



TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

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MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 08, 2021
(Public Forum)

Barbara McNamee, Chair welcomed committee members & attendees, including Melissa Cryan to the Public Forum (via ZOOM).

Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Services presented a slide presentation on "What is an Open Space & Recreation Plan" -see attached.

Meeting is adjourned at or about 8:30 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 12, 2022.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANS



What is an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)?

- A document that describes a community's open space and recreation resources
- It is also a blueprint for action for open space and recreation decision-makers in a community
 - ▣ Conservation Commission
 - ▣ Parks Commission
 - ▣ CPC Committee
 - ▣ Planning Board
 - ▣ Local citizens



What is open space?

- Conservation land, forest land, agricultural land, parks, green buffers along roadways, etc.
- Also refers to undeveloped land with particular conservation or recreation interest, including vacant lots and brownfields that can be redeveloped into recreation areas, even community gardens
- Most of this land is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation or recreation, but not all open space is protected

Why write an OSRP?

- Integrates many sources of data into one comprehensive picture of a community's natural resources
- Educates residents about conservation and recreation issues and increases awareness of local resources
- Identifies actions that will protect and manage community's resources



Why write an OSRP?

- And, it makes communities eligible to apply for grants through the Division of Conservation Services



What are the OSRP requirements?

- ❑ The Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook details the requirements (<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/tx/osrp-workbook08.pdf>)
- ❑ Nine sections in the plan, highlights of which are the inventory of open space and the action plan



What is the process of writing an OSRP?

- First step is starting an Open Space and Recreation Committee
- Members can come from local boards, interested citizens, and municipal employees
- The lead author of the plan can be a volunteer, a municipal employee, graduate student, or a consultant (in some cases)
- Many plans are written on a shoestring budget with all volunteers



What is the process of writing an OSRP?

- Many times the OSRP sections are divvied up and a responsible party (or group of people) will be identified for each
- Everyone should help with the public participation process, which is the most important part of the planning process



What's an OSRP Update?

- ❑ OSRP Updates must contain all nine required sections of a plan
- ❑ What must be, could be, and doesn't have to be updated from one plan to the next is listed in the Workbook
- ❑ Municipality still must submit a complete plan for review



What are other important components of an OSRP to be aware of?

- Public participation process
 - ▣ Can take on many forms – survey, public meeting, workshop, etc.
 - ▣ Can combine different types – you know your community best
 - ▣ Helps to gather information on what land community members feel is important to protect, what recreational activities they'd like to see, etc.
 - ▣ Also helps to inform the community about the importance of open space and recreation in their community

What are other important components of an OSRP to be aware of?

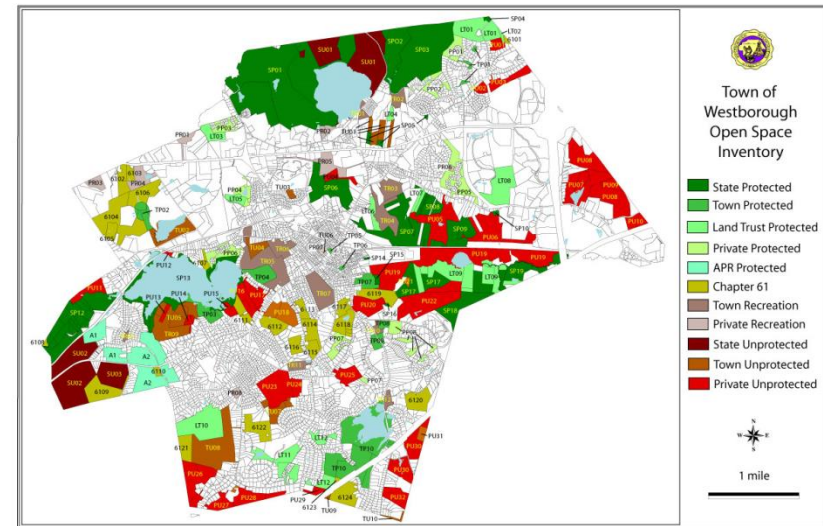
□ Environmental Justice

- Aggressively combat against environmental burdens unduly placed onto low-income communities and communities of color
- Neighborhood where:
 - 25% of the households of annual median household income that is equal to or less than 65% of the statewide median, or
 - 40% of its population is minority, or
 - 25% of its population lacks English proficiency
 - 25% or more of its population is minority and annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income
- Enhanced outreach must be completed in these locations

What are other important components of an OSRP to be aware of?

□ Maps

- Regional Context
- Environmental Justice (if applicable)
- Zoning
- Soils and Geologic Features
- Unique Features
- Water Resources
- Open Space Inventory
- Action Plan



What are other important components of an OSRP to be aware of?

- Open Space Inventory
 - ▣ Lists all municipally-owned conservation and recreation properties only
 - ▣ Includes information on management agency, zoning, public access, condition, recreation potential, etc.
- Action Plan
 - ▣ Lists actions that will implement the plan's goals and objectives with a responsible party and potential funding source identified, all listed in priority order

What are other important components of an OSRP to be aware of?

- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Report
 - ▣ Administrative requirements
 - ▣ Inventory of municipally-owned conservation and recreation properties only – use facility inventory form from Workbook
 - ▣ Employment practices



What is the OSRP approval process?

- Once the community has written the plan, email a copy to the Division of Conservation Services for review and approval
- A letter is sent to the community with any additions and/or changes that are required – the plan expires seven years (for seven year action plans) from the date of this letter
- If you feel that a specific comment is not relevant to your community, please let me know
- Once those issues are addressed in a final plan, the community will receive a final approval letter

Who can I call for help?

- Helpful resources are listed in the Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook (on our website)
- State agencies, as well as local and statewide non-profits
- Me!



What grant programs are available?

- ❑ LAND – municipal grant program to acquire land for conservation purposes
- ❑ PARC – municipal grant program to acquire land for recreation purposes, build a new park, or renovate an existing park
- ❑ Land and Water Conservation Fund – grant program for any of the purposes listed above, as well as trail development on conservation land
- ❑ Small Communities – financial assistance for communities with less than 6,000 residents to write an OSRP or to complete an appraisal

What grant programs are available?

- Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program – municipal grant program to protect drinking water supplies
- Landscape Partnership – grant program to acquire 500+ acres of land with two of three of the following entities working in partnership: federal, state, or local government, land trust
- Conservation Partnership – grant program for 501(c)(3)s for the acquisition of land

What's Melissa's contact information?

Melissa Cryan

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<https://www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-the-division-of-conservation-services>

Grant program information,
including grant applications and
deadlines, can be found here too

