

Bennington, Vermont

Park and Open Space Plan



February 2009

Prepared by the Bennington Planning Commission

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Park and Open Space Description and Standards	2
Types of Park and Open Space Areas	2
Facility Standards and Needs	6
Summary and Recommendations	8
Long-Term Vision for Bennington’s Park and Open Space Resources	8
Town-wide Park and Open Space Inventory Map	11
Town Center Park and Open Space Inventory Map	12
Neighborhood Park Service Area Map	15
Inventory of Existing Resources	16

This Plan was prepared by the Bennington Planning Commission with assistance from the Bennington County Regional Commission. Funding for the project was provided by a Municipal Planning Grant administered by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

Bennington Planning Commission: Barry Horst, Chair, Michael McDonough, Charles Copp, Donald Campbell, Nicholas T. Lasoff

Bennington Select Board: Lodie Colvin, Chair, John A. Zink, Sharyn Brush, Christopher H. Oldham, Matthew Maroney, Jason Morrissey, Joseph L. Krawczyk Jr.

Introduction

The Bennington Town Plan identified public parks and developed and undeveloped open spaces as critical resources that contribute to the quality of life for residents of the town. The Plan recommended existing parks and public open spaces be inventoried to assist in the assessment of whether an adequate number of these resources exist and to identify any issues associated with management of lands or maintenance of facilities.

Bennington's location in a broad valley at the base of the Green and Taconic Mountain ranges affords residents with a plethora of opportunities for outdoor recreation. The extensive forests in the area, especially those that lie within the Green Mountain National Forest on the slopes of Bald Mountain and the protected forests on Mount Anthony, offer a vast area for hiking, cross country skiing, and other sports. Rivers, streams, and ponds are important aesthetic features, recreational resources, and natural corridors for linear parks and pathways. Also important to the Town are the numerous parcels of private land that is protected from development; even though not always available for public access, these open fields and wooded hillsides are critical to maintaining Bennington's unique rural landscape.

Several parks and recreation areas owned by the Town and the local School Districts contain facilities that support a wide variety of recreational activities. These parks are convenient to centers of population and are valuable as centers of neighborhood recreation as well as the locations where most organized athletic teams practice and play.

Taken together, these parks and open space resources are critical in shaping the form and character of the community. Ideally, the town's parks and open spaces are varied, but also interconnected in a way that promotes access and contributes to overall scenic quality. This report includes a quantitative look at these resources in Bennington and a more general qualitative assessment of needs that should be addressed to meet the Town Plan's goal of making available "a variety of recreational facilities and services for residents and visitors" and of "maintaining or providing public access to outdoor recreational opportunities."



Park and Open Space Description and Standards

The number and size of parks and the extent of open space appropriate for any town are dependant upon the unique characteristics of the community and the desires of its residents. It is difficult, therefore, to establish specific standards that should be met, either for the amount of park and open space or for the recreational facilities provided within those lands. Nonetheless, it is useful to compare Bennington's existing park and open space resources with established standards, such as those promulgated by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), because other communities have used those standards as benchmarks. This section of the report will identify types of park and open space resources present in Bennington, compare them with the NRPA standards, and identify any evident shortcomings in either land area or facilities.

Types of Park and Open Space Areas

Community Parks serve an entire community and contain a variety of facilities and landscapes. A community park should be at least 20 acres in size, while a park of 40 or more acres is preferred as it can more easily accommodate the diversity of facilities and the number of people who may want to use the park at any one time. Good access for both vehicles and pedestrians is critical, and sufficient parking for cars and bicycles should be provided.

These parks should be large enough to include extensive open spaces that are not fully developed with recreational facilities. A trail loop through the park can provide access to both developed and undeveloped areas, and ideally will connect to a wider trail and greenway system. Community parks should contain picnic areas, shelters, and related facilities as well as playgrounds and some playing fields or courts as appropriate for the setting of the particular park and the overall need within the community. These parks also are suitable locations for winter activities such as ice skating, sledding, and cross country skiing.

Willow Park serves as Bennington's community park, and at 58.7 acres is large and diverse enough to meet the town's needs. It includes picnic areas and pavilions, attractive playgrounds, a trail loop and a connection to the multi-use pathway along East Road, playing fields, and a variety of other facilities as noted in the inventory.

Neighborhood Parks are smaller than community parks and provide the primary, and most easily accessible, recreational opportunities for residents. As such, it is important that a community have an adequate number of neighborhood parks and that those parks be distributed so that no area of the town is too remote from one. These parks should be at least three acres in size, with even greater opportunities possible when the parks extend over five or more acres. The typical service area of a neighborhood park is ½-mile (that is, the park serves neighborhoods within a ½-mile radius of the park). To ensure easy access, it is important that no part of the service area be interrupted by a barrier to pedestrian movement such as a limited access highway. Sidewalk or pathway connections to neighborhoods in the service area should be present.

Most recreation at neighborhood parks involves informal activities, although some will provide opportunities for youth team practices and occasional games. The emphasis clearly is on social interaction and a place for neighborhood residents to enjoy outdoor activities. These parks should include a play area with some playground equipment, open space for informal use and games, a basketball or tennis court or similar facility, benches and picnic tables, and possibly some facilities for winter sports. Neighborhood parks should provide for a small amount of

parking, but parking lots should not be so large as to significantly reduce the park space, as the emphasis in these parks is on pedestrian access. On-street parking often is sufficient. It is particularly important that neighborhood parks be well-maintained with suitable landscaping so that they complement their neighborhoods and attract people to visit.

Neighborhood parks in Bennington include the Stark Street Playground, the Leonard J. Black Park, and the Beech Street Field. Because of their location and facilities, Willow Park and the Bennington Recreation Center can serve a dual function as neighborhood parks. The town's elementary schools also have many attributes in common with neighborhood parks and can serve that function when school is not in session.

School Recreational Facilities (outdoor and indoor) are intended primarily to serve their student populations. These facilities are designed for sports and recreation at the youth level, with the type, size, and sophistication of the facilities dependant upon the grade level of the particular school. Because of this orientation, the playing fields and indoor gymnasiums are ideal for non-scholastic youth and community sports practices and games.

The facilities at Mount Anthony Union Middle School and Mount Anthony Union High School are best-suited for soccer, baseball, football, basketball, track, and other sports requiring specific standardized playing areas. The elementary schools, on the other hand, do not provide appropriate indoor recreational space for community use, but their outdoor playgrounds and open spaces serve much the same function as neighborhood parks and can service areas that may be underserved by Town-owned parks. In fact, the playground facilities at Bennington's elementary schools are generally more substantial and better maintained than those at the Town's three neighborhood parks.

Special Use Parks include a wide range of park and open space areas that vary from community to community. In Bennington, such parks include nature reserves, cultural and historic sites, downtown pocket parks and public gathering places, and (public and private) facilities designed for specific activities such as Little League Baseball, soccer, and golf. Because residents from throughout the Town and surrounding area will be using these parks, it is important that they have good access for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, as well as adequate parking for the expected use of the parks.

Trails and Greenways include both developed "multi-use" paths such as the Bennington Pathway and public and public use footpaths (trails) such as those in the Green Mountain National Forest and the trails on Mount Anthony accessed from the Southern Vermont College trailhead. Multi-use paths should provide a safe and convenient route between major destinations (such as neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas) and should be clearly marked and surfaced to allow for use by pedestrians, bicycles, roller blades. Major trails and trail systems should have well-marked access points (trailheads) with vehicle parking.

Elements of a town's trail and greenway resources should form a network that allows non-motorized travel by residents seeking to reach specific destinations and for recreation. Bennington's Town Plan includes a detailed map of existing and possible future trails and greenways that form a comprehensive network throughout the town; however, at present the trail systems in the south, east, and northwest are not connected to each other and the only multi-use paths are the Bennington Pathway north of downtown and the paved pathway that extends up East Road past Willow Park and the Middle School.

Water Resources, especially streams, rivers, and lakes, provide important recreational opportunities including fishing, swimming, and aesthetic appreciation. Although streams and rivers, and most of the town's larger ponds and lakes, are publicly owned, access to them is often restricted by adjacent privately owned land. Public access points are, therefore, of great importance to a community, and may include access points such as the old road and bridge access to the Roaring Branch off Barney Road, a developed recreation facility such as the park at Lake Paran, or a streamside linear park like the developed portion of the Bennington Pathway and the greenway envisioned along the Walloomsac River.

Conserved Open Space forms an important part of a town's park and open space inventory, contributing to the overall quality of the visual landscape and in some instances providing access to large tracts of rural land. Much of the conserved land in Bennington is privately owned farmland or other open space with no public access for recreation, but its importance in promoting a development pattern of a dense mixed-use core surrounded by rural open space is critical as is its natural visual appeal. Other rural open spaces, such as the Green Mountain National Forest, the Southern Vermont College trail system on Mount Anthony, and the extensive trail network in and around North Bennington Village serve those functions and also provide public access for hiking, cross country skiing, and other outdoor pursuits. Bennington's cemeteries also are important open spaces, serving important historical, cultural, and religious purposes in quiet and scenic locations around the community.

Parks and protected open spaces occupy over 5,600 acres of land in Bennington (Maps 1 and 1a), significantly exceeding the NRPA benchmark. The large acreage total is attributable to Bennington's rural location, considerable ownership of land by the United States Forest Service, and to the extensive land conservation activities that have taken place in the town. The number and size of developed recreational parks (neighborhood parks, school parks, community parks, and certain special use parks) is smaller, but still adequate for a town the size of Bennington. Furthermore, the distribution of these parks ensures that most neighborhoods within Bennington's densely developed "growth center" are close to a public park facility (Map 2).

The most significant need concerning location and park access has to do with the fact that Bennington's large community park (Willow Park), which contains its most extensive range of facilities, is relatively distant from the center of town and is separated from large residential developments by US Route 7, which is difficult, and unsafe, for pedestrians to cross. A pedestrian underpass that would resolve that access issue is planned as part of a comprehensive reconstruction of a segment of the Kocher Drive/Northside Drive corridor, but sufficient funding for that project has not yet been secured.

Other neighborhood and school parks in the town's center have generally good access along the local road and sidewalk system. Some of the parks are also connected to nearby neighborhoods by informal trails. Bicycle racks should be provided at all neighborhood, school, and community parks.

A related issue deals with the need to ensure access to recreational resources for people with disabilities. New facilities and upgrades to existing facilities should incorporate ADA standards (parking spaces, pedestrian routes, toilet facilities, and other necessary accessories) and the town should strive to have a reasonable number of accessible fields, courts, and other playing areas available to meet the needs of disabled residents. Scheduling for existing facilities should accommodate requests for accessible fields, player areas, and spectator seating to the extent possible.

Table 1. Bennington recreational facilities compared with standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Facility	Standard	Bennington Inventory
Total Park/Open Space Acreage	10 Acres per 1,000 population (Approximately 170 Acres)	5,747 Acres (public and private)
Outdoor Basketball Court	1 per 5,000 population (4 Courts)	5 courts plus courts and half courts at schools
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000 population (9 courts)	4 courts at Recreation Center, 4 courts at Bennington College, 4 proposed (private indoor/outdoor development) at Leonard J. Black Park
Volleyball Courts	1 per 5,000 population (4 courts)	3 outdoor courts at Willow Park and 2 at private facility (tavern), plus indoor courts at schools and a private recreational fitness center
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 per 2,500 population (7 fields)	16 fields: 1 at Willow Park, 1 at Stark Street, 1 at Beech Street Field (minimal facility), 2 at Recreation Center, 2 at MAU Middle School, 2 at MAU High School, 1 at Southern Vermont College (private), 1 at each elementary school (small), 3 at Little League Park
Football Field	1 per 20,000 population (1 field)	3 fields: 1 at MAU Middle School, 1 at MAU High School, 1 at Beech Street Field (minimal facility)
Soccer Field	1 per 4,000 population (5 fields)	2 at MAU Middle School, 2 at MAU High School, small fields at each elementary school, 1 at Beech Street Field (minimal, no nets), one at Southern Vermont College
Golf Course	1 per 50,000 population (1 golf course)	1 private golf course at Mount Anthony Country Club
Trail System	1 mile per 5,000 population (4 miles of trails/greenways)	1 mile in place (Bennington Pathway plus East Road multi-use path), 1 mile under development (Bennington

		Pathway extension), 20+ miles of public use trails
Swimming Pool (outdoor)	1 per 20,000 population (1 outdoor pool)	No pools, but developed swimming area at Lake Paran
Swimming Pools (indoor)	1 per 50,000 population (1 indoor pool)	1 pool at the Recreation Center
Running Track	1 per 20,000 population (1 running track)	1 track at MAU High School
Playgrounds	1 per 2,500 population (7 playgrounds)	7 playgrounds: 2 at Willow Park, 1 at Stark Street Playground, 1 at each elementary school, 1 in North Bennington
Gymnasium	1 per 20,000 population (1 gymnasium)	1 at each school plus one private commercial fitness center; no public gymnasium if school facilities unavailable
Picnic Pavilion	1 per 2,000 population (9 picnic pavilions)	2 at Willow Park, 1 at Bennington Museum, 1 at Lake Paran, others at nearby state parks (Lake Shaftsbury and Woodford)

Facility Standards and Needs

Bennington contains a very large amount of park and open space relative to its population and, according to NRPA standards, has a sufficient supply of recreational facilities to serve the resident population, with only a few exceptions (Table 1). One of the most evident areas of shortfall is the extent of public pathways in Bennington. Although there are extensive footpath networks in the Green Mountain National Forest, on Mount Anthony, and near the village of North Bennington (Map 1), multi-use pathways (i.e., constructed and suitable for a variety of users such as bicyclists and inline skaters) are minimal, currently including only the short section of the Bennington Pathway, the planned extension to that pathway, and the pathway that parallels East Road. Completion of the extension to the Bennington Pathway from Depot Street to the Molly Stark School will begin to address this shortage, and a further extension of the pathway toward North Bennington, either along the banks of the Walloomsac River or along the line of the Bennington Rail Spur will improve the situation even more.

The Town has determined appropriate alignments for a comprehensive trail and greenway network (Map 1) that would provide access throughout the community and link together many important parks and open spaces as well as important residential and commercial areas. Funding for construction of pathways meeting federal standards is very limited, and developing trails to those standards extremely expensive, so the Town should consider first acquiring necessary rights-of-way along the most important trail and greenway corridors and then using Town crews and equipment to clear the alignments and establishing relatively rough pathways. When additional funds can be secured the trails can be upgraded to accommodate more users and conform to federal standards.

The highest priority future trail segment is an extension from the new northern section of the Bennington Pathway following the Walloomsac River corridor and providing access to both the river and the commercial and residential areas near Northside Drive and North Bennington Road. Priorities for future trail and greenway development should be based on the importance of destinations that will be accessed and by the extent to which the trail contributes to an interconnected greenway system.

Bennington does not have extensive facilities to support indoor winter sports. A preliminary study evaluating issues and costs associated with development of a facility that would include an ice skating rink and other amenities at the Recreation Center on Gage Street was completed several years ago. The town also would benefit from a public gymnasium; although gyms exist at the middle school and high school, they are used primarily for scholastic athletics and are not often available to the general public. An active local wiffle ball league, for example, has indicated that it lacks an indoor facility use for winter use. The skating-rink study considered development of a gymnasium at the site as well; the total project was estimated to cost approximately \$11 million. In addition to the high capital cost, the Town would have to consider funding sources to support the annual operating cost of the facility. This “Recreation Center Expansion Project” is included as a future project in the Town’s Capital Program, and should remain there while efforts are made to find a funding source.

Recently, a proposal to construct a private indoor tennis facility on the grounds of the Leonard J. Black Park was advanced and supported by the Town. The park is currently underutilized and conveniently located near Northside Drive. Plans for this or a similar facility, or for other indoor sporting venues, at the site should be supported. The potential for converting existing vacant or underutilized structure(s) to an indoor recreational facility also should be considered; possible sites include the former middle school on East Main Street, the former Catamount School on North Street, and portions of former industrial buildings.

Although there are several “neighborhood parks” in Bennington, playground and playing field facilities at those parks (Stark Street Playground, Beech Street Field, Leonard J. Black Park) are either minimal, in very poor condition, or both. The number of people observed using the parks is also quite low considering their proximity to residential neighborhoods. As noted above, the playground facilities at Willow Park are extensive and well-maintained, but the park is quite distant from most residential areas of town and thus not easily accessible by children. The Recreation Department should plan for, and the town budget for, basic new playground equipment for each of these parks and commit to maintenance of those facilities. In addition, these neighborhood parks all have adequate space for baseball, softball, and soccer fields, but lack backstops and goals; those facilities should be added to encourage greater use of the parks.

The Bennington Youth Soccer program and the Norshaft Little League baseball organization both have a need for additional playing fields. Availability of fields for the soccer program could be partially alleviated by improved scheduling and coordination through the municipal Recreation Department. Several options exist for expanding the number of soccer fields. The Southern Vermont College rugby team currently uses the Beech Street Field and the positioning of the rugby goals makes it unusable for youth soccer. Consideration should be given to relocating the SVC rugby program to the college campus or repositioning the goals to accommodate youth soccer fields. The “lower field” at Willow Park should be improved for soccer use; it is conveniently located and adjacent to other youth sports facilities. Welling Field in North Bennington is not fully utilized in the fall and could support additional use by youth soccer teams. The Norshaft Little League facility needs could be most effectively met through

improvements to the Lion's Park in North Bennington. Funds needed to expand the field to regulation size are being sought at this time.

Summary and Recommendations

Specific objectives and recommendations for the use, maintenance, and expansion of Bennington's park and open space resources should be based upon the desires of residents, the availability of resources, and potential benefits to the local economy. Combining each of these aspects of the town's park and open space plan can provide a framework for a long-term vision to guide future policy and investment decisions.

Local residents seek convenient access to a variety of recreational opportunities at well-maintained parks and indoor facilities. Those parks and buildings should be located in the town's designated growth center and should provide for easy access by car, but also should be accessible by foot and bicycle for most residents. Residents appreciate parks and other recreation sites that are developed with the types of facilities which will encourage regular year-round use, and those facilities must be maintained in an attractive and safe condition. Townspeople also have made it clear that preserved open space areas in the rural parts of Bennington (i.e., outside the growth center) are extremely important for a number of reasons, including: scenic value, local agriculture – both private farming and community gardens, forest-related resources and businesses, and for a host of recreational activities.

The inventory section of this report demonstrates that Bennington already has a wealth of conserved open space, much of it public or available for public use, and several key parks and recreation sites that are well-positioned to serve a majority of the population. With its location in a broad valley at the base of two mountain ranges, the town also has a unique network of clear streams that flow from highlands in the east, north, and south to connect in the center of the valley and form the west-flowing Walloomsac River; these waterways are invaluable natural resources and natural park and open space corridors and connectors. Bennington's historical and cultural resources are just as prominent and significant as its natural resources, and those assets also should be central features of park and open space planning, particularly the town's three historic districts.

Travelers and tourists who visit Bennington appreciate the town's history and scenic beauty, and many also enjoy hiking, hunting, skiing, bicycling, and other recreational activities that are available locally and in the region. A greater emphasis on these natural resource based activities could encourage more people to visit Bennington, stay for an extended period of time, and support local businesses.

Long-Term Vision for Bennington's Park and Open Space Resources

Bennington should strive for a park and open space plan that maintains high quality resources and which physically and functionally connects as many of those resources as possible. A system of pathways, as identified in the Town Plan (see also Maps 1 and 1A in this report) should be fully developed and should connect existing neighborhood and community parks, schools, public open spaces, the downtown, downtown historic district, and the Old Bennington and North Bennington village historic districts. The town also should expand upon the Molly

Stark scenic byway and provide information to motorists about the best routes to local recreational and historical attractions.

Many of those proposed pathways, as well as current roadways, follow streams and rivers through the town. Development of those pathways and provision of visual and recreational access to the waterways from pathways and roadways will further connect the town's natural and historic resources and provide exceptional recreational opportunities for both residents and tourists. The presence of such an integrated park and open space system and its focus on Bennington's unique natural and historical resources will be appreciated by residents and will attract tourism and new businesses seeking a location with a high quality of life for employees.

Finally, a sufficient quantity of rural open spaces should be preserved to maintain the town's rural character, provide space for local food and timber production, biomass-based energy production, and – in public spaces such as the Green Mountain National Forest – outdoor recreation.
















- ✿ Bennington contains abundant land, both within the town center and in the surrounding rural countryside, serving as park and open space resources. These lands provide opportunities for recreation, scenic appreciation, and natural resource based businesses such as agriculture and forestry. Some of the land is managed specifically to provide public access and recreation (such as the Green Mountain National Forest and state and local parks) while other conserved tracts are privately owned (for example, agricultural land protected by conservation easements). Maintaining and expanding this inventory of open land should be a priority for the town.
- ✿ Willow Park is a large and well-maintained community park with a wide variety of facilities for sports, play, picnicking, and other outdoor recreational activities. The Recreation Center is another important town-owned recreational asset that includes an indoor pool. The Town should continue to provide necessary support to maintain the facilities and activities at these key recreation sites adequately.
- ✿ Bennington's neighborhood and school parks are well-distributed around the town center, but recreational facilities at three principal town-owned neighborhood parks (Stark Street Playground, Beech Street Field, and Leonard J. Black Park) are minimal. The town should consider additional funding to provide and maintain the types of facilities that are appropriate at neighborhood parks.
- ✿ Improved scheduling and coordination could help alleviate shortages of outdoor playing fields, especially for high-demand periods such as during youth soccer season. Investments in improvements to the Lower Field at Willow Park should be a priority as should improvements to the Lion's Park baseball field in North Bennington. Welling Field, also in North Bennington, can support additional fall season use.
- ✿ An outstanding network of footpaths (White Rocks Trail, Long Trail, Mount Anthony trail network, North Bennington/Lake Paran trail system) exists in and around Bennington. The number and extent of multi-use pathways is very limited, however, and should be expanded. The first priority for addressing the shortage of multi-use pathways is to complete the planned extension to the Bennington Pathway from Depot Park

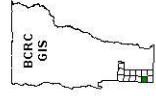
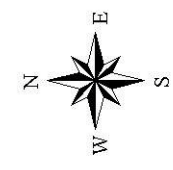
northward to the Molly Stark School. New multi-use pathways should be developed based on the planned network identified in the Town Plan (and illustrated on Map 1 in this report). Of particular importance is development of a pathway along the Walloomsac River corridor from the new Bennington Pathway downstream toward North Bennington. The Town should take advantage of any opportunities to acquire rights-of-way or easements along any of the planned network alignments. When public access is secured along a segment that connects significant destinations (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, commercial areas, parks) the Town should consider clearing and grading a rough pathway to encourage use and eventually pursuing additional funding for improvement of the pathway by providing a paved surface, benches, and other amenities.

- ✿ The town should seek opportunities for providing access to and along streams and the Walloomsac River. Linear parks along these waterways should be pursued whenever possible and should include hubs at important sites downtown and at important recreational sites and historic areas, especially the town's three covered bridges.
- ✿ Productive agricultural and forest lands should be preserved to support local natural resource based businesses and Bennington's rural character. A location or locations for a community garden should be identified and acquired.
- ✿ Opportunities for outdoor winter sports and recreation (e.g., skiing, snowshoeing, sledding) in and around Bennington are abundant, but there are not many facilities available for indoor public recreation in the winter. The town has studied the feasibility of developing a skating rink/gymnasium at the Recreation Center and opportunities for funding that project should be pursued. A proposed private indoor tennis facility at the Leonard J. Black Park would provide another opportunity for indoor sports in the winter while putting that municipal park land to good use. Re-use of existing vacant or underutilized buildings for recreational use also should be considered.

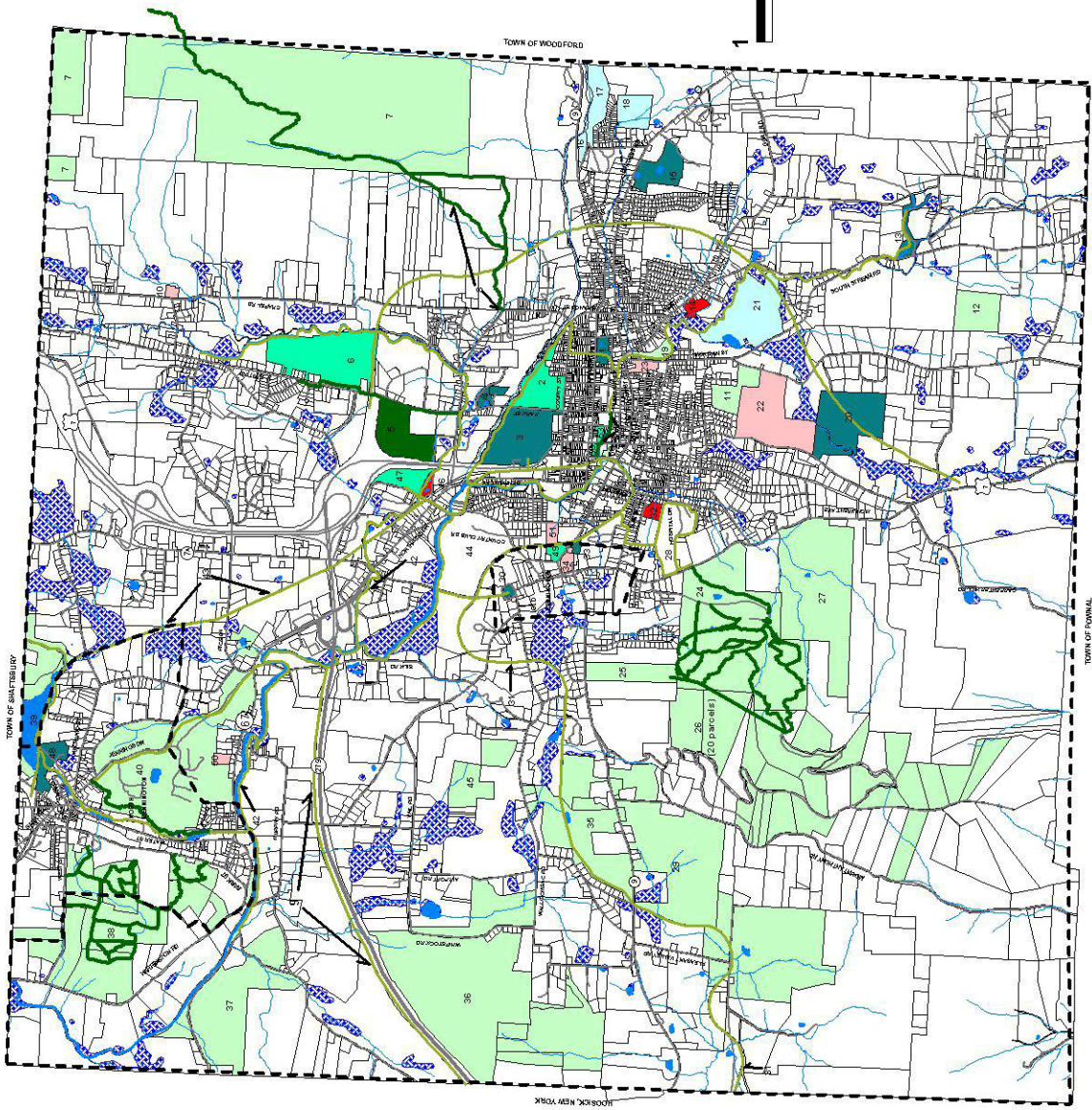
Bennington Park and Open Space Inventory

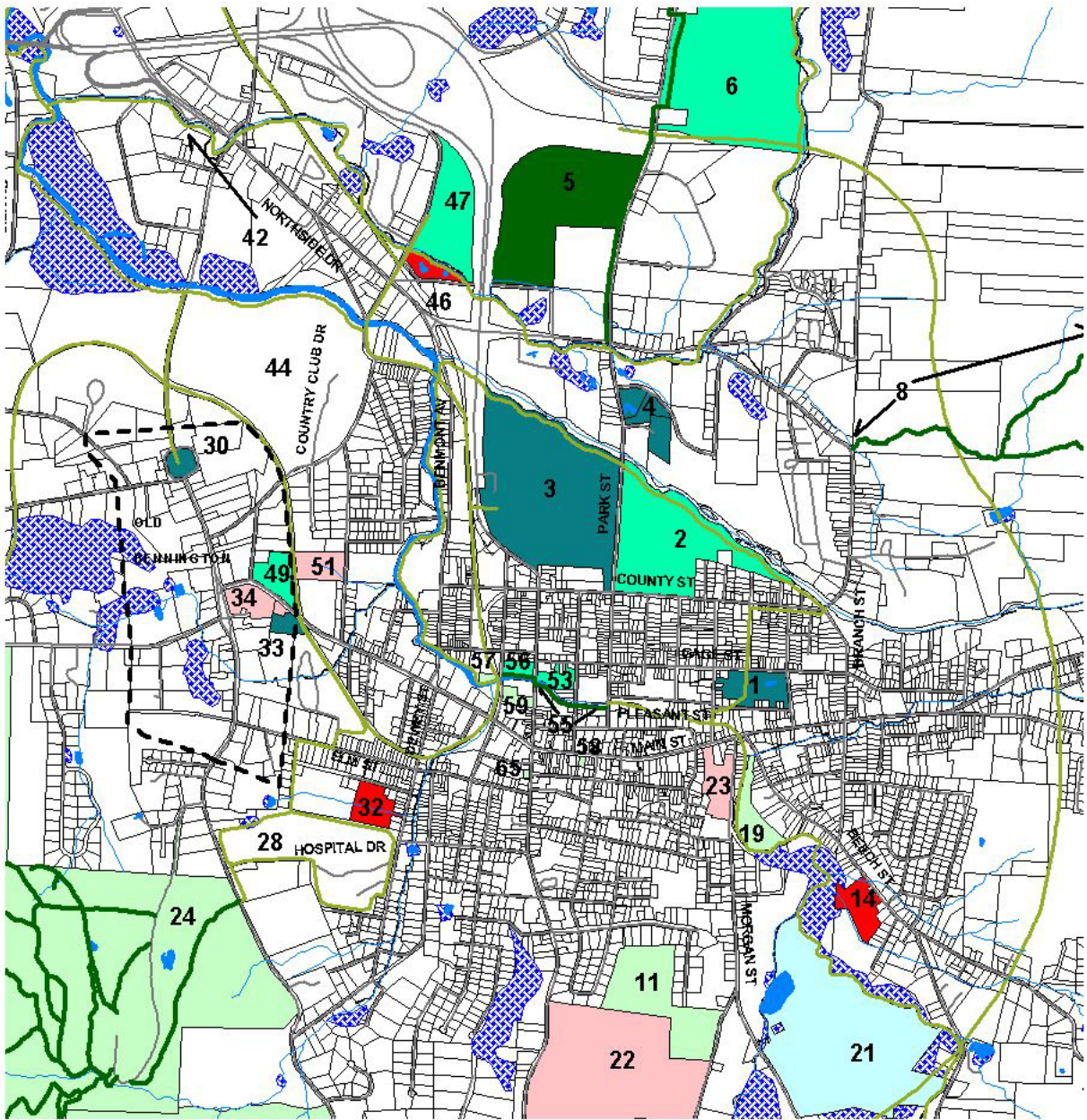
Map 1

-  Existing Trails and Pathways
-  Potential Future Pathways
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Roads
-  Lakes and Ponds
-  School
-  Cemetery
-  Community Park
-  Neighborhood Park
-  Special Use Park/Trails
-  Open Space, Open Space/Trails
-  Private Recreation Facility
-  Water Resource
-  Wetlands
-  Parcels.shp



Map produced September 18, 2008 by
 Bennington County Regional Commission
 111 South Street, Suite 203
 Bennington, VT 05201





- Existing Trails and Pathways
- Potential Future Pathways
- Rivers and Streams
- Roads
- Lakes and Ponds
- School
- Cemetery
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Special Use Park/Trails
- Open Space, Open Space/Trails
- Private Recreation Facility
- Water Resource
- Wetlands
- Parcels.shp

Parks and Open Space Town Center Map 1A

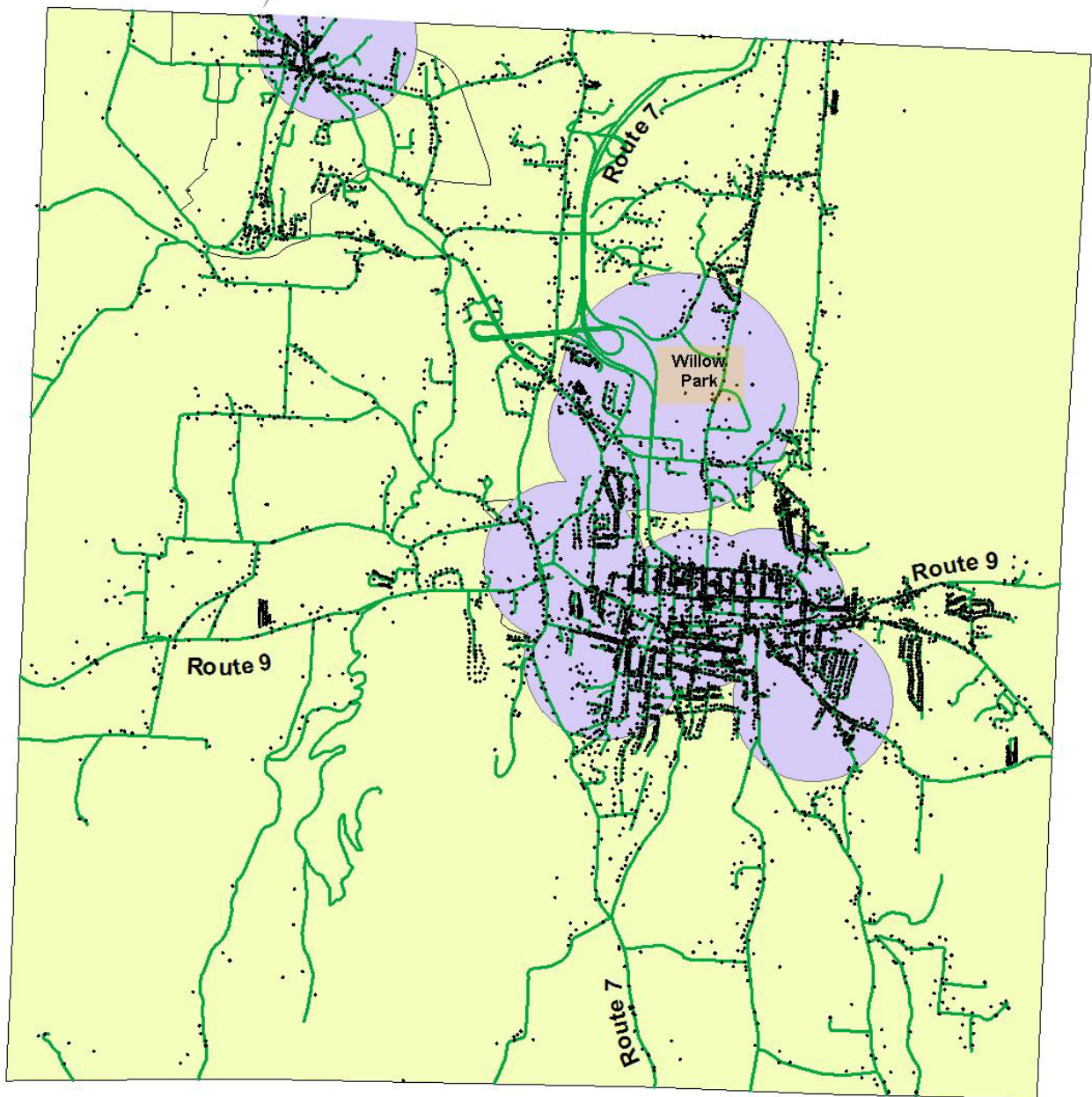


Map produced October 31, 2008 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

Key to Maps 1 and 1A – Bennington Park and Open Space Resources

Map ID Number	Name	Park/Open Space Type
1	Bennington Recreation Center	Special Use Park
2	Mt. Anthony Union High School	School
3	State Office Complex/Vt. Veteran's Home	Special Use Park
4	Little League Fields/Duck Pond	Special Use Park
5	Willow Park	Community Park
6	Mt. Anthony Union Middle School	School
7	Green Mountain National Forest	Open Space
8	White Rocks Trail/Trailhead	Trail and Greenway
9	VT Route 279 Corridor	Trail and Greenway (Future)
10	Chapel Road Cemetery	Cemetery
11	Y-Woods	Open Space
12	Town Forest	Open Space
13	State Fish Hatchery	Special Use Park
14	Beech Street Field	Neighborhood Park
15	Bradford-Putnam Wetlands	Special Use Park
16	Roaring Branch Access	Water Resource
17	Roaring Branch Stream Access (State)	Water Resource
18	Wetland (State owned)	Water Resource
19	Parcel along South Stream	Open Space
20	Greenberg Conservation Reserve	Special Use Park
21	South Stream Wetlands	Water Resource
22	Park Lawn Cemetery	Cemetery
23	Morgan Street Cemetery	Cemetery
24	Southern Vermont College	Open Space/Trail and Greenway/College
25	Mt. Anthony North / Route 9 Access	Open Space
26	Mt. Anthony North and West	Open Space
27	Beal Farm	Open Space
28	Southwest Vermont Health Care Property	Trail and Greenway (Future)
29	Pleasant Valley	Open Space
30	Bennington Battle Monument	Special Use Park
31	Corkscrew Trail Corridor – West End	Trail and Greenway (Future)
32	Stark Street Playground	Neighborhood Park
33	Bennington Museum Grounds	Special Use Park/Trail and Greenway
34	Old First Church Cemetery	Cemetery
35	Route 9/Walloomsac Rd. Agricultural Land	Open Space
36	Whipstock Hill	Open Space
37	Hall Estate Lands	Open Space
38	Mile-Around Woods and Fields	Open Space / Trail and Greenway
39	Lake Paran	Open Space / Trail & Greenway /Water Resource
40	Bennington College	Open Space/College
41	Campbell Estate	Open Space
42	Walloomsac River Corridor	Water Resource / Trail and Greenway (Future)
43	Railroad Spur	Trail and Greenway (Future)
44	Mt. Anthony Country Club	Private Recreation Facility
45	Airport—North Parcels	Open Space
46	Leonard J. Black Park	Neighborhood Park
47	Molly Stark School	School
48	North Bennington Ball Fields and Playground	Special Use Park/Neighborhood Park
49	Monument Elementary School	School
50	"Heaven's Way" Cemetery	Cemetery
51	Cemetery Near Corkscrew/Monument School	Cemetery
52	Courthouse Pocket Park	Open Space
53	Bennington Elementary School	School
54	Bennington Brush Parcel	Open Space / Redevelopment Site
55	Bennington Pathway	Trail and Greenway
56	Catamount School	Open Space / Redevelopment Site
57	Farmer's Market/Depot Park	Special Use Park
58	Former Theater Parcel	Open Space / Redevelopment Site
59	Former Tuttle Hardware and VA Parcels	Open Space / Redevelopment Site
60	Sidewalks and Public Open Spaces	Open Space (not shown on maps)
61	Landscaped Area Near Town Garage	Open Space
62	Library Lawn	Open Space
63	Merchant's Bank Park/Lawn	Open Space
64	VFW Memorial Pocket Park	Open Space
65	Town Office Front Lawn/Rear Yard	Open Space
**	Downtown Front Yards	Not shown on maps

Park and Open Space Resources – organized by type of resource (Map ID in parentheses). Some resources may appear in more than one category.	
<u>Community Park</u>	<u>Water Resources</u>
Willow Park (5)	Roaring Branch Access (16)
<u>Neighborhood Park</u>	Roaring Branch Access – State (17)
Beech Street Field (14)	Wetland – State owned (18)
Stark Street Playground (32)	South Stream Wetlands (21)
Leonard J. Black Park (46)	Lake Paran (39)
N. Bennington Ballfields/Playground (48)	Walloomsac River Corridor (42)
<u>Special Use Parks</u>	<u>Open Space</u>
Bennington Recreation Center (1)	Green Mt. National Forest (7)
State Office Complex/Veteran’s Home (3)	Y-Woods (11)
Little League Fields/Duck Pond (4)	Town Forest (12)
State Fish Hatchery (13)	South Stream Town Parcel (19)
Bradford-Putnam Wetlands (15)	Southern Vermont College (24)
Greenberg Conservation Reserve (20)	Mt. Anthony/Route 9 Access (25)
Bennington Battle Monument (30)	Mt. Anthony/North and West (26)
N. Bennington Ballfields/Playground (48)	Beal Farm (27)
Farmer’s Market/Depot Park (57)	Pleasant Valley (29)
<u>Schools</u>	Route 9/Walloomsac Rd. Agricultural Land (35)
Mt. Anthony Union High School (2)	Whipstock Hill (36)
Mt. Anthony Union Middle School (6)	Hall Estate Lands (37)
Molly Stark Elementary School (47)	McCullough Woods and Fields (38)
Monument Elementary School (49)	Lake Paran (39)
Bennington Elementary School (53)	Bennington College (40)
<u>Trails and Greenways</u>	Campbell Estate (41)
White Rocks Trail/Trailhead (8)	Airport – North Parcels (45)
Route 279 Corridor – Future (9)	Downtown Front Yards (Not on Map)
Southern Vermont College (24)	Courthouse Pocket Park (52)
SW Vermont Health Care Property – Future (28)	Bennington Brush Parcel (54)
Corkscrew Trail/West End – Future (31)	Catamount School (56)
Bennington Museum Grounds (33)	Former Theater Parcel (58)
Mile-Around Woods and Fields (38)	Former Tuttle/VA Parcels (59)
Lake Paran (39)	Sidewalks and Public Spaces (Not on Map)
Walloomsac River Corridor – Future (42)	Landscaped Area Near Town Garage (61)
Railroad Spur – Future (43)	Library Lawn (62)
Bennington Pathway (55)	Merchant’s Bank Lawn/Park (63)
<u>Cemetery</u>	VFW Memorial Pocket Park (64)
Chapel Rd. Cemetery (10)	Town Office Front Lawn/Rear Yard (65)
Park Lawn Cemetery (22)	<u>College</u>
Morgan Street Cemetery (23)	Southern Vermont College (24)
Old First Church Cemetery (34)	Bennington College (40)
Heaven’s Way Cemetery (50)	<u>Private Recreation Facility</u>
Near Corkscrew/Monument Elementary School (51)	Mt. Anthony Country Club (44)



Map 2. Most of Bennington’s residential neighborhoods within the densely developed town center (each dot on the map represents a building) are within the “service area” (shaded areas) of a local park - either one of the three neighborhood parks, a public school park, or Willow Park or the Recreation Center. Willow Park, the community park that contains the most extensive array of recreational and playground facilities, is in an area of relatively low density residential development and is separated from large residential developments to the west by US Route 7, a limited access highway that is difficult and dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.

Inventory of Existing Resources

Map ID 1 Bennington Recreation Center

Northeast
Gage Street
Special Use Park / Neighborhood Park
9.1 Acres * with building
Ownership: Town

The Bennington Recreation Center is home to a building with an indoor pool, a general purpose room, fitness equipment, and locker rooms. The grounds include two softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a small playground area. A large parking area is located next to the building. There has been some interest in expanding the facilities at the Center to include additional indoor facilities that might include an ice arena and/or gymnasium.



Map ID 2 Mount Anthony Union High School

Northeast
Park Street and County Street
School
47.8 Acres * school building, playing fields, and open space
Ownership: School District

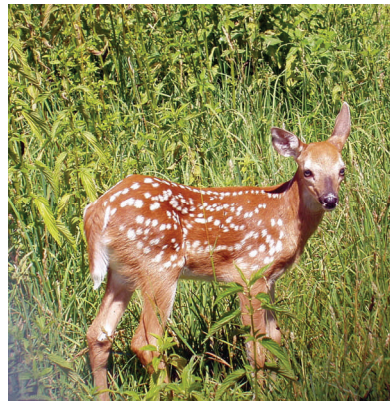
MAU High School is the area’s public secondary school, serving Bennington and surrounding towns. The building contains a gymnasium used for indoor scholastic sports and outdoor facilities include a variety of playing fields for baseball, softball, track and field, football, soccer, lacrosse, and other sports. The property also includes some undeveloped wooded land with an informal trail along Roaring Branch. The playing fields and facilities are used extensively by school teams, youth teams, and residents. Parking is available on school grounds and in designated spaces along Park Street. Sidewalks connect the school grounds to nearby neighborhoods and to the Middle School on East Road.



Map ID 3 State Office Complex and Vermont Veteran's Home

Northeast
North Street to Park Street
Special Use Park
82.9 Acres
Ownership: State of Vermont

The complex, located north of the downtown with principal access from US 7 (North Street), contains a variety of uses including the Veteran's Home, State Office Complex, Chamber of Commerce building, and park and open spaces (including the fenced "Deer Park"). The developed park area includes a stream, walking paths, and picnic tables. A large open lawn provides considerable green space along this busy corridor. Most of the land at the north of the property is undeveloped with floodplain and agricultural soils constraining future use. The Town Plan identifies a possible pathway connection through the land along Roaring Branch (connecting to the trail on the MAU High School property).



Map ID 4 Little League Fields / Duck Pond

Northeast

Park Street and Bowen Road

Special Use Park

3 parcels totaling 9.4 acres * baseball fields and accessory structures

Ownership: Private

A popular duck pond along Park Street is served by a small roadside pull-off parking area and benches. The Little League complex includes fenced playing fields with backstops, scoreboards, dugouts, bleachers, and unorganized parking for vehicles. Primary access to the playing fields is from Park Street, with another access and a parking lot off Bowen Road adjacent to an industrial building.



Map ID 5 Willow Park

Northeast

East Road

Community Park

58.7 Acres * open space, playing fields, playgrounds, picnic pavilions

Ownership: Town

Willow Park is the town's principal outdoor public park and recreation venue. The park contains two picnic pavilions, extensive playground equipment, softball and soccer fields, a BMX course, pathways and trails, a small bandstand, and other facilities. The softball field has lights for night play. Youth and school teams use the fields for practice and the local high school and middle school cross-country running courses wind around the park. Parking is available at a lot near the upper part of the park off East Road, near the softball and BMX facilities, and near the lower pavilion, accessed off Kocher Drive.



Map ID 6 Mount Anthony Union Middle School

Northeast
East Road
School

121.8 Acres * school building, playing fields, and open space

Ownership: School District

The recently constructed Middle School includes an indoor gymnasium, extensive playing fields, and a forested area sloping down toward Furnace Brook to the east. The fields provide recreational facilities for the school and for various youth teams. The site is located just north of Willow Park and is connected to the park - and MAU High School - by a pathway/sidewalk system. Extensive on-site parking is available.



Map ID 7 Green Mountain National Forest

Northeast
Roadless area, western slope of Green Mountains
Open space (rural, conserved, with public access)
932.9 acres in main parcel
Ownership: United States Forest Service

National Forest lands in Bennington are contiguous with the extensive USFS holdings in Woodford and throughout the Green Mountain Range in southern Vermont. A popular hiking trail traverses the GMNF lands in Bennington en route to the White Rocks lookout high on Bald Mountain and an intersection with a network of maintained trails including the Appalachian/Long Trail. The forested slopes of the Green Mountains provide an important scenic backdrop and recreational resource for the town.



Map ID 8 White Rocks Trail/Trailhead

Northeast
North Branch Street to National Forest
Trail
Ownership: Town trailhead, easements over private land

The White Rocks trail extends approximately four miles from an informal trailhead on North Branch Street to a spectacular lookout over Bennington high on Bald Mountain. The trail currently is bisected by construction of the eastern leg of the Vermont 279 highway project, but a trail underpass will be built to ensure continued public access. Very limited and unorganized parking is available at the trailhead and there are no signs or information about the trail or hike present.



Map ID 9 VT 279 Corridor - Possible Trail

Northeast

Within ROW of VT 279 and/or adjacent power line from East Road to VT 9

Possible Future Trail

Ownership: State highway or utility right-of-way

Construction of the second leg of the highway project that will provide an alternative route around Bennington's town center is currently underway, with completion expected by 2012. A pedestrian trail or shared-use pathway could be located with the highway (or adjacent power line) right-of-way. The trail would provide a convenient link between East Road and the existing pathway that serves Willow Park and the Middle School and residential areas on the east and south side of Bennington. Views along the corridor over the town to the west and north up the Valley of Vermont are outstanding.



Map ID 10 Chapel Road Cemetery

Northeast

Chapel Road

Cemetery

3.6 Acres

Ownership: Private

This small rural cemetery is adjacent to a historical chapel. The cemetery is in a low-density residential area and is bordered by woodland to the east.



Map ID 11 Y-Woods

Southeast
Crescent Blvd and Middle Pownal Road
Special Use Park / Open Space (residential area)
29.9 Acres
Ownership: Town

The Y-Woods is a completely wooded parcel lying at the top of a hill southeast of the downtown and sloping down to the east where it borders Middle Pownal Road. The Y-Woods is surrounded on three sides by residential properties and on the south by the Park Lawn Cemetery. A system of trails winds throughout the woodlot, with access at Middle Pownal Road and on Crescent Boulevard. The trails are used extensively by residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Small and informal parking areas adjacent to the street are located near both access points, although neither the parking nor the trailheads are marked. The Y-Woods also is valued for its scenic value as it maintains the natural appearance of the crest of this prominent hill and for its wildlife habitat.



Map ID 12 Town Forest

Southeast

No road frontage; between Middle Pownal and South Stream Roads

Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)

44.7 Acres

Ownership: Town

This parcel of town-owned woodland lies on either side of the high ridge that separates Middle Pownal Road and South Stream Road, just north of Niles Road. The parcel contains a mix of hardwood and softwood trees; surrounding lands are primarily in agricultural use. Because there is no direct access from the road and no parking, public use of the land is limited. Timber has been harvested from the land and the forested ridgeline is a significant feature of the rural landscape from surrounding roads.



Map ID 13 State Fish Hatchery

Southeast

South Stream Road and Hatchery Road

Special Use Park

16.7 Acres with culture station, visitor center, maintenance buildings

Ownership: State of Vermont

The Fish Hatchery contains a stream and fish-culture ponds in a park-like setting. A visitor center providing interpretive material is located adjacent to a small parking lot. The parcel includes the beginning of a possible trail system that would follow South Stream northward into the center of town.



Map ID 14 Beech Street Field

Southeast
Beech Street
Neighborhood Park
7.7 Acres
Ownership: Town

This large open field contains a baseball diamond and a large mowed grass area that can be used for a variety of sports. There is no backstop for the ballfield, however, and the field condition is rather rough. A trail at the west side of the field enters the woods and connects to an informal existing trail that parallels South Stream, a possible future public trail corridor. A small parking lot is located adjacent to Beech Street.



Map ID 15 Bradford-Putnam Wetlands

Southeast
Burgess Road
Special Use Park
36.9 Acres
Ownership: Town

Site of a former public water supply, the area now contains a number of small wetlands connected by a trail; interpretive signs provide information about the site's history and ecology. The trails and signs do not appear to be regularly maintained. A good parking area is present off Burgess Road.



Map ID 16 Roaring Branch Access

Southeast
Route 9 and Barney Road
Special Use Park / Water Resource Access
5.5 Acres
Ownership: Town

A small pull-off for parking and pedestrian access along an old road bed leads to the banks of the Roaring Branch and a site suitable for fishing and swimming.



Map ID 17 Roaring Branch - State Land

Southeast
Barney Road (access from Town land, Map ID 15)
Special Use Park / Water Resource Access
20.4 Acres
Ownership: State

This parcel shares the same public access as Site 15 and includes land along and south of Roaring Branch extending to the Woodford town line.



Map ID 18 Wetland

Southeast

East of Barney Road and South of Garbrooke Drive, no public access

Open Space (rural) / Water Resource

28.4 Acres

Ownership: State of Vermont

This parcel contains a large wetland complex and a stream. There is no apparent public access or parking, although the site can be seen from Barney Road. A private roadway east of Barney Road does intersect the parcel.

Map ID 19 South Stream Parcel

Southeast

Near Beech Street, Beech Court

Open Space (residential area)

8.4 Acres

Ownership: Town

Parcel of land bordering South Stream between Beech Street and Morgan Street; in-town location. Possible future trail corridor - South Stream trail - across parcel. No apparent or well-defined public access.

Map ID 20 Greenberg Conservation Reserve

Southeast
US Route 7
Special Use Park / Open Space (rural)
94.3 Acres
Ownership: New England Tropical Conservatory (non-profit conservation)

This parcel extends from US 7 across Jewett Brook, the planned corridor for the southern leg of VT 279, and onto the hillside to the east of that corridor. The site currently has a parking area off US 7, a small trail network, and an information kiosk with trail maps. One trail segment lies along the bed of an old trolley line. The land between US 7 and Jewett Brook is mostly open and is the site of a planned research/educational building. Land on the east side of the VT 279 corridor, which will have no public access after the highway is built, is entirely wooded.



Map ID 21 South Stream Wetlands

Southeast
Morgan Street and South Stream Road
Open Space (rural) / Water Resource
119.2 Acres in four parcels (largest 95.4 Acres)
Ownership: Private

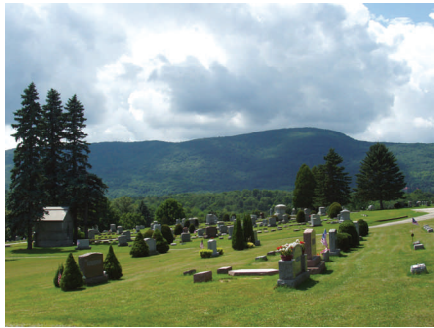
This large wetland complex supports a rich diversity of wildlife, including many avian species. Views of the surrounding mountains from the wetlands are outstanding. The entire area has very little development potential, but there currently is no direct public access, except at a bridge where South Stream Road crosses Jewett Brook. The Town Plan identifies a possible trail corridor along South Stream at the north and east side of the complex; an old trolley line corridor still is evident in that area. The southern leg of VT 279 is planned to skirt the southern and eastern portion of the wetlands.



Map ID 22 Park Lawn Cemetery

Southeast
South Street (US 7) and Middle Pownal Road
Cemetery
81.5 Acres
Ownership: Private

Park Lawn Cemetery is set on the south-facing slopes of a hill just south of the center of Bennington. It adjoins the town-owned Y-Woods to the north and the Greenberg Nature Reserve to the south, forming a substantial contiguous area of undeveloped land in that part of the community. The serene setting offers outstanding views to the east, south, and west.



Map ID 23 Morgan Street Cemetery

Southeast
Morgan Street
Cemetery
7.5 Acres
Ownership: Private

The Morgan Street Cemetery is located in a residential area near the town's center. It is accessible by foot from the downtown area and has limited gravel drives for vehicular access.



Map ID 24 Southern Vermont College

Southwest

Monument Avenue / East side of Mount Anthony

College / Open Space (rural, conserved, public access) / Trails and Greenways

373.1 Acres

Ownership: Private (Southern Vermont College)

Southern Vermont College owns a large tract of land on the east side of Mount Anthony. The lower slopes are occupied by the college buildings and extensive open fields. The upper slopes are heavily forested and steep. An extensive trail network winds throughout the parcel, connecting to a trail network that covers much of the mountain. Public access and parking is available at the college. In addition to serving as an important recreational resource, the forested mountainside is an important scenic asset for the community.



Map ID 25 Mount Anthony North / Route 9 Access

Southwest
VT Route 9
Open Space (rural, conserved, public access)
42.7 Acres
Ownership: Private, conservation easement with trail access

This parcel lies at the base of Mount Anthony's north face and provides access to conserved lands and trails higher up on the mountain. Most of the parcel is a maintained open field and is traversed by a mowed trail. The trail is cleared out to Route 9, but there is no designated parking area and no sign indicating the trail access.



Map ID 26 Mount Anthony * North and West

Southwest
Mount Anthony Road and Quarry Road (gated) to summit
Open Space (rural, private, conserved, public access)
573.3 Acres (20 parcels ranging in size from 12.2 Acres to 66.7 Acres)
Ownership: Private, several lots owned by local land conservation group

Several of these conserved lots border Mount Anthony Road; others lie on either side of Quarry Road all the way to the summit of the mountain. Although the road is closed to vehicular traffic, it serves as a popular walking route to the summit where it intersects with several trails. The conserved lands preserve the natural character of the north and west sides of Mount Anthony and also contribute to the large tract of unbroken forest that represents a significant wildlife habitat resource.



Map ID 27 Beal Farm

Southwest
Monument Avenue
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
239.9 Acres
Ownership: Private, conservation easement

The Beal Farm is located on the east side of Mount Anthony, with open rolling fields between Monument Avenue and the base of the mountain, and extending up onto the forested slopes adjacent to the conserved lands owned by Southern Vermont College. The view of Mount Anthony over the Beal property is an important community scenic resource and the mix of open fields and forest provides outstanding wildlife habitat.



Map ID 28 Southwest Vermont Health Care Property

Southwest
Dewey Street and Monument Avenue
Trail and Greenway (Possible Future) around health care center grounds
49.9 Acres
Ownership: Private (SVHC)

The SVHC campus contains a hospital, medical office building, long-term care residential complex, and other structures, as well as large parking areas. There is a significant amount of remaining open space on the property, however, and SVHC has expressed an interest in developing a trail around the perimeter of its land. The trail could connect to the proposed Corkscrew Trail (along the bed of the old Corkscrew Rail Line) and to the trails at Southern Vermont College on the other side of Monument Avenue. The front lawn of the hospital is very scenic, with its rock outcroppings and mature trees.



Map ID 29 Pleasant Valley

Southwest
Pleasant Valley Road (west of Mount Anthony)
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
504.7 Acres (8 parcels)
Ownership: Private, conservation easements

Pleasant Valley has long been recognized for its outstanding scenic and agricultural values. Much of the land in the Valley is devoted to agricultural use (including two large Christmas tree farms). The views from the road over the agricultural land toward Mount Anthony and the surrounding hills are very important to the community. Pleasant Valley Road also is the site of Vermont's premier Irish Road Bowling course.



Map ID 30 Bennington Battle Monument

Southwest
Monument Circle * Old Bennington Village
Special Use Park
3.3 Acres
Ownership: State

The Bennington Battle Monument is an important scenic and cultural component of the town's landscape. A large maintained lawn at the base of the Monument provides space for recreation. Parking is available in a small lot adjacent to the roadway.



Map ID 31 Corkscrew Trail * West End

Southwest
Old Rail corridor from New York State Line through Pleasant Valley
Possible Trail and Greenway
Ownership: Private

Although much of the old rail bed still is evident, most of the land is in private ownership. The Town Plan does identify the Corkscrew from the downtown area, around the Bennington Battle Monument, and through the west end as a possible future trail corridor.



Map ID 32 Stark Street Playground

Southwest
Stark Street
Neighborhood Park
6.7 Acres, * building and playing fields
Ownership: Town

The Stark Street Playground includes a large expanse of grass field with a rough baseball diamond, minimal playground equipment, and a basketball court. A municipal recreation building is on the site. The playground is a significant piece of open park land in a relatively densely developed residential area, but, perhaps because of the paucity of maintained facilities, shows little evidence of use. A small parking lot is located off Stark Street.



Map ID 33 Bennington Museum Grounds

Southwest
West Main Street
Special Use Park / Trails and Greenways
19.9 Acres
Ownership: Private Non-Profit (Bennington Museum)

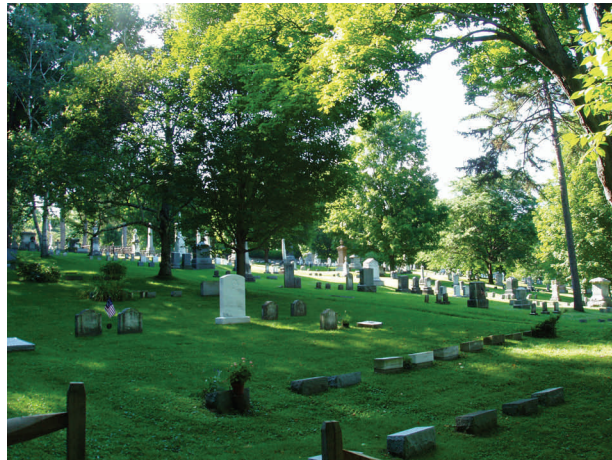
The Bennington Museum is a popular educational and tourist destination on West Main Street. A large parcel of open land next to the museum buildings has been developed with walking trails and a small picnic pavilion. A stream flows through the property and the lot adjoins the old Corkscrew Rail line. Parking is available at the Museum's parking lot.



Map ID 34 Old First Church Cemetery

Southwest
Lower Monument Avenue / Old Bennington Village
Cemetery
5.6 Acres
Ownership: Private, First Congregational Church

This cemetery, set behind the iconic “Old First Church” is at the entryway to the town center and is an important historical and cultural asset to the community. The cemetery is often visited by tourists as it contains the gravesite of Robert Frost. The parcel adjoins the Bennington Museum property and is connected to it by a small footpath. Parking is available adjacent to the church.



Map ID 35 Agricultural Land Between Route 9 and Walloomsac Road

Northwest
Route 9 West and Walloomsac Road
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
172.6 Acres (2 contiguous parcels)
Ownership: Private

This large tract of primarily open agricultural land is in the foreground of the distant views northward up the Valley of Vermont from Route 9. The land also contains an extensive section of the old Corkscrew rail corridor, identified in the Town Plan as a possible future pathway.



Map ID 36 Whiptsock Hill

Northwest
South of VT 279 / vicinity of Whipstock Road
Open Space (rural, conserved, public access on State's portion)
589.7 Acres (several parcels)
Ownership: State and Private

Whiptsock Hill is the dominant landform on Bennington's west side. Much of the hillside was preserved when land was purchased by the State of Vermont for construction of VT 279, which borders the conserved land to the north. Most of the land is forested; land on the east side of Whipstock Road is adjacent to the WH Morse Airport. There currently are no plans in place for management/use of the State lands.



Map ID 37 Hall Estate Lands

Northwest
River Road and Ore Bed Road
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
195.6 Acres (3 parcels)
Ownership: Private

These parcels are located on the hillside that slopes down to the Walloomsac River on Bennington's west side. Most of the land is wooded, although there are several open agricultural fields. The land includes extensive river frontage along and to the north of River Road.



Map ID 38 Mile-Around Woods and Fields

Northwest
West/McCullough, Harrington, and Park (partially in North Bennington Village)
Open Space (rural, conserved, with public access)
266 Acres, (10 parcels)
Ownership: Private and conservation organization (Fund for North Bennington)

The large block of conserved land lying behind the Park-McCullough House and extending all the way to Harrington Road is an important community open space and recreational resource. Open fields are maintained and the woodlots and fields are traversed by an extensive network of public use recreational trails.



Map ID 39 Lake Paran

Northwest

Lake and Parcels West, North, and East of Lake Paran

Open Space (rural) / Water Resource / Trails and Greenway (Future)

Approximately 61 Acres, plus adjacent land in Shaftsbury and North Bennington

Ownership: Private conservation/recreation organizations, and State (access by dam)

Paran Recreation owns and operates a recreational facility that includes a beach, picnic facilities, and a parking area on the northwest shore of Lake Paran. A State boat launch and fishing access area is located on the southern shore. Extensive land surrounding the lake and extending north and east into Shaftsbury has been acquired by the Fund for North Bennington. A hiking trail from the north side of the lake to the Robert Frost Museum in Shaftsbury is planned. Vegetation on conserved land is a mix of dense woodland and brush.



Map ID 40 Bennington College

Northwest

North of VT 67A, partially in North Bennington Village

College / Open Space (rural, conserved, with public access) / Trails and Greenway

343.3 Acres * with college buildings, recreational facilities, and open space

Ownership: Bennington College

The Bennington College campus is spread across rolling hills in the north-western part of Bennington; most of the college buildings are located in North Bennington. The campus includes extensive open fields and some wooded areas. A public use trail runs through the campus parallel to Paran Creek, and a pathway connects the North Bennington Village center with Route 67A where it could join a possible future trail along the Walloomsac River.



Map ID 41 Campbell Estate

Northwest
VT 67A and Rice Lane
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
15.1 Acres
Ownership: Private

This parcel is located at the western end of the Route 67A commercial corridor; principal access is from Route 67A, with a narrow property extension to Rice Lane. A pond is located on the property.

Map ID 42 Walloomsac River Corridor

Northwest
Banks of the Walloomsac River from Hicks Avenue to the Henry Covered Bridge
Water Resource / Access to Water Resource
Ownership: Private (numerous owners), some easements

This corridor not only provides direct access to the Walloomsac River, but also is a possible future extension of the Bennington Pathway from the Hicks Avenue pedestrian bridge to commercial areas to the west and to North Bennington. The corridor also includes three covered bridges. Easements along the rear of some commercial properties and on State-owned land near the VT 279 bridge are in place, and a pathway feasibility study has been completed, but considerable additional planning work is required before a continuous pathway or a park along the river is possible.



Map ID 43 Railroad Spur

Northwest

Old rail line between North Bennington and Bennington depots

Trails and Greenway (Possible Future)

Approximately 4 miles long

Ownership: State of Vermont, Long-term Lease to Vermont Railway

This rail spur off the main Vermont Railway line has not been active in a number of years, and although the feasibility of using the corridor for a multi-use pathway has been studied, Vermont Railway wishes to maintain the rail line for possible freight traffic. The town does have an approved plan to use a portion of the right-of-way at the southern end of the line for a pathway (The Bennington Pathway) and that project is close to construction. There has been some discussion of Vermont



Railway abandoning its lease from Bennington Station to the Route 7A crossing at the base of Harwood Hill, thus allowing for a dedicated pathway along that section of the corridor.

Map ID 44 Mount Anthony Country Club

Northwest

Bank Street

Private Recreation Facility

110.6 Acres * with golf course, clubhouse building, and parking

Ownership: Private

The only golf course in Bennington is an important recreational resource and a scenic asset as well; it maintains a large green space in the center of town at the base of the Bennington Battle Monument and affords outstanding views from the clubhouse and fairways to the north and east.



Map ID 45 Airport North Lots

Northwest
North and East of WH Morse Airport
Open Space (rural, conserved, no public access)
59.8 Acres, two parcels
Ownership: State of Vermont

Two parcels providing a buffer north and east of the airport and west of Pippin Knoll. The land does not border a road so there is no apparent public access.



Map ID 46 Leonard J. Black Park

Northwest
Lover's Lane
Neighborhood Park
4.7 Acres, land with limited playground facilities
Ownership: Town

This park was formerly the site of an outdoor pool and some plans have been developed for some new park facilities on the land. The lot is close to an area of relatively dense residential development and the Northside Drive commercial corridor.



Map ID 47 Molly Stark School

Northwest
Orchard Road
School
22.4 Acres * playing fields and school building
Ownership: School District

The Molly Stark Elementary School includes the school building, several large, flat open playing fields, and some playground equipment.



Map ID 48 North Bennington Ballfield and Playground Facilities

Northwest
North Bennington Village
Special Use Parks
Ownership: Public

North Bennington Village contains two parks that are used by residents of that community and the Town. The Norshaft Park contains a playground and Little League baseball field and Welling Field contains two playing fields. Both parks have some parking and are located near village residential areas.



Map ID 49 Monument Elementary School

Northwest
West Main Street
School
6.4 Acres * school building, land, and playground facilities
Ownership: School District

The Monument Elementary School is located just west of the downtown and across the road from the Bennington Museum. In addition to the school building, the property includes a playground and a small playing field.



Map ID 50 Cemetery—Heaven’s Way

Northwest
Heaven’s Way (off VT 67A)
Cemetery
4.3 Acres
Ownership: Private

This small cemetery is located on a small private road near North Bennington. The parcel adjoins a large tract of open space on the Bennington College campus.



Map ID 51 Cemetery—Near Corkscrew rail route and Monument Elementary School

Northwest
6.2 Acres
Ownership: Private

Secluded cemetery with many gravestones from the mid-19th century, located north of the Corkscrew rail route and just below Monument Elementary School.



Downtown Landscaped Front Yards (Not on maps)

Downtown
Various Locations
Maintained lawns in front of downtown businesses that add open space and landscaping to the streetscape
Ownership: Private



Map ID 52 Courthouse Pocket Park

Downtown
South Street by Courthouse and Better Bennington Corporation
Lawn with benches adjacent to BBC building (Downtown Visitor Center); plans for future enhancements
Ownership: Town



Map ID 53 Bennington Elementary School

Downtown
School Street
School
3.4 Acres * school building with playing fields and playground equipment
Ownership: School District



Map ID 54 Bennington Brush Lot

Downtown
North Street
Currently vacant commercial building with sizeable front lawn bordering stream
(1.6 acres)
Ownership: Private



Map ID 55 Bennington Pathway

Downtown
Park Street to Depot along stream, northward extension planned
Trail and Greenway
Developed pathway with benches, interpretive signs, streamside linear park
Ownership: Town



Map ID 56 Catamount School

Downtown
North Street
2.8 Acres * currently vacant, former school with large front yard
Ownership: Private



Map ID 57 Bennington Depot/Farmer's Market

Downtown
Depot Street
Special Use Park
Historic train depot, now a restaurant, with lawn adjacent to stream, Bennington Pathway, and large parking area; used regularly for Farmer's Market
Ownership: Private (building and parking) and Town (pathway area)



Map ID 58 Vacant Lot, Site of Former Theater Building

Downtown
East Main Street
0.1 Acres * vacant lot located near the center of downtown
Ownership: Private



Map ID 59 Tuttle Lot and Open Area Adjacent to VA Facility

Downtown

Depot Street to North Street

1.1 Acres * site of former Tuttle Hardware on Depot Street is a large vacant lot, adjoins open space/lawn area next to VA Medical Facility on North Street

Ownership: Private



Map ID 60 Sidewalks as Public Open Spaces

Downtown

Sidewalks in the downtown are widely used open spaces, important visually to pedestrians and passing motorists

Various Locations

Ownership: Town



Map ID 61 Open Space Near Town Garage

Downtown
Depot Street
Small green space near Town garage lot
Ownership: Private



Map ID 62 Library Lawn

Downtown
Bennington Free Library, Silver Street and Union Street
Landscaped area with bench
Ownership: Library



Map ID 63 Merchants Bank Lawn/Park

Downtown
North Street
Sizeable lawn area used for public gatherings and events such as summer music in the park series
Ownership: Private



Map ID 64 VFW Memorial Park

Downtown
North Street
Small landscaped area adjacent to sidewalk with bench and veteran's memorial marker
Ownership: Private



Map ID 65 Town Office Front Lawn and Rear Yard Greenspace

Downtown
South Street
Landscaped lawn with benches and historic markers/items; additional lawn and picnic tables at rear of parcel; adjacent to public parking lot
Ownership: Town

