

SECTION 9

SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Seven-Year Action Plan fulfills the Open Space and Recreation Plan objectives. The objectives address open space, natural resources, recreation, and community development needs. The quantity and quality of accessible open space relates directly to the state of Shelburne's environment, the Town's recreational opportunities, and the quality of future development in Shelburne. The community survey overwhelmingly called for preserving open space and water quality and increasing public access to the Deerfield River and natural areas. The goals in this Plan aim to address the values expressed by Shelburne community members.

On the following table, the objectives are listed in the far left column are followed in the same row by *Recommended Actions, Participating Board or Group, Start date, and Potential Funding Sources*. Implementing the Open Space and Recreation Plan will require the participation of the Open Space Committee, as well as the involvement of many other Town groups; other participating entities are suggested in the *Participating Board or Group* column in the action plan. Boards and organizations listed are suggestions of those who might be involved, and do not necessarily reflect a commitment to work on these items in the time frame shown in the table.

Many of these actions may be constrained by a lack of volunteer time, in addition to funding limitations. Where money is required, such as to permanently protect open space, it does not have to be provided by the Town alone. The Community Preservation Act recently approved by the Town will serve as an important funding source for open space protection and for the development of recreational opportunities. State and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, and foundations are also potential sources of funding. These sources are more likely to invest in land protection and recreation projects that have a broad base of community support.

Under the primary stewardship of an Open Space Committee, the Town can achieve the action steps listed below over time. It will be important to establish the Town's top priorities. The Open Space Committee has prioritized action steps by the goals and objectives listed in the previous chapter. These action steps are represented graphically (where possible) on the *Seven-Year Action Plan Map* and highlighted in light yellow in Table 9-1. Any project the Town decides to take on will ensure avenues for public input and comment.

Table 9-1: Recommended Action Steps to Implement the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan

<Note to reviewers: Priority items will be selected by the Open Space Committee after the October 10 public meeting in order to take into account comments heard at the meeting.>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Goal A: Sustain and enhance the small town, rural feel of Shelburne as reflected by large tracts of farm and forested lands, its ridgelines with views, and its lively village in Shelburne Falls.				
A1. Promote and support the economic viability of farming and forestry in Shelburne.	Continue participating in the Woodlands Partnership of Northwestern Massachusetts (Woodlands Partnership).	Selectboard	2023	Woodlands Partnership of Northwestern Massachusetts
	Actively pursue applications for Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grants to fund OSRP goals.	Open Space Committee	2024	Woodlands Partnership
	Convene the Agricultural Commission 2-4 times per year, and identify and work on projects consistent with the mission of the Agricultural Commission.	Agricultural Commission	2024	Volunteer time

¹ Any action highlighted in light yellow is considered a high priority. The high priority designation was determined through the OSRP Community Survey, Community Forum, and during OSRP Committee meetings.

² For action items that are considered to be ongoing efforts, the start date is given as 2023. Many of the action items can be worked on simultaneously. Also, the start date for a given action item is not set in stone. The Participating Board/Group could change the start date for a specific action item, as it deems appropriate, in consultation with the Open Space Committee. The start date is also dependent on available funding.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
A2. Identify and protect lands that have ecological, historical, agricultural, cultural, and recreational significance, including places that are significant to indigenous peoples.	Use the results of the 2022-2023 Open Space and Recreation Community Survey, this plan, and the latest version of Biomap to update the 2008 Land Evaluation Workbook ³ for use when the town has opportunities to exercise its right-of-first-refusal when Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands come up for sale.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Consult with state- and federally-recognized Tribes in the area as well as indigenous ally groups like Nolumbeka Project, the Oketeau Center, and the Atowi Project, to better understand places of indigenous value in Shelburne and use the information in prioritizing areas to protect.	Open Space Committee; FRCOG	2024	Volunteer time; Cultural Council grant
	Incorporate information learned from consultation with indigenous peoples into the Land Evaluation Workbook and use this information to identify priority areas for protection.	Open Space Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Identify priority areas for protection, such as the Patten District, using newly developed criteria.	Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Conservation Commission	2024	Volunteer time

³ The Land Evaluation Workbook is a document that is part of Shelburne's right of first refusal policy (https://www.townofshelburne.com/files/Chap_61_Review_Procedure.pdf). It can be found online at https://townofshelburne.com/files/shelburne_open_space_ranking_workbook.pdf

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
A2 (continued). Identify and protect lands that have ecological, historical, agricultural, cultural, and recreational significance, including places that are significant to indigenous peoples.	Respond to Right-of-First-Refusal opportunities by engaging Shelburne's Selectboard, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, and other relevant Boards & Committees in the process.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Partners	2024	Volunteer time
	Use the Right-of First-Refusal process for determining, on a case-by-case basis, whether Shelburne should own permanently protected open space in fee, accept a conservation restriction, or encourage ownership by others.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission; Finance Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Identify and document historical sites in Shelburne.	Shelburne Historical Society	2025	Community Preservation Act (CPA); Mass. Historical Commission
	Hold periodic workshops on estate planning and land management options in coordination with the MassWoods Program, UMass Extension.	Franklin Land Trust; Open Space Committee	2024	Town funds; Volunteers
A3. Create public spaces in Shelburne Falls village where residents of all ages can meet, socialize, eat together, stay active, and enjoy arts and culture.	Assess whether there are small lots in Shelburne Falls village that could be acquired for the purposes of developing permanent open space or pocket parks in the village.	Open Space Committee, Recreation Committee	2025	CPA; PARC grant program
	Enhance existing parks in Shelburne Falls village by installing benches, tables, new vegetation, or play structures.	Recreation Committee; Select Board	2025	CPA

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
A3 (continued). Create public spaces in Shelburne Falls village where residents of all ages can meet, socialize, eat together, stay active, and enjoy arts and culture.	Support the development of public spaces in downtown Shelburne Falls that addresses uses, design, and solutions for the Singley Lot, the Pothole area, and other parcels	Select Board; Open Space Committee	2024	Community One Stop grants
	Work with downtown businesses and Town boards to establish seasonal or permanent bathroom facilities that are open to the public.	Franklin County Chamber of Commerce; Select Board	2024	Woodlands Partnership of Northwestern MA for capital expense; opt in and earmark meals tax for maintenance ⁴
A4. Propose changes to zoning bylaws that reflect desired characteristics in the village and rural areas, enabling trail construction and housing diversity while still protecting open space.	Continue to implement the 2018 Shelburne Housing Plan ⁵	Planning Board; FRCOG	2023	Community One Stop; FRCOG's Improve Housing to Improve Health (IH2) Grant
	Examine trail-related elements of the Shelburne zoning bylaw and draft proposed changes to encourage community and landowner supported trail development in Shelburne.	Shelburne Planning Board; Shelburne Open Space Committee	2023	Volunteer time
A5. Explore adopting zoning measures that protect water resources, encourage climate resiliency, keep skies dark at night, enhance access to	Work with FRCOG to update the floodplain bylaw using the 2020 MA Model Floodplain Bylaw and support the Planning Board in drafting updates to the Zoning Bylaw, as appropriate.	Planning Board; FRCOG	2024	Volunteer time; DLTA; s.319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program

⁴ Although the Town has adopted the Local Rooms Tax, the Town has not adopted the local meals tax or the short-term rental community impact tax. If adopted, the Select Board and Finance Committee could decide that revenues collected from these visitor-related services be dedicated to fund services that support the village center business district, such as maintenance of a public toilet and similar services.

⁵ The Housing Plan can be reviewed on the Town website at https://townofshelburne.com/files/E_Shelburne_Housing_Plan_2017.pdf.

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recreation and trails, and preserve scenic views.	Collaborate with the Town of Buckland to adopt ridgeline protection bylaws for both towns to prevent further visual impacts within Shelburne Falls village and to prevent erosion and forest fragmentation. ⁶	Shelburne Planning Board; Buckland Planning Board	2025	Volunteer time; DLTA
	Examine trail-related elements of the Shelburne zoning bylaw and draft proposed changes to encourage community and landowner supported trail development in Shelburne.	Shelburne Planning Board; Shelburne Open Space Committee	2023	Volunteer time
	Compare Shelburne's Open Space Development provision in zoning bylaws to Mass Audubon's "best practices" for Open Space Zoning and consider changes to Shelburne's bylaws that differ from best practices ⁷	Planning Board	2025	DLTA

Goal B: Maintain and improve the quality of Shelburne's natural resources for today and the future, under a changing climate.

⁶ The Planning Boards may wish to review Hadley's zoning bylaw, section 5.8, which attempts to limit development impacting views of the Holyoke Range.

⁷ See "Download the Bylaw Review Tool" section of <https://www.massaudubon.org/our-work/climate-change/local-climate-resilient-communities/land-use-rules>. Worksheet #5 covers the Open Space Development Analysis.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
B1. Propose and assist development of strategic land conservation to protect natural habitats, wildlife corridors, forests with significant carbon sequestration potential, contiguous undeveloped tracts of land, and plants or places that are significant to indigenous peoples.	Learn more about how other Community Preservation Act towns have successfully used CPA funds for open space and recreation projects in order to guide effective use of Shelburne CPA funds for protection of high priority open space.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Work with willing landowners to protect BioMap priority habitat as identified on parcels identified in the Plant and Wildlife Map in this OSRP.	Open Space Committee	2025	Volunteer time
	Develop a whitepaper describing how the Town can receive lands for conservation purposes that can be transferred to a land trust or other land conservation agencies. Post and promote on the Open Space Committee's webpage and elsewhere.	Open Space Committee; Franklin Land Trust	2025	Volunteer time
	Work with local and regional land conservation trusts (e.g., Franklin Land Trust and Hilltown Land Trust) and state conservation agencies like Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to encourage private conservation efforts and to provide resources for landowners interested in protecting their land.	Open Space Committee	2026	Volunteer time
B1 (continued). Encourage strategic land conservation to protect natural habitats, wildlife corridors, forests with significant carbon sequestration potential, contiguous undeveloped	Attend the annual Massachusetts Land Trust Conference and events hosted by the Massachusetts Open Space Network to learn of efforts underway that Shelburne could implement.	Open Space Committee	2024	Volunteer time

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tracts of land, and plants or places that are significant to indigenous peoples.	Explore the option of a municipal carbon project, or provide outreach to landowners about their options	Open Space Committee with help from land trusts and DCR; Energy Committee	2026	Free initial consultation with MassAudubon
B2. Execute water quality protection initiatives to conserve and protect rivers, groundwater, wetlands, and lakes, along with their riparian areas.	Work with the Conservation Commission to develop a draft wetlands protection bylaw. Review Zoning and Subdivision Regulations that address stormwater management and revise as necessary to protect wetlands and water quality.	Conservation Commission; Planning Board; Open Space & Recreation Committee; FRCOG	2025	DLTA
	Work with riparian landowners to improve the water quality of streams such as Dragon and Hinsdale Brooks by developing natural buffer strips to increase shading and reduce impacts from bacteria.	Selectboard, Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission; Franklin Conservation District	2024	NRCS; s.319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program
B3. Identify infrastructure and lands that are vulnerable to extreme flooding, droughts, and temperatures resulting from climate change and complete projects that reduce Shelburne's vulnerability.	Complete the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan by July 1, 2024.	Shelburne MVP Project Liaison; Consultant	2023	MVP Planning Grant

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
B4. Identify and promote land use practices that improve and sustain healthy landscapes that can provide local food, recreation, wildlife habitat, and community living for current and future generations.	Create an invasive plant management plan to prioritize areas and actions.	Tree Warden; Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission; Highway Department; MassDOT	2026	MVP; Volunteer time
	Implement recommendations of the Shelburne Pollinator Action Plan from 2021. ⁸	Open Space Committee	2025	Volunteer time; Franklin Conservation District's Lawn Conversion Grant Program
B4 (continued). Identify and promote land use practices that improve and sustain healthy landscapes that can provide local food, recreation, wildlife habitat, and community living for current and future generations.	Sponsor educational events and materials for residents concerning the management of invasive plant species, invasive pests, and diseases affecting vegetation, including food crops and trees.	Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Tree Warden; Conservation Commission; UMass Extension; Highway Department	2027	Volunteer time; MDAR grants ⁹

⁸ Shelburne's Pollinator Plan is found online at https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Shelburne-Pollinator-Action-Plan_FINAL_2021.pdf

⁹ Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

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	Engage with MassDOT (through FRCOG) about whether there are any appropriate locations for animal crossing tunnels under Route 2.	Conservation Commission; Deerfield River Watershed Association; FRCOG; MassDOT	2026	MassWildlife Habitat Management grant
Goal C: Offer recreational facilities and programming for residents of all ages and abilities, especially those that connect people with Shelburne's rich natural environment and landscapes.				
C1. Continue to offer high quality recreational programming and facilities.	Meet with Cowell Gymnasium director seasonally, review programming and attendance numbers, and adjust programming for the next season.	Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Continue to maintain and upgrade the building and grounds of the Cowell Gymnasium.	Recreation Committee; Select Board; Highway Department	2024	PARC grant; CPA
C1 (continued). Continue to offer high quality recreational programming and facilities.	Continue to develop programming at the Cowell Gym in response to interest, and develop additional programming at the Cowell Gym during school vacation periods	Recreation Committee	2024	Cowell operating budget; program fees
	Renovate the Arms Academy ballfield and look to expand activities and increase its usage year-round.	Recreation Committee	2024	Woodlands Partnership Grant; PARC grant

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
C2. Identify, protect, and enhance river access points to the Deerfield River.	Work with private landowners, power companies, MA DFW and DCR, and river users to identify river access sites. Acquire land for this purpose if necessary.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee; Deerfield River Watershed Association; Select Board	2024	CPA; PARC grant program
	Remove invasive plants from the town-owned Lillian Davenport property.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2024	Woodlands Partnership Funding; Volunteer time
	Implement early stages of the concept design for the Lillian Davenport found in the Shelburne Pollinator Plan. ¹⁰	Open Space Committee	2025	Woodlands Partnership Funding; volunteer time
	When the Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2022 becomes law, designate an Open Space Committee member to serve on the local advisory committee. ¹¹	Open Space Committee	2026	Volunteer time
C2 (continued). Identify, protect, and enhance river access points to the Deerfield River.	Research and implement one walkable river access location downstream of Dam No. 3 and one location within a short walk from Shelburne Falls Village.	Open Space Committee; Deerfield River Watershed Association	2026	Volunteer time

¹⁰ Shelburne's Pollinator Plan is found online at https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Shelburne-Pollinator-Action-Plan_FINAL_2021.pdf

¹¹ Find up to date information on the progress of the bill here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4631/text?r=2&s=1>

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	Work with the three landowners, Eversource, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Central Rivers Power (owner of Gardner Falls Dam), to provide a permanent solution for improving and maintaining the access road down to Wilcox Hollow. ¹² Determine if a new route or partial new route is needed to reduce the road slope.	Open Space Committee; Deerfield River Watershed Association; Connecticut River Conservancy	2024	Operating budget of land owners
C3. Work with nonprofit and private landowners to maintain and expand the number of trails in Shelburne.	Continue to maintain and promote existing trails on Mt. Massamet, along the Deerfield River, and on the Wooded Loop.	Open Space Committee Recreation Committee	2025	Woodlands Partnership Grants, CPA; Volunteer time
	Upgrade and expand educational signage program to new trail areas.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2025	Woodlands Partnership Grants, CPA; Volunteer time
	Organize and hold a “Trail Summit” to dig deeper into short- and long-term trail planning in Shelburne.	Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee	2025	Woodlands Partnership Grants; volunteer time
	Use results of Trail Summit to implement more multi-use trails in town. Examine potential for horseback riding, mountain biking, and dog walking opportunities	Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee	2027	Volunteer time; various state and private trail grants
C4. Identify the best prospects for future roadside biking and walking, and paths for hiking, walking, and	Support the creation of opportunities for bicycling in Shelburne, both on and off the roads.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2026	Volunteer time; MassTrails

¹² Wilcox Hollow is a recreational amenity required under the Gardner Falls FERC license P-2334, but the access road crosses land owned by three entities.

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jogging; work to develop those facilities.	Work with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to explore the creation of new off-road bike paths in town.	Recreation Committee; FRCOG	2024	Community Preservation Act; FRCOG Unified Planning Work Program
	Develop a Complete Streets Plan and participate in the MassDOT Complete Streets funding program.	Select Board Select Board; Highway Superintendent	2024	MassDOT; FRCOG can assist town with application.
	Review and provide comment on FRCOG's updated regional bicycle plan (planned for federal fiscal year 2024). Provide recommendations for specific locations.	Shelburne residents; Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
C5. Provide access points to natural areas for village residents.	Update the town website to provide more information on publicly accessible natural areas and recreation resources in town.	Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
	Explore options for linking walking options in Shelburne Falls village to locations outside the village.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee; FRCOG	2025	MassTrails
C6. Expand outdoor recreation offerings for children, teens, young adults, and older adults.	Resume some youth and other programming that stopped during the pandemic.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
C6 (continued). Expand outdoor recreation offerings for children, teens, young adults, and older adults.	Identify a location and start a community garden, preferably serving residents living within Shelburne's Environmental Justice census block.	Recreation Committee; Select Board; new ad hoc committee	2025	USDA Health Food Financing Initiative

OBJECTIVE	ACTION ¹	PARTICIPATING BOARD / GROUP	START DATE ²	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
C7. Provide information on the available public recreation resources in town.	Update the town website to provide more information on recreation resources in town.	Recreation Committee	2024	Volunteer time
Goal D: Engage residents in discussions about community projects and the town's natural, recreational, and cultural resources, and as volunteer and stewards of these resources.				
D1. Continue to engage the community in open space and recreation planning efforts.	Engage and recruit residents to actively participate in volunteering and implementing this Plan even if they are not on a town committee.	Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee; Select Board	2024	Volunteer time
	Update community members related to open space and recreation by email subscribers, the town website, the town e-newsletter, and community social media accounts.	Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee	2024	Volunteer time
D2. Improve availability of public information on recreation and open space in Shelburne.	Consolidate and update recreation and open space information on the town's website in a location that is not on a town board's page.	Recreation Committee; Select Board	2024	Volunteer time
D2 (continued). Improve availability of public information on recreation and open space in Shelburne.	Work with interested landowners to develop a pamphlet providing guidelines about engaging in recreational activities on private lands that builds off previous efforts to establish a positive culture of respectful use rather than restricting use. Consider doing this in cooperation with surrounding towns.	Recreation Committee; Franklin Conservation District	2025	Town funds