



# WESTON

## Open Space and Recreation Plan

Public Forum | October 26 & 27, 2025

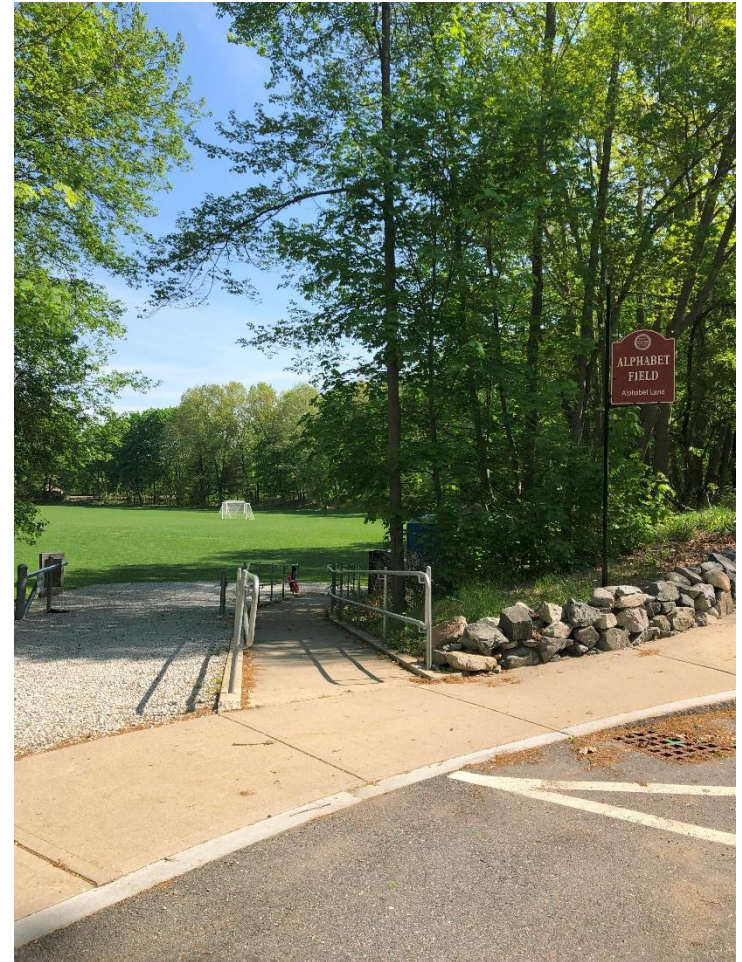
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Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, Town of Weston  
Christopher Fitzgerald, Recreation Director, Town of Weston  
Jill Slankas, AICP, Barrett Planning Group LLC



# Public Forum Agenda

- WELCOME
- OSRP PLAN OVERVIEW
- PROGRESS TO DATE
- ACTIVITY
- NEXT STEPS



# Committee on Open Space & Recreation (COSRP)

## Members

### Resident At-Large Members

- Hannah Peters (Co-Chair)
- Beth Marshdoyle (Co-Chair)
- Emily Wu

Conservation Commission | Glenn Butcher

Recreation Commission | Drew D'Amaro

Weston Forest & Trail Association | David Banks

Planning Board | Shawn Lanier

Agricultural Commission | Kent Lundberg

## COSRP Work to Date

- Extensive survey outreach, tabling, flyer distribution
- ~Monthly meetings
- Formation of working groups



# Where in Weston?

1



2

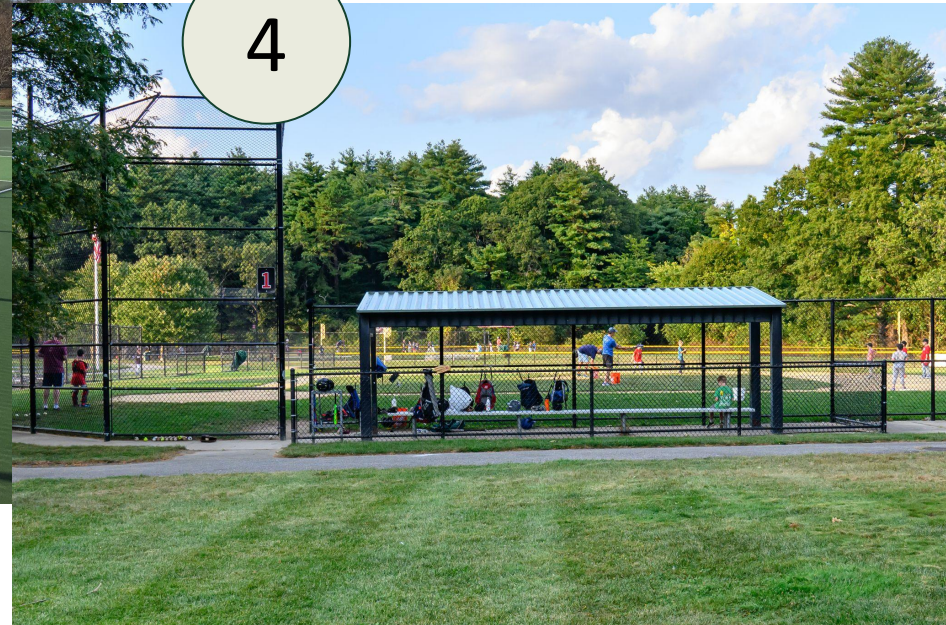


# Where in Weston?

3



4



# Where in Weston?

5



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# Where in Weston?

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8



# Where in Weston?

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10



# Where in Weston?

11



12



# What is an OSRP?

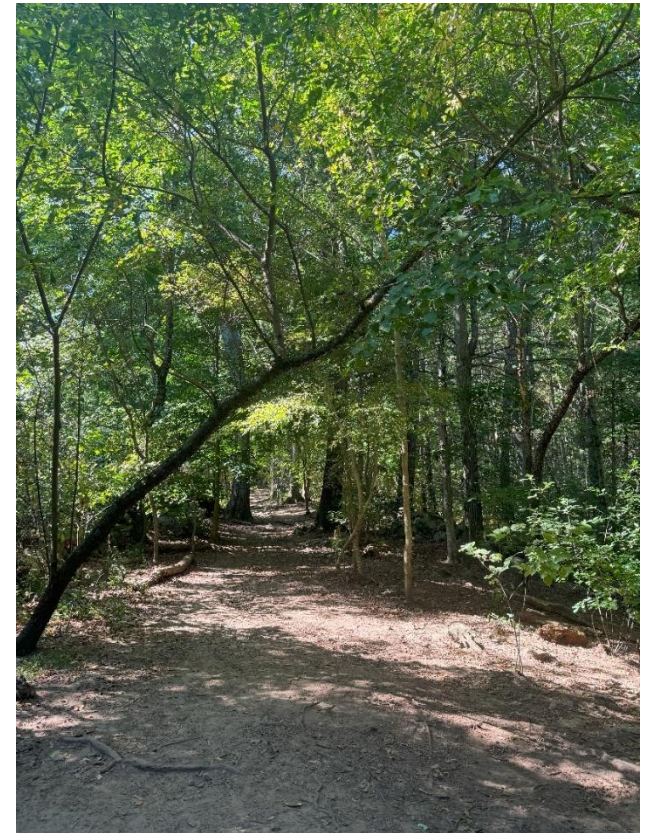
- State mandated planning document updated on a 10-year cycle that describes a community's open space and recreation resources
- Follows a process and format developed by the Division of Conservation Services (DCS), including significant public input/participation
- Opportunity to assess and plan for a municipality's open space and recreation resources and facilities and decide how to get there

# Why Do An OSRP?

- Proactive planning to protect open space and recreational facilities helps ensure compatible growth in the future, improving your community's livability
- Required for eligibility for grant programs administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
- Can help guide Community Preservation Act (CPA) expenditures and other town spending
- Documenting needs and goals can help support other grants

# OSRP Required Sections

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Community Setting
- Environmental Inventory & Analysis
- Conservation and Recreation Lands Inventory
- Analysis of Needs
- Ten-Year Action Plan
- Public Comments
- Maps



# 2025 OSRP Progress to Date

- ✓ Obtain and analyze required data and information in OSRP's first 4 Sections
- ✓ Appoint OSRP Advisory Committee (COSRP)
- ✓ Develop and distribute survey to residents
- ✓ Create working groups for Analysis of Needs & Action Plan
- ★ Community meeting for further public input (Oct 26th & 27th)
  - ❑ Finalize Needs Analysis, Goals, and Action Plan based on public input & committee guidance
  - ❑ Compile draft plan & share with public & elected officials
  - ❑ Public hearing for final plan
  - ❑ Submit to DCS for review, feedback, and approval

# Community Engagement - Survey Summary

- Available in English & Simplified Chinese
- Available online & in print at various locations around town
  - Library, Community Center (Recreation Dept & Council on Aging), Town Hall, Brook School Apts
  - Extensive publicizing by COSRP & staff!
- Open for 90 days (July - Sept)
- Over 654 responses\* (including 49 in Simplified Chinese)!

\* Significant increase from 411 survey responses in 2017

# Open Space & Recreation Use in Weston: What & Where?

What recreational activities are people doing in Weston?

The two most popular recreation activities in Weston are hiking on Weston trails and walking (80% of respondents).

Where do people like to recreate in Weston?

The top five favorite open space, park, recreational facilities, or natural areas in Weston are:

1. Town Green
2. Mass Central Rail Trail
3. Land's Sake Farm Stand/40 Acre Field
4. Burchard Park
5. Weston Memorial Pool

\*Compared to 2017...the Town Green remains a favorite open space area in Weston. Burchard Park rose in popularity, and the new Rail Trail took a new top spot.

# Open Space & Recreation Use in Weston: Why not?

Nearly 70% of respondents reported being happy with and regularly using Weston's OSR areas and programming.

19% of respondents indicated they are not aware of the programming available

## "Other" Responses

- Lack of programming for certain groups (adults, kids and adults with physical or intellectual disabilities, seniors)
- Discontiguous sidewalks and feeling unsafe along roadways
- Ticks in wooded areas
- Limited hours/seasonal opening of some offerings
- Issues with dogs (no dog park, unleashed dogs in other areas)

# In terms of Facilities and Activities, what improvements would you like to see for Weston's open space and recreation areas?

## Desired Improvements

- **Facilities & Activities:** more trails, expanded community events, more indoor facilities, more children's playgrounds, better public swimming, designated dog-friendly areas
- **Maintenance:** invasives & pest control, boardwalks over wet areas on trails
- **Accessibility:** markers & signage, public information about OSR opportunities

# Access, Populations Served, and Funding

## Accessing OSR in Weston

Survey respondents are more car-dependent in accessing OSR areas than they would like to be; people would like to walk or bike more to OSR areas.

## Who is OSR serving?

Almost half of respondents say all age groups well-served. Teens & seniors most underserved.

## Funding Priorities

- Open space: conserve rural character, protect water quality
- Recreation facilities: expanding connections for walking and biking to recreational areas

# Benches & Picnic Tables?

The majority of survey respondents support additional amenities (benches and picnic tables) to support trail users.

Would you support having Weston Forest and Trails Association or the Conservation Commission install picnic tables for small gatherings at select trailheads? (e.g. install two picnic tables by the abandoned baseball field at Cat Rock Drabbington Road trailhead)

536 responses | 118 skipped

**Yes, 73%**

**No, 27%**

Would you support having the Weston Forest and Trails Association or the Conservation Commission install benches for hikers to rest and take in the surroundings at select places along the trails?

540 responses | 114 skipped

**Yes, 83%**

**No, 17%**

Full survey summary is available at [WestonOSRP.com](https://WestonOSRP.com)

# Analysis of Needs

1. Resource Protection Needs
2. Community Needs
3. Management Needs

# Analysis of Needs

## **Changes/Updates to Consider for 2025 OSRP**

1. Transportation and Connectivity
2. Facilities and Programming Gaps
3. Resource Protection and Maintenance
4. User Conflicts and Amenities

# Analysis of Needs

## 1. Transportation and Connectivity

- Top funding priority from 2025 survey
- High usage and incomplete access
- Safety Concerns (request for more bike lanes on major roads)

# Analysis of Needs

## 2. Facilities Programming and Gaps

- More children's playgrounds requested by 22% in 2025 survey
- More indoor recreation facilities requested by 25% in 2025 survey
- All groups are generally well served with 13-18 and 70+ age groups a priority consideration

# Analysis of Needs

## 3. Resource Protection and Maintenance

- Better control of invasive species and forest pests was the top maintenance priority of 2025 survey
- Better boardwalks on wet trails sections was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest maintenance need from 2025 survey
- Additional staffing and operational funds for conservation land stewardship was supported by the 2025 survey

# Analysis of Needs

## 4. User Conflicts and Amenities

- Uncontrolled, off-leash dogs, especially at Cat Rock Park
- Dog waste
- Support for benches & picnic tables at select locations
- Need for more trash cans at trailheads and playgrounds
- Improved permanent bathrooms
- Better public awareness/accessibility to information

# 2017 OSRP Goals

1. Maintain, steward, and restore existing natural resources, open spaces, and recreational facilities.
2. Preserve the semi-rural character of Weston by protecting open space, preserving scenic and historic features, and implementing thoughtful development strategies.
3. Promote the use of recreational facilities and open space.
4. Improve access to and connectivity among open spaces, recreational facilities, and other important town resources.
5. Improve coordination among departments, committees, and local organizations working toward common goals for open space, recreation, and other related topics.

# What's been done since the 2017 plan?



# Progress since 2017



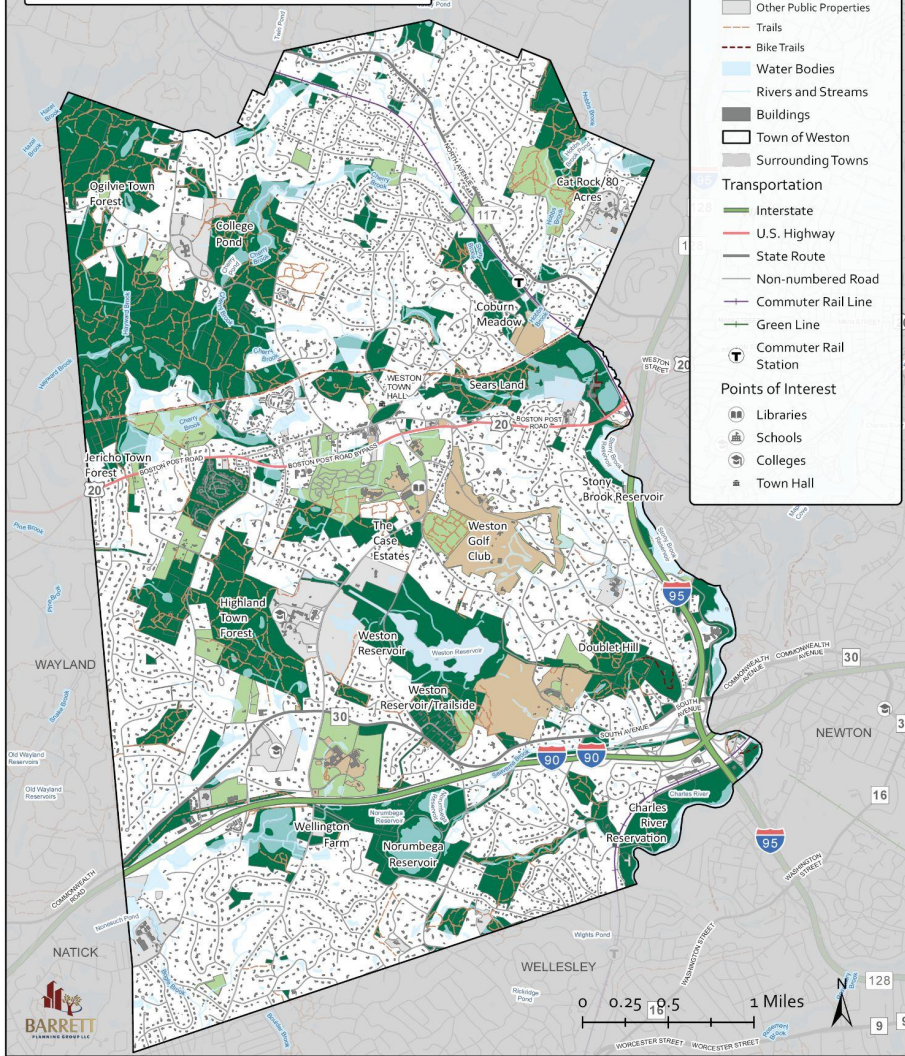
- o Upgraded the Town Pool facility
- o Developed the Weston portion of the MCRT
- o Completed Invasive water chestnut efforts on Charles River Kingsbury Cover
- o Completed the Coburn Meadow field edge restoration management plan
- o Completed the Weston Community Gardens expansion & rehabilitation project
- o Analyzed the need & ability of the Town to support additional active recreation facilities.
- o Entered into a 30-year lease on the property to ensure continued use of 40-Acre Field for agriculture.
- o Installed accessible Legacy Trail at Case Estates
- o Installed kiosks at trailheads and improved kiosk signage
- o Expanded off-road biking opportunities
- o Explored opportunities for increasing staffing for conservation land/open space initiatives and recreation facilities maintenance.

# Activity

1. Visioning activity
2. Small group activity (stations 1 and 2)
3. Report back to larger group

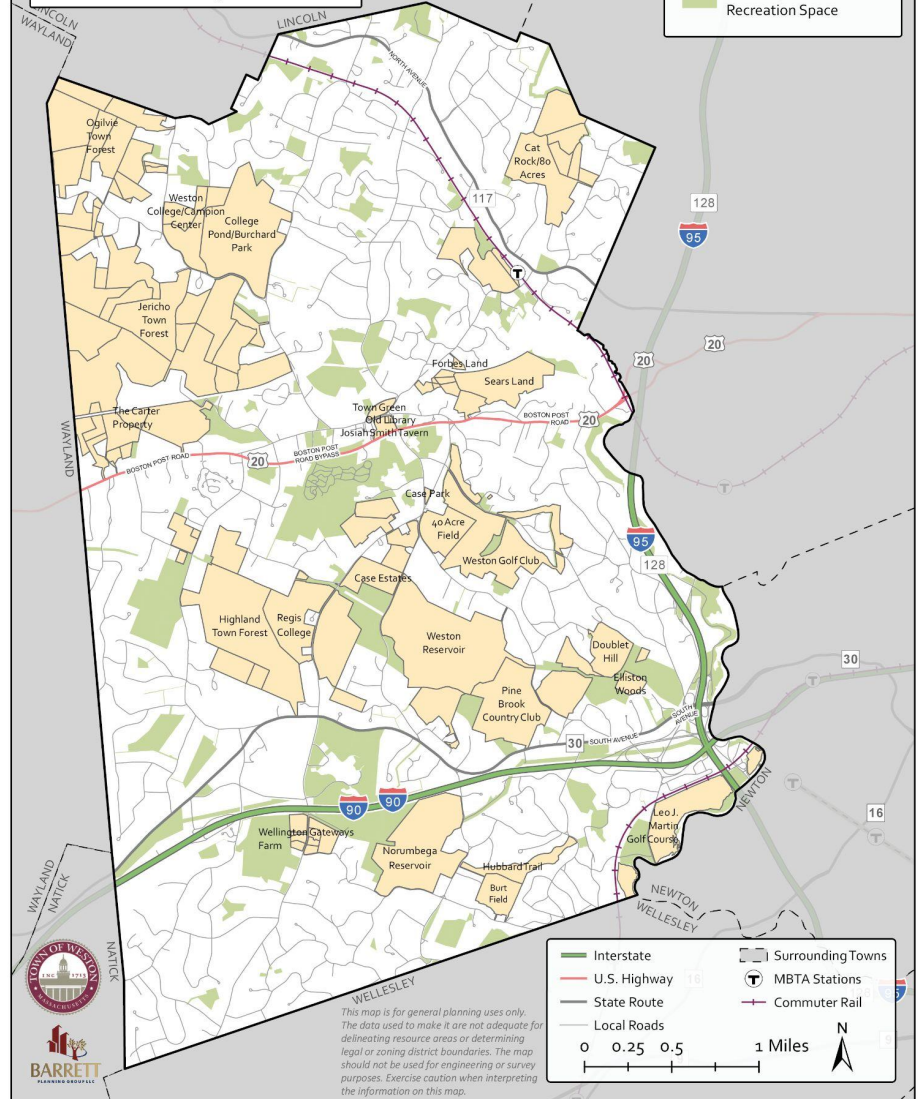
# Weston Open Space Land by Level of Protection

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston



# Unique Features

Data Sources: MassGIS, Town of Weston



# Identify Scenic Landscapes & Unique Environments

What gives Weston community character and makes the town unlike surrounding communities?

## Scenic Landscapes

### Privately Owned

Wellington Gateways Farm  
Dickson Farm  
Church Street  
Regis College  
Weston College/Campion Center  
Weston Golf Club  
Pine Brook Country Club  
Farm Road  
The Carter Property

### MWRA and State Properties

Weston Reservoir  
Norumbega Reservoir  
Leo J. Martin Golf Course

## Scenic Roads

Ash Street	Loring Road
Chestnut Street	Love Lane
Church Street	Lexington Street
Conant Road	Maple Road
Concord Road	Merriam Street
Crescent Street	Newton Street
Glen Road	Sudbury Road
Highland Street	Summer Street
Lincoln Street	Ware Street

### Town of Weston and the Weston Forest and Trail Association Land

Case Estates  
Town Green  
40-Acre Field, Case Park, and Case House  
Coburn Meadow and Stony Brook  
Cat Rock/80 Acres  
Burt Field and Hubbard Trail  
Jericho Town Forest  
Ogilvie Town Forest  
Highland Town Forest  
Sears Land  
Forbes Land  
Doublet Hill and Elliston Woods

## Cultural and Historic Areas

Local Historic Areas  
National Register of Historic Homes  
Old Library  
Josiah Smith Tavern

## Unusual Geologic Features

In 2017 OSRP, no unusual geologic features were singled out (previous reports highlighted the town's hilltops)

## What is missing?

*Are there areas that you are really happy with?  
What areas need improvement?*

## Goal 1: Maintain, steward, and restore existing natural resources, open spaces, and recreational facilities

Ongoing Actions	New (2025)
Continue to reduce the impact of stormwater on local water bodies via the NPDES MS4s & the Stormwater Permitting	Develop Japanese Knotweed Monitoring & Native Restoration Program
Continue deer monitoring program & review at the end of each season	Transition Forest Mgt. Program to new climate resilience & habitat improvement model
Continue to restore field edges, maintain stonewalls, and retain meadow habitat and scenic views	
Explore options for enforcing trail user compliance, particularly w/ regard to illegal trail cutting & dog walking	

## Goal 2: Preserve the semi-rural character of Weston by protecting open space, preserving scenic & historic features, & implementing thoughtful development strategies

Ongoing Actions	New (2025)
Support the Affordable Housing Trust in providing more affordable housing options in town per the Housing Production Plan.	Permanently protect a portion of Parcel 9 at the Case Estates through the Water Tank
Monitor opportunities for fee and easement acquisition	Develop plan for continued use of Dickson Riding Rings at Jericho Town Forest
Support the Case Estates Master Planning process to provide the best combination of agricultural, historic, recreational, conservation and other uses.	
Work to permanently protect Parcels 6 & 9 of the Case Estates as open space.	

### Goal 3: Promote the use of recreational facilities and open space

Ongoing Actions	New (2025)
Fulfill transition plans for ADA accessibility at recreation facilities based on ADA self-evaluation	Kick-off and promote new regular e-newsletter to WFTA members
Provide better awareness of and access to the Charles River	Leverage new Weston Observer weekly print paper for more regular outreach to all households in Weston
Explore ways to better provide recreational services to populations that are underserved.	
Release Conservation Connections quarterly newsletter; Promote use of new MapsOnline trail app	

### Goal 4: Improve access to & connectivity among open spaces, recreational facilities, & other important town resources.

Ongoing Actions	New (2025)
Support a Traffic & Sidewalk Plan that provides & improves sidewalks & bike paths that connect to schools, town center, public transportation & conservation trails	Install benches and picnic tables at select trailheads
Improve parking at trail heads	Parking Access Plan for Conservation Land
Improve trail marking signage so it is more user friendly	Trail Easement Inventory Analysis Plan

# Next Steps

- Incorporate public feedback into Needs Analysis
- Develop goals, objectives, and action items based on public input & committee guidance
- Compile draft plan & share with public & elected officials
- Public hearing for final plan
- Submit to DCS for review, feedback, and approval

