

DRAFT
Framingham Open Space and Recreation Plan
Executive Summary

July 2008

Prepared by the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Community and Economic Development

A. Purpose of the Plan

The overall purpose of the OSRP is to serve as a guide for protecting, managing, improving, and expanding Framingham's open space and recreation resources in the face of continuing development pressures. More specifically, the purposes of this OSRP are:

- To identify unique open space and recreation assets places that have ecological, recreational, civic, and/or scenic value,
- To prioritize the open space and recreation needs for all citizens of Framingham,
- To identify specific goals, objectives, and recommended priority actions, and
- To qualify the Town for State and Federal cost-sharing funds that might be available for capital improvement and acquisition projects.

B. Process of Revising the Plan

This 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is an update of earlier versions of the Plan. In September 2007 an Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee was established to oversee revision of the Plan. Assisted by Framingham's Planning and Economic Development, the Conservation Commission staff, and Park and Recreation staff, the OSRP Committee undertook a comprehensive analysis of Framingham's Open Space and Recreation resources. Inventories of the Town's open space, recreation, and historic and cultural resources were updated. The Town's open space preservation and recreation needs were assessed through public forums, widely distributed surveys, and many meetings with municipal staff.

C. Goals of the Plan

The end result of the planning process is a coordinated set of goals and objectives and a five-year action plan that outlines specific tasks to meet the Town's open space and recreation goals. The open space and recreation goals are as follows.

- Maintenance and improvement of the current inventory of active recreational facilities
- Maintenance and improvement of the current inventory of Conservation and open space parcels

- Conservation of natural resources and open space to protect water resources, wildlife habitat, and horticultural, agricultural and sylvan opportunities, and passive recreational opportunities
- Creation of new recreational facilities to meet unmet needs
- Other efforts that will support open space and recreation

D. Implementation of the Plan

Action items designed to achieve each goal are spelled out in the Action Plan. There, detailed actions, responsible parties, and specific timeframes are identified. Since this Open Space and Recreation Plan reflects the substantive input from and broad consensus of many Town departments, boards, commissions, and committees, non-profit organizations, and resident volunteers, and spells out specific attainable tasks, we are hopeful that implementation will be swift and effective.

E. Highlights of the Five-Year Action Plan

This plan focuses on a few key goals and actions.

1. Ensuring aggressive implementation of the plan.

Action 5A2: Form a new permanent Open Space and Recreation Implementation Committee (OSRIC) to monitor progress of the plan, communicate with involved departments, and conduct research and develop recommendations as noted in this plan

Action 5C1: Appoint a new CPA study committee. The surveys and forums identified an interest in taking another look at the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a means to fund some of the actions in this chapter. This would provide one means of funding.

Action 5B1: Research the list of possible funding mechanisms listed in Ch 7 and develop a report recommending funding strategies for Framingham

2. Focusing on the maintenance of existing facilities and programs.

Action 1A4: Undertake actions identified in Table 7-1 for Recreation Facilities in Need of Improvements

Action 2A2: Continue and expand Conservation land steward program and workdays to help maintain and improve and make consistent open space parcels

3. Protecting open space in Framingham

Action 3A1: Research private land, tax title land, other town land, etc. and identify priority parcels for acquisition (based on size, current land use, ecological diversity, presence of rare species, adjacency to protected land, etc.)

4. Creating non-motorized corridors in Framingham

Objective 4A: Create and complete corridors for non-motorized passage that serve as greenways and provide access to passive and active recreation facilities, places of work, school, public transportation connections, or other points of interest in town.