

## **SECTION 1 – PLAN SUMMARY**

Foxborough is a town in Norfolk County, Massachusetts, approximately 22 miles southwest of Boston and 18 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island. The population was 16,865 at the 2010 census. The town is perhaps best known as the site of Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots of the National Football League and the New England Revolution of Major League Soccer. The stadium hosts numerous events from concerts to charity events.

Settled in 1704 and incorporated in 1778, Foxborough was named for Charles James Fox, a Whig member of parliament and a staunch supporter of the Colonies in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Foxborough's rural composition began to mix with industrial/commercial development in the mid-1800s with the construction of the Union Straw Works, a straw hat factory (destroyed by fire in the early 1900s). Other large developments followed, including the former State Hospital; The Foxboro Company, one of the oldest and largest commercial developments in Foxborough (currently Invensys, Inc.); Schaefer Stadium (opened in 1971) on Route 1 (currently Gillette Stadium); and on-going commercial property development located near the Mansfield town line.

Additional changes to town demographics occurred when Interstate 95 was extended through Foxborough in the 1960s, creating easier access to Boston and resulting in a surge in residential development and population. Foxborough's residential growth has slowed since the early 1960s and more recently, growth has been concentrated along the commercial sector of Route 1, including the new Gillette Stadium and the Patriot's Place Mall.

Foxborough residents value their Town's rural character and understand the importance of protecting its natural resources. Large tracts of conservation and agricultural lands still exist along the Town's east and west boundaries, but maintaining connectivity between conservation areas has been challenging, due to a crisscrossed transportation infrastructure that divides wildlife populations and large tracts of open land.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) was developed in accordance with guidelines developed by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EOEEA) Division of Conservation Services (DCS) and contains the following major elements:

- A description of the plan's purpose and the process of incorporating public participation in developing the plan;
- A land use and demographic profile of the town;
- A summary of recent growth trends;
- An inventory and analysis of the town's natural, historic and scenic resources;
- An inventory of existing open space and recreation parcels;
- An analysis of open space and recreation needs;
- A statement of goals and objectives;
- An action plan through 2018; and
- Public comments.

This document presents a picture of the Foxborough's present demographic and environmental status, along with some discussion of how it evolved. The Inventory includes a list of major public and privately owned open space parcels. The thrust of the plan is a recognition of the need to take actions to preserve and protect Foxborough's natural resources, rural character, and recreation needs. Specific actions, including the identification of lead groups to spearhead those actions, are included in the action plan.

Among the Plan's major recommendations are a number of actions to protect water supplies, prioritize Chapter 61, 61A and 61B properties, increase awareness of conservation resources and issues, link open space areas, and coordinate efforts among public and nonprofit land owners. Recreation recommendations include developing or improving programs for all age groups, restoring older facilities, pursuing implementation of new facilities, and ensuring access to all facilities.

Overall, the Plan affirms Foxborough's desire to preserve and protect water resources, its natural assets, history and cultural heritage and provide environmental education and diverse recreational opportunities to the community. As the Town continues to grow, developmental pressures and land use conflicts will undoubtedly increase, making the establishment of a strong open space management program of critical importance. Region wide considerations should be incorporated into long-term conservation planning to assure connectivity between protected areas in neighboring towns into the future. Balancing development with the Town's diverse needs for conservation land, parks, playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities will be especially difficult during these financially challenging times.