# Open Space and Recreation

## Introduction

Open space and recreation areas and facilities are vital to a community’s health, economy, and quality of life. The Town’s outdoor recreation spaces and amenities serve a variety of purposes: youth and adult sports, fitness and wellness programs, seasonal and community events, and others. These recreation resources are an asset to Mashpee residents of all ages, as well as residents in neighboring Towns and throughout the state. They create a sense of community and provide enjoyment of the outdoors for a wide variety of individuals. Recreational opportunities play an important role in people’s daily lives and contribute to quality of life within a community. Open space areas serve an equally important purpose within a community. They provide habitat, protect environmentally sensitive areas, contribute to the character of the community, and offer passive recreation opportunities. Many areas of Town set aside for recreation and open space overlap and serve a dual purpose. Properties considered as open spaces can also provide opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking and bird watching. The purpose of the Open Space and Recreation Chapter is to define Town goals and actions to promote recreation and conservation of open space in Mashpee.

## Existing Conditions

An important function of this Chapter is to inventory a community’s existing open space and recreational resources. Section 7.3.1 provides an overview of the types of recreation facilities in Town and Section 7.3.4 describes the types of open space in Town along with their location and purpose.

### Recreation Facilities Inventory

The Town of Mashpee offers a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities administered by the Mashpee Recreation Department. These amenities include sports, fitness, and wellness programs, childcare/preschool programs, and youth leisure programs (Town of Mashpee, n.d.). Table 7-1 below provides an overview of the different indoor and outdoor recreational facilities in Town.

| **Table 7-1. Recreational Facilities Inventory** |
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| **Facility** | **Outdoor Amenities** | **Indoor Amenities** | **Address** |
| Attaquin Park - Mashpee/Wakeby Lake | Attaquin Park Playground, Beach | N/A | Lake Avenue |
| Heritage Park | Softball/Baseball Fields, Playground, Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field, Basketball Court, Splash Pad, Tiger Long Playground | N/A | 520 Main Street |
| John's Pond | Beach, Swing Sets, State Boat Ramp | N/A | Back Road |
| Mashpee Barnstable Fitness Center |  | Swimming Pool | 168 Industrial Drive |
| Mashpee Senior Center |  | N/A | 26 Frank Hicks Drive |
| Quashnet Elementary School and KC Coombs Elementary School | K.C. Coombs School Therapeutic Playground, Softball Field, Baseball Field, Soccer/Football Field | Gymnasium | 150 Old Barnstable Rd and 152 Old Barnstable Road |
| Kids Klub Child Care Center | Kids Klub Pre-school Playground | N/A | Great Neck Road, North |
| Mashpee Middle-High School | Track, Basketball Courts, Baseball Fields, Softball Fields, Soccer/Field Hockey Field, Football Field, Tennis Court | Basketball Court, Training Rooms, Gymnasium | Route 151 and Old Barnstable Road |
| Maushop Equestrian Center | Horse Stables | N/A | 31 Quashnet Road |
| Quashnet Valley Country Club | Golf Course, Tennis Courts | N/A | 309 Old Barnstable Road |
| Mashpee Community Park/Veterans Garden | Outdoor Stage | N/A | Main Street Route 130 |
| Ryder Conservation Area | Town Beach | N/A | Off South Sandwich Road |
| Sea Mist Resort | Outdoor Pool, Miniature Golf Course, Tennis Court | Swimming Pool | Great Neck Road South |
| Seconsett Island | Boat Ramps | N/A | Meadow Neck Road |
| Mashpee Pickleball Courts | Pickleball Courts | N/A | 162 Ashumet Road |
| Willowbend Country Club | Golf Course, Swimming Pool, Tennis Court, Basketball Court | N/A | 100 Willowbend Drive |
| The Country Club at New Seabury | Tennis, Golf Course, Swimming Pool | N/A | 95 Shore Drive W, |
| Camp Farley | Horse Stables, | N/A | 615 MA-130 |
| Great River Boat Ramp | Boat Landing | N/A | Hooppole Road |
| Mashpee/Wakeby State Boat Ramp | State Boat Ramp | N/A | Main Street |
| Edward A. Baker Boat Ramp at Pirate’s Cove | Boat Landing | N/A | End of Mashpee Neck Road |
| Ockway Bay | Boat Landing | N/A | Off Great Neck Road South |
| South Cape Resort and Club |  | Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts |  |
| South Cape State Beach | Beach | N/A | 500 Great Oak Road |
| Popponesset Beach | Beach, Ball Field | N/A |  |
| Santuit Pond Estates Common Open Space | Tennis Court, Basketball Court, Ball Field, Beach, Boat Landing | N/A | 48 Cranberry Lane and Timberland Drive |

*Source: Town of Mashpee, MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2021*

### Recreation Department

The Recreation Department is located at 520 Main Street and has five staff members, including a Recreation Director, an Assistant Recreation Director, an Administrative Secretary, an Administrative Assistant Kids Klub Preschool, and an Administrative Clerk (Town of Mashpee, n.d.). The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for maintaining recreational facilities including Heritage Park, Town beaches, and other Town-owned properties (Town of Mashpee, n.d.). The DPW also maintains equipment to assist with a variety of responsibilities.

### Recreation Programs

The Recreation Department strives to provide a variety of opportunities and activities for the public to participate in. Several programs are reoccurring, and some are changing based on seasons and public demand. The Recreation Department offers a variety of programs from youth sports programs to coding for kids (Town of Mashpee, n.d.) (Town of Mass Recreation Department, 2021). Current programs are listed below but are subject to change based on staffing, funding, and attendance.

Kids Klub Preschool and Childcare Center

Kids Klub Childcare Center

The Childcare Center provides a safe, fun, affordable, not-for-profit preschool and daycare program for the benefit of the community.

Special Events

Camp Sessions

Camp sessions for Voyager Camp, Adventure Camp, and Explorer Camp are available for grades 1-7. Voyager Camp is available for grades 1-3, Adventure Camp is available for grades 4 and 5 and Explorer Camp is available for grades 6 and 7.

Youth Fishing Derby

Youth Fishing Derby is held at John’s Pond Town Beach and is available for children ages 5-14.

Youth Programs

Instructional Tee Ball

Instructional Tee Ball is available for youth ages 3-6 and teaches fundamentals like hitting, catching, throwing, and gameplay.

After School Soccer

After School Soccer is open to youth in grades K-2 to refine key soccer skills in areas such as dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, and gameplay.

Tiny Tykes Soccer

Tiny Tykes Soccer is open to youth 3-6 years that teaches basic soccer skills while focusing on motor skill development, balance, coordination listening skills, and teamwork.

Youth Track and Field

Youth Track and Field is open for children in grades 1-6 and focuses on elements of running such as warm-up, cool-down, and stretching.

Tennis

Tennis lessons are open to grades K-12 and available for youngsters to build strokes into muscle memory, develop footwork that cross-trains for all sports, and finely tunes hand/eye coordination.

Coding for Kids

Code Wiz aligns its curriculum with the K-12 Computer Science Framework and represents a vision in which all students engage in concepts and practices of Computer Science. Students critically engage in computer science issues; approach problems in innovative ways; create computational artifacts with a practical, personal or social intent.

Everyday Science!

A hands-on after-school program that explores science as we interact with it every day.

Adult Programs

Pickleball

Pickleball is available as open play, a predetermined time where pickleball players show up at the courts/gym to play. All classes are held at the Mashpee Pickleball Courts at 162 Ashumet Road.

Adult Tennis

Intense instruction of volley, forehand, backhand, and serving techniques at the Mashpee Middle-High School Tennis Courts. Participants learn how to play, score, and play in singles and double matches.

Golf

Pitch, Putt, and Swing Camp on Paul Harney Golf Course. Teaches full swing instruction, short game instruction, and full swing and short game review and play.

Adult Sailing

Designed for adults who have little or no knowledge about sailing. The four-week is taught at the John’s Pond Town Beach.

Basketball

The Basketball program is open to adults aged 30 and older at the Quashnet Elementary School.

All Age Groups

Karate

Isshinryu karate is an Okinawan-based karate system formally created in 1956 by its founder Tatsuo Shimabuku. Karate is taught at Heritage Park.

Qi Gong

A six-week zoom class teaches the benefits of the ancient and gentle movement practice which began in China over 3,000 years ago.

Futsol Soccer

Futsol is a modified form of soccer that is played with five players per team, and it is typically played indoors. Futsal is played with a smaller, harder, lower-bounce ball than soccer.

* + 1. *Private Recreation Programs*

The Mashpee Youth Baseball/Softball and Soccer is run by parent volunteers and not affiliated with Mashpee Recreation Department.

Mashpee Youth Sports Leagues

Youth Baseball

Baseball is open to sixth to twelfth grades and focuses on pitching, catching, and hitting.

Youth Soccer

The Mashpee Youth Soccer program is run by parent volunteers and not affiliated with Mashpee Recreation Department.

* + 1. *Open Space Inventory*

Mashpee’s natural habitat, water, and abundant open spaces draw tourists to the Town for recreation. Mashpee has a variety of types of open space and conservation lands that provide activities such as hiking and biking. This section will focus on inventorying those resources to aid the community in policy decisions regarding opportunities for additional open space and conservation land acquisition.

The total land area in Mashpee is 16,384.94 acres. Of the Town’s area, 5,356.33 acres (32.69%) is open space (MassGIS, 2021). Table 7-2 below provides an overview of all open spaces and their primary purposes. Table 7-3 provides an overview of the largest open space properties (180 acres and above) and associated landowners. As detailed in Table 7-3, these come in the form of federally, state, and privately owned to those managed by the Town of Mashpee.

| **Table 7-2. Existing Open Space** |
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| **Open Space Primary Purpose** | **Open Space Description** | Parcels | **Open Space and Recreation Area (Acres)** | **% of Open Space and Recreation Area** |
| Recreation | Activities are facility-based | 314 | 929.1 | 17.4% |
| Conservation | Activities are non-facility based | 63 | 3,568.9 | 66.6% |
| Recreation and Conservation | Recreation and conservation | 26 | 637.6 | 11.9% |
| Historic/Cultural | Historical/Cultural | 3 | 2.6 | <1% |
| Agriculture | Country Farm Estates Inc | 1 | <1.0 | - |
| Water Supply Protection | Water supply protection | 9 | 199.9 | 3.7% |
| Other | Cape Cod Land Bank Acquisition | 6 | 18.3 | 0.3% |
| **TOTAL** | **5,356.4** | **100%** |

*Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2021*

| **Table 7-3. Largest Open Space Properties and Landowners (180 acres and above)** |
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| **Name** | **Landowner** | **Ownership** | **Primary Purpose** | **Area in Mashpee (Acres)** |
| South Cape Beach State Park | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | State | Conservation and Recreation | 447.59 |
| Quashnet Woods State Reservation & WMA | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation / Department of Fish and Game | State | Conservation | 395.98 |
| Mashpee River and Woodlands Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Town | Conservation | 314.54 |
| Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | United States Department of the Interior | Federal | Conservation | 276.93 |
| John’s Pond Park Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Town | Conservation | 261.57 |
| South Mashpee Pine Barrens Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Town | Conservation | 259.68 |
| Mashpee River Reservation | The Trustees of Reservation | Private | Conservation | 253.30 |
| Willowbend Country Club | Willowbend Development Corporation | Private | Recreation | 211.25 |
| Mashpee Pine Barrens WMA | Department of Fish and Game | State | Conservation | 211.69 |
| The Country Club at New Seabury | New Seabury Properties | Private | Recreation | 209.66 |
| Quashnet Valley Country Club | Lacava Anthony J TR | Private | Recreation | 190.95 |
| Santuit Pond WCE | Town of Mashpee | Town | Conservation | 190.95 |
| Quashnet Woodlands | Town of Mashpee | Town | Conservation | 181.29 |

*Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2021*

Several recreation activities can be experienced throughout the Town’s open space areas including hiking, cross country skiing, golfing, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, bird watching, and walking trails (Town of Mashpee, n.d.). Table 7-4 provides an overview of public trails on Town of Mashpee properties, which are spread across the Mashpee River Woodlands and Mashpee Wildlife Refuge (ArcGIS).

| **Table 7-4. Public Trails on Town Property** |
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| **Name** | Parkland Designation | Length of Public Trail |
| Mashpee River Woodlands Main Parcel | Mashpee River Woodlands | 3.5 Miles |
| Fitch Property | Mashpee River Woodlands | 1.2 Miles |
| John Johansen | Mashpee River Woodlands | 0.6 Miles |
| DesRosier | Mashpee River Woodlands | 0.24 Miles |
| Pickerel Cove | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 1.8 Miles |
| Noisy Hole | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 2.5 Miles |
| Pine Barrens | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 3.4 Miles |
| Santuit Pond Landbank | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 0.6 Miles |
| Johns Pond | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 4 Miles |
| Jehu Pond | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 3.9 Miles |
| Childs River | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 1.2 Miles |
| Besse Bog | Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | 0.75 Miles |

*Source: Town of Mashpee, 2022*

In addition to the trails mentioned above, the Mashpee Wildlife Refuge consists of the Flat Pond Trail, Lowell Holly Trail (2.2 miles), Santuit Pond Preserve (3 miles), and Quashnet Woodlands Trails (4.4 miles) (ArcGIS). The Town also has walking trails located at the Reserve Headquarters, the Quashnet River area, South Cape Beach State Park, Abigail’s Brook, and Washburn Island on the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve).

**Levels of Protection**

**In Perpetuity:** Legally protected in perpetuity and recorded as such in a deed or other official document. The land is considered protected in perpetuity if it is owned by the Town’s conservation commission or, sometimes, by the water department; if a Town has a conservation restriction on the property in perpetuity; if it is owned by one of the state’s conservation agencies (thereby covered by article 97); if it is owned by a non-profit land trust; or if the Town received federal or state assistance for the purchase or improvement of the property.

Private land is considered protected if it has a deed restriction in perpetuity if an Agriculture Preservation Restriction has been placed on it, or a Conservation Restriction has been placed on it.

**Limited: Protected by legal mechanisms other than those above or protected through functional or traditional use.**

**These lands might be protected by a requirement of a majority municipal vote for any change in status. This designation also includes lands that are likely to remain open space for other reasons (e.g., cemeteries and municipal golf courses).**

***Source: MassGIS***

The total open space in Mashpee is 5,356.33 acres, of which 4,621.72 acres (86.29%) is protected. 4,469.20 acres (83.44%) is considered protected “in perpetuity,” and 152.52 acres (2.85%) is considered to have a “limited” level of protection (MassGIS, 2021). Several enterprises hold legal interests in land including the Town of Mashpee, the state’s conservation agencies (thereby covered by Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution), and nonprofit land trusts. Conservation and Recreation areas protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution include 3,653.74 acres (68.21%) of the Town’s open space (MassGIS, 2021). Land that is protected under Article 97 requires a 2/3 vote of the Legislature with regards to the disposition of any protected open space (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs). Table 7-5 provides an overview of Mashpee’s largest open space lands (180 acres and above) protected in perpetuity.

| **Table 7-5. Large Protected Open Space Properties (180 acres and above)** |
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| **Protected Open Space** | **Fee Owner** | **Article 97** | **Area in Mashpee (Acres)** |
| South Cape Beach State Park | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation | Yes | 447.6 |
| Quashnet Woods State Reservation & WMA | DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation / Department of Fish and Game | Yes | 396.0 |
| Mashpee River and Woodlands Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Yes | 314.5 |
| Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge | United States Department of the Interior | No | 276.9 |
| John’s Pond Park Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Yes | 261.6 |
| South Mashpee Pine Barrens Conservation Area | Town of Mashpee | Yes | 259.7 |
| Mashpee River Reservation | The Trustees of Reservation | Some Properties | 235.3 |
| Mashpee Pine Barrens WMA | Department of Fish and Game | Yes | 211.7 |
| Santuit Pond WCE | Town of Mashpee | Yes | 191.0 |
| Quashnet Woodlands | Town of Mashpee | Yes | 181.3 |

*Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2021*

Land trusts that serve Mashpee include the Native Land Conservancy, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, The Trustees of Reservations, and The 300 Committee Land Trust (MassGIS, 2021, MassLand, n.d.). Table 7-6 provides an overview of open space properties that are managed by land trusts in Mashpee.

| **Table 7-6. Open Space Properties Managed by Land Trusts** |
| --- |
| **Open Space** | **Fee Owner** | **Primary Purpose** | **Article 97** | **Area (Acres)** |
| Ashumet Pond Sanctuary | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 35.2 |
| Dawson Sanctuary | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation and Recreation | No | 3.5 |
| East Way Conservation Area | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 0.7 |
| Great Oak Road Conservation Area | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 25.5 |
| Lowell Holly Reservation | The Trustees of Reservations | Conservation | No | 63.2 |
| Makepeace Reservation | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation and Recreation | Yes | 13.9 |
| Makepeace Sanctuary | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 87.1 |
| Mashpee River Reservation | The Trustees of Reservations | Conservation | Some Properties | 235.3 |
| Mercy Lowe Sanctuary | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 43.8 |
| North Ockway Road Conservation Area | The 300 Committee Land Trust | Conservation | No | 8.2 |
| Quashnet River WCE | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation and Recreation | Yes | 14.2 |
| Wood Road Conservation Area | Orenda Wildlife Land Trust | Conservation | No | 0.7 |

*Source: MassGIS Protected and Recreational Open Space, 2021*

Mashpee’s Conservation Department is responsible for permitting and enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (Town of Mashpee, n.d.; Town of Mashpee, 2021). Under the Conservation Commission Act, they are involved with open space acquisition and the management of conservation lands, including advocacy, maintenance, and improvement projects (Town of Mashpee, n.d.). Many of the open space properties identified in this chapter serve as natural resource and habitat protection areas. These areas are further detailed in Chapter 4, *Natural Resources*.

## Challenges & Opportunities

### Challenges

Mashpee draws visitors and residents because of its scenic beauty and recreational accessibility. However, a lack of public facilities, including restrooms, water fountains, and water-bottle stations have limited use of open space and recreational areas. Expanding open space while enhancing development has been a concern in Mashpee for decades.

* + 1. *Opportunities*

Increasing the amount of open space in Mashpee and balancing development is an ongoing problem, but the Town can pursue opportunities to purchase land from residents and redevelop existing public property into open space. Other alternatives are planting trees through a one-for-one scheme where for each tree that is cut from one area, a new tree is then planted elsewhere in the community to ensure those benefits are not lost.

The Town can take steps towards modernizing and improving their recreation resources. The addition of restrooms to particular facilities will improve the overall user experience and encourage the use of specific recreation areas.

### Current Measures

Mashpee Conservation Department has expended considerable time and energy towards wetlands restoration projects in recent years. Utilizing Community Preservation funds, the Conservation Commission acquired Chopchaque Bogs north of Santuit Pond and are undertaking a restoration initiative includes excavation of the site to variable depths to restore historic groundwater connection and create a variety of freshwater wetland habitats, including deep water and shallow marsh as well as shallow scrub shrub wetlands. Also, they are participating in a restoration of the upper Quashnet River to a cold water stream with associated restoration of riparian habitat: river realignment, wetland restoration and invasive species management. This restoration initiative will help to restore what was once part of a cold water fishery that supported a healthy brook trout population. Additionally, river realignment will help to improve fish passage for river herring and American Eels. Lastly, the Conservation Department  received a $300,000 grant from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to cover expenses relating to design, planning and permitting for restoration of the Mashpee River fish ladder and restoration of eroding embankments from the pond outlet at Mashpee Pond to the culvert that runs under Great Neck Rd North.

## Goals & Policies

*Goals*

1. Ensure that residents and visitors have access to a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities.
2. Preserve the quantity and quality of conservation and open space lands as a means to protect natural resources, provide a high quality of life for residents, provide access for passive recreation, ensure adequate wildlife habitat, and preserve access for hunting and fishing rights.

*Policies*

1. Ensure that public access to open space and water bodies is preserved where it will not adversely affect sensitive natural resources.
2. Provide adequate recreational programs and facilities for existing residents and plan for additional programs and services for projected future growth.
3. Continue to pursue opportunities to preserve sensitive areas as conservation and passive open space lands.