

**Draft
FOSP
Open Space Criteria for identification
of Key Parcels**

The Future Open Space Preservation Committee (FOSP) has been charged by the Cape Elizabeth Town Council with identifying property in Cape Elizabeth that is a high priority for preservation as open space.

6. FOSP shall identify specific key parcels of land in town that are of the highest priority. A comprehensive review of vacant lands in Cape Elizabeth should be undertaken to determine which areas exhibit the most important habitat features, recreational opportunities and whose preservation would help to ensure the town retains its rural character, including large undeveloped areas, agricultural uses of the land and scenic vistas.

FOSP reviewed open space criteria used in other communities and created a matrix of common elements (See Attachment x). Open space elements significant in Cape Elizabeth were also added to the list. Committee members then voted on the highest priority criteria.

In the review of open space criteria used elsewhere, it was noted that some communities established criteria that essentially made it possible for any land in the community to be eligible for open space preservation. Other communities attempted a more rigorous prioritization that would focus preservation efforts on the most important areas. The committee discussed the two approaches and decided to create a list that emphasized priorities rather than all-inclusiveness. With this approach, the committee agreed on the following criteria has identified the following criteria to select key parcels for preservation. The criteria is listed in order of priority.

- 1. Agriculture**

Undeveloped lands that have been are currently used for agriculture, as identified by the Cape Farm Alliance. within the last 5 years or that support the economic viability of agriculture. Economic viability shall include lands for accessory buildings directly related to agriculture or accessory activities necessary to perform agricultural activities, but shall not include residential uses.

Information sources: inventory of existing farms as provided by the Cape Farm Alliance, prime farmland soils, land under agriculture tax program

Optional: Woodland

2. Greenbelt trails

Land located in areas with potential for greenbelt trail links as identified in the 2001 Town Greenbelt Plan. Further emphasis has been placed on lands that would complete the greenbelt trail links from Fort Williams to Crescent Beach.that adds to the town greenbelt trail system by providing links between existing open space or adding open space to an underserved area of town consistent with the Town Greenbelt Plan and lands that expand recreational opportunities or provide water access.

Information Sources: Town and Land Trust open space and trails, 2001 Greenbelt Plan, river, stream and pond frontage.

Optional: Public access, Scenic viewsheds, hilltops, unique natural features

3. Wildlife Habitat

Undeveloped lands that provide a habitat for wildlife as identified by State of Maine data such as the Beginning with Habitat information, but not including lands that are located in the Town Resource Protection Districts and therefore already afforded some protection, or have the characteristics that are suitable for wildlife habitat, land that links at least two wildlife habitat areas, or land immediately adjacent to a preserved area that can be combined to improve the wildlife habitat value through contiguous open space. These areas provide habitat in particular to endangered or threatened wildlife.

Information sources: State of Maine data, including Beginning with Habitat Wildlife habitat data, Zoning Map, RP1 and RP2 wetlands.

Optional: Endangered or threatened plants, shellfish beds

4. Historic and Cultural

Land and buildings that uniquely represent historical or cultural features which significantly contribute to community character.

Information sources: National Register properties, archeological sites

Optional: Local historic structures inventory

Other optional criteria not included above: floodplains, water quality protection, avoidance of town services, preference of type of acquisition of fee or easement.