

## SECTION 6

### COMMUNITY VISION

#### A. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS

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Open space and recreation goals for the Town of Shelburne were developed by the Open Space Committee (OSC) and Recreation Committee (RC). The Open Space Committee has representatives of the Planning Board, the Recreation Committee, the Conservation Commission, and the Agriculture Commission as well as 11 at large members appointed by the Select Board. These goals were reaffirmed through a public outreach and planning process that included the following activities:

- In the fall of 2022, an Open Space and Recreation Survey developed by the Shelburne Open Space Committee and Recreation Committee was posted to the Town. It was advertised in the community's newsletter, email communications, the FRCOG and a community Facebook page, and via a postcard mailed to every postal customer in Shelburne (Shelburne Falls routes to parts of nearby towns were excluded; post office boxes in Shelburne were included). Additional copies of the survey were made available at the two libraries and Town Hall. The survey was open from November 15, 2022 to January 31, 2023. The Committee received 252 responses to the survey (234 e-survey responses and 18 paper surveys). With approximately 1,436 residents, this represents 17.5% of Shelburne's population and is considered to be statistically significant.
- From August 2022 to [MONTH] 2023, the Shelburne Open Space Committee developed the Open Space and Recreation Plan(OSRP) using several methods for involving public participation:
  - The Open Space and Recreation Survey results were used to support the development of Section 8 Goals and Objectives as well as the overall open space and recreation goals and vision. The results of the survey were posted on the Town's website in June of 2023, and the July 2023 Town Newsletter included a link to the results of the survey on the Town's website.
  - [NUMBER] meetings were held by the Open Space Committee and were posted and open to the public.
  - Drafts of plan sections were sent by the Open Space Committee to Town boards and community groups considered stakeholders in the plan (see Responsible Board/Group column in the *Section 9* seven-year action table).
  - A public forum was held on October 10, 2023, where residents reviewed and discussed the inventory, analysis, community goals, objectives, and seven-year action plan. A one-month public comment period followed the public forum that closed on November 10, 2023. All public comments were recorded and incorporated into the plan (see *Section 10*).

## B. STATEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

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Shelburne residents who responded to the Open Space and Recreation Survey and participated in the process of developing this plan expressed a vision for the future of Shelburne's natural, scenic, recreational, and historical resources. Their vision for Shelburne rests in the following main themes:

- continue to support the rich forest and farmland in town largely under private ownership;
- provide more opportunities for river access and a larger network of trails;
- develop more open space and recreation access opportunities in and from Shelburne Falls village;
- enable growth while preserving open space.

These themes include:

### *Protecting the Town's Most Climate Resilient and Ecologically Vulnerable Areas*

Shelburne is rich in intact forest, farmland, and healthy ecosystems that contribute to ecosystem services and climate resilience, the protection of which is important both locally and regionally.

### *Preserving Biodiversity and Ecosystem Function of Conservation Lands under a Changing Climate*

Public, nonprofit, and private landowners manage large tracts of land in Shelburne that are an important part of being resilient to climate changes. A mix of climate-smart stewardship approaches to these lands will increase their resilience and be models for land managers in the community and beyond.

### *Improving Recreation Access to the Deerfield River*

The Deerfield River runs along Shelburne's border. The community highly values the river, and desires more and better opportunities to swim/wade, hike along, paddle and boat, and fish in the Deerfield River.

### *Making Recreation Opportunities Accessible Across Town*

Shelburne residents appreciate the opportunity to walk, hike, and bike near their home. They would like to be able to travel within town, in and out of the village of Shelburne Falls, on trails and paths without being on Route 2.

### *Increasing Public Open Space in Shelburne Falls*

The Shelburne side of Shelburne Falls village qualifies as an Environmental Justice community based on average income. The Town has a very limited amount of protected open space in the village. Residents in the village desire more and a greater variety of places to come together as a community, maintain good health, and enjoy the natural beauty of their surroundings.

### *Maintaining Shelburne's Character and Sense of Place*

Residents love the mix of a tight-knit, vibrant village, combined with good air and water quality, forests, farmland, and dark skies at night. Residents want Shelburne to maintain its rural character while

allowing for some growth. They embrace traditions and recreation opportunities to allow community members to stay connected and to feel a sense of place in the town where they live.

*Making Shelburne's Open Space and Recreation Opportunities a Place for All Ages and Abilities*

Outdoor spaces should be able to be enjoyed by all, including aging residents who want to continue to be active. Shelburne residents recognize that their recreation facilities and recreation areas can be made to be more accessible to the full spectrum of ages and abilities.

*Working with the Community and Regional Partners to Improve Awareness and Literacy and Planning of Open Space, Recreation, the Environment, and Climate Resilience*

Shelburne is a close-knit community that is committed to working together as a community to develop forward-thinking management practices and work with neighboring communities to support regional, landscape-scale conservation and recreation projects.

*Improving Public Awareness of Open Space and Recreation Opportunities*

Shelburne residents recognize that the accessibility of open space and recreation is also a function of peoples' awareness of and access to information about open space. Making detailed recreation information available to the public about these opportunities helps make them accessible to all.