

2.0 Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The primary intent of this document is to update Southampton's prior Open Space Plan that expired in September 2011, assist the Town in open space and recreation planning, and meet qualification requirements for state funding.

The 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update ("the Plan") for the Town of Southampton will help the Town with funding eligibility, but more importantly, it serves as a tool to connect open space and recreation issues to comprehensive town planning. The new plan addresses issues of importance to the town and offers strategies for implementation by various town boards and citizen groups.

The Board of Selectmen retained Haff Associates and its principal Courtney A. Haff, AICP, Ph.D on June 4, 2012 to prepare the Plan in compliance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requirements. The Plan follows the guidelines, as specified by Appendix D: Preparing an Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, a section of the MA Open Space Planner's Workbook, March 2008.

The Plan update assesses opportunities and provides guidance about open space and recreation within a community vision framework that identifies areas for focusing growth and development within a Smart Growth context, while also protecting ecologically sensitive and scenic resources that provide the much cherished rural character of Southampton.

This plan meets the Open Space and Recreation Plan requirements of the LAND/PARC Act and is an element of the Southampton Master Planning Process. The Conservation Commission, Park Commission, and the Planning Board have adopted the Plan. The Planning Board adopted the Plan in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, §81D.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

This plan builds on the four earlier Open Space and Recreation Plans and other planning, including the 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 2008 Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan, the 2005 Water Conservation Plan and the 2004 Community Development Plan.

The 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update draws upon the Master Plan Committee meetings for findings and data related to the requirements noted above. The Master Plan Committee has met fourteen times between April 2010 and June 2012.

The public participated in three public visioning sessions and responded to a survey concerning open space and recreation issues during April 2010 and June 2012.

A press release and publication in the Gazette announced each of the four visioning sessions as noted in Section 10.0 herein.

Environmental Justice

Due to Southampton's demographics and predominantly rural development pattern, no Environmental Justice Populations have been identified. The state considers environmental justice populations to be predominantly low-income or minority populations that live in denser urban neighborhoods and, for reason of location, may lack open space and recreational resources and often live side-by-side numerous existing large and small sources of pollution and old abandoned, contaminated sites, which can pose risks to public health and the environment. These conditions are not present in Southampton and, therefore, no enhanced outreach to this population was performed, as required by DCS.