

**Open Space Plan Action Items**

**Legend**

Completed

**Item**

**Timing**

**Responsibility**

**7.0 Recommendations and Implementation**

This section of the plan consolidates actions detailed above. It will be utilized by the Conservation Commission to assign responsibility. Each item has been assigned a timeframe for completion. Short-term means the first five years after adoption of the plan, mid-term is

**7.1 Plan of Conservation and Development – Chapter 2 Conservation Items**

The Town of Groton POCD (Ref 3) identified a total of 27 recommendations in the conservation section with eleven applicable to op

POCD	Item	Timing	Responsibility
2.7	Develop an open space management plan for existing Town-owned open space to include inventory/monitoring of conservation easements, and to provide standards for improvements. This plan overall will provide the basis for follow on actions.	Short-term / discuss at next CC meeting	Parks & Recreation Department with input from Conservation Commission (Text)
2.11	Develop an action plan to establish, expand, and connect greenbelts and state greenways. This plan (section 3) will provide the basis for related follow on actions.	Short-term	Planning and Zoning Commission, Office of Planning and Development Services
2.16	Develop a program to prioritize and implement the selected strategies outlined in the Municipal Coastal Program, including development of plans to restore eroded tidal marshes, to acquire land for marsh advancement, and to reduce the direct discharge of storm water to coastal waters. This plan (sections 3, 4 and 5) along with the Town of Groton Resilience and Sustainability Task Force will provide the basis for	Short-term	Office of Planning and Development Services, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Harbor Management Commission

**7.2 Future Preservation and Protection**

In section 3 of this plan, a number of recommendations were documented to support meeting priorities of the plan, and are consolidated

**7.2.1 Greenbelts**

**7.2.1.1 Modify the Western Greenbelt:**

7.2.1.1.a	Close coordination with DEEP should be done to ensure protection of the former YMCA (Gungywamp) land and to support establishment of the Northwest branch	Mid-term	Parks & Recreation Commission
7.2.1.1.b	Support land owner placement of additional, associated lands into the PA 490 program or establishment of conservation and recreation easements, should be coordinated to link the already protected areas, and areas in the area of the state airport to, with slight modification of the pathway to minimize residential areas to the	Mid-term	Landowner application to Tax Assessor
7.2.1.1.c	Establish two Western Spurs: 1) that goes from the west side of the Copp Property via the reservoir, Avalonia's Leo Antonio Preserve and the Seely School, to the foot of the pedestrian walkway on the Gold Star Bridge, thus allowing linkage to the New London Waterfront Walkway/Bikeway Greenway; 2) that supports a wildlife land/water connector south of the Naval Submarine Base to cross the Thames River into Waterford.	Long-term	Planning and Zoning Commission

**7.2.1.2 Modify the Central Greenbelt:**

7.2.1.2.a	The Greenbelt should be split and re-directed south of the Candlewood Hill Wildlife Management Area to the southwest in order to link up with GOSA's Sheep Farm, and to the southeast in order to connect to the Eastern Greenbelt at the south end of Pequot Woods. The original portion going through the Mystic Weigh subdivision should be eliminated. Support land owner placement of additional, associated lands into the PA 490 program or conservation easements should be investigated to cross the I-95 corridor and link the already protected areas.	Mid-term	Planning and Zoning Commission
7.2.1.2.b	The Town of Groton in 2019 endorsed GOSA's expansion of the Sheep Farm to the south. GOSA was subsequently awarded a DEEP OSWA grant to support the associated land purchase in 2020, and is expected to complete full acquisition in early 2021. The Town of Groton should continue to support this purchase in order to ensure completion.	Short-term	Office of Planning and Development Services
<b>7.2.1.3 Modify the Eastern Greenbelt:</b>			
7.2.1.3.a	The Greenbelt should be split and re-routed south of Route 184 to the west to utilize existing PA 490 land and other existing protected open space to cross the I-95 corridor, and to the east to connect to the Mystic River Greenbelt. The original portion going through the Woodcrest subdivision should be eliminated. Placement of additional, associated lands into the PA 490 program or conservation easements should be investigated to link the already protected areas.	Mid-term	Planning and Zoning Commission
7.2.1.3.b	The southern cross connect to the Mystic River should be re-routed to utilize the established Crosstown Trail in the Cutler School area to link GOSA's Merritt Family Forest and Beebe Pond Park, including utilization of a Parks and Recreation Department proposed bridge over Fishtown Brook on the Cutler School property, which was included in the 2019 Greenway proposal noted in section 2.3.5. The original portion going through the Brook Street should be eliminated. Support land owner placement of additional, associated lands into the PA 490 program or conservation easements should be investigated to link the already protected areas.	Short-term	Parks & Recreation Commission
<b>7.2.1.4 Modify the Mystic River Greenbelt:</b>			
7.2.1.4.a	The Greenbelt should be extended northward from the termination point of the Coastal Access along the Mystic River to link the Nature Conservancy's Peace Sanctuary, to the State Oral School Property, Town's River Road Open Space and the Avalonia's Down's Marsh, with a cross connect to the Eastern Greenbelt. The primary justification for this expansion is to support recreational utilization, reduced vehicle traffic along the river and mitigate flooding impacts with sea level and climate change.	Mid-term	Planning and Zoning Commission
7.2.1.4.b	Support land owner placement of additional, associated lands into the PA 490 program or conservation easements should be investigated to link the already protected areas.	Mid-term	Landowner application to Tax Assessor
7.2.1.5	Pursue designation of the Groton Greenbelt system as a Connecticut Greenway.	Mid-term	Parks & Recreation Commission
7.2.1.6	Pursue Greenway integration, through the SECCOG, for the Groton Greenbelt system, New London's River Front Greenway and Ledyard's Great Oak Greenway utilizing the Western Greenbelt.	Mid-term	Parks & Recreation Commission

7.2.1.7 Continue support of the Groton Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan recommendations, as a means for Greenbelt system implementation. Long-term Conservation Commission

**7.2.2 Coastal Areas**

7.2.2.1 Long-term Office of Planning and Development Services

Based upon a detailed review of the Coastal Flooding mapping projections available from the University of Connecticut, the Conservation Commissions recommends the Town of Groton selectively purchase lands projected to be above the 100-year flood plus 20" sea level increase zone, as found in Appendix B.4, for the purpose of open space acquisition. It should be noted that significant areas of the Eastern Point Beach, Jupiter Point, Groton-New London Airport, Groton Long Point, Mumford Cove, Willow Point, River Road and downtown Mystic will be inundated with seawater, and it is recommended that future sea bed parcels not be acquired.

7.2.2.2 Continue to support the recommendations of the 2011 report Preparing for Climate Change in Groton, and the SCCOG Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex for the Town of Groton including: identify vulnerable lands or land that will act as buffer for Groton, including utilization of FEMA and State grants, private funding, etc., for potential flood zone land purchase, utilizing the Resilient Land Mapping Tool. Long-term Conservation Commission

7.2.2.3 The Conservation Commission endorses the work of the Town of Groton Resiliency and Sustainability Task Force, and recommends continued coordination with their efforts. Long-term Conservation Commission

7.2.2.4 The Conservation Commission to review, comment and support the establishment and document review process of the Connecticut NERR. Short-term Conservation Commission (text)

**7.2.3 Water Resources**

7.2.3.1 Support the development of Groton Utilities future drinking water supply in the Haley's Brook and Great Brook Watersheds including protection of the yet to be designated lands. Long-term Office of Planning and Development Services

**7.2.4 Woodlands**

7.2.4.1 The Conservation Commissions recognizes while the overall forest canopy of Groton is currently in balance with the population from a carbon footprint viewpoint, the Office of Planning and Development Services, Groton Public Works and the Tree Warden need to maintain an active program to monitor areas of development for possible clear cutting, canopy loss (i.e. due to invasive insects, disease, drought, etc.) and establish a program to identify areas for re-planting more than an equal number of replacement native trees, or ensuring equivalent alternative carbon sequestration methods are implemented. Long-term Conservation Commission / Tree Advisory Board Oversight

7.2.4.2 The Office of Planning and Development Services should investigate an update to the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Regulations to ensure more than an equal number of native trees, or alternative carbon sequestration actions (i.e. solar power) are taken to result in a net zero carbon sequestration change, before and after installation of any new developments. Long-term Office of Planning and Development Services

7.2.4.3 Efforts should be initiated for identification of additional areas within Groton where forests and carbon sequestration efforts can be better protected, such as transition from PA 490 to protected open space. Mid-term Office of Planning and Development Services

7.2.4.4 The Conservation Commission should remain vigilant of its duties as the Tree Advisory Board, and continue supporting the Tree City USA, Connecticut Urban Forest and Coverts Cooperator programs. Long-term Conservation Commission/Tree Advisory Board

**7.2.5 Flora and Fauna**

7.2.5.1 The Conservation Commission should encourage future open space protection efforts that promote State of Connecticut Natural Diversity Data Base and Nature's Network mapping identified specific lands in Groton for protection of critical habitats and specific federal and state species. Mid-term Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission

7.2.5.2 The Conservation Commission should encourage future applications under the NFWF submitted by individuals or organizations in Groton, in supporting Long Island Sound resources. Short-term Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission

### 7.2.6 Natural Heritage

7.2.6.1	The Conservation Commission should encourage future applications under the RNHT submitted by individuals or organizations in Groton.	Long-term	Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission
7.2.6.2	The Conservation Commission should encourage future open space acquisitions that utilize the Natures Network three tiers of highly important habitats, important habitats and land connectors.	Long-term	Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission

### 7.2.7 Recreation

7.2.7.1	The Conservation Commissions should continue to support the recommendations of these Groton Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as well as the on-going update of the plan.	Long-term	Conservation Commission
7.2.7.2	Continue to support implementation of the Town's Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trail Master Plan for viable linkages between park facilities.	Long-term	Conservation Commission
7.2.7.3	As the Town continues to consolidate its schools, the Conservation Commission should pro-actively evaluate former school properties for permanent open space designation opportunities, balancing their currently developed services and their potential recreational benefits.	Short-term	Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission
7.2.7.4	The Commission will monitor development and application of the parameters for ensuring social justice in the amount and location of open space areas.	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.2.7.5	Continue to support implementation of the Thames River Heritage Park, and expansion of open space opportunities within the park development.	Long-term	Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission

### 7.3 Open Space Policy Improvements

In sections 4 and 6 of this plan, a number of recommendations were documented related to policy improvements, and are consolidate

7.3.1	Ensure compliance with the Connecticut Land Registry requirements, once they are finalized by DEEP, as outline in section 4.1.1.	Mid-term	Office of Planning and Development Services with input from the Conservation Commission
7.3.2	Coordinate with the Town of Groton Clerk's Office to develop a means for having access to conservation and recreation easement information on all parcels in the town, as outlined in section 6.2.	Short-term	Conservation Commission (text)
7.3.3	Develop and execute targeted acquisition strategies that maximize state open space funding opportunities, as outline in section 6.2.	Short-term	Conservation Commission
7.3.4	Work closely with the Office of Planning and Development Services Staff in the development of future Town Manager Budgets, to ensure continued support of a recurring CIP Program, as outline in section 6.3.	Short-term	Conservation Commission
7.3.5	The processes by which the town obtains open space lands should be jointly reviewed by the Conservation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission to ensure permanent protection of new acquisitions, as outlined in section 6.4.	Short-term	Joint - Conservation Commission and Planning/Zoning Commission
7.3.6	Coordinate with the Town Council for establishment of an open space protection ordinance that provides for implementation of mandated stewardship management plans for designated properties, establishment of an Open Space Steward, and provides detailed regulation of prohibited activities on open space properties as outlined in section 6.4.1.	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.37	Coordinate with the Town of Groton for establishment of a volunteer open space stewardship program as outline in section 6.4.2.	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.3.8	Establish an open space education program as outlined in section 6.4.3.	Mid-term	Conservation Commission

### 7.4 Other Conservation Commission Supporting Initiatives

While not specifically included in plan, a number of recommendations are included related to policy improvements, and are consolid

7.4.1	Multi-jurisdiction conservation collaboration	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.2	Support reduction of plastics use	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.3	Support reduction of solid waste	Long-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.4	Support creation of pollinator pathways	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.5	Declare a Climate Emergency, for the public and governing bodies to acknowledge the seriousness of the crisis and insure timely action. Require actions that address climate change impacts to infrastructure, utilities, town, business and private property. Note: Cities of New Haven and New Britain have declared Climate Emergency, and Hartford and Middletown will be considering a declaration of Climate Emergency in 2020.	Mid-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.6	Issue the Economic Model User's Manual	Short-term	Conservation Commission
7.4.7	Investigate and publish access to open space from public transportation The current bus stops can be found by turning on Route 11 at:	Short-term	Public Works and Conservation Commission

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