



The Intervale on Main Street (S. Quill, Owner)

Photo by Steve Piazza

Section 6. Community Vision

6.A. Description of Process

The gathering of citizen input in support of the 2017-2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan update began in January 2017. The existing Open Space and Recreation Committee started meeting monthly instead of every other month in order to update the plan.

Other methods were used to solicit public input, such as:

- In March 2017, a survey was mailed to each residence. The response rate was eight (8) percent and those citizens who listed their names on the survey as interested in recreation and open space matters were contacted individually by the committee.
- In March 2017, a public forum was hosted to explain the Open Space and Recreation Committee's mission and goals, to explain the necessity of the plan, to show how much of the 2009 plan was implemented, and to get additional public input. The results of this forum are in the appendix (OSRP Public Forum Presentation, Breakout Session Results).

Both methods of public input were well advertised and promoted, including into Lancaster's Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods in South Lancaster. Enhanced outreach was intended to ensure that members of our EJ population neighborhoods had sufficient opportunities to participate in the planning and decision making process of our 2017-2024 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Committee members routinely attend other town committee meetings and public hearings. The Open Space and Recreation Committee seeks to collaborate with the Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Historical Commission, Recreation Committee, Trail & Bikeway Coalition, Friends of the Nashua River, Planning Board, Economic Development Team, Council on Disability, and Council on Aging on projects of mutual interest and has attended numerous meetings to further this aim.

Members of the Committee have also communicated with MassWildlife, the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA), the MassDEP TMDL project, the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge project manager, and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) office. The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) has also assisted with this plan update.

6.B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The overall vision of the Lancaster community has three equally important objectives:

- 1) Protect the natural resources of Lancaster, especially its water supply, agricultural lands and contiguous blocks of forestland so that residents and visitors may enjoy their benefits.
- 2) Improve Lancaster's recreational opportunities and facilities for the benefit of all age groups to access and enjoy.
- 3) Retain Lancaster's natural beauty, rural nature and historic character while integrating development.

To accomplish these objectives, the following actions must be addressed:

- Effectively maintain, manage and promote our natural and recreational resources.
- Balance passive recreation and active recreation needs.
- Foster greater community involvement through the efforts and programs of the Open Space and Recreation Committee, Recreation Department and Committee, Trail and Bikeway Coalition, Town Forest Committee, Friends of the Nashua River, Conservation Commission, Land Trust, Commission on Disability and Council on Aging.
- Support the goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan through communication, education and interaction among the various town boards, committees and departments, while working together on planning initiatives, policies and regulations as they relate to shared goals.