

Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following Draft Goals and Objectives were formulated from the results of the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Planning Survey, which was conducted in June of 2003. Overall, 720 surveys were either mailed to households in town or were picked up by residents from drop-off locations. Of these, 155 were returned and counted as responses. The survey responses represent a 22 percent rate of return. Although the responses may not reflect the opinions of all residents, they do represent a significant source of community input, which was used to identify the open space and recreation resources most important to Shelburne residents.

Goal 1: Ensure that Shelburne sustains its small town environment characterized by general peace and quiet, clean air and water, safety from crime and vandalism, and maintains its rural character outside of Shelburne Falls while supporting the infrastructure of the village.

Objectives:

- Educate town boards, commissions, and residents on the costs of municipal services associated with different land uses including commercial, industrial, residential, farm and forestland and explore the impact of development of each type.
- Support farmers in Shelburne to maintain open space and rural character by reducing burdens of farming. Work with farmers, Shelburne Board of Assessors, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, the Franklin County Regional Planning Board, and other groups to advocate for changes in the state tax code (e.g. a maximum of one building lot per active farm) and Chapter 61A application procedures (e.g. Ch. 61 A applications should be required only once, unless changes occur) as a means of reducing the burdens of farming.
- Support a periodic review of zoning by-laws, work to make by-laws consistent with the goals of the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan, study cases in Massachusetts where subdivisions, created with conservation development design, result in effective preservation of open space without over-regulation. Consider revising the zoning bylaws and the subdivision regulations to support agriculture (e.g. change the name of the Residential District to Agriculture/Residential District). Consider additional amendments to the town's zoning bylaws.
- Work with Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) and other interested parties to implement strategies at all levels that will result in economic viability and higher profits for local farmers as a means of keeping farmland open.
- Continue to identify areas of town that are most important to protect from development. The Select Board should have information on areas identified as important and be prepared to act on opportunities that are initiated by landowners.

Goal 2: Ensure that Shelburne maintains or improves the quality of its air, drinking water, streams and other surface waters including the Deerfield River, and maintains and improves the quality of farm and forestlands, scenic views, and wildlife habitat through the conservation of locally important natural and open space resources.

Objectives:

- Promote the Massachusetts Chapter 61, 61A, and 61 B Land Classification and Taxation Programs to local landowners to help keep undeveloped lands in active farming, forestry, and recreational uses.
- Continue to set aside municipal funding each year to be used as a town match to ensure that landowners that want to protect their farmland through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program can do so. Find mechanisms for increasing revenues for the purpose of land preservation by the town.
- Continue to work with local land trusts to encourage investment of state, municipal, and private resources for the purposes of protecting priority resource values from development while preferably maintaining property on the tax rolls with minimal tax impact.
- Provide opportunities for landowners to learn about land protection and estate planning options.
- Explore whether the Conservation Commission has the capacity to manage conservation lands and conservation restrictions that could be donated to the town in the future.
- Encourage the use of Best Management Practices by all Town departments.

Goal 3 : Ensure that Shelburne maintains and improves the quality and accessibility of all of its recreational facilities and programming.

Objectives:

- Promote existing recreational facilities and services.
- Enhance safe public access to the Deerfield River or to lands that contain priority recreational resource areas.
- Explore additional funding sources for recreational facilities and programs including the libraries.
- Determine the potential recreational needs of different segments of the population and the feasibility of developing new facilities and programs of the types most in demand.
- Inventory access and ownership issues on all public and quasi-public lands in Shelburne in support of exploring the potential for recreational use.
- Seek to increase the number of hours the town libraries are open each week.
- Encourage the Recreation Commission to explore the benefits of collaborative relationships with private associations in town to better serve the recreation needs of residents.