

# 5 | NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## Overview

Expansive views of Hundred Acre Cove. The facades of historic colonial homes. The white steeple of the Congregational Church. These are images that greet people entering Barrington on R.I. 114, the main route into Barrington from the north. The drive into town provides a picturesque snapshot of just one section of Barrington. There also are the shorelines, beaches and waters of Narragansett Bay and the Barrington and Palmer Rivers; the distinct neighborhoods of West Barrington, Hampden Meadows, Rumstick Road, and Alfred Drown; the agricultural lands in the northeast corner of town; and numerous outstanding historic buildings, including Town Hall, built in 1888. It is this abundance of natural resources, scenic landscapes and historic sites that give Barrington its special distinction, its sense of place.

One of the defining features of the community, Barrington's lengthy shoreline, also is becoming one of the most significant issues facing the Town. Going forward, risks of flooding and more frequent and damaging coastal storms are projected to rise,<sup>1</sup> underscoring the importance of protecting coastal and freshwater wetlands and other sensitive areas from development.

## Existing Conditions

### Natural Features

#### Wetland Areas

Most of Barrington's 955 acres of wetlands (see **Table 1** on the next page) are on conservation land owned by the Town, the State, the Land Conservation Trust, Audubon Society or otherwise protected. There are also several significant areas of freshwater wetlands in private



Osemequin Park (left) and Hundred Acre Cove

<sup>1</sup>See the Natural Hazards element

**Table I: Wetland Acreage, Barrington**

Classification	Acres
<b>Emergent Wetland: Marsh / Wet Meadow</b>	23.0
<b>Scrub-Shrub Swamp</b>	56.5
<b>Forested Wetland: Deciduous</b>	402.5
<b>Marine / Estuarine Shore</b>	47.7
<b>Estuarine Emergent Wetland</b>	422.5
<b>Estuarine Scrub-Shrub Wetland</b>	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>955.4</b>

Source: RIGIS (1993 Wetlands data)

ownership throughout town. The wetland areas depicted on **Map NCR-1** are an approximation of wetlands generated by the RI Geographic Information System (RIGIS); there are other sites that could be classified as wetlands, but have not yet been identified by RIGIS.

The largest contiguous wetlands near the shoreline are around Hundred Acre Cove, the upper Barrington and Palmer Rivers, on Narragansett Bay at the RI Country Club and Tillinghast Estate, and on Rumstick Point.

Freshwater wetlands are found throughout town. The most significant areas include the Hampden Meadows “Greenbelt” between New Meadow Road and Sowams Road, the “Brickyard Wetlands” between the Barrington Shopping Center and the YMCA, those within the Tall Pines conservation area east of Washington Road near County Road, and the Divine Vargas wetlands west of Wampanoag Trail. Though relatively smaller in acreage, there are critical wetlands along Mussachuck Creek, which feeds into the bay north of Nayatt Point, and along Annawamscutt Brook, which empties into Allin’s Cove.

Within the past decade, several projects have been completed that helped restore wetlands in critical areas:

- *Allin’s Cove*. The \$760,000 Allin’s Cove restoration project, completed in 2006, was

launched in order to restore approximately 11 acres of degraded coastal wetland at the mouth of Allin’s Cove, as well as stop erosion of the shoreline along Byway Road.

- *Walker Farm*. The goal of the Walker Farm Marsh restoration, completed in 2005, was to increase the acreage of marsh to 15 acres and address problems created over the years from alterations of the site, including roads and dam structures.
- *Mussachuck Creek*. A project along Mussachuck Creek at the Rhode Island Country Club was completed in 2007. The work has contributed to the restoration of the Mussachuck Creek aquatic system.

#### Surface Water

Inland water bodies (lakes, ponds, creeks, streams) in Barrington total approximately 199 acres. The largest bodies of water include Brickyard Pond (105 acres), Echo Lake (22.5 acres) and Prince’s (Tiffany) Pond (8.3 acres). Significant creeks include Annawamscutt Brook and Mussachuck Creek (discussed above).

#### Groundwater

Barrington’s major groundwater resource, the Barrington aquifer, once provided Bristol County Water with significant quantities of water. The well field is within a larger area designated as the aquifer recharge (see Map NCR-1), which encompasses undeveloped areas, including woods, Veterans Park and Brickyard Pond and wetlands, as well as developed areas – neighborhoods and commercial properties along County Road and Maple Avenue. The Zoning Ordinance requires advisory review by the Conservation Commission of certain Planning and Zoning Board applications for sites within the Wellhead Recharge Overlay District.

#### Wildlife Habitat

Three areas of Barrington have been identified by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program as rare or endangered species habitat areas (see Map NCR-1). The largest and most important area includes the Town-owned Nockum Hill

conservation parcels and marshland to the west. This land, bounding the north side of Hundred Acre Cove, serves as a nesting habitat for the Northern Diamondback Terrapin, a Rhode Island threatened species, which inhabits saltwater and brackish marshland and coves, while nesting in adjacent open sandy areas.

Another important habitat area in Barrington is the marshland and adjacent upland along the Palmer River, which supports at least five state listed species of plants and serves as a nesting site for the Seaside Sparrow and habitat for numerous other bird species. Other habitat areas include the Providence River marsh extending northward from the mouth of Mussachuck Creek, and the mostly wetland area along the east side of the Rumstick Point peninsula, across Smith Cove from Adams Point.

#### Flood Zones / Other Physical Constraints

**Map NCR-2** depicts physical constraints to development, including the 100-year flood zone (having a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding in a given year) and the velocity zone (coastal area within the flood zone likely inundated by a wave surge during hurricanes). These areas, designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provide for necessary floodwater retention, but also present a safety hazard to existing and potential development. Proposed construction and other land development activities are subject to stricter building codes and more restrictive zoning and subdivision requirements. In addition to flood zones, other constraints include wetlands and hydric soils (severe constraints), high water table and steep slopes (moderate constraints).

In general, the areas with the most significant constraints to development are within proximity to the shore—the Palmer, Barrington or Warren Rivers, Narragansett Bay, Brickyard Pond and Hundred Acre Cove.

***Flooding and other natural hazards are discussed in the Natural Hazards Element.***

#### Scenic Views

In January 1990, the RI Department of Environmental Management completed an inventory of scenic areas throughout the State. Barrington was included within that portion of the state defined as the Narragansett Bay Area. Three areas in Barrington are identified in the state inventory, which are also designated on **Map NCR-3**:

- Hundred Acre Cove, as seen primarily from Wampanoag Trail.
- An area in the southwest corner of Barrington that includes Echo Lake, Mussachuck Creek, which flows from Brickyard Pond to the Providence River, and a portion of the Nayatt Point area. This scenic area was described as a nice combination of open land, woodland and wetlands.
- The Smith Cove Marsh, a wetland with varied vegetation. It includes all of the marshland and coastal area between Rumstick Point and Adams Point.

Both the Echo Lake and the Smith Cove sites were defined as distinctive landscape areas, having the highest visual appeal and containing a great deal of variety in form. The Hundred Acre Cove site was defined as noteworthy, an area of lesser but important scenic value.

#### Protected Open Space Parcels

The Town of Barrington, the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, Audubon Society and other private interests have acquired a substantial amount of open space throughout town, totaling more than 900 acres<sup>1</sup>. These properties, sorted by owner, are depicted on **Map NCR-4** and summarized below.

<sup>1</sup> There also are multi-use parks, described in the Outdoor Recreation element, with important natural features

- *Town- and State-Owned Properties.* The Town and State own many parcels of protected open space with conservation values. These parcels can be categorized as follows:
  - ◊ *Natural Areas with Restricted Public Access (see Table 2).* The Town owns open space properties where public access is restricted on part or throughout the particular site due to the presence of environmentally sensitive areas such as coastal or freshwater wetlands, or endangered habitat areas. These sites lack sufficient upland suitable for development to convert to an active park. However, most of these lots have areas within which trails have been or could be extended such as the Hampden Meadows Greenbelt, which features a trail that follows a sewer easement through a forested wetland.
  - ◊ *Natural Areas: Conservation Areas (see Table 3, next page).* The Town owns conservation properties—parcels with significant environmental constraints – totaling approximately 64 acres of land.

***Parks and recreational needs are discussed in the Outdoor Recreation element.***

The State owns approximately 39 acres of conservation lands – several small parcels in Hundred Acre Cove and properties at the tip of Rumstick Point. Public access in these areas is discouraged.

- *Privately Owned Properties*
  - ◊ *Privately Owned Protected Open Space.* Within Barrington’s town limits, approximately 110 acres of privately owned open space is protected by deed restriction or other similar mechanism. Properties with conservation zoning – Wildlife Resources, Conservation and Open Space-Passive – are also considered “protected”, though it is possible these areas could be rezoned in the future. Much of the privately owned open space, in particular Land Trust holdings, is open to the public on a limited basis for passive recreation use (for example

**Table 2: Natural Areas with Trails/Accessible Areas—Publicly Owned Properties**

Use	Location	Acreage	Uses
<b>Town Properties</b>			
<b>Allin’s Cove</b>	Allin’s Cove, Willow Way, Ocean Ave.	2.45 acres	Conservation land with restricted public access
<b>Former “Vitullo Farm”</b>	West of Wampanoag Trail	29.25 acres	Community garden, future trails
<b>Tall Cedars</b>	East of Washington Road	33.04 acres (excludes 8 acres owned by BCLT)	Conservation land; drainage
<b>Osamequin Park</b>	East of Wampanoag Trail, on 100-Acre Cove	28.43 acres	Trails, bird sanctuary; parking on Wampanoag Trail
<b>Walker’s Farm</b>	Wampanoag Trail, Barrington River	48.53 acres	Conservation land; boat launch, community gardens, yard waste disposal area
<b>Prince’s Pond</b>	West of County Rd, east of Upland Way	25 acres	Conservation land; trail around pond
<b>Brickyard Wetlands</b>	Btwn YMCA, Bosworth St. end	10.1 acres	Conservation land, trails
<b>Hampden Meadows “Greenbelt”</b>	Between Christine Drive and Linden Road	126.8 acres	Conservation land, trails
<b>Rayner Wildlife Refuge at Nockum Hill</b>	SW of George Street, 100-Acre Cove	40.3 acres	Conservation land, wildlife/bird sanctuary, trails
<b>Total</b>		<b>343.90 acres</b>	

Source: Tax Assessor Database, Town Open Space Plan (2011)

**Table 3: Conservation Areas—Publicly Owned Parcels**

Site	Location	Acreage	Uses
<b>Town of Barrington</b>			
Divine Vargas	Wampanoag Trail	46.4 acres	Conservation land
Washington Road	South of Bike Path across from Bicknell Park	9.16 acres	Conservation land
Smith's Cove	Smith's Cove, south of Quincy Adams Rd.	5.1 acres	Conservation land
Palmer River	Palmer River, near Johannis Farm	0.75 acres	Conservation land
<b>Subtotal: Town</b>		<b>61.41 acres</b>	
<b>State of Rhode Island</b>			
Rumstick Point	End of Rumstick Road, on Rumstick Point	27.4 acres	Coastal wetlands, shoreline
Calf's Tongue	100-Acre Cove	5.4 acres	Coastal wetlands
Island in 100-Acre Cove	100-Acre Cove	3.6 acres	Undeveloped island
Great Tongue	100-Acre Cove	2.55 acres	Coastal wetlands
<b>Subtotal: State</b>		<b>38.95 acres</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.36 acres</b>	

trails), while others are not open to the public. The Barrington Land Conservation Trust and Audubon Society are the two largest private owners of open space within the town.

Unprotected Open Space Parcels

Properties that have conservation values that remain unprotected are as follows:

- *Privately Owned Parcels Containing Conservation Values.* The majority of privately owned open spaces in Barrington are not permanently protected and therefore may be available for development, though environmental restrictions such as the presence of wetlands are found on many of these parcels. Privately owned open space that have not been protected in perpetuity include institutional sites that also contain significant open space areas with conservation values. These include: the former Zion Bible Institute campus (a section of forested wetlands); St. Andrews School (forested wetlands in the western portion of the site); Tillinghast Estate, owned by the RI School of Design (coastal wetlands); and the RI Country Club (coastal wetlands, Mussachuck Creek).

- *Privately Owned Parcels Containing Agricultural Values.* Two large parcels on George Street, zoned Residence 40-Conservation Development, are currently unprotected—leaving an area of prime farmland with no water or sewer or adequate roads at risk to development. Approximately 24 acres of land, mostly active farmland, are in the Farm Forest and Open Space Program but not permanently protected.<sup>2</sup>
- *Unprotected Open Space – Unknown Owners.* Along the shoreline of the Palmer River, Hundred Acre Cove and Allin's Cove are open space lots of unknown ownership. These lots, totaling approximately 90 acres, all have severe environmental constraints – including several partially underwater. They also are located near protected open space areas owned by the Town, the Land Conservation Trust and the Audubon Society.

Agricultural Lands

About 200 acres in town are in agricultural use. The northeast section (George Street area) of Barrington is the largest contiguous agricultural area. The Town has zoned the area, which lacks access to city water and sewer, for single-family

<sup>2</sup> An additional 8.7 acres of protected agricultural land are in the program (Town purchased development rights).

**Figure 1: Allen-West House, George Street**

Allen-West House, George Street

detached houses on large lots (Residence 40-Conservation Development) and conservation/resource protection (Wildlife Refuge, Open Space-Passive and Conservation zoning).

The Town leases approximately 40 acres within the George Street area (see Number “1” on **Map NCR-5**) to Four-Town Farm for farming operations. These soils are considered prime farmland, classified by the State as “Agricultural Soils of Statewide Importance.” The George Street area is the last remaining area where farming activity occurs on any significant scale in Barrington. The Town’s two community gardens—the Barrington Community Garden (one to two acres) at the former “Vitullo Farm” site, and the Walker Farm site (one acre) – have prime agricultural soils, but are also within the floodplain.

There are many areas within Barrington with soils suitable for agricultural use according to the State; however, most of these areas are either developed residential areas or used for other purposes, such as St. Andrew’s School, Haines Park, the RI Country Club, Veterans Memorial Park, Town Hall, and several cemeteries.

## Cultural Resources

### Historic Sites and Buildings

The Town has a wealth of historically significant properties, most notably the Civic Center Historic District along County Road. This National Register District includes Town Hall, the Peck Center (Library/Senior Center), Prince’s Hill Cemetery and Wood Pond. Barrington properties on the National Register (see **Map NCR-6**) have changed in recent years, with the addition of the Alfred Drown historic district in 2005 and the Jennys Lane historic district in 2008.

In December 2013, the Allen-West House (see **Figure 1**) at 153 George Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The circa 1763 house was once part of a large farmstead consisting of more than 100 acres. The area also has historic significance, which is recognized by a large stone monument installed in 1905 that commemorates the location of the Baptist church built in the 1660s.

Projects impacting the Civic Center Historic District are reviewed by the Town Council on a case-by-case basis. Projects impacting the exterior of

Town Hall or the surrounding grounds also require the involvement and approval of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, which holds a historic preservation easement on the Town Hall and surrounding property. In 2007, the Town received a \$50,000 State Preservation Grant to replace the Town Hall roof and re-paint the woodwork in historic colors that met the approval of this commission.

One of Barrington's most iconic structures, the 50,000-square-foot Belton Court, is listed on the National Register and formerly used by the Zion Bible Institute. Belton Court, along with the entire 40-acre Zion Bible campus, was acquired at auction in 2011. Most of the buildings have remained vacant since, but the new owner is proposing a senior residential community, including restoration and re-use of Belton Court (discussed in the Housing & Neighborhoods element and Appendix II). Most of the other buildings, none historically significant, would be demolished to make room for the proposed development.

The Barrington Preservation Society, chartered by the State in 1965, is the town's principal force for historic preservation. The Society occupies space on the ground level of the Town Library. The room houses the Town Museum, archival storage of artifacts and town records.

Through its on-going Plaque Program, the society has identified approximately 160 private and public buildings that are at least 100 years in age and retain their architectural integrity. This program led to the society initiating and supporting the effort in 2004 to list the Alfred Drown Historic District and again in 2006 to list the Jennys Lane Historic District in the National Register of Historic Sites and Places. The society has provided advice to the town on preservation issues and will continue to play an active role in the designation and promotion of additional sites for listing in the National Register.

The Town also has several historic cemeteries—

including Tyler Point, Watson, Allin, Forest Chapel and Prince's Hill. The Barrington Cemetery Commission has oversight and is responsible for maintenance of these sites.

### Regulation of Development Impacts

The Town has adopted measures to help protect natural and cultural resources, including the following:

- *Wetlands Overlay District.* Barrington has stringent wetland protections in effect, with the adoption of the Wetlands Overlay District Zoning Ordinance, established as part of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite in 1994 (Article XXV). It requires the granting of a special use permit by the Zoning Board of Review, with advisory review by the Conservation Commission, prior to any development within 100 feet of either a coastal wetland or a freshwater wetland one-half acre or greater in size. The Wetlands Overlay District is more restrictive than State regulations requiring RIDEM approval for activity within 50 feet of a wetland. A 100-foot wetland setback, however, is a preferable standard in Barrington, where pressure to develop marginal sites will only increase as the community approaches build out.

Most applications for special use permits related to the wetland buffer are granted. From January 2010 through August 2014, for example, 42 special use permit applications were before the Zoning Board for encroachment into the wetland buffer. Of these, 38 were granted, while two were denied (and two withdrawn).

- *Groundwater Recharge Area.* Development proposed within the recharge area, as mapped on Map NCR-1, requires advisory review by the Conservation Commission.

- *Historic Sites—Review.* The Town does not have any local historic districts or a historic district commission. The Town has put in place additional review standards for development projects that abut or are within 200 feet of an historic property listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places (Sec. 185-160 of the Zoning Ordinance).
- *Developer Guidance-Belton Court.* The Developer Guidance (Appendix II of the Comprehensive Plan) for the former Zion Bible Institute campus incentivizes the restoration of Belton Court, one of the Town’s most significant privately owned historic properties, through the provision of a density bonus. The guidance states: Belton Court “shall be restored in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The historic grounds associated with Belton Court shall be preserved.”

#### Other Standards

- *Stormwater design.* Applicants for qualifying development activity must develop and submit a stormwater management plan consistent with the Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual and the Rhode Island Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook. The Planning Board in recent years has approved plans with low impact development features, such as at Walker Farm Lane, where surface runoff from the street drains into a retention pond, rather than through culverts and pipes; the development features narrow street widths and pervious pavement for on-street parking spaces and driveways. The Board has also granted waivers allowing private streets for subdivisions of up to two lots, allowing access through shared driveways that require much less pavement compared to development of a street to Town standards.
- *Lighting standards.* The Town’s standards require cut-off lighting fixtures in new parking lots; photometric plans are required to

demonstrate neighboring properties will not be impacted by light pollution.

- *Cell towers.* Cell towers, with the associated ground-mounted equipment and access road, can negatively impact scenic resources and conservation areas. The Town in 2012 adopted Zoning Ordinance amendments requiring an analysis of colocation opportunities and compliance with design standards (Sec. 185-209 of the Zoning Ordinance) as part of the cellular tower development plan review and special use permit process.

#### **Open Space Protections and Incentives**

Techniques to protect open space utilized by the Town, Land Trust and others include:

- *Land Acquisitions—Town.* The Town has had success protecting properties through land acquisition. Recent acquisitions, since 2000, include:
  - ◊ *St. Andrews Farm, Middle Highway.* The Town acquired the 28.5-acre tract from St. Andrews School for active and passive recreation. The rear of the site consists of an open field to be preserved for passive recreation.
  - ◊ *Sowams Road open space parcel.* An upland area within the 5.9-acre site near Sowams Road has been converted to a practice field with parking. The rear portion of the site, within the “Hampden Meadows Greenbelt,” has the potential for new trails.
  - ◊ *The “Brickyard Wetlands.”* Property is located between the Barrington Shopping Center and the YMCA. The 10-acre site, which is mostly wetlands, was purchased using State Open Space bond funds with a local match; a conservation easement restricts the type of activities and land disturbances that may take place at the site.
  - ◊ *Vitulo Farm on Wampanoag Trail.* A section of the former farm just off Wampanoag Trail was converted in

2014 for use as the Barrington Community Garden. Environmental constraints include wetlands and a high water table. The Town has plans to install a gravel parking lot and to relocate the driveway that provides access from Wampanoag Trail.

- ◇ *George Street parcel.* In 2009, the Cemetery Commission acquired approximately seven acres of upland in the George Street area for a future cemetery. The site includes a small section of coastal marsh on Hundred Acre Cove.
- *Land Acquisitions—Land Conservation Trust.* The Land Trust also has played a vital role in protecting sensitive properties throughout Barrington. One of the more significant acquisitions was made in 2007, with the purchase of “Sowams Woods” on Washington Road. The 12.3-acre site, which abuts Echo Lake, was purchased from RI Country Club using several funding sources. A conservation easement is in place for the site, which features a Native American archaeological site. The Land Trust has established trails on the property. Sowams Woods is included in the Land Trust’s proposed “Sowams National Heritage District” (discussed in detail in the Issues and Opportunities section).
- *Land Donations.* The Town and Land Trust has also acquired several properties in recent years through land donations—including two acres that abutted the Town’s Hampden Meadows Greenbelt (Town acquisition).
- *Acquisition of Development Rights.* In one instance, the Town protected property from development by acquiring development rights. This was put in place on 8.7 acres of farmland and coastal wetlands owned by Four-Town Farm. The Town acquired the development rights in the early 1990s in exchange for allowing Four-Town Farm to

lease Town property off George Street for 20 years.

- *Farm, Forest and Open Space Program.* The Farm Forest and Open Space Program is a tax incentive program that helps to achieve open space protection, but does not provide permanent protection. The program is intended to encourage property owners to manage their land for forestry, agriculture, and open space. Property owners enter into an agreement with the Town to keep their properties undeveloped for at least 15 years in exchange for lower property tax assessments. Should a property owner decide to remove land that has been designated under the tax program, back taxes would be owed to the Town. As such, these properties are not protected in perpetuity, unless, for example, there is also a permanent conservation easement in place.

As noted previously, lots farmed by Four-Town Farm in the George Street area represent the largest acreage of any property owner in the program, totaling 33 acres (this includes an 8.7-acre parcel where the Town acquired the development rights). Three residential properties, each with a small area for a house, are in the program as well, totaling 28 acres.

## Issues and Opportunities

### Future Land Acquisitions

#### Protection / Acquisition Priorities

Acquisitions of significant parcels throughout town for conservation and open space protection purposes may become more difficult over time due to the increasing land values associated with the limited supply of available property in town, in particular with regard to developable upland outside conservation areas. Acquisition criteria as well as input on proposed land acquisitions from groups with potentially com-

peting interests — such as the Park and Recreation Commission, Cemetery Commission, Conservation Commission and Housing Board of Trustees — would help the Town weigh potential future uses of various sites.

The Town's Open Space Plan, presented to the Town Council in November 2011, offer a set of criteria for evaluating acquisition of conservation/open space properties. Though these criteria have not been formally adopted as official Town policy; the Planning Board has used them as a basis to evaluate and submit recommendations to the Town Council of requests for property donations offered by private landowners.

#### Properties of Unknown Ownership

Acquisition of conservation/open space properties is typically a straightforward negotiation between the Town or other party such as the Land Trust and the property owner. However, this is not possible in every situation, in particular where, ownership of parcels with conservation value is unknown. While many of these lots of unknown ownership are either within wetlands or even submerged, making development in these areas highly unlikely, acquisition would help create a band of protected area and clarify ownership and, therefore, management responsibilities. Targeted acquisitions in other habitat areas would also provide an additional level of protection for these important sites.

#### Zoning—Conservation Parcels

The Town completed a town-wide Zoning Map update in 2012, for consistency with the Future Land Use Map. A number of protected open space properties, including St. Andrews Farm and other parcels acquired by the Town, were rezoned to zoning designations reflecting the long-term intended conservation or recreational use of the sites. The Town has just one remaining property that was identified but not included in the rezoning effort—a section of

Business-zoned property that is the rear portion of a parcel in the Farm, Forest and Open Space program. This area is just south of a 10-acre parcel with sensitive wetlands—the “Brickyard Wetlands” site owned by the Town, located between the Barrington Shopping Center and the Bayside YMCA. That site was rezoned from Business to Open Space-Passive in 2012. The remaining Business-zoned area recommended for rezoning is identified in the Land Use element—see Map LU-7.

#### **Planning for Impacts of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Wetlands**

Coastal marshes are highly susceptible to impacts of sea level rise<sup>3</sup> due to increases in inundation. These marshes over time will migrate inland—provided there are adjacent areas allowing for this migration to occur. Barrington already has a significant amount of coastal wetlands already inundated at mean high tide. **Map NCR-7** shows additional coastal wetland areas that would become inundated with one, three and five feet of SLR. The largest areas susceptible to inundation are around One Hundred Acre Cove, along the shores of the Palmer River, at Allin's Cove, at the RI Country Club and Tillinghast Estate south of Nayatt Road near the shore, and at Rumstick Point and Smith Cove. There are very few areas of coastal marsh that would not become inundated with five feet of SLR.

A more detailed analysis of impacts of SLR on coastal marshes has been developed by the RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), in partnership with other agencies and organizations. The Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) maps depict specific areas where marsh migration might occur—based on factors such as topography as well as impacts of roads, parking lots and other development.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Impacts of sea level rise are discussed in greater detail in the Natural Hazards element.

<sup>4</sup> The SLAMM maps can be examined at the Council's office in Wakefield, at the Secretary of State's office, and online at the Council's website: [www.crmc.ri.gov](http://www.crmc.ri.gov).

The SLAMM maps are an excellent tool for future open space acquisition planning and prioritizing adaptation projects, such as those discussed in the Natural Hazards element. Map NCR-7 shows that many of the parcels with coastal marshes are already protected. However, there are other marsh areas, such as at the Country Club and Tillinghast Estate as well as other privately owned properties, that are vulnerable to SLR but without permanent protection. (It should be noted that Save the Bay has completed multiple marsh restoration projects the Country Club and Tillinghast Estate.)

### **Effectiveness of Regulations**

The Town should consider the following actions related to review of development impacts on natural and cultural resources.

#### Improve Wetland Protections

The Town uses the RIGIS wetlands mapping (see Map NCR-1) as a guide for identifying whether a proposed project could impact the 100-foot wetlands buffer. The wetland mapping is based on interpretation of 1988 aerial photography to one quarter acre polygon resolution, according to RIGIS. The wetlands depicted in this Comprehensive Plan maps utilize the RIGIS data, which are effective for showing general wetland areas. An accurate wetlands edge requires delineation in the field by a wetlands biologist, which is cost-prohibitive at the town-wide level. The Town, however, should take reasonable steps to ensure the GIS data showing the State wetlands in relation to Town parcels is as accurate as possible.

It is recommended that the Town engage in a five-year budgeted (or otherwise funded) program to research, inventory, and digitally map all wetlands in town. The primary goal of this inventory would be to establish more accurate existing wetland edges, identify wetland types and jurisdictions, document distance from existing structures, and map interconnections between wetlands and other water bodies, includ-

ing larger rivers and bay. This activity would have the following benefits:

- Ensure that the town is adequately regulating its wetland resources by identifying all structures in proximity to wetlands;
- Build an understanding of hydrological flow configurations in coastal, inland areas; and
- Identify opportunities to protect areas to allow for coastal marsh migration resulting from sea level rise.

This effort should help identify potential violations of approvals related to wetland permits, as issued by the Town as well as the State. This could be accomplished through evaluation of aerial photography together with the approved site plans, based on the updated wetland data.

#### Eliminate Groundwater Overlay Review

The Town's requirements for review of projects within the Nayatt groundwater recharge area should be re-evaluated in the context of the feasibility and future need of the aquifer being brought online as a water supply. Currently the Water Authority is proceeding with other options for secondary sources of drinking water and has no plans to bring the Nayatt well field facilities back on-line (see discussion in Community Services & Facilities). One of the challenges is saltwater intrusion into the aquifer—which, according to CRMC, will only worsen in the future with increases in sea level (discussed in the Natural Hazards element).

Given the Nayatt well field's lack of viability as a groundwater resource, the Town should eliminate as unnecessary the requirement that subdivisions and other development applications receive an advisory review of the plans from the Conservation Commission.

### **Water Quality**

#### Surface Water

Water quality remains a concern in Barrington, where degraded conditions persist in several water bodies, including Brickyard Pond,

Prince's Pond, the Barrington River/Hundred Acre Cove and Echo Lake. The Town will need to continue to work to develop and implement water quality plans and projects, which have included the following:

- *Brickyard Pond.* Brickyard Pond was included in a 2007 RI Department of Environmental Management study of impaired ponds. The study identified high phosphorus and low dissolved oxygen levels, with problems linked to sources such as stormwater runoff, waterfowl, shoreline erosion, and internal cycling. In September 2007, the Office of Water Resources at RIDEM released a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study to address water quality concerns, predominantly phosphorous loadings, in Brickyard and other sites in Rhode Island. The Town is in the process of identifying actions to bring the Pond into compliance with the TMDL.
- *Prince's Pond.* Prince's Pond (also known as Tiffany Pond) is on the State's list of impaired waters for phosphorous and dissolved oxygen.
- *Palmer River.* The Palmer River (not included in the above acreage) also is listed as impaired, from the Massachusetts/Rhode Island line to the East Bay Bike Path trestle, due to nitrogen and dissolved oxygen levels and fecal coliform.
- *Hundred Acre Cove.* Hundred Acre Cove continues to be affected by increased bacterial levels, in particular due to upstream sources of stormwater runoff. A shellfishing ban in place at Hundred Acre Cove since the early 1990s remains in effect today. A RIDEM Total Maximum Daily Loads study for Hundred Acre Cove, as was completed for Brickyard Pond, is in the planning stages.
- *Echo Lake.* Recent projects have helped to improve conditions of Echo Lake. A \$6 million project undertaken by the Rhode Island Country Club has helped improve flow through Mussachuck Creek to Narragansett Bay. It is hoped that the improved

conditions will allow herring to reach breeding areas in Echo Lake and Brickyard Pond and provide a less conducive environment for the invasive weed phragmites.

### Management of Open Space

Another issue relates to the management of conservation lands held in public and private ownership. The Conservation Commission and Barrington Conservation Land Trust have advocated adopting and enforcing Management Plans for Town-owned conservation lands across Barrington. Concerns include encroachments from neighboring parcels, enforcement of easements, illegal dumping and other activities, and people accessing environmentally sensitive areas.

Management plans developed for Nockum Hill and Hundred Acre Cove, the Hampden Meadows "Greenbelt," and Brickyard Pond have been partially implemented.

Comprehensive Management Plans provide a framework for the protection of publicly owned or otherwise protected conservation lands. In general, each management plan includes a description of the area's significant characteristics and features, management objectives and implementation plan. The Town owns a substantial number of conservation lands. Conservation areas in private ownership also deserve special attention, as they represent a significant amount of land area throughout town. Comprehensive management plans are important as they provide site-specific objectives and strategies for the continual protection of these areas.

Typical elements of management plans include:

- Control of hydrological characteristics.
- Removal or control of nuisance, exotic, plant and animal species.
- Preservation of native vegetation.
- Maintenance of habitat corridors.
- Encroachments from abutters.
- Enforcement of easements.

The Town should also encourage development of Management Plans for privately owned conservation areas. Plans for Land Trust and Town conservation lands should articulate a consistent vision, given many of these parcels are in proximity to one another. An example is the “Sowams Woods” parcel which is adjacent to or near Town-owned open space / conservation lands. Other groups will be encouraged to develop management plans as well. For example, the Audubon Society owns a number of important conservation parcels, including property along the Palmer River and adjacent to Haines Park.

An issue to be evaluated in the Nockum Hill Management Plan is the extent of the Diamondback Terrapins’ habitat area. The Land Trust has reported witnessing terrapins in areas beyond the Habitat Area mapped by the State (see Map NCR-1). Additional study of Area 1a depicted on Map NCR-1 is recommended to determine whether the mapped habitat area should be enlarged.

**Sowams National Heritage District**

The Land Trust, an owner of open space properties a throughout Town, has proposed establishment of the “Sowams National Heritage District” in the Echo Lake/Brickyard Pond area. The district would be a more comprehensive approach to managing this area, focusing on the area including the Land Trust’s Sowams Woods parcel on Washington Road, Echo Lake and Brickyard Pond. The proposed district includes:

- *Open Space.* The proposed area includes approximately 350 acres already protected by the Town of Barrington and other large tracts of open land.
- *Natural Habitat.* The proposed area includes the watershed of Big Mussachuck Creek, one of just 18 original herring runs remaining in Rhode Island. The rich and varied habitats also provide forage and shelter for

birds seasonally migrating along the eastern North American flyway. Unprotected endangered and threatened plant species are present as well as numerous uncontrolled invasive plants.

- *Passive Recreation.* The district includes a central portion of the East Bay Bike Path, the oldest and most popular bike path in the state which is part of the national East Coast Greenway running from Florida to Maine. Biking trails could be added. Year round opportunities for hiking, fishing, picnicking, bird-watching and biking with important coastal access.
- *Historic Resources.* The district includes at least three layers of history each eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:
  - ◊ Native American Archeological site: 5,500-year-old Archaic Period crescent shaped stone hearths unique in Northeast adjacent to burial mounds. Historical Pokanoket territory of Sowams including village sites.
  - ◊ The Brickworks site long proposed for historic recognition, as an archaeological district (see Map NCR-6).
  - ◊ A nearly century-old championship, 18-hole golf course designed by the legendary course architect Donald Ross. Landscape plans by the renowned Olmstead Brothers are in the National Archives.
- *Scenic.* The area’s roadways included on state scenic map offer expansive views of Narragansett Bay and green open space views. Echo Lake/Mussachuck Creek is a State-designated scenic area.

A management plan would build on the area’s unique features cited above and target key goals for the district, potentially helping leverage grants and private funds to protect and highlight the unique qualities of the area, including additional conservation acquisitions or easements. A district approach could be partic-

**Figure 2: Nayatt Lighthouse**

Nayatt Point Lighthouse, a property listed on the National Register

ularly helpful in coordinating efforts to control invasive plants and to improve water quality throughout the herring run.

### **Preservation of Historic Properties**

Of all of the historic sites in Barrington, the future of the 50,000-square-foot Belton Court, once used for office and classroom space at the Zion Bible Institute campus, is a significant preservation issue. Zion Bible Institute in the summer of 2008 moved its operations to a new campus in Massachusetts, after years of struggling to maintain Belton Court and other campus buildings as well as comply with more stringent fire codes.

The future use of the campus and Belton Court is almost certain to change, as a developer has the campus property under a purchase and sale agreement (the issue of the development of the site is addressed in other areas of this Plan as well). Restoration of Belton Court (listed in the National Register in 1976) in an historically sensitive manner will require a significant investment.

Another important public building is the century-old Bay Spring Community Center on Narragansett Avenue. In 2006, the building was

determined as eligible for nomination to the State Register by a vote of the State Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. The Town has since renovated the building, including providing ADA access to the second floor. Given the Town's commitment to utilize the building, the Town should pursue applying to list the property on the National Register of Historic Places.

An ongoing concern relates to development pressure on not only properties on the Historic Register, but also Barrington's existing neighborhoods established 50 or more years ago. For a suburban town of many single family houses, these neighborhoods represent the essential qualities that define Barrington. With the exception of the Alfred Drown Road and Jennys Lane National Register Districts, the only privately owned residential properties with the Historic Register designation are individual homes.

The Town should pursue applications for additional National Register Districts. Map NCR-6 recommends several districts for further study. These areas, most of which have multiple houses that have historic plaques from the Preservation Society, are:

- *The Nockum Hill/George Street area.* Nockum Hill is the site of the founding of three towns – Barrington, Warren and Swansea, MA. Research by the Barrington Preservation Society suggests the area has major historical and religious significance as the possible site of the first Baptist meeting house building in the country.
- *Johannis Farm.* This historic farm on Sowams Road contains agricultural fields, ponds, woodland and marsh on the Palmer River.
- *Lincoln Avenue from Washington Road to Townsend Street.* Seven houses, ranging in date from 1870 to 1915, have been researched and plaqued by BPS, reflecting the popularity of this neighborhood as a residential district for commuters.
- *St. Andrews School.* The original complex of Saint Andrews Industrial School, (founded in 1893) contains significant Shingle Style and Georgian Revival institutional buildings and has been previously recommended for listing in the National Register.
- *Nayatt Point.* Approximately 30 houses along Nayatt Road, plus Elm Street and Glen Avenue, would comprise the Nayatt Point Historic District. This neighborhood illustrates Nayatt Point's history from development in the 1850s as a summer resort, with the Bay House Hotel and ferry landing through the early twentieth century with construction of elaborate Victorian and Colonial Revival summer houses, designed by the State's leading architects for the industrial leaders of Rhode Island. The district, as mapped, has nine houses with Preservation Society plaques. The district contains two individual National Register properties: the Nayatt Point Lighthouse (see **Figure 2**, previous page) and the Benjamin Jackson.
- *Honeysuckle Court.* The five houses sited on Honeysuckle Court, ranging in date from 1950 to 1955, were built by a leading Bar-

ington contractor. Each house is a variation on an historic Georgian design and was reputedly showcased to entice prospective clients to build a new home. Further study is needed to identify other houses in Barrington that were then built by Volpe to document the significance of this plat.

### Protection of Scenic Views and Shore Access Points

Barrington enjoys a wealth of scenic resources, where the beauty of the natural setting has been preserved or benignly modified by patterns of development, as well as more than 20 public shore access points (see Map NCR-3). The Town's topographical character is set by the interplay between its land and waters, including the Bay, the various tidal rivers, several coves and a number of freshwater ponds. These large and small bodies of water provide vistas ranging from the expansive to the intimate that are enjoyed from both public and private land.

Three areas in Barrington are identified in the state inventory of scenic areas (1990), in terms of their size and visual qualities, constitute scenic resources that are important on a regional and statewide level. The most significant risk to these views may be cell tower installations, given the height of these structures. The Town could consider impacts on scenic resources in evaluating special use permits for cell towers.

As yet there has been no comprehensive survey of smaller scenic areas that are important on a town-wide level. Such a survey would profitably focus on the East Bay Bicycle Path corridor, especially at Brickyard Pond and the Barrington and Warren Rivers; and along certain road corridors, including Mathewson, Adams Point, Rumstick, Chachapacassett and Nayatt Roads in the southern half of town. Other scenic areas are visible from lower New Meadow Road along the Barrington River, and along portions of Wampanoag Trail, Washington Road and Middle Highway.

An inventory of scenic views should also include views from the ends of public rights of way—important view corridors that should be protected from encroachment such as from the marina expansions or extensions of docks off adjacent private parcels.

### **Protection of George Street’s Agricultural Heritage and Rural Character**

George Street is an area of major historic significance for Barrington. It is also where the preservation of the predominant agricultural use and rural character are critical concerns. The Town’s most critical agricultural land is in this section of town, which includes portions of the Doug Rayner Wildlife Sanctuary at Nockum Hill and significant parcels farmed by Four-Town Farm. However, the area also has undeveloped parcels that, despite a lack of water and sewer and adequate roads, are under development pressure. Currently, there are only 10 houses, including two vacant, within the 75 acres zoned Residence 40-Conservation Development, where residential use is permitted. This equates to just one unit per 7.5 acres of land in the R40-CD zone.

The conversion of farmland to housing in this area consumes land historically used for agricultural purposes, diminishes the rural character and potentially impacts environmentally sensitive areas, in particular the terrapin habitat within Nockum Hill. Also, more people living in close proximity to active farming operations could make farming more difficult due to complaints from dust, noise, etc.

These are not new issues. In 2012, the Town adopted a new zone for this part of town—changing the area’s Residence 40 zone to Residence 40-Conservation Development. The zone is intended to provide more flexible subdivision design, with the goal of preserving important open space and limiting the development footprint. The zone requires subdivisions of five or more lots to meet the requirements

of the R40-CD zone, including setting aside at least 35 percent of the site as contiguous open space. To date, no proposals have been submitted that trigger the R40-CD requirements.

An open question is whether the R40-CD zone offers sufficient protection of the agricultural land use and rural character of the George Street area, as the zone retains the current Residence 40 density. There are additional measures—such as larger minimum lot size requirements or the establishment of an agricultural zoning district—that could further protect an area with significant agricultural resources, sensitive habitat, and a historic, rural landscape reflective of Barrington’s early settlement.

The Town also has had success with land acquisition and acquiring development rights in the George Street area. The Town should emphasize these strategies as it initiates or evaluates requests for open space acquisition based on established acquisition criteria.

## **Goals, Objectives Policies & Actions**

**Goal NCR-1:** Protect important natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, groundwater aquifers, and the salt marshes especially around Hundred Acre Cove and the Barrington and Palmer Rivers.

**Objective NCR-1.1:** Establish an official open space protection program by 2017.

**Policy NCR-1.1.1:** Evaluate potential open space protections based on the following criteria:

- Cost: allows the Town to maximize its assets and leverage additional resources including grants, landowner donations, funding partnerships, and donations.
- Community benefit: promotes benefits for the town at large—such providing land for

recreational areas, expanding an existing open space network, or enhancing buffers.

- Connectivity: adds to the existing or planned open space system and enhances ecological, hydrological, and recreational vitality.
- Ecologically significant habitat (rare or endangered flora or fauna).
- Protection of upland areas adjacent to coastal wetlands that are projected to migrate landward due to impacts from sea level rise
- Farmland preservation (preserve agricultural properties that may also qualify for protection under other programs).
- Historic value (within a National Register Historic District and/or of significant cultural value).
- Scenic value (aesthetic value and/or preservation of community character).
- Property provides storm water storage, flood protection, or groundwater recharge.
- Size of parcel (based on acreage);
- Feasibility of purchase and likelihood of acquisition, including time seller can provide to allow Town to secure necessary funding.

**Actions**

- A. Evaluate proposed protections of open space parcels, through acquisition, easements or other techniques, and identify priority areas based on Policy NCR-1.1.1
- B. Establish a process for reviewing potential open space acquisitions that includes key stakeholders, including Boards and Commissions and the Land Trust. Consider establishing an official open space committee that meets semi-annually to review proposed land donations and to consider initiating acquisition of critical properties based on the Open Space acquisition criteria.
- C. Seek grants and other funding sources to

*See the Implementation element for information on implementation schedule, priorities, estimated costs, responsibilities and action types.*

protect open space, including habitat areas and farmland, through acquisition and conservation easements.

- D. Establish deed restrictions to ensure high priority Town-owned conservation parcels, as determined based on Policy NCR-1.1.1, cannot be sold or otherwise disposed of.
- E. Rezone properties with conservation values, consistent with the Future Land Use Map (see **Maps LU-6** and **LU-7** in the Land Use element).

**Objective NCR-1.2:** By 2017, amend local regulations and procedures to improve protections of natural resources.

**Policy NCR-1.2.1:** Effectively regulate and enforce regulations protecting critical conservation lands from development impacts.

**Actions**

- A. Create an administrative mechanism to certify that projects comply with approved zoning action regarding encroachments in the Town's 100-foot wetland buffer that includes mandatory inspection by the Town Building Official / assignee prior to critical project steps.
- B. Create an electronic inventory of all properties granted variances and conditions of plan approval for construction within the 100-foot setback that specifies the approval and conditions of that approval.
- C. Secure funding to research, inventory, and digitally map wetlands in town to improve the accuracy of the locations of wetland

edges.<sup>5</sup> The primary goal of this inventory would be to establish existing wetland types and approximate wetland edges, identify jurisdictional review, document distance from existing structures, and map interconnections between wetlands and other water bodies, including larger rivers and bay.

- D. Amend Zoning Ordinance and Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to establish review procedures to ensure development/subdivision proposals provide dedicated open space consistent with the Town’s open space acquisition criteria.
- E. Amend drainage and site plan design standards in the Land Development & Subdivision Regulations to encourage low-impact development techniques.
- F. Eliminate the required advisory review of projects proposed within the Groundwater Overlay District.

**Goal NCR-2:** Effectively manage open space properties to maintain and protect conservation values of the Town’s critical cultural and natural resources.

**Policy NCR-2.1.1:** Manage town owned property to ensure protection of important natural and cultural features, and develop regulations and/or techniques for the protection of such land that is privately owned, including scenic, historical and cultural sites.

**Policy NCR-2.1.2:** Encourage cooperation with private owners of open space parcels to establish public access, enhance trail connectivity, expand wildlife corridors and coordinate management responsibilities.

**Actions**

- A. Implement management plans developed for priority sites. Review and revise as necessary. These sites include:

- Nockum Hill
- Allin’s Cove (Town and Conservation Land Trust parcels).
- The Brickyard Wetlands (the Town-owned 10-acre site west of the Barrington Shopping Center).
- Hampden Meadows “Greenbelt”
- Walker Farm
- Town Beach (Town)
- St. Andrews Farm (Town)

- B. Complete management plans for other public open space spaces, including:

- The former Vitullo Farm property and the Divine Vargas Conservation area
- Veterans Park west of Brickyard Pond

- C. Work with owners of private conservation parcels to develop new or coordinate implementation of existing management plans that are consistent with those adopted for public conservation areas. Priorities include:

- Mussachuck Creek
- Echo Lake/Sowams Woods
- Johannis Farm
- Tillinghast Estate
- Other critical natural areas

- D. Create a process for consistent oversight of management plans for individual sites. The success of management plans will require assigning responsibilities and a monitoring process to track implementation including inspections for conditions, maintenance needs, and encroachments. Annually review status of management plan implementation for all conservation areas.

- E. Work with the Land Trust and other stakeholders to establish the proposed Sowams National Heritage District to enhance and protect the scenic, historic, natural and recreational open spaces within the district. Reinforce public awareness of the district through maps, logos, educational panels and other measures.

<sup>5</sup> In conjunction with completion of a hydrology study (see Natural Hazards Goal NH-2, Action C.

- F. Work to eliminate encroachments into open space properties by abutting property owners. This action requires a Class 1 survey, which can be costly. To minimize costs, the Town should focus on identifying the most blatant encroachments first.
- G. Conduct a study of the habitat of the Diamondback Terrapin to determine whether the mapped Habitat Area on NCR-1 should be expanded.

**Goal NCR-3:** Work to protect and restore water quality, including in Hundred Acre Cove, Brickyard Pond, Prince’s Pond, and Annawamscutt Creek.

**Policy NCR-3.1.1:** Pursue cost-effective water quality measures and include projects in capital budget planning.

**Actions**

- A. Complete a watershed study within priority areas, including Town Beach and Brickyard Pond, to identify and prioritize future stormwater / water quality improvement projects, with an emphasis on “green infrastructure” such as rain gardens, where feasible. Prepare detailed plans as necessary to determine estimated costs and capitalize on funding opportunities available through the State or other sources.
- B. Prioritize and phase in implementation of watershed study recommendations, emphasizing the most cost-effective measures.
- C. Formalize a partnership (or consortium) with neighboring communities to adopt measures to improve water quality in Hundred Acre Cove.
- D. Develop an education/public outreach program on everyday uses and activities that contribute to the degradation of the water quality of local ponds and streams.

**Goal NCR-4:** Protect critical historic properties and areas of historic significance.

**Policy NCR-4.1.1:** Take proactive action to protect historic properties at risk of demolition or negative impacts resulting from development.

**Policy NCR-4.1.2:** Promote awareness of the area’s history, including the pre-colonial era.

**Actions**

- A. Develop incentives for the restoration of Belton Court that are economically viable, and seek opportunities for gaining public access to building and grounds. (Incentives are listed in Appendix II)
- B. Explore creation of a Nockum Hill National Historic Landmark (NHL) Site. Seek study of Nockum Hill area to determine archaeological resources including Native American use of the land and the location of the first Baptist meeting house built in the 1660s off George Street.
- C. Work with stakeholders to develop a management plan for the Civic Center National Register District. Adopt a policy for reviewing and approving projects within the District, including an evaluation of parking and other impacts and potential maintenance responsibilities.
- D. Apply for designation of the Bay Spring Community Center on the National Register of Historic Places.
- E. Work with the Preservation Society for expansion of existing historic districts and for listing of additional residential districts in the State and National Registers, per Map NCR-6.
- F. Appoint a committee to study establishment of a Voluntary Historic District Commission. Such a committee could develop guidelines for restoration and protection of historic properties, based on the Secretary

of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and study possible local tax incentives.

- G. Include Sowams Woods history on historic signs along the Bike Path.
- H. Adopt a stop-work ordinance which would allow a reasonable grace period for historic preservation consultation when a significant historic property is threatened with whole or partial destruction.

**Goal NCR-5.** Protect the Town’s scenic resources.

**Policy NCR-5.1.1:** Review impacts of private and public projects on scenic resources.

**Actions**

- A. Adopt scenic area registry and incorporate protections within Planning Board review process.
- B. Identify smaller scenic areas that are important at local level, including ends of public rights of way providing views to the water.
- C. Establish viewshed easements around particularly important sites.
- D. Convert streetlights/parking lot lighting to cut-off (“dark sky”) fixtures (see also Energy Goal E-1).
- E. Set standards for outdoor lighting to limit light pollution in scenic areas; adopt Town ordinance to require cut-off lighting on residential properties.
- F. Adopt zoning standards for review of impacts of proposed cell towers on scenic resources.

**Goal NCR-6.** Preserve the character of rural areas of Barrington.

**Policy NCR-6.1.1:** Adopt measures and policies to protect rural areas, with an emphasis on preserving rural character and agricultural values.

**Actions**

- A. Enact protections through zoning and other regulations to limit impacts of development on the rural character of the George Street area.
- B. Evaluate other potential options to protect agricultural lands, such as conservation easements through the purchase of development rights.
- C. Consider including the following conditions when providing option of leasing Town properties for farming:
  - Adding conditions to limit environmental impacts, such as restrictions on the application of chemicals and limitations on farming near environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Requiring provision of public access, if such access would improve connectivity to open space or for extending trails, per recommendations in Open Space plan.