

OPEN SPACE PLANNING RESOURCES

Open Space Planning Introduction

What is planning?

Planning provides the opportunity to assess where you are, where you would like to go, and how you might get there.

What is an open space plan ?

An open space plan identifies existing open spaces, natural resources, and community priorities; and provides goals and strategies to serve as a framework for the protection and acquisition of open spaces in the future.

Why do an open space plan?

An open space plan:

- Provides a strong foundation for more informed decision making about local open space assets
- Allows a municipality to maintain and enhance the environmental and economic benefits of open space
- Provides an opportunity for citizen involvement
- Helps build consensus for open space protection
- Makes campaigns to raise public or private funds for open space protection more successful

Developing An Open Space Plan

1. **Open Space Plan Committee** Establish an open space plan committee and may wish to set up subcommittees
2. **Earlier Plans and Surveys** Check/review earlier open space plans, related attitude surveys, latest comprehensive plan especially looking at the following chapters or sections: Natural Resources, Water Resources, Agriculture and Forestry, Outdoor Recreation, Population, and Land Use Development and if applicable Coastal Resources.

3. **Discussions and Survey** Have discussions with municipal boards and committees, and local organizations about what they want concerning open space. Also survey residents and school children.
4. **Existing Protected Public and Private Lands** Inventory and characterize existing public lands owned by the municipality and the state and private lands protected by easements or deed covenants.
5. **High Value Natural Areas** Identify high value natural areas by overlaying Beginning with Habitat maps <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/maps/index.html> with maps that may be part of a comprehensive plan egs. working farms, scenic views, steep slopes, erodible soils, etc..
6. **Needs and Wants** Summarize natural resource needs and community needs and wants from survey, discussions, and comprehensive plan and if any earlier open space plan and surveys. Consider population, housing and development trends from comprehensive plan. **Review and consider climate change provisions to include from other open space plans, comprehensive plans and other resources.**
7. **Priorities** These are based on needs and wants.
8. **Vision** The vision may be for the overall plan or may be for each goal or as in Manchester’s open space plan may be for both.
9. **Goals (and objectives or policies)**
10. **Action Steps**
11. **Action Plan**

Some Open Space Plans (OSP)

Manchester ME Public Facilities and Open Space Plan 2004 (population 2560)

https://manchester.govoffice2.com/vertical/sites/%7B3B8C7150-3DCC-4652-A5F2-C595FDA4FEA5%7D/uploads/Long_Range_Open_Space_Plan.pdf

NOTE: Manchester OSP does not include climate change provisions but does exemplify a good plan. Review the Table of Contents and the Plan Summary. Note in the Plan Summary how “What People Want” ties in with the “Vision”. Also the Plan Summary’s

“Why This Plan Matters” brings up economic and health benefits that should be emphasized in every OSP. Read “ A Conservation Account Would Provide a Start” on pg. 24. On pg. 25 check out “Current Status/Maps” that were overlaid to determine high value lands and the resulting “High Value Natural Areas” map that is on pg. 26B. The implementation table/action plan is on pg. 39B.

Readfield Open Space Plan 2006 (population 2589)

<https://www.readfieldmaine.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3716/f/uploads/2e17f409-6c3e-46a1-b61a-158d67674fae.pdf>

NOTE: While this OSP doesn't include climate change provisions its worth checking out.

South Portland Open Space Plan 2019 (population 25304)

https://www.southportland.org/files/6415/9421/4011/Open_Space_Plan_Appendix_Q_to_Comprehensive_Plan.pdf

NOTE: This plan does include climate change provisions. On pg. 35 see bullet 5 of Vision Statement. Under “Goal: Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources and Wildlife” review “Strategy 6.3 Recognize the Role of Open Space in Climate Resiliency” on pg. 57.

Topsham Natural Areas Plan 2006 (population 8902)

<https://ecode360.com/documents/TO1615/public/575916961.pdf>

NOTE: This plan was mentioned during CC Share Time at the conference and provided by Victor Langelo Topsham CC chair and MEACC BOD member. The section on qualifying criteria for evaluating individual parcels for natural resource values (A method developed by Topsham CC.) starts on pg. 45.

Some Mass OSRP with Climate Change Provisions

Ashfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) 2018 (population 1734)

<https://www.ashfield.org/DocumentCenter/View/4010/Ashfield-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan-PDF>

NOTE: Under “Goal 1 Protect the natural systems that support wildlife and provide clean water and air” read Objective D and its Action Steps on pg. 139.

Longmeadow OSRP 2021 (population 15583)

https://www.longmeadow.org/DocumentCenter/View/5306/Longmeadow_OSRP_020121_FINAL-PLAN

NOTE: This is an updated plan that includes a new Goal 5. Read pgs. 81 -83.

Greenfield OSRP update 2021 (population 17375)

https://greenfield-ma.gov/files/2021_Open_Space_and_Recreation_Plan_Final_Draft.pdf

NOTE: Under new Goal C review objectives and actions in a 7 year action plan on pgs. 160 -164.

Other Resources

Beginning with Habitats Program Maps <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/maps/index.html>

NOTE: Beginning with Habitat maps are essential for both OSPs and comprehensive plans.

Municipal Climate Adaptation Guidance Series: Comprehensive Planning

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/CAGS_06_Comprehensive_Planning.pdf

NOTE: This is a useful guide with climate change provisions to consider for an OSP as well as for a comprehensive plan. Especially review pgs. 6 - 15.

Bowdoinham Comprehensive Plan 2014 (Population 788)

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Bowdoinham%202014.pdf

NOTE: This comprehensive plan includes many climate change provisions some of which could be applied to OSPs.

One Climate Future (Portland and South Portland) 2021 [https://](https://www.oneclimatefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/OneClimateFuture_FinalJan2021_Downsized.pdf)

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NOTE: This is considered the gold standard of climate change plans. The role of open space and open space planning ties in on pgs. 204 - 207 and pgs. 211-213.

Georgetown ME Climate Change Adaptation Report 2015 (population 1085)

http://gtownconservation.com/wp-content/uploads/climate-change-report_full-report.pdf

NOTE: The Georgetown CC was very involved in helping to develop this report.

Georgetown Climate Change Adaptation Report Update 2018

<https://seureservercdn.net/198.71.233.185/o9w.d2b.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/CCAR-update-November-15-2018-FINAL-2.pdf>

NOTE: The Georgetown Conservation Commission has been very involved in helping to implement the plan.

**Greenfield Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) Resiliency Plan
2021**

https://greenfield-ma.gov/files/Greenfield_MVP_Report_to_EEA_FINAL_-_June_2021.pdf

NOTE: Mass. OSRPs' climate change provisions sometimes key into MVP plans. Such a plan would be useful to supplement OSPs and comprehensive plans in Maine.