



North Reading Open Space and Recreation Plan

Conservation Commission

February 12, 2020

Tonight's Agenda

- What is the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)?
- How does it relate to the Conservation Commission?
- Feedback on draft OSRP
- Next steps



A scenic view of a large body of water, likely a lake or reservoir, with a forested shoreline in the background and reeds in the foreground. The text "Open Space and Recreation Plans" is overlaid in the center.

Open Space and Recreation Plans

What is open space?



Why complete an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)?

1. Support community protection and **stewardship** of vital resources
 - Identifies where you are
 - Where you want to go
 - How to get there over next 7 years
2. Completion of an OSRP makes municipalities **eligible to apply for State grants** to acquire and improve land for conservation and recreation



**Town of North Reading
Open Space and Recreation Plan**

Prepared by Brown Walker Planners, Inc. with the North
Reading Open Space Plan Committee

March 2013

Who is writing the North Reading OSRP?



- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
 - Ella Wise
 - Ralph Willmer



- OSRP Committee
 - Town Staff: Danielle McKnight, Maureen Stevens, Marty Tilton
 - Public members: Liane Gonzalez, Rita Mullin, Randy Mason, Phil Hertz



- Public
 - Survey and public meeting



What does the OSRP include?

1. Introduction
2. Plan Summary
3. Community Setting
4. Environmental Inventory and Analysis
5. Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest
6. Community Vision
7. Analysis of Needs
8. Goals and Objectives
9. Seven-Year Action Plan
10. Accessibility Report and miscellaneous

Who implements the Actions?

- Town staff
- Conservation Commission
- Community Planning Commission
- Select Board
- Board of Appeals
- Parks & Recreation Committee
- Land Utilization Committee

What is the planning process?

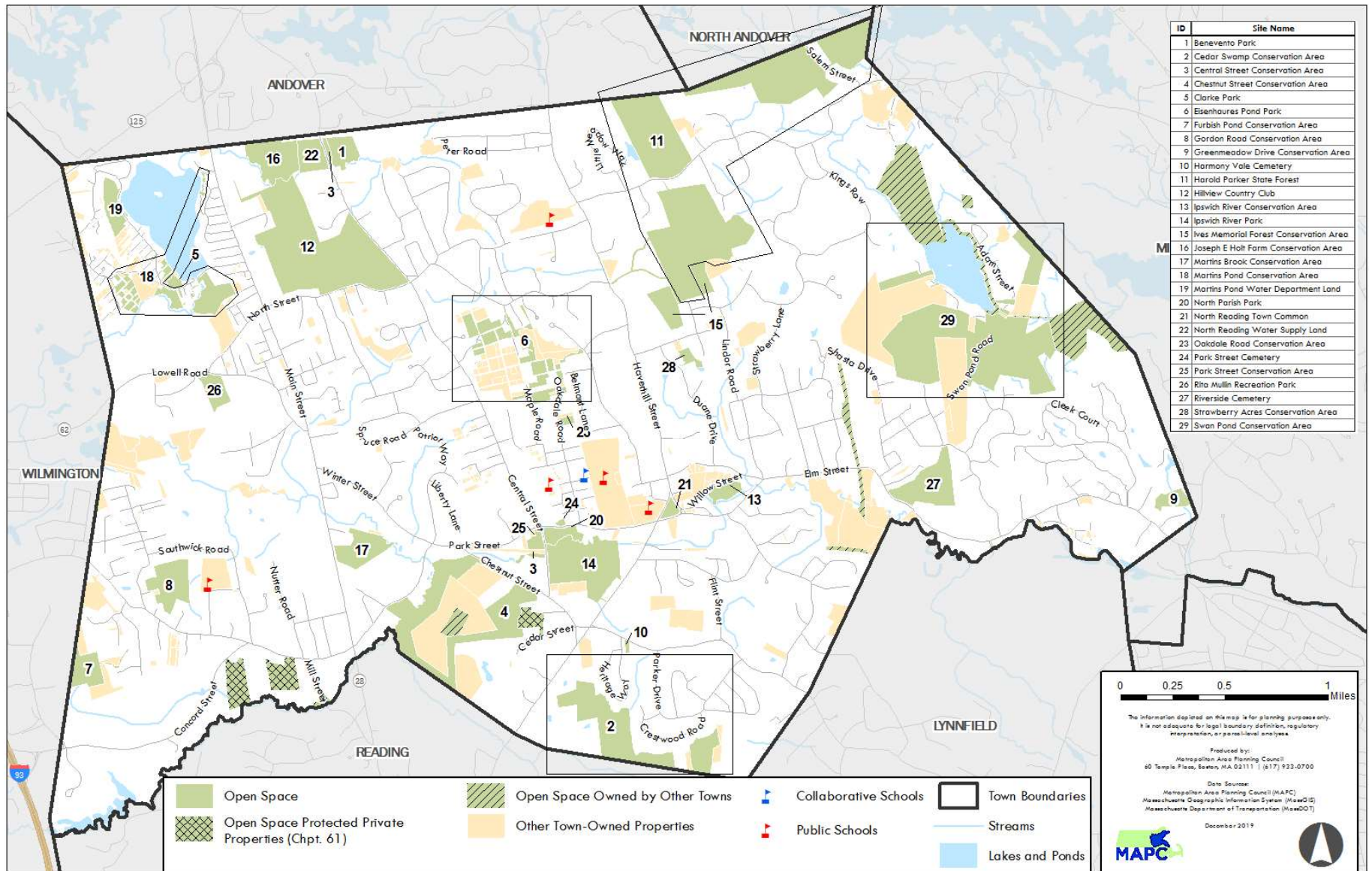


500 survey responses



A scenic photograph of a large body of water, possibly a lake or reservoir, under a clear blue sky with light clouds. In the foreground, there are tall reeds and grasses growing along the shoreline. In the background, a dense forest of trees with autumn-colored foliage lines the far shore. A small cluster of white buildings is visible on the right side of the far shore. The text "Open Space Inventory" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Open Space Inventory



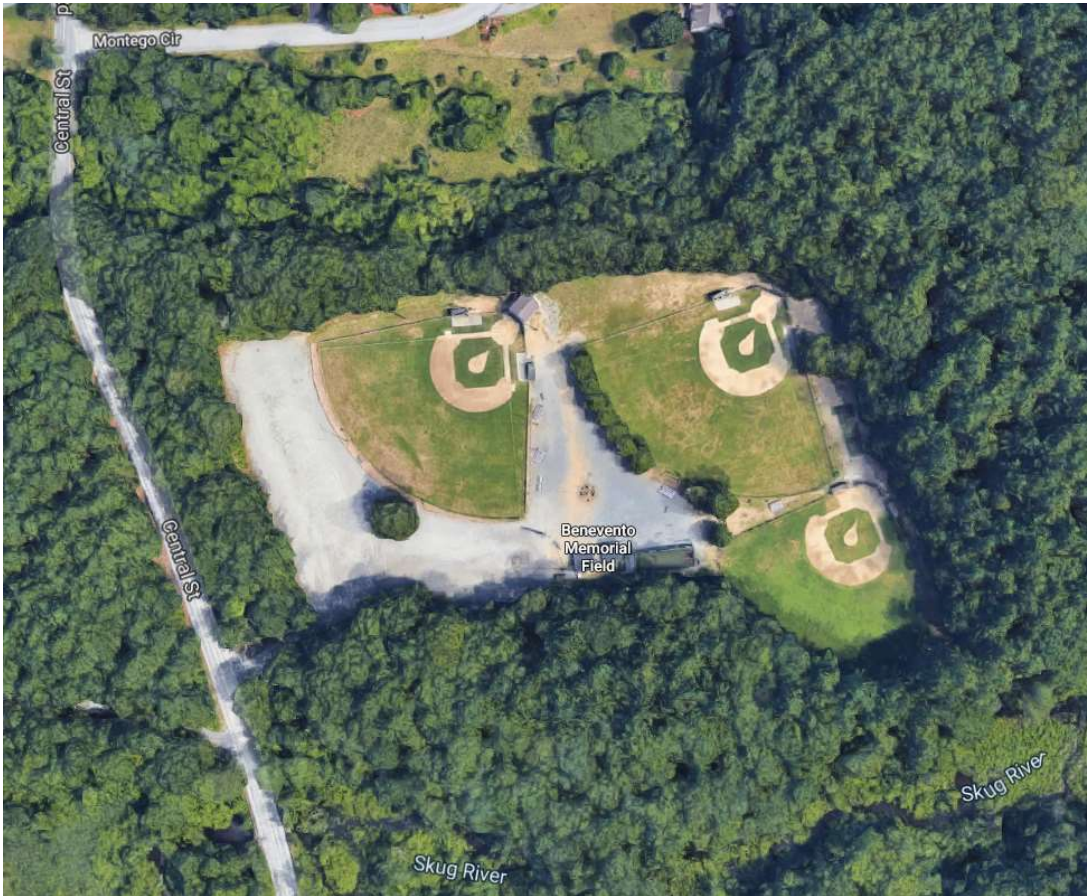
ID	Site Name
1	Benevento Park
2	Cedar Swamp Conservation Area
3	Central Street Conservation Area
4	Chestnut Street Conservation Area
5	Clarke Park
6	Eisenhaures Pond Park
7	Furbish Pond Conservation Area
8	Gordon Road Conservation Area
9	Greenmeadow Drive Conservation Area
10	Harmony Vale Cemetery
11	Harold Parker State Forest
12	Hillview Country Club
13	Ipswich River Conservation Area
14	Ipswich River Park
15	Ives Memorial Forest Conservation Area
16	Joseph E Holt Farm Conservation Area
17	Martins Brook Conservation Area
18	Martins Pond Conservation Area
19	Martins Pond Water Department Land
20	North Parish Park
21	North Reading Town Common
22	North Reading Water Supply Land
23	Oakdale Road Conservation Area
24	Park Street Cemetery
25	Park Street Conservation Area
26	Rita Mullin Recreation Park
27	Riverside Cemetery
28	Strawberry Acres Conservation Area
29	Swan Pond Conservation Area

Key Sites: Ipswich River Park



- Town owned
- 50 acres
- Paved trail, playground, pavilion, soccer fields, and more

Key Sites: Benevento Memorial Field



- Town owned
- 12 acres
- Publicly accessible
- Baseball fields, concession stand, pavilion, and bathrooms

Key Sites: Harold Parker State Forest



- State owned
- 2,050 acres
- Forested land that extends into a larger park in North Andover

Key Sites: Swan Pond Conservation Area



- Town owned
- 370 acres
- Publicly accessible
- Forested land

A scenic view of a large body of water, likely a lake or reservoir, under a clear blue sky with light clouds. The water is calm with gentle ripples. In the foreground, there are tall reeds and some green vegetation along the shoreline. In the background, a dense forest of trees with autumn-colored foliage (yellows, oranges, and browns) lines the far shore. A few small buildings are visible among the trees on the right side of the far shore.

Conservation Commission

Commission's Charge

“Conservation commissions play an important role in municipal open space planning, acquisition, and management. In fact, this was their primary role from the time commissions were created in 1957 until they began administering the Wetlands Protection Act in 1972. With so much time now required for wetlands permitting, it is a challenge for commissions to give open space planning the attention it deserves.”

- *Protecting Wetlands and Open Space: MACC's Environmental Handbook*
for Massachusetts Conservation Commissioners



Commission's Charge

- 1957 Conservation Commission Act ([MGL Ch. 40 §8C](#); HB 1.1.2)
 - Directs the commission to “conduct research into its local land areas”
 - Recommends that the commission have a “conservation and passive outdoor recreation plan”



Conservation Commission is responsible for the management and protection of to Town conservation areas, including more than 500 acres under the Commission's jurisdiction.

Location	Number of Parcels	Acres
Cedar Swamp Conservation Area	6	63
Central Street Conservation Area	2	3
Chestnut Street Conservation Area	3	81
Eisenhaures Pond Park	36	36
Furbish Pond Conservation Area	2	15
Gordon Road Conservation Area	5	24
Greenmeadow Drive Conservation Area	1	8
Ipswich River Conservation Area	2	8
Ives Memorial Forest Conservation Area	5	19
Joseph E Holt Farm Conservation Area	1	27
Martins Brook Conservation Area	3	20
Martins Pond Conservation Area	51	31
North Parish Park	2	7
Oakdale Road Conservation Area	3	2
Park Street Conservation Area	1	4
Strawberry Acres Conservation Area	1	4
Swan Pond Conservation Area	12	164

Actions assigned to Conservation Commission in 2013 OSRP

Actions related to the following goals:

- Identify lands of conservation interest for water quality, habitat protection, and historical preservation
- Monitor list of lands of conservation interest to track changes in ownership, availability, etc.
- Create management and maintenance program for all conservation lands, including building a network of volunteers to maintain conservation lands
- Evaluating sites for birding, canoe access, sports fields, etc.
- Develop trailheads where appropriate
- Promote water-saving techniques
- Work with neighboring towns to pursue inter-town trails and water protection



A scenic photograph of a calm lake under a clear blue sky with light clouds. The far shore is lined with a dense forest of trees in autumn colors. In the foreground, tall reeds and grasses grow along the water's edge. The text "Next Steps" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Next Steps

-
1. Release draft OSRP in late February
 2. Gather feedback and public comment
 3. Submit OSRP to State on March 13
 4. Revise OSRP based on State review



A scenic photograph of a calm lake. In the foreground, there is a sandy shore with a dense patch of tall, green reeds. A small wooden dock extends into the water from the left. The lake's surface is blue with gentle ripples. In the background, a distant shoreline is covered with a forest of trees in various shades of green and autumnal colors. A few small buildings are visible on the right side of the far shore. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy clouds.

Discussion

Discussion Questions

1. What are your top priorities related to open space and recreation?
2. Should the updated plan assign similar actions to the Conservation Commission?
3. What would be helpful to the Conservation Commission in implementing actions from the OSRP?
4. The 2013 OSRP includes a list of criteria to use to prioritize land for the Town to protect for conservation and/or recreation. Any suggestions to the list? (on next slide)



List of criteria for prioritizing land

- Lands that have high value for aesthetic purpose, scenic or community character;
- Areas that create contiguous open space;
- Areas that are considered critical for environmental reasons -- protection of natural resources, water resource protection, and wildlife corridors;
- Areas with potential to serve as neighborhood parks, playing fields or other sports facilities;
- Lands which contain unique landscape features;
- Lands located in aquifer protection districts;
- Lands which have high value for cross-over or shared use for other municipal purposes such as schools, cemeteries, or community buildings;
- Lands which include historic buildings and/or structures or have other historic value.



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