

Section 6: Community Vision

Description of Process

The 2021 OSRP reflects fundamental principles common to Manchester’s previous OSRP with some adjustments as necessary to address the changing needs and desires of residents, as well as the changing challenges and opportunities for conservation and recreation.

Open space and recreation planning in Manchester is conducted in a cooperative effort between a number of Town departments and commissions, including the Open Space and Recreation Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Department, the Manchester Coastal Stream Team, the Manchester Essex Regional School District, the Planning Board, and the ADA Advisory Committee. Further, the Town collaborates with outside organizations, including local nonprofits and volunteer groups such as the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust (MECT), Essex County Greenbelt, and The Trustees of Reservations.

The OSRP process included meetings with two key advisory bodies that provided expertise and helped inform and guide the process: the Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC) and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee (OSRPAC). These core groups met regularly with MAPC staff to review and contribute to elements of the plan, prioritize recommendations, and assist with community engagement.

Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC)

The OSRC, whose members represent the open space and recreation stakeholders in Manchester, was instrumental in the development of this plan. The role of the OSRC was to review the goals of the 2014 OSRP, report on the progress of the 2014 Seven-Year Action Plan, make recommendations to the OSRPAC for action items to incorporate in the 2021 update, and review and provide feedback on meeting content and draft sections of the plan. This group was also charged with helping to guide outreach and assisting MAPC with sharing information about the process and plan with the community.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee (OSRPAC)

The OSRPAC was composed of a diverse group of representatives of various town departments, boards, and commissions, including the Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works, Planning, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Harbormaster, Council on Aging, ADA Committee, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, among others.

In order to maximize interaction and opportunities for feedback, the Town of Manchester and MAPC developed an OSRP Community Survey and held two virtual community forums and a virtual open house, as described in Section 2. Using the online platform, Qualtrics, MAPC was able to host a virtual open house immediately following the community forum on August 26, 2020.

The virtual open house presented meeting content through visuals and included associated questions to solicit community feedback on the 2014 OSRP goals. Participants were asked to express their opinions about whether these goals should still be considered high priority, if they

needed to be revised or modified, if they were still relevant or if they had already been accomplished. Participants were also invited to suggest new goals for the 2021 plan update. Not surprisingly, a majority of respondents were reluctant to remove most of the goals and objectives stated in the 2014 plan. Additionally, respondents were asked what the town should prioritize as it invests in its parks, open space and recreational facilities. The top five priorities that emerged from the virtual open house reinforce the goals of the previous plan and are listed in **Figure 34**.

Figure 34: Investment Priorities

As Manchester-by-the-Sea invests in its parks system, what should it prioritize?	
<i>(Top 5 Priorities)</i>	
1	Acquire land for conservation purposes (e.g., wildlife habitat and water supply protection)
2	Maintain existing parks and facilities
3	Improve access to parks and facilities through trails, sidewalks, bike lands, safer crossings
4	Improve existing parks and facilities through new playgrounds, athletic fields, paving, trees, buildings
5	Acquire land for recreational purposes (e.g., playgrounds, ballfields, boating)

MAPC and the OSRP Committee hosted a second community forum on May 26, 2021. This forum was set up as a virtual open house, with a brief presentation providing an overview of the OSRP planning process and the major phases of work to orient participants. During the presentation MAPC staff presented findings from the OSRP Community Survey and highlighted key themes of the draft 2021 Seven Year Action Plan. Following the presentation participants were encouraged to ask questions and were provided a link to visit the virtual open house to review, comment, and provide feedback on the draft 2021 Seven Year Action Plan. A Working Draft of the 2021 OSRP was posted on the Town website and circulated for public review comment, and feedback on June 7, 2021. The draft was also reviewed by town staff and boards and commissions for feedback. The full planning process is described in Section 2: Introduction.

Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The residents of Manchester have expressed a deep desire for their community to actively engage in environmental stewardship and to provide a wide array of recreational opportunities that meet the needs and interests of residents of all life stages and abilities. Manchester is envisioned as a beautiful seaside community blessed with a variety of landscapes and ecosystems that are preserved for their intrinsic ecological values and for social and recreational pursuits. Our harbor and beaches, woodlands and wetlands, along with our parks and open spaces are integral to the health and vitality of our community and our strong sense of place.

The Town's overarching goals that were gleaned from the residents and other stakeholders throughout the planning process include:

- Better understanding, protecting and managing the town's natural resources, for the purposes of clean drinking water, wildlife habitat, passive recreation and climate resiliency.
- Providing for active recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels, including additional playing fields and more access to water-related activities.
- Creating a more accessible, pedestrian and bicycle friendly community.

Section 7: Analysis of Need

The summaries of open space and recreation needs were determined based on information from the 2014 OSRP, public input from the virtual open house, the OSRP Community survey, virtual community forums (as described in Section 2 Introduction), and consideration by the OSRP Committee. The consolidated community input can be sorted in three broad categories of needs which are carried over into the Goals and Objectives section:

- Resource Protection Needs
- Community Needs
- Management Needs

Resource Protection Needs

Manchester has an abundance of open space that helps safeguard the town's natural resources for clean water and wildlife habitat. The town is fortunate that the majority of its open space and recreation lands are permanently protected from future development, whether due to protection through Article 97 status, the presence of a conservation restriction or easement, or through other means. There are, however, areas that should be considered for acquisition or for further protection through conservation restrictions in order to protect the town's drinking water supply.

These areas include unprotected parcels within the Round Pond and Gravelly Pond watersheds; remaining unprotected woodlands north of Route 128; parcels in the "Western Woods" and parcels that would link existing parcels to create greenway corridors. Consistent management and possible legal protections of these areas could benefit Manchester in the long run.

Additionally, the 2021 Seven Year Action Plan calls for the development of Land Management Plans for better stewardship of Manchester's conservation areas. The OSRP Committee suggests that these plans focus on managing vegetation, removing invasive species, restoring ecosystems, and maintaining forest health. The plans should also include estimated budgets and identify potential funding sources.

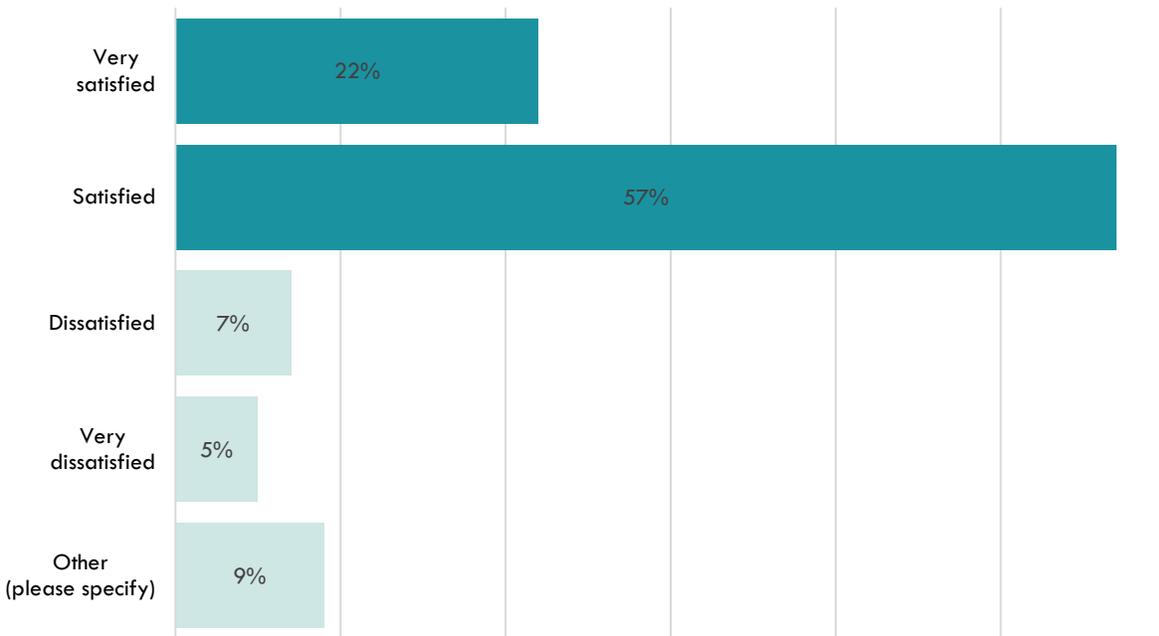
The following summarizes the Resource Protection Needs of the town:

- Increase safeguards for the town's water supply, especially in the Gravelly Pond/Round Pond watershed and the watershed of the Lincoln Street aquifer.
- Identify and protect important wildlife habitat and natural resource areas particularly, those areas identified in the BioMap2 (or Biomap3 when available).
- Proactively manage town-owned open space parcels.
- Improve the town's open space parcels for walking, hiking, and environmental studies.
- Increase public awareness of the town's open space parcels.

Community Needs

Enhancing, maintaining, and preserving the recreation amenities in Manchester is a major goal of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. The community is fortunate to have three town-owned active recreation facilities, as well as passive recreation areas. When asked about the town’s park and open space system as a whole in the online community survey, approximately 80% of respondents reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the condition of Manchester’s parks and open space properties.

Figure 35: How satisfied are you with the condition of Manchester’s parks and open space properties?

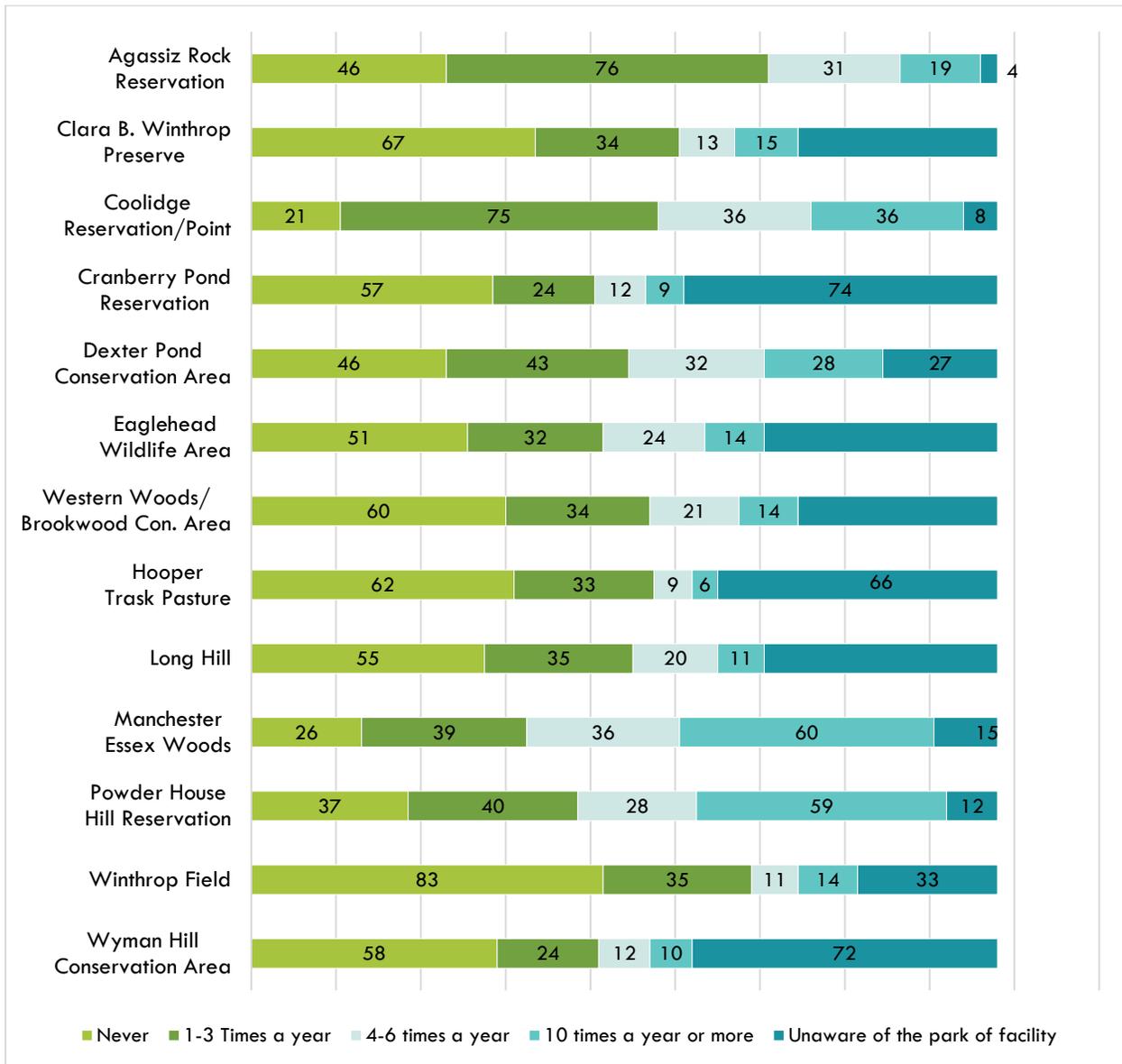


Singing Beach, Tuck’s Point, and Masconomo Park were ranked top three among favorite and beloved parks and open spaces in Manchester. Respondents enjoy visiting these parks and open spaces for a wide range of reasons, particularly passive recreation and community events like the annual Fourth of July Celebration and the Music in Masconomo Summer Concert Series. Singing Beach is a major asset for residents and was recorded as the most frequently visited site in town with 89% of survey respondents noting that they visit ten or more times a year. However, respondents also noted a need for improvements to the bathhouse and expanded restroom facilities.

The virtual open house and online community survey asked residents what was most important to them, and responses varied from acquiring land for conservation purposes to increased parking to additional resources for pickleball. There was a general overall interest in increasing trails and access points to conservation areas and striking a balance between active recreation/programming and preserving open space as natural areas.

In terms of passive recreational facilities, the Manchester Essex Woods (Wilderness Conservation Area) and Powder House Hill Reservation are the most utilized sites in Manchester. Residents love hiking, walking their dogs, and seeing the wildlife here. At the same time, other respondents reported concern with off-leash practices at some locations. The site receiving the least visitor traffic is Winthrop Field, off Bridge Street (Route 127). This site was identified as a Scenic and Unique Resource and is discussed in further detail in Section 4.

Figure 36: How often do you visit or use the following open spaces for walking, jogging, biking, bird watching, etc.?

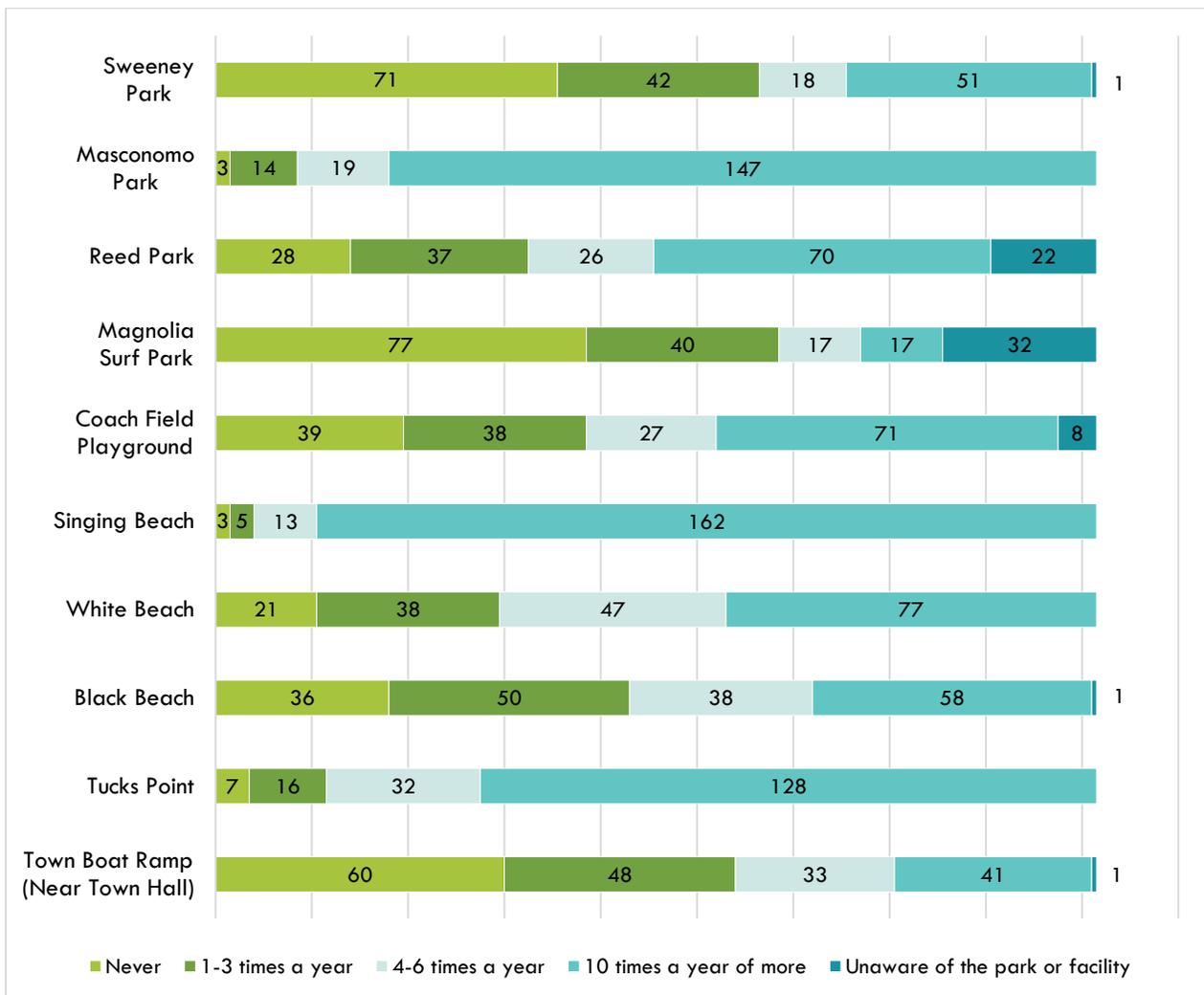


As noted in Section 6, improving and maintaining the town’s existing parks and facilities emerged as a major priority for residents. Improvements to existing sites also aligns with a main priority of

the Town; the 2020 Athletic Fields Master Plan (AFMP) prepared by Weston & Sampson identifies repairs, renovations, and upgrades to Coach Field, Masconomo Park, and Sweeney Park.

In regard to the Town’s active recreation facilities, Coach Field is the most frequently used recreational facility, with most survey respondents visiting ten or more times a year. Walking and enjoying nature were the top activities survey respondents noted that they enjoyed doing in most parks. Sports and recreation were less frequently mentioned, but this may be more of a reflection of respondent demographics than town-wide demand for active recreation opportunities.

Figure 37: How often do you (or your family members) visit or use the following parks and recreational facilities?

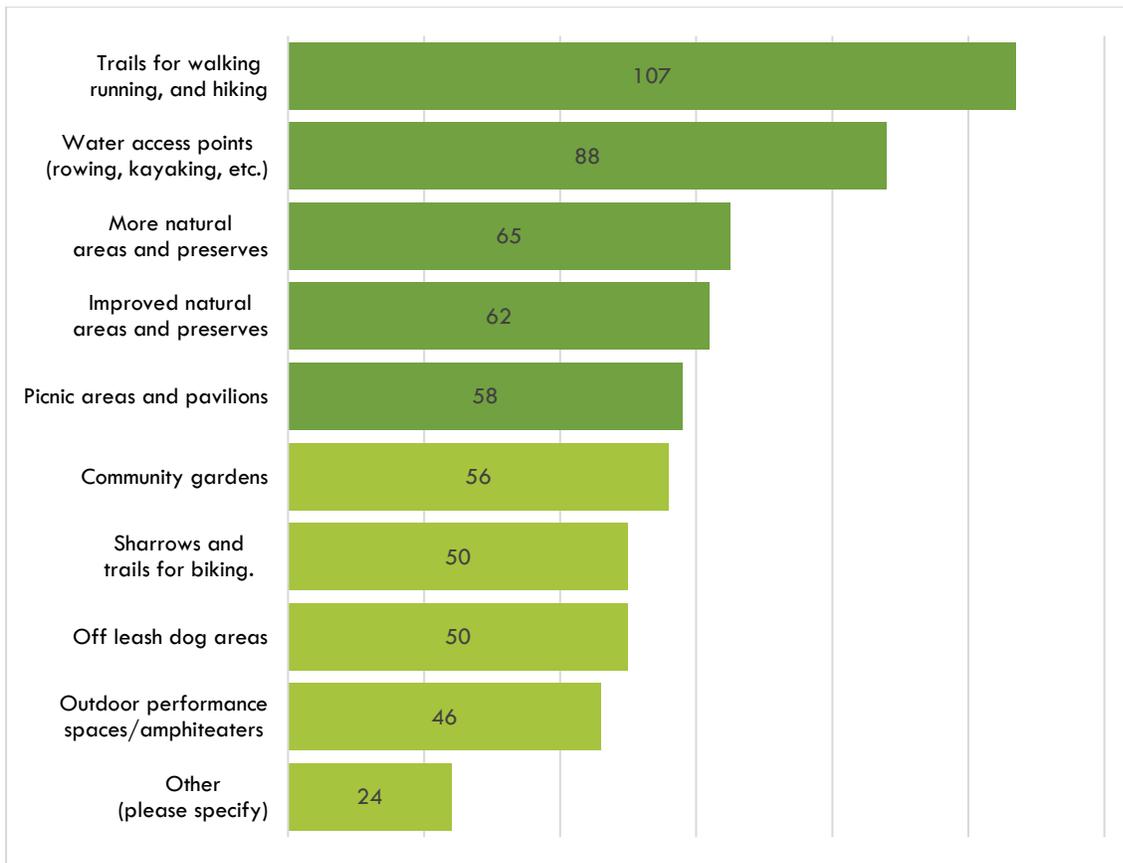


The public survey conducted by Weston & Sampson as part of the Athletic Fields Master Plan found that the most popular recreational activity that respondents used town facilities for was walking and jogging (90%), followed by playground use (71%), passive recreation (65%), and

soccer (62%). Participation in the athletic programs offered in Manchester is strong, though it is the general feeling of residents that there is not enough good quality field space.

Should athletic fields be renovated, or new fields be constructed in Manchester, it is important that they are multi-purpose fields with artificial turf as recommended in the AFMP. Single purpose fields are not as versatile since they cannot easily be changed to accommodate changes in the popularity of certain sports. Due to the shortage of fields in the town, grass fields cannot be given time to rest and recover. Artificial turf fields, while initially more costly, do not need recovery time.

Figure 38: What would you like to see more of in Manchester in the next 10 years?



Improved connectivity for bicycle and pedestrian access between parks was another major theme that emerged as residents expressed their desire for future amenities and facilities. The term connectivity refers to trails, sidewalks, or paths that promote passive recreation and community connections.

The Town’s Complete Streets Policy also supports connectivity, and consistent implementation with assistance from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee should be pursued. Complete Streets increase safety and livability, improve public health, reduce traffic congestion, and increase a community’s environmental sustainability. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

Based on the feedback from the OSRP community survey residents want to see more trails for walking, running, and hiking, more access points to the waterfront and more natural and conservation areas. In addition, social amenities, such as picnic areas, pavilions, and casual gathering spaces, were also requested features.

Residents 65 and over make up more than twenty percent of Manchester’s overall population, and this number is expected to increase in the coming years. This demographic trend is important to consider when addressing the open space and recreation needs of all residents.

Approximately 30% of the survey respondents were over the age of 60, and the senior needs that were identified include group exercise classes, gardening programs, pickleball courts, bocce courts, improved ADA accessibility at parks and open spaces, and safe walking and biking paths.

In addition, youth and teenagers have special needs unique from the general Town population. Approximately 56% of the survey respondents live with someone under the age of 18 years in their household. The needs of Manchester’s youth include improving walking and biking access to parks, multi-use athletic fields that accommodate youth sports and school-related athletics, and aquatic based programing.

When asked what prevents residents from visiting or using Manchester’s open space and recreation amenities, 25% of respondents said they did not know about the locations. This may point to a lack of signage about parks or information about their offerings. Currently, respondents are most likely to hear about parks and recreation events and programing through social media or the Manchester Parks and Recreation website. The Town should continue to populate its websites and social media pages with information about Manchester’s recreational resources and consider opportunities for integrating additional wayfinding and signage around parks and open space. After not knowing about locations, a lack of parking was the next biggest barrier to using open space amenities (identified by 15% of survey respondents).

Figure 39: *What, if anything, prevents you from utilizing Manchester’s open space, parks, and recreation facilities?*

Factor/Reason	Percent of Respondents
Don't know where the site is located	25%
Lack of parking	15%
Site is not accessible by walking or biking from my home	11%
Other (please specify)	10%
Not interested in the sports fields and playgrounds provided	7%
Lack of restrooms	6%
Dogs are not allowed	6%
Poor condition or maintenance	5%

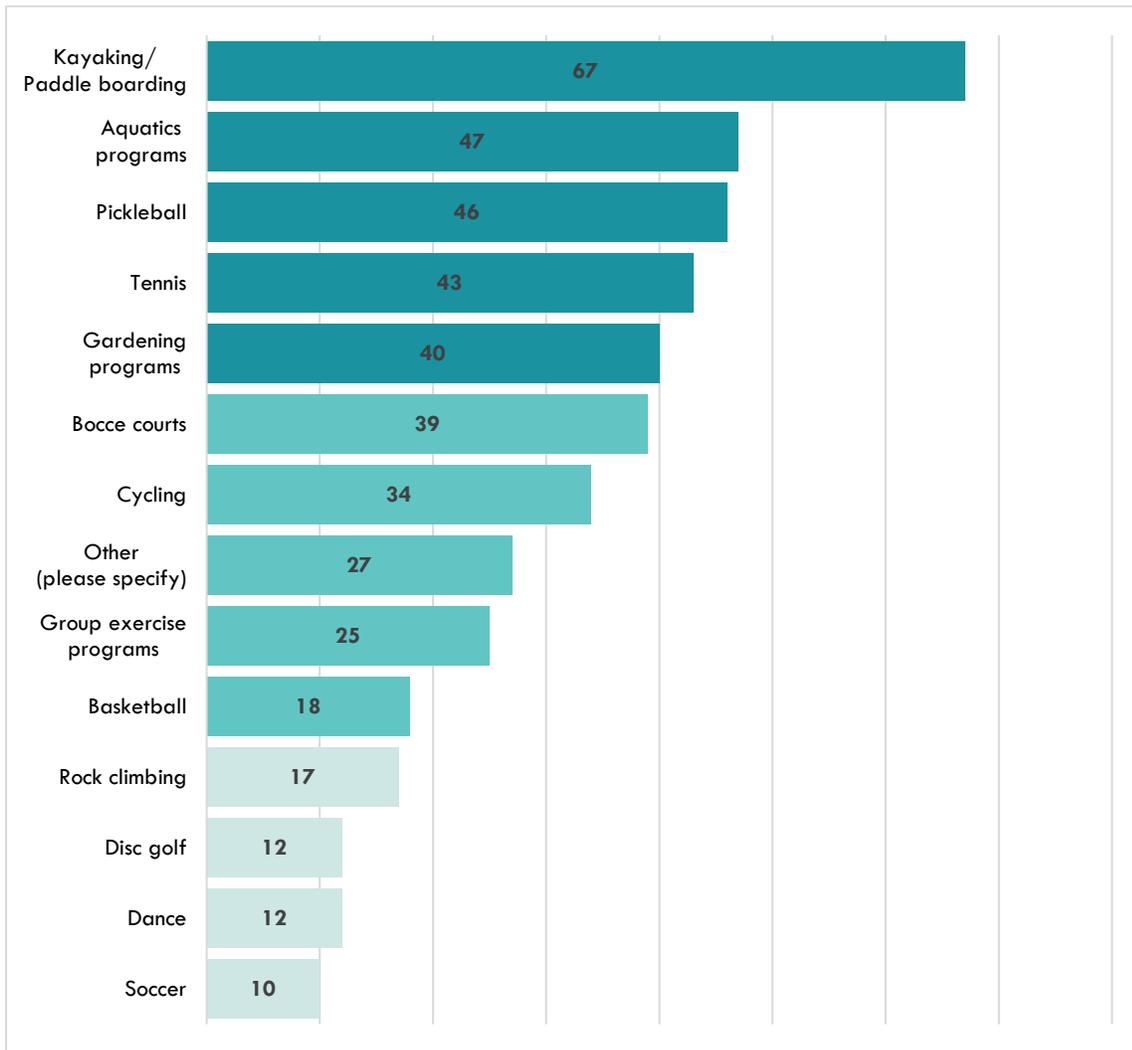
Not interested in the trails provided	4%
My recreational and open space needs are met outside of Manchester	3%
Too crowded	2%
Size or park/amount of space available	2%
Safety concerns	2%
No place to sit	2%
Lack of shade	1%
Unable to access due to disability barriers	0%

The Town of Manchester is fortunate to have a Parks and Recreation Department with two full-time staff members, 50 temporary/seasonal employees, and a five member Parks and Recreation Committee. The Parks & Recreation Committee serves as the sole advisory group to the Board of Selectmen on matters related to Parks & Recreation programs, services, and facilities.

Manchester’s Parks & Recreation Department oversees some of the town’s greatest natural resources including Singing Beach, Tuck’s Point, Masconomo Park, Sweeney Park and Coach Field Park. The department also manages the scheduling of athletic fields as well as events at Crowell Chapel and the Chowder House at Tuck’s Point. The Parks and Recreation Department collaborates with the Department of Public Works for the maintenance and upkeep of town-owned parks and playgrounds.

There were a diversity of suggestions and issues mentioned throughout the planning process relating to programming, including things such as creating an all-abilities playground, improving showers and bathroom facilities, creating a seasonal farmer’s market, creating additional walking trails, grills for cooking, and more. Survey respondents indicated an interest in future programming for activities like kayaking and standup paddle boarding, pickleball, tennis, aquatics programs (i.e., swim lessons, swim teams, lifeguard training) as well as gardening programs.

Figure 40: Select up to three (3) active/recreation programs you would like to see increase in Manchester the next 10 years.



The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the planning, coordination, supervision and evaluation of all recreational programs and services. The department prides itself on offering programs and services to serve all ages and abilities. Programs range from adult programs such as Zumba for Senior Citizens to pre-school programs and after school childcare.

Some of the Department’s most popular programs include the long running Summer Playground program that serves over 200 children, the Winter Basketball program with over 250 participants and the Licensed After School Program that registers about 70 children. The department also offers programs that have fewer participants but are equally important such as adult programs including Yoga on the Beach, archery and first aid and smaller youth programs such as voice lessons, sewing and coding.

Along with providing services, the Manchester Council on Aging (COA) organizes many activities for seniors. Yoga, Zumba and Strong Women classes are offered on a regular basis (typically weekly) depending on the availability of the venues. The COA also hosts annual summer luncheons

and events at Tuck's Point and offers musical and theatrical events at Crowell Chapel. For all programs, the COA offers free van transportation to residents of Manchester.

The Parks and Recreation Department's biggest challenge is space. For example, the Department rents space from The Manchester-Essex Regional School District, but building the rental fees into the price of the program can sometimes make the program cost prohibitive.

Management Needs

Staffing

The town owns a significant amount of open space devoted to conservation and passive recreation, including forest, woodlands, swamps, marshes, wetlands, streams, and ponds. Most of these spaces are under the management of the Manchester Conservation Commission; however, active management of these conservation lands has been lacking.

The Conservation Commission is tasked with reviewing and issuing a great number of wetlands permits, leaving an inadequate amount of time for open space management. It is clear that there's a need for additional involvement in managing these lands.

To implement the actions in this updated OSRP and ensure adequate and coordinated planning and management of all open space resources, additional staffing resources may be needed. The town should consider hiring a shared conservation agent or part-time environmental planner that could serve Manchester and neighboring municipalities on a part-time basis. The position would provide support, coordination, and professional management for the Conservation Commission and assist with carrying out their mandates and missions to protect the community's natural resources.

Partnerships

Manchester has many strong public-private partnerships that have contributed to the preservation and stewardship of numerous open space resources. The Town should continue to nurture and strengthen these relationships to implement elements of this plan. Key partners in Manchester include, but are not limited to, the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust (MECT), Essex County Greenbelt, Cape Ann Trail Stewards, The Trustees of Reservations, and Salem Sound Coastwatch.

These relationships are beneficial and important for a myriad of reasons. Many of these non-profit organizations provide great assistance to the Town in terms of volunteer labor, fundraising, environmental monitoring, and communicating with the public.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the Commonwealth's equivalent of a municipal open space plan. SCORP plans are developed by individual states in order to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. In 2017, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs completed the Massachusetts SCORP to help guide the distribution of federal funding to state agencies and municipalities for the acquisition of open space, renovation of parks, and development of new parks. The SCORP is a planning document that discusses the available recreational resources in a state, as well as its

needs, and identifies the gaps between the two. The goals and objectives of the 2017 SCORP are shown in **Figure 41**. This Plan is consistent with these goals and objectives.

Figure 41: 2017 SCORP Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Improve Access for Underserved Populations
Objectives:
1. Support the acquisition of land and development of new open spaces in areas that lack existing or useable open spaces, such as Environmental Justice neighborhoods
2. Develop parks and open spaces that offer amenities that go above and beyond ADA requirements for people with disabilities
3. Consider the needs of underserved demographic groups — senior citizens and teenagers — in park and open space designs
4. Encourage establishment of programming endowments
Goal 2: Support the Statewide Trails Initiative
Objectives:
1. Support the acquisition of land and development of new open spaces that can provide a trail network
2. Fill in the gaps of existing trail networks
3. Ensure that any existing or new trails are fully accessible to people with disabilities
Goal 3: Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation
Objectives:
1. Support the acquisition of land that will provide for water-based recreation
2. Support the acquisition of land that will increase drinking water supply protection
3. Develop water-based recreational facilities, including swimming areas, spray parks, boating facilities, fishing areas, etc.
Goal 4: Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks
Objectives:
1. Promote the acquisition and development of neighborhood parks where none currently exist
2. Develop amenities supported by neighborhood parks, such as playgrounds, off leash dog parks, and community gardens
3. Work with community development organizations to improve walking access to local parks

Section 8: Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives were developed after reviewing previous plans and studies, meeting with several key advisory bodies including the Open Space and Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Group, gathering input from the online community survey, and incorporating feedback from the virtual community meetings and open houses. The Goals and Objectives are summarized below and detailed further in Section 9.

- **GOAL 1: Ensure that the objectives and actions identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) are implemented and that the plan is updated as needed for resubmission in 2028.**
 - Objectives:
 - Update the 2021 plan with a view to a submission of a revised plan in 2028 and establish a budget as needed.

- **GOAL 2: Protect Land Significant to Drinking Water Protection, Wildlife Habitat, Natural Resource Protection and Climate Change (for carbon storage)**
 - Objectives:
 - **2.1:** Revise the Town’s list of high- priority parcels which are not currently protected for potential acquisition or protection by other means.
 - **2.2:** Using the list created in (2.1), set priorities and actions for each parcel (e.g., acquisition, conservation restrictions, Conservation Commission management)
 - **2.3:** Initiate steps to acquire or protect those high-priority parcels identified in (2.2).
 - **2.4:** Maintain an ongoing inventory of parcels that need additional protection through acquisitions, dedications, or conservation restrictions.
 - **2.5:** Create an informal group of representatives from abutting municipalities to discuss environmental issues that span municipalities, re topics of watershed, open space, climate change, etc.
 - **2.6:** Ensure the installation of permanent survey monuments demarcating the 400-foot radius around the Lincoln Street well as specified in the Order of Conditions (#39-0800, Conditions #46 and #56) for the new Memorial School.

- **GOAL 3: Manage existing town-owned or town-managed open space parcels for the purposes of safe and enjoyable public access and the protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat.**
 - Objectives:
 - **3.1:** Identify all town-owned or town-managed open space parcels that would benefit from: maintenance of existing trails; creation of new trails; clean-up of trash and garbage; new or improved signage; and management of trees and vegetation. Consider each for possible ADA improvements.
 - 3.1.1: Seek to partner with the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust in managing the Wilderness Conservation Area, as it consists of many abutting Town and Trust parcels with boundaries undefined in the field.
 - **3.2:** Prioritize those parcels identified in (3.1) and create management plans for those identified as high priorities.
 - **3.3:** Create a plan for the Western Woods for acquiring or protecting parcels, forest management, trail maintenance, creation of access and parking areas.
 - **3.4:** Create a plan to provide public access to the restored Central Pond area of Sawmill Brook.
- **GOAL 4: Promote awareness, enjoyment and stewardship of Manchester’s open space parcels and natural resources through outreach and education.**
 - Objectives:
 - **4.1:** Continue to update the Open Space and Recreation webpage where the public can access information about open space areas that are open to the public (both town-owned and other) including parcel descriptions, trail maps, and use.
 - **4.2:** Create trail maps of existing town-owned open space parcels in both paper and electronic form (GIS) for use by the public.
 - **4.3:** Plan and hold events which would enhance and promote town-owned open space.
 - **4.4:** Promote awareness and recognition of the state [BioMap2](#) or, *BioMap3* when it’s available) and what it means to biodiversity and how this relates to Manchester’s open space parcels.
 - **4.5:** Initiate outreach programs to local school and youth groups to encourage environmental education and an appreciation of Manchester’s natural resources.
- **GOAL 5: Identify the town’s recreational needs and create action plans to address those needs.**
 - Objectives:
 - **5.1:** Continue to maintain the inventory of all existing town-owned recreational areas including playing fields, parks, and beaches.

- **5.2:** Use the new **Athletic Field Master Plan** (2020) to prioritize playing fields that will need improvement or repairs over the next seven years (e.g., parking lot and flooding issues at Sweeney Park). Prioritize recreational parcels for the same.
 - **5.3:** Support the creation of playing fields in the Town as referenced in the **Athletic Field Master Plan**.
 - **5.4:** Support the creation of a multi-use athletic court (e.g., pickleball, tennis, bocce) at the old Skate Park site on Summer St.
 - **5.5:** Continue to explore and implement ways to make Manchester more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
 - **5.6:** Develop an interactive website that shows points of interest, parking, walking and biking routes, bike stores, and perhaps restaurants and stores, with an additional reporting feature.
 - **5.7:** Map in-town walking paths within Manchester (e.g., from train station and parking lots to Singing Beach and other locations).
 - **5.8:** Continue to update town infrastructure improvements needed for safer biking and walking to include sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, speed limits and bike lanes so that they can be addressed by DPW.
- **GOAL 6: Promote the use and improvement of the town-owned waterfront resources for the purposes of water-related activities.**
 - Objectives:
 - **6.1:** Continue to update the inventory of existing town-owned and publicly accessible docks and piers.
 - **6.2:** Work towards improving town docks and piers to ensure that facilities are publicly accessible and ADA compliant.
 - **6.3:** Construct a small boat launch facility at Tuck’s Point.
- **GOAL 7: Continue to advocate for accessibility by ensuring that town officials, boards and committees are aware of Universal Design Standards and ADA requirements and that ADA considerations are incorporated into town projects.**
 - Objectives:
 - **7.1** Adopt and integrate universal design principles and programming.
 - **7.2:** Monitor the implementation of the latest ADA Transition Plan.
 - **7.3:** Monitor the enhancement and maintenance of the existing ADA Advisory Committee webpage including information (and links) regarding new and/or updated regulations to keep town employees, boards and committees informed of these changes.
 - **7.5:** Continue to recognize businesses and initiatives that prioritize accessibility and accommodates residents of all abilities by honoring them with the prestigious ADA Access Award.

Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan

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Accomplishments since the 2014 OSRP

The Town, the Open Space and Recreation Committees, along with other town committees and volunteers, have made progress on several goals and action items outlined in the 2014 OSRP. Listed below is a summary of some of these key accomplishments.

- Establishment of a permanent Open Space and Recreation Committee in **2015**.
- Held a volunteer clean up event at Dexter Pond in **2016**.
- Constructed a new public boat ramp at Town Hall in **2017**.
- Rebuilt a pedestrian bridge at the Dexter Pond Nature Sanctuary in **2018**.
- Implemented a Safe Routes to School project at Memorial School, which included sidewalks, crosswalks and other safety improvements in **2019**.
- Secured funding from town CPA Funds to develop Open Space management plans for town owned open space parcels **2020**.
- Developed an Athletic Field Master Plan in **2020**.
- Updated Manchester's ADA Self-Evaluation and ADA Transition Plan in **2020**.
- Added 260 linear feet to the existing docks at Reed Park in **2020**.
- Placed approximately 12 acres of land in the Western Woods under the management of the Conservation Commission in **2020**.
- Initiated the purchase of a 12-acre lot on Christian Hill in the Western Woods and placed it under the management of the Conservation Commission in **2020**.
- Created a new walking trail and installed informational kiosks and trail markers at Powder House Hill Reservation in **2020**.
- Provided funding to the Manchester Stream Team to develop a video entitled *Sawmill Brook: A Visual Survey 2020*, to educate and promote protection of the Town's drinking water and natural resources in **2020**.
- Created an Open Space and Recreation subpage on the Town's website with information on Town-owned conservation properties with trails and links to open space related documents.
- Continued the update of Open Space Parcels spreadsheets for the purposes of the Town's Open Space layer on the town's GIS maps and for use in the 2021 OSRP. **2015-2021**.
- Created an OSRC Facebook Group to promote Open Space activities and participation.
- Created an inventory of all public docks and assessed their conditions.

The Seven-Year Action Plan details the actions and activities that should occur over the next seven years to successfully implement the Manchester Open Space and Recreation Plan. These action items provide specific recommendations for meeting the goals and objectives that were formulated in Section 8.

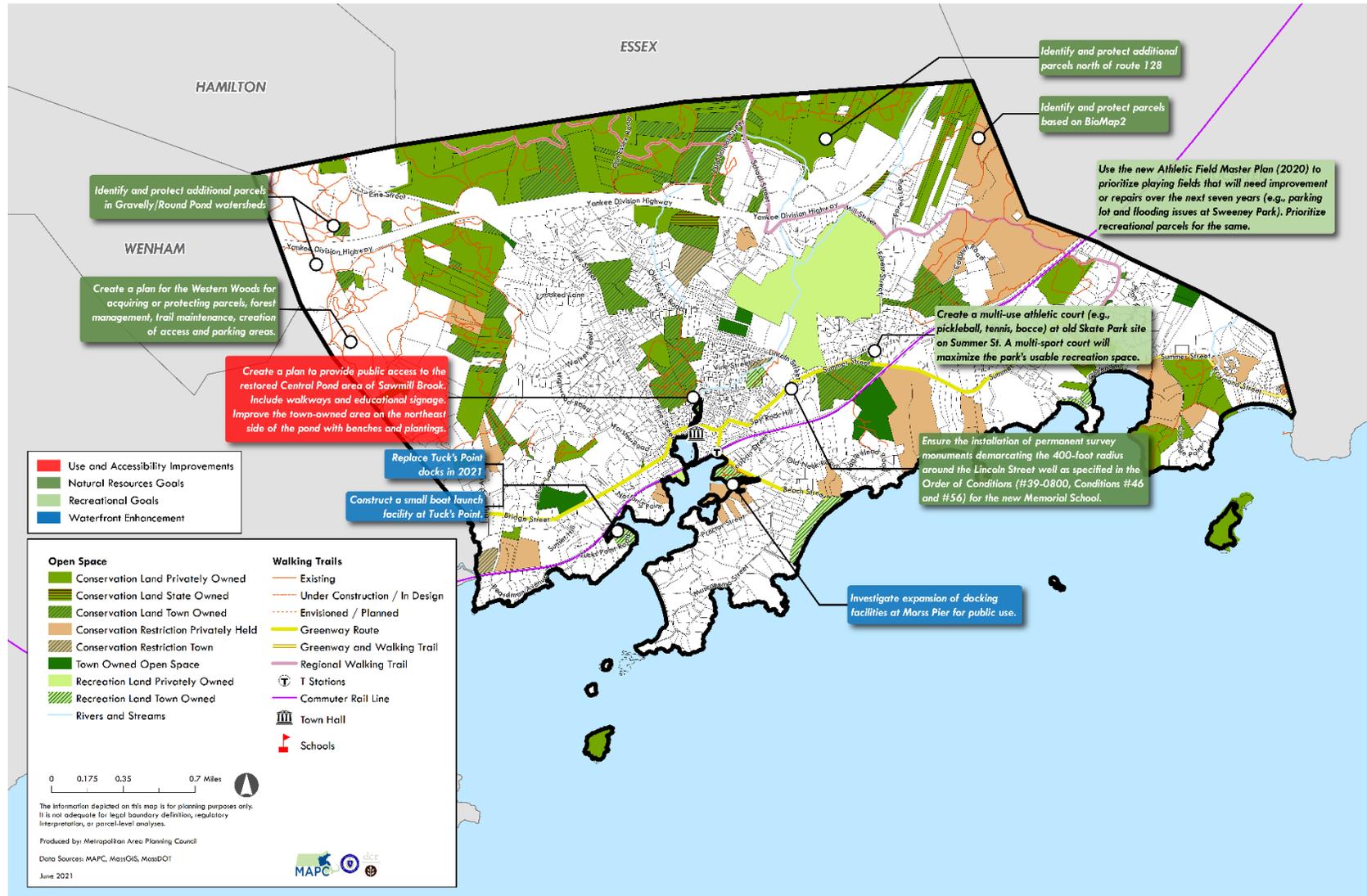
The 2021 Seven-Year Action Plan was developed by first reviewing the action plan from the 2014 OSRP. All completed actions were removed from the list and the remaining action items were reviewed by the OSRC and OSRPAC to determine whether they were still applicable. New action items were added based on Town priorities, input from the online community survey, and feedback from the virtual community meetings and open house.

Figure 43 lists a range of action items, and **Figure 42** indicates the locations of selected major projects. Some of these actions are already in the planning process; others are ongoing but need additional support. The Action Plan is arranged sequentially beginning with the first goal and the associated objectives and actions to facilitate the achievement of this goal. For each action, a timeframe for when the proposed action should be taken is listed. Short-term recommendations fall within Years 1-2, mid-term recommendations fall within years 3-5, and long-term recommendations fall within years 6-7. Recommendations that are ongoing are marked as such. The party or parties responsible are listed with the primary one being in bold type (there are a few where several entities are primary and are listed in bold). Acronyms used in the Seven-Year Action Plan are listed below.

List of Acronyms

- **ADA** – Manchester ADA Advisory Committee
- **BOS** – Manchester Board of Selectmen
- **BPC** – Manchester Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- **CATS** – Cape Ann Trail Stewards
- **ConCom** – Manchester Conservation Commission
- **CPA** – Community Preservation Act Funds
- **DCSG** – Grants from Mass Division of Conservation Services
- **DIPC** – Downtown Improvement Project Committee
- **DPW** – Manchester Dept of Public Works
- **HAC** – Harbor Advisory Committee
- **HM** – Manchester Harbormaster’s Office
- **LLTs** – Local land trusts including Essex County Greenbelt, Manchester Essex Conservation Trust, Mass Audubon, The Trustees of Reservations, et al.
- **MCST** – Manchester Coastal Stream Team
- **MERSD** – Manchester Essex Regional School District
- **MET** – Mass Environmental Trust General Grants
- **MOSF** – Man Open Space Fund managed by the ConCom
- **MRTP** – Massachusetts Recreational Trails Program
- **NC** – Nature Conservancy
- **OSRC** – Open Space and Recreation Committee
- **OSRPAC** – Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee
- **PRC** – Manchester Parks and Recreation Committee
- **PRD** – Manchester Parks and Recreation Dept.
- **TP** – Town Planner
- **WWAC** – Western Woods Advisory Committee

Figure 42: Action Plan Map



Source: Path: K:\Data\GIS\Projects\Current\Projects\OpenSpace\Plans\Wrentham\2020_2021\Wrentham_OpenSpaceInventory_v2.mxd

Figure 43: Seven-Year Action Plan Matrix:

Goal 1: Ensure that the objectives and actions identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) are implemented and that the plan is updated as needed for resubmission in 2028.			
Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
Action 1.1: Update the 2021 plan with a view to a submission of a revised plan in 2028 and establish a budget as needed.	OSRC, OSRPAC	HIGH Continuous	Volunteer and/or Staff Time
Goal 2: Protect land significant to drinking water protection, wildlife habitat, natural resource protection and climate change (for carbon storage)			
Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
<p>Action 2.1: Revise the Town’s list of high- priority parcels which are not currently protected for potential acquisition or protection by other means.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible candidates include unprotected parcels within the Round Pond and Gravelly Pond watersheds; remaining unprotected woodlands north of Route 128; parcels in the “Western Woods”; parcels that would link existing parcels to create greenway corridors including Wyman Hill, Great Hill, and Owl’s Nest Nature Preserve; and the Eaglehead Wildlife Study Area. Consideration should be given to those areas identified in the BioMap2 (or, <i>Biomap3 when available</i>), created by the <i>Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program</i>. The <i>BioMap2</i> project includes a report for the town of Manchester which should be consulted when identifying high-priority parcels. 	OSRC, ConCom, MCST, TP, ZBA/Planning Board, LLTs, NC	HIGH Year 1 Short-term	Volunteer and/or Staff Time State Grants
Action 2.2: Using the list created in Action 2.1 , set priorities and actions for each parcel (e.g., acquisition, conservation restrictions, Conservation Commission management)	OSRC, ConCom, MCST, WWAC, MCST	HIGH Year 1 Short-term	Volunteer and/or Staff Time

<p>Action 2.3: Initiate steps to acquire or protect those high-priority parcels identified in Action 2.2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek allies among other local nonprofits to help encourage conservation outcomes for these parcels. • Work with Town Planner and Planning Board to identify and assess zoning bylaws that protect resource values. (or perhaps this is an action on its own – whereby parties evaluate zoning bylaws to strengthen resource protection – clustering, LID, etc. are all valid resource protection tools). • Seek Town Meeting votes to conserve or protect the resource values of the Town-owned undisturbed parcels in the Gravelly/Round Pond watershed recently identified by the Assessors and those in the Western Woods. 	<p>OSRC, TP, PB, ConCom, LLTs, NC</p>	<p>HIGH Year 2 - 7 Short- to long-term</p>	<p>CPA; DCSG; MET; Town funds</p>
<p>Action 2.4: Maintain an ongoing <u>inventory of parcels</u> that need additional protection through acquisitions, dedications, or conservation restrictions. These include parcels that are important for water supply protection, wildlife habitat and natural resource protection. Reassess and update the inventory annually and apply it to Manchester’s online mapping utility.</p>	<p>OSRC, ConCom</p>	<p>HIGH Year 1 – 7 Ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time; Town budget for mapping services</p>
<p>Action 2.5: Create an informal group of representatives from abutting municipalities to discuss environmental issues that span municipalities, re topics of watershed, open space, climate change, etc. Involve organizations that promote regional efforts such as MAPC’s North Shore Coalition and North Shore Task Force.</p>	<p>OSRC, ConCom</p>	<p>MEDIUM Year 2 - 7 Short- to long-term</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 2.6: Ensure the installation of permanent survey monuments demarcating the 400-foot radius around the Lincoln Street well as specified in the Order of Conditions (#39-0800, Conditions #46 and #56) for the new Memorial School.</p>	<p>ConCom</p>	<p>–</p>	<p>–</p>

Goal 3: Manage existing town-owned or town-managed open space parcels for the purposes of safe and enjoyable public access and the protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat.

Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
<p>Action 3.1: Identify all town-owned or town-managed open space parcels that would benefit from: maintenance of existing trails; creation of new trails; clean-up of trash and garbage; new or improved signage; and management of trees and vegetation. Consider each for possible ADA improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of trees and vegetation would include identification and removal of invasive species; removal of dead or dying trees that pose a threat to the public; and restoration of degraded areas. • Work with land trusts with adjoining properties to create management agreements. 	<p>ConCom, OSRC, DPW, ADA, LLTs</p>	<p>MEDIUM Year 1-3 Short-term and Ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 3.2: Prioritize those parcels identified in Action 3.1 and create management plans for those identified as high priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to maintenance and improvement activities, the management plans should clearly define the appropriate uses for existing trails and parcels to avoid conflict between user groups and to protect sensitive natural resources. The plans should also include estimate budgets and identification of funding resources. 	<p>ConCom, TP, OSRC, WWAC</p>	<p>MEDIUM Year 1 Short-term</p>	<p>Volunteer and Staff Time, CPA</p>
<p>Action 3.3: Create a plan for the Western Woods for acquiring or protecting parcels, forest management, trail maintenance, creation of access and parking areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Western Woods webpage where all relevant information and documents can be posted. 	<p>, TP/ ConCom, OSRC,</p>	<p>HIGH Year 1 - 2 Short-term</p>	<p>CPA, Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 3.4: Create a plan to provide public access to the restored Central Pond area of Sawmill Brook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include walkways and educational signage. • Improve the town-owned area on the northeast side of the pond with benches and plantings. 	<p>BOS, ConCom, OSRC</p>	<p>HIGH Year 3-7 Mid-to long-term</p>	<p>CPA, Volunteer and/or Staff Time, Town Funds</p>

Goal 4: Promote awareness, enjoyment and stewardship of Manchester’s open space parcels and natural resources through outreach and education.

Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
<p>Action 4.1: Continue to update the Open Space and Recreation webpage where the public can access information about open space areas that are open to the public (both town-owned and other) including parcel descriptions, trail maps, and use.</p>	<p>OSRC, ConCom</p>	<p>LOW Ongoing</p>	<p>CPA, Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 4.2: Create trail maps of existing town-owned open space parcels in both paper and electronic form (GIS) for use by the public. Coordinate volunteer efforts to help map the parcels (e.g., Scouts, Cape Ann Trail Stewards).</p>	<p>OSRC, ConCom, LLTs</p>	<p>MEDIUM Start in Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 4.3: Plan and hold events which would enhance and promote town-owned open space. Events could include trail cleanup days; removal of invasive species; coordinated “theme” walks; etc. Partner with local organizations such as Mass Audubon, MECT, Cape Ann Trails Stewards, local school groups and others.</p>	<p>OSRC, LLTs, CATS, SSCW</p>	<p>MEDIUM Year 1 - 7 Ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 4.4: Promote awareness and recognition of the state BioMap2 or, <i>BioMap3</i> when it’s available) and what it means to biodiversity and how this relates to Manchester’s open space parcels. <i>BioMap2</i> was created by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and includes a report for the town of Manchester. (See Appendix F.)</p>	<p>OSRC</p>	<p>MEDIUM Start in Year 2 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 4.5: Initiate outreach programs to local school and youth groups to encourage environmental education and an appreciation of Manchester’s natural resources.</p>	<p>PRD/PRC, OSRC</p>	<p>MEDIUM Start in Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>

Goal 5: Identify the town’s recreational needs and create action plans to address those needs.

Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
<p>Action 5.1: Continue to maintain the inventory of all existing town-owned recreational areas including playing fields, parks, and beaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess each one for frequency of use, condition, need for improvement or management, ADA compliance, etc. Follow-through on recommendations, especially for high priority fields and recreational parcels. 	<p>PRD/PRC, DPW, ADA</p>	<p>HIGH Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 5.2: Use the new Athletic Field Master Plan (2020) to prioritize playing fields that will need improvement or repairs over the next seven years (e.g., parking lot and flooding issues at Sweeney Park). Prioritize recreational parcels for the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and initiate plans for improvements to priority parcels Refer to Chapter 5 of the Athletic Field Master Plan for specific design recommendations 	<p>PRD/PRC, DPW</p>	<p>HIGH Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Capital Funds, CPA, Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 5.3: Support the creation of playing fields in the Town as referenced in the Athletic Field Master Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help find funding sources through grants and private donations that would supplement CPA funding. 	<p>DFASC, PRD/PRC</p>	<p>MEDIUM Start in Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 5.4: Support the creation of a multi-use athletic court (e.g., pickleball, tennis, bocce) at the old Skate Park site on Summer St. A multi-sport court will maximize the Town’s usable recreation space.</p>	<p>PRD, PRC</p>	<p>MEDIUM Start in Year 1 Short-term</p>	<p>CPA</p>
<p>Action 5.5: Continue to explore and implement ways to make Manchester more bicycle and pedestrian friendly including working with the Police, the DPW, the BOS, and the MERSD administration through a combination of infrastructure improvements, safety training and community involvement.</p>	<p>BPC</p>	<p>HIGH Start in Year 1 Short-term; then ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>

<p>Action 5.6: Develop an interactive website that shows points of interest, parking, walking and biking routes, bike stores, and perhaps restaurants and stores, with an additional reporting feature.</p>	<p>BPC</p>	<p>LOW Year 5 - 7 Long-term</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time</p>
<p>Action 5.7: Map in-town walking paths within Manchester (e.g., from train station and parking lots to Singing Beach and other locations).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the locations of the new Longevity Benches⁵⁵ that have been installed in town. Investigate existing maps/walks that may exist (e.g., historic walks) and make them known to the public. 	<p>BPC, DPW, ADA</p>	<p>LOW Year 5 - 7 Long-term</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time, CPA</p>
<p>Action 5.8: Continue to update town infrastructure improvements needed for safer biking and walking to include sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, speed limits and bike lanes so that they can be addressed by DPW.</p>	<p>BPC, DPW, ADA</p>	<p>MEDIUM Year 5 - 7 Long-term</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time, CPA, Safe Routes to School funding</p>

Goal 6: Promote the use and improvement of the town-owned waterfront resources for the purposes of water-related activities.

<p>Actions:</p>	<p>Responsible Parties</p>	<p>Priority/ Time Frame</p>	<p>Potential Funding Sources</p>
<p>Action 6.1: Continue to update the inventory of existing town-owned and publicly accessible docks and piers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess each site for frequency of use; condition, need for improvement or management, ADA compliance, etc. Replace Tuck's Point docks in 2021. Investigate expansion of docking facilities at Morss Pier for public use. 	<p>HM, HAC, ADA</p>	<p>HIGH Year 1 Short-term and ongoing</p>	<p>Volunteer and/or Staff Time, Grants</p>

⁵⁵ Find more information on the Longevity Bench Project by visiting <https://www.longevitybenchproject.org/>

Action 6.2: Work towards improving town docks and piers to ensure that facilities are publicly accessible and ADA compliant.	HM, HAC, ADA	HIGH Year 1 Short-term and ongoing	Volunteer and/or Staff Time
Action 6.3: Construct a small boat launch facility at Tuck's Point.	HM, HAC	MEDIUM Year 1 Short-term	Staff Time, Seaport Grant

Goal 7: Continue to advocate for accessibility by ensuring that town officials, boards and committees are aware of Universal Design Standards and ADA requirements and that ADA considerations are incorporated into town projects.

Actions:	Responsible Parties	Priority/ Time Frame	Potential Funding Sources
Action 7.1: In order to improve accessibility to Manchester's parks and open spaces and serve the recreation needs of all residents, the Town should adopt and integrate universal design principles and programming. ⁵⁶	ADA, DPW, OSRPAC	HIGH Ongoing	–
Action 7.2: Monitor the implementation of the latest ADA Transition Plan.	ADA	HIGH Year 2 Short-term	Volunteer and/or Staff Time
Action 7.3: Monitor the enhancement and maintenance of the existing ADA Advisory Committee webpage including information (and links) regarding new and/or updated regulations to keep town employees, boards and committees informed of these changes.	ADA	MEDIUM Year 1 Short-term and ongoing	Volunteer and/or Staff Time
Action 7.4: Participate in research, planning and monitoring for Phase II of the Downtown Improvement Project (DIP) to guarantee that all routes meet Mass. accessibility standards.	ADA, DIPC	HIGH Year 3-7 Mid-to long-term	Volunteer and/or Staff Time

⁵⁶ Programs are available for training on Universal Design principles and application.

Action 7.5: Continue to recognize businesses and facilities that prioritize accessibility and accommodate residents of all abilities by honoring them with the prestigious Access Award ⁵⁷ .	ADA	HIGH Ongoing	Volunteer and/or Staff Time
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⁵⁷ Find more information about the Access Award and the award criteria by visiting <https://manchester.ma.us/332/ADA-Advisory-Committee>

State and Federal Funding Sources

Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program

The LAND Program (formerly the Self-Help Program) was established in 1961 to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic, or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farmland. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required. This state program pays for the acquisition of land, or a partial interest (such as a conservation restriction), and associated acquisition costs such as appraisal reports and closing costs.

Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program

The PARC Program (formerly the Urban Self-Help Program) was established in 1977 to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Any municipality with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park/recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program. Only projects that are to be developed for suitable outdoor recreation purposes, whether active or passive in nature, shall be considered for funding. Grants are available for the acquisition of land and the construction, or renovation of park and outdoor recreation facilities, such as swimming pools, zoos, athletic play fields, playgrounds and game courts. Access by the general public is required.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This is a federal program administered by the State Division of Conservation Services for the acquisition and development or renovation of park, recreation, and conservation land. The Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (P.L. 88-578) provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development, and renovation of park, recreation, or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts, and state agencies are eligible to apply. Nearly 4000 acres have been acquired and hundreds of parks renovated using the \$95.6 million that Massachusetts has received from the state side portion of the federal program since 1965. DCS administers the state side Land & Water Conservation Fund program in Massachusetts. Access by the general public is required.

Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTGP)

The Recreational Trails Program provides grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000 on a reimbursement basis for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. It is part of the National Recreational Trails Program, which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Funds are disbursed to each state to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. In Massachusetts, funds are administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in partnership with the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board.

Drinking Water Supply Protection grant program (DWSP)

The DWSP grant program provides financial assistance to public water systems and municipal water departments for the purchase of land or interests in land for:

- Protection of existing DEP-approved public drinking water supplies
- Protection of planned future public drinking water supplies; or
- Groundwater recharge

Community Preservation Act

The establishment of a real estate transfer tax was signed into law on September 14, 2000 as the Community Preservation Act (CPA). CPA is a tool for communities to preserve open space, park and recreational facilities, historic sites, and affordable housing. The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation that allows cities and towns to exercise control over local planning decisions by providing a funding source which can be used to address three core community concerns:

- Acquisition and preservation of open space
- Improve park and recreation facilities
- Creation and support of affordable housing
- Acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes

A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each four core community concerns. The remaining 70% can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses. This gives each community the opportunity to determine its priorities, plan for its future, and have the funds to make those plans happen.

The Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2005, implementing a 1.5% property tax surcharge rate and establishing a Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The CPC recently updated the Town of Manchester's FY2021-2025 Community Preservation Plan, which includes an analysis of local needs, goals for CPA program areas (i.e., Housing, Open Space and Recreation, Historic Preservation), as well as priorities and potential projects to utilize CPA funding over the coming years. The Plan functions as an informational document and as a blueprint for the CPC to guide their recommendations to Town Meeting for project funding.