

WOODBIDGE OPEN SPACE PLAN

A plan and guide for conserving and preserving open space in our town



Approved by the Woodbridge Conservation Commission January 16, 2020

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Introduction

The Woodbridge Conservation Commission is guided by the belief that human activity must be in harmony with the elements of nature: air, water, land, and other natural resources which are finite and precious. We need to protect and actively manage our natural resources. It is our belief that open space helps to preserve the livability of our community. It is imperative that any development be balanced with the creation of open space. Our focus is to preserve the character of our Town, the small town atmosphere, to plan for its physical landscape, to protect the water, wildlife, vegetation, environment, and quality of life for our citizens. We must be vigilant so that we can ensure, for future generations, the existence of undeveloped spaces that will provide recreation and leisure-time activities for all residents.

In 1930 Woodbridge was among the first towns in the country to pass zoning regulations promoting harmonious human growth with the natural environment. An Open Space Plan for Woodbridge was developed in 1965; Woodbridge Open Spaces, a 20-page booklet, was published in 1988. Several large land use maps are available in the Town Hall, including the "Maps of Woodbridge Open Spaces and Greenway prepared for the Woodbridge Conservation Commission and Woodbridge Land Trust by Ronald Hedberg, 1996," which is updated periodically (the most recent being April 1, 1999) and which is here incorporated by reference. These publications are integral parts of a continuing Open Space Plan. They should be referred to when appropriate.

The following is the Woodbridge Conservation Commission's most recent updating of the Town's previous Open Space Plans. We believe this plan exists in harmony with the Town's Plan of Development and its Open Space Subdivision Regulations.

Definition of Open Space

The Woodbridge Conservation Commission defines Open Space as any area, including forest and farm land, that when set aside for preservation:

1. Maintains and enhances the conservation of the natural and scenic resources.
2. Protects biodiversity and habitats
3. Protects natural streams and water supply
4. Protects conservation soils and wetlands
5. Protects against erosion
6. Enhances the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forest, wildlife preserves, greenways, trails, land trust properties, or other open spaces.
7. Enhances public active and passive recreation opportunities
8. Preserves historic and archeological sites
9. Promotes orderly suburban development
10. Maintains and enhances scenic value, thus preserving the rural character of the Town

Open Space shall not be deemed to include driveways, parking lots, or other paved surfaces designated for vehicular travel.

Classification of Open Space

Woodbridge's supply of open space areas ranges from wooded trails to ball fields and playgrounds to open parcels. Approximately 25% of the Town's land area is protected open space with another 12% in open land for a total of 37% open land area. Not all land classified for open space within Woodbridge is protected from development to an equal extent. Categories of open space in Woodbridge are presented below in descending order of the strength of their protections.

Protected Open Space

- **Fully Protected:** Open space that is subject to restrictions that limit the use and transfer of property to permanently maintain its status for conservation or recreation. This protection may take the form of a Town park dedication; ownership by a state or federal agency whose purpose includes open space conservation, such as the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP); a legal deed restriction or conservation easement that requires the parcel to remain in open space, recreational, park, or agricultural use in perpetuity, regardless of ownership; or ownership by a non-profit conservation organization or Land Trust, whose stated purpose is to preserve the parcel in perpetuity.
- **RWA Protected:** Open space that is designated as Class I and/or Class II Water Authority property by the Connecticut Department of Public Health under CGS 25-32. Class I land is protected by a blanket prohibition on sale or lease, while Class II land is protected by a review process: any sale, lease, or change in use must be approved by the state Commissioner of Public Health, and both the state and towns have a right of first refusal for any land put up for sale. Both land classes are designated as protected open space under Connecticut's Green Plan and subject to significant legal barriers to development.

Open Land

- **Municipal Managed:** Open space that is owned by the Town of Woodbridge and used for conservation or recreational purposes, but not permanently protected from development.
- **RWA Managed:** Open space that is designated as Class III Water Authority property, which is subject to weaker development restrictions than Class I or Class II land.
- **PA 490:** Open space that is designated as forest, pasture, or farmland under Public Act 490. The land is subject to tax incentives that prohibit new development, but the landowner may elect to repeal the designation, re-allowing development.
- **No Protection:** Open space that is privately owned with the unencumbered right to pursue development of the land.

In addition, the definitional language from the Connecticut General Statutes §12-107(B) is hereby incorporated by reference for considerations of future open space and farmland acquisition.

Goals of the Open Space Plan

The goals of the Woodbridge Open Space Plan are to:

1. Combine regulatory and land acquisition measures to achieve Open Space objectives.
2. Allow open space and development to complement, rather than compete with, one another.
3. Protect surface water and associated wetlands, protect the water's edge for public access and protect water quality.
4. Include areas identified as worthy of preservation in subdivision and zoning regulations so applicants know beforehand what lands the community wishes to preserve.
5. Add to sites that are already committed open spaces, such as municipal, state, or land trust lands.
6. Assemble open space corridors or greenways that provide linkages to open spaces, nodes of development, trails, or wildlife corridors,
7. Protect the municipality's unique and significant natural features, including wetlands, flood plains, prime agricultural soils, scenic vistas, trap rock ridges, glacial formations, rivers and ponds, historic sites, etc.
8. Preserve and encourage areas that shape community design and character, such as buffer strips, street trees, and areas visible from roads and sidewalks.
9. Assure that site development plans recognize, and are sensitive to, the natural characteristic of the area.
10. Provide sites for active and passive recreation based on population and recreation standards.
11. Protect flora and fauna.
12. Protect critical and threatened habitats, with emphasis on those areas identified on Connecticut's Natural Diversity Data Base and Endangered Species List.
13. Protect ground water within aquifers which are existing or potential public drinking water supplies, with consideration to be given both to stratified drift deposits and bedrock aquifers.
14. Protect lands of cultural importance, including archeological and historical sites.
15. Protect steep slopes to control soil erosion and water runoff, as well as to maintain scenic views of and from areas such as bluffs, hills, ridges, mountains, etc.
16. Protect incentives to preserve meaningful open space within private development and to promote the creative use of new ideas for the preservation of open space developments.
17. Preserve farmlands, productive forest land, and water company land.

Open Space objectives

Property classification, rating and identification

It is the objective of the Open Space Plan to identify the characteristics that make a parcel intrinsically valuable as open space, and to then recommend the preservation of specific parcels with the greatest innate value as open space. A major consideration that gives structure to this Open Space Plan is the preservation and extension of the Town's Greenway. Since the town cannot acquire all the underdeveloped parcels within its boundaries, it must focus on those parcels with special value as open space. It is the preservation and enhancement of the Greenway that gives focus and coherence to the Town's efforts to acquire such special open space parcels.

Develop use designations of open space

By defining usage designations of open space we can facilitate a meaningful conversation without confusion as to how a property is intended to be used. The Conservation Commission will work with other town commissions, such as the Commission on the Use of Publicly Owned Properties, to define these designations.

Open Space Management Plan

The Conservation Commission has begun drafting an Open Space Management Plan. This foundation document will be broad and general to encompass all town owned open space parcels. Further refinement is possible for specific parcels which have unique needs. The commission will seek guidance and partnership with the Commission on the Use of Publically Owned Properties, the Woodbridge Land Trust, and the Woodbridge Parks Association. Once complete, such plans can be used by the town to properly manage and maintain its open space for generations to come.

Review properties worthy of acquisition

The list of properties worthy of acquisition in this plan require enhanced detail and thorough review. The documentation supporting these properties have been lost and need be recreated. The review of these properties will begin once a proper classification and rating system is developed. Using such a tool the Commission will complete a full review of the properties listed elsewhere in this plan.

Fitzgerald Property protection

This publicly-owned property in the center of Town defines the nature of the community as a "country cousin" to New Haven. It is essential to keep this tract as open space. As home to the Woodbridge community gardens and the Greenway, it serves an important role in the open space needs of Woodbridge residents. The walking and jogging track around the cornfield is extremely popular, and serves as a central forum where residents come to meet and exercise. In the cold weather, a small informal skating rink provides wintertime fun for families. It is recommended that the entire Fitzgerald Tract should be permanently protected as open space.

Developing of trails through existing golf courses

Rights for trails through golf courses could be an important addition to our pathways. Extending the Greenway to the southernmost section of Town and Racebrook tract requires passage through private golf courses. The town should seek partnerships with these entities and extend the Greenway. In

particular the land to the immediate north of the Merritt Parkway on the westerly side of Racebrook Road which abuts Regional Water Authority land.

Recreation near Town Hall and Rice Pond

This area is an important adjunct to the Alice Newton Street Park and the Town owned Rice Pond Property. The Conservation Commission recommends the reconstruction of Rice Pond for bird watching and ice skating, especially given the recent construction of a pavilion on the banks of the former pond. Such a reclamation of Rice's Pond, in conjunction with the existing blue trail, will enhance the natural setting in the Town Center as a recreational focal point for the community.

Greenway extensions

The Woodbridge Greenway received state recognition in 2002. The Town has a vision of extending the Greenway to circle the Town and connect West Rock Ridge State Park on the east, SCRWA land to the south, Birmingham on the west, and Elderslie and Sanford Road to the north. All are connections to other towns in the region.

Greenways

One of the primary goals of the Open Space Plan is to create greenways, streamways, or pathways through our Town. A greenway is intended to provide linkages between open spaces in a way that links people with their public and open space lands. Some greenways cannot accommodate visitors but will allow for the movement of wildlife and provide other ecological benefits.

As defined by Connecticut statute (C.G.S. 23-100), "greenway" means a corridor of open space that (1) may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or nonmotorized transportation, (2) may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors, (3) may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals or (4) may be a greenspace along a highway or around a village.

Woodbridge Greenway

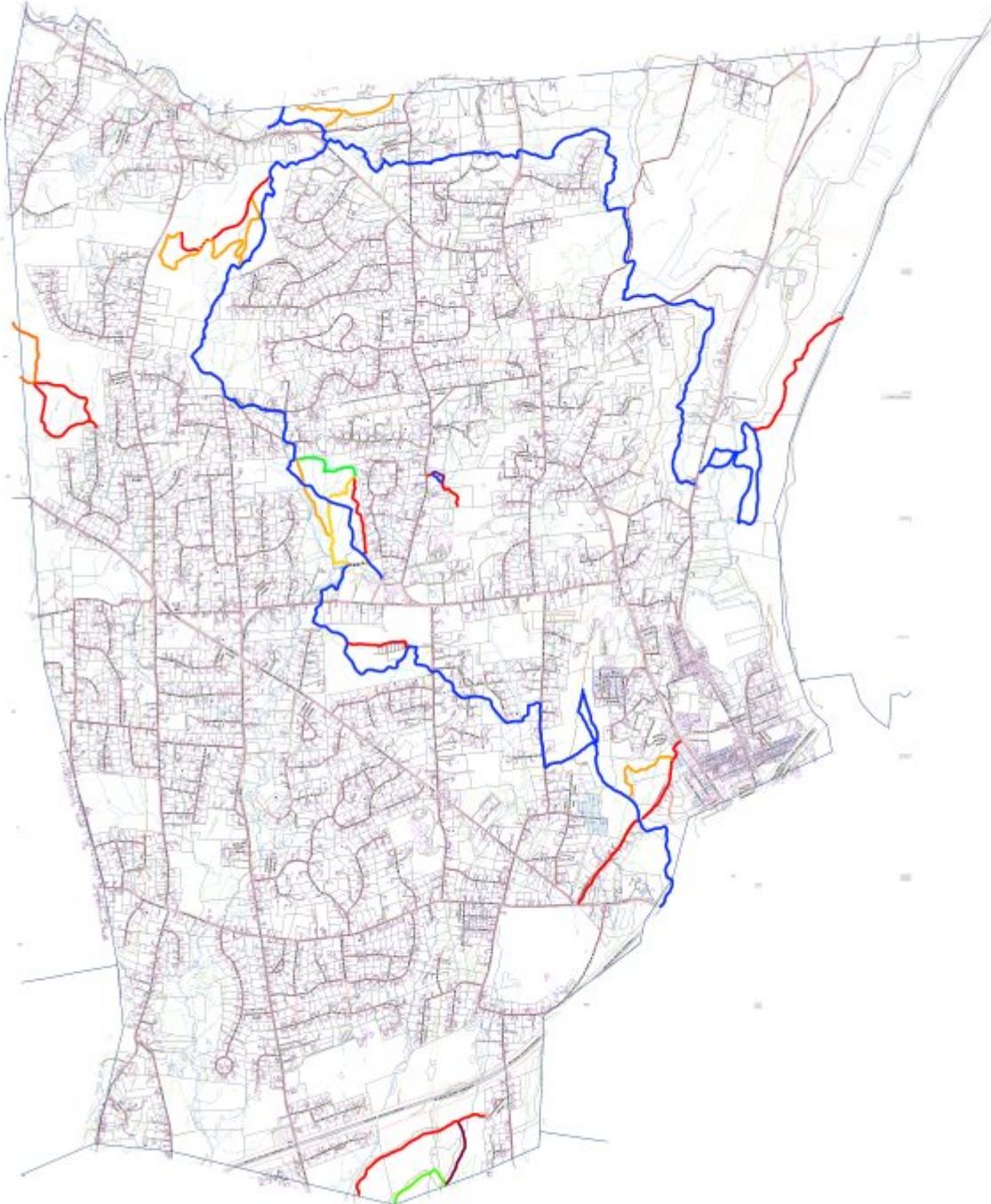
A successful greenway is established through a partnership between land trusts, conservation groups, municipalities, utilities, individuals, and state agencies. We feel we have such an ongoing partnership. The Conservation Commission has worked together with all these agencies to develop a successful greenway plan. Working together, we have designed a map of Woodbridge open spaces delineating the location of the Woodbridge Greenway and indicating those links that need to be secured through the purchase or donation of conservation easements, development rights, or fee simple interests. This map is entitled "Map of Woodbridge Open Spaces and Greenways." In May 2002, the 12 miles of The Woodbridge Greenway trail received official Greenway Designation by The Connecticut Greenway Council. This added the Woodbridge Greenway to the Connecticut Greenway Council Official Greenway Map.

We recommend that year the Town observe a "Woodbridge Greenway Day" by bringing together all the various groups and individuals interested in preserving open space to celebrate the beautiful 12 mile Greenway trail system maintained in Town. Woodbridge's Greenway is remarkable not only for its length and variety, but also because it serves as the central linkage in a regional greenway system connecting New Haven, Hamden, Bethany, Seymour, Ansonia, and Derby. A description of the Woodbridge Greenway follows.

The Greenway "begins" at the top of West Rock Ridge State Park and traverses the South Central Regional Water Authority's (SCRWA) lands to the town-owned Thomas Darling House and the Bishop Estate. From the Bishop Estate, the greenway travels north to Dillon Road into the SCRWA's land and up to the utility easement. The trail follows the utility easement westward across Newton Road to the Russell Estate, which includes an extraordinary trail and boardwalk through diverse wetlands of the Bladens River watershed. From here, the greenway will go to the Elderslie Preserve to the Lodge. The greenway then leaves the Lodge and crosses Milford Meadows and into Wepawaug Falls. From the falls, the greenway connects with Alice Newton Street Memorial Park, the town hall, and across Center Road to the Fitzgerald Tract. The trail travels easterly across the Busman Property and the Alegi Property to the East Side Burial Ground. From the cemetery, the greenway crosses the Jewish Community Center and heads south into the United Illuminating Company parcel. The trail heads down to Park Lane Road and the Priest Property.

Woodbridge Greenway Map

All Woodbridge trails are indicated on the overall town map below. Different colors indicate blaze colors of various trails. Last updated in the fall of 2014.



West River Watershed Greenway

The West River Watershed Coalition received Connecticut Greenway Council Greenway Designation for the West River Watershed in May of 2015. The West River Watershed Coalition includes five stakeholder towns with property adjacent to the river: Bethany, Hamden, New Haven, West Haven and Woodbridge. On March 3, 2016, all five Coalition towns signed an agreement endorsing the West River Greenway. One of the goals of the WRWC is to create a continuous, multi-use trail along the river and its tributaries. Development of the Greenway is a vital part of achieving this goal.

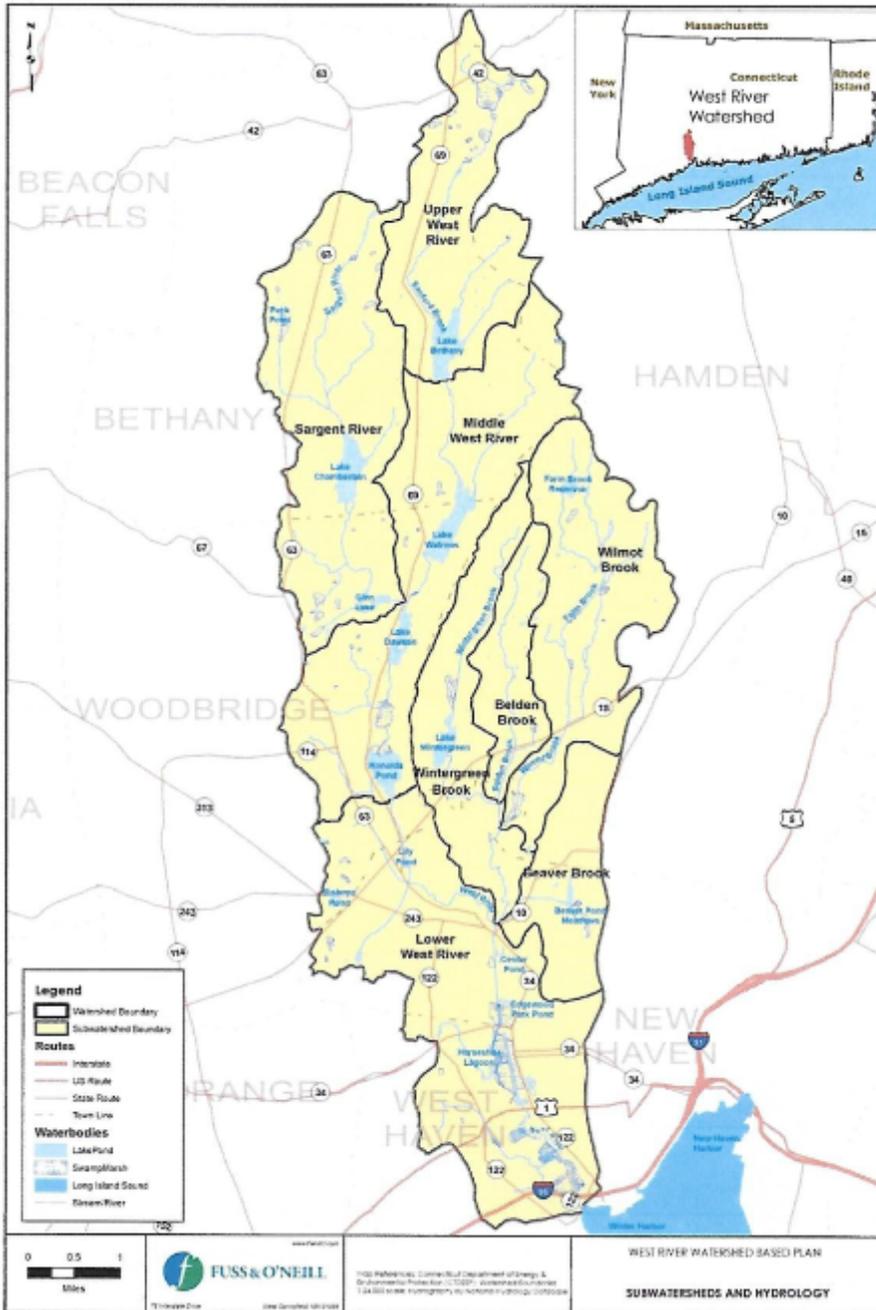
The West River Greenway is included in the Woodbridge Plan of Conservation and Development. It is hoped that the property's DEEP Connecticut Greenway designation will aid municipalities and nonprofits to obtain funding for resource conservation efforts, environmental education programs and recreational development.

Many sections of the proposed comprehensive Greenway include existing trails which are being improved. The city of New Haven has plotted a route through New Haven, using the existing trails and walkways along the West River, with the goal of ultimately connecting Barnard Nature Center, Edgewood Park, West Rock Park and The Pond Lily Nature Preserve. The West River Watershed Coalition is working with the New Haven Parks Department, as well as many nonprofits, to enhance the existing trails and walkways along the river. The Pond Lily Nature Preserve is located on Whalley Avenue in New Haven just north of Walgreens Pharmacy. The Preserve is a focal point where existing trails and future trails could converge. Existing trails along the river heading north from Westville enter the Nature preserve. Proposed trails from the preserve would travel north along Whalley Avenue adjacent to the scenic Pond Lily Nature Preserve following the West River into Woodbridge. The proposed Greenway route would then follow Litchfield Turnpike north to Bradley Road, then turn east following Bradley Road to Konolds Pond. These trails could eventually connect to the Woodbridge Greenway at the Bishop Estate East property. Some sections of the Greenway route through densely populated urban areas will utilize sidewalks and signage where necessary.

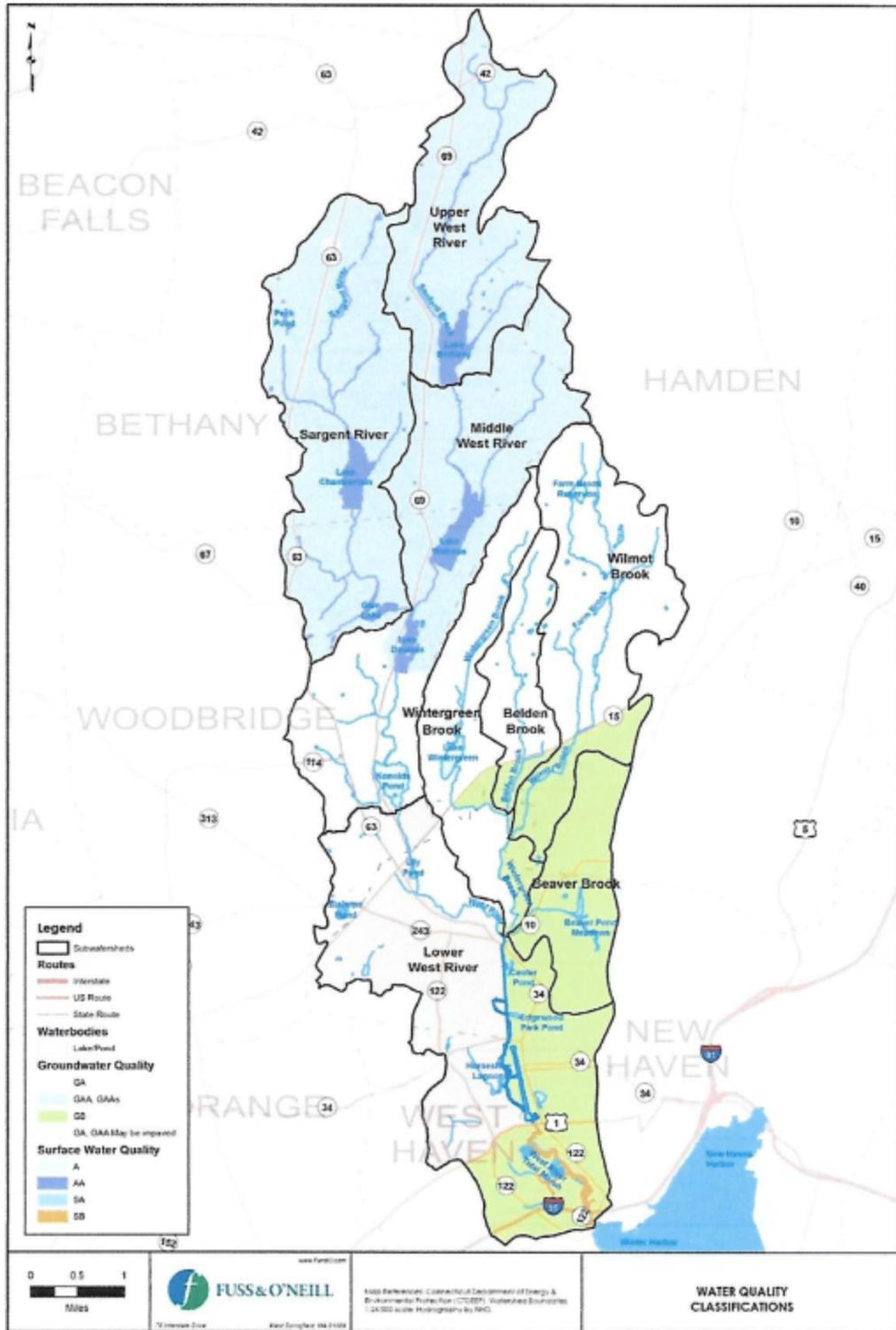
The Woodbridge section of the proposed Greenway includes pristine trails along the West River at the Bishop Estate East extending to state property surrounding Konolds Pond. The Woodbridge Conservation Commission would like to see these trails extended further south, creating a connection with the New Haven Land Trust's Pond Lily Preserve trails. In the future, a completed Greenway trail would follow the West River from its source in rural Cheshire, Bethany and Woodbridge continuing along Litchfield Turnpike through Woodbridge in the corridor between Route 69 and West Rock Ridge south to Westville, into urban areas of New Haven and West Haven.

The section of the West River Watershed spanning from the outlet of Lake Dawson to Westville village, in the shadow of West Rock, is possibly one of the most scenic areas in the state. In addition, the water quality of the West River through Bethany and much of Woodbridge has an AA rating. A scenic Greenway with good water quality has the potential for many recreational opportunities. The WCC supports the inclusion of the West River Watershed Greenway as part of the Woodbridge Greenway and will continue to work with the West River Watershed Coalition to extend this Greenway so that it eventually connects with the Woodbridge Greenway Trails.

West River Watershed Greenway Maps



West River Greenway Watershed – Subwatersheds and Hydrology map



West River Greenway Watershed – Water Quality Classifications

Funding

Open space has numerous funding needs. In particular funds obtained will be used to promote and implement projects such as property acquisition, wetland protection, habitat preservation and restoration, and farmland restoration on public land.

As of the writing of this plan the Town holds \$79,000 of available funds for open space purposes.

The Conservation Commission continually looks for grant opportunities offered from the State, Federal Government and private organizations. What follows is a list of currently known opportunities with brief descriptions.

Federal

Funding from Federal resources are listed below.

USDA NRCS

NRCS's natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters.

USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program; its purpose is to protect agricultural lands by limiting non-agricultural uses. NRCS partners with approved state, local, and non-profit entities who arrange for the purchase of development rights through conservation easements on private lands. The entity holds and manages these conservation easements in perpetuity.

USDA FSA

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) oversees a number of voluntary conservation-related programs.

USDA Grassland Reserve Program

The goal of the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP) is to prevent grazing and pasture land from being converted into cropland, used for urban development, or developed for other non-grazing uses. Participants in the program voluntarily limit future development of their grazing and pasture land, while still being able to use the land for livestock grazing and activities related to forage and seed production. Participation in GRP may also entail restrictions on activities during the nesting season of certain bird species that are in decline or protected under Federal or state law.

USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy program protects “working forests” those that protect water quality, provide habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other public benefits. Participation in Forest Legacy is limited to private forest landowners.

Community Forest Program (CFP)

The Community Forest Program (CFP) protects forests that are important for people and the places they call home. Community forests provide many benefits such as places to recreate and enjoy nature; they protect habitat, water quality and other environmental benefits, and they can provide economic benefits through timber resources. Community Forests have also long been sites for environmental and cultural education.

The Community Forest Program is a grant program that authorizes the Forest Service to provide financial assistance to local governments, Tribal governments, and qualified nonprofit entities to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Created by Congress in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. From majestic forests and snowcapped mountains, to wild rivers and stunning beaches, these acquisitions become part of your national forests

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Division of Bird Habitat Conservation

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (Act, or NAWCA) of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

State

Funding from State resources

CT Farmland Preservation Program

The Department of Agriculture preserves farmland by acquiring development rights to agricultural properties. The farms remain in private ownership and continue to pay local property taxes. A permanent restriction on nonagricultural uses is placed on these properties. Nationally, farmland preservation has been recognized in the federal Farm Bill and Connecticut's Farmland Preservation has qualified for participation in the federal Farmland Protection Program.

CT Farm Viability Grant Program

The Farm Viability Grant Program for Municipalities & 501c(3) Agricultural Non Profits (FVG) (C.G.S. Sec. 22-26j) is a competitive matching grant program that may only be used by municipalities, regional planning agencies, association of municipalities, and 501c(3) agricultural nonprofits. The maximum FVG grant award is \$49,999. A 50% match is required and the match can be in "in-kind" services or funding from other sources. A 40% match is required for 501c(3) agricultural nonprofits and the match can be in "in-kind" services or funding from other sources.

These grants may be used for capital projects, agriculture friendly land use regulations, planning projects or for initiatives to support agriculture. Applicants may apply more than one time even if have previously received FVG grant money.

CT Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant Program provides financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property.

When this grant is funded the deadline is typically in February. Grant awards are announced during the summer and funding available in the fall.

This grant focuses on land that is:

- valuable for recreation/conservation of wildlife
- prime natural feature of State's landscape
- habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened
- relatively undisturbed; example of native ecological community which is uncommon
- important for enhancing/conserving water quality
- valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage

CT Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust program was created by the Legislature in 1986 in order to help preserve Connecticut's natural heritage. It is the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) primary program for acquiring land to expand the state's system of parks, forests, wildlife, and other natural open spaces. Through it, the DEEP manages the acquisition of land of statewide significance that represents the ecological and cultural diversity of Connecticut, with a focus on unique features such as rivers, mountains, rare natural communities, scenic qualities, historic significance, connections to other protected land, and access to water.

Private

Funding from private resources.

These are typically consulting firms better leveraged to assist with seeking funding from other sources. Thus, they are more a resource for assistance than an actual funding source.

Woodbridge Land Trust

<http://woodbridgelandtrust.org>

Through generous land and financial gifts, continued efforts of volunteers, and cooperation from town agencies, we work to ensure that working farms, forestland, wildlife habitats, wetlands and other precious and often threatened open spaces will be available today and for future generations to enjoy.

Woodbridge Parks Association

<http://woodbridgeparks.org/>

We continue to strive ‘to hold and steward lands within the Town of Woodbridge as parks for passive recreational use and nature preserves for plants and animals, thereby fostering the preservation of open space for the benefit of the public.’

CT Farmland Trust

<http://ctfarmland.org/>

The mission of the Connecticut Farmland trust is to permanently protect Connecticut’s working farmland.

The Trust for Public Land

<http://www.tpl.org/services>

From helping raise funds for conservation; to protecting and restoring natural spaces; to collaborating with communities to plan, design, and build parks, playgrounds, gardens, and trails; our conservation services allow us to apply our national leadership and expertise to local challenges

The Conservation Fund

<http://www.conservationfund.org/partner-with-us/local-government/>

Rather than solely pursuing our own conservation agenda, we work to fulfill top public priorities. Our projects often begin when government or community leaders want to save a special outdoor place. To act swiftly, they turn to us for bridge financing and a full suite of conservation services, from real estate negotiation and land acquisition to strategic planning, conservation training and community outreach

Zoning regulations affecting open space

In 2019 the Town of Woodbridge made a substantial update to the zoning regulations. Here are the sections of particular interest to open space and conservation.

Table 1.1 Zones and Boundaries – Definitions of the types of zones in the town and their intended purposes.

Section 3.0 Land Uses – Contains a table of various land uses in the different Zones.

Section 5.7 Stormwater Management – Describes land use and planning to protect waters from runoff.

Table 5.2 List of Recommended Street Trees – Table of trees suggested for planting in town right-of-way areas. In particular buffer areas.

It's important to note the Town may exclude itself from zoning regulations on town-owned parcels.

Charter and Code affecting open space

The following sections of the Town Charter and Code (Ordinances) are those with most relevance to Open Space and conservation:

Charter Section 4-8; Purchase and sale of real property – describes how the town may acquire or divest itself of real property such as land.

Code Chapter 208; Drainage – defines general rules with regard to water management around highways

Code Chapter 264; Historic Preservation – relates specifically to the Thomas Darling House and the conservation of the land and structures

Code Chapter 370; Stormwater Management – describes non-stormwater management into municipal owned sewers and potential pollutants

Code Chapter 375 Article II; Scenic Roads – can be used as a way to support preservation and conservation of open spaces

Methods of protection and acquisition

There are various methods to protect or acquire properties of interest. Many methods rely upon local precedent and changes to laws.

Fee simple purchase

This is the most straightforward method and often is the most expensive. Purchasing a property assures control passes to the owner, in this case the Town. Funds used to complete the purchase can come from various sources including the town open space funds, grants and gifts.

Purchase of development rights

Instead of purchasing a parcel it's possible to purchase the rights to develop a parcel. Once the rights are obtained the owner of the parcel cannot make alterations but must still pay taxes. This method is very effective to protect farmland or other areas of open space vulnerable to development.

Conservation easements

This is a legal agreement of the owner to restrict uses of the parcel. Often used when an owner of a property wants to assure it remains protected under future ownership. Depending upon the structure of the easements, the owner could have tax benefits.

PA490

Connecticut Public Act 490 is a tax break tool to incentivize land owners to not develop or sell their property. This is mainly oriented toward land owners with forest, farm, or open space. There are certain requirements a parcel must meet to qualify.

Properties worthy of acquisition

The following is a list of open space worthy of acquisition for protection. The properties listed carry forward from prior revisions of the Open Space Plan and are not listed in any priority.

At this time all prior documentation related to property ratings and rankings has been lost or destroyed. Thus, each parcel listed will require a fresh review to classify, rate, and rank in order of priority for acquisition once a well-documented system and process has been developed.

Open space planning is a continuous process, and therefore sites may be added to or deleted from this list as times and needs change.

20 Blue Trail Dr

Notable features

- Steep slopes facing West Rock Ridge Park Wooded ravines
- Quartz schist studied by geology classes Greenway Trail runs through it
- Magnificent laurel and dogwood
- 36 acres abuts Town-owned land
- faces SCRWA land

Reasons for acquisition

- extends the Greenway
- threatened by developmental forces
- It is one of the last remaining large undeveloped areas in Woodbridge (36 acres).
- A Boy Scout camp is adjacent to the area and connected to the Greenway. Its proximity to West Rock Ridge State Park adds to its value.
- To provide a natural year-round shelter for many forms of wildlife.

- To protect an historic trail that is a critical link in Woodbridge's Greenway. It is adjacent to lands owned by the Town and the Woodbridge Land Trust.

180 Ford Rd, 154 Ford Rd, 15 Osborne Lane, 356 Rimmon Road

Notable features

- Adjacent to town-owned land
- Various sized potholes with shrubby shelter for birds
- Land forms a natural amphitheater above potholes
- Slope of amphitheater has wide variety of vegetation, with wild azalea, pink lady slippers, viburnum, club mosses, blueberries, oak, beech, spruce, and pine plus stream and swampy area

Reasons for acquisition

- threatened by developmental forces
- To provide an area for nature study.
- To maintain existing cover for small animals and birds.
- The contours of the land make development of an outdoor theater feasible. Ideal for a wildlife park.
- Possible recreation area.
- Potential Bridge to Ansonia-Derby Water Company Property.

141, 145, 149, 153, 157, 165 Peck Hill Rd

Notable features

- contains both woodlands and meadows

Reasons for acquisition

- threatened by developmental forces
- contiguous with the Wallace Estate open space to the east of Peck Hill Road
- extend the large area of protected open space created by Wallace and the Woodbridge Land Trust properties
- maximize the benefits of the immediate area for wildlife and the public

37 North Pease Rd, 17 Woodbine Rd

Notable features

- 40 acres east of North Pease Road that were part of the old Hubbell Farm property
- provide views of West Rock Ridge, New Haven Harbor, and Long Island Sound
- contain interesting wetlands

Reasons for acquisition

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

902 Baldwin Road

Notable features

- a 70 acre farm, with about 10 acres in Woodbridge

Reasons for acquisition

- developer presently exploring options

145 Beecher Road

Notable features

- 12 acre horse farm in the center of town
- frontage on a state road
- faces the Fitzgerald cornfields and town trail (originally part of the farm)
- collection of New England barns and outbuildings

Reasons for acquisition

- Prominent location in town center
- Helps define town's rural character

1010 Racebrook Road

Notable features

- 42 acre parcel that is surrounded by Regional Water Authority land
- part of the property is a private golf course
- the Wepawaug River running through it

Reasons for acquisition

- extension to town's Greenway trail system
- serve as a town golf course

1156 Racebrook Road, 1130 Racebrook Road, and 25 Northrup Properties

Notable features

- the three parcels totaling 73 acres between Racebrook Road and Northrup Road

Reasons for acquisition

- An opportunity exists to extend the Greenway from the Racebrook Tract on the south to the Town owned Massaro Property on Ford Road on the Town's southwestern border. The key linkages are the South Central Regional Water Authority's Wepawaug River lands between Greenway Road and Ansonia Road (permission for a trail would have to be obtained from the SCRWA).
- An important watershed area that if protected would also link the Town's Greenway system to the 600 plus acres of open space owned by Birmingham Utilities in Derby, Ansonia, and Seymour. Such a linkage would allow the public to circle back into Woodbridge Greenway via the Birmingham Class 1 lands adjoining the Elderslie Preserve on Peck Hill Road.

Regional Water Authority Land

Notable features

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

Reasons for acquisition

- Key South Central Regional Water Authority parcels, should they come on the market, would be an asset to the Town. See the more explicit detailed Conservation Commission's Ford foundation funded report on this topic and recent state legislation enabling the acquisition of water company lands by towns and land trusts for open space and recreational purposes. When possible, the Town of Woodbridge is interested in pursuing joint efforts with the SCRWA to acquire lands as open space that have an effect on the RWA's watershed.

Ansonia-Derby Water Company (Birmingham Utilities) Property

Notable features

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

Reasons for acquisition

- This is the site of some of the most valuable open space in Woodbridge, with contiguous parcels in Seymour, Ansonia, and Derby. The BU land extending from the west side of Peck Hill Road to Beaver Reservoir is Class 1 watershed land, and should be protected by acquisition of adjacent open space properties.
- This land can be linked up to the Woodbridge Greenway trail from the Wallace Estate on Peck Hill Road. The Town should obtain permission for BU for hiking on the existing trails on the BU property.

2 Acorn Hill Rd

Notable features

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

Reasons for acquisition

- Closely tied in to establishing a Greenway at the western perimeter of Woodbridge is the Zwick Farm. It occupies land on Acorn Hill Road and Seymour Road west to the border with the Town of Seymour. It would be a vital connector in any North-South Regional Open Space Greenway involving the Birmingham Utility lands. The Woodbridge Land Trust owns land between Seymour Road and Bladens Brook linking directly to lands in Bethany owned by the Bethany Land Trust. The Woodbridge Land Trust has been given a piece of the farm that extends out to Hallsey Lane.

10 Warren Road

Notable features

- 74-acre parcel, mostly water, at the foot of West Rock Ridge State Park
- includes Konold's Pond, which is an important wildlife and fowl habitat, and of regional significance to bird watchers

Reasons for acquisition

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

1875 Litchfield Turnpike

Notable features

- 28.2-acre tract at the foot of West Rock Ridge State Park.
- Habitat for many species.

Reasons for acquisition

- This parcel is adjacent to state, Regional Water Authority, and town land
- extends the Greenway

357 Rimmon Road

Notable features

- 280-acre tract
- Owned by Birmingham Utilities

Reasons for acquisition

- adjoins utility land in Ansonia and Seymour, and should be part of a new regional state forest and regional park
- extension of the Greenway

655 Amity Road

Notable features

- 34 acres that are bounded by Bethany
- has views of West Rock Ridge State Park and the entire Valley

Reasons for acquisition

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

639 Amity Road

Notable features

- A 40-acre farm adjacent to SCRWA land, leading to Bethany.

Reasons for acquisition

- (awaiting comprehensive review)

81 Pease Road

Notable features

- 66 acres of open space
- Owned by CT Light and Power

Reasons for acquisition

- Major connector of Town-owned lands extends Greenway southeast, connecting with New Haven.

Current land holdings

This section contains tables summarizing land holdings of the town and other land conservation organizations.

Municipal

Owner	Street number	Street name	Acreage	Tax assessment	Book/Page	Description
City of New Haven	1873	Litchfield Tpke.	8.5	\$ 11,900	46/524	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	211	Peck Hill Road	198.24	\$ 5,626,740	329/324	Elderslie Preserve
Town of Woodbridge	50	Woodfield Road	140.41	\$ 4,032,700	628/294	Country Club Fire Station/ Fitzgerald Property
Town of Woodbridge	100	Center Road	133.05	\$ 4,565,190	101/54	Thomas Darling House
Town of Woodbridge	1907	Litchfield Tpke.	118	\$ 578,900	86/185	Town Landfill and Ballfields
Town of Woodbridge	85	Acorn Hill Road	60.53	\$ 401,800	88/504	Massaro Farm
Town of Woodbridge	41	Ford Road	57.85	\$ 651,840	226/264	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	977	Racebrook Road	52.59	\$ 189,700	635/240	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	35	Sanford Road	44.15	\$ 169,050	265/260	Beecher Road School municipal
Town of Woodbridge	40	Beecher Road	43.44	\$ 9,615,760	88/153	Pease Road Fields
Town of Woodbridge	236	Newton Road	41	\$ 173,320	318/175	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	52	Center Road	40.32	\$ 797,370	278/188	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	1966	Litchfield Tpke.	35.86	\$ 345,730	562/114	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	44	Park Lane	35	\$ 1,019,760	344/68	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	29	Park Lane	33.49	\$ 978,530	302/221	Camp Whiting Amity Regional High School
Town of Woodbridge	1910	Litchfield Tpke.	27.4	\$ 421,050	46/455	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	25	Newton Road	25	\$ 25,291,210	83/20	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	282	Seymour Road	20.33	\$ 288,610	457/306	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	312	Rimmon Road	16.5	\$ 527,520	75/556	Vacant Land

Owner	Street number	Street name	Acreage	Tax assessment	Book/Page	Description
Town of Woodbridge	52	Cow Path. Lane	13.64	\$ 603,260	369/121	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	80	Park Lane	13.03	\$ 62,930	42/117	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	17	Woodfield Road	12.06	\$ 157,570	628/294	Outbuildings
Town of Woodbridge	20	Marion Lane	10.95	\$ 747,320	364/117	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	1159	Racebrook Road	9.8	\$ 176,120	309/255	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	149	Center Road	9.7	\$ 189,280	85/265	Center Road Fields
Town of Woodbridge	110	Pease Road	9.66	\$ 129,570	364/117	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	11	Meetinghouse Lane	8.86	\$ 2,033,010	47/551	Town Hall
Town of Woodbridge	220	Peck Hill Road	8.75	\$ 403,130	372/211	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	4	Meetinghouse Lane	8.22	\$ 2,991,380	35/422	Municipal Building
Town of Woodbridge	151	Center Road	8.01	\$ 130,200		Outbuildings
Town of Woodbridge	25	South Bradley Road	7	\$ 1,379,420	104/666	West River Ballfields
Town of Woodbridge	1841	Litchfield Tpke.	6.9	\$ 9,660	46/249	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	45	Elderslie Lane-	6.39	\$ 15,190	372/211	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	31	Enoch Drive	6.22	\$ 220,360	311/363	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	1936	Litchfield Tpke.	6.05	\$ 137,060	106/484	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	5	Newton Road	5.9	\$ 331,940	79/553	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	1831	Litchfield Tpke.	5.6	\$ 5,880	46/249	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	115	Ford Road	5.54	\$ 301,840	330/56	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	1	Forest Road	4.91	\$ 34,370	202/86	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	46	Burnt Swamp Road	3.87	\$ 112,630	270/275	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	157	Ansonia Road	3.3	\$ 130,620	330/136	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	23	Sanford Road	3.05	\$ 123,480	290/319	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	212	Seymour Road	3	\$ 115,710	87/544	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	8	Forest Road	2.3	\$ 16,100	102/382	Vacant Land
Town of Woodbridge	1952	Litchfield Tpke.	2.1	\$ 76,440	266/13	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	19	Lucy Street	2.02	\$ 261,590	49/248	Woodbridge Elderly Housing

Owner	Street number	Street name	Acreage	Tax assessment	Book/Page	Description
Town of Woodbridge	7	Newton Road	1.95	\$ 27,160	321/96	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	2	Woodside Drive	1.87	\$ 113,890	364/117	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	9	Brookwood Drive	1.83	\$ 132,230	161/638	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	153	Center Road	1.56	\$ 118,440	85/266	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	50	Crestview Drive	1.5	\$ 23,800	131/780	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	81	Sperry Road	1.5	\$ 21,980	57/47	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	1	Brookwood Drive	1.41	\$ 25,830	161/638	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	5	Brookwood Drive	1.41	\$ 25,830	161/638	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	38	Milan Road	1.39	\$ 115,710	200/358	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	27	Krum Elbow	1.3	\$ 1,820	158/200	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	95	Center Road	1.15	\$ 111,860	138/716	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	46	Selden. Street	0.77	\$ 1,050		vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	13	Newton Road	0.75	\$ 105,000	138/715	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	25	Enoch Drive	0.57	\$ 12,880	117/740	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	1840	Litchfield Tpke.	0.55	\$ 3,850	46/249	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	809	Fountain Street	0.46	\$ 350	300/343	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	41	Pease Road	0.46	\$ 8,960	42/372	vacant land
Town of Woodbridge	32	Dogwood Circle	0.4	\$ 11,200	101/58	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	30	Lorraine Drive	0.4	\$ 3,710	102/511	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	27	Laurel Road	0.32	\$ 8,960	103/228	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	60	Selden Street	0.28	\$ 420	327/224	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	58	Selden Street	0.26	\$ 350	40/604	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	160	Northrop Road	0.25	\$ 12,950	115/927	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	5	Ailing Avenue	0.22	\$ 14,980	186/145	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	24	Forest Road	0.19	\$ 1,330	42/372	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	48	Selden Street	0.19	\$ 280		municipal
Town of Woodbridge	56	Selden Street	0.19	\$ 280	47/51	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	62	Selden Street	0.18	\$ 280	138/670	municipal

Owner	Street number	Street name	Acreage	Tax assessment	Book/Page	Description
Town of Woodbridge	1181	Johnson Road	0.17	\$ 87,990	76/551	Old South School House
Town of Woodbridge	52	Selden Street	0.16	\$ 210	222/327	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	54	Selden Street	0.16	\$ 210	139/42	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	49	Manila Avenue	0.14	\$ 42,910	40/333	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	29	Elderslie Lane	0.13	\$ 10,080	372/211	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	14	Forest Road	0.12	\$ 840	138/838	municipal
Town of Woodbridge	805	Fountain Street	0.05	\$ 490	628/294	Outbuildings
Town of Woodbridge	4	Newton Road	0	\$ 372,470	44/95	old fire house
Town of Woodbridge	10	Newton Road	0	\$ 2,822,960	43/47	library
Woodbridge, Bethany, Orange, Prospect	135	Bradley Road	1.08	\$ 258,970	325/129	Dog pound

Management of current land holdings

In many cases the Woodbridge Land Trust is tasked with management. But there are other parcels for which the town is solely responsible to manage. Below is a summary of parcels and who manages them.

Parcel	Assessor Address	Owner	Responsible for Management	Trails
Bishop Estate and Darling House trails	1907 Litchfield Tpk.	Town and Regional Water Authority	Town	Blue trail, Red trail; connects to West Rock
Bishop West	1907 Litchfield Tpk.	Town and Land Trust has a small parcel	Town	Blue trail.
Bladen's Brook Russell Swamp & Round Hill	35 Sanford Road	Town	Town and Land Trust	Blue trail, yellow trail. Connect to RWA and Bethany
Elderslie Preserve	211 Peck Hill Rd.	Town	Land Trust	Blue trail, white trail, yellow, orange and red. Connects to Russell Swamp and Alice Newton.
Fitzgerald Tract	100 Center Road	Town	Town and Land Trust	Blue, white and red. Connects to Alice Newton and Race Brook Estates
Historic Indian Trails	29 Park Lane	Town and Eversource	Land Trust	Blue trail, white, yellow, red and blue/yellow
Alice Newton St	7 Meetinghouse Ln	Park Association	Park Association	Blue trail
Newton Road Park	75 Newton Road	Park Association	Park Association	Red and white
Race Brook Estates	2 Woodside Dr.	Town	Land Trust	Blue trail. Connects Fitzgerald to Historic Indian Trails
Racebrook Tract	971 Racebrook Road	Town	Town	Red, green, white, purple

Appendix A – Natural Resource Inventory

The initial natural resource inventory is based upon prior work performed by Yale and presented in the Alice Newton Street Management Plan. The list of potential wildlife species comes from the Yale study. They used an older software program which is still available today here:

<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/tools/ned/products/newild/>

Updated January 2020 - this inventory should be revised every five years or when a notable natural resource has been identified.

Observed wildlife species

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Mammals	Gray squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	
	Eastern chipmunk	<i>Tamias striatus</i>	
	White-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	
	Virginia opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	
	Meadow vole	<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>	
	Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	
Birds	Pileated woodpeckers	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>	Annual cavity excavation is an excellent source of habitat for other cavity-dwelling animals (Bonar 2000).
	Downy woodpeckers	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	
	White-breasted nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	
	Turkey vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	
	Canada geese	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	Migratory.
Reptiles	Eastern ribbon snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	Prefers wetland or riparian habitat
Amphibians	Wood frog	<i>Rana sylvatica</i>	Obligate vernal pool species
	Spring peeper	<i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>	Facultative vernal pool species

Potential wildlife species

Fauna

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>	
American Redstart		
American Robin		
American Woodcock		
Barred Owl		
Beaver		
Big Brown Bat		
Black Bear		

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Black Rat Snake		
Black-and-white Warbler		
Black-billed Cuckoo		
Black-capped Chickadee		
Blue Jay		
Bobcat		
Broad-winged Hawk		
Brown Creeper		
Brown-headed Cowbird		
Bullfrog		
Carolina Wren		
Cedar Waxwing		
Chestnut-sided Warbler		
Chipping Sparrow		
Common Grackle		
Common yellowthroat		
Cooper's Hawk		
Dark-eyed Junco		
Deer Mouse		
Eastern American Toad		
Eastern Box Turtle		
Eastern Garter Snake		
Eastern Milk Snake		
Eastern Painted Turtle		
Eastern Phoebe		
Eastern Pipistrelle		
Eastern Wood-Pewee		
European Starling		
Fisher		
Golden-crowned Kinglet		
Gray Catbird		
Gray Treefrog		
Great Blue Heron		
Green Frog		
Hairy Woodpecker		
Hermit Thrush		
House Wren		
Least Flycatcher		
Louisiana waterthrush		
Marbled Salamander		
Masked Shrew		
Mourning Dove		

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Northern Brown Snake		
Northern Cardinal		
Northern Flicker		
Northern Mockingbird		
Northern Oriole		
Northern Redbelly Snake		
Northern Spring Peeper		
Northern Water Snake		
Olive-sided Flycatcher		
Ovenbird		
Pickerel Frog		
Porcupine		
Purple finch		
Pygmy Shrew		
Raccoon		
Red Fox		
Red Squirrel		
Redback Salamander		
Red-bellied Woodpecker		
Red-breasted Nuthatch		
Red-eyed Vireo		
Red-shouldered Hawk		
Red-spotted Newt		
Red-tailed hawk		
Red-winged Blackbird		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird		
Ruffed Grouse		
Rufous-sided Towhee		
Scarlet Tanager		
Sharp-shinned Hawk		
Solitary Vireo		
Southern Flying Squirrel		
Southern Red-backed Vole		
Spotted Salamander		
Striped Skunk		
Swainson's Thrush		
Tree Swallow		
Tufted Titmouse		
Veery		
White-footed Mouse		

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
White-throated Sparrow		
Wild Turkey		
Wood Duck		
Wood Thrush		
Woodchuck		
Yellow Warbler		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		

Flora

Common Name	Scientific Name	Comments
Border Privet		Invasive
Garlic Mustard		Invasive
Japanese Barberry		Invasive
Japanese Pachysandra		Invasive
Japanese Honeysuckle		Invasive
Multiflora Rose		Invasive
Norway Maple		Invasive
Oriental Bittersweet		Invasive
Winged Burning Bush		Invasive
White oak		
Black oak		
Red maple		
Sugar maple		
Yellow birch		
Black birch		
Beech		
White ash		
Tulip poplar		
Eastern hemlock		
Shagbark hickory		