

# OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

## Overview

The intent of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is to document local open space and recreation status, needs and concerns, and to include these issues in all building development and facility repair/maintenance projects initiated by the town. The OSRP, once accepted by the State, qualifies the town for multiple State funding opportunities through the Department of Conservation Services and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

## Key Findings:

The Open Space Implementation Committee and the Town Parks Commission have accomplished several things in the past few years, including:

- Construction of a new practice field at Goodale Park
- Improvement of safety fencing at Goodale Park and Woodland Park
- Implementation of field use scheduling
- Evaluation of conditions of the facilities
- Evaluation of Goodale Park possible enhancements
- Protection of multiple open space properties in coordination with DCR and the Greater Worcester Land Trust. These parcels were on the list of properties of interest due to their proximity to town drinking water sources and mapped aquifers.
- Authorization and Implementation of the Complete Streets Policy, which will improve pedestrian and bike access along roadways to schools, residential areas and businesses.

The Town has X acres of passive open space and X acres of active open space

20% of the Wachusett Reservoir is located in West Boylston, and most of the town is within the Wachusett watershed.

Based on two surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016, 88% of town residents who responded believe it is important to protect open space and nature.

The most commonly used facilities are the sidewalks and walking trails, according to the surveys.

The three items most survey respondents want to fund in 2016 are sidewalks, a swimming facility and protection of open space near town wells.

## **Key Challenges**

Balancing the need for passive open space and active recreational space given the limits of natural and financial resources.

The need to improve some of the substandard facilities, such as the track, Woodland Park, and High School baseball field.

Limitations on elder access to the existing facilities.

Acquiring funding for the design, installation and upkeep of a new swimming facility.

The lack of a Recreation Director.

## **Open Space and Recreation Goals**

Investigate and evaluate swimming options.

Improve existing substandard MIAA facilities

Improve substandard multiuse facilities at Woodland Park

Improve and expand walking and bicycle access throughout the town.

Acquire and protect priority open space parcels

Investigate and establish a fenced dog park.

Encourage expanded use of the State Chapter 61 Program and Conservation Restrictions Program

Fill Recreation Director's position

Ensure adequate fields remain at former Mixter Building site

Improve elder and universal access to existing fields

The following list is taken from the OSRP Action Plan intended to guide the Town's activities and priorities. For each goal, there are several actions that were identified to accomplish the goal. Each action has a responsible entity identified, resources, and priority and timing. The OSRP Appendix F provides the Town with a listing of some grants and resources that may be useful in implementing these actions.

<b>Action ID</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Action Description</b>
1	Goodale Park	Improve substandard track/baseball facilities & evaluate swimming facility/location. NOT a football stadium.
2	Mass Central Rail Trail	Improve trail extension along Pleasant Street and improve parking and dog waste removal conditions.
3	264 Prospect Street	Acquire 7.3 acres adjacent to Town Well
4	Town-wide	Hire a Director of Recreation Programs
5	Town-wide	Improve elder/universal access to fields
6	Woodland Park	Improve substandard facilities
7	277 Sterling Street	Acquire 5 acres for athletic fields
8	Crescent, Goodale, Newton Streets	Improve sidewalks and bicycle access near Town schools, Apportion Chapter 90 money annually for this purpose.
9	Route 140	Implement Complete Streets Policy for safe bicycle use
10	120 Prescott Street	Insure playing field construction is included in Senior Center Development
11	Large Lots (>4 acres)	Encourage landowner donations/deed restrictions to limit development
12	Tivnan Drive	Investigate fenced dog park
13	18 Malden Street	Protected open space with buffer from future school development