



**Natural Resources, Open Space, and  
Recreation / Programming  
Challenges and Solutions**

# Universal Challenges



## Challenge:

Creating opportunities for public / private partnerships

## Solutions:

- Designate a Town Department Head to help “match make” opportunities
- Maintain a list of grantors and grantees
- Consider creating a new position in Town to facilitate and coordinate public private partnerships (both monetary and volunteer)
- Work with the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce to develop a process private organizations to share their ideas and interests with the Town and nonprofit organizations
- Create a committee that includes private sector representation to regularly discuss community needs and private interest

## Challenge:

Funding for historic preservation, open space, affordable housing, and recreation

## Solutions:

- Adopt the Community Preservation Act

## Challenge:

Coordinating volunteer and monetary resources to support open space and natural resource goals

## Solutions:

- Schedule monthly or quarterly coordination meetings for the various organizations (Friends of Mary Cummings Park, Friends of the Landlocked Forest, Conservation, etc.) to discuss upcoming projects, site needs, challenges, and success stories
- Create and support a Burlington Environmental Network or similar organization to bring the various organizations together

## Challenge:

Identifying and addressing maintenance issues on public sites

## Solutions:

- Schedule a standing interdepartmental coordination meeting monthly or quarterly
- Encourage the use of the “Report a Concern” function on the Town’s website. Provide additional information and examples to help residents identify the types of issues they can report
- Coordinate the maintenance and management of public property on a site-by-site basis

# Natural Resources and Open Space



## Challenge:

Corridors connecting open space areas are undefined or nonexistent

## Solutions:

- Establish a wayfinding and signage program to highlight existing connections and guide people from one site to another
- Identify parcels that would create or contribute to open space corridors and prioritize their acquisition or secure conservation restrictions
- Provide trail and site maps identifying routes between open spaces
- When feasible, provide a strong visual cues showing residents how to walk or bike between nearby open space parcels
- Work to develop a riverwalk along Vine Brook



## Challenge:

Protecting mature trees on residential and commercial lots and ensuring adequate replacement trees with redevelopment

## Solutions:

- Create a Tree Protection Bylaw that sets minimum standards for tree replacement and works to protect mature trees whenever possible
- Expand the use of site plan review or create a separate review process to establish enforceable protection, replacement, and installation of appropriate trees and other plant material

## Challenge:

Invasive plants are damaging native plants and habitat

## Solutions:

- Educate residents on invasive plants and best management practices
- GPS and map invasive species throughout Town to target management and prioritize areas
- Develop an invasive species management plan
- Adopt a Road / Park / Square / Reservation program focused on invasive plant management and removal
- Work with Conservation to coordinate invasive plant education and removal efforts with volunteer organizations
- Include invasive species management and removal in Conservation permits

## Challenge:

Trail maintenance and management is labor intensive and there are conflicting or improper uses on sites (example: ATVs)

## Solutions:

- Combine and coordinate town staff with volunteer efforts to survey and care for existing trails
- Designate or hire a town staff person to manage and coordinate open space maintenance, management, and enforcement
- Create “Adopt a Trail” program to support Conservation efforts to maintain trails
- Post Conservation’s contact information prominently at all trail heads and kiosks
- Confirm or establish municipal codes for use of open space land. Update signage and maps to clearly specify uses allowed and not allowed

## Challenge:

Residents are not aware of all of the public open space resources in Burlington

## Solutions:

- Create a town-wide trail map and trail maps for each property. Post the maps prominently on the Town's website, provide hard copies, and post trail maps at all trail heads
- Include brochures and other information about Burlington's open space resources in town-wide mailings
- Create or clearly mark loop trails with information on time to complete, distance, and terrain. Advertise these loops as part of a public outreach and education campaign

## Challenge:

Making open spaces, parks, and playgrounds are accessible from neighborhoods, places of employment, and schools

## Solutions:

- Add additional access points from adjacent neighborhoods
- Clearly mark access points and trail heads
- Prioritize the installation of sidewalks and multi-use paths in neighborhoods and commercial areas adjacent to parks and other open spaces

## Challenge:

The Landlocked Forest is inaccessible from Burlington

## Solutions:

- Increase visibility and knowledge of access from Lexington conservation lands
- Provide trail maps that include adjacent trails and parking lots in Lexington
- Secure access rights via Northwest Park and work to secure funding to construct a pedestrian bridge from Northwest Park to the Landlocked Forest

## Natural Resources and Open Space



## Challenge:

Clearly define and support Recreation Department operations

## Solutions:

- Work to fund an additional staff person to support Recreation Department operations
- Secure additional indoor space for Recreation Department programs
- Build or identify a secure, weather-tight facility with enough space to store equipment for the Recreation Department Maintenance Team



## Challenge:

Maintain and improve recreation facilities, parks, and playgrounds

## Solutions:

- Plan and budget for space needs, such as additional adult softball fields and basketball courts
- Complete an accessibility study for all playgrounds and parks
- Identify maintenance needs on public sites and coordinate maintenance
- Proactively maintain and improve playground and other facilities
- Survey facilities and quantify user and facility needs (including parking) and work towards universal access
- Coordinate with Burlington Swim and Tennis Club and/or North Suburban YMCA to provide pool access to Burlington residents
- Seek funding to build a public pool

## Challenge:

Providing activities for “pre-driver” pre-teens and teenagers (ages 10 – 14)

## Solutions:

- Work to provide skateboard parks, basketball courts, and other recreation opportunities in neighborhood parks and near schools to encourage people to walk to these destinations
- Designate a town staff person or volunteer to support activities organized by the user groups at these facilities
- Coordinate with nonprofit organizations to support youth programming
- Develop semi-organized programming for middle school and young high school students so they can create their own programs
- Create a Burlington Teen Center

## Challenge:

Involve the private sector in providing recreational opportunities

## Solutions:

- Require usable green spaces and/or recreational amenities in new developments
- Educate developers and property owners about the liability shield for providing public access to usable private open spaces
- Provide incentives in the permitting process to encourage the provision of usable public open space and / or recreational facilities
- Encourage private sector companies and organizations to sponsor (more) teams in local Burlington leagues and host recreational programming in their facilities