

# SECTION

## 9

### SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Seven-Year Action Plan addresses the objectives of the Open Space and Recreation Plan and identifies actions to meet these objectives. While the Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee believe that all of the objectives are important and should be pursued, it is also necessary to establish priorities for the next seven years. At the public forum held on September 23, 2010, members of the Committee and the public identified fourteen objectives for priority implementation during the next seven years. These objectives are represented graphically on the Seven Year Action Plan Map, and are identified in Table 9-1 below.

While these objectives have been identified as priorities for the next seven years, all goals and corresponding objectives from this plan are listed in the far left column of the foldout Table 9-1 in the same order as they appear in Section 8. They are followed in the same row by recommended actions, the board or group responsible for implementation, start dates, and potential funding sources. By implementing the recommended actions, each of the objectives will begin to be realized.

The Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee recommend the creation of two new committees to help facilitate implementation of the Plan: an Open Space Committee, and a Trails Committee. Successful implementation will also require the participation of existing Town boards, committees and staff, including but not limited to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Board of Health, Fire and Water Districts, Town Planner, Parks & Recreation Director, Health Director and others.

Accomplishing the actions identified in this section will require time and commitment from dedicated volunteers. Where money is required, it may be sought from state and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, foundations, and individual donations in addition to municipal funds. A broad base of community support for the Open Space and Recreation Plan should facilitate fundraising to achieve its goals and objectives.

It is important to reflect on the Town's achievements since the last Open Space and Recreation Plan update in 2010. Below are some of the activities completed in the last seven years, which provide positive momentum for continued progress with open space and recreation goals and objectives in the future:

- 2010: Added a new Water Supply Protection District for the Hannegan Brook Public Water Supply Well
- 2010: Completed a phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) on Town-owned property in support of a park in Montague City
- 2011: Reconstituted the Agriculture Commission
- 2012: Passed a Right to Farm bylaw
- 2012: Constructed a new pedestrian bridge at the North Street Wildlife Management Area
- 2013: Finalized re-construction of Unity Park with many new elements such as playground equipment, a water spray feature, rain gardens, walking path, outdoor exercise stations, volleyball court, etc.
- 2016: Built the Unity Skate Park
- 2016: Completion of Greenfield Road bike and pedestrian bridge
- 2016: Completion of bike path crossing at Montague City Road
- 2016: Posting and blazing a trail system at the Dry Hill Conservation Area
- 2016: Completed a planning study for improvements to Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant
- 2016 – 2017: Worked with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments on draft revisions to the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations to protect natural resources
- 2010 – 2017: About 523 acres were permanently protected from development
- 2017: Initiated planning for improvements to Montague Center Park
- 2017: Installed pedestrian lighting at Peskeomskut Park.

Table 9-1: Recommended Action Steps to Implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan

OSRP Goal	Action Items	Action Type	Project Area	Responsible Party	Start	Potential Funding	
<b>A</b>	<b>Promote and protect our rivers and waterways for improved habitat and recreation opportunities</b>	Develop public boating, fishing, and viewing access to the CT River below Turners Falls Dam	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	FirstLight	2019	private investment
		Improve Public access to the CT River at the Rock Dam and Poplar Street for fishing, boating, and wildlife viewing	Physical Improvement	Montague City	FirstLight	2020	private investment
		Increase flow in the CT River Bypass to support habitat and recreation	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	FirstLight	2019	private investment
		Improve fish passage at the Turners Falls Dam and Canal	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	FirstLight	2019	private investment
		Develop public boating and fishing access to the Millers River in Millers Falls off Newton Street	Physical Improvement	Millers Falls	Town Planner, Millers Falls Improvement Assoc.	2018	DCR Rec Trails Grant, PARC
		Promote preservation and public access at Cabot Camp	Policy	Millers Falls	Town Planner, FirstLight, Land Trust	2020	private investment, Land Trust, HWCF, LAND
		Protect the Millers River oxbow in Millers Falls	Policy	Millers Falls	Conservation Commission, Eversource, Land Trust	2020	private investment, Land Trust, HWCF, LAND
		Evaluate locations and develop a public swimming area	Policy	Townwide	Parks and Rec, Public Swimming Sub-Comm.	ongoing	Staff time, volunteer time, PARC
		Implement bio-engineering recommendations in the Sawmill River Rehabilitation Plan	Physical Improvement	Montague Center	Franklin County Conservation District	2021	MEMA Hazard Mitigation Program, DEP s.319 Program, NRCS
		Plan and prepare for recreational opportunities in the CT River Bypass	Policy	Turners Falls	Town Planner, Town Administrator	2017	Direct Local Technical Assistance
		Support implementation of FirstLight's Erosion Control Plan on the CT River	Policy	Millers Falls	Conservation Commission	ongoing	private investment
		Mitigate seasonal flooding on Montague City Road with bio-engineering	Physical Improvement	Montague City	DPW		MEMA Hazard Mitigation Program, DEP s.319 Program
<b>B</b>	<b>Provide access to high quality parks in each village</b>	Rehabilitate Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant into an ADA Accessible park	Physical Improvement	Lake Pleasant	Parks and Rec, Lake Pleasant Village Assoc.	2019	CDBG, PARC
		Rehabilitate Montague Center Park	Physical Improvement	Montague Center	Parks and Rec	2020	Town Funds, KaBoom Grant
		Rehabilitate Spinner Park	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, RiverCulture	2017	CDBG
		Rehabilitate Highland Park	Physical Improvement	Millers Falls	Parks and Rec	2021	Town Funds, CDBG, PARC
		Maintain Unity park, Skatepark, and Peskeomskut Park	Physical Maintenance	Turners Falls	Parks and Rec, DPW	ongoing	Town Funds
		Explore potential for a public park on municipal land in Montague City	Physical Improvement	Montague City	Parks and Rec	2022	Direct Local Technical Assistance
		Assess adequacy of existing recreational opportunities for senior citizens	Policy	Townwide	Parks and Rec/Council on Aging	2018	Direct Local Technical Assistance
		Support programming and investment at the Great Falls Discovery Center	Policy	Turners Falls	Friends of GFDC, Board of Selectmen, RiverCulture	Ongoing	volunteer time
		Develop a public park/ Native American Culture interpretive trail below the Turners Falls Dam	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, RiverCulture	2024	National Park Service ABPP, ArtPlace, Foundations

OSRP Goal		Action Items	Action Type	Project Area	Responsible Party	Start	Potential Funding
C	Develop a comprehensive trail network for walking and cycling that connects the villages to open space	Establish a Trails Committee	Policy	Townwide	Board of Selectmen	2018	Volunteer Time
		Develop and implement a town-wide trails master plan, and publicize trails maps	Policy	Townwide	Trails Committee	2018	Staff Time
		Develop and connect the Montague Plains, Dry Hill, and Chestnut Hill Trail systems	Physical Improvement	Townwide	Trails Committee, DFW, TFWD	2019	DCR Rec Trails Grant
		Formalize the recreational trail system on the Montague Plains	Physical Improvement	Townwide	Trails Committee, DFW	2020	DCR Rec Trails Grant
		Improve trailheads off of Ripley Road, Spaulding Brook and W. Chestnut Hill Road with signage, trail maps, and parking	Physical Improvement	Montague Center	DFW, Trails Committee	2020	DCR Rec Trails Grant
		Formalize walking paths at Cabot Woods	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	FirstLight	2021	Private Investment
		Evaluate potential for walking paths around Lake Pleasant and Green Pond	Physical Improvement	Lake Pleasant	TFWD, Lake Pleasant Village Assoc.	2019	DCR Rec Trails Grant
		Improve safety and accessibility of the hillside pathways in Turners Falls	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	DPW	2019	DCR Rec Trails Grant
		Implement recommendations from the Turners Falls Livability Plan to improve access to the Canalside Trail Bike Path	Physical Improvement	Turners Falls	Town Planner	2020	DCR Rec Trails Grant
D	Preserve farming as a way of life in Montague	Pursue permanent protection of prime farmland soils and preservation of farms through APRs and CRs	Policy	Montague Center	Land Trusts, DAR, Town Planner	ongoing	Landscape Partnership Program, APR Match, HWCF
		Ensure that the Right-to Farm Bylaw is implemented	Policy	Townwide	Agricultural Commission	ongoing	Volunteer Time
		Develop a brochure and webpage promoting Montague farms and forest product businesses	Policy	Townwide	Agricultural Commission	2018	Volunteer Time, farm and business investment
		Support existing and proposed markets for local farm and forest products	Policy	Townwide	Board of Selectmen	ongoing	Volunteer Time
		Offer assistance to farmers and woodlot owners on planning for the conservation and transition of their land	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner, Land Trusts, UMass Extension	ongoing	UMass Extension, Land Trusts, Staff time
E	Preserve our pristine drinking water resources, habitat corridors, and special places	Develop a prioritized list of parcels to protect	Policy	Townwide	Conservation Commission	2018	Staff time, volunteer time
		Evaluate town-owned tax title properties and Chapter 61 parcels for their conservation and recreation value	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	2018	Staff time
		Inventory water district parcels and identify parcels that are not permanently protected	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner, TFWD, MCWD	2019	Staff time
		Review criteria for evaluating offers of CRs and APRs	Policy	Townwide	Conservation Commission	2019	Staff time
		Evaluate current water supply protection bylaws and floodplain management regulations	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	2019	Staff time, Direct Local Technical Assistance
		Implement best management practices for road maintenance in water supply protection areas	Policy	Townwide	DPW, MassDOT	2020	MassDOT, Mass Rural Watershed Coalition
		Publicize ongoing research and ecology of the Montague Plains	Policy	Townwide	DFG, Conservation Commission	ongoing	DFG, Staff Time
		Evaluate local regulations to address use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials	Policy	Townwide	Planning Board, Town Planner	2019	Staff time

OSRP Goal	Action Items	Action Type	Project Area	Responsible Party	Start	Potential Funding	
F	Green our villages	Propose zoning amendments that encourage well planned development and redevelopment in village centers	Policy	Townwide	Planning Board, Town Planner	2017	EOEEA Landscape Partnership Grant
		Propose adoption of an Open Space Residential Design Development bylaw	Policy	Townwide	Planning Board, Town Planner	2017	EOEEA Landscape Partnership Grant
		Adopt changes to the Montague Subdivision Regulations that promote Low Impact Development (LID)	Policy	Townwide	Planning Board, Town Planner	2017	EOEEA Landscape Partnership Grant
		Incorporate Green Infrastructure and LID into all Town building and roadway projects	Physical Improvement	Townwide	Town Planner, DPW	ongoing	MassDOT, DEP 604b and s319 grants
		Pursue MassDOT Complete Streets Program	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner, DPW	2018	MassDOT
		Expand Turners Falls Tree Inventory throughout Town	Policy	Townwide	Tree Committee	2019	Direct Local Technical Assistance, volunteer time
		Develop a public shade tree planting and management plan	Policy	Townwide	Tree Committee	2020	Direct Local Technical Assistance
		Continue the Homesteading Program to promote historic preservation and redevelopment of villages	Policy	Townwide	Town Administrator, Town Planner	ongoing	Town Funds, Private Investment
		Continue Montague's representation on the Franklin Regional Brownfields Program to help cleanup properties	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	ongoing	Environmental Protection Agency
		Evaluate Safe Routes to Schools to encourage youth walking and biking	Policy	Turners Falls	GMRSD, Town Planner	2018	Safe Routes to School Program
		Balance conservation with economic development at the Sandy Lane landfill area	Policy	Turners Falls	Town Planner, Selectmen	ongoing	Staff time
		Develop strategy to maintain existing sidewalks, and prioritize areas for new sidewalks	Physical Maintenance	Townwide	DPW	ongoing	Chapter 90
		Evaluate feasibility of a Green Burial Cemetery in Montague	Policy	Townwide	Cemetery Commission, Board of Health	2019	Staff Time
		Provide maintenance and signage for all municipal cemeteries	Physical Maintenance	Townwide	Cemetery Commission	ongoing	Town Funds
G	Get organized for Open Space and Recreation	Update Montague ADA Transition Plan	Policy	Townwide	Town Administrator	2018	Staff Time
		Reconsider adoption of the Community Preservation Act	Policy	Townwide	Town Administrator	2018	Staff time, volunteer time
		Consider creation of an Open Space Committee to oversee implementation of this plan	Policy	Townwide	Town Administrator, Town Planner	2017	Staff time, volunteer time
		Distribute copies of Open Space and Recreation Plan to all schools and libraries in Montague	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	2017	Town Funds
		Evaluate staff and volunteer capacities to implement OSRP goals	Policy	Townwide	Town Administrator	2017	Staff Time
		Evaluate effectiveness and adequacy of funding for the Henry Waidlich Conservation Fund	Policy	Townwide	Conservation Commission	2018	Staff Time
		Ensure Open Space and Recreation goals are considered in townwide capital planning	Policy	Townwide	Parks and Rec, Town Planner	2018	Staff Time
		Educate residents and visitors about existing environmental laws and conservation policies	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	2018	Staff Time
		Maintain positive working relationship with landholding state agencies , regulatory agencies and private utilities	Policy	Townwide	Town Planner	ongoing	Staff Time
		Research wetland protection bylaws in other towns and consider adoption of a local wetlands bylaw	Policy	Townwide	Conservation Commission	2019	Staff Time
		Update Open Space and Recreation Plan	Policy	Townwide	Conservation Commission or Open Space Committee	2024	Direct Local Technical Assistance, Staff Time

Notes: DCR = Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation; PARC = Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program; LAND = Massachusetts Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity Program; HWCF = Henry Waidlich Conservation Fund; MEMA = Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency; DEP = Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; NRCS = Natural Resource Conservation Service; CDBG = Community Development Block Grant Program; APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction; CR = Conservation Restriction; EOEEA = Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; MassDOT = Massachusetts Department of Transportation