



MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton
Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12
Northampton, MA 01060-3199
(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275
mayor@northamptonma.gov

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Northampton protects 146 acres of open space with major new purchases

Today the city of Northampton purchased a long sought conservation area, the 114 acre Burt's Bog Greenway, extending from Burts Pit Road to Woods Road, Florence Road, and Sandy Hill Road. In total, including a 32 acre purchase scheduled for next week, Northampton has permanently protected 300 acres of open space to date in 2017, well over 1% of the total land in the city.

"The Burt's Bog Greenway protects some of the most valuable habitat in the city and provides recreation for several neighborhoods", said Mayor David J. Narkewicz, lauding the purchase, "because this is a limited development project, creating ten new building lots on three acres, three of which will be affordable homes, this project will also increase property taxes collected by the city." The site will also be the home to an eventual extension of a multi-use trail from the New Haven and Northampton Canal Line Rail Trail (Manhan) to Woods and Sandy Hill Roads.

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning & Sustainability added, "Even as we protect open space we are dedicated to creating new residential building opportunities so that our open space efforts do not drive up the building lot prices or effect city property tax collection. This year, on Burts Pit Road and in other projects, we are increasing the availability of land for housing and generating new tax revenue, even as we create more conservation and parks."

One-quarter of the City is now permanently protected as open space. The open space serves every neighborhood in the city. Open space includes City, state, federal, and non-profit parks, recreation and conservation areas, and privately-owned but permanently protected working forest and farmland.

Northampton's open space program is coordinated by the Office of Planning and Sustainability in conjunction with the Mayor, Conservation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Community Preservation Committee, and the City Council. Hundreds of donors have financially contributed to make these efforts possible. Community partners include the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Friends of Northampton Recreation, Kestrel Land Trust, and the Broad Brook Coalition.