

WESTON

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Final Public Presentation | February 10th, 2026

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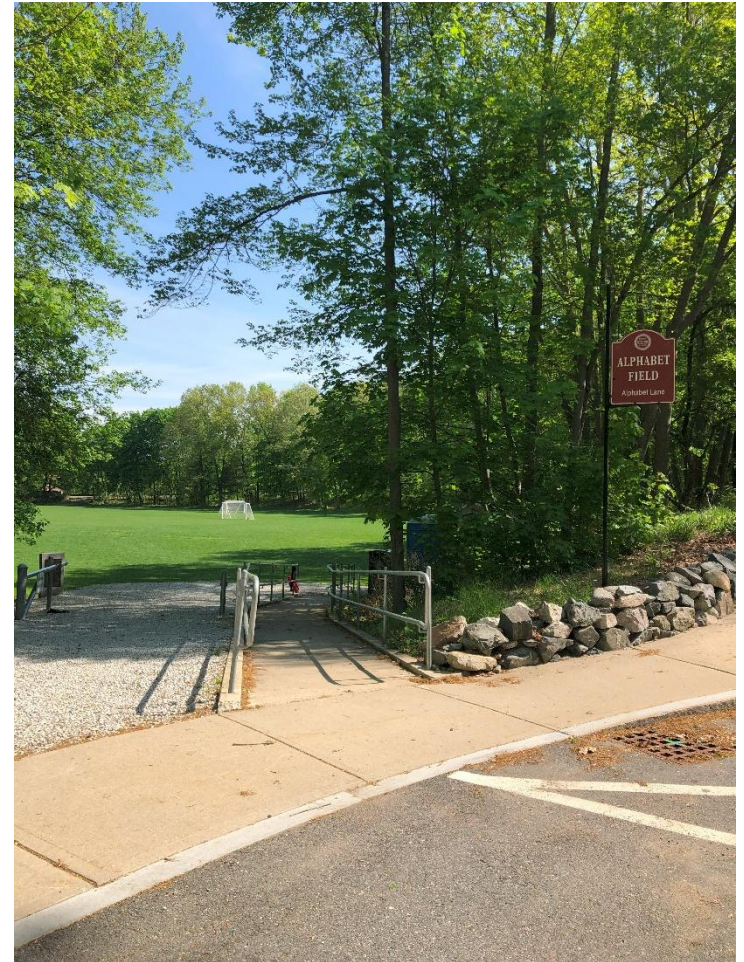
Hannah Peters, Committee on Open Space and Recreation Plan Co-Chair

Beth Marshdoyle, Committee on Open Space and Recreation Plan Co-Chair



Agenda

- WELCOME
- PROJECT OVERVIEW
- PRESENTATION OF OSRP
- PUBLIC COMMENT
- NEXT STEPS



What is an OSRP?

- State-directed planning document outlining a community's 10-year open space and recreation priorities & plan for achieving them
- Follows a process and format developed by the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
- Includes a process of community engagement

Why Do An OSRP?

- **Protect and enhance** open space and recreational resources to align with Weston's quality of life
- **Gain** eligibility for state grant programs (ex: Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities)
- **Guide** Community Preservation Act (CPA) expenditures and other town spending
- **Document** needs and goals to help achieve other funding

OSRP Timeline

Obtain and analyze required data and information in OSRP's first 4 Sections
(May-Jul '25)

Develop goals, objectives, and action items based on public input & committee guidance
(Fall '25)

Develop and distribute survey to residents
(Jul-Sep '25)

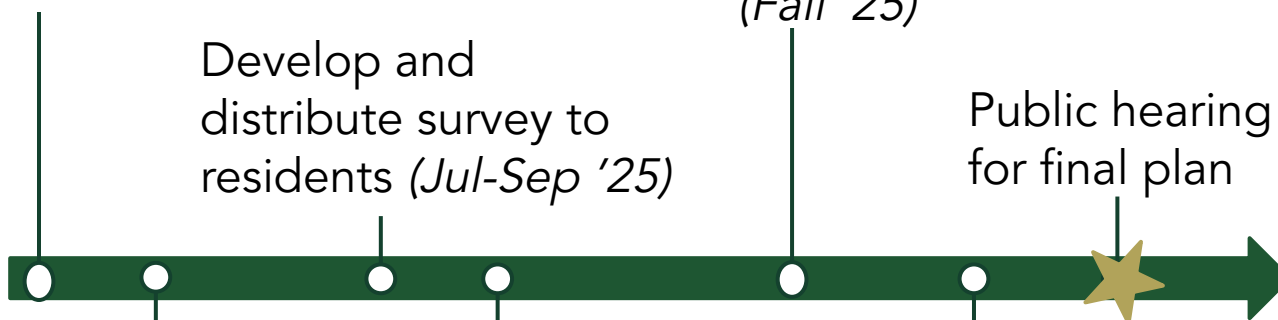
Public hearing for final plan

Submit to DCS for review, feedback, and approval
(Feb '26)

The Select Board appoints OSRP Advisory Committee
(May-Jun '25)

Community meeting for further public input
(October 26th & 27th)

Compile draft plan & share with public and elected officials



Committee on Open Space & Recreation Plan (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 Efforts

- Extensive survey outreach, tabling, flyer distribution
- Monthly meetings
- Working groups for OSRP sections
- Draft review & editing



Community Engagement Efforts

- ❖ Community Survey
 - English & Simplified Chinese
 - Online & in print at various locations around town
 - Open for 90 days (July - Sept)
 - 654 responses* (including 49 in Simplified Chinese)!
- ❖ Tabling
- ❖ Public Forums (Oct 26 & 27, 2025)
- ❖ Final Public Presentation

* Significant increase from 411 survey responses in 2017

Accomplishments Since the 2017 Plan

- Upgraded the **Town Pool** facility.
- Developed the Weston portion of the **Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT)**.
- Completed the **Weston Community Gardens** expansion & rehabilitation project.
- Entered into a 30-year lease with **Land's Sake** to ensure the continued use of the 40-Acre Field for agriculture year-round.
- Installed accessible **Legacy Trail** at Case Estates.
- Installed **kiosks** at select trailheads and improved kiosk **signage**.



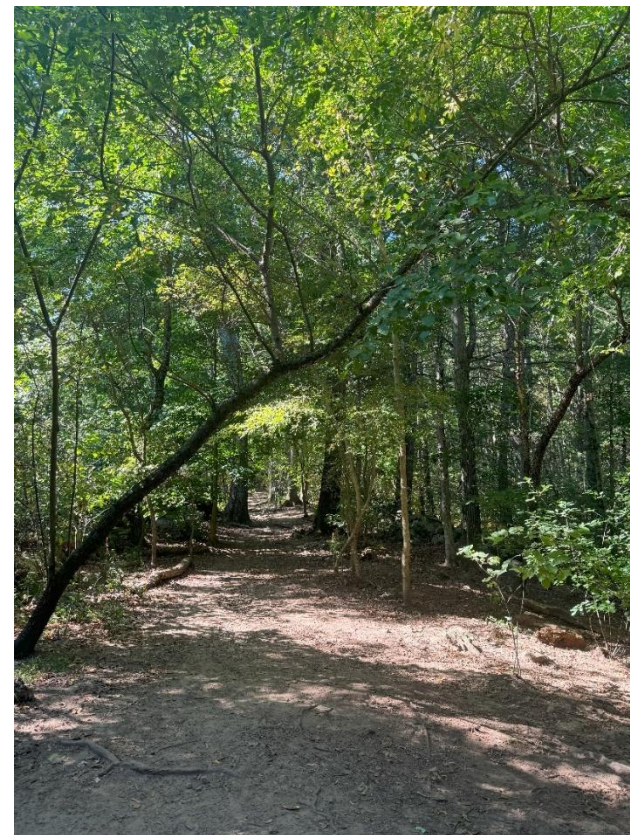
Accomplishments Since the 2017 Plan

AND MORE!

- Analyzed the need & ability of the Town to support additional active recreation facilities, resulting in new pickleball and cricket facilities.
- Expanded off-road biking opportunities.
- Improved tick and poison ivy management.
- Explored opportunities for increasing staffing for conservation land/open space initiatives and recreation facilities maintenance.
- Continued to manage and expand the Town's off-road trail network.
- Permanently protected a portion of Parcel 9 at the Case Estates.
- Enhanced recreational facilities and services for teens and aged 50+ by adding or renovating outdoor pickleball, tennis and basketball facilities, and developing recreational programs targeting those populations.

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



Analysis of Needs



Analysis of Needs

Resource Protection Needs

- ❑ Open space protection efforts need to focus on making connections to provide **better wildlife corridors, habitat blocks, and trail connections**.
- ❑ Open fields, meadows, and shrubby habitats need to be protected, maintained, or restored to provide both a **diversity of habitats** and the **quality of scenic views**.
- ❑ **Historic buildings, neighborhoods, and districts** contribute to the semi-rural character of Weston. Important open spaces within these neighborhoods and districts need to be protected.
- ❑ **Invasive species, forest pests, and white-tailed deer** need to be managed, particularly where they threaten sensitive or important resources and native species populations.
- ❑ **Local water bodies** need to be protected from development pressures, stormwater runoff, and invasive species.

Analysis of Needs

Community Needs

- ❑ **Sidewalks, road crossings, and trail connections** need to be developed to provide safe, effective linkages between open space areas, recreational facilities, and other important town facilities including the town center, library, schools, churches, and commuter rail stops.
- ❑ An assessment needs to be conducted to determine what **programming the teen and 70+ populations desire** and would participate in if additional active recreation facilities or programs were available.
- ❑ Several **recreational desires for facilities and activities** raised in the open space and recreation plan survey and community forums need to be further investigated
- ❑ The public needs **better access to information** about Weston's open space resources, recreational opportunities, and natural resource protection efforts.
- ❑ **Trail user amenities** need to be expanded, including prominence/availability of maps, kiosks, trail markers, and parking; trail condition improvements; and improvements for people with accessibility challenges.

Analysis of Needs

Management Needs

- ❑ Strategically provide more diversity in housing type and affordability in a way that **complements the town's semi-rural character** and **preserves valuable open spaces**.
- ❑ Strategize about how to move forward with land management, green infrastructure, and land protection efforts that are **adaptive to the anticipated impacts of climate change**.
- ❑ **Improve coordination** between departments, committees, and local organizations working toward common open space and recreation goals.
- ❑ **Additional staffing** for the stewardship of conservation land, other open spaces, and recreational resources.

2026 OSRP Goals

1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND CONNECTIVITY AMONG OPEN SPACES, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND OTHER IMPORTANT TOWN RESOURCES
2. PROMOTE THE USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE
3. MAINTAIN, STEWARD, AND RESTORE EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.
4. PRESERVE THE SEMI-RURAL CHARACTER OF WESTON BY PROTECTING OPEN SPACE, PRESERVING SCENIC AND HISTORIC FEATURES, AND IMPLEMENTING THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
5. IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARD COMMON GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS.

Ten-Year Action Plan

- Several objectives beneath each goal
- Includes a responsible party, timeline, possible funding sources, and priority

Example Structure of 10-Year Action Plan

Goal 1	Responsible Party	Funding Source	Timeline	Priority
Objective A				
Objective B				
Objective C				

Ten-Year Action Plan

1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND CONNECTIVITY AMONG OPEN SPACES, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND OTHER IMPORTANT TOWN RESOURCES
 - A. Enhance opportunities to travel throughout town without a motorized vehicle by exploring the feasibility of initiatives such as:
 - Incorporate **new Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan** into all aspects of trail & bicycle route development
 - Identify **town-wide pedestrian/bicycling routes** that travel on trails, sidewalks, and safe streets (such as Lexington's ACROSS program)
 - Collaborate with MBTA and DCR to pursue Feasibility Study for **Fitchburg Line Rail with Trail** concept
 - B. Improve user experiences on trails.
 - C. Improve **parking** at select recreation facilities.

Ten-Year Action Plan

2. PROMOTE THE USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

- A. Increase usability of recreational facilities and trails for **users with mobility, sight, hearing, and other impairments**, in compliance with ADA standards and following the lead of other organizations such as Mass Audubon and Trustees, and also nearby communities that have implemented similar initiatives.
- B. Provide better awareness of and access to the **Charles River**.
- C. Continue to provide and support appropriate recreational services targeting all populations, exploring ways to enhance services **targeting teens and those over 70** without sacrificing service to other populations.
- D. Seek ways to distribute trail maps and other open space-related information to the public through **kiosks, social media, apps, websites, local media outlets**, and other means.

Ten-Year Action Plan

3. MAINTAIN, STEWARD, AND RESTORE EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.
 - A. Continue to **reduce the impact of stormwater** on local water bodies via the NPDES General Permit for MS4s and the Stormwater Permitting Authority.
 - B. Maintain conservation land and conservation restriction property baseline **inventory** and encroachment **monitoring program**.
 - C. Evaluate the effectiveness and explore the expansion of the **Deer Management program**.
 - D. Monitor and explore **treatment options for invasive plants and pests** when they threaten sensitive or important resources.
 - E. Explore the possibility of providing a **dog park** as a way to meet the needs of dog owners while reducing the negative impact of dog use at other open spaces.

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Ten-Year Action Plan

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3. MAINTAIN, STEWARD, AND RESTORE EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.
 - F. Continue to partner with ACO and mountain biking community to **enforce trail user compliance**, particularly with regard to illegal trail cutting and dog walking
 - G. Re-establish **data collection** program from long-term habitat plots in Weston's forests.
 - H. Encourage native species populations through long-term **native plant and wildlife restoration projects**
 - I. Continue to implement Weston's **Climate Adaptation Plan** *Weston Ahead*
 - J. Transition **Forest Management Program** to new climate resilience and habitat improvement model

Ten-Year Action Plan

4. PRESERVE THE SEMI-RURAL CHARACTER OF WESTON BY PROTECTING OPEN SPACE, PRESERVING SCENIC AND HISTORIC FEATURES, AND IMPLEMENTING THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
 - A. **Support the Affordable Housing Trust** in providing more affordable housing options in town per the Housing Production Plan.
 - B. **Acquire parcels** in fee, easements, or conservation/agricultural/preservation restrictions on parcels that are important from an environmental, recreational, historic, or scenic perspective (see **Appendix A: Lands of Open Space Interest List**).
 - C. Support the **Case Estates Master Planning** process to provide for the best combination of agricultural, historic, recreational, conservation, and other uses.
 - D. Permanently protect **Green Power Farm** and the **Community Gardens**
 - E. Continue to restore field edges, maintain stonewalls along field edges, and retain meadow habitat and scenic views.

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Ten-Year Action Plan

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4. PRESERVE THE SEMI-RURAL CHARACTER OF WESTON BY PROTECTING OPEN SPACE, PRESERVING SCENIC AND HISTORIC FEATURES, AND IMPLEMENTING THOUGHTFUL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
 - F. Develop a plan for continued use of **Dickson Riding Rings** at Jericho Town Forest
 - G. Update Conservation Commission's **Tree Removal Policy** to strengthen mitigation requirements and protect Weston's tree canopy.
 - H. Follow through with the remaining goals of the **Recreation Master Plan** as appropriate.
 - I. Consider adding **playgrounds** to strategic spaces in northern and southern sections of town, as well as the areas identified in **Section 5C: Parks & Open Space Equity**.
 - J. Support the preservation and development of **Wellington/Gateways Farm** Historic Heritage Overlay District, including development of a Heritage Loop Trail at the Blainey Aquifer.

Ten-Year Action Plan

5. IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARD COMMON GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS.
 - A. Host **bi-annual Open Space and Recreation Summit** with participation from the Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Planning Board, Select Board, Weston Forest and Trail Association, Land's Sake, Agricultural Commission, Traffic and Sidewalk Committee, Sustainability Committee, associated Town staff, and others as deemed appropriate to coordinate around projects such as:
 - Stewardship and management of open spaces and recreational facilities
 - Updates to and progress on parcels and easements shown in **Appendix A: Lands of Open Space Interest List**
 - Advancing trail connectivity through new development permitting, easement acquisition, pedestrian/bicycling long-haul routes, new sidewalks, and other means
 - Expanding public outreach, involvement, and programming efforts
 - Improving ADA accessibility on open spaces and recreational facilities
 - Coordinating with other local and regional open space and recreational initiatives
 - Monitoring progress on this Action Plan

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Ten-Year Action Plan

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5. IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARD COMMON GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS.
 - B. Continue **seasonal coordination of playing fields** among recreational groups.
 - C. Continue and enhance where necessary **maintenance practices** for recreational fields, facilities, and open spaces.
 - D. **Enhance collaboration** of like-minded recreation-related service providers to better serve resident needs.

Full Plan Available!



WestonOSRP.com 

Public Comment



Next Steps

- ❑ Consider feedback from public & boards/committees
- ❑ Solicit letter of support from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- ❑ Submit to the MA Division of Conservation Services for review, feedback, and approval

