding updated state policies such as Executive Order 525
- Refining priority area boundaries to be exact and “rational” (coterminous with other map layers such as roadways, zoning boundaries, designated resource areas, etc.)
- Making clear and strategic statements about the stated purpose for and desired character of priority areas

For the few SRPEDD communities without town staff, SRPEDD did this preliminary review at a public meeting in the community; then, using the criteria outlined by meeting participants, SRPEDD made the remaining changes and returned revised maps and a narrative description of the revisions to the municipality for their review prior to the workshop with the general public. SRPEDD staff used the input from the preliminary meetings to generate a “before” and “after” map to present to the public for their feedback and input.

**#3: Public Meeting Review:** Each community held a public meeting, at which time RPAs and local meeting participants reviewed each community's priority areas and identified desired changes. Some communities incorporated this into a Board of Selectmen meeting, others

during a Planning Board meeting, and some communities held a public meeting held specifically for this purpose.

## TOWN OF DIGHTON RESULTS

On December 12, 2012, SRPEDD staff met with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to re-introduce the Priority Area planning exercise. The BOS designated Selectman Tom Pires as the contact person for this work. Since there was not any municipal staff with which to work, the BOS held a public meeting as Dighton's preliminary municipal meeting. This meeting was publicized and held on January, 24, 2013 at Town Hall. Participants reviewed the purpose and the boundaries of each 2008 Priority Area. In discussions, they clarified the purpose of each and adjusted the respective boundaries to coincide with the stated purpose.

The town of Dighton held a public meeting to seek input from town residents on the revisions recommended by the municipal representatives on May 29, 2013 at Town Hall. No revisions were requested for the priority areas. The consensus of the meeting attendees was that the 2013 Priority Area map depicts the boundaries of areas deemed to be priorities for development and for preservation. The result of this work is the 2013 Dighton Community Identified Priority Area Map, which can be found on page 2 of this document.

✎

## PRIORITY AREA ADJUSTMENTS

As stated above, the 2013 Priority Areas (PAs) are based upon the PA designations identified in 2008. Many of these PAs still represent municipal growth priorities today. In most cases, revisions made to the PAs simply transition them from the "general designations" of the 2008 process to more "exact designations" (both in terms of their boundaries and their stated purposes) using current Geographic Information Systems data and updated local input. In some cases, communities added new PAs or removed previous designations because (1) municipal priorities changed over time, (2) the purposes for designations were achieved or new ones arose, or (3) designations were incorporated into other PAs identified for the same purpose. The text below lists the updated 2013 PAs, identifies their stated purposes, describes their boundaries, and details changes from the 2008 Priority Areas.

## PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

### **Dighton Industries [76-01]**

*Purpose:* Industrial, commercial, or mixed-use redevelopment on the previously disturbed footprint of this underutilized site. Any future redevelopment should acknowledge its proximity to the natural and scenic resources of the Three Mile River and enhance public recreational access to these areas.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels within the Industrial Zoning District that contain the former Dighton Industries facility, excluding a 200' buffer from the shoreline of the Three Mile River. This designation contains an EOA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines and zoning districts.

### **Dighton Power and Advanced Loose Leaf [76-02]**

*Purpose:* Industrial redevelopment.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels containing these facilities, excluding those areas that are within the Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap 2 Corridor PPA. This designation contains an EOA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

### **Manheim Site [76-03]**

*Purpose:* Light industrial or commercial redevelopment on the previously disturbed footprint of this underutilized site.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected disturbed parcels within the Industrial Zoning District that contain the Manheim auto auction facility, excluding small areas covered by the Zone A Surface Water Protection Areas PPA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines and zoning districts.

### **Maxaldan Corporation Complex [76-04]**

*Purpose:* Industrial, commercial, or mixed-use redevelopment of this previously underutilized site and selected adjacent properties. Any future redevelopment should acknowledge its proximity to the natural and scenic resources of the Three Mile and Taunton Rivers and enhance public recreational access to these areas.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Industrial and Business Zoning Districts along Route 138, excluding the Three Mile River ACEC PPA, Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap 2 Corridor PPA, and a 200' buffer from the shoreline of the Taunton River. This designation contains an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA).

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow zoning districts.

### **Route 138 Business District [76-05]**

*Purpose:* Business redevelopment.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Business Zoning District north of Main Street along Route 138, excluding those areas that are within the Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap 2 Corridor PPA.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PDA was called the Dighton Business District. Community representatives renamed this PA in order to more clearly describe its location altered its boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning districts.

### **Route 44 Business Corridor [76-06]**

*Purpose:* Mixed-use, commercial and in-fill redevelopment.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Business Zoning District along Route 44, excluding those areas within the Zone A Surface Water Protection Area PPA and the Segregansett River Aquifer PPA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning districts.

### **Zeneca Property [76-07]**

*Purpose:* Industrial, commercial, or mixed-use redevelopment of the previously disturbed footprint of this underutilized site. Any future redevelopment should acknowledge its proximity to the Muddy Cove PPA and enhance public recreational access to the Cove.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels within the Industrial Zoning District that contain the former Zeneca Property facility. This designation contains and EOA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines and Zoning districts.

## **PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS**

### **Aquifer Overlay District [76-08]**

*Purpose:* To protect public drinking water resources.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond one of the three Aquifer Overlay Zoning District. This area entirely covers a DEP Zone II Aquifer.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was called the Aquifer. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and altered its boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning Districts.

### **Broad Cove [76-09]**

*Purpose:* Preservation of this ecologically valuable area that may also contain archeological resources.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to BioMap 2 Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes associated with Broad Cove and the Taunton River.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow BioMap 2 habitats.

### **Council Oak [76-10]**

*Purpose:* Preservation of cultural and historic resources.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels north of Main Street.

*Changes from 2008:* This is a new priority area in 2013.

### **Horton Farm [76-11]**

*Purpose:* To protect active agriculture and areas of prime farmland.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected agricultural parcels at the intersection of Wellington Street and Fieldstone Drive. This PA contains BioMap 2 Core Habitat and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) prime soils.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcels.

### **Maple Swamp [76-12]**

*Purpose:* Preservation of the swamp.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Residential and Conservation Zoning District in the northwest section of Town, south of Route 44. This PA contains a BioMap 2 Critical Natural Landscape.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning districts.

### **Muddy Cove [76-13]**

*Purpose:* To maintain public access to Muddy Cove.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the parcel containing Muddy Cove.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

### **Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap 2 Corridor [76-14]**

*Purpose:* To preserve a contiguous corridor of BioMap 2 Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes associated with the brooks and swamp.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to updated BioMap 2 Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes. These include aquatic, wetlands, and vernal pool habitats.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this priority area consisted of three individual PPAs called Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook. Community representatives incorporated these designations into one contiguous PPA corridor and altered its boundaries to more clearly follow BioMap 2 habitat boundaries.

**Segregansett River Aquifer [76-15]**

*Purpose:* To protect public drinking water resources.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond one of the three Aquifer Overlay Zoning District. This area entirely covers a DEP Zone II Aquifer.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning districts.

**Taunton River Trail [76-16]**

*Purpose:* Further planning, design, and construction of this section of a regional bike path and scenic trail.

*Boundaries:* Community representatives approved a linear route from SRPEDD’s 2011 Recommended Bike Paths/Lanes for construction of a regional multimodal path. The conceptual boundaries represented here correspond to a 30’ buffer around this route; the exact dimensions of the path and right-of-way will be “ground-truthed” in the design process.

*Future Action:* Further planning and design work. Pursue funding for and construction of the path.

**Three Mile River ACEC [76-17]**

*Purpose:* Protection of the Three Mile River ACEC.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Three Mile River ACEC, excluding previously disturbed areas associated with the Dighton Industries PDA.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to follow the ACEC.

**Town Forest [76-18]**

*Purpose:* To preserve public open space.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Residential and Conservation Zoning District in the northwest section of Town, along the borders with Taunton and Rehoboth. This PA contains a BioMap 2 Core Habitat, a BioMap 2 Critical Natural Landscape, and a DEP Outstanding Resource Water.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow Zoning districts.

### **Waterfront Protection Area [76-19]**

*Purpose:* To protect the Taunton River waterfront, including the Bristol County Agricultural High School and a Medium- and High-Yield Aquifer. Community representatives renamed this PA in order to more clearly describe its purpose.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected undeveloped, waterfront parcels.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was called the Waterfront Aquifer. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

### **Zone A Surface Water Protection Areas [76-20]**

*Purpose:* To preserve public drinking water resources directly associated with DEP Zone A Surface Water Protection Areas and DEP Outstanding Resource Water designations.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to updated DEP Zone A Surface Water Protection Areas within the DEP Outstanding Resource Water designation, excluding areas already designated for protection by the Town Forrest PPA, Maple Swamp PPA, Segregansett River Aquifer PPA, and the Pidges Swamp, Muddy Cove Brook, and Sunken Brook BioMap2 Corridor PPA.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was called the Surface Water Protection Area/Zone II. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and altered its boundaries to more clearly follow Zone As.

## **COMBINED PRIORITY AREAS**

### **Main Street [76-21]**

*Purpose:* Redevelopment in a manner that maintains the historic character of the area.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels along Main Street.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

### **Shaw's Boatyard [76-22]**

*Purpose:* Continued use and limited, context-sensitive development of this boatyard on the Taunton River.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the parcel containing the boatyard.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines. Community representatives chose to change this priority designation from PPA to Combined PDA/PPA in order to maintain the active boatyard use, while still emphasizing respect for the Taunton River and its associated natural resources.

### **DELETED PRIORITY AREAS**

**Route 44 Industrial Area PDA and Reeds Farm PDA:** Community representatives deleted these priority areas due to environmental constraints, poor access, and the desire to preserve open space.