

City of Methuen

2020 Update of Methuen Open Space & Recreation Plan

Mayor Perry's Advisory
Committee
Meeting #2 - August 27, 2020





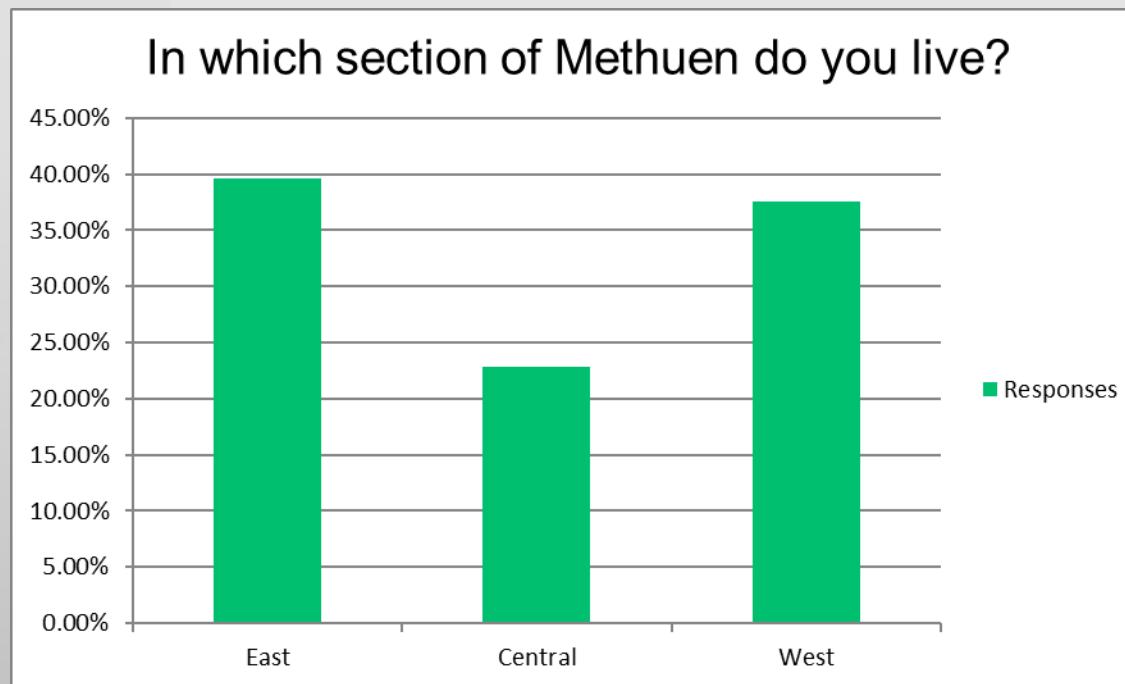
Meeting Agenda

- 1) Welcome & Introductions
- 2) Needs Analysis - Community Survey of Methuen Open Space & Recreation
- 3) Goals & Objectives From the Prior OSRP
- 4) Assessment - Progress/Challenges in Achieving Goals
- 5) Discussion on Updated Goals for the 2020s

2020 Methuen Needs Survey



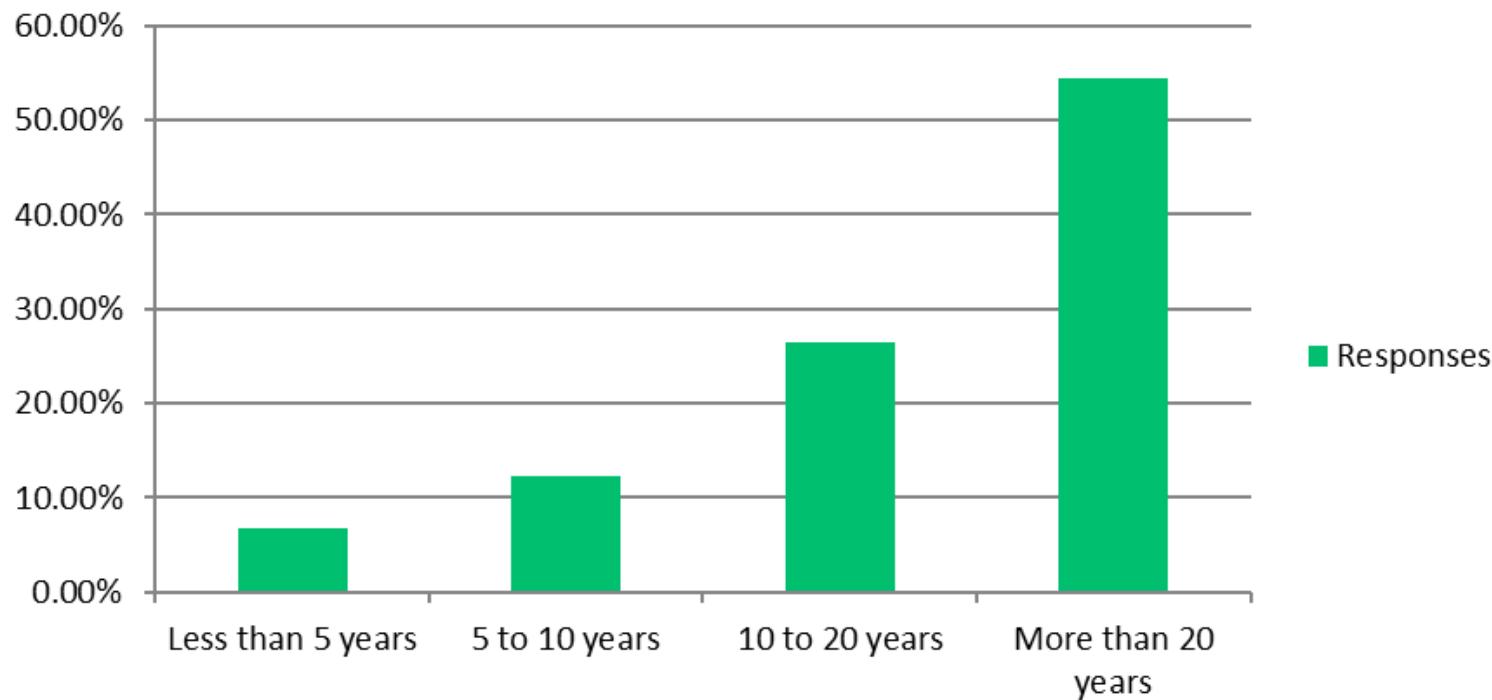
661 Total Respondents



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



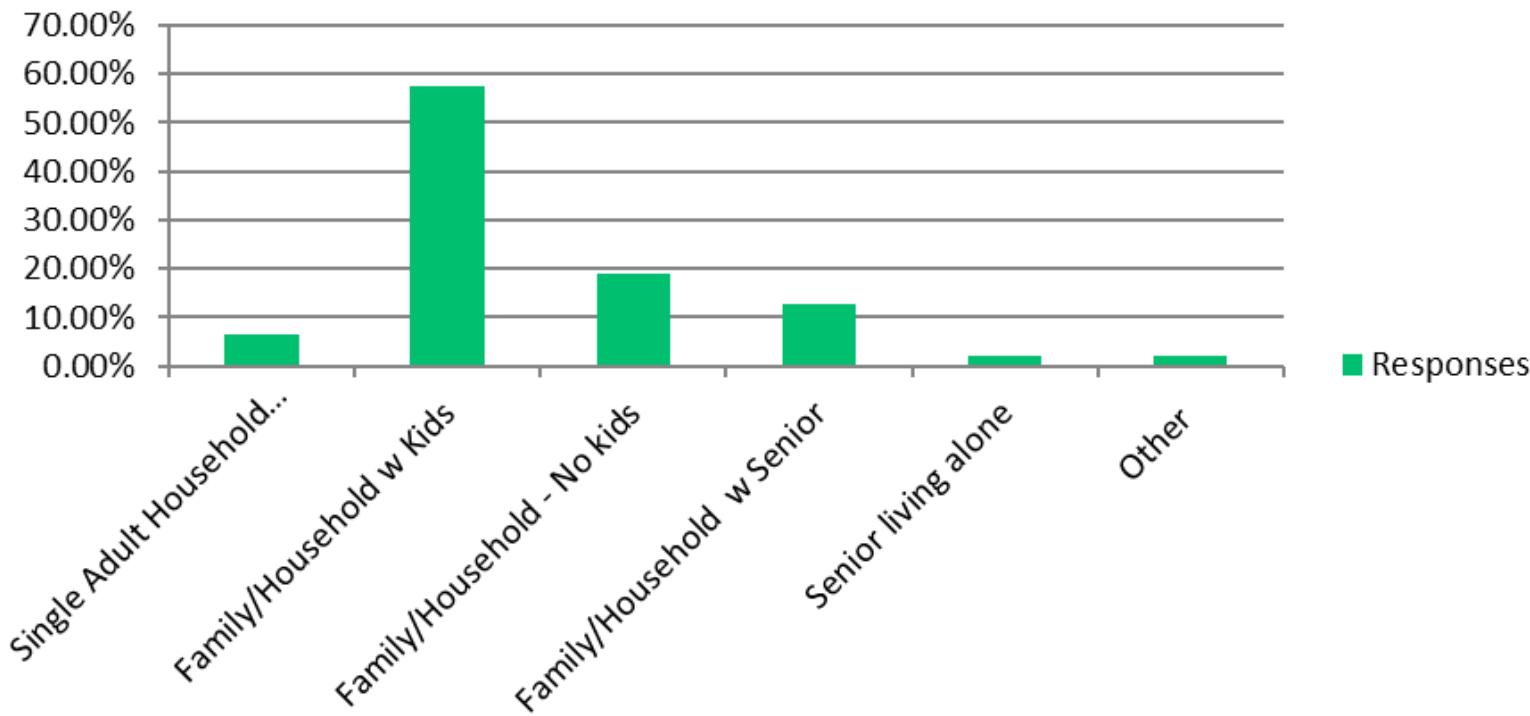
How long have you been a resident of Methuen?



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



Which best describes your current living situation?



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



Top Ten Recreation Activities of Respondents

Hiking/Walking	64.69%	425
Community Events (outdoor movie nights, concerts, festivals etc.)	45.97%	302
Nevins Library activities/book clubs	37.75%	248
Dogwalking	36.68%	241
Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking	35.46%	233
Art/Music Programs	34.86%	229
Baseball/Softball	29.22%	192
Gardening	28.16%	185
Farmers Market @ Nevins Library	26.79%	176
Cycling/Mountain Biking	24.96%	164
Basketball	24.20%	159

2020 Methuen Needs Survey



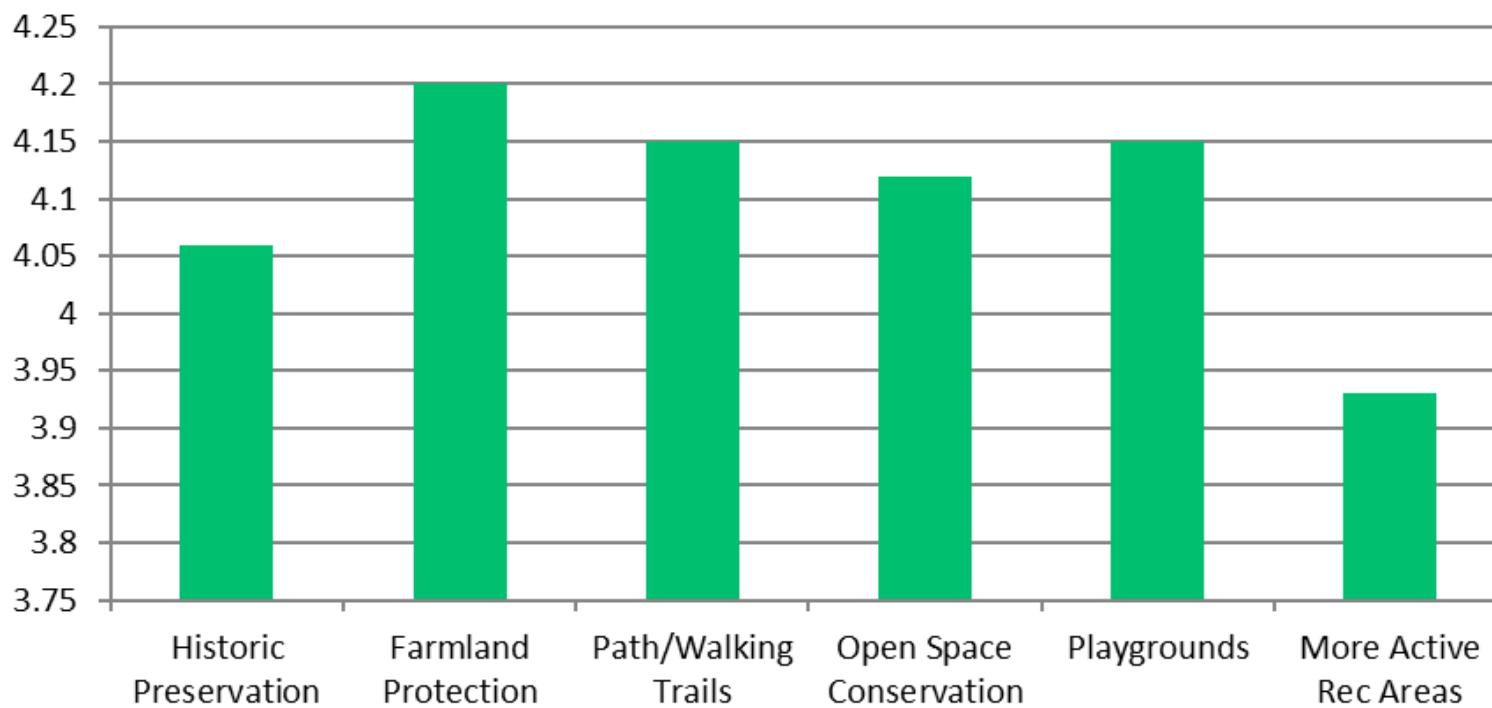
Top Methuen Facilities Used By Respondents

Methuen Rail Trail	53.31%	346
Veterans Memorial Park (Milk St.)	39.60%	257
Greycourt Park at the Tenney Estate	31.12%	202
Nicholson Stadium	29.12%	189
Forest Lake Town Beach	27.58%	179
Methuen Recreation Dept. Programs & Special Events	24.35%	158
MHS Track	22.96%	149
Burnham Road Sport Fields	21.73%	141
CGS Fields & Playground	20.80%	135
Nevins Bird Sanctuary	18.95%	123
Tenney School Fields & Playground	18.49%	120
Riverside Park @ Merrimack River	18.34%	119
Marsh School Playground	17.72%	115
Methuen Memorial Music Hall	15.41%	100

2020 Methuen Needs Survey



In your opinion, how important are the following activities?



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



Rate Supply/Condition of Methuen Facilities:
(1= extremely poor; 3=fair, 5=excellent)

- Active Recreation Parks & Playgrounds - 2.88
- Conservation Lands & Passive Rec. Areas (trails) - 3.11
- Historic & Cultural Facilities - 3.41

2020 Methuen Needs Survey



How important is it to you for Methuen to acquire and preserve open space for conservation and recreation?

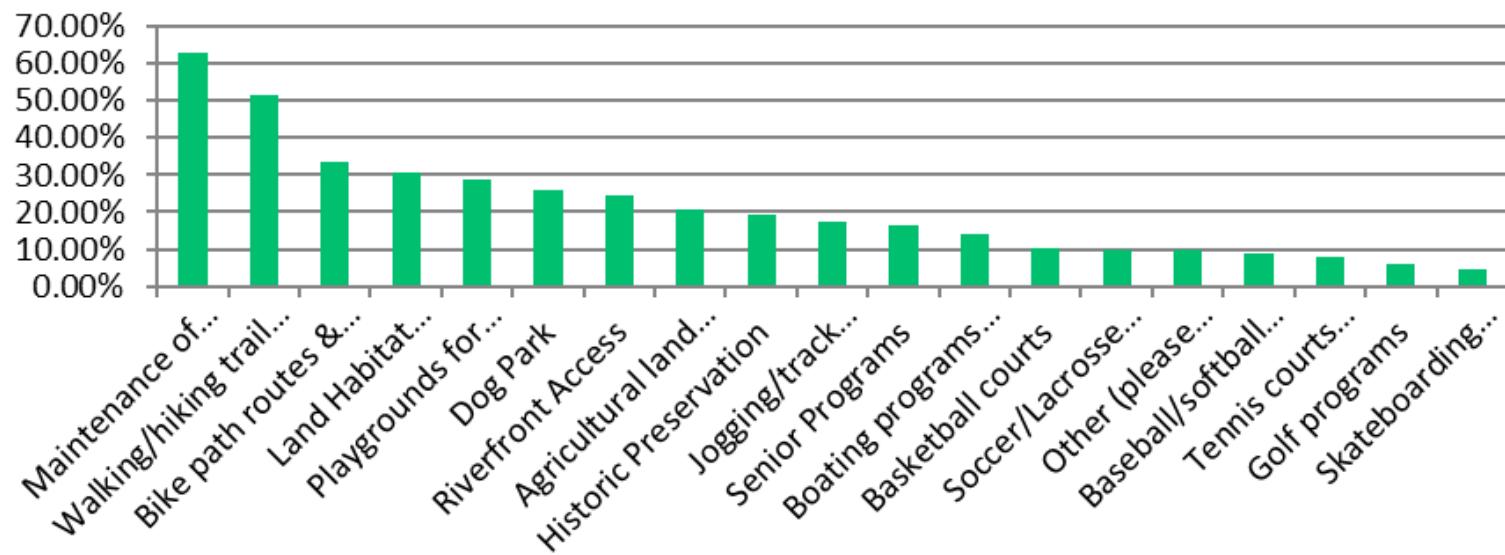
(1= Very unimportant; 3=Neutral, 5=Very important)

- 4.16 weighted average of 657 responses

2020 Methuen Needs Survey



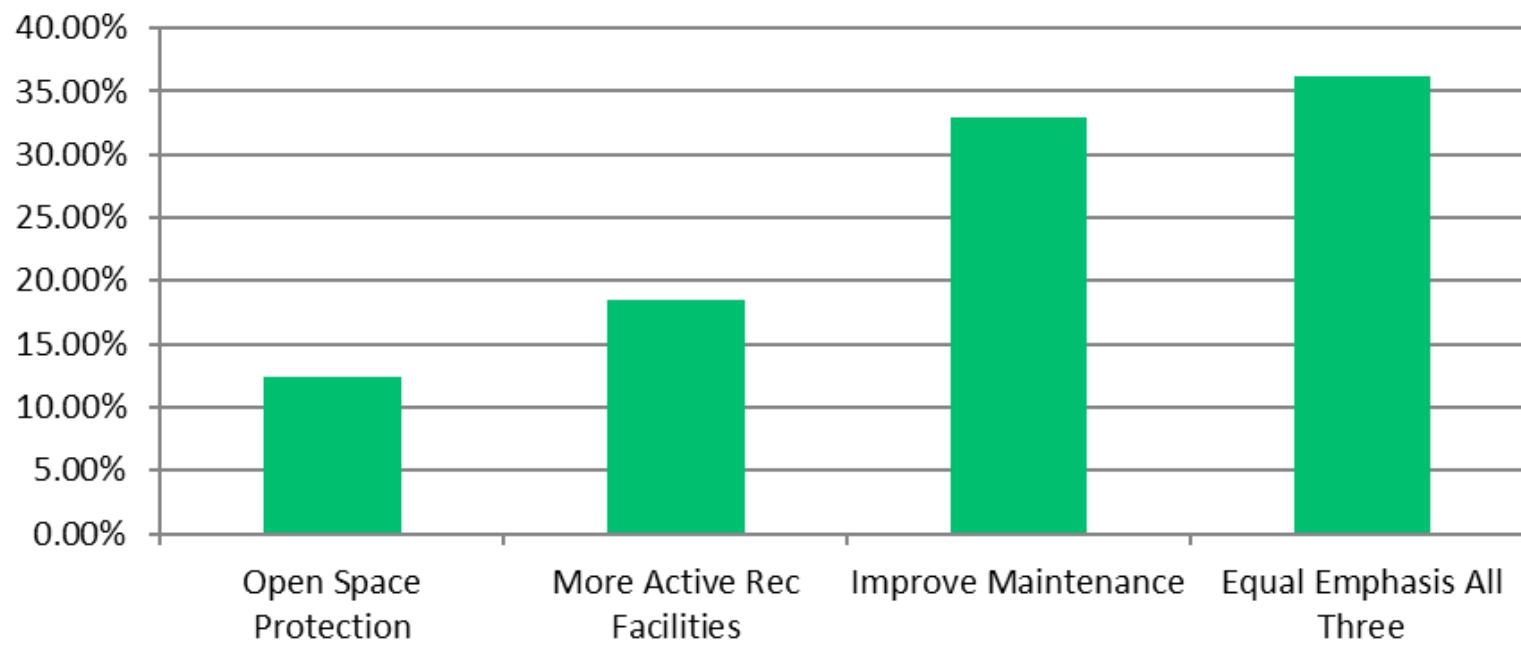
What do you think should be the focus areas for Methuen's open space and recreation program over the next decade
(Select your top 3)



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



Which should Methuen consider the top priority in its Open Space and Recreation planning?



2020 Methuen Needs Survey



METHUEN OPEN/SPACE RECREATION WORD CLOUD

new play Please trees development housing will maintenance updates Thank time
business go many fixed growing improve high school lot teens baseball fields
home think much places seniors great allow rail trail really use
conservation space live building s better things kids Forest Lake
maintained well town open area stop
playground nice park schools need create
Methuen Veterans Park city preserve see parks playgrounds
fields Stop building also come children leave open space
old make residents keep Maybe dog park around clean Loop
love see sports fields add one community job sidewalks properties Safe
Upgrade activities bring work basketball court programs public look enjoy etc plan
sports equipment take care downtown important put

Goals & Objectives from the 2013 OSRP



Prepared by
Methuen Open Space and Recreation Plan Working Group

- Six General Goals
- Themes:
 - Continue
 - Maintain
 - Protect
 - Preserve
 - Promote

GOAL #1: Increase regular maintenance and continue to enhance existing recreational facilities

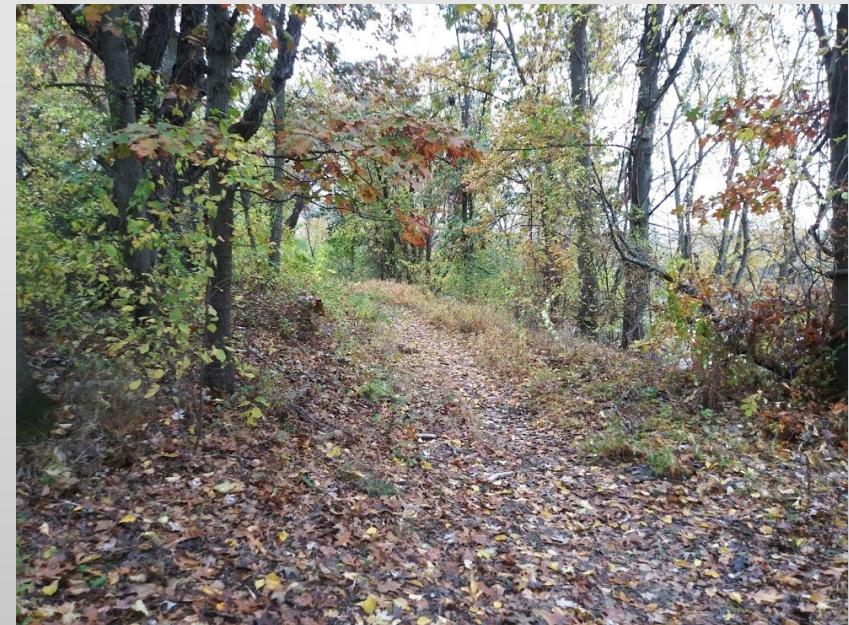


- Enhance Existing Facilities.
- Schedule regular maintenance.
- Develop capital plan and encourage public-private partnerships to protect and maintain.



GOAL #2: Create and maintain areas for walking trails, bike paths, and other passive recreation

- Maintain & updated existing trails/passive recreation areas.
- Identify areas for new trail connections.
- Acquire easements for trails.
- Construct and complete trails underway.
- Promote trails/passive recreation opportunities



GOAL #3: Preserve the existing rural character of Methuen

- Identify & prioritize lands for permanent protection.
- Work with developers/landowners to permanently protect agricultural areas & forested areas.



GOAL #4: Increase Access to waterfront resources through enhancement and protection

- Identify areas along the Merrimack & Spicket for public access.
- Create partnerships to enhance existing access areas and create new water access points.
- Promote existing trails & access points along the Merrimack & Spicket Rivers.



GOAL #5: Increase activity and attendance at existing facilities for all ages and groups by implementing more active in-parks programming

- Review existing recreational programs & opportunities.
- Create new programs to address needs identified.
- Maximize use of existing programs.



GOAL #6: Preserve historic and cultural resources and landscapes

- Continue expansion of the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District.
- Educate & promote.
- Maintain & restore identified historic/cultural resources.



How'd We Do 2013-20?



GOAL #1: Increase regular maintenance and continue to enhance existing recreational facilities

What We Accomplished

- Completed clubhouse & accessibility improvements at Nicholson Stadium
- Installed turf field
- Upgrades including accessibility, and new tot lot play area at Riverside.
- Installed Splash Pad at Gill Ave.
- Field improvements at Pelham St. ballfield, Burnham Rd., Neil Playstead and Veterans Park (2014).
- Upgraded playground equipment at Tenney, CGS, Marsh, Timony, MHS
- Playground equipment upgrade at Tenney St., Gill Ave. and Veterans Park
- MHS Track reconstruction
- City designated a Green Community with energy reduction plan and commitment to reduce energy use/carbon emissions 20%
- Updated Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (valid to May 2021) endorsed by FEMA
- Designated Municipal Vulnerability Partnership community by Commonwealth.



GOAL #1: Increase regular maintenance and continue to enhance existing recreational facilities



Incomplete

- 5-year capital plan for Parks
- Parking at Neil Playstead & Veterans Park
- Limited partnerships (eg of Central Catholic plans for multi-purpose field plan)
- New soccer fields & new multi-purpose field in West (Hampshire Road fields discontinued in 2018)
- Maintenance continues to be issue complaint



GOAL #2: Create and maintain areas for walking trails, bike paths, and other passive recreation

What We Accomplished

- Methuen Rail Trail completed 2019
- Access/New Signs at Nevins Bird Sanctuary
- Partnerships – Rail Trail Alliance, Methuen Arts Alliance, Essex National Heritage Area
- Regional Active Transportation Plan--- Bike & Ped network.
- Trail connections at Great Oaks & Liams Lane (East End)
- Preliminary planning for Merrimack River Corridor at Riverside



GOAL #2: Create and maintain areas for walking trails, bike paths, and other passive recreation

Incomplete

- Expanding trail connections
- Citywide public map of open space & trails
- Some bike racks added (Riverside) but still lacking at public buildings/facilities.



GOAL #3: Preserve the existing rural character of Methuen

What We Accomplished

- 270 acres open space protected including Open Space Residential Development acreage –63.8 acres at Great Oaks (off North St.) and 65.6 acres at The Preserve Emerald Pines (Howe St.)
- Donations of conservation parcels - including .86 Willis property at Lowell Blvd. riverfront and 4.2 acre McCoul property at Prospect St.





GOAL #3: Preserve the existing rural character of Methuen

Incomplete

- Loss of 61A Parcels
- Lack of Prioritized Parcel listing
- Limited Resources for financing acquisitions – Methuen doesn't have Community Preservation Act option
- Database of property conservation restrictions & easements
- Monitoring & managing
- Signage & mapping (some additions, notably Rail Trail)



GOAL #4: Increase Access to waterfront resources through enhancement and protection

What We Accomplished

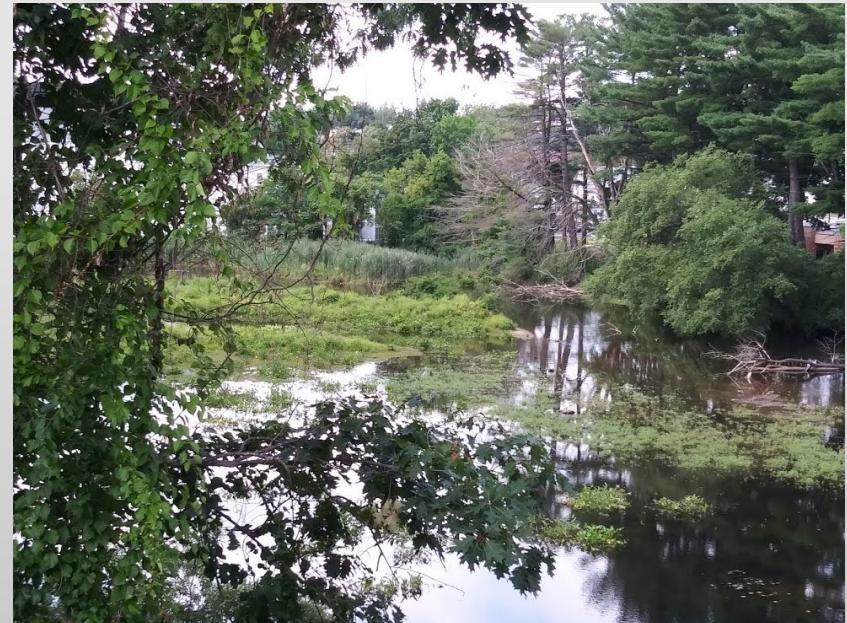
- Merrimack River Corridor Plan at Riverside
- Boat Ramp Access Completed at former Bea's property
- Ivy Island Acquired
- Wetland restoration and Flood storage improvements by State at former Loosigian Nursery site @ Lowell Blvd.
- Rail Trail Access to Spicket
- Organized Municipal Stormwater Management Plan
- Ongoing management & monitoring program at Forest Lake inc. water quality testing, seasonal drawdown and stocking of trout



GOAL #4: Increase Access to waterfront resources through enhancement and protection

Incomplete

- Merrimack River Trail system
- Coordination on community access at Phillips Academy and Essex Rowing
- Lack of Forest Lake Management Plan



GOAL #5: Increase activity and attendance at existing facilities for all ages and groups by implementing more active in-parks programming

What We Accomplished

- Recreation Program Survey underway
- Expanded programs in Tball, Middle School Volleyball, Skate and Read Program, Ranger Adventure Camp and Spring Decorating Contest.
- Retooling in response to 2020 pandemic with on-line programs –fitness, talent show, and theater---and special events includinng Easter Event and Drive-in Summer Movies at The Loop.



GOAL #5: Increase activity and attendance at existing facilities for all ages and groups by implementing more active in-parks programming

Incomplete

- Limited outdoor basketball courts
- Tennis court at MHS needs refurbishment.
- Upgrade needed at MHS baseball field.



GOAL #6: Preserve historic and cultural resources and landscapes

What We Accomplished

- Searles Estate Sale & Reuse
- Historic Preservation Special Permit used to protect historic homes at 310 Howe St; 311 Pelham Street; and 72 North Street.
- Historic Preservation restriction in place 195 Howe Street.
- Methuen Center Smart Growth Overlay 40R District Established and buildings at 5-7 Hampshire St. (Odd Fellows Bldg) and 2 Charles Street (Tenney & Co. Shoe Factory) revitalized
- Incorporating Arts Projects at Spicket Falls Bridge & Rail Trail
- Renovation & Reuse of Odd Fellows Building



GOAL #6: Preserve historic and cultural resources and landscapes

Incomplete

- Sands Bridge
- Charles St. sidewalk & retaining wall in disrepair
- Loss of Pleasant St. properties in fires



Vision for Methuen's Next Decade



Environment/Open Space

- What areas/resources do you think need to be protected?

Climate Resilience/Hazard Mitigation

- How can we protect our environmental resources, limit our carbon footprint & adapt to more extremes of heat & precipitation?

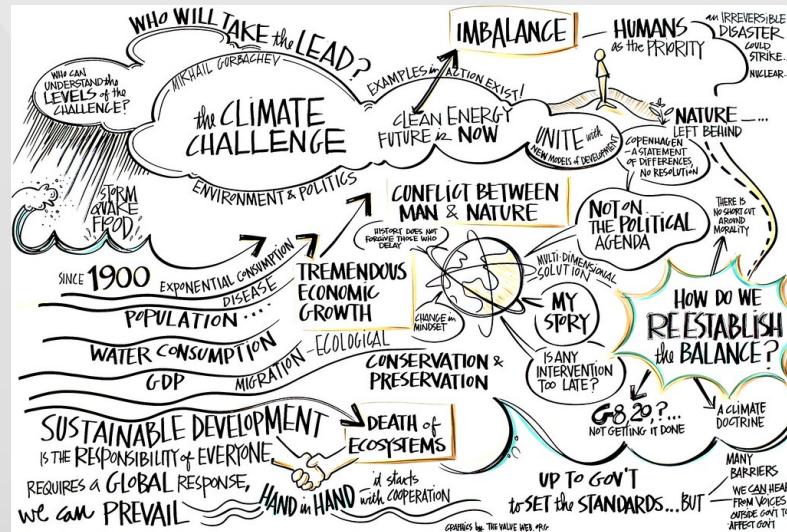
Recreation

- What do you think is working well? What needs to be improved?

Environmental Justice

- What should be standards to ensure all neighborhoods have access to quality parks/open space?

New OSRP Issues & Goals for the 2020s



- Waterfront Access
- Agricultural Land Protection
- Playgrounds
- Recreation Programs—All Ages
- Accommodating Diverse & Multiple Interests
- Athletic Fields & Programs
- Historic Preservation
- Climate Adaptation/Community Resilience
- Public Health
- Access to Parks/Open Space
- Arts/Cultural Programs
- Environmental Justice/Social Equity
- Balanced Growth
- Reuse/Redevelopment
- Water Quality & Pollution Control
- Habitat Protection
- ADA Compliance
- Active Transportation (Walking/Biking)
- Management Capacity—Operations & Maintenance, Planning, Design & Construction, Finance

Next Meeting



- Sept. 24 @ 6:30 P.M.
- Conservation/Recreation Areas Inventory
- Follow-up Discussion of Open Space/Recreation Needs
- Plan Goals & Vision Statement