

Open Space Acquisition Criteria

11/27/22

1. **Water supply protection:** Parcels in the aquifer or watershed area that supplies the main well field at the end of Pumping Station Lane.
2. **Maintain surface water quality:** Open Space can help filter pollutants from pollution discharges. Included in this criterion would be parcels that contain a stormwater discharge. This area of a parcel is incompatible with parks and recreation.
3. **Wetlands:** The limit of these areas is determined in the field. Special emphasis will be placed on parcels that mitigate localized flooding. Maps may exist for the particular parcel in the Town house at the Conservation Commission office.
4. **Saltmarsh:** These areas are easily field identified and usually designated on the Wetland Conservancy maps at the Conservation Commission office.
5. **Endangered species (flora & fauna):** Roseate terns, Piping Plovers, diamond-backed terrapins, and eastern box turtle, to name a few, are known to occur in Marion. This information should be based on actual sightings, as the Natural Heritage Program maps are very general.
6. **Significant wildlife habitat:** Includes vernal pools, areas for overwintering, nesting and feeding. These can be wooded, shrub, meadows, or a combination. Habitat areas need to be a certain size, and location is important.
7. **Adjacent to wetlands:** How much of a buffer, both lateral protection and vertical elevation as it relates to sea level rise, to the wetlands is provided by this purchase? Does the parcel contain areas that provide potential flood hazard mitigation?
8. **Adjacent to Saltmarsh:** How much of a buffer; both lateral protection and vertical elevation as it relates to sea level rise, to the saltmarsh is provided by this purchase?
9. **Adjacent to river/stream/pond:** The greater the amount of river front, the greater the protection. This does not apply to every little intermittent stream. Includes: Sippican River, Hales Brook, Doggett's Brook, Benson's Brook, and Aucoot Creek. In deciding if a creek is big enough, look at the USGS map. If it is on the map (Marion or Onset quadrangle) then count it here.
10. **Creates contiguous corridor:** Tying all the pieces together benefits wildlife and trails.
11. **Open space gain:** If the town buys a piece of property that has a conservation restriction has it made an open space gain? How about a piece that is ready for development with all permits in place? There would be very little gain from acquiring land with wetland restrictions (most of the saltmarsh in town), private deed restrictions, or publicly held conservation restrictions.
12. **Shore access:** This category includes shellfish area access or boat launching ramps.
13. **Along coastline:** Areas along the shore that contain habitats other than saltmarsh, such as barrier beaches, rocky shores, and tidal flats. Does not include shore access (separate category).
14. **Woodland for trails:** Large enough to have walking/horse/mountain bike trails.
15. **Strategically placed for quality of life:** This includes pocket parks (such as Bicentennial Park) and other areas in the midst of built-up and crowded areas. This grouping includes purchases that are essential for the maintenance of the town character. Sites not visible from the town roads are generally not part of this category.
16. **Sandy beaches:** Beach property.
17. **Financial - cost vs. impact on taxes:** This is a cost/benefit in purely financial terms. What does the property cost? What are the lost taxes if purchased, and what are the avoided

services? (This is performed using information from the Finance Committee on the per house cost of services, and assuming 0.5 students per household.) This would always apply to any land that could be developed commercially or for residential purposes.

18. Farmland: When purchased as farmland, will future use comply with the reason it's being bought? Will farming practices that occur on the parcel be compatible with sustainable land stewardship by using practices that prevent erosion and pollution? In almost all cases, this category will only apply to Conservation Restrictions.

19. Bordering SLT or town open space: This applies to parcels that are adjacent to Sippican Lands Trust, Recreation Committee, Water Department, or Conservation Commission land.

20. Size: Lots of acreage is the factor here.

21. Frontage on town road: The more frontage, the more attractive the land is from an aesthetic viewpoint. Where the frontage is larger amount, it can create a positive curb appeal. The presence of Frontage creates access opportunities.

22. Accessibility: Can you get to it? Accessibility to as many people as possible is important to people who want to use their open space.

23. Educational potential: A variety of habitat characteristics is important here.

24. Acreage scattered all over/not in one place: Everyone wants to be near open space. If there are not any open space parcels in the area, score points here.

25. Expansion of existing recreational area: Areas adjacent to Washburn Park, etc.

26. Possibility for new recreational area: If Marion's population doubles in size in the next twenty years, a new Washburn Park, new basketball courts, and new tennis courts will be needed. We can secure these locations now and build these facilities as we need them.

27. Adjacent to historical site: Check with the Historical Society for a list of historical sites.

28. V-zone. Does the parcel contain portions of land mapped by FEMA as a VE zone?

Open Space Criteria Ranking 2023

RANK 2023	Criterion	Importance/points	1995 Rank
1	Water Supply protection	5.0	1
2	Endangered species	4.2	4
3	Saltmarsh	4.1	4
4	Significant wildlife habitat	4.0	6
5	Help maintain water quality	3.7	2
5	Shore access	3.7	12
7	Wetlands	3.6	3
8	Adjacent to saltmarsh	3.4	8
9	Accessibility	3.3	21
10	Woodland for trails	3.2	14
10	Sandy beaches	3.2	16
12	Adjacent to wetlands	3.1	6
12	Adjacent to rivers, streams, ponds	3.1	9
13	Creates contiguous corridor	2.9	10
14	Adjacent to coastline	2.7	13
14	Farmland	2.7	18
14	Financial- cost v. impact on taxes	2.7	16
17	Bordering SLT or town land	2.6	18
18	Educational potential	2.5	23
19	Open Space gain	2.4	11
20	Size	2.3	20
21	Expansion of recreational areas	2.2	25
21	Strategically placed	2.2	14
23	Possibility of recreational sites	2.1	25
24	Velocity Zone	2.0	n/a
24	Frontage on town road	2.0	21
26	Scattered all over	1.2	23
27	Adjacent to historic sites	1	28

Note: This ranking was funded by the Town of Marion through the Community Preservation Act. For questions 1-94, N=17 for the rest of the questions (94-380) N=8.