

Here follows the

South Portland Open Space Plan – 2019



OPEN SPACE PLAN

SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE

2019



OPEN SPACE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE

Plan Adopted August 13, 2019

Prepared by FB Environmental Associates and Terrence J. DeWan & Associates
with guidance from the South Portland Open Space Planning Committee



Terrence J. DeWan & Associates
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of South Portland is a vibrant, healthy, and equitable community. In both 2017 and 2018, Money Magazine named South Portland as the best place to live in the state of Maine.¹ In the article's description of what makes South Portland a great place to live, there was mention of Willard Beach, the Greenbelt Walkway, and the scenic views from both Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse and Bug Light. The cover image for the article displays Bug Light Park as the iconic image of the city. Open space is an essential component in South Portland's recognized sense of place. This Plan acknowledges the role of open space in South Portland, explores open space in the City across all geographies, and outlines steps to ensure the community protects and builds upon its existing assets.

The OSPC took a full year to develop the contents of this Plan by documenting existing open space, conducting public outreach to engage citizens of South Portland, and exploring strategies to enhance the quality of the city's open space in network. This Plan is intended to be used as an open space road map for South Portland citizens, volunteers, policy makers, and City staff.

This Plan establishes a vision of the City with a focus on high quality, functional, and accessible open space network. The Plan identifies goals in support of this vision and recommends strategies to ensure each goal is achieved. The Plan recommends an implementation process to ensure the execution of the strategies and the fulfillment of the goals.

The structure and contents of this Plan is outlined below:

Chapter 1. Introduction provides an overview of open space planning in South Portland including the process taken to arrive at this Open Space Plan.

Chapter 2. State of Open Space summarizes existing open space in South Portland, providing a 2019 benchmark. This benchmark is intended to serve as a measure by which to compare future open space progress against.

Chapter 3. Vision + Goals identifies the vision for South Portland open space and outlines the goals needed to achieve the vision. This chapter serves as the foundation for the recommended strategies and implementation work that follow.

Chapters 4 to 8. Strategies outlines the recommendations for the protection and acquisition of open space. Each strategy is related to a specific goal and achievement of each goal may be measured by the success of the recommended strategies.

Chapter 9. Implementation outlines the steps required for a successful implementation process. The implementation of the goals and strategies are summarized in a simplified Action Plan.

Appendices A to F include maps, materials, public feedback, and neighborhood recommendations are available to assist in the use and implementation of this Plan.

¹ *This Is the Best Place to Live in Every State* by Shaina Mishkin, Allana Akhtar, and Prachi Bhardwaj for Money Magazine, December 17, 2018. <http://money.com/money/5479244/this-is-the-best-place-to-live-in-every-state/>

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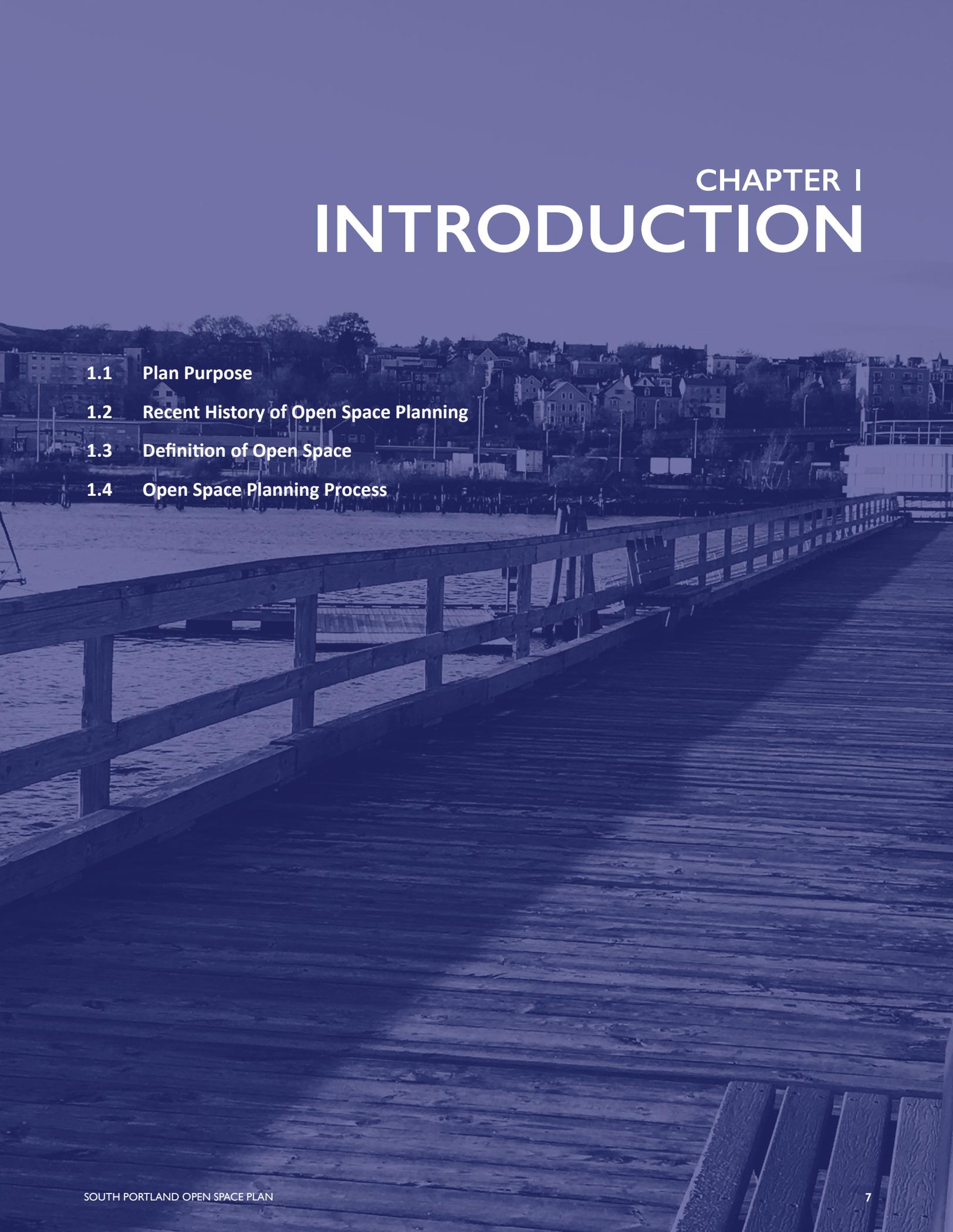
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ACRONYMS

- GIS** Geographic Information Systems
- ILF** Maine in Lieu Compensation Fund
- LID** Low Impact Development
- LWCF** Land and Water Conservation Fund
- MDOT** Maine Department of Transportation
- MNRCP** Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program
- MS4** Maine Municipal Stormwater Sewer System
- NRPA** National Recreation and Park Association
- OSPC** Open Space Planning Committee
- PACTS** Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee
- PDR** Purchase of Development Rights
- SPLT** South Portland Land Trust
- TDR** Transfer of Development Rights



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Plan Purpose
- 1.2 Recent History of Open Space Planning
- 1.3 Definition of Open Space
- 1.4 Open Space Planning Process

I.1 PLAN PURPOSE

The City of South Portland is a regional leader in providing access to open space. Open space protects significant natural resources and wildlife habitat, promotes opportunities for health and wellness for its citizens, aids in the protection and enhancement of community character, and makes South Portland a desirable place to live. This Open Space Plan will sustain the community's interest in protecting and preserving open space throughout the city.

The purpose of this Open Space Plan is to provide the community of South Portland with a strong foundation for more informed decision-making. This is done by identifying existing open spaces, natural resources, and community priorities; and providing strategies to serve as a framework for the protection and acquisition of open spaces in the future.

I.2 RECENT HISTORY OF OPEN SPACE PLANNING

This Open Space Plan builds on the foundation of the Open Space Strategic Plan developed in 2001. Additionally, this Plan addresses the open space goals outlined in the latest Comprehensive Plan Update in 2012. Other relevant South Portland Plans include:

- Mill Creek Master Plan, 2011
- Clarks Pond Trail Plan, 2007
- Greenbelt Walkway Plan, 1987

The following two subsections provide a brief overview of the approach to open space in both the **2001 Open Space Strategic Plan** and the **2012 Comprehensive Plan Update**.



*Hamlin School Community Garden
Photo by Susan Chase*



I.2.1 2001 OPEN SPACE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan outlined actions to implement the Plan’s mission to (1) develop long-term strategies ensuring protection of open spaces, (2) create a potential open space parcel evaluation process, and (3) work under the principle of voluntary landowner participation. However, following the completion of the Plan, it was never adopted by City Council and implementation of the Plan was limited. The following outlines the implementation status of the recommended strategies.

Recommendations Implemented

- **Grant Funding.** Suggested open space funding mechanisms included pursuing grant opportunities for open space protection (e.g. Land for Maine’s Future).
- **Wetland Protection.** Strengthen relationships with environmental permitting agencies to promote wetland mitigation in South Portland.
- **Land Bank.** Develop City ordinance amendments to direct funds from sale or lease of city-owned land to the Land Bank fund and clarify the management of the account.
- **Environmental Protection.** Develop amendments to the city’s land use regulations to provide greater protection to environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Conservation Easements.** Obtain conservation easements and land donations, and pursue other non-acquisition strategies with South Portland Land Trust (SPLT).
- **Watershed Studies.** Work with Pollution Abatement, Casco Bay Estuary Project, and SPLT in getting a grant to perform a comprehensive conceptual study of the city’s watersheds for strategies that also protect open space.

Recommendations Not Implemented

- **New Staff Position.** Strengthening the Conservation Commission with funding to hire a new City staff person to assist the Conservation Commission tasked with Plan implementation.
- **Bond Issue.** A \$1,000,000 bond issue request to the voters to fund open space protection.
- **Property Tax Dedication.** Dedicate \$0.03 in the property tax rate to fund open space protection.
- **Neighborhood Commons.** Authorize City departments to work with the SPLT, neighborhood associations, and volunteer attorneys to help neighborhoods in the purchase of private neighborhood commons.



The 2001 Plan also recommended keeping current inventories of potential open space parcels, performing due diligence and developing an action plan for each parcel, and educating the public about open space protection. The Plan identified and prioritized 23 privately-owned potential open space parcels and potential trail extensions for conservation. In the 18 years that have passed, five of the original 23 prioritized parcels have since been developed (**Table 1.1**) and five have since been conserved (**Table 1.2**).

Table 1.1
Developed Open Space Lands Identified in the 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan

| PARCEL NAME | DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT | YEAR DEVELOPMENT INITIATED |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Henley St./Stanford St. | Condominiums | 2005 |
| Fickett Woods | Residential development (Hawthorne Woods) | 2003 |
| Cobb’s Field | Condominiums (Sand Pebble Way) | 2003 |
| Old Joe’s Pond | Potential for partial development | NA |
| Sunset Park | In process of development | NA |

Table 1.2
Conserved Open Space Lands Identified in the 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan

| PARCEL NAME | DESCRIPTION OF PROTECTION | YEAR PROTECTED |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Dow’s Woods | SPLT conservation easement | 2015 (year acquired) |
| Harrisburg lot (Clark’s Pond) | Owned by City of South Portland with trail easements through SPLT | 2009 (trail easements established) |
| Trout Brook Nature Preserve (formerly Trout Brook) | SPLT conservation easement | 2007 |
| Sawyer Street Marsh (formerly Sawyer Street/Trout Brook) | SPLT conservation easement | 2007 |

I.2.2 2012 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Open space was again addressed in the City of South Portland Comprehensive Plan Update adopted on October 15, 2012. This Plan identified recreation and open space as a community sub-goal needed to achieve the overall mission of the Comprehensive Plan. This goal states *“To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.”* The two objectives identified to achieve this goal are as follows:

- To provide high-quality, well-maintained recreational facilities and open spaces for residents and visitors.
- To provide access to the city’s waterfront for recreational purposes in a manner that is compatible with marine uses of the waterfront.

Specifically, the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update identifies the city’s policies pursuant to the aforementioned objectives. These policies are summarized in brevity, below:

- Maintain and continue to fund the Land Bank Fund.
- Focus on developing, funding, and implementing long-range programs to maintain and upgrade existing outdoor recreational facilities, parks, and public open spaces.
- Invest in improvements to Mill Creek.
- Expand actual and visual public access to the shore front.
- Continue to work with the SPLT to expand trail system.
- Promote South Portland as a desirable location for regional events.



Bug Light Park
Photo by Susan Chase

I.3 DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE

The definition of *open space* is a revision of the definition put forward in the 2001 Plan. While maintaining the fundamental objectives of the 2001 definition, the revised definition aims to expand on the view of open space. As understood through the remainder of this document, the definition of open space is provided below.

Open space refers to a parcel or area of land or water, the preservation of which would achieve any of the following:

- 1. Conserve and potentially enhance habitats, natural resources, or scenic resources;**
- 2. Protect water quality;**
- 3. Promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches, or tidal marshes;**
- 4. Enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, trails, forests, or nature preserves; or**
- 5. Enhance recreation opportunities.**



*Clarks Pond
Photo by Susan Chase*



I.4 OPEN SPACE PLANNING PROCESS

On August 21, 2017, the South Portland City Council approved the establishment of an ad-hoc Open Space Planning Committee (OSPC) and approved funding to hire outside planning consultants to guide and develop this 2019 Open Space Plan. It was decided that the development of this Plan would put emphasis on public input and feedback throughout the planning process. Initial public feedback came in the form of an Online Community Survey and an interactive public forum, and later from City Council members. The contents of this Plan were developed over the course of one year, between March 2018 and April 2019.

I.4.1 OPEN SPACE PLANNING COMMITTEE (OSPC)

The OSPC consisted of 16 volunteer members and three City staff members. Committee members represented the Conservation Commission, SPLT, City Council, Department of Planning and Development, Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, Department of Water Resource Protection, Community Garden Collective, the South Portland Schools, and interested citizens at large.

OSPC held 11 meetings on March 19, 2018, April 26, 2018, June 28, 2018, July 26, 2018, August 23, 2018, September 27, 2018, October 25, 2018, November 29, 2018, January 10, 2019, January 31, 2019, and April 17, 2019.

The OSPC worked closely with the planning consultants to develop the contents of this Plan. The work included the facilitation of an online community survey and open space public forum, the development of the vision statement and open space definition, and the outline of the Plan's goal and strategies. The Committee met monthly, participated in a bus tour to open spaces in the city, managed a web presence through the City website, and provided feedback and Plan contents through correspondence and work between official meetings.

I.4.2 PLANNING CONSULTANTS

The City of South Portland hired a team of consultants from FB Environmental and Terrence J. DeWan & Associates to assist the OSPC in the development of the Open Space Plan. The two firms provided the City with a variety of skills and services; FB Environmental is an environmental planning and assessment firm based in Portland, Maine and Terrence J. DeWan & Associates is a landscape architectural and planning firm based in Yarmouth, Maine. The consultant team presented Plan contents at OSPC meetings, at the open space public forum, and to City Council. They established the online community survey and designed the interactive activities at the open space public forum. The team used geospatial mapping (ESRI ArcMap) to process data and develop the mapping, conducted site visits to existing open spaces, drafted the contents of the Plan and produced all maps and graphics included in the Open Space Plan document.

I.4.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public input was a very important component in the development of this Open Space Plan. Feedback from the public was collected and implemented into the Plan through a variety of mechanisms. The most significant input was collected through an online community survey and an open space public forum event. Public updates on the planning process were made available through an Open Space Planning page on the City website, updates and event notifications were made through an email list serve, feedback was heard at a City Council workshop, and OSPC meetings were open to the public.

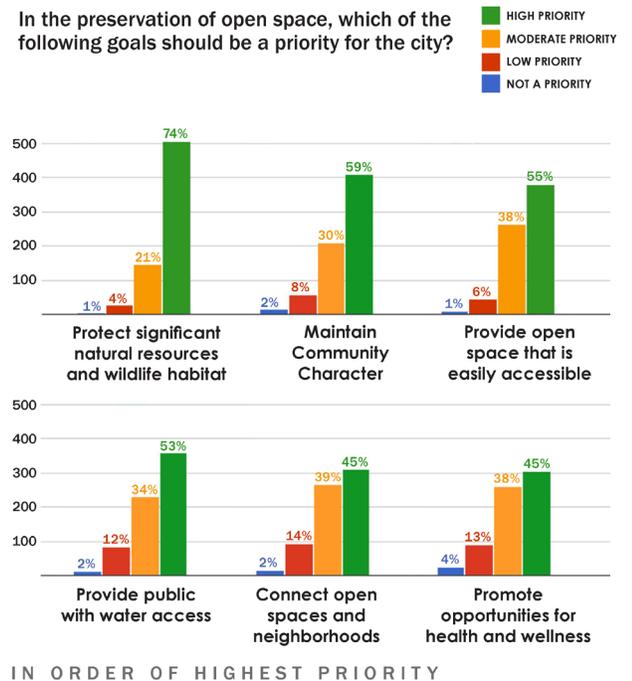
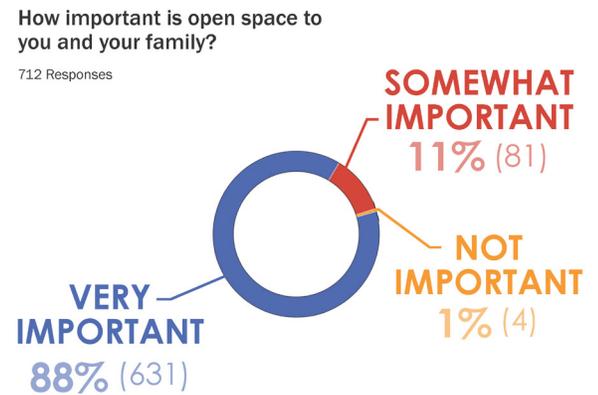
ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online community survey was designed as an efficient way to receive public feedback. The planning team recognized that South Portland residents are not always available to attend public meetings, but many residents had the time and interest in providing feedback online. The survey was designed to be a short 10-minute survey asking respondents about the current use of open space in South Portland and feedback for how the City might prioritize the preservation of open space in the future.

The survey collected information on demographics, including each respondent’s neighborhood of residence. The survey asked about the use of existing open space and asked respondents to prioritize open space planning goals. Respondents were also able to leave written comments related to open space. The survey was administered through Google Forms. It was advertised online, in the schools, announced at City Council meetings, sent to existing municipal email list serves, and advertised in newsletters and media outlets. It was open for seven weeks (May-July 2018) and received 716 responses. There are shortcomings of the survey, as it represents only a small portion of the City population and carries bias inherent in any public opinion survey. However, this number of respondents provided a reasonably robust sample of opinions to guide the direction of the Open Space Plan, far exceeding the number of participants who would attend an evening or weekend meeting on the subject.

The feedback was reviewed by the OSPC and synthesized by the planning consultants into city-wide and neighborhood-specific recommendations. This proved very helpful in using the survey responses to identify issues and opportunities in each neighborhood throughout the city. The online community survey and the synthesized survey results are available in **Appendix E**.

Figure 1.1
Samples from Online Community Survey Results





OPEN SPACE PUBLIC FORUM

This forum served as a point of introduction of the South Portland Open Space Planning Project to the public. The goal of the forum was to identify and share existing open spaces in the city, present the results of the online community survey, and facilitate a discussion about strategies for strengthening and expanding the open space network in South Portland.

The participants at the July 2018 forum were divided into five groups to participate in an interactive mapping exercise. The small group activities involved brainstorming open space priorities, suggestions of strategies moving forward, and plotting important locations on a map of South Portland. The mapping activity allowed residents to locate scenic viewpoints to preserve, potential water access points, potential and existing undocumented nature trails, natural resource/habitat areas to preserve, and other potential locations to preserve as future open space. The forum participants were also asked to map suggested improvements to connectivity between neighborhoods and open spaces, via trails as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The groups then developed potential strategies for acquiring additional open space.

In addition to the group activities, each participant was given a neighborhood comment card, offering individuals to privately relay issues and opinions related to their neighborhood of residence. The cards provided participants an opportunity to voice opinions that may not have been present in the discussions.

While the group of citizens in attendance the open space public forum was far smaller than the feedback received through the online community survey, the participants were involved, enthusiastic, and took a city-wide approach to assessing open space opportunities. A detailed report on the Public Forum is available in **Appendix D**.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

The consultant team presented the Open Space Plan progress and strategies to the City Council at a Council workshop on January 22, 2019 and July 16, 2019. The purpose of the January presentation was to update the public and Council Members on the progress of the Plan and acquire feedback to be included in this Plan. The purpose of the July presentation was to present the Plan implementation process. Members of the public were invited to attend both presentations through public notice of the Council Agenda, and an update on the OSPC webpage.



July 2018 Open Space Public Forum
Photos by Jessica Kimball

THE STATE OF OPEN SPACE

- 2.1 City Land
- 2.2 Protected Land
- 2.3 Cemeteries
- 2.4 Trails
- 2.5 NRPA Open Space Comparison
- 2.6 Distance to Open Space
- 2.7 Access to Open Space
- 2.8 East / West Divide
- 2.9 Natural Resources
- 2.10 Existing Programs and Strategies
- 2.11 City Regulations

This chapter describes elements contributing to existing South Portland Open Space in the city. This snapshot of current open space attributes describes public lands, protected lands, trails, accessibility of open space, and natural resources. This chapter also describes current policies, programs, and organizations that are contributing to open space enhancement in the city. Please use the maps provided in **Appendix A** as a reference throughout this chapter.



TOTAL AREA OF SOUTH PORTLAND • 8,996 acres
TOTAL LAND AREA (excluding Portland Harbor) • 7,854 acres
MUNICIPAL LAND • 735 acres (8.2%)
CITY PARKS/SCHOOLS • 375 acres (4.2%)
LAND IN CONSERVATION EASEMENTS • 25 acres (<0.01%)
PUBLIC SHORELINE • 3 miles (~17% of the total shoreline)

2.1 CITY LAND

Public land includes land owned by a government entity, either by the City of South Portland or state of Maine. The City of South Portland covers a total area of 8,996 acres. Of the total City land area, 735 acres (8.2% of the City land area) are owned by the city. Approximately half of city-owned land is managed as a City park or school, and the rest is maintained as developed land for uses other than open space.

2.1.1 PARKS AND SCHOOLS

Approximately 375 acres of land is managed as parks and schools. Designation of land as a City park does not indicate that the parcel is owned by the city, nor that it has protections from development. **Table 2.1** lists the areas designated as City parks and schools. This table identifies the acreage, ownership, any conservation protections applied to that parcel, and zoning district. All lands in the table are managed by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront unless otherwise noted. The **Park Map** in **Appendix A** represents each of the parcels listed in Table 2.1.

2.1.2 PAPER STREETS

In addition to the aforementioned open spaces, the City contains 23.1 acres of land designated as paper streets. In South Portland, paper streets are part of larger privately-owned parcels and the City holds rights of incipient dedication to accept these as public roadways if proposed at a later date. Otherwise, the City holds no authority for their use. The paper streets are represented on the **Open Space Protection Map** in **Appendix A**.

Table 2.1 Land Used and Managed as a Park or School

| PARK / SCHOOL | PARCEL ACREAGE¹ | OWNER | CONSERVATION PROTECTIONS | CURRENT ZONE |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Anthoine Creek Park | 5.54 | City of South Portland | NONE | Dual Zone |
| Bug Light Park | 12.18 | City of South Portland/ South Portland Historical District | LWCF (Municipal Boat Launch Only) | Residential and Light Industrial District |
| Bug Light Park (South end) | 5.10 | Portland Pipe Line Corp. | NONE | Residential and Light Industrial District |
| Dyer School Recreation Facilities | 7.10 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Firefighter's Memorial Park | 0.18 | City of South Portland | NONE | Limited Business District |
| Ge Erskine Park | 0.80 | City of South Portland | NONE | Limited Business District |
| Hamlin School Common Area and Community Garden ² | 2.92 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| High/Sawyer Park | 0.12 | City of South Portland | NONE | Limited Business District |
| Hinckley Park | 32.02 | City of South Portland | LWCF (Partial) | Residential District Single Family |
| Jordan Park ² | 5.04 | State of Maine (co-owner Long Creek Redevelopment LLC) | NONE | Conditional Residential District |
| Kaler School Recreation Facilities | 4.68 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Legere Park | 1.14 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Legion Square Park | 0.27 | City of South Portland | NONE | Commercial District Mixed-Use |
| Lincoln School Recreation Facilities | 3.10 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Mahoney Middle & Brown Elementary Rec Facilities | 12.63 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Memorial Middle Recreation Facilities | 17.02 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Mill Creek Park | 9.61 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Pierce Street Park | 0.32 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Pine Street Ballfields ² | 4.45 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Pope Preserve ² | 0.76 | City of South Portland (easement holder is the Nature Conservancy) | Deed Restriction | Dual Zone |

| PARK / SCHOOL | PARCEL ACREAGE ¹ | OWNER | CONSERVATION PROTECTIONS | CURRENT ZONE |
|--|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Redbank Community Park | 2.71 | Privately Owned (Leased and Managed by the City of South Portland) | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Santo "Sam" DiPietro Memorial Park | 0.77 | City of South Portland | LWCF | Residential District Single Family |
| Sawyer Park | 2.02 | City of South Portland | Conservation Easement | Dual Zone |
| School Street Park | 0.45 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Multi-Family |
| Skillin Elementary Recreation Facilities | 7.67 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| Small Elementary Recreation Facilities | 6.90 | City of South Portland | LWCF (Partial) | Residential District Multi-Family |
| South Portland High School Recreation Facilities | 29.60 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |
| South Portland Municipal Golf Course | 31.74 | City of South Portland | LWCF | Residential District Single Family |
| Thomas Knight Park | 1.51 | City of South Portland | NONE | Dual Zone |
| Trout Brook Nature Preserve ² | 6.90 | City of South Portland | Conservation Easement | Residential District Single Family |
| Wainwright Recreation Complex | 146.46 | City of South Portland | Deed Restriction | Non-Residential Industrial District |
| Wilkinson Community Park | 9.19 | City of South Portland | Deed Restriction | Residential District Single Family |
| Willard Beach and Fisherman's Point | 4.08 | City of South Portland | NONE | Residential District Single Family |

TABLE NOTES:

¹ Portions of some parcels may include existing development and, therefore, do not consist entirely as open space.

² All sites in the above table are managed in whole by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront, unless denoted by a (2), which include the following:

- Trout Brook Nature Preserve and Pope Preserve are managed by the SPLT.
- Pope Preserve is managed by the Friends of Pope Preserve.
- Jordan Park management is contracted out by the Brickhill Association.
- Hamlin School common areas are managed by Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront. The Hamlin School Community Garden is managed by the Community Garden Collective.
- Pine Street Ballfield common areas are managed by Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront. The ballfields are managed by the South Portland American Little League.

2.2 PROTECTED LAND

Conservation protections on land in the City have historically been performed using one of two mechanisms: conservation easements and LWCF lands. South Portland’s protected lands total 1.5% of the city’s land area (115 acres). Land protected by conservation easements or the Maine LWCF are represented on the **Open Space Protection Map** in **Appendix A**.

- **Conservation Easements.** There are 30.5 acres of land in the City of South Portland held in conservation easements (less than 0.01% of the city). Conservation easements represent some of the strongest conservation protections in the city. Each easement is unique in its conservation interests, crafted specifically to best preserve the parcel and its resources.
- **Maine Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** There are 84.5 acres of land in the City of South Portland that have been protected using LWCF monies. This fund, enacted in 1964, is intended to assist federal, state, and local governments with improving public lands. To this end, the state of Maine is responsible for post-completion compliance; however, the municipality (in this case, the City of South Portland) is responsible for stewardship of the property. Strict provisions protect grant-assisted areas from conversions to other intended uses.²

2.3 CEMETERIES

The cemeteries in South Portland are privately owned and offer open space for limited passive recreation. In addition to serving as burial grounds, cemeteries are forested open spaces with trails, views, and historic significance (in some cases). Forest City and Calvary Cemeteries alone offer more than 200 acres of open space land. These sites are typically not under conservation; however, their use as burial grounds offers inherent protection against future development. The City of South Portland has six major cemeteries, represented on the **Open Space Protection Map** in **Appendix A**, and listed below:

- Forest City Cemetery
- Calvary Cemetery
- Highland Memorial Gardens
- Mount Pleasant Cemetery
- Bay View Cemetery
- Old Settlers Cemetery

2.4 TRAILS

The City of South Portland has 12.4 miles of trail network. This network is growing rapidly, particularly with the West End Trail initiative championed by the SPLT. Trails are protected via Trail Easements and Use Agreements. The existing trails are represented on the **Trails Map** in **Appendix A**. A link to existing trails is on the SPLT webpage at <https://www.southportlandlandtrust.org/trails>.

² SEC. 6(f)(3) No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/protection.htm>

2.5 NRPA OPEN SPACE COMPARISON

The City of South Portland currently has more managed parkland than the average municipality in the United States. The residents of South Portland are fortunate to have access to a variety of high-quality parks within the community.

The City of South Portland has a population of approximately 25,500³ people, and 375 acres across 33 properties are managed as parkland and schools (see **Table 2.1**). According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)⁴, the typical park and recreation agency offers one park for every 2,114 residents served, with 10.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. For municipalities of similar size to South Portland (with a population range of 20,000 to 49,999), **the median average for open space is one park for every 1,849 residents served, with 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.** These statistics are based on a nation-wide survey of municipal parks and recreation departments.

Based on the average NRPA metric noted above for communities of similar population size to South Portland, there should be 14 acres of parkland for the South Portland population. There are 33 South Portland parkland/school properties, more than twice the NRPA average.

Based on the NRPA average of 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the City of South Portland should have 245 acres of managed parkland. With 375 acres of parkland/schools, the City exceeds the average community by approximately 130 acres.

While the City of South Portland exceeds the national average in available open space, only a percentage of this land is protected from future development. Of the 375 acres of City parkland and schools, only 97 acres (26%) is protected from sale or development.

Table 2.2 South Portland Compared to Communities with Similar Population Size (20,000 – 49,999)

MEDIAN AVERAGE: One park per 1,849 residents

- Based on 25,500 residents, South Portland should have 14 parks to meet the national average.
- South Portland maintains 33 park/school properties (more than twice the national average).

MEDIAN AVERAGE: 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

- Based on 25,500 residents, South Portland should have 245 acres to meet the national average.
- South Portland maintains 375 acres of parkland (130 acres more than the national average).

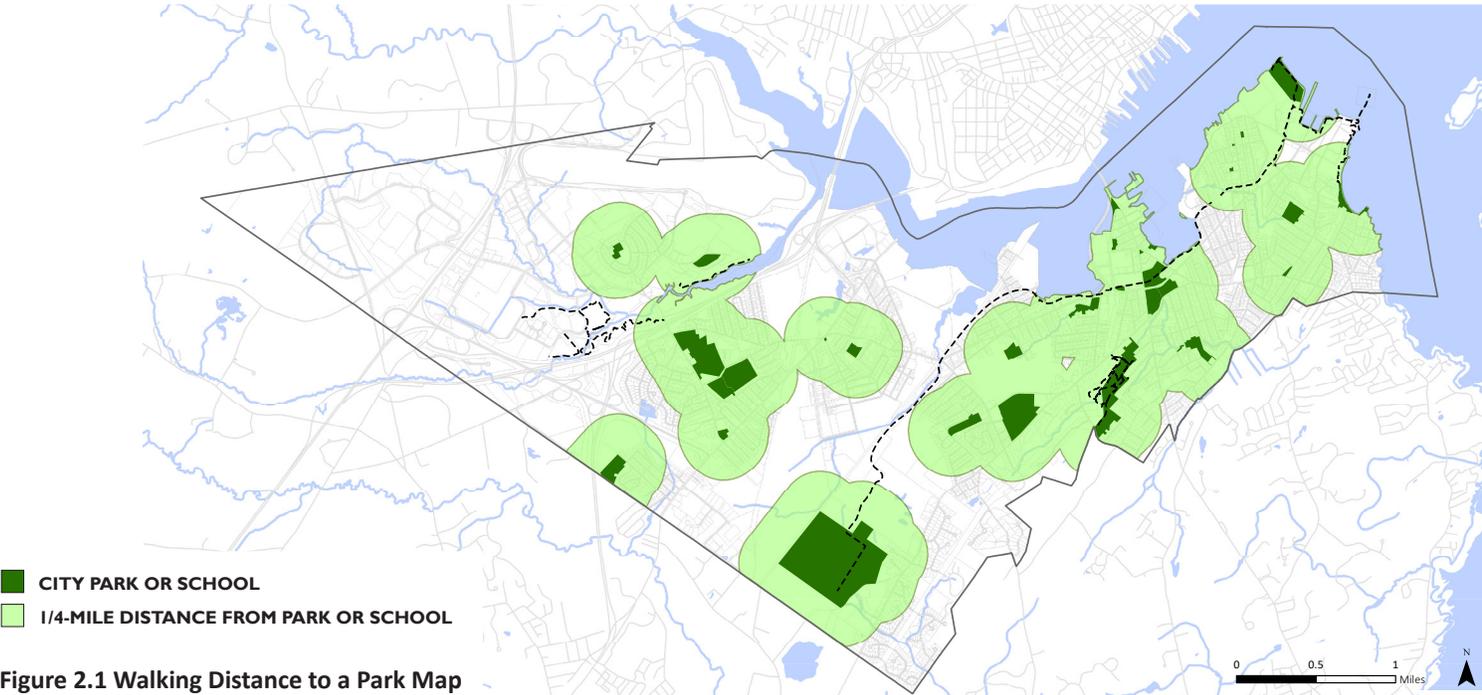
³ US Census Bureau estimated the South Portland population was 25,483 on July 1, 2017 (based on 2010 census). <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/southportlandcitymaine>

⁴ National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation. NRPA Park Metrics are the most comprehensive source of data standards and insights for park and recreation agencies. The 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review is located here: <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf>

2.6 DISTANCE TO OPEN SPACE

Perhaps more important than the acreage of open space land is the location and accessibility of the parks within the city. Ideally, there should be a park or accessible open space within a 10-minute walk of every neighborhood residence. The map below shows a ¼-mile buffer around each managed open space to represent a 10-minute walk. Land within a ¼-mile distance from an open space covers 46% (3,647 acres) of City land area. Land located more than ¼-mile from an open space covers 54% (4,214 acres) of City land area.

The majority of the east side of the City is within a ¼-mile of open space, whereas the west side has larger gaps between open spaces. As new open spaces are evaluated for acquisition and protection, it is important to consider the areas that are not located within short walking distance from an open space. See the Walking Distance to a Park Map in **Figure 2.2** below and in **Appendix A**.



In the online community survey, residents were asked **how long it takes to get to the nearest park, trail or open space**. In response to this question, approximately 94% of respondents reported they were within walking distance of an open space amenity (82% of respondents reported less than a 10-minute walk; 12% of respondents reported a 10 to 20-minute walk). Of the remaining 6% of respondents, 2% reported being able to ride a bike and 4% were a car ride away from an open space (see **Figure 2.2**). These numbers varied by neighborhood, with some neighborhoods reporting closer distances to open space. See a detailed breakdown of the survey results in **Appendix E**.

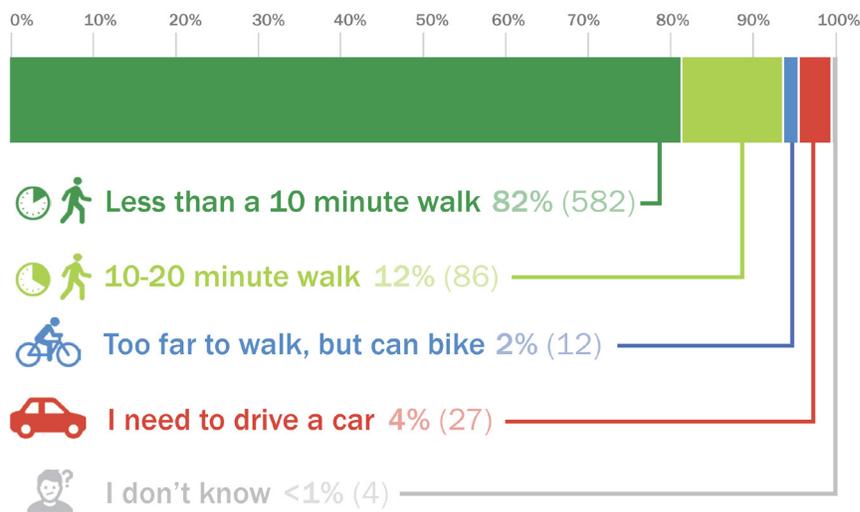
2.7 ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

In the online community survey, residents were asked **how easy it is to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space**. In response to this question, 77% said they had an easy and safe route to the nearest open space, with good pedestrian infrastructure to allow for a safe walk. 22% of respondents indicated that their access was somewhat difficult with some safe pedestrian infrastructure between their home and the nearest open space. Only 1% of respondents reported difficult and dangerous conditions (see **Figure 2.2**). These numbers varied by neighborhood, with some neighborhoods reporting very safe conditions and others noting needs to improvements. See a detailed breakdown of the survey results in **Appendix E**.

Figure 2.2 Online Community Survey Results for Distance and Access to Open Space

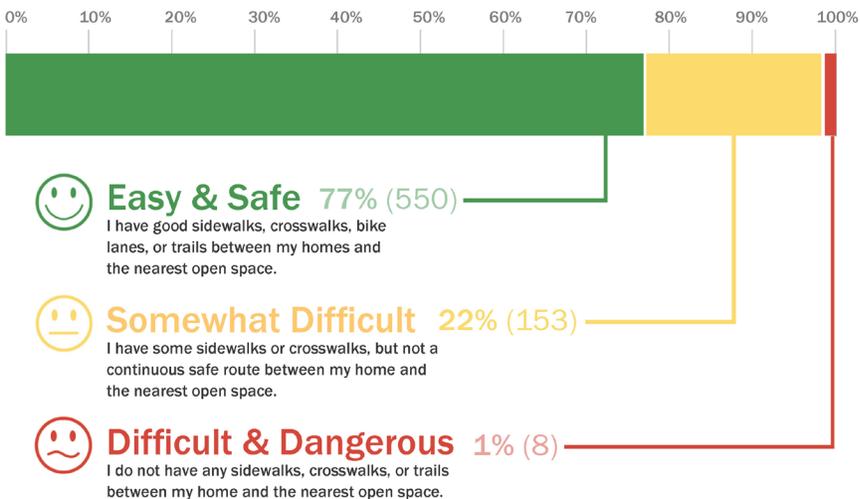
DISTANCE

How long does it take to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?



ACCESS

How easy is it to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?



2.8 EAST / WEST DIVIDE

There is a clear divide between the east and west sides of the city. The dividing line between the east and west is generally considered to be Route 1 / Main Street.

East Side. The east side of South Portland has tightly woven residential neighborhood development. This area includes some of the most significant green spaces in the community, including Bug Light Park, Mill Creek Park, Hinckley Park, and the Greenbelt Walkway. The east side also benefits from the majority of the shoreline along the Fore River and Portland Harbor.

West Side. The west side of South Portland has large tracts of commercial and industrial development, such as the Maine Mall and Portland International Jetport. With changes in zoning over the last few decades, residential neighborhoods, consisting primarily of larger apartment complexes, have been interspersed within this dense commercial development. A significant feature on the west side is the Interstate 295 (I-295) corridor that bisects the city. This creates a physical barrier through the west side, interrupting pedestrian movement across the corridor. Overall, there is less access to open space on the west end than in the east. Open space features on the west side include Redbank Community Park and Jordan Park, as well as multiple trail systems (Long Creek Trail, Red Brook Trail and Red Brook Trail Extension, the Home Depot Trail, and Clark’s Pond Trail).

Comments from South Portland residents at the Open Space Public Form and responses in the online community survey emphasized the need to improve open space accessibility in the west and the need for improved connections between the east and west sides of the city.

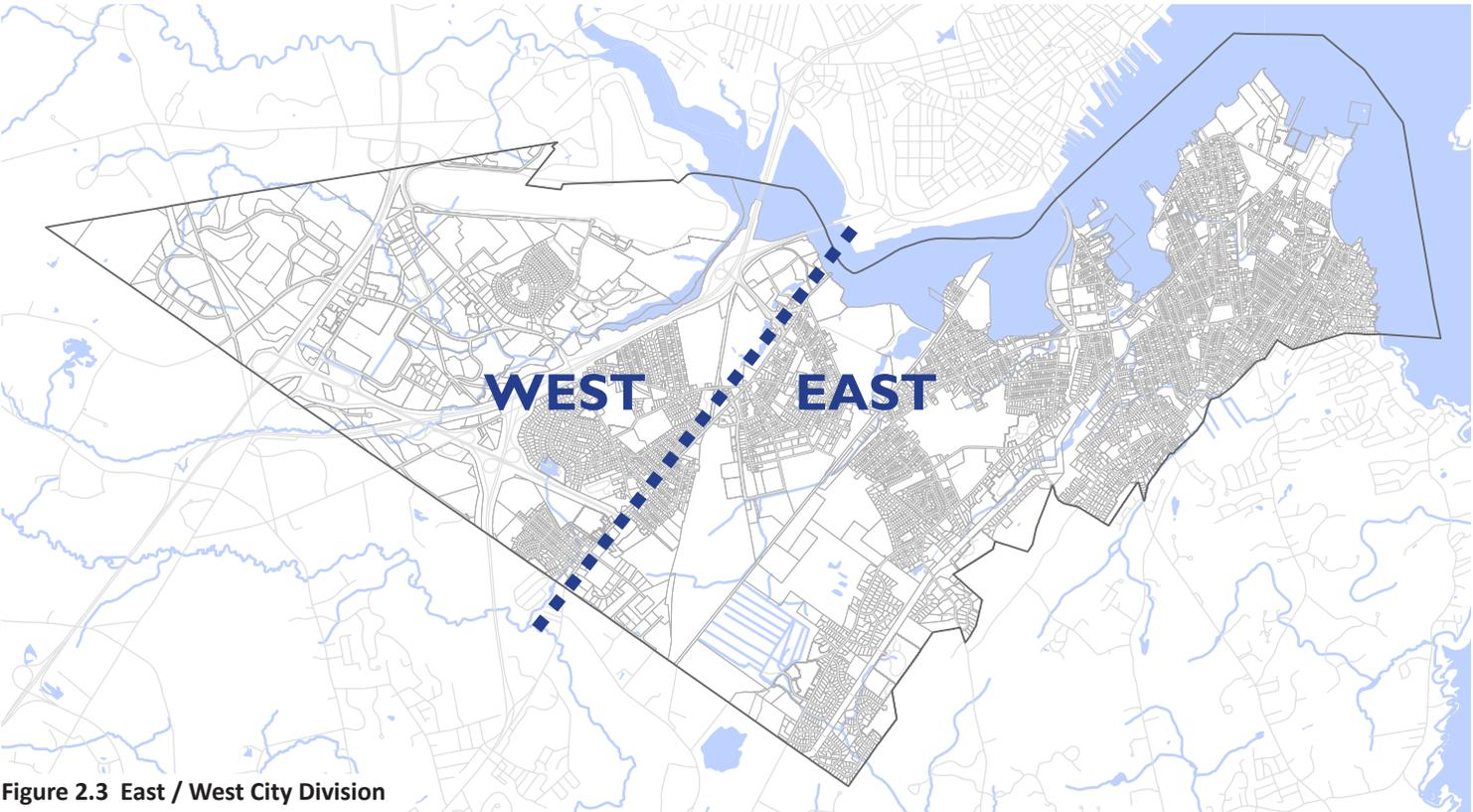


Figure 2.3 East / West City Division

2.9 NATURAL RESOURCES

This section described the existing natural resources represented in the City of South Portland. The Natural Resource Maps provided in **Appendix A** should be used as a reference to this section.

2.9.1 HABITAT

As a result of significant developed area in the City of South Portland, mapped terrestrial habitat for wildlife is limited. Suitable habitat for two endangered species exists within the city; (1) Peregrine Falcon habitat has been identified along the Casco Bay Bridge corridor⁵, and (2) New England Cottontail habitat in the Mall Neighborhood and to the west of I-295 on the Portland International Jetport land (see the **Habitat Map** in **Appendix A**). Peregrine Falcons, historically nesting on open-water adjacent cliffsides, have increasingly found habitat on bridges across the state of Maine. Populations of New England Cottontail have declined due to increased development pressure and loss of young forest, the Cottontail's preferred habitat.⁶

In addition to providing terrestrial habitat, the City contains habitat for critical marine species, including tidal waterfowl and wading birds, sea scallops, softshell clams, and blue mussels. Additionally, the northeast coastline along Bug Light and Willard Beach has extensive Eelgrass beds. Eelgrass is a critical plant along Maine's coast, providing the base of food production in the ocean in addition to shelter for juvenile fish, invertebrates, and bivalve mollusk larvae.⁷

2.9.2 WATER RESOURCES

Scientists have long recognized the adverse impacts associated with increasing development density on water resources. The prevalence of impervious surfaces such as pavement and rooftops can be particularly problematic. There is a very close relationship between the extent of impervious area and the health of adjacent water resources. In Maine, some streams in urban and more densely developed residential areas no longer support healthy aquatic communities or attain water quality standards.

The Clean Water Act requires states to assess all such streams, identify likely impairment sources, and make general recommendations to restore water quality. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has designated **five streams in South Portland as "urban impaired"** for failure to attain water quality and aquatic life standards (Long Creek, Red Brook, Barberry Creek, Kimball Brook and Trout Brook). The City of South Portland has developed watershed plans that identify specific impairment sources and restoration recommendations for all of these streams except Barberry Creek. In addition, South Portland is a founding member of the Long Creek Watershed Management District which works to protect and restore Long Creek.

In addition to these five streams, the City borders the Fore River, a short (5.7 mi) long river dividing South Portland from Portland. The Fore River is subject to significant commercial transportation and is bordered by many of Casco Bay's port facilities.

⁵ Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife peregrine falcon source: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/species-information/birds/falcons.html>

⁶ New England Cottontail citation: <https://newenglandcottontail.org/>

⁷ Maine Department of Marine Resources eelgrass source: <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/science-research/species/eelgrass/>

2.9.3 WILDLIFE MIGRATION CORRIDORS

Habitat connectivity is imperative for both daily and seasonal wildlife movement. The National Wildlife Federation is leading an initiative to pass the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act, legislation that would create a national corridor system.⁸ Efforts to improve habitat connectivity through this program include road mitigation (e.g. gaps in guardrails, less salt application, lower speed limits, culvert crossings), roadside improvements for traffic safety and wildlife crossing, land conservation, and local land use planning. These efforts can improve habitat for large mammals such as the moose, *Alces alces Americana*, as well as the 39 species and subspecies of reptiles and amphibians inhabiting the state.⁹

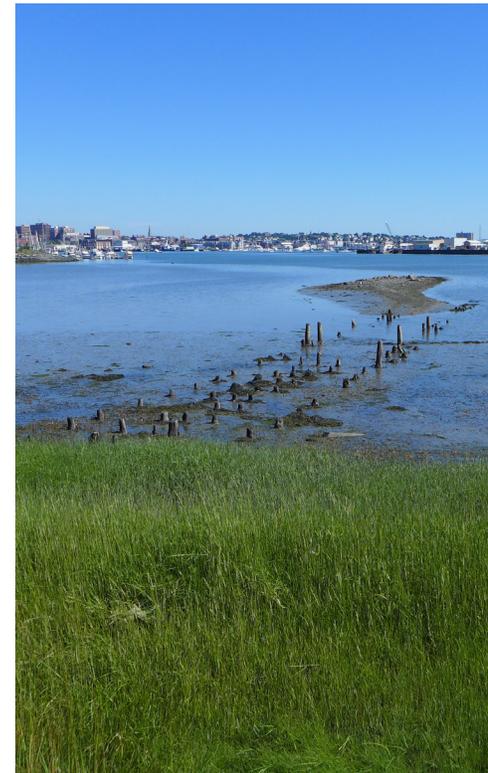
Maine's diverse landscape offers unique habitat for many migrating birds and often represents the range limit for birds migrating north. Maine provides nesting grounds and migratory stopover sites for birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway.¹⁰ This corridor contains significant salt marsh habitat, an important habitat for a variety of bird species in Maine, that is uniquely threatened by sea level rise. Migrating birds are reliant on City parks and open space for both stopover sites and nesting ground because the Atlantic Flyway is so densely populated. More specific to South Portland, Hinckley Park is listed in the Maine Birding Trail Guidebook as a notable birding spot in May, June, and July.¹¹ The park is host to a variety of warblers in the breeding season and the guide notes that there is the occasional Blue-winged Warbler and the pond attracts Rough-winged Swallows. One hundred and fifty (150) species have been identified at Hinckley Park by citizen observers on eBird, an online bird-sharing platform; the top species seen are the Mallard Duck, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Double-crested Cormorant, House Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, American Crow, American Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, and American Black Duck. Wainwright field has 134 observed species on eBird, with top counts for American Crow, Common Redpoll, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Snow Bunting, Herring Gull, American Robin, American Black Duck, Northern Flicker, and Red-eyed Vireo. Sable Oaks, a recently closed private golf course in the western corner of South Portland, recently achieved Audubon certification. Through this certification, they installed twenty-one nest boxes on site and had successful nesting by four different species (Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Black-Capped Chickadee, and the House Wren). This former golf course is scheduled for redevelopment.

⁸ National Wildlife Federation Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act: <https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Habitats/Wildlife-Corridors>

⁹ Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife Reptiles and Amphibians source: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/species-information/reptiles-amphibians/index.html>

¹⁰ Audubon Flyway source: <https://www.audubon.org/birds/flyways>

¹¹ Maine Office of Tourism Birding Brochure: <http://www.mainebirdingtrail.com/Brochure.pdf>



ABOVE. Coastal Habitat in Pope Preserve
BELOW: Turtle in Hinckley Park
Photos by Maggie Burns

2.10 EXISTING PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

In addition to the successes of the 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan (see Section 1.2) the City of South Portland has maintained an active approach to open space and natural resource conservation. This section outlines the status of the work being done and organizations focused on open space in South Portland.

2.10.1 CONSERVATION COMMISSION

According to *Sec. 2-77* of the South Portland code of ordinances “The purpose of the Conservation Commission shall be to serve as a research, advisory, and advocacy group on environmental and conservation issues relating to the city.” In this capacity, the seven-member commission has supported the following activities:

- Received a grant from the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership to increase the public’s awareness of the five urban impaired streams in the city. A public forum was held on April 26, 2017. Stream walks, led by an experienced environmentalist, were held for each stream.
- Administration of the Freshwater Wetlands Compensation Fund in partnership with the South Portland Water Resources Department. Beginning in 2017, the Commission began issuing \$2,500 Community Service Grants to local groups, individuals, associations, or businesses to support environmental improvements that contribute distinctly to the quality of South Portland’s freshwater resources. One grant was awarded to South Portland High School teacher, Tania Ferrante, to create a rain garden in one of the high school’s interior courtyards. A second grant was awarded to Julie Pitts, a teacher at Mahoney Middle School, to address invasive plants and erosion in Trout Brook, adjacent to the school.
- An update to the 2010 Wetland Compensation Fund Planning Report that provides guidance for identifying compensation fund eligible projects.
- Establishment of the “Conservation Corner” feature of the South Portland Community e-Newsletter. This regular column provides updates on Commission activities and education on a variety of conservation issues.
- Regular correspondence with the City Council on several vital environmental issues including the Portland Harbor dredging project, the Portland Pier aquaculture development initiatives, and climate change concerns. Commission members meet regularly with Water Resource Protection and the Department of Planning and Development.
- Representation on the O’Neil Street Reuse Committee that began meeting in March 2017.
- Representation on the Mildred Street “Gully” Project. This project was funded by the Freshwater Compensation Fund as part of a sewer project in Pleasantdale.
- Attention and resources for the restoration of Old Joe’s Pond.
- The initiation of the open space planning process culminating in this 2019 Open Space Plan. This work began with the initial establishment of an Open Space Inventory Committee, with a charge to review city-owned or controlled properties to evaluate conservation potential. The Conservation Commission members felt strongly that this project required a new Open Space Plan and campaigned to develop a Request for Proposal for consulting services to support the work of the current OSPC.

2.10.2 SOUTH PORTLAND LAND TRUST

In 1987, the South Portland Land Trust was established as a nonprofit organization dedicated to these key goals:

- Creating and supporting a network of trails interlinking South Portland neighborhoods to each other and to the trails of adjoining communities.
- Engaging the community in park and trail use, open space protection, trail building and land stewardship.
- Encouraging and supporting acquisition of priority open spaces.

As of 2018, the SPLT owns six properties and holds 12 easements (including both trail and property easements). The current organizational structure includes a Board with elected Officers and a Program Manager. The SPLT has approximately 300 members. A brief historical timeline of significant acquisition, protection and advocacy actions are listed below:

- **1996** - Donald Kirkpatrick donates the Florence Street Marsh to the SPLT.
- **1999** - Gilman and Muriel Ellis donate the property at the end of Mt Vernon Street to provide public pedestrian access to Trout Brook and across it to Lawrence Lano Street.
- **2002** - John Lydon, Patricia Lydon, and Joanne Lineham donate several marsh properties along the Luncille Avenue paper street at Spurwink Avenue on the Cape Elizabeth town line to be held for conservation by the SPLT.
- **2007** - The Sawyer Street Marsh is established. The SPLT signs a conservation easement with the property owners.
- **2007** - Curt Jensch and Catherine Menyhart donate the marsh property at the end of Schooner Road to the SPLT for conservation.
- **2007** - The Trout Brook Nature Preserve is established. The SPLT signs a conservation easement with the property owners (City of South Portland).
- **2008** - The SPLT signs an easement and collaborates with the City of South Portland and Maine Conservation Corps to lay out the Long Creek Trail.
- **2008-2009** - The SPLT collaborates with Sappi Paper and the Maine Conservation Corps to build the Red Brook Trail and Red Brook Extension Trail to connect the Clarks Pond Trail with points further west.
- **2011** - The SPLT partners with the Community Garden Collective to support the use of city-leased land for the establishment of the Community Garden Collective's Organic Community Garden Plots at the corner of Ocean Street (Route 77) and Sawyer Street (currently known as the Hamlin School Community Garden).
- **2015** - The SPLT signs a conservation easement with the City of South Portland to create and protect Sawyer Park along Route 1, Main Street.
- **2016** - The Dow's Woods Nature Preserve is established. The SPLT signs a conservation easement with the property owners.
- **2017** - The SPLT donates nearly \$56,000 to the City of South Portland to build a new playground at Sawyer Park. Funds were raised in collaboration with the neighboring Congregation Bet Ha'am.

2.10.3 OPEN SPACE FINANCING

The primary municipal funding source for the acquisition of open space is the South Portland Land Bank, governed by *Chapter 18 Article VII* of the South Portland Code of Ordinances. The ordinance was established in 1987 and most recently amended in 2010. Other funding mechanisms were suggested in the 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan, but they were not implemented (see Section 1.2).

LAND BANK FUNDING

- **Annual contribution** of \$35,000 from the Capital Improvement Plan is placed in the Land Bank until the fund balance exceeds one million dollars (\$1,000,000). The annual contribution is suspended when the balance meets this designated cap.
- **Proceeds from the sale of City property** go to the land bank based on the following ratios: in the sale of undeveloped municipal land, 60% of the sale profit is placed in the Land Bank. In the sale of developed municipal land, 30% of the sale profit is placed in the Land Bank.
- **Other contributions** include voluntary donations, funds appropriated by City Council beyond the CIP funding, and grants received.

ALLOWABLE LAND BANK USES

- **Acquisition.** Purchase interests, including conservation restrictions, development rights or easements, in real property.
- **Maintenance.** Maintain, manage and improve land and interests in land held by it in a manner which allows public use and enjoyment. The amount of funding available for maintenance may not exceed 10% of the current Land Bank balance.
- **Other uses.** Use of the Land Bank fund for any proposed acquisition or sale of any real property interest shall be referred to the Planning Board for review and recommendation.

CURRENT LAND BANK BALANCE

- As of the date of this plan, the balance of the Land Bank was \$933,210 (close to reaching the \$1,000,000 CIP funding cap).
- In FY2018, the fund earned \$14,975 in interest and \$27,088 in land sale revenues to bring it to its current balance.

RECENT LAND BANK ACTIVITY

- **Trout Brook Nature Preserve.** In FY2013, \$19,226 was expended to fund the Trout Brook project. Funding for this project helped the SPLT transform an unmaintained gravel pit into a natural area with stream-side, deep wood and meadow trails, new signage, two new bog bridges and a new 45-foot bridge over Trout Brook.
- **Dow's Woods.** In FY2017, \$140,000 was expended to purchase the Dow's Woods conservation easement at 590 Highland Avenue. The purchase of this easement includes 9.2 acres of land that otherwise may have been developed as residential condominiums. The remaining land not included in the conservation easement has been approved for 15 condominium units.

OTHER CITY OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES

In recent years, the City has funded additional open space initiatives without the direct assistance of the Land Bank fund. These initiatives have been funded via other municipal sources and outside funding programs, such as Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee (PACTS). A list of recent open space improvement initiatives include:

- Sawyer Marsh land swap.
- Sunset Park open space improvements.
- Red Brook trail easement (as part of site plan approval for the Residences at Clark's Pond).
- Multi-use path constructed from the Veterans' Memorial Bridge to Cash Corner along Main Street and programmed from the Veterans' Memorial Bridge to the Greenbelt via Billy Vachon Drive, Lincoln Street, and Broadway.
- Funding and investment in this 2019 Open Space Plan.



*Sawyer Marsh
Photo by Denise Michaud*

2.11 CITY REGULATIONS

The following chapter provides a brief review of South Portland code of ordinances and how they apply to open space protection.

2.11.1 STORMWATER

South Portland and other densely developed areas in the State are subject to the Maine Municipal Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) General Permit. This permit requires a plan to “Reduce the discharge of pollutants (from publicly-owned stormwater systems) ... to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act.” South Portland’s Stormwater Management Plan identifies a wide variety of activities and policies that must be implemented to comply with MS4 permit requirements.

As required by the MS4 General Permit, the municipal Stormwater Performance Standards and Stormwater Manual promote Low Impact Development (LID), which generally refers to systems and practices that mimic natural processes to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. More specifically, LID is an approach to land development (or redevelopment) that minimizes the extent of site disturbance and creation of new impervious surfaces to preserve and recreate natural landscape features.

2.11.2 SUBDIVISION AND SITE PLAN REVIEW

In the South Portland code of ordinances, subdivision regulations are listed in *Chapter 24* and site plan review processes are detailed in *Chapter 27*. Both regulatory processes have approval standards that enable the Planning Board to review, discuss, and approve open space in various ways.

Sec. 24-4.1 indicates the Planning Board may require, as a condition of subdivision approval, that offsite improvements be constructed or reconstructed, including “parks and other open space areas.” The ordinance also includes a provision for developers to offer public open space to the City as part of the subdivision process.

The Site Plan Review standards in *Chapter 27* include provisions to prevent development from having adverse effects on rare or irreplaceable natural areas. In addition, the Planning Board has the ability to require public access to the extent allowed by Supreme Court decisions and other case law.



TOP: Stormwater System on Main Street, photo by Fred Dillon
MIDDLE: Residential Rain Garden, photo by Fred Dillon
BOTTOM: Trout Brook Culvert, photo by Maggie Burns

2.11.3 WETLAND PROTECTION

In South Portland's code of ordinances, *Sec. 27-1526* addresses performance standards with respect to activities adjacent to freshwater wetlands. The City's Freshwater wetlands protection standards go above and beyond the State requirements for wetlands protection. The standards were updated through a rigorous public process in 2008. General standards for freshwater wetlands include:

- The alteration of any freshwater wetlands on the property will be avoided to the extent feasible considering cost, existing technology and logistics based upon the overall purpose of the project;
- The area of freshwater wetlands that is altered will be limited to the minimum amount necessary to complete the project;
- A 25-foot-wide naturally vegetated buffer strip will be maintained between the activity and any river, stream or brook (this is in addition to the requirement for an upland buffer in accordance with *Sec. 27-1526(e)*); and
- The project, including any alteration of freshwater wetlands, will not violate any state water quality law, including those governing the classification of the state's waters.



Sawyer Marsh
Photo by Denise Michaud

2.1.1.4 SHORELAND ZONING

The state of Maine Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 MRSA, *Sec. 435-449*) requires all municipalities to adopt, administer, and enforce ordinances which regulate land use activities within 250 feet of great ponds, rivers, freshwater and coastal wetlands, and tidal waters; and within 75 feet of streams as defined. The City of South Portland adopted shoreland zoning in 1992. The South Portland Shoreland Area Overlay District protects all land areas around coastal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, streams, and tidal inundation. See the **Shoreland Zoning Map** in **Appendix A**. Shoreland Zoning in South Portland is specific, with 250 feet of land area protected from the upland edge of wetlands and areas experiencing tidal inundation. The Stream Protection Overlay Subdistricts identify protections specific to identified streams; (1) Subdistrict SP-1 protects Mill Creek, Kimball Brook, Trout Brook, Anthoine Creek, Barberry Creek, and Gambler’s Arm Brook; (2) Subdistrict SP-2 protects Long Creek (upstream of the dam at Westbrook Street and its major tributaries), Red Brook, and Jackson Brook; and (3) Subdistrict SP-3 protects minor tributaries of Long Creek.

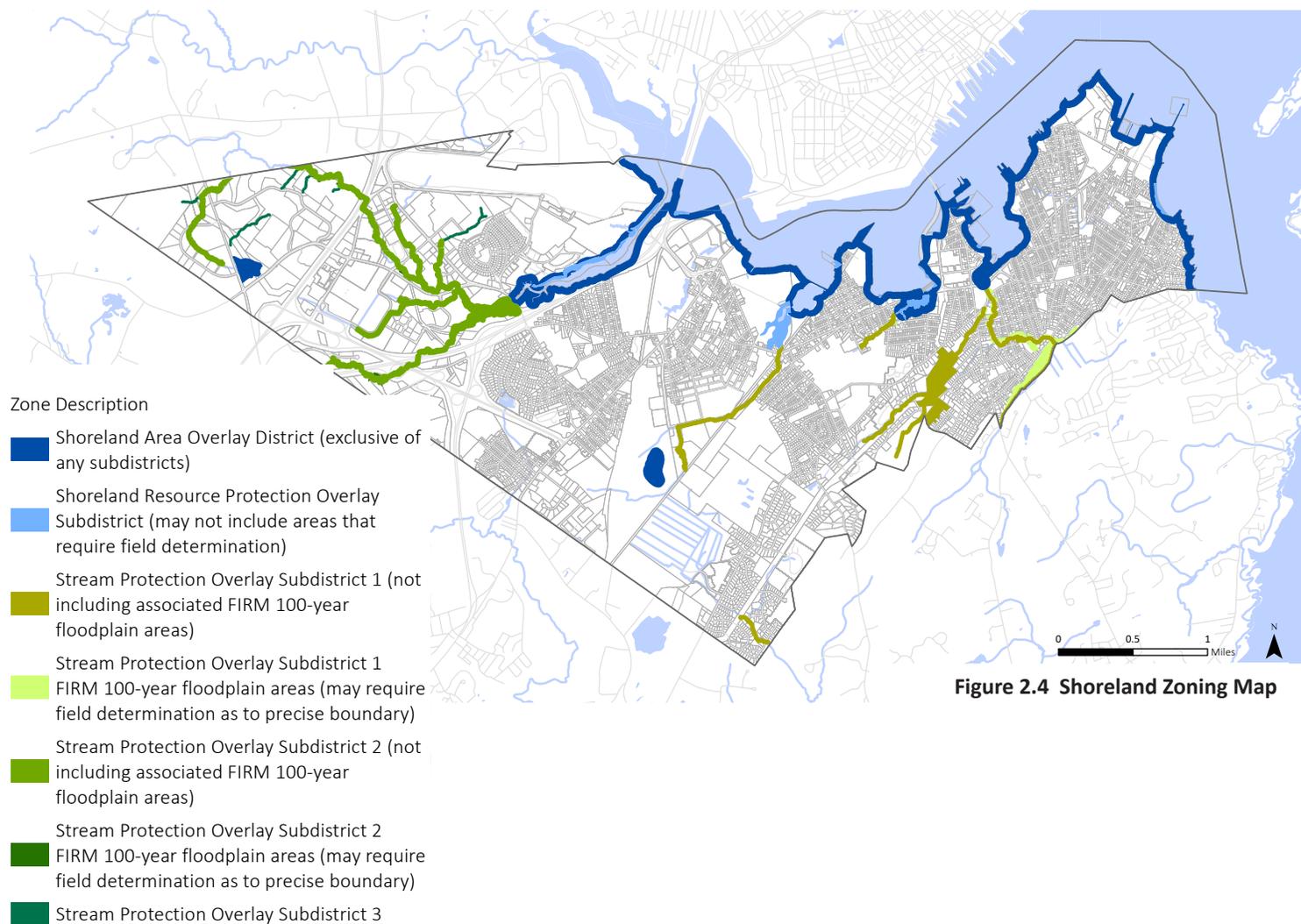


Figure 2.4 Shoreland Zoning Map



CHAPTER 3 VISION + GOALS

- 3.1 Vision Statement
- 3.2 Open Space Goals

3.1 VISION STATEMENT

South Portland is a community with both significant natural resources and continued development growth. This position allows the City the opportunity to achieve a successful balance and partnership between development, natural resource protection, and continued access to a variety of open spaces. The vision for South Portland is a City that is vibrant, healthy, and equitable. It is a desirable community to live in and visit and one that emphasizes the importance of open space in the city.

South Portland should:

- Prioritize natural resource and habitat protection in future development and open space preservation.
- Maintain connectivity between neighborhoods and open spaces that is accessible to all residents.
- Emphasize the enhancement of community character and uphold neighborhood-based development patterns.
- Maintain and improve waterfront access for all residents and visitors.
- Recognize the value of open space to help improve climate change resilience and mitigate the effects of sea level rise.
- Promote health and wellness opportunities by providing a variety of open space amenities throughout the city.
- Ensure all residents and visitors have access to natural landscapes as development growth continues in and around the city.



*Spring Point Shoreway
Photo by Terrence DeWan*

3.2 OPEN SPACE GOALS

The following five goals are the foundation for the strategies recommended for implementation:

PROTECT EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Taking care of existing city-owned open space is essential to maintaining a high-quality open space network. The City should ensure that existing open space is protected from future sale or development. It is recognized that all public open space is not created equal. Some existing open spaces have higher value than others. The value of open space may vary based on social, contextual, and ecological factors.

The strategies specific to this goal ensure the city's high value public open spaces are protected and will remain as open space. See strategies in **Chapter 4**.

ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

South Portland is a growing community with development pressures that threaten the loss of existing private open space land. Obtaining partial or full land rights to private open space properties is necessary to ensure that existing private open spaces remain protected open space and to add new open space to the public domain. Acquisition of open space property may be done through various methods, including land purchase, donation, coordination with the SPLT, grants, and working with developers on site-specific strategies that benefit both open space and livability of development.

The strategies specific to this goal guide the selection and acquisition of open space land to ensure that critical natural resources and open spaces are not diminished or eliminated, now or in the future, by development. See strategies in **Chapter 5**.



*Jordan Park
Photo by Susan Chase*

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Open spaces provide opportunities to preserve and enhance the quality of natural resources. South Portland is a uniquely positioned urban center that also offers a broad range of habitats. As parcels are evaluated to preserve as open space, it is critical to consider the habitat of the area and the life it supports as well as its interconnectedness to the broader ecosystem.

The strategies specific to this goal provide tools to assess the natural resources at the scale of each open space parcel and within the context of the greater ecosystem. See strategies in **Chapter 6**.

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS TO OPEN SPACES FROM ALL NEIGHBORHOODS

South Portland aims to be a City with an accessible open space network. All members of the community, regardless of neighborhood, mobility level, or age should have safe access to a variety of open spaces. Improving connections between and access to open spaces will strengthen the quality and use of the network as a whole.

The strategies specific to this goal provide guidance in the identification and prioritization for improved open space access and linkages throughout the city. See strategies in **Chapter 7**.

FINANCE THE PROTECTION AND ACQUISITION OF OPEN SPACE

The future of open space preservation and acquisition is dependent on the city's financial capacity to purchase and maintain open space lands. Many of the strategies outlined in this Open Space Plan require financial support to be successful. Ensuring the proper funding for open space is a critical component to this Plan.

The strategies specific to this goal inform the managements and improvement of funding for the purposes of open space acquisition, preservation, and management. See strategies in **Chapter 8**.



*Municipal Golf Course
Photo by Maggie Burns*

PROTECT EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

The protection and maintenance of open space is an essential component of maintaining a high-quality open space network. There are three strategies aimed at protecting existing city-owned open space land.

- 4.1 Tiered Protection System for City-owned Lands
- 4.2 Maintain a Geospatial Database of Existing Public Lands
- 4.3 Establish an Open Space Zoning District

4.1 TIERED PROTECTION SYSTEM FOR CITY-OWNED LANDS

The City of South Portland should ensure important city-owned open space and public lands are protected from future sale or development. Currently, a minority of city-owned open spaces have legal protections requiring that land be maintained as open space, leaving many city-owned open spaces at risk for future sale or development (see the **Open Space Protection Map** in **Appendix A**). Existing legal protection of public open spaces is found in the form of conservation easements, deed restrictions, or restrictions established through the LWCF program. Properties without legal protections may be sold for private development by a majority City Council vote. Examples of open space lands with and without legal protections are provided below:

PROTECTION STATUS OF OPEN SPACE (SAMPLE LIST)

Public open space with no legal protection:

- Bug Light Park (south of the Liberty Ship Memorial)
- The entire Greenbelt under City ownership
- Legere Park
- Mill Creek Park

Public open space with legal protection:

- Wainwright Fields (deed restriction)
- Pope Preserve (deed restriction)
- Wilkinson Park (deed restriction)
- Trout Brook (conservation easement)
- Sawyer Park (conservation easement)
- Municipal Boat Ramp (LWCF)

A THREE-TIERED SYSTEM

Open spaces are not all equal in value. Some public lands have higher value as open space than others, based on social, historical, contextual, and ecological factors. This strategy recommends a three-tiered protection system for city-owned open space lands. All existing city-owned public open space lands should be evaluated and assigned to one of three tiers. This strategy will ensure properties of the highest value are permanently protected as open space, properties of moderate importance will undergo a public review process prior to sale or development, and those properties with little value as open space land are made available for thoughtful development.

TIER I

Tier 1 protected properties are existing open spaces currently used as public parks and therefore deemed to be worthy of the highest protection. These lands should be permanently protected by conservation easement.

Conservation Easements. South Portland will maintain ownership of these properties, and the conservation easement holder will be a group such as the SPLT or other designated by the City Council as having sufficient structure, expertise, and record of conservation. The easements may only be modified or terminated by mutual agreement (the City and easement holder). Consideration should be given to easement protection in the case that the easement holder organization were to dissolve.

This process was presented to the SPLT during the open space planning process. The SPLT is interested in assisting in the protections of these lands with the condition that the cost of ownership and maintenance continue as the sole responsibility of the City. The Conservation Commission and City staff should work closely with legal counsel and the SPLT to establish the Tier 1 conservation easements. The City will also be responsible for all legal costs associated with establishing the conservation easements.



*Spring Point Shoreway
Photo by Maggie Burns*

TIER 2

Tier 2 protected properties are comprised in whole or in part of open space (or have the potential to become open space) that would benefit, at minimum, the citizens of its neighborhood. The properties in this tier would likely prompt citizen interest if proposed to be sold or developed.

Public Review Process. A proposal for sale or development of a Tier 2 protected property is recommended to undergo a rigorous review and public comment prior to a City Council vote to sell or develop the city-owned property. Through this process, the City Council must hear comments and consider how the loss of the public open space will impact the community. This process will precede the Planning Board site plan or subdivision review process required for all development proposals in the city.

Recommended steps for Tier 2 property public review process:

1. **Plan Submissions and Application.** The party interested in purchasing the public property for development (hereafter referred to as the Proponent) is to submit an application and preliminary plans for development to the City manager for referral to planning staff. Staff will evaluate how the proposed development of the public property relates to the open space goals (as identified in the latest Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plan).
2. **Planning Board Review and Public Hearing.** The Proponent will present the application to the Planning Board and hold a Planning Board Public Hearing. In addition to regular advertising for Planning Board public hearings, abutters within 500 feet of the city-owned property will be directly notified of the public hearings. Following the public hearing, the Board will make a recommendation to City Council.
3. **City Council Review and Public Hearing.** The Proponent will present the application to the City Council and hold a public hearing. The Council will review the recommendation made by Planning Board. In addition to regular advertising for City Council public hearings, abutters within 500 feet of the city-owned property will be directly notified of the public hearings.
4. **Plan Revisions.** Throughout the process, the Proponent will review the public feedback with planning staff and discuss recommendations for amendments to the proposed development plan. If necessary, the Proponent will provide an updated plan based on feedback and resubmit the proposal.
5. **City Council Vote.** City Council will then vote to either sell the property for development (possibly subject to development conditions) or vote to keep the property as public open space.
6. **Standard Planning Board Review.** In cases where City Council votes to sell the city-owned property for development, the Proponent will then proceed with the standard subdivision review or site plan review process as outlined by the South Portland code of ordinances.

TIER 3

Tier 3 protected properties include small pieces of land that have potential to serve the community better as urban infill rather than city-owned open space land. These lands may be more suitable for development based on their size, shape, location, or context.

Public Review Process. Properties on this list are recommended for sale or transfer with the recommendation of Planning Board to the City Council.

Recommended steps for Tier 3 property public review process

1. **Plan Submissions and Application.** The party interested in purchasing the public property for development (hereafter referred to as the Proponent) to submit an application and preliminary plans for development to the City Manager for referral to the planning department. Planning Staff will evaluate how the proposed development of the public property relates to the open space goals (as identified in the latest Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Plan).
2. **Planning Board Review and Public Hearing.** The Proponent will present the application to the Planning Board and hold a Planning Board Public Hearing. Following the public hearing, the Board will make a recommendation to City Council.
3. **Plan Revisions.** Throughout the process, the Proponent will review the public feedback with planning staff and discuss recommendations for amendments to the proposed development plan. If necessary, the Proponent will provide an updated plan based on feedback and resubmit the proposal.
4. **City Council Review and Vote.** City Council will review the application and the Planning Board recommendation then vote to either sell the property (possibly subject to conditions) or vote to keep the property as public open space.
5. **Standard Planning Board Review.** In cases where City Council votes to sell the city-owned property for development, the Proponent will then proceed with the standard Subdivision Review or Site Plan Review process as outlined by the South Portland code of ordinances.



*Dyer School Open Space
Photo by Maggie Burns*

TIERED PROTECTION EXAMPLES

The identification of tiered properties is not included in this Plan. This process should be included in Plan implementation and should include site specific evaluations of properties. Below are examples of potential properties that may be included in the identified tiers.

Potential Tier 1 Properties

- The Greenbelt (portions under City ownership)
- Bug Light Park
- Hinckley Park
- Legere Park
- Mill Creek Park

Potential Tier 2 Properties

- 3 Mitchell Road, a garden adjacent to the Congregational Church.
- Legion Square Park at 5 Cottage Road, land adjacent to the rotary at E Street/Cottage Road/Ocean Street.
- 16 Bangor Street, a 3.21-acre open space parcel.
- High Street Basketball Court, a recreational facility that may require review and public comment to hear and consider interest from the neighborhood.
- Former City landfill area, includes several large parcels not included in the public works complex.

Potential Tier 3 Properties

- 80 Running Hill Road, a narrow strip of land along Running Hill Road adjacent to commercial development.
- 100 Snowberry Drive, located in the Highland Meadows subdivision, a 0.67-acre parcel under utility lines between houses.
- 1 Ocean Street, a 0.23-acre parcel at the old “Million Dollar Bridge” entry on the point of land as Ocean Street becomes Waterman Drive (adjacent to Ainsworth Theilan property).
- 15 Mountain View Road, a small 0.14-acre strip of land located across from the entrance to South Portland High School.



DEVELOPED CITY-OWNED LANDS

City-owned properties that are developed and not currently classified as open space are not eligible for classification through this tiered system. These city-owned parcels may include schools, municipal buildings, or utility rights-of-way. If the municipal use of a city-owned parcel is discontinued and is not immediately changed to another municipal use, the property shall be assigned to one of the three open space protection tiers at that time. For example, the former Hamlin Elementary School is currently used as municipal offices. If this use was ever discontinued and not replaced with another municipal use, the property would be classified as open space and assigned to one of the three tiers.

The classification as open space and assignment to tiered protection will ensure public lands are not sold for private development without an appropriate review process. The classification of public parcels with discontinued municipal functions will be the responsibility of the Conservation Commission (or appointed subcommittee) in coordination with City staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee and City staff shall be responsible for overseeing the tiered classification of city-owned lands. This work should include site specific evaluation of public open space lands to determine their value in open space. The specific process, timeline, and evaluation criteria should be established as part of the implementation of this Open Space Plan. See *Sec. 2-171* in the City code of ordinances for further guidance on the existing standards for the sale of city-owned lands.

Recommendations to guide the tiered classification work

- Utilize the material provided in this Open Space Plan to guide classifications, including data provided in the geospatial database.
- Develop baseline criteria to guide the classification of parcels. Criteria may be based on parcel size, existing conditions, adjacent uses, natural resource and habitat, etc.
- Consider engaging neighborhood groups in the tiered classification of parcels.
- Consider City Council approval of the tiered land classifications to ensure the process for protections is officially accepted.

Recommendation for annual monitoring of the protection system

Following the initial tiered classification of public open space properties, City staff and the Conservation Commission will review the status of protected public lands on an annual basis. This annual review would include any new city-owned open spaces parcels adopted into the tiered protection system and any Tier 2 or Tier 3 parcels that were reviewed for sale or protection in that calendar year. This report should be provided in the City Council and included in the Annual Report.

4.2 MAINTAIN A GEOSPATIAL DATABASE OF EXISTING PUBLIC LANDS

There should be an up-to-date geospatial database maintained for all city-owned public lands. The database has been updated in the development of this Plan, and has been provided to the Information Systems Staff. See the maps included in **Appendix A**.

As the database is maintained, it should include all available information for all city-owned parcels, including each use, legal protection as open space, and protection tier. The map and classified database may be used to:

- Expand open space facilities within existing public lands.
- Aid in the evaluation of private open space lands for acquisition.
- Aid in the future protection or sale of public land.
- Aid in future planning work.
- Determine where parcels would be included in the tiered protection system.

IMPLEMENTATION

This work should be completed by City staff with geographic information system (GIS) mapping capabilities. The database should be updated at the time of public land classification and maintained over time. The Conservation Commission should be aware of this database and include updates in its annual review of city-owned lands.

4.3 ESTABLISH AN OPEN SPACE ZONING DISTRICT

An open space zoning district will improve the City’s ability to manage and enhance the existing city-owned open spaces in South Portland. Currently, open spaces are located in various zoning districts (see **Table 2.1** for a list of various zones governing City parkland). Examples of this include Bug Light Park, located in the *Shipyards District* and Hinckley Park, located in *Residential District A*. The allowable uses, density restrictions, and regulations do not always relate to the function of open spaces. Maintaining elements such as park signage or infrastructure that are not recognized as allowable uses in the zone makes management of these open space sites difficult.

South Portland should have a zoning district that encourages uses and infrastructural improvements that enhance the existing open spaces. An open space district would relate directly to uses and facilities associated with existing public open spaces. The uses in this new zoning district would be primarily limited to non-development type activity, assisting in the protection of these lands as undeveloped open space.

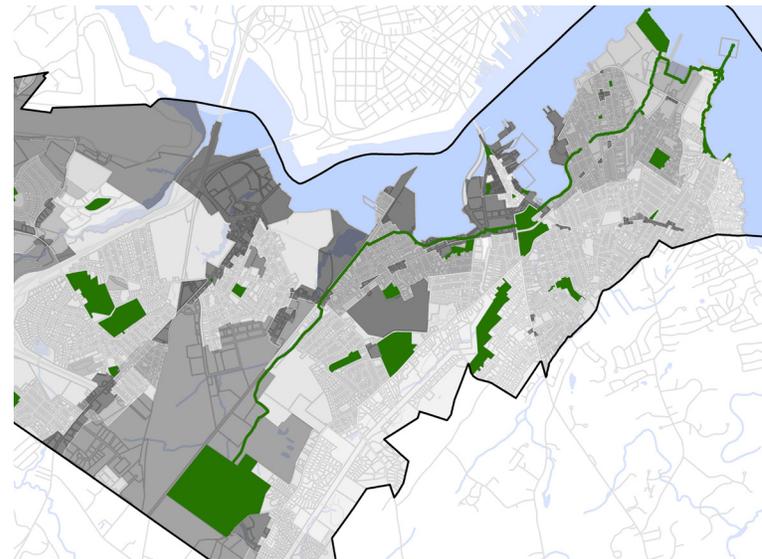
This Plan does not include recommended provisions or locations for the zoning district. The identification of the zoning district may be based on the Tier 1 parcels (as described in Section 4.1), from results of the online community survey, or a new process undertaken by a Conservation Commission subcommittee. An example of a potential *Open Space District*, including all parklands and major trail corridors is represented in a sample map below.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of a new Open Space Zoning District should be led by City staff and the Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee. The process includes an amendment to the current zoning map and development of language in *Chapter 27 Zoning* of the South Portland Code of ordinances. Following draft development, the process may require the following steps:

1. First City Council workshop.
2. Planning Board public hearing and Planning Board recommendation to City Council.
3. Second City Council workshop (optional). Any substantive amendments by the City Council would trigger another Planning Board public hearing.
4. Two City Council public hearings.
5. City Council approval of new zoning district would require a super majority vote with a recommendation from the Planning Board.

Figure 4.1 Open Space Zoning District Example



OPEN SPACE ZONING DISTRICT EXAMPLE

All City parks are identified in sample Open Space District

ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

Currently, the City does not have a strategy for private land acquisition to expand or strengthen the public open space network. This Open Space Plan does not identify specific private properties for potential acquisition and the Plan is not designed to function as a mechanism for private land acquisition. There are three strategies intended to provide the guidance and tools necessary to make smart and proactive decisions related to the expansion of the public open space network moving forward.

- 5.1 Private Property Acquisition Guidelines
- 5.2 Acquisition and Conservation Methods
- 5.3 Partnership Opportunities

5.1 PRIVATE PROPERTY ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

The acquisition of private property as public open space will vary dependent upon the identified property and the landowner. The purpose of this strategy is to provide basic guidelines for how to approach the acquisition process.

Each open space acquisition process should be guided by four principles:

1. Identify opportunities with willing landowners.
2. Assess opportunities.
3. Determine the best use of funds.
4. Invest in future open space.

PARTICIPANTS

There are two parties in each acquisition transaction: (1) the private landowner and (2) the City of South Portland. The key factors to consider in this two-party transaction are listed below:

- 1. The Willing Private Landowner.** Each private landowner should engage in conversations willingly and be treated with respect throughout the process.
- 2. The City Representative.** The individual selected to represent the City will initiate contact and facilitate discussions with the private landowner. There may be a Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee or City staff behind the decision to engage a private property owner; however, there should be a single individual selected to engage in discussions. This may be a volunteer committee member, an elected official, or City staff. Thoughtful consideration should be given to the chosen City representative.

PROCESS

The flowchart provided below is a general guide for how the City of South Portland may address the process of open space acquisition. This is a simplified representation of a complex and highly variable process. This is intended to serve as a road map for the City as opportunities around open space acquisition are explored.

The big ideas represented in the flowchart are the open communication with willing landowners, the use of the evaluation/prioritization process to identify potential open space lands, and consideration of both financial and management strategies during the acquisition process.

ACQUISITION PROCESS FLOWCHART

This chart demonstrates the typical process for private land acquisition as public open space. The Conservation Commission or appointed committee should be responsible for the process of private land acquisition.

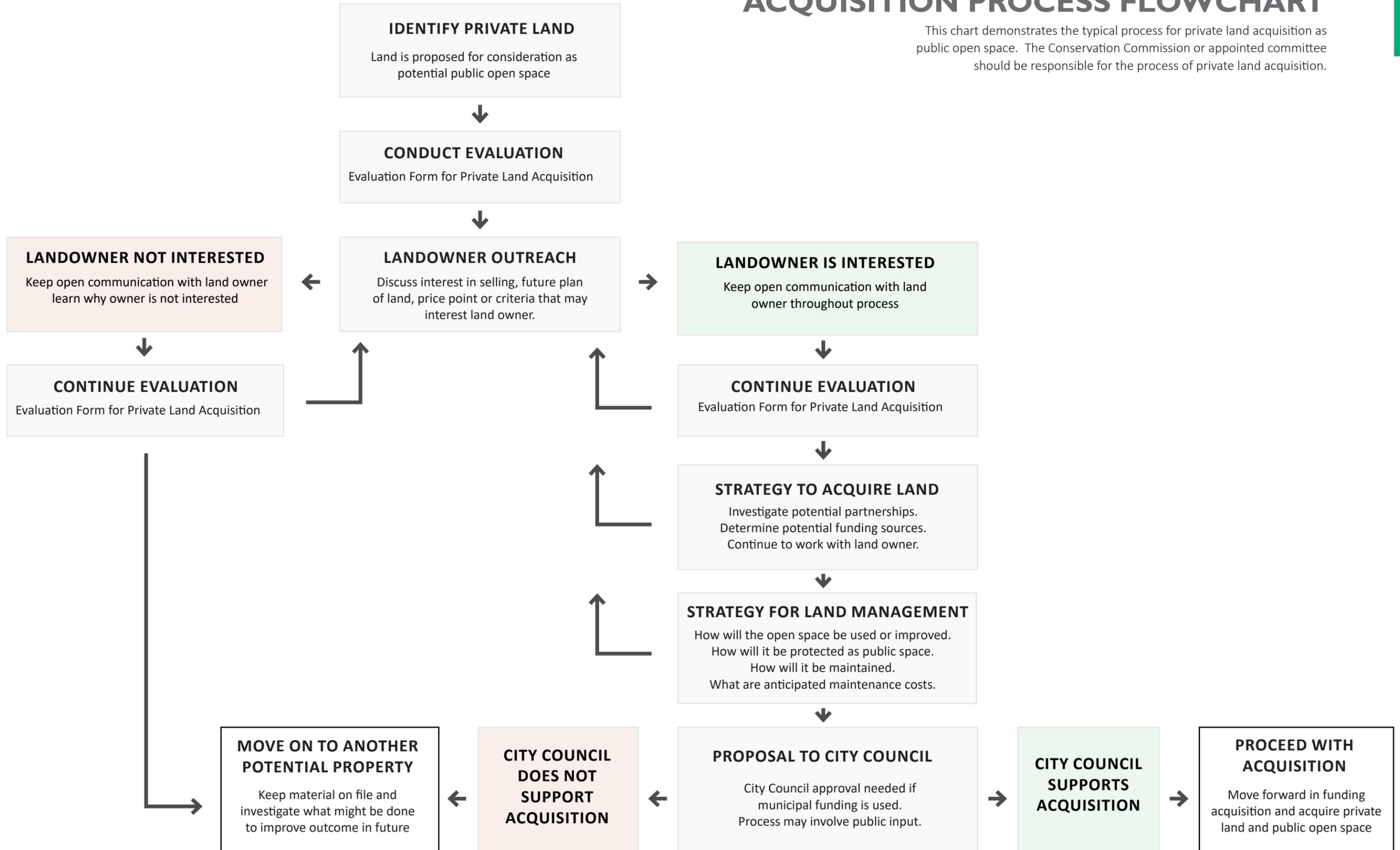


Figure 5.1 Acquisition Flowchart

EVALUATION FORM

As noted in the flowchart, an Evaluation Form should be used for private land acquisition to assess the quality and suitability of the property as potential public open space. The evaluation will assist with the prioritization of the various private properties. The complete Evaluation Form for Private Land Acquisition is provided in **Appendix B**.

This evaluation requires a full site analysis. This analysis should include a site visit as well as the maps and data provided in this Open Space Plan. Each property will be assessed individually and rated as high/medium/low in response to an established set of criteria. Reviewers conducting the assessment will evaluate the suitability of the land, as it relates to the following categories:

1. Provides public access and connectivity.
2. Preserves or enhances natural resources.
3. Enhances community character and livability of the city.
4. Protects the City from potential impact of climate change.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The list of undeveloped private open space land should be established and maintained on an annual basis. The South Portland code of ordinances currently requires the Conservation Commission to maintain this list [see *Sec. 2-79(d)(f)*]. An annual review and update of the map and list of potential open space lands will allow the City to act quickly and dynamically to acquisition opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION

This is a long-term strategy, requiring thoughtful attention over years and decades. A Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee and City staff should meet on a regular basis. This group will identify properties, evaluate and prioritize potential open space properties, select a representative to engage in discussions with willing landowners, and investigate the financial strategies required to acquire open space lands. This group will also be responsible for the annual review of privately held undeveloped land.

5.2 ACQUISITION AND CONSERVATION METHODS

This strategy outlines a glossary of methods that may be used to acquire or conserve private open space. Some acquisition methods may be used on a case-by-case basis with willing landowners, while others require long-term implementation and management. This strategy serves as a reference for open space acquisition methods.

IMPLEMENTATION

The methods and programs provided in the glossary below should be reviewed and considered when establishing ways to acquire open space lands. Some methods may require the establishment of long-term programs or new City ordinances. The Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee and City staff should review and discuss the methods to determine if any may apply to the City of South Portland.

ACQUISITION METHODS GLOSSARY

Property Purchase at Market Value. Standard property purchase based on an agreed upon price. This is a typical real estate transaction used with municipal funds.

Right of First Refusal. A legal agreement between the City (buyer) and a private property owner (seller) that allows the City to be first in line to make an offer on a piece of property before the private property owner negotiates any other offers for the land purchase. The landowner may put the property on the market; however, before any offers can be accepted, the seller must notify the City, who would have right of first refusal.

Gifting and Bequeathing. The City can accept gifts of property or easements for the establishment of a City park. Gifts may also be made directly to the SPLT.

Land Exchanges. A public land exchange is any transaction other than a sale that transfers publicly owned land (federal, state, county or municipal) from one owner to another. A public land exchange would involve trading municipal land for private land. The exchange may include a financial payment to equalize the value of the trade. Sawyer Marsh is an example of a parcel acquired using this method.

Maintaining Tax-Acquired Land. Tax-acquired land includes properties acquired by the City as a result of the expiration of a tax lien. The City takes title on a property and may auction the property off. As tax-acquired properties come under ownership by the City, they should be evaluated for their open space potential before being put up for auction (See *Sec. 2-171* of the South Portland Code of Ordinances).

Conservation Easements. A legal agreement between a landowner and an easement holder (typically an organization such as the SPLT) that permanently limits uses of land in order to protect its use or value as open space. Landowners retain ownership with the right to use, sell, or assign the property, subject to the terms of the easement.

Trail Easement. A legal agreement that allows others to use private land within the easement area in the manner provided for in the agreement. An easement can be very broad, granting access to the public for various uses; or it may be limited with restrictions on the conditions of access and use. An easement can be for public access to an entire property, or it could be restricted to a specific trail or area of the property. An easement may also restrict the type of uses allowed on the easement area (e.g., non-motorized activities including hiking, cycling, horseback riding).

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Very similar to a conservation easement described above, PDR provides a way to financially compensate willing landowners for not developing their land. When buying development rights, the community obtains a legal conservation easement that restricts development of the land. The landowner, however, still owns the land and can use or sell it, subject to terms specified in the easement. This is often used for agricultural land, because it provides farmers with cash while allowing them to maintain their farming operation¹².

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). This program financially compensates landowners for choosing not to develop some or all of their land by transferring development rights from a property with potential open space value to an area better suited for development. This type of program only works when there is demand for development rights. A TDR program identifies areas for conservation and areas for target growth in the community. A municipality can manage a TDR Bank and act as an intermediary, in lieu of developers going directly to landowners.

Cluster Development / Density Bonus for Conservation. Developers may be incentivized with increased unit density in the development of their land if they maintain portions of the property in conservation as open space. This may mean clustering development in one portion of a parcel while conserving a contiguous portion of open space on the property.

Open Space and Conservation Tax Incentives. When private land acquisition is not possible, the City can seek to preserve open space land through tax incentives to the private landowner. A reduced tax rate for the conservation of open space or the protection of important wildlife habitat may be an option. The City can educate owners about these programs. A description of state of Maine tax incentives is provided in *Property Taxation of Conservation Land Options for Property Owners* by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.¹³

Bargain Sale of Land. A Bargain Sale is the sale of land or other assets to a charity, land trust, or other non-profit, e.g., SPLT, for less than fair market value. In general, the fair market value, less the sale price, can be deducted from the land owner's taxes as a charitable donation provided the property has been held for at least one year by the landowner.

Parkland/Trail Dedication (as part of development). The City can enact an ordinance requiring dedication of city-owned open space as part of a development proposal. This type of program aims to acquire open space in development projects.

¹² *Purchase of Development Rights: Preserving Farmland and Open Space* by Gayle Miller & Douglas Krieger. <http://plannersweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/140.pdf>

¹³ *Property Taxation of Conservation Land Options for Property Owners* by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust <http://www.mltm.org/perch/resources/property-taxation-of-conservation-land-former-tb-104-july302013.pdf>

5.3 ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

This strategy lists organizations that may partner with the City of South Portland in the effort to expand open space. Partnerships between the City and the various organizations may center around funding leverage in the acquisition of open space or may be a partner in open space stewardship. Also see **Appendix F** for a list of programs and organizations that may provide funding for Open Space acquisition.

- South Portland Land Trust
- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust
- Scarborough Land Conservation Trust
- Portland Trails
- South Portland Conservation Commission
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust
- Land Trust Alliance
- Trust for Public Land
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Land for Maine’s Future Coalition
- The Nature Conservancy
- Friends of Casco Bay
- Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
- Community Garden Collective
- Eastern Trail Alliance

IMPLEMENTATION

The City should reach out to these organizations to learn what kind of partnerships could be formed. There may be opportunities for funding or willing landowners may be more interested in working through alternative organizations or programs.



*Bridge in Trout Brook Nature Preserve
Photo by Fred Dillon*

CHAPTER 6

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE HABITAT STRATEGIES

The preservation and enhancement of natural resources and wildlife habitat is an essential factor in the management, conservation, and expansion of open space. These three strategies provide guidelines for ensuring natural resource are included the decision making around open space.

- 6.1 Natural Resource Mapping
- 6.2 Support Efforts in Natural Resource Protection
- 6.3 Recognize the Role of Open Space in Climate Resiliency
- 6.4 Hire a City Arborist

6.1 NATURAL RESOURCE MAPPING

A description of natural resources is provided in Section 2.9 and natural resource mapping is provided in **Appendix A**. At the time of this Plan, the City of South Portland is equipped with the latest mapping data available. This strategy has two components:

Maintain up-to-date natural resource data. The data compiled in this Open Space Plan should be maintained and updated with available municipal and state data by City staff in the form of a geospatial database or other geospatial file type on an ongoing basis to ensure the best available is used in open space decision making. Much of these data (e.g. hydrography, habitat) are statewide datasets created using desktop modeling techniques and should be updated if site-specific data is made available. If a new property is acquired as open space, we recommend hiring technical experts to complete a thorough natural resources inventory and wetland delineation of the property

Utilize the latest data in the management, conservation, and expansion of open space. The well maintained and up-to-date mapping and data are intended to be used for evaluation of private open space for potential acquisition, evaluation of city-owned properties for preservation, and other activities related to planning, development, and conservation.

Available data relevant to this Plan includes

- City-owned Lands
- Conservation Easements
- Features identified at open space public forum
- Habitats
- Impervious Cover
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Areas
- Major Neighborhoods
- Managed Parks and Schools
- Paper Streets
- Quarter-mile Park Radius
- Shoreland Zone Maps
- South Portland Land Trust Land
- Trails
- Wetlands and Water Resources

IMPLEMENTATION

Update Online GIS Website. City staff should add the data provided with this Plan to the publicly available online GIS website. Additional database material developed during the open space planning process should be also added to the online GIS website.

Data Management. City staff should update the geospatial database on an annual basis to ensure all data is available and accessible to decision makers.

Data Referencing. The Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee and City staff responsible for evaluating open space for potential acquisition should use the data as a key reference with evaluating and prioritizing open space opportunities.

Site Assessments. Conduct site-specific natural resource inventories and wetland delineations for properties under consideration for open space preservation /acquisition.

6.2 SUPPORT EFFORTS IN NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

This strategy provides high-level recommendations for supporting natural resource protection in South Portland through open space planning and regulations. This Plan does not provide specific regulatory revisions, but rather techniques to integrate natural resource protection and climate resiliency into this Plan.

Overall, existing City ordinances support the protection of open space and natural resources. See Section 2.11 for an overview of the relationship between the existing City code of ordinances and open space conservation. The following is a list of potential regulatory improvements to consider:

Stormwater. The stormwater performance standards in South Portland are stricter than those of many other communities in the state. However, some smaller projects may be exempt from meeting State stormwater standards. The City is currently considering changes to its stormwater ordinance through the assistance of an outside consultant, and should ensure that development/redevelopment projects provide stormwater treatment, where appropriate.

Wetland Protection. Many development/redevelopment projects are required to contribute to a compensation fund to mitigate wetland impacts. The City could identify specific “offset projects” that establish, restore, or protect wetlands elsewhere in the city. The identified projects would provide sites to directly apply the wetland compensation funds. There may be room for improvement projects in riparian areas, providing opportunities to improve municipal water resource protection efforts.

Whole System Planning. When evaluating existing city-owned open space for protection or private property for acquisition, consideration should be given to the open space network as a whole. Open space should be prioritized for protection when it supports resiliency to sea level rise, connects fragmented habitat, and protects vulnerable freshwater and coastal resources. Parcels should not be evaluated in isolation but rather in the context of existing open space and feasibility of future open space acquisition. Additionally, natural resources do not obey political boundaries; work with neighboring communities to connect critical habitat across municipal borders.

IMPLEMENTATION

City staff and the Conservation Commission should discuss the above recommendations related to stormwater and wetland improvements. The City should consider and support the enhancement of environmental protections when opportunities arise.

6.3 RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF OPEN SPACE IN CLIMATE RESILIENCY

At the time of this Open Space Plan publication, South Portland is developing a **2020 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan** in partnership with the City of Portland. The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan has four areas of focus: Energy and High-Performance Buildings, Transportation and Land Use, Waste Reduction, and Climate Preparedness and Resilience. In addition to this Plan, the City has received a grant to develop an **Interactive Sea Level Rise and Vulnerability Map**. This will be an online mapping program that allows users to see the anticipated changes in sea level rise and identify areas of potential vulnerability.

The role of open space should be recognized in relation to the data and recommendations developed through these two independent initiatives. Critical connections between open space and climate resiliency should be recognized in the following ways:

- **Mapping.** Identify open spaces that provide resiliency to climate change and sea level rise. For example, there may be parcels of land that can help mitigate the impacts of sea level rise. Open space lands and natural resources have been mapped through this open space planning process and should be overlaid with the mapping data produced in the climate adaptation and sea level rise project noted above. The combination of this mapping data should drive decision making around open space protection and climate adaptation.
- **Open Space and Climate Change Goals.** Consider open space protection as a tool towards achieving the identified climate change goals – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 and for municipal operations to run 100% on clean energy by 2040. An example of this effort is the city-owned property formerly used as a landfill that has been repurposed as a solar farm for energy.
- **Support Future Climate Resiliency Recommendations.** Materials, data, and recommendations are likely to come out of the climate-related planning efforts currently underway. Upon completion of this planning work, the City should examine ways to use open space to develop and refine strategies related to climate resilience and adaptation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Planning staff should coordinate with the sustainability office to ensure the data from both planning efforts is used in future decision making. The Conservation Commission and appointed subcommittees should use the climate-related data and recommendations when prioritizing open space land for preservation and acquisition.

Consider the appointment of additional staff in the sustainability office to focus on open space as it relates to climate change.

6.4 HIRE A CITY ARBORIST

The City of South Portland does not currently have an arborist on staff to care for the health of the city's many trees. The City should consider the appointment of an arborist to enhance the health and management of trees.

An arborist is a professional tree specialist with a focus on the health, safety, and management of individual trees. The duties of a City arborist may include:

- Assist and advise on tree planting and health on public works construction projects.
- Advise in the management of open spaces.
- Improve the presence and health of street trees.
- Evaluate tree health for safety and management decisions.
- Develop a list of recommended street trees.
- Establish a street tree enhancement / tree replacement program.
- Establish a memorial tree and gift tree program.
- Review subdivision and site plan applications to ensure recommended tree species align with conditions.
- Guide and manage applications for the Maine Forest Service's Project Canopy Grant Assistance program.
- Provide information and advisement on pest management related to tree health.
- Manage the establishment of a GIS-based South Portland Tree Map.

IMPLEMENTATION

Consider the appointment of a City arborist and explore the above referenced possibilities to enhance the health and awareness of trees in the city.

CHAPTER 7

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

The four strategies related to connectivity and access are recommendations based on public comments and input collected during the open space planning process (i.e. the online community survey and open space public forum). These strategies are generally city-wide recommendations.

- 7.1 Improve Open Space Access
- 7.2 Improve Open Space Connectivity
- 7.3 Strengthen Planning Partnerships

7.1 IMPROVE OPEN SPACE ACCESS

Some general themes and recommendations for open space access and improvements are presented below. These recommendations should be considered in future open space planning and maintenance initiatives.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO OPEN SPACES

- Encourage schools to work towards accessibility of play spaces. Public school playgrounds are not accessible.
- Increase trail connections.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access within the city.
- Improve public transit to open spaces.
- Specific roadways identified as dangerous for pedestrians include Broadway, Cottage Street, and Route 77.
- Add open space in the west side of the city.
- Extend the East Coast Greenway to the west side of the city.

PROMOTE AWARENESS OF OPEN SPACES

- Involve students to teach stewardship and environmental planning.
- Support fundraising events, such as concerts, art sales, or sporting events.
- Create a South Portland Open Space Guide, highlighting parks, conservation areas, and open space connections. This document may be on paper, online or both, and include maps, images, and descriptions.
- Develop partnerships with developers and businesses, such as “Adopt a Park”, sponsored trash cleanups, and more public and private outreach for funding and participation.

INCREASE PUBLIC WATER ACCESS

- Prioritize water access to the ocean as well as rivers and streams.
- Consider boat launches designed for all tides.

IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN EXISTING SPACES

- Involve neighborhood residents in open space decisions to create open spaces designed for local need.
- Organize trash pickups.
- Make managed open spaces appealing to all age groups and ability levels.
- Install historic markers and educational interpretive panels.
- Add small playgrounds throughout the city.
- Add more community gardens.
- Establish permaculture gardens and edible forests.
- Propagate native/wild landscape (such as with wildflowers and tall grass for pollinators).
- Develop additional wellness opportunities, such as bouldering rocks, ice skating rinks, a community pool, sledding hills, and an adult playground.
- Work with utility companies and developers to improve open space opportunities.

CONSIDER CANINE ACCESS IN OPEN SPACES

- Enforce pet laws in open spaces.
- Create additional off-leash dog areas.
- Improve signage at existing off-leash dog areas.
- Create additional fenced-in dog parks.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront should consider the recommendations in the planning and budgeting for open space improvements.

City staff assigned to manage open space should use the recommended actions to find strategies for improving open space access.

The Conservation Commission and other committees should recognize these recommendations as planning and discussions continue around open space improvements.

7.2 IMPROVE OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY

The recommended strategies for improving open space connectivity are represented in the **Open Space Connectivity Diagram**. These recommendations represent the need for a larger and safer system connecting open spaces, neighborhoods, and water access points. An increased focus on open space connectivity identifies the need for safer pedestrian and cycling movement throughout the city. There are eight connectivity ideas represented in the Open Space Connectivity Diagram detailed on the following pages.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Department of Planning and Development should use the recommended strategies when working with developers and when reviewing development proposals.

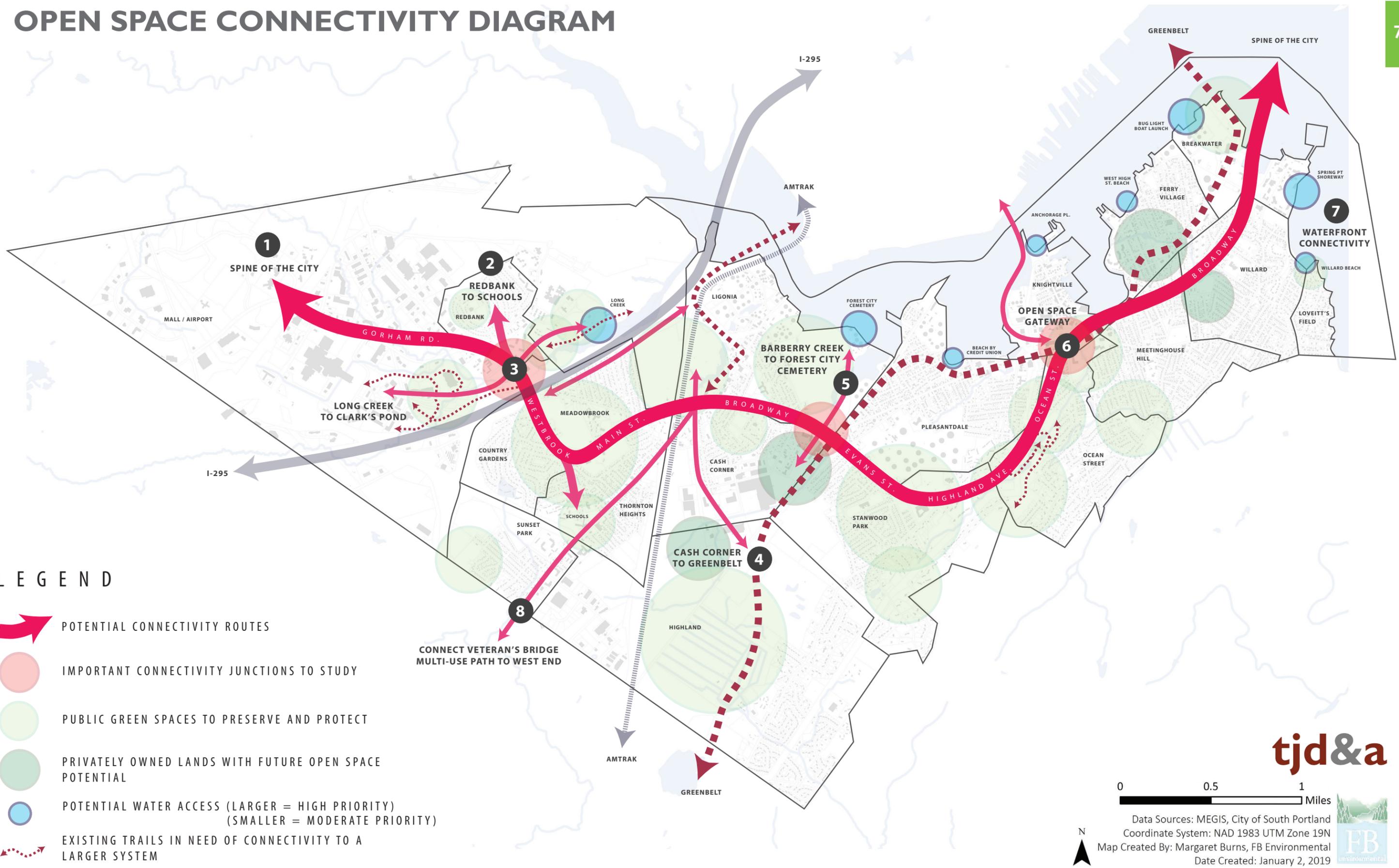
The Department of Public Works should use these strategies as a reference when making infrastructure improvement and applying for Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) project funding.

The Conservation Commission, SPLT, other committees, and City staff should recognize these recommendations as planning for open space improvements continues.



*Cyclists on Greenbelt Pathway
Photo from City Website*

OPEN SPACE CONNECTIVITY DIAGRAM



LEGEND

-  POTENTIAL CONNECTIVITY ROUTES
-  IMPORTANT CONNECTIVITY JUNCTIONS TO STUDY
-  PUBLIC GREEN SPACES TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT
-  PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS WITH FUTURE OPEN SPACE POTENTIAL
-  POTENTIAL WATER ACCESS (LARGER = HIGH PRIORITY)
(SMALLER = MODERATE PRIORITY)
-  EXISTING TRAILS IN NEED OF CONNECTIVITY TO A LARGER SYSTEM

tjd&a

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: MEGIS, City of South Portland
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 19N
 Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
 Date Created: January 2, 2019



Figure 5.2 Open Space Connectivity Diagram

CONNECTIVITY IDEAS

1. **Spine of the City.** An improved corridor connecting South Portland as a single community, creating a safer, more well-defined contiguous route for pedestrians and cyclists. This route is informed by existing and potential public open space, existing trails, and neighborhood placement. From west to east the “spine” follows Gorham Road down to Westbrook Street, across Main Street, onto Broadway, down Evans Street, across Highland Avenue, up Ocean Street, back to Broadway through to Bug Light Park. Reconfiguring the route of the “spine” away from the existing Greenbelt (shifting from Broadway to Highland Avenue), connects the route to the Hinckley Park trails.
2. **Redbank to Schools.** An improved on-road pedestrian route between the Redbank neighborhood and the schools. This route will allow for safe passage from the Redbank neighborhood in the west end to the school districts east of I-295. This connection reinforces the need for connectivity between neighborhoods separated by I-295. This route would run from Macarthur Circle E in the Redbank neighborhood and continue onto Westbrook Street under the highway overpass to the elementary and middle school complex.
3. **Long Creek to Clark’s Pond.** A connection between Long Creek Trails with the Clark’s Pond and Red Brook Trails. This connectivity improvement would create an uninterrupted trail system across Westbrook Street, which will ultimately provide access to the Fore River at Long Creek. This will also create greater pedestrian movement and connectivity through the existing open spaces. These trails may interact and cross the proposed “spine” in a way that will enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety in a newly imagined intersection that functions as more than a high-volume roadway.
4. **Cash Corner to Greenbelt.** Connect Cash Corner to the Greenbelt through Whitetail Junction. This will create an easier route for those living in the Ligonias and Cash Corner neighborhoods to access the Wainwright facilities, the Greenbelt, and the adjacent open spaces. This will also provide access to the proposed “spine” and allow for a safe, non-vehicular commute from Cash Corner to the Mall/Airport area.
5. **Barberry Creek to Forest City Cemetery.** Establish a connection from Barberry Creek through Forest City Cemetery to improve access to the waterfront. This connection would meet the proposed “spine” and the Greenbelt trail in the same location to create an important node. In addition to improving two existing open spaces (Barberry Creek and Forest City Cemetery), this connection would increase the opportunity for access across the city.
6. **Open Space Gateway at Casco Bay Bridge.** This is the gateway to South Portland from downtown Portland via the Casco Bay Bridge. It is also the trail head to the off-road section of the Greenbelt and connection to the proposed “spine.” Improved pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure are critical at this junction to ensure safety across these routes.
7. **Waterfront Connectivity.** The Portland Harbor and Fore River waterfront is one of South Portland’s defining assets. Access and connectivity to the waterfront may be improved through the establishment of additional water access points. Potential water access points include: (1) Long Creek (2) Forest City Cemetery (3) Beach on Bagley Avenue (behind Evergreen Federal Credit Union) (4) Anchorage Place (5) West High Street Beach (6) Bug Light Boat Launch (7) Spring Point Shore Way (8) Willard Beach.
8. **Connect Veterans Bridge Multi-Use Path to West End.** Extending the connection between Portland and South Portland using the Veterans Bridge multi-use path. This path would become an extension of the proposed “spine” and extend south to the west side of the city. Another possible extension from the multi-use path is along the interior of the I-295 sound barrier to Westbrook Street.

7.3 STRENGTHEN PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS

The Conservation Commission should align its efforts and develop positive working relationships with partners from neighboring communities, City departments, city-sponsored committees and commissions, and independent nonprofits with like-minded or overlapping interests. Work with these groups will determine where open space goals and strategies align or be enhanced by the cooperation with these partners. See **Appendix F** for funding programs that may be serve these potential partnerships.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Conservation Commission appointed subcommittee or City staff should reach out to the above organizations and groups to establish a relationship and point of contact regarding partnerships and strategies.

NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

- Portland
- Cape Elizabeth
- Scarborough

SOUTH PORTLAND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

- Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront
- Water Resource Protection
- Sustainability Office
- Economic Development
- Department of Planning and Development

CITY-SPONSORED COMMITTEES

- Planning Board
- Conservation Commission
- Bike-Pedestrian Committee
- Harbor Commission
- Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
- Trails Advisory Group

NONPROFITS

- Bicycle Coalition of Maine
- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust
- Cape Farm Alliance
- Community Garden Collective
- Cultivating Community
- Environment Maine Policy & Research Center
- Friends of Casco Bay
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Greater Portland New England Mountain Biking Association
- Maine Audubon
- Maine Farm Land Trust
- Maine Gulf Research Institute
- South Portland Land Trust
- Protect South Portland
- Portland Trails
- Other (neighboring/regional) land trusts

CHAPTER 8

FINANCE THE PROTECTION AND ACQUISITION OF OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

There are two strategies designed to enhance the funding mechanisms for open space protection and acquisition. The strategies in this chapter are fundamental to the success of this Plan.

- 8.1 Revisions to Land Bank Ordinance (Chapter 18 Article VII)
- 8.2 Expand Financial Strategies

8.1 REVISIONS TO LAND BANK ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 18, ARTICLE VII)

A description of the existing Land Bank funding sources, allowable uses, and current status is provided in Section 2.10.3. The City should conduct an ordinance revision process to ensure the Land Bank is sufficiently funded and the allowable use of funds is in line with the vision and goals identified in this Open Space Plan. Included below is a list of recommendations for items to consider in the revision of the Land Bank Ordinance. This is not a comprehensive list of all possible amendments or revisions. This list is intended to serve as guidance to initiate the Ordinance revision process.

POTENTIAL REVISIONS TO LAND BANK FUND

Change the name of the “Land Bank” fund.

- The name “Land Bank” does not clearly or simply describe the use of the funds. The public and City Council should have an accurate understanding of the fund’s purpose.
- **Recommendation:** the fund should be renamed “Open Space Preservation and Acquisition Fund.”

Eliminate or adjust the one million dollar (\$1,000,000) funding cap.

- There is currently a \$1,000,000 account balance cap limiting annual contributions to the fund. Under the current regulations, when the Land Bank fund reaches \$1,000,000, the annual contribution ends. This is a static number from a 2008 Ordinance revision.
- **Recommendation:** The \$1,000,000 cap should be revised based on current land assessments and include a provision that this cap of the account’s balance be reviewed every seven years and/or in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan revisions.

The ordinance section would benefit from a list of Definitions specific to the fund.

- There is currently no definition section.
- Terms that would benefit from a definition include: *unimproved land; improved land; open space, etc.*
- **Recommendation:** Develop a *Definitions* section specific to the language governing the fund.

Improve guidance for the use of funds.

- There is a lack of stated criteria on how to release or use funds from the Land Bank. It is currently managed on a case-by-case basis that tends to be reactive to the particular situation. There should be clear rules to follow in determining how to use the funds.
- **Recommendation:** Establish specific criteria and system to guide use of funds. Use **Chapter 4 and Chapter 5** of this Open Space Plan as guidance in the criteria. City councilors may use an evaluation form similar to the form provided in **Appendix B** to discuss and debate the merits to approve the usage of the funds.

Review the funding structure of municipal property sale profits.

- Currently, a portion of municipal land sale profits go to the Land Bank fund. When a developed property is sold, 30% of the sale price goes to the fund. When an undeveloped property is sold, 60% of the sale price goes to the fund.
- **Recommendation:** This funding structure should be reviewed in the ordinance revision process. Reviewers should consider whether it would be beneficial to increase the amount of funding from undeveloped land, since it is essentially open space that is sold in these cases. The review should include an analysis of recent contributions to the fund from land sales.

IMPLEMENTATION

The City should immediately begin work on revisions to the Land Bank Ordinance. The recommendations in this strategy should serve as guidance for this review process. Additional recommendations and considerations will likely be added through a thorough review of the ordinance section.

A committee appointed by the City Council should work with City staff to review the complete Chapter 18 Article VII and consider the recommendations provided in this strategy. The ordinance revision process should follow standard procedures, involving the City Council and the legal counsel.



*Willard Beach Playground
Photo by Maggie Burns*

should explore additional funding strategies to support the improvement of the South Portland open space network. Potential strategies include incentives, funding sources, partnerships, and programs that may be used to in coordination with the Land Bank to ensure appropriate funding for open space. Funds collected through the various sources may go toward protection, acquisition, or maintenance of open space lands. A list of recommended strategies is provided below.

Land Donations. The City should set up procedures to make land donations possible, including working with SPLT to receive and provide stewardship for land donations. All donated conservation lands require a management plan and funding source for anticipated maintenance.

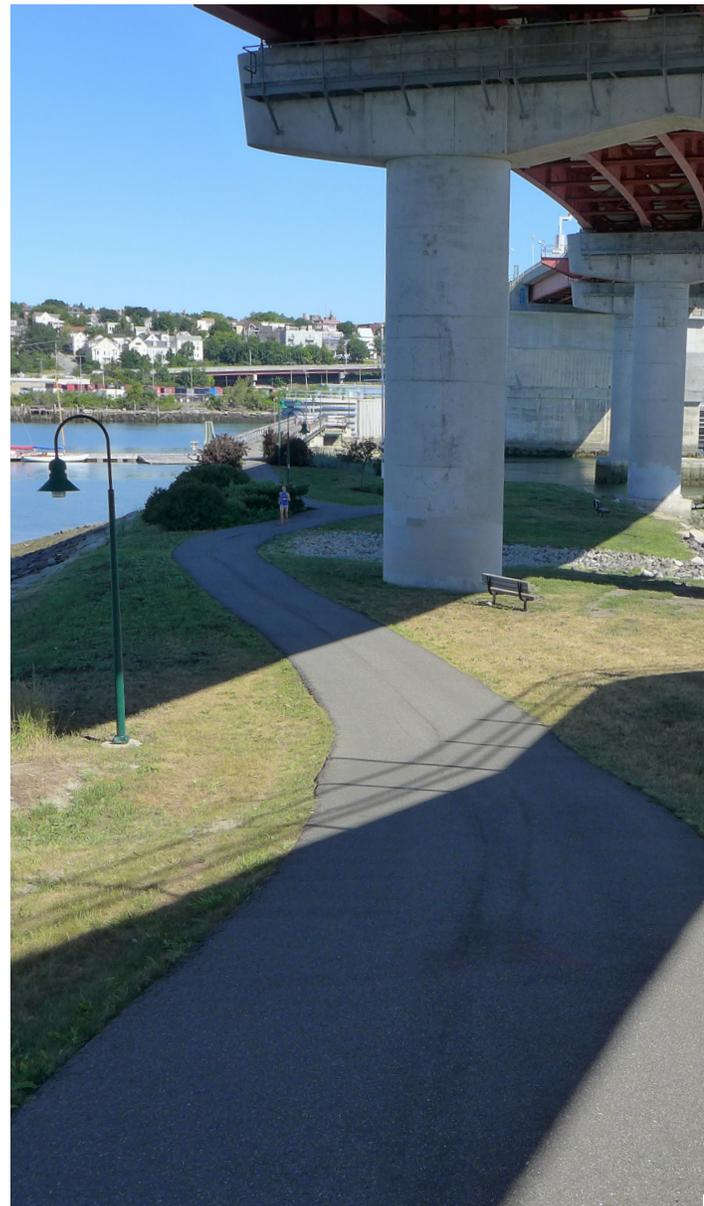
Private Fundraising. This is a voluntary funding source dependent on financial donors. The City should partner with SPLT to increase outreach to potential donors or host fund raising events. A clear goal and well-thought-out prioritizations are recommended prior to fundraising.

State Compensation Funds. These programs are designed to support conservation and natural resource protection projects with funds collected through environmental impact mitigation fees. These programs include the Maine In Lieu Compensation Fund (ILF), the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program (MNRCP), and wetland mitigation funds.

Development/Impact Fees. The City may create an open space impact fee to be applied to development proposals. The funds collected from impact fees may be used acquire and/or maintain open space. Funds may be directed to the Land Bank or a separate funding source for designated open spaces.

Municipal Bonding. A bond question may be put to voters requesting a bond package be used to fund the acquisition of prioritized open space lands. Implementation work in identifying and prioritizing the lands with willing land owners is recommended prior to a bond vote.

Tax Increase. The 2001 Open Space Strategic Plan recommended a three-cent dedication of the property tax rate to fund open space protection. This was not implemented, but a similar approach may be considered as a funding strategy.



*Thomas Knight Park
Photo by Maggie Burns*

Reserve Funds. A percentage of the South Portland General Reserve Fund may be designated for open space financing. For example, the annual incremental tax increases from new development after adjustments provides reserve funds beyond the annual budget. A percentage of the increased revenue may be used to fund open space.

City Tax on Property Sales. A tax could be levied on all properties sold in South Portland. The tax would be based on the sale price of the property and revenues would go directly to open space funding.

Appropriations. The City can appropriate City funds for the purchase of a specific open space property. Often, the turn-around time is too short to allow for purchase of a property currently on the market. This financial strategy in coordination with a proactive acquisition process and open discussions may make this a viable funding strategy.

Tax Acquired Property Sales. A percentage of tax acquired property sales may be used as a funding strategy.

Grant Programs. There are a number of grant programs that provide assistance to open space conservation efforts. See **Appendix F** for a list of grant programs, organizations, and funding sources.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Conservation Commission appointed committee and City staff should investigate the recommended financial strategies to the City Council. This work should determine if any would be appropriate for increasing the available funding for open space protection, maintenance, and acquisition. In some cases, the identification of funding sources should be tied to specific projects or identified priorities.

This strategy may partner with the implementation of the strategies identified in **Chapter 5** for improving the acquisition of open space.



*Hamlin School Community Garden
Photo by Maggie Burns*



*Red Bank Community Center Park
Photo by Susan Chase*

CHAPTER 9 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Open Space Plan will require short-term immediate work to implement the strategies outlined in this Plan. Other elements of this Plan require ongoing long-term work to ensure continued implementation of the strategies. There are three components that will assist in the successful implementation of this Plan.

- 9.1 Open Space Plan Adoption
- 9.2 Appointment of City Staff
- 9.3 Conservation Commission and Appointed Subcommittees

A summary of the implementation process for all strategies recommended in this Plan are summarized in a simple table.

- 9.4 Action Plan

9.1 OPEN SPACE PLAN ADOPTION

This Open Space Plan should be reviewed and approved by City Council, and **adopted as an amendment to the 2012 Comprehensive Plan**. This Plan should also be referenced in future municipal planning documents, such as the next Comprehensive Plan update and the Climate Change and Resiliency Adaptation Plan.

9.2 APPOINTMENT OF CITY STAFF

The tasks described above and listed in the Action Plan (see Section 9.4) require time, management, and guidance by City staff. The strategies listed are likely too large for volunteer citizens to manage alone. City staff should be appointed to work with the Conservation Commission and its appointed subcommittees to ensure successful implementation and management of the strategies outlined in this Plan.



*Thomas Knight Park
Photo by Susan Chase*

9.3 CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND APPOINTED SUBCOMMITTEES

The Conservation Commission should be responsible for overseeing the immediate and continued implementation of this Plan. The Conservation Commission should meet annually to review any new public open spaces that may need to be classified in one of the three protection tiers. The Conservation Commission should also prepare a report outlining open space protections for the South Portland Annual Report.

While the Conservation Commission is responsible for ensuring the implementation and management of open space strategies, the strategies outlined in this Plan exceed the work of the volunteer members of the Conservation Commission.

The City Council (with assistance from the OSPC) should appoint three ad-hoc subcommittees to oversee this work. The membership of each subcommittee should be broad and diverse, representing various professional backgrounds. The members of these committees should not be limited to members of the Conservation Commission.

The Conservation Commission should decide the best way to divide the work load and assign subcommittee roles. A potential method to delegating implementation work is provided below.

9.3.1 IMPLEMENTATION SUBCOMMITTEE (TEMPORARY / TASK SPECIFIC)

An initial Implementation Subcommittee would be responsible for reviewing this Plan and assigning roles and appointing members for the various subcommittees. This Committee may include members of the OSPC. This Committee may include:

- Two City staff (representatives from the Department of Planning and Development and Department of Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront).
- Five to seven community representatives, including representatives from the SPLT and the Conservation Commission.

The Implementation Subcommittee would oversee the immediate implementation of the public land tiered protection system. This subcommittee will:

- Lead the classification process of the three-tiered protection system (see Section 4.1).
- Oversee the establishment of conservation easements with the SPLT.
- Appoint members to additional subcommittees (see 9.3.2 and 9.3.3)

9.3.2 OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION SUBCOMMITTEE

(PERMANENT / ON GOING)

An Open Space Acquisition Subcommittee would oversee the long-term management of open space acquisition. In selecting committee members, consideration should be made as to individuals who would be strong liaisons for outreach to private landowners. This Committee should work with appointed City staff and meet regularly with the City manager and the economic development director. This subcommittee will lead:

- Identification of private properties for future acquisition as open space land.
- Outreach to private land owners about their interest in land sale or conservation.
- Conduct evaluations of private properties for open space value.
- Partner with the SPLT in the acquisition of publicly accessible open space land.
- Monitor the Land Bank funding and use.
- Seek out funding strategies for open space acquisition funding.
- Make recommendations for potential acquisition projects to City Council.
- Prepare a report outlining open space acquisitions for the South Portland Annual Report.

9.3.3 ORDINANCE REVISION SUBCOMMITTEE(S)

(TEMPORARY / TASK SPECIFIC)

The Ordinance Revision Subcommittee(s) will focus on the ordinance revisions recommended in this Plan. The ordinance revision work may be distributed to multiple subcommittees if simultaneous work is needed on specific ordinance revisions. The recommended ordinance revision work includes:

- **Land Bank (*Chapter 18 Article VII*)**. Committee to work with City staff and legal counsel to review and revise the Land Bank ordinance (see Section 8.1).
- **Open Space Zoning District (*Chapter 27 Article IV*)**. Committee to work with City staff

and Planning Board to establish an Open Space Zoning District. Revisions include changes to the zoning map and new ordinance language (see Section 4.3).

9.4 ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan in **Table 9.1** summarizes the implementation process, listing the responsible parties, the general time frame for each strategy, and the priority level as either *immediate* or *secondary*. All strategies are important to the fulfillment of the stated vision **Chapter 3** in this Plan; however, the strategies listed as *immediate* represent the steps that should be addressed first in the implementation process. The Action Table includes additional notes guiding implementation of each strategy and the Plan report page number to identify each strategy.

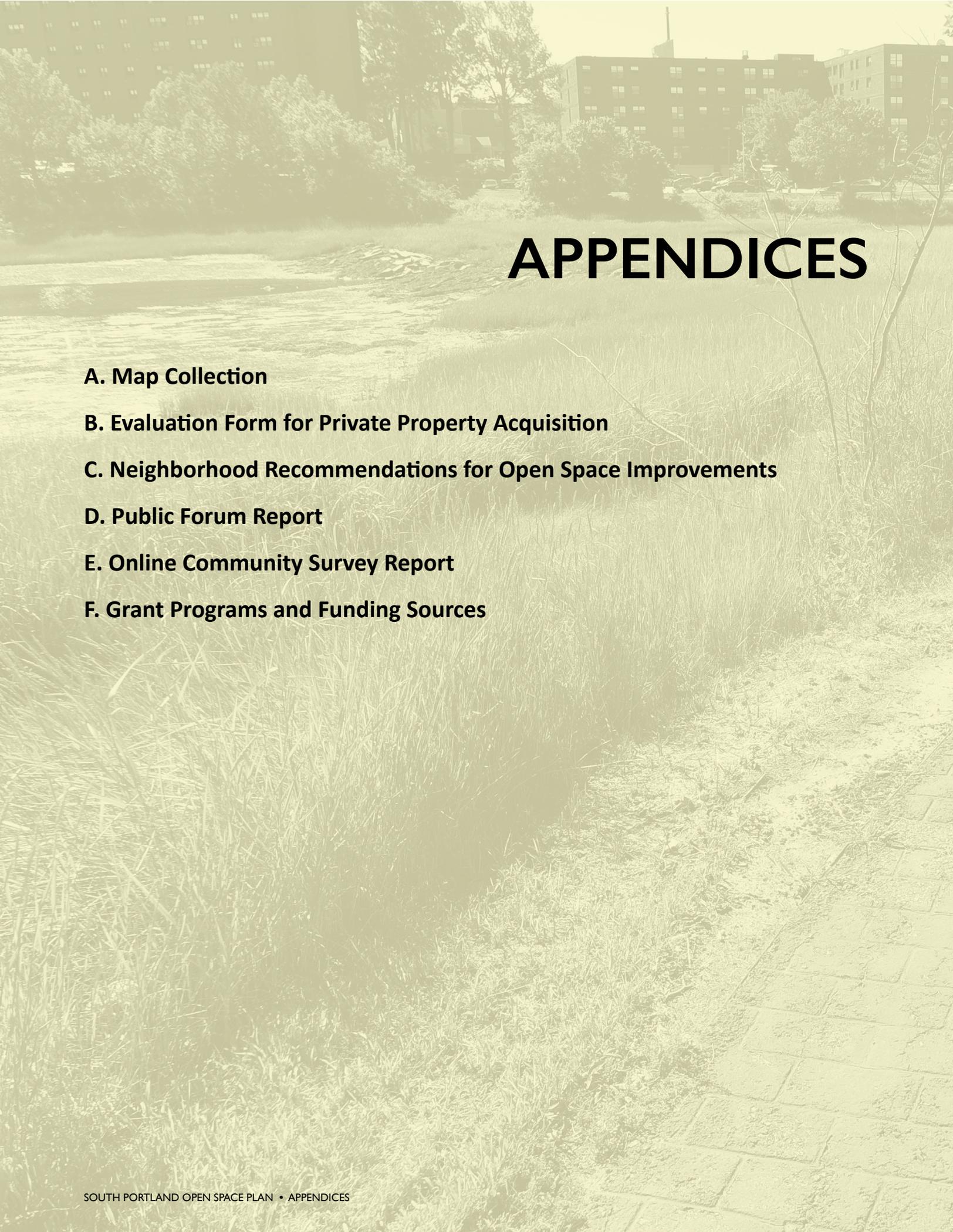


Pope Preserve
Photo by Maggie Burns

TABLE 9.1 ACTION PLAN

| STRATEGY | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | TIME FRAME | PRIORITY | NOTES | PAGE |
|--|---|------------------------|-----------|---|------|
| 4 Protect Existing Open Space | | | | | |
| 4.1 Tiered Protection System for City-owned Lands | City Staff / City Council / CC Subcommittee | Short-Term / Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Initial process may include public review and City Council approval. This work is of highest priority and should start as soon as possible. | 39 |
| 4.2 Maintain a Geospatial Database of Existing Public Lands | City Staff | Long-Term | SECONDARY | Data to be reviewed/updated annually or as new data becomes available. | 45 |
| 4.3 Establish an Open Space Zoning District | City Staff / City Council / CC Subcommittee | Short-Term | IMMEDIATE | Zoning revision process to include public review and City Council approval. | 46 |
| 5 Acquire Additional Open Space | | | | | |
| 5.1 Private Property Acquisition Guidelines | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Establish a committee and organize approach based on recommended guidelines. | 48 |
| 5.2 Acquisition and Conservation Methods | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Reference this glossary when considering acquisition strategies. | 51 |
| 5.3 Partnership Opportunities | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Use this list to establish potential partnerships in the acquisition process. | 53 |
| 6 Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat | | | | | |
| 6.1 Natural Resource Mapping | City Staff | Annual Update | SECONDARY | Data to be reviewed/updated annually or as new data becomes available. | 55 |
| 6.2 Support Efforts in Natural Resource Protection | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Short-Term | SECONDARY | City Staff and CC Subcommittee consider and support the enhancement of environmental protections when opportunities arise. | 56 |
| 6.3 Recognize the Role of Open Space in Climate Resiliency | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Department of Planning and Development to coordinate with Sustainability Office to consider open space in climate resiliency initiatives. | 57 |
| 6.4 Hire a City Arborist | City Manager / Department Heads / CC | Permanent | SECONDARY | City Manager to work with department heads and CC to establish staffing for City Arborist. | 58 |
| 7 Improve Connectivity and Access to Open Space | | | | | |
| 7.1 Improve Open Space Access | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | SECONDARY | Appointed City Staff and CC Subcommittees to keep tabs on opportunities to expand/improve open space access and connectivity. Implementation of recommended strategies will be through various project interventions. | 60 |
| 7.2 Improve Open Space Connectivity | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | SECONDARY | | 62 |
| 7.3 Strengthen Planning Partnerships | City Staff / CC Subcommittees | Long-Term | SECONDARY | | 65 |
| 8 Finance the Protection and Acquisition of Open Space | | | | | |
| 8.1 Revisions to Land Bank Ordinance (<i>Chapter 18 Article VII</i>) | City Staff / City Council / CC Subcommittee | Short-Term | IMMEDIATE | Establish a committee and work with City Staff to recommend ordinance revisions to City Council. | 67 |
| 8.2 Expand Financial Strategies | CC Subcommittee | Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | Reference this glossary when considering how to increase funding for specific open space projects or general funding. | 69 |
| 9 Implementation | | | | | |
| 9.1 Open Space Plan Adoption | City Council | One-Time Vote | IMMEDIATE | City Council to adopt Plan as an amendment to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. | 72 |
| 9.2 Appointment of City Staff | City Manager / Department Heads | Permanent | IMMEDIATE | City Manager to work with department heads to establish staffing for open space management. | 72 |
| 9.3 Conservation Commission and Appointed Subcommittees | City Staff / CC / OSPC | Short-Term / Long-Term | IMMEDIATE | City Council to appoint: 1. Implementation Subcommittee 2. Open Space Acquisition Subcommittee 3. Ordinance Revision Subcommittee(s) | 73 |

CC = Conservation Commission OSPC = Open Space Planning Committee



APPENDICES

A. Map Collection

B. Evaluation Form for Private Property Acquisition

C. Neighborhood Recommendations for Open Space Improvements

D. Public Forum Report

E. Online Community Survey Report

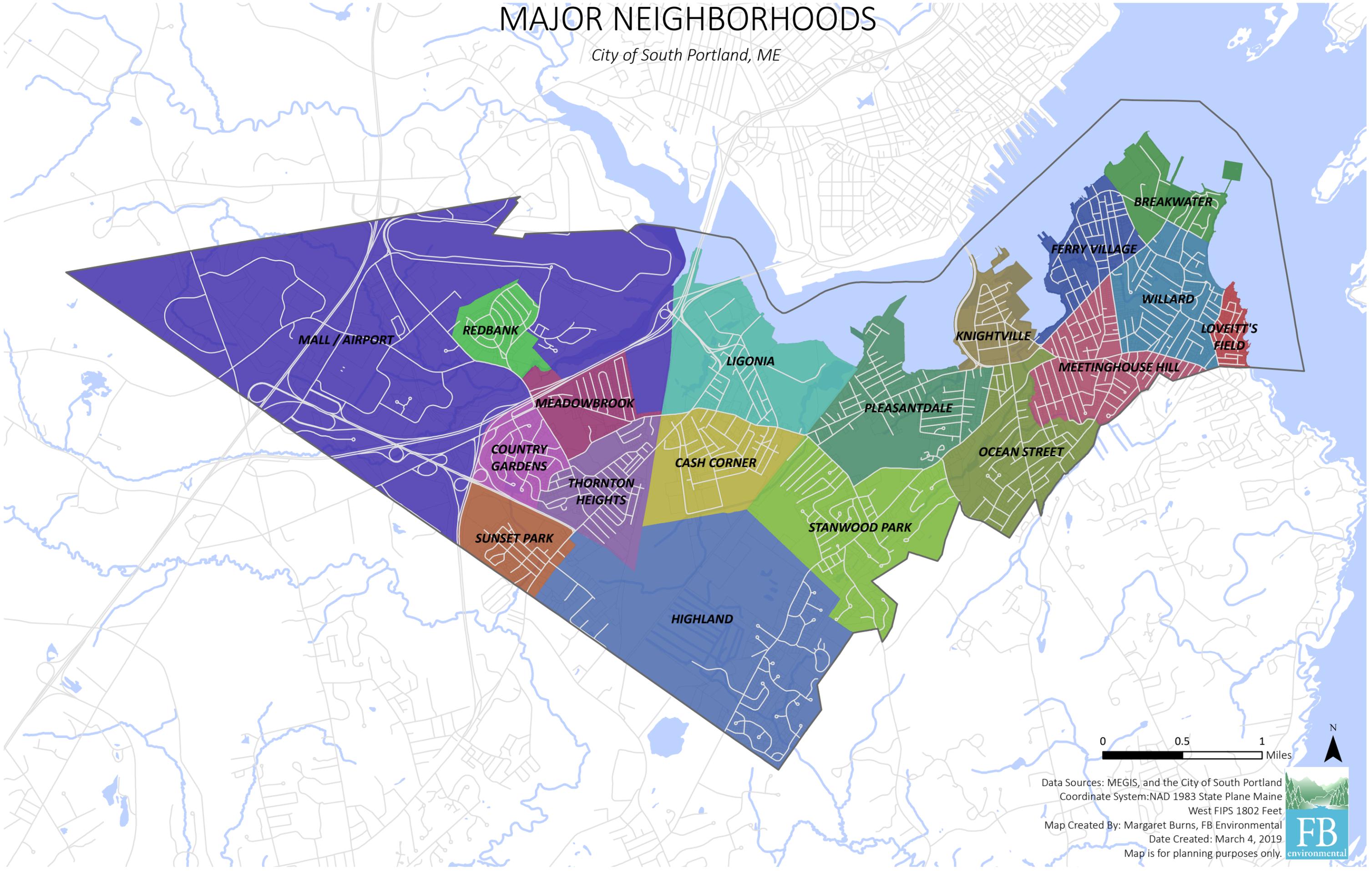
F. Grant Programs and Funding Sources



APPENDIX A MAP COLLECTION

MAJOR NEIGHBORHOODS

City of South Portland, ME

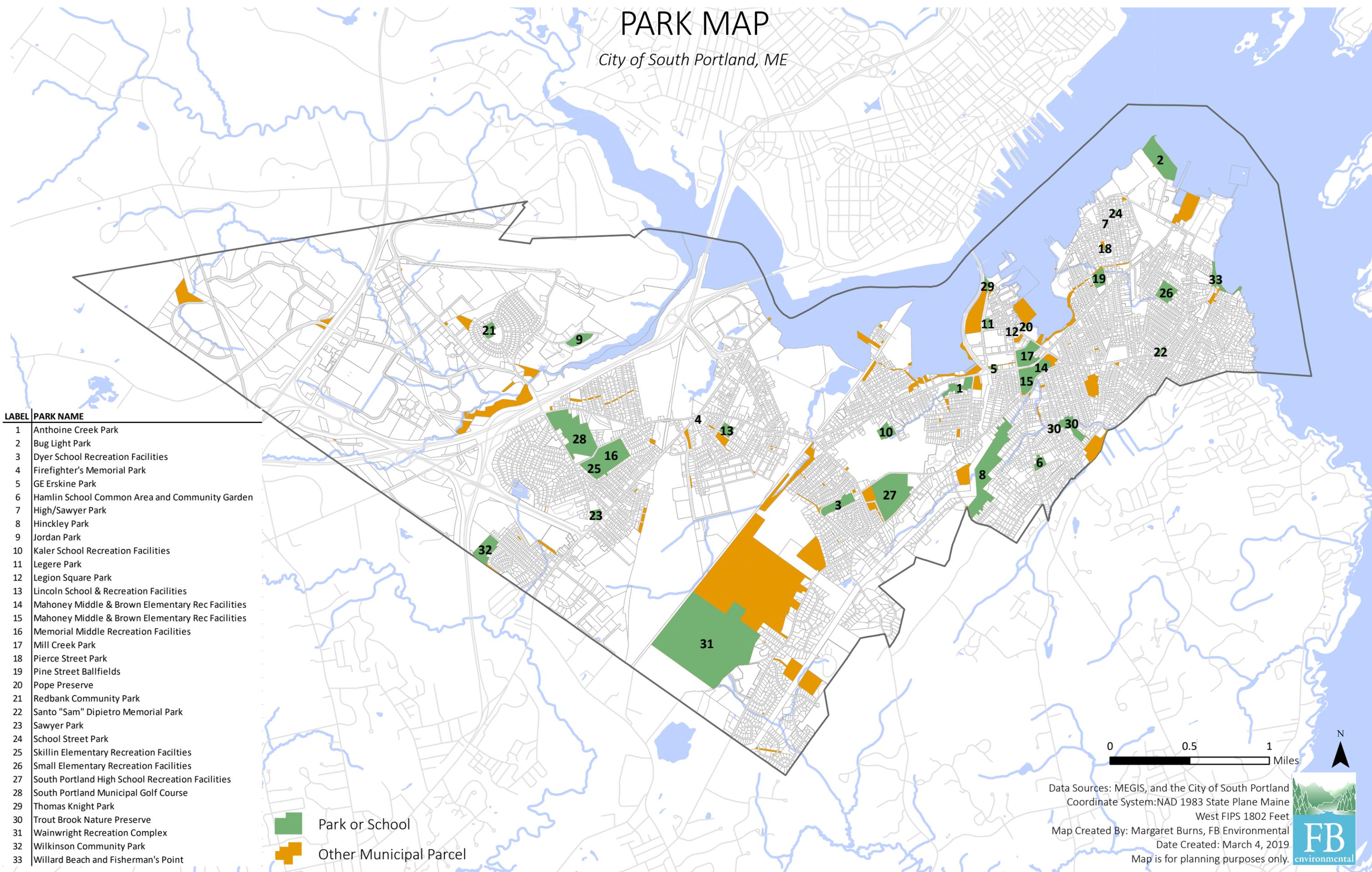


Data Sources: MEGIS, and the City of South Portland
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane Maine
West FIPS 1802 Feet
Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.



PARK MAP

City of South Portland, ME



| LABEL | PARK NAME |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Anthoine Creek Park |
| 2 | Bug Light Park |
| 3 | Dyer School Recreation Facilities |
| 4 | Firefighter's Memorial Park |
| 5 | GE Erskine Park |
| 6 | Hamlin School Common Area and Community Garden |
| 7 | High/Sawyer Park |
| 8 | Hinckley Park |
| 9 | Jordan Park |
| 10 | Kaler School Recreation Facilities |
| 11 | Legere Park |
| 12 | Legion Square Park |
| 13 | Lincoln School & Recreation Facilities |
| 14 | Mahoney Middle & Brown Elementary Rec Facilities |
| 15 | Mahoney Middle & Brown Elementary Rec Facilities |
| 16 | Memorial Middle Recreation Facilities |
| 17 | Mill Creek Park |
| 18 | Pierce Street Park |
| 19 | Pine Street Ballfields |
| 20 | Pope Preserve |
| 21 | Redbank Community Park |
| 22 | Santo "Sam" Dipietro Memorial Park |
| 23 | Sawyer Park |
| 24 | School Street Park |
| 25 | Skillin Elementary Recreation Facilities |
| 26 | Small Elementary Recreation Facilities |
| 27 | South Portland High School Recreation Facilities |
| 28 | South Portland Municipal Golf Course |
| 29 | Thomas Knight Park |
| 30 | Trout Brook Nature Preserve |
| 31 | Wainwright Recreation Complex |
| 32 | Wilkinson Community Park |
| 33 | Willard Beach and Fisherman's Point |

 Park or School
 Other Municipal Parcel

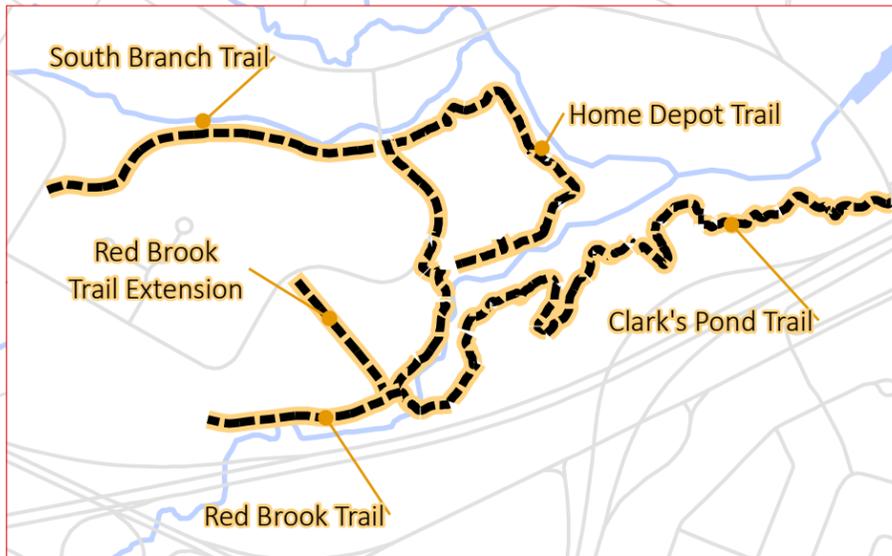
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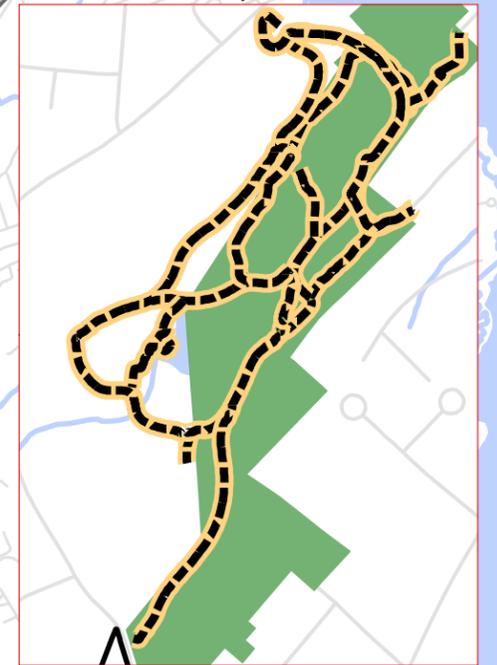
TRAILS

City of South Portland, ME

1. West End Trail Network



2. Hinckley Park Inset



Long Creek Trail

East Coast Greenway

Spring Point Shoreway

Trail
Park or School

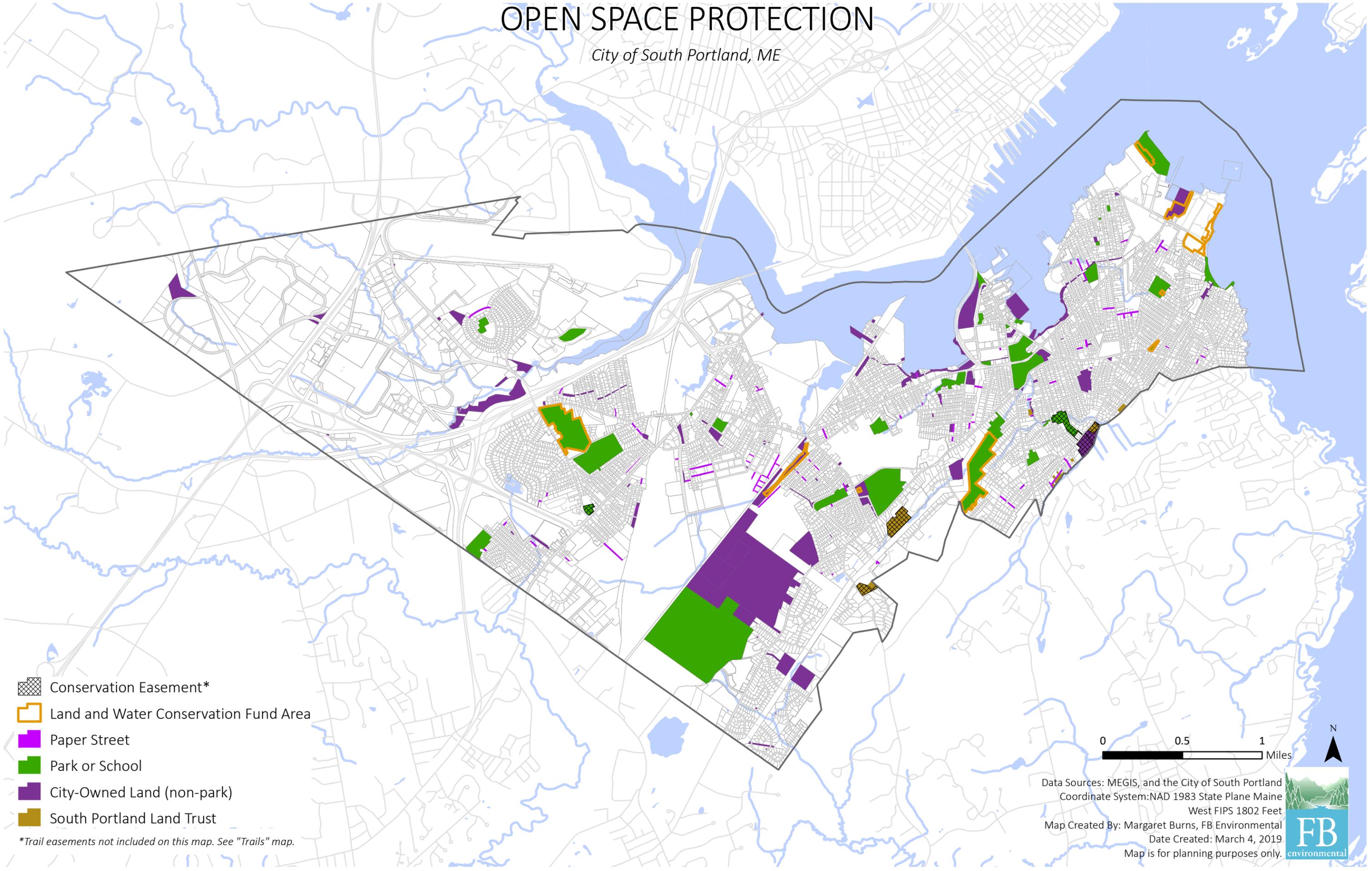


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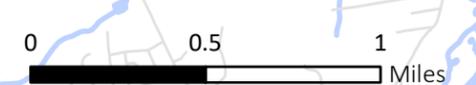
OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

City of South Portland, ME



-  Conservation Easement*
-  Land and Water Conservation Fund Area
-  Paper Street
-  Park or School
-  City-Owned Land (non-park)
-  South Portland Land Trust

*Trail easements not included on this map. See "Trails" map.

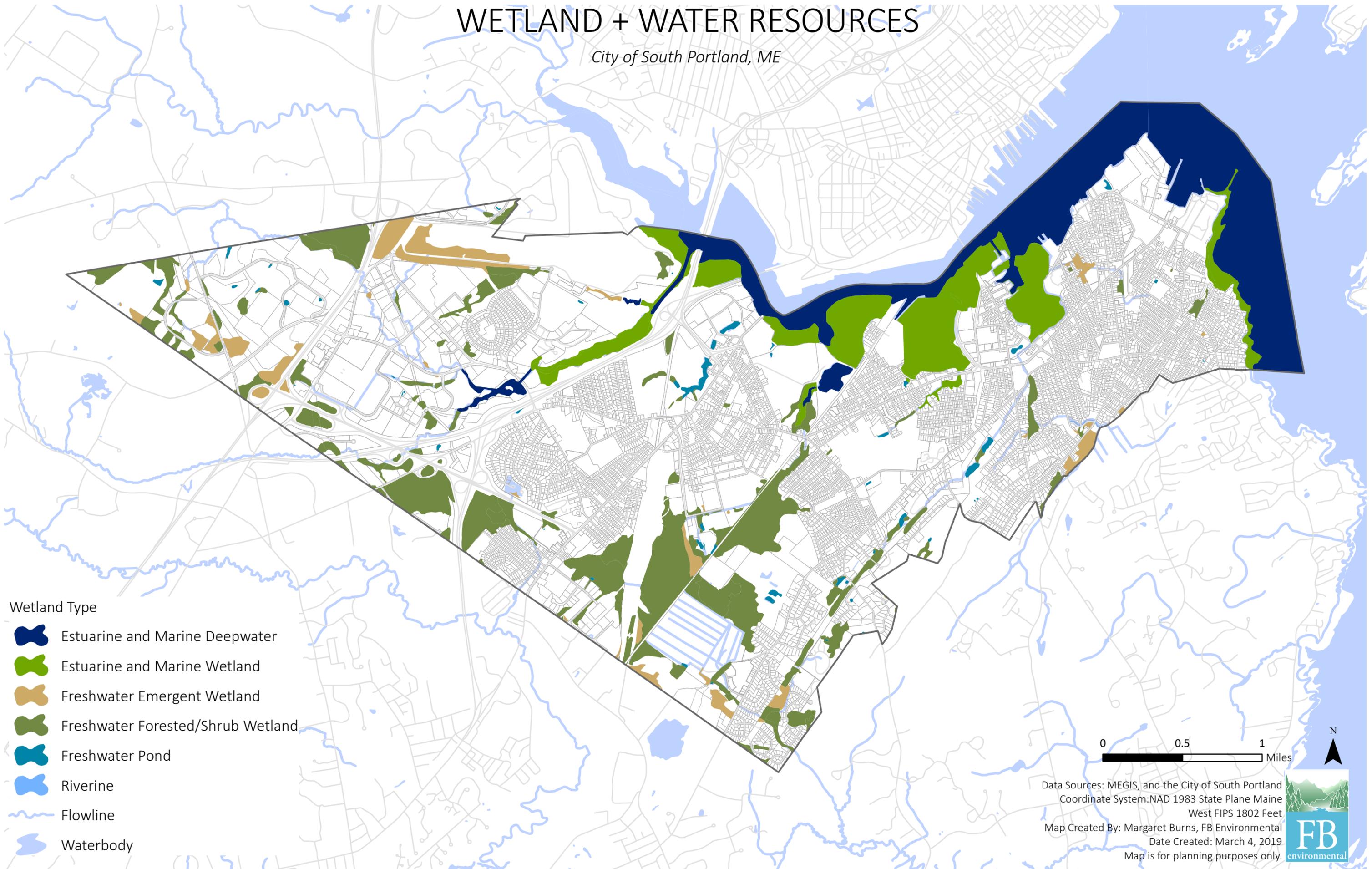


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West FIPS 1802 Feet
Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.



WETLAND + WATER RESOURCES

City of South Portland, ME



Wetland Type

-  Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
-  Estuarine and Marine Wetland
-  Freshwater Emergent Wetland
-  Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
-  Freshwater Pond
-  Riverine
-  Flowline
-  Waterbody

0 0.5 1 Miles

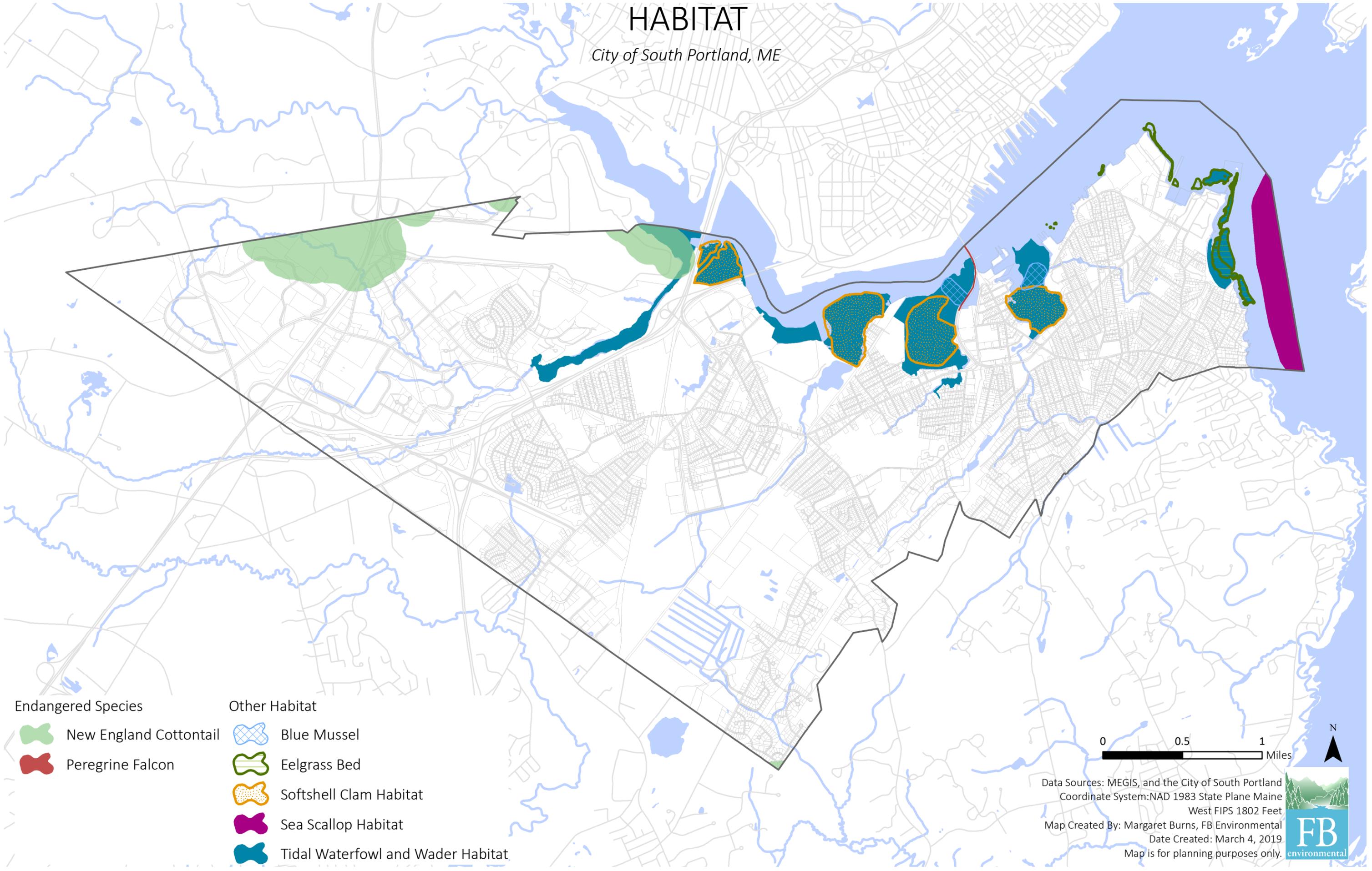


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West FIPS 1802 Feet
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HABITAT

City of South Portland, ME



Endangered Species

-  New England Cottontail
-  Peregrine Falcon

Other Habitat

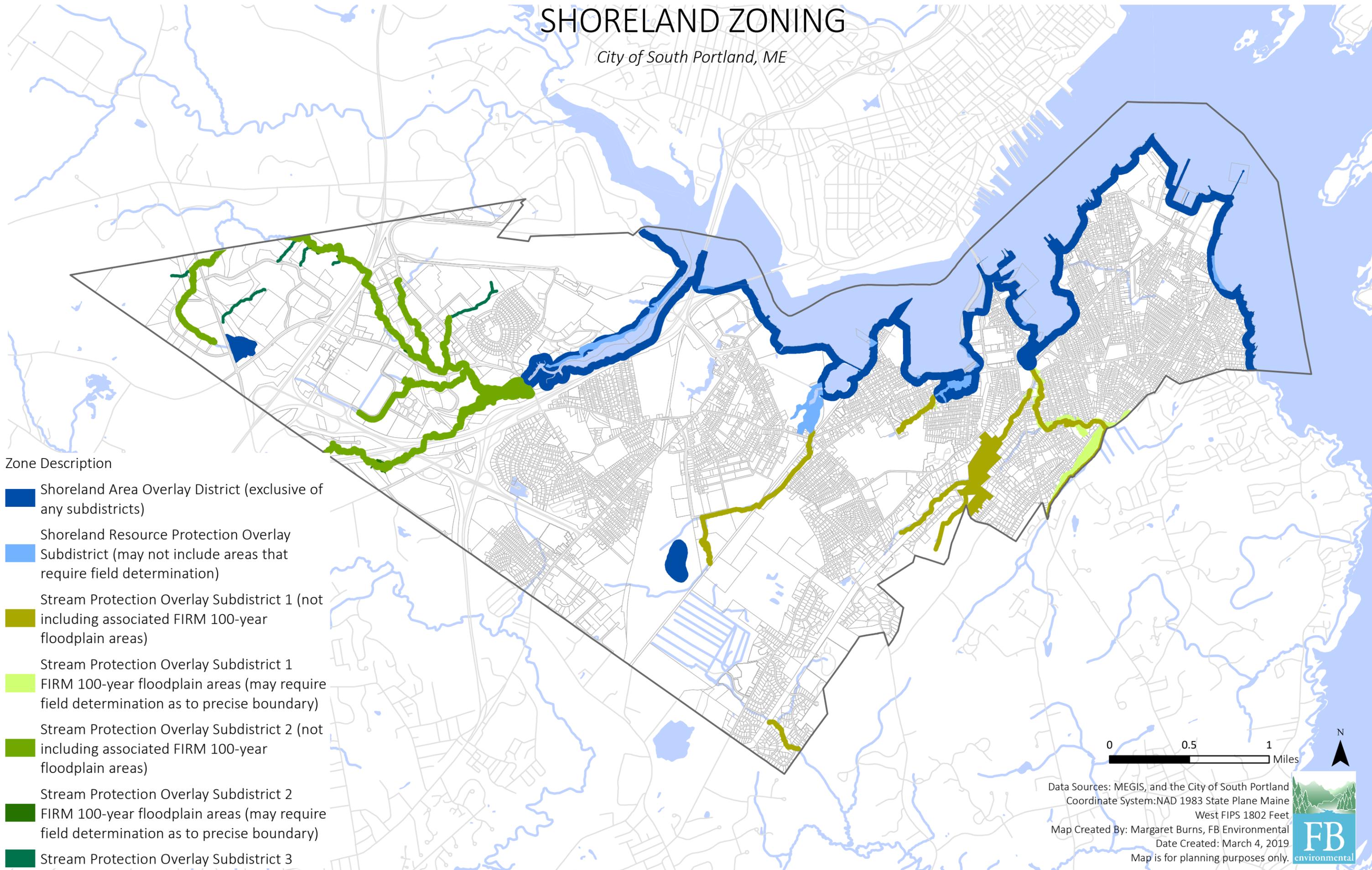
-  Blue Mussel
-  Eelgrass Bed
-  Softshell Clam Habitat
-  Sea Scallop Habitat
-  Tidal Waterfowl and Wader Habitat

Data Sources: MEGIS, and the City of South Portland
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane Maine
West FIPS 1802 Feet
Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.



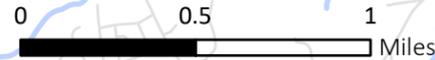
SHORELAND ZONING

City of South Portland, ME



Zone Description

- Shoreland Area Overlay District (exclusive of any subdistricts)
- Shoreland Resource Protection Overlay Subdistrict (may not include areas that require field determination)
- Stream Protection Overlay Subdistrict 1 (not including associated FIRM 100-year floodplain areas)
- Stream Protection Overlay Subdistrict 1 FIRM 100-year floodplain areas (may require field determination as to precise boundary)
- Stream Protection Overlay Subdistrict 2 (not including associated FIRM 100-year floodplain areas)
- Stream Protection Overlay Subdistrict 2 FIRM 100-year floodplain areas (may require field determination as to precise boundary)
- Stream Protection Overlay Subdistrict 3

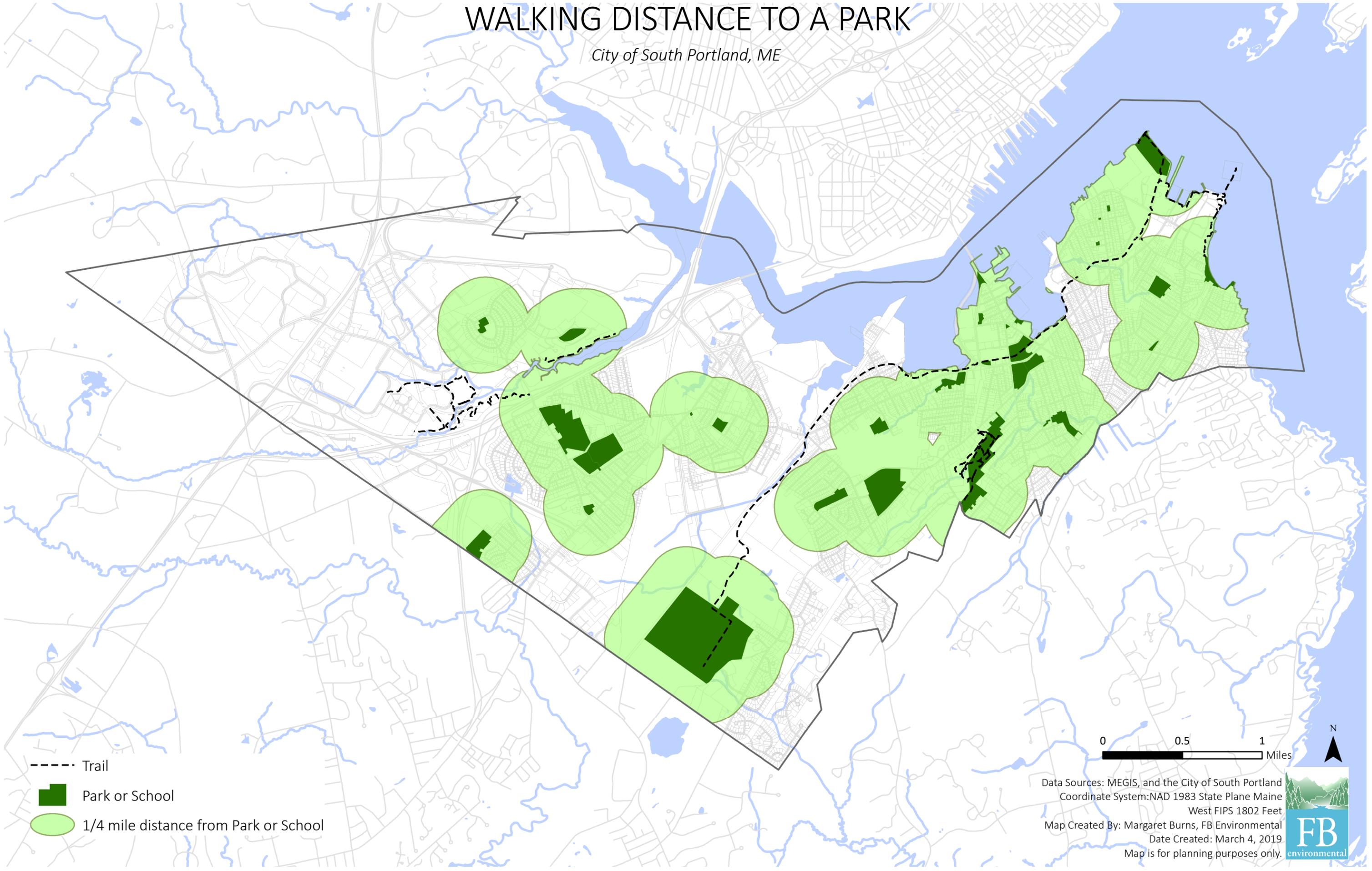


Data Sources: MEGIS, and the City of South Portland
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane Maine
West FIPS 1802 Feet
Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.



WALKING DISTANCE TO A PARK

City of South Portland, ME



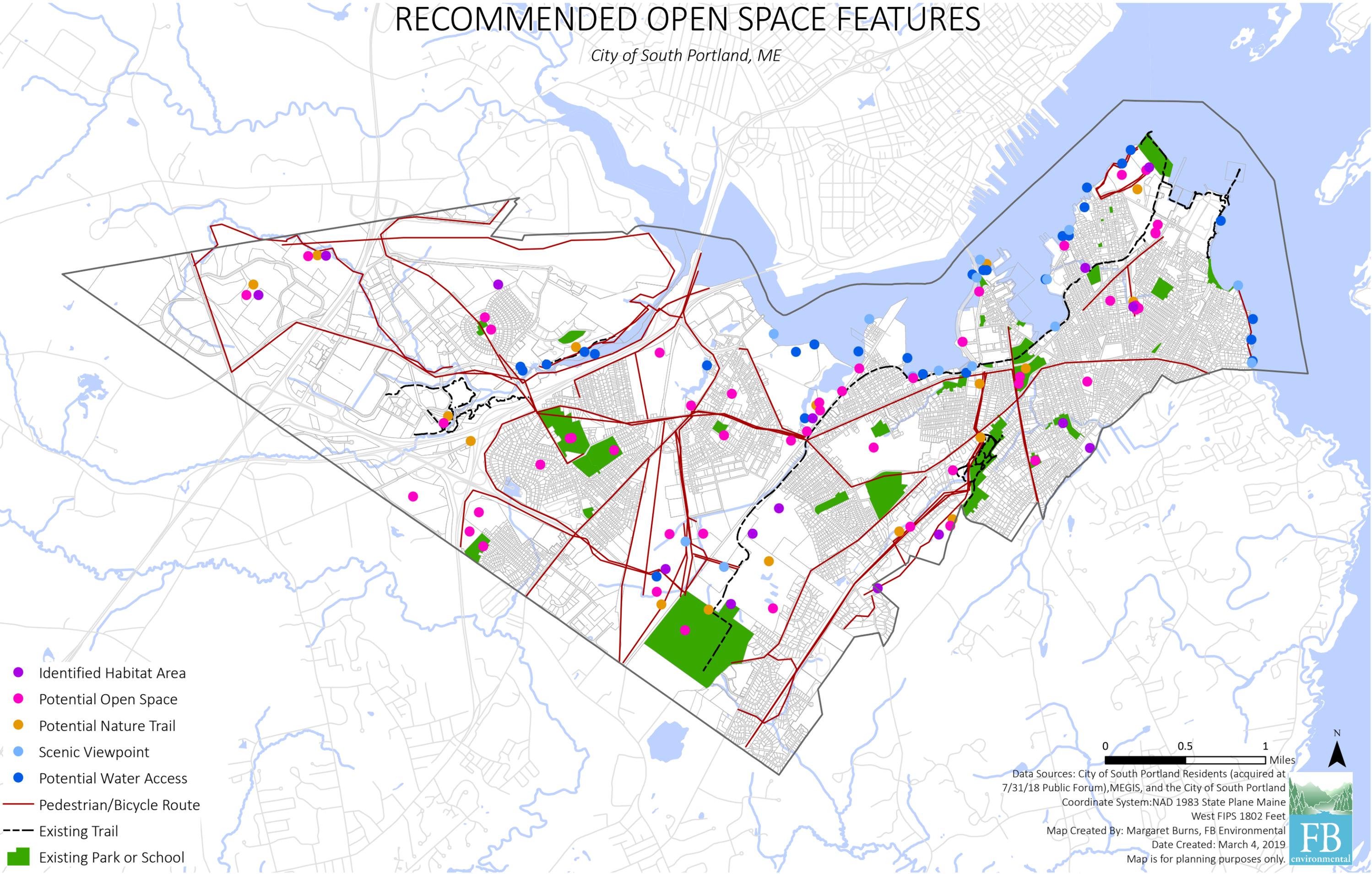
- Trail
- Park or School
- 1/4 mile distance from Park or School

Data Sources: MEGIS, and the City of South Portland
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane Maine
West FIPS 1802 Feet
Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.



RECOMMENDED OPEN SPACE FEATURES

City of South Portland, ME



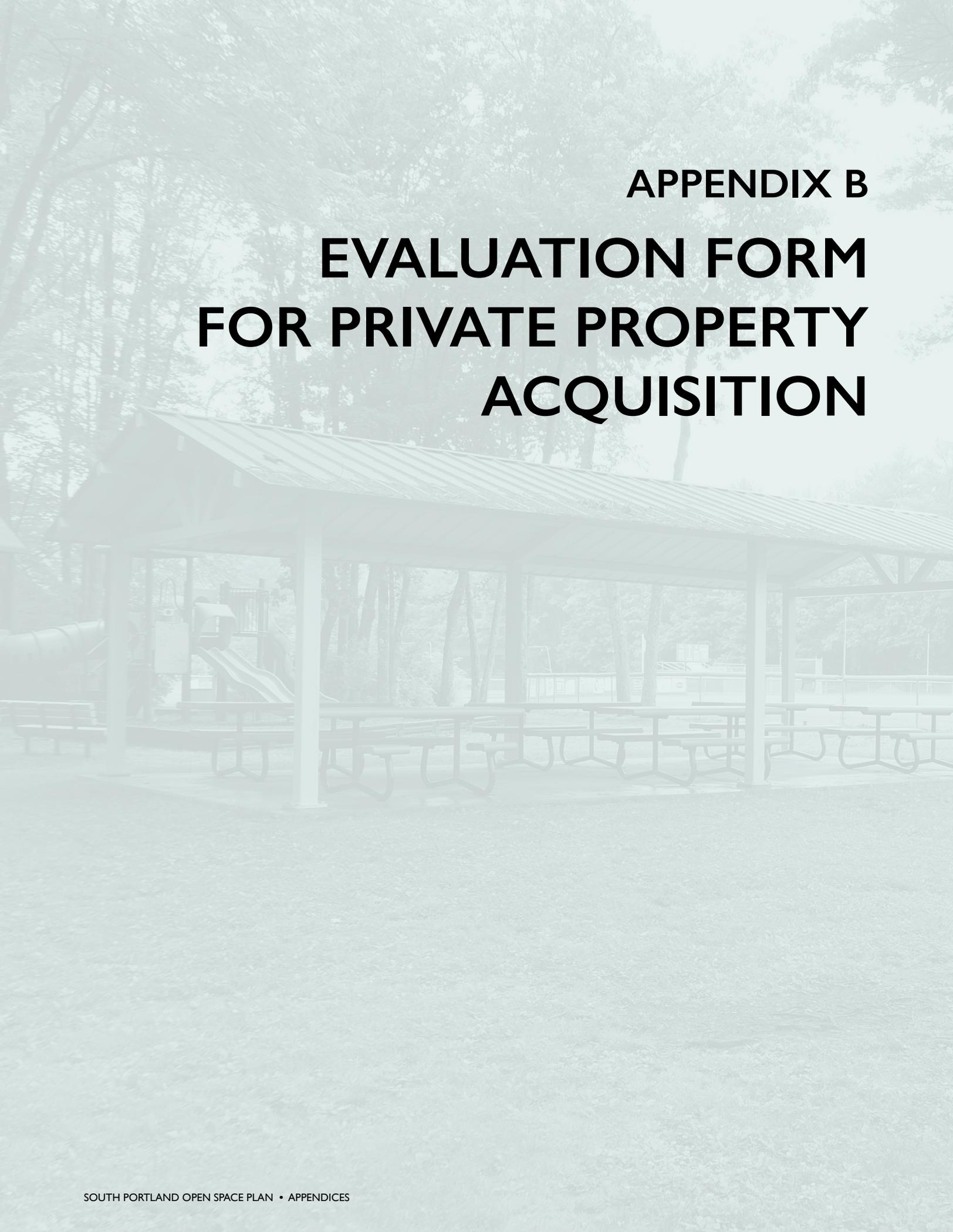
- Identified Habitat Area
- Potential Open Space
- Potential Nature Trail
- Scenic Viewpoint
- Potential Water Access
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Route
- - - Existing Trail
- Existing Park or School

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: City of South Portland Residents (acquired at 7/31/18 Public Forum), MEGIS, and the City of South Portland
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane Maine West FIPS 1802 Feet

Map Created By: Margaret Burns, FB Environmental
Date Created: March 4, 2019
Map is for planning purposes only.





APPENDIX B

**EVALUATION FORM
FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY
ACQUISITION**

EVALUATION FORM FOR PRIVATE LAND ACQUISITION

| GENERAL INFORMATION ON PRIVATE LAND | NOTES |
|---|-------|
| BASIC INFORMATION | |
| Map Block Lot | |
| Property Address | |
| Zoning District | |
| Parcel Size | |
| Undeveloped acreage of parcel | |
| Parcel Neighborhood | |
| Current use of the property | |
| Describe physical conditions of property (development, undeveloped, vegetation, impervious surfaces, etc.) | |
| OPEN SPACE INFORMATION | |
| As public open space, is the parcel a <i>Natural Area</i> or <i>Developed Park Land</i> | |
| Potential use/value of property if acquired as public open space | |
| What type of open space is in close proximity to the private parcel (type, proximity, protected status, connectivity) | |

VALUE & DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

| | |
|--|--|
| Describe the development potential of the property | |
| Assessed value of property | |
| Anticipated market value of property | |

PURPOSE

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Purpose for this evaluation | |
|-----------------------------|--|

PROPERTY OWNER

| |
|--------------|
| NOTES |
|--------------|

OWNER INFORMATION

| | |
|--|--|
| Property Owner | |
| Property Owner Contact (email, phone, address) | |
| Owner Contact (email, phone, address) | |
| Has the owner been contacted? (by whom, date) | |
| Does the owner have interest in preserving the land as open space? | |
| Does the owner have interest in developing the land? If so, in what timeframe? | |
| What price has the owner requested in potential property acquisition? | |

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITION

| | NOTES | HIGH | MED | LOW |
|--|-------|------|-----|-----|
| PROVIDE PUBLIC ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE FOR ALL RESIDENTS | | | | |
| • Is the property accessible via public transportation? | | | | |
| • Are any portions of the property ADA accessible? | | | | |
| • Does the property provide sufficient parking to support anticipated open space use? | | | | |
| • Is the property accessible to low income housing? | | | | |
| • Does this property create a ten-minute walking distance for an area that would otherwise not have a park within a ten-minute walk? | | | | |
| • Does the property have any existing recreation infrastructure (trails, lawns, etc.)? | | | | |
| • Does the property have potential for trail connections to neighboring open spaces? | | | | |
| • Does the property have access to sidewalks or bike lanes? | | | | |
| • Does the property support any of the recommended connectivity strategies in the 2019 Open Space Plan or any other planning document? | | | | |
| • Is the acquisition of the property an opportunity to improve open space connectivity? | | | | |
| • Does the property provide open space access to a neighborhood that otherwise has limited access to open space? | | | | |
| • Does the property provide a potential key linkage between existing open spaces? | | | | |
| PRESERVE & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES | | | | |
| • Is the property part of a large undeveloped block of land? | | | | |
| • Is the property contiguous with other undeveloped private land? | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the property contiguous with any public open space lands? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the property large enough to support significant habitat or protect natural resources? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property help protect prime greenways or wildlife corridors? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property provide habitat for any unique, threatened, or endangered species? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect critical habitat or an adjacent buffer zone for this habitat (sp. Blue mussel habitat to the east and west of Knightville, Eelgrass beds northeast of Willard Beach, softshell clam beds along the mouth of the Fore River, and Tidal Waterfowl and Wader habitat across much of the coastline)? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the property a critical corridor for species migration? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect land of geological or landscape value of regional significance? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect drinking water sources? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect surface water from stormwater erosion or enhance buffer zones to surface water? This includes small ponds and tributaries as well as the Fore River and Casco Bay. | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect wetlands of special significance? | | | | |
| ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND LIVABILITY OF THE CITY | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect anything of significant historical or cultural value? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property provide educational value to the community through the use of outdoor classroom space, signage, etc.? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would a potential recreational resource be unique to the neighborhood and community this property serves? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property protect scenic viewsheds or improve the aesthetic character of the area? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the property provide open space in an area of the city that is lacking in other open space? | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property provide water access (ocean, river, beaches)? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property provide access to any other points of interest? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would preservation of the property enhance the quality of life for any members of the community? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been community input or support for the acquisition of this property? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the property likely to be developed in the short term? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the landowner willing and interested in preserving the property as open space? (detailed information above in the landowner section) | | | | |
| PROTECT THE CITY FROM POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY-WIDE CLIMATE ACTION & ADAPTATION PLAN | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property protect critical infrastructure from rising sea levels? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property provide key flood protection through marshes or wetlands? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property serve as access to City stormwater utilities that otherwise would be inaccessible? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does acquiring the property as public open space assist in any other specified climate change mitigation or adaptation activities (i.e., protect critical infrastructure)? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property provide trees for carbon sequestration? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property provide/create natural buffers for flood or erosion controls? | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does acquiring the property as public open space assist in any other specified climate change mitigation or adaptation activities? | | | | |

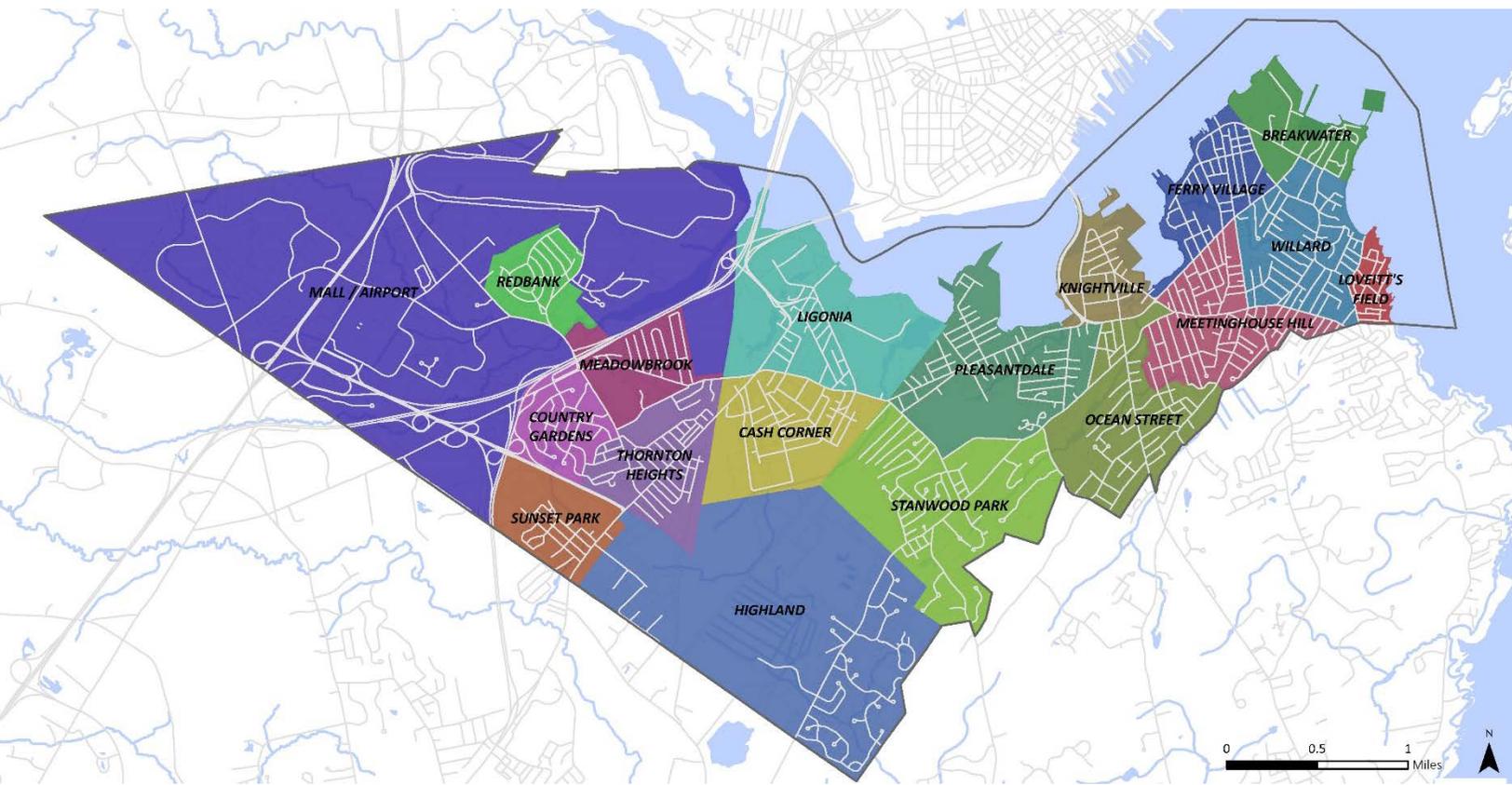
The background of the page is a faded, light green-tinted photograph of a park. It shows several large trees with dense foliage, a wooden bench, and a dog on a leash in the foreground. In the distance, there are some buildings and a parking lot with a few cars.

APPENDIX C

**NEIGHBORHOOD
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR OPEN SPACE
IMPROVEMENTS**

NEIGHBORHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

This strategy provides succinct bulleted summaries by neighborhood residents for improved Open Space Connectivity in South Portland. As open space opportunities are evaluated, the following neighborhood recommendations should be considered.



Breakwater

- Preserve Bug Light Park.
 - Increase public water access.
 - Purchase 22 acres behind Bug Light Park.
 - Expand into old shipyards and remove oil tanks and chimneys on the piers.
 - Add connector between Ferry Village and Bug Light Park.
- Consider scenic viewsheds in future development.

Willard

- Add green space in center of Willard Square intersection.
- Maintain playgrounds at Willard Beach.
- Revise dog rules at Willard Beach.
- Enforce dog rules at Willard Beach.
- Improve accessibility to Sam DiPietro Park (current crosswalk has low visibility and traffic is fast).
- Add trees, a water fountain, inward facing benches at Sam DiPietro Park.
- Preserve Spring Point Shoreway as scenic viewpoint and potential future water access.
- Preserve the ‘Piggery’, which is undeveloped private land, was cited by many as an important open space for family use and to preserve wildlife. The ‘Piggery’ should be evaluated in accordance with **Section 5.1**, and may be a high priority for the City to purchase and maintain as open space. This site should be considered for maintaining existing trails, establishment of a community garden, and wildlife preservation. Residents have emphasized the desire for this to be maintained as a natural green space, as other open spaces can serve as sports recreation areas.
- Preserve paper streets. *NOTE: There are limited development rights in paper streets and the City has extremely limited control over paper streets.*

Ferry Village

- Improve water access and scenic waterfront vistas.
- Clean-up trash at Davidson Beach and West High Street Beach.
- Improve safety of road crossings on East Coast Greenway.
- Add open space land adjacent to the East Coast Greenway.

Loveitt’s Field

- Improve access to Danforth Cove – specifically access to private beaches.
- Create a trail along the coast to increase access.

Meetinghouse Hill

- The most important open spaces in the Meetinghouse Hill neighborhood identified by the public include: Trout Brook Nature Preserve, the open space at the corner of Ocean Street (Route 77) and Sawyer Street (behind the City office), the previous public works facility on O’Neil Street, the open space located between 6th, Clemens, Sprague, and Mussey Streets.
- Mussey Street is an opportunity for improved wildlife habitat and use as a community garden space.
- Improve safety and visibility of Cottage Road crosswalks.
- Increase pedestrian access between the South Portland Public Library, Otto’s Pizza, and the Meetinghouse Hill residential area.
- Reduce plant height at the corner of Mitchell Road and Hillside Avenue.

Ocean Street

- Improve Hinckley Park, a valuable and well used open space:
 - Add a fenced-in dog park and dog run adjacent to the community garden.
 - Enforce dog leash laws and dog waste clean-up.
 - Improve site erosion.
- Preserve former Hamlin School field and the existing Hamlin School Community Garden (the open space at the corner of Ocean Street and Sawyer Street discussed above), as well as the Mahoney Middle School field and Brown School recreation facilities.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycling access (specifically for children) and increase crosswalks in the Brown School neighborhood.
- Add an open space corridor between the Pleasantdale and Ocean Street neighborhoods.

Knightville

- Open spaces important to the Knightville neighborhood include Thomas Knight Park, Mill Creek Park, and Legere Park.
- Increase lighting and cut back shrubbery at Thomas Knight Park to improve safety.
- Expand access to docks under Casco Bay Bridge.
- Consider hosting vendors and events at Thomas Knight Park.
- Add a playground to Mill Creek Park.
- Add trash cans to Waterman Drive.
- Create park at the current location of John's Service Auto Body Shop or Paulin's Tire and Auto Care on Broadway Street; increase pedestrian crosswalks in this area.
- Improve crosswalks along Broadway, specifically to Mill Creek Park, Mahoney Middle School Field, and Brown School Recreation Facilities.
- Add protected bicycle lane across Casco Bay Bridge to improve safety.

Pleasantdale

- Preserve open space bordering the Sprague Portland Pipeline Facilities Tank Farm.
- Maintain Mildred Street Pond (i.e. trash cleanup) and increase safety, as it is an important location for nature preservation – especially birding—and good for family use.
- Connect the trail from South Kelsey Street along the Anthoine Creek to the Kaler School.
- Add a fenced dog park to the land in front of the oil tanks near Campbell's Market; *NOTE: This is private land owned by the Portland Pipeline Company.*
- There may be open space opportunities behind the Evergreen Credit Union off Broadway (access to the small pond behind the building and the potential for a boat launch access to the harbor); this point on the shoreline was also noted as a scenic viewpoint.

Stanwood Park

- The Stanwood Park neighborhood has several locations along its southeastern side, off of Highland Avenue, which have potential open space value for nature preserves.
- Expand trails and conserved open space in Dow's Woods.
- Preserve the undeveloped watershed boundary along the border between South Portland and Cape Elizabeth.
- Fickett Street contains small parcels of residential land which neighboring landowners could work collaboratively to establish open space connectivity.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access on Fickett Street and at the bridge adjacent to Dock's Seafood and Amato's.

Ligonia

- The rear of Forest City Cemetery has potential water access.
- Explore acquisition of land adjacent to the east side of the cemetery for open space and natural resource preservation; this area is currently vacant commercial space.
- Barberry Woods has no public access; Barberry Creek access could connect to Forest City Cemetery.
- Improve connectivity to the East Coast Greenway.
- Calvary Cemetery also has open space and water access potential; the woods in Calvary Cemetery could serve as a green space.

Cash Corner

- Important existing open space identified by the public included the Lincoln School recreational facilities.
- Potential open space located in the area around Evans Street and Broadway Avenue.
- Add a boardwalk to the marsh area to connect Cash Corner and Wainwright Farms Recreation Complex (potentially starting at Rumery Street).
- There is a lack of safe, straight routes to access the east end of the City; crosswalks with flashing lights could improve walkability to open spaces.

Highland

- Wainwright Farms Recreation Complex was identified as an important existing open space for nature preservation, scenic viewpoints, and recreation. Suggestions to improve this space include adding lighting to the access routes to the Greenbelt to make it safer (e.g., behind the fields), expansion of the park's facilities and improving the playground (specifically, adding a splashpad).
- Improve access to Wainwright Farms Recreation Complex from the east side through Rigby Yard (pedestrian and bicycle route); connecting the gap in the Eastern Trail between Wainwright Farms and Scarborough would increase connectivity between open spaces.

Sunset Park

- Prioritize Wilkinson Park for preservation.
- Improve safety and accessibility of bicycle lanes on Main Street near Sunset Park.

Thornton Heights

- Identified important open spaces include the South Portland Municipal Golf Course and the green space of Memorial Middle School.
- Preservation of the open space if Memorial Middle School is moved/consolidated; expansion/conversion of the South Portland Municipal Golf Course into open space including construction of nature trails and recreation areas for activities such as disc golf.
- The parcel at 611 Main Street is an existing open space with potential to be managed as a park.
NOTE: Following the Open Space Public Forum, the sale of St. John's Church at 611 Main Street to the South Portland Housing Authority was completed for development with 40 housing units.
- Improve access to the Greenbelt and Clark's Pond Trails.

Country Gardens

- Improve access and safety to Clark's Pond Trail and Long Creek Trail; Clark's Pond Trail is not consistently safe and it is difficult to walk there due to road design and traffic, despite being close to the neighborhood; increased use may improve the safety in this area.
- Clark's Pond Trail is not bicycle-friendly, as there are stairs in the area by I-295; connecting Veteran's Bridge to the Clark's Pond area could improve the pedestrian experience.

Meadowbrook

- Identified important open spaces including Clark's Pond Trail and the South Portland Municipal Golf Course.
- Improve access to the Clark's Pond Trail.

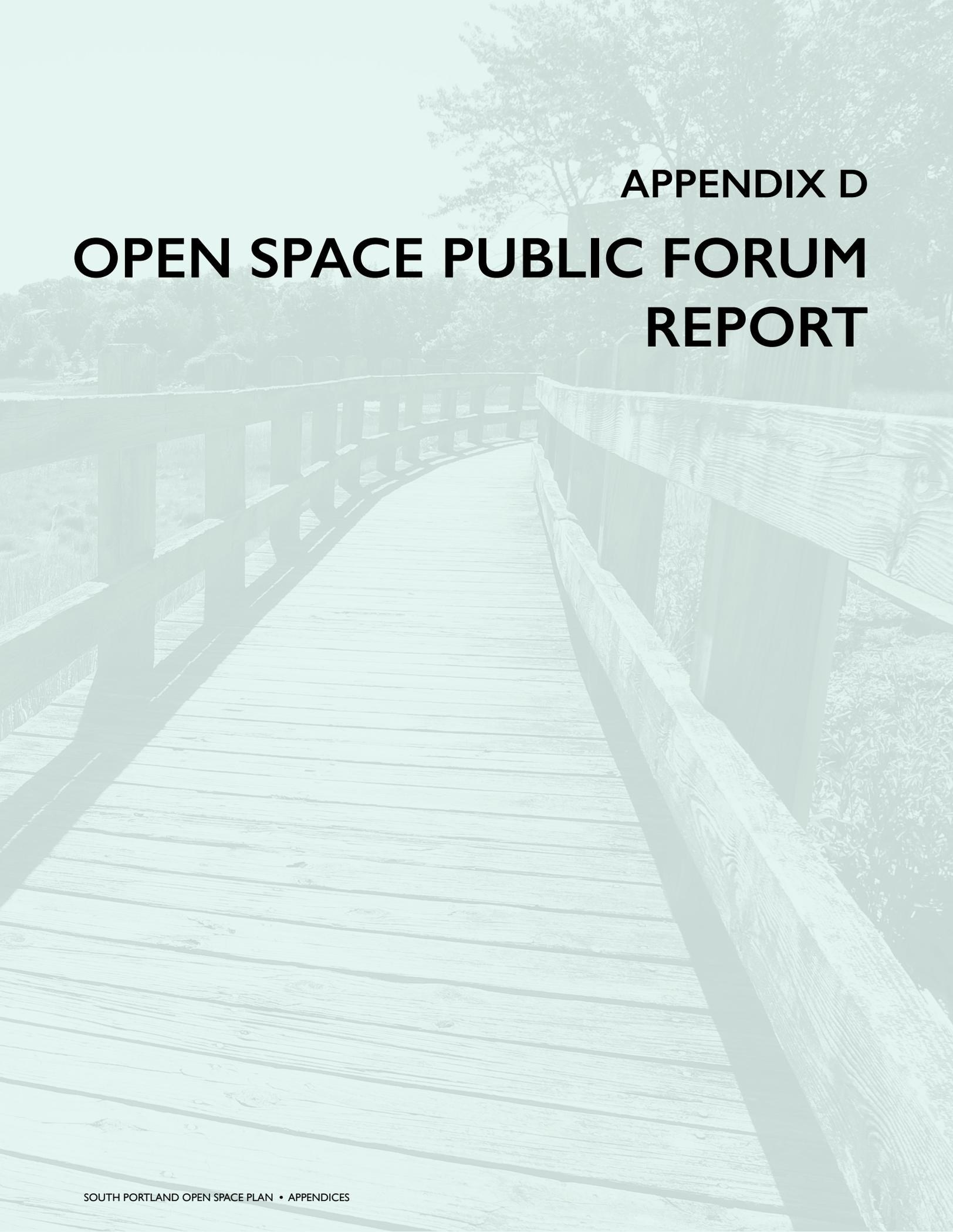
Redbank

- The Redbank Community Park was identified as the most important open space.
- There is opportunity to add a community garden to the Redbank Community Park.
- Improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists in the Country Gardens Neighborhood and to the local schools.

Mall/Airport

- Identified important open spaces including Jordan Park, the Long Creek Trail, Clark's Pond Trail, and Sable Oaks Country Club and Golf Course; *NOTE: Following the Open Space Public Forum, closure of the Sable Oaks Country Club was announced, this property is slated for development.*
- Improve the trail along Long Creek to the Fore River with a canoe and kayak drop-off ramp at the Long Creek pump station.
- Create natural recreational space for multiple ages and interests at Sable Oaks Golf Course¹.
- Improve accessibility to the Maine Mall and the Portland Jetport (Airport) via bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways.

¹Sable Oaks has closed following the public input session but prior to the development of this final plan document.

A photograph of a wooden boardwalk with railings, curving through a park-like setting with trees and grass. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent light blue filter.

APPENDIX D

OPEN SPACE PUBLIC FORUM REPORT

SOUTH PORTLAND OPEN SPACE PLANNING PUBLIC FORUM

Tuesday, July 31, 2018
6:30 – 8:30 pm
Community Center Senior Wing
21 Nelson Road, South Portland

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. Purpose
2. Forum Agenda
3. Format & Participation
4. Small Group Activities
5. Small Group Responses
6. Neighborhood Comment Cards

I. PURPOSE

This forum served as a point of introduction of the South Portland Open Space Planning Project and the Open Space Planning Committee (OSPC) to the public. The goal of the forum was to present existing open spaces in the city, present the results of the online community survey, and facilitate a discussion about strategies for strengthening and expanding the open space network in South Portland.

2. FOURM AGENDA

6:30 – 7:00 **Introduction and Presentation**

7:00 – 7:55 **Small Group Activities**

7:55 – 8:20 **Group Reporting**

8:20 – 8:25 **Complete Neighborhood Comment Cards**

8:25 – 8:30 **Closing Comments**

3. FORMAT & PARTICIPATION

The meeting opened with a thirty-minute presentation by consultants from FB Environmental and Terrence J. DeWan & Associates (TJD&A). The three planning consultants provided an introductory presentation which included an overview and timeline of the open space planning process, a virtual tour of the existing open spaces in South Portland, a presentation of the online community survey results, and an introduction to the small group activities.

Following the presentation, the participants worked in small groups to complete a series of activities. The 39 participants at the forum were divided randomly into five groups. Each group was led by a facilitator, who was a member of the OSPC. Other committee members either floated between groups or were participants in a single group activity. A 36" x 66" base map of the City, colored dot stickers, markers, an easel, and a large flip chart were supplied to each group.

The small group activities involved brainstorming open space priorities, suggestions of strategies moving forward, and plotting important locations on a South Portland map. The mapping activity allowed residents to locate scenic viewpoints, potential water access points, potential and existing undocumented nature trails, natural resource/habitat areas to preserve, and other potential locations to preserve as future open space. The forum participants were asked to map suggested improvements to neighborhood connectivity to open spaces, via trails as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The groups developed potential strategies for acquiring additional open space and for engaging the public at the upcoming public forum in October.

4. SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

The attending community members were divided into groups and given the following instructions on mapping and open plan strategies:

1. **MAPPING IMPORTANT LOCATIONS.** The survey results show that the participants value nature trails, water access points, scenic viewpoints, and natural resources/habitat areas. We need your help identifying these places. On the map provided, use colored dots to identify each place and write notes next to the dots if you have additional information for each point. In addition to the map, please record your ideas on the flipchart. *(20 minutes)*

1. Scenic Viewpoints to preserve (pink dot)
2. Potential Water Access Points (red dot)
3. Potential Nature Trails (yellow dot)
4. Natural Resource / Habitat Areas to preserve (green dot)
5. Potential locations to preserve as future open space (orange dot)

2. **MAPPING CONNECTIVITY.** The survey results show that connections between neighborhoods and open spaces are an important part of improving the open space network in South Portland. On the map provided, use colored highlighters to identify ways of connecting open spaces with neighborhoods and ways of connecting open spaces to each other. This may be in the form of trails, improved pedestrian infrastructure, and improved bicycle infrastructure on streets. In addition to the map, please record your ideas on the flipchart. *(15 minutes)*

1. Potential Trails (yellow marker)
2. Improved pedestrian infrastructure (blue marker)
3. Improved bicycle infrastructure (green marker)

3. **STRATEGIES & NEXT STEPS.** We plan to have a second community forum later this year to discuss and evaluate methods for preserving and enhancing the South Portland open space network. Between now and then, the OSPC will be developing those strategies. *(15 minutes)*

1. Do you have ideas about ways to acquire or preserve additional open space in South Portland?
2. How might we engage the public in the review of these ideas and strategies at the next public forum?

Please record your ideas on the flipchart.

- Skate park should not be at Mill Creek
- Mahoney Middle School redevelopment opportunities
- O’Neil Street Former Public Works property
- More pocket parks throughout city
- Nature trails in west end
- Area east of Thomas Knight Park – “sandglass beach”
- Work with utility companies and developers to improve spaces
- Improve access to Wainwright Sports Complex from west end
- Viewpoint on landfill
- Make golf course have multiple uses
- Need better signage
- Bike access to mall
- Open space next to bug light

CONNECTIVITY

- West end to Wainwright Sports Complex through Rigby Yard? Bridge?
- Connect east and west sides of city
- Don’t give up on railroad negotiations
- Red Bank to schools
- Work with developers to maximize benefit to public
- Greenbelt to mall
- Better pedestrian experience in west end, including sidewalks
- Trail that circumnavigates city?
- Calvary cemetery woods?
- Connect all neighborhoods along city spine
- Need proper funding for connectivity infrastructure
 - Impact fees
- Consider how increased tourism will affect city

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Funding is key
- Partnerships with developers and businesses who are seeking opportunities:
 - Corporate adoption
 - Clean ups
 - Coast Guard to caretake beaches
 - Adopt a park
 - Educational institutions
 - More public and private outreach for funding and participation
- Reminders to users of how to be respectful of other users
- Create diversity of users to appeal to different groups of people (equity)
- How to increase participation in this process
 - Flyers to distribute at schools, libraries, buses
 - Bring friends and neighbors
 - Promote recreation not open space

- Increase knowledge about signage, markings of parks and rec systems to educate users and non-users
- Work on enforcement and cleanup of public areas

GROUP 2

| Name | Neighborhood |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Richard Rottkov, Facilitator | Ocean Street |
| Max Wibby | Cash Corner |
| Matt Wibby | Cash Corner |
| Kat Taylor | Broadway Gardens |
| Karen Lewis | Ferry Village |
| Marcia Grant | Willard |
| Kate Gatti | Stanwood Park |
| Sue H | Knightville |

MAP



IMPORTANT LOCATION & CONNECTIVITY

- No greenbelt when dog walking because bikes are dangerous
- Clarks Pond – 295 area has stairs: no bike
- Boardwalks added to marsh area on Greenbelt from Cash Corner to Wainwright fields - start at Rumery Street or other location?
- The Piggery – find access point, problem with fence
- Find location for a fenced-in dog park, maybe municipal services?
- Purchase property at oil tanks by High School and tanks by Bug Light

- Can we maintain spaces we already have (e.g. trees removed from shoreline)?
- Hinckley Park needs maintenance

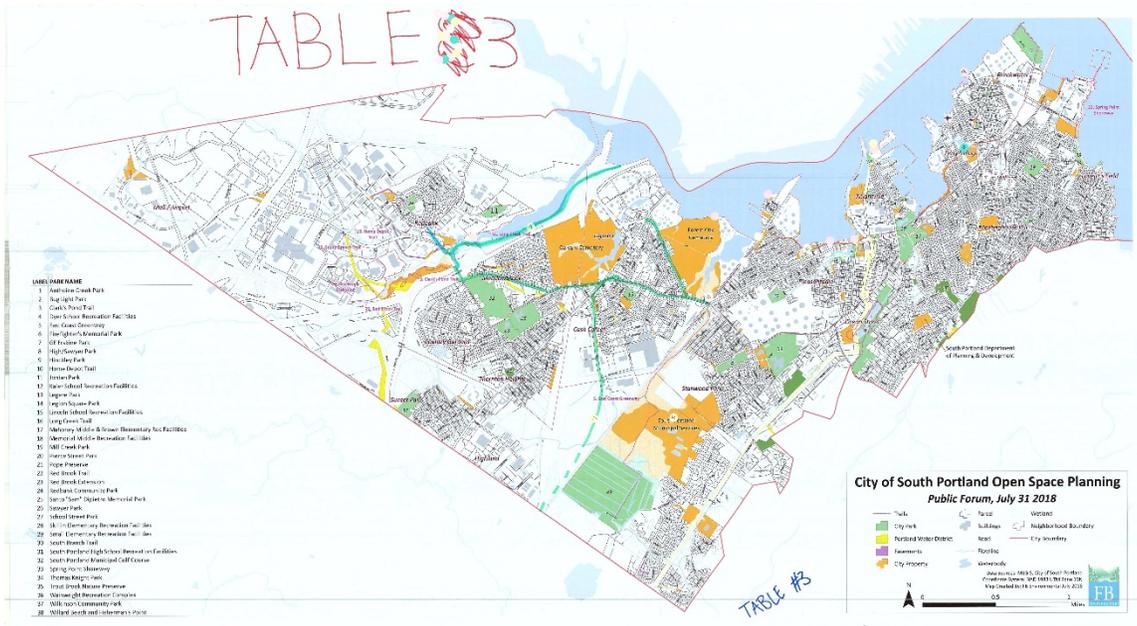
POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Raise money to purchase land
 - o Facebook page asking for small donations to pay for ads
 - o More write ups in paper
 - o 1 cent tax for funds to preserve and purchase open space
 - o Bond issue for \$2 million to support green space

GROUP 3

| Name | Neighborhood |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Sharon Newman, Facilitator | Not listed |
| Rachel Gallo | Willard |
| Jessica Wibby | Cash Corner |
| David Noakes | Pleasantdale |
| Lisa Hutchison | Ocean Street |
| Rob Hutchison | Ocean Street |
| Alessa Leylie | Stanwood Park |
| Adam Wolf | Willard |
| Taylor Strubell | Knightville |
| Jody Meredith | Thornton Heights |

MAP



IMPORTANT LOCATIONS & CONNECTIVITY

- The Piggery (access?)
- Power line – potential trail connector?
 - Biking access through Hinckley Park
 - Water access near Long Creek
 - Try to connect Cash Corner to Greenbelt
- Community Garden (location not identified)
- Formalize existing rough trails
- Clear cut and connect pond (name not documented)
- Trail through Rigby railroad yard connecting to Pleasant Hill Road area
- Connect Veteran’s Bridge to Clark’s Pond area and improve pedestrian infrastructure
- Boat launch for all tides
- Barberry Creek – connectivity and access issues
- Paper streets – potential open space to preserve
- Old Joe’s Pond – preserve
- Connect City’s West side with more pedestrian/bike infrastructure
 - Long Creek, Redbank neighborhoods

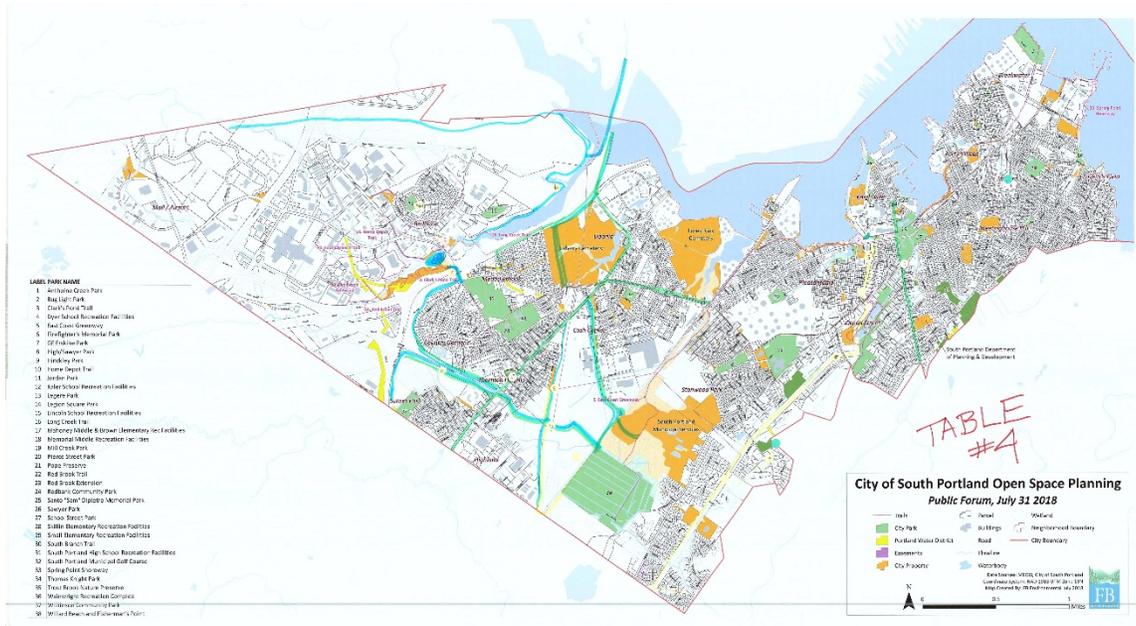
STRATEGIES

- Involve neighborhoods in decisions
- Meetup in Western/Redbank area – encourage participation
- It is challenging for working class residents to get to meetings if during the day
- Proactively identify high priority properties that abut public lands to purchase
- Post visuals at local businesses to create more awareness in each area
- Spend the money, buy now before price increases
- Encourage private property owners to donate land as part of tax benefit? Estate planning?
- High priority properties for purchase should use the Land Bank
- Create digital access app with town park information

GROUP 4

| Name | Neighborhood |
|--------------------------|--|
| Fred Dillon, Facilitator | City of South Portland Stormwater Coordinator |
| Rachel Burger | Knightville |
| Thea Sames | Willard |
| John Cole | Hillside |
| Andy Gagnon | Thornton Heights |
| Victoria Morales | Thornton Heights |
| Nancy Crowell | Fickett St/Highland |
| William Mann | City of South Portland Economic Development Director |

MAP



IMPORTANT LOCATIONS & CONNECTIONS

- The Piggery
 - Connects neighborhood
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Community garden?
- Edible forest – needs a location
 - Berry picking
 - Pollinator corridors along Greenbelt – wildflowers instead of mowing
- Canoe and kayak ramp drop off – Long Creek pump station?
- CMP power line – trail and view protection
- Work with landowners to connect neighborhoods
 - All trails don't need to be large and wide
 - Fickett Street neighbors

- Pedestrian Bridge Waterman/Broadway/Bridge
- Park Behind Yankee Ford
- White Tail Junction – bike trail connection Cash Corner to Greenbelt
- Preserve existing trees as well as planting new
- Pedestrian/bike along rail line from Rigby Yard
- Add qualified arborist to City staff above existing maintenance positions
- Make use of non-conforming lots for natural habitats or play spaces for kids
- Improve bike lanes on all streets, especially on Route 77 (Ocean Street)
- Identify government rights-of-way for trails
- Add a community garden at Sawyer Park
- Loop trails around developments (government or contractor easements)
- Review mowing habits to encourage (grass?) root strength, improve soils to encourage growth
- Consider using the Pan Am rail line for connectivity?
- Biking and pedestrian infrastructure along DOT rights-of-way (power line property)

STRATEGIES

- Be bold
- Knock on doors of residents with green spaces and ask if they would like to be part of the solution
- Be creative
- Overlay paper streets and consider them as potential trail connections
- Conservation easements
- Increase Land Bank fund to more than 10%
- Increase partnerships with local land trusts with contiguous spaces especially our own South Portland Land Trust
- Conservation impact fee on development
- Partnerships with schools – gardens, too
- Use the library for education and outreach
- SPC-TV shows
- Get middle and high schoolers involved in visioning to prepare them to be good stewards in the future and to inform them of the vocational/professional benefits of careers in environment/planning
- “Safe streets” program

6. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENT CARDS

The neighborhood comment cards were a way to receive feedback about open space in participants’ neighborhoods. They provided an additional, optional way to identify needs on a local scale. Identification on the cards was optional as well, so participants could comfortably provide the most pressing information in case they did not get a chance to speak up at the group discussions.

There were 23 total comment cards. This represents over half of the forum attendees. They represented the following neighborhoods:

- Cash Corner – 2
- Ferry Village – 4
- Highland – 1
- Knightville – 2
- Meetinghouse Hill – 2
- Ocean Street – 3
- Pleasantdale – 2
- Thorton Heights – 1
- Willard – 4
- Other – 2

Each individual comment card is transcribed in the table below:

| Neighborhood | Comment |
|--------------------|---|
| Cash Corner | I commute from the Mall to Cash Corner on my bike. The road stretch[ing] from Seadogs to the golf course is very dangerous. The Clarks Pond trail is not bike friendly. Can we build a bike commuter system in that stretch? Can we find a good steep hill for a sledding park? Can we extend the greenbelt from wainwright to Scarborough? |
| Cash Corner | Connectivity! There are very little safe, straight routes to open spaces from my area to the East End. It is very frustrating. Also even adding green spaces where available because there are few near us. |
| Ferry Village | Clean up and enforcement at West Highland Beach |
| Ferry Village | Continued maintenance of Bug Light Park and Spring Point, as well as Mill Creek Park, and other established open spaces. Also, an effort by the City to patrol W High Street Beach should be a priority |
| Ferry Village | We seem to have much already with Beltway, but bit more water access, a few safe road crossings, bike space on roads |
| Ferry Village | Portland Street Pier – preserve Preserve open space/views from pipeline property |
| Highland (Fickett) | Connect private lots by asking owners to be part of a larger puzzle that would make an impact. |

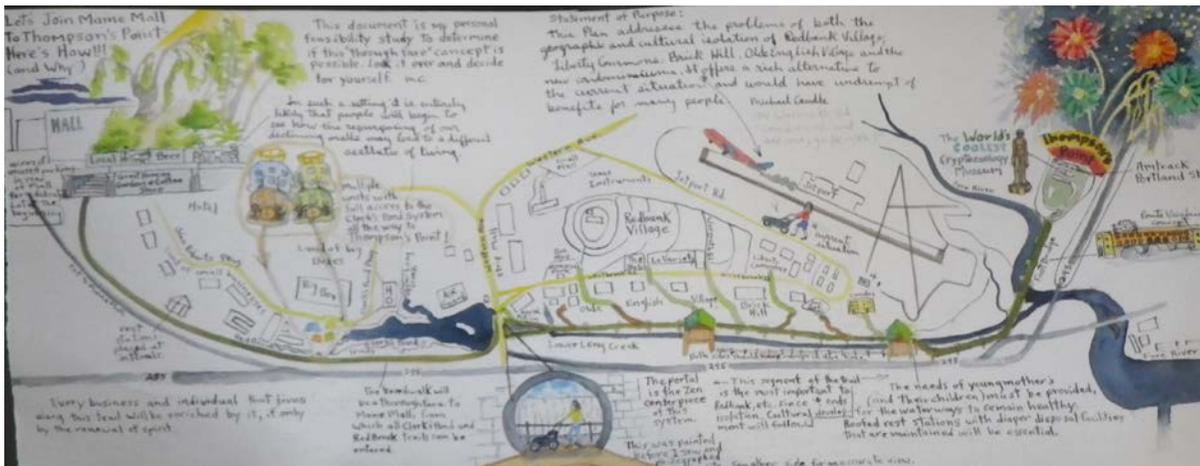
| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | <p>Scarborough passes lots of land bonds – can't we do the same?</p> <p>Create bike lanes on Fickett Street</p> |
| Knightsville | <p>Clean up beach next to Thomas Knight Park</p> <p>Keep Mill Creek Park as it is, no skateboards</p> <p>Leave geese and ducks alone</p> <p>Bicyclists are not careful around pedestrians on the greenbelt, same with dog owners</p> |
| Knightsville | Better water access to small beach under Casco Bay Bridge |
| Meetinghouse Hill | Better pedestrian/cycling infrastructure and crossings all along Cottage Ave, more lighted crosswalks, bike lanes, speed bumps, rotary in the Cottage/Pillsbury intersection |
| Ocean street/Meetinghouse Hill | More community gardens, especially in central and west sides of the city. |
| Sylvan sites – Ocean Street | <p>Garden Clubs</p> <p>"Trails in your hood" campaign – each neighborhood connected to next with local involvement</p> |
| Ocean Street | Our neighborhood <u>needs</u> to have the grounds of the planning office preserved as open space. The Community Garden needs a permanent home, kids play ball year-round in this space, and dog walkers are present every day. Sledding occurs there in the winter and kids and parents alike lament the loss of the playground equipment. The land was recently almost sold to a commercial business – our neighborhood needs this area protected! |
| Ocean Street | <p>One digital website location that show all open spaces and what they can be used for</p> <p>Keep properties clean, trash, dog waste</p> <p>We live near a paper street where people are starting to dump construction waste (end of Brenton Street)</p> |
| Pleasantdale | <p>Provide access to Barberry Creek to access Forest City Cemetery</p> <p>Clean up greenbelt trail, get volunteers or sponsors to maintain like roadways</p> |
| Pleasantdale | <p>Cross Broadway safely</p> <p>New water access for kayaking or swimming</p> <p>Preserve wildlife corridors and habitat</p> |
| Thornton Heights | <p>A way to get through Cash Corner safely on a bike</p> <p>Community garden space</p> <p>Preserve existing open space – golf course/skillin memorial playing fields. Better access to the water (long creek area) for kayaking</p> |
| Willard | I would really like to see "the piggery" purchased and preserved. |

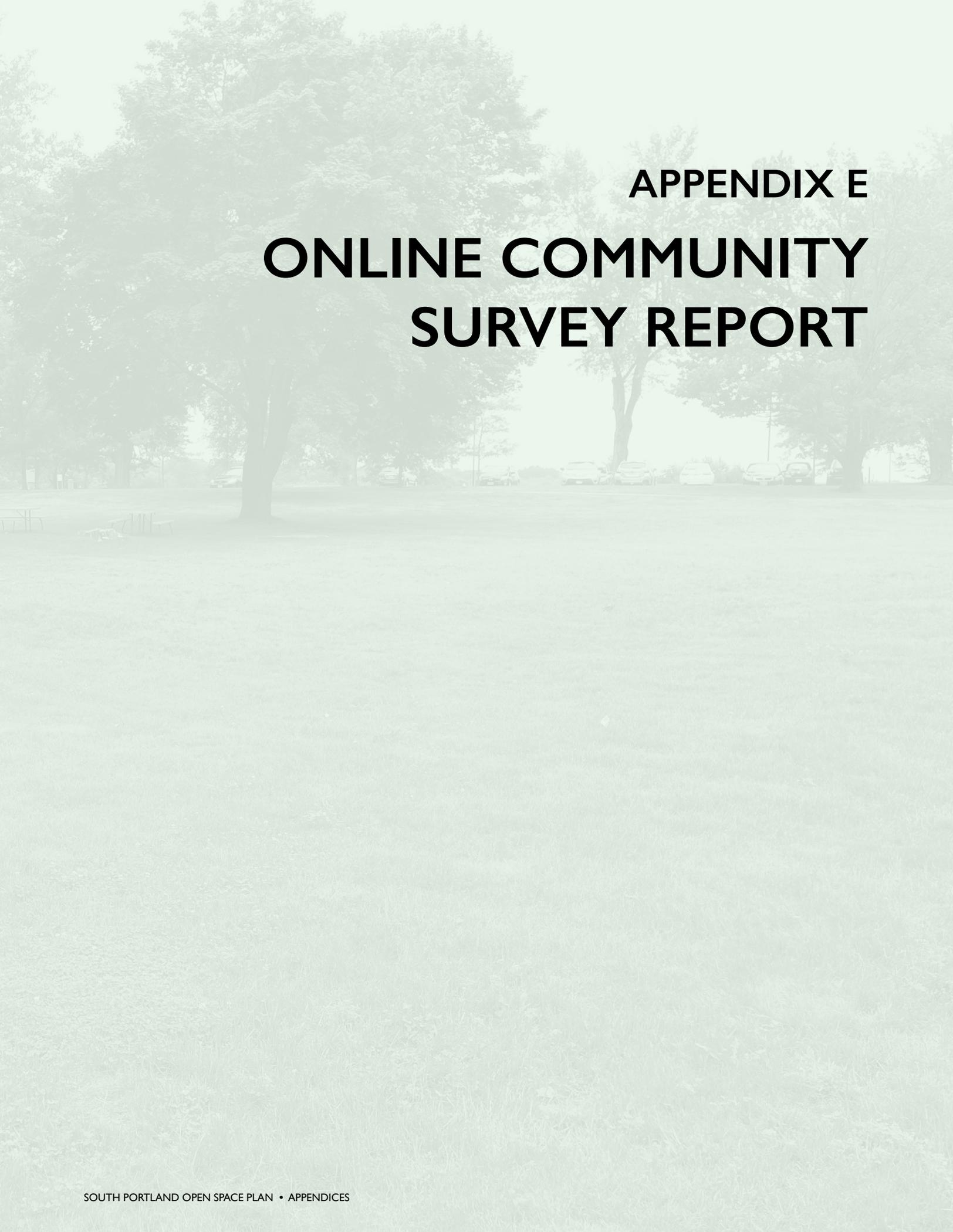
| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | Field at end of Broadway (East End) near oil tanks could be a dog park – is it only used for Tri for a Cure parking? Purchase small lots for playgrounds |
| Willard | More partnership with land trust |
| Willard | It seems as though so many of the mentioned open spaces are developed and treated. That's one big reason that I'd love to see the Piggery preserved – a place where trees can grow and wildlife can live – not just a ballfield, but a natural place that connects so many neighborhoods- kids can play and fall in love with the natural world. Developing this wild lot would destroy the feel of our neighborhood and add so many cars to our already congested streets. Please, we'll do anything to save this land. There is so little left wild in our neighborhood we need a place where trees can simply live, especially with so many non-conforming lots being built on now. Thanks again, save the piggery! |
| Willard | Protect and maintain what we have now Tons of invasive plants Replant large trees that were removed at the end of Beach Street Signs for open space bike trail and expected behavior |
| Neighborhood not indicated | Protecting natural areas to preserve as flora and fauna – need woods and wetlands of sufficient size and diversity to support an abundance of nature |
| Neighborhood not indicated | Safe bike bypass for commuters from mall to golf course Dog parks Greenbelt connector to Scarborough Sledding hill |

Total: 23 comment cards

Additional Comment from Victoria Morales:

It was so great to talk about the many great things about our City yesterday. Here are renderings of trail/open space ideas along the Long Creek watershed from a neighbor in the West End.





APPENDIX E

**ONLINE COMMUNITY
SURVEY REPORT**

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONS



SOUTH PORTLAND OPEN SPACE

The City of South Portland is developing an Open Space Strategic Plan and we need your help!

Open space generally includes areas such as parks, trails, beaches and forested areas. The survey will ask about how you currently use open space in South Portland and how the city might prioritize the preservation of open space in the future.

The survey will take less than 10 minutes.

For more information, please visit <http://www.southportland.org/our-city/board-and-committees/open-space-committee/>.

Thank you for completing this survey. Please pass on to your friends and neighbors!

NEXT

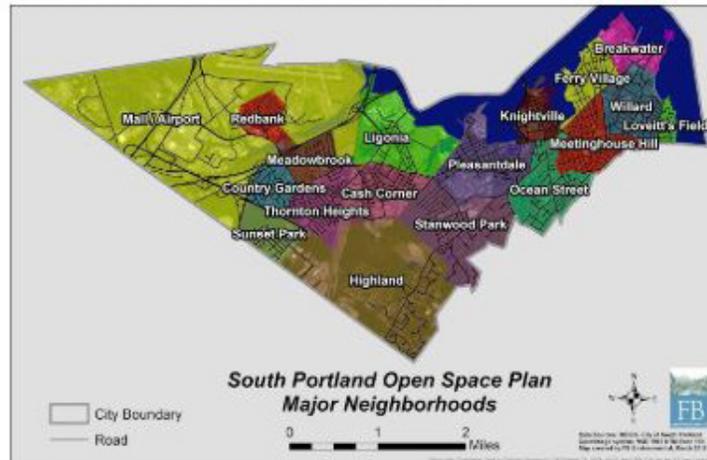


Page 1 of 4

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ABOUT YOU

SOUTH PORTLAND NEIGHBORHOOD MAP



INTERACTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD MAP: <https://bit.ly/2rMGw65>

What neighborhood do you live in? (see neighborhood map above)

Choose

How long have you lived in South Portland?

- 0 - 6 months
- 6 months - 2 years
- 2 - 5 years
- 5 -15 years
- Over 15 years

What age bracket are you in?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-65
- 66+

If others live in your household, what age brackets are they in?
(choose all that apply)

0-10

11-20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-65

66+

Do you rent or own your home?

rent

own

What is the best way to communicate with you about the
progress of the Open Space Plan? (choose all that apply)

Sentry newspaper

SPC TV Public Access

City website

Social media

Conversations with city staff / councilors

Notices through the schools

Other: _____

BACK

NEXT

Page 2 of 4

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EXISTING OPEN SPACE

How frequently do you or your family participate in the following recreational activities in South Portland open spaces?

| | N/A | MONTHLY | WEEKLY | DAILY |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Walking / Jogging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Biking | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Going to a playground | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Organized sport (soccer, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Wildlife/bird watching | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dog walking | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fishing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Enjoying scenic views | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Going to the beach | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community gardening | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How long does it take to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?

- It is less than a 10 minute walk from my home
- It is a 10-20 minute walk from my home
- It is too far to walk, but I can ride a bike
- I need to drive a car
- I don't know

How easy is it to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?

- EASY & SAFE:** I have good sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lane, or trail between my home and the nearest open space.
- SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT:** I have some sidewalks or crosswalks, but not a continuous safe route between my home and the nearest open space.
- DIFFICULT & DANGEROUS:** I do not have any sidewalks, crosswalks, or trail between my home and the nearest open space.

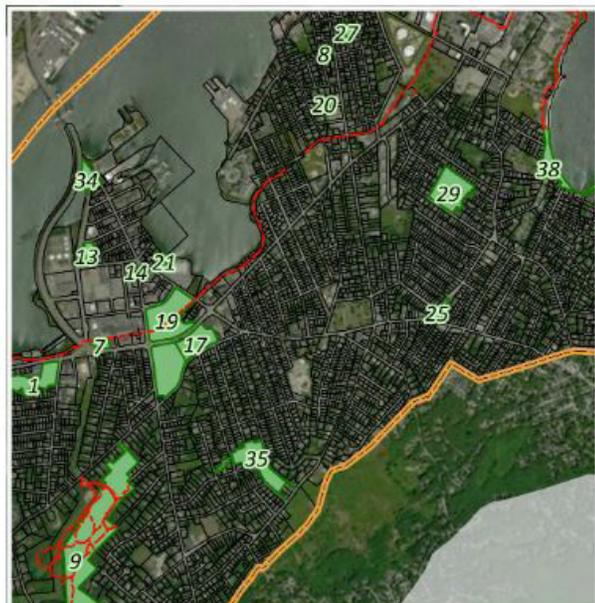
MAP OF SOUTH PORTLAND OPEN SPACES (use maps for reference in next question)



WEST MAP INSET



EAST MAP INSET



Which open spaces in South Portland do you or your family use most frequently? (choose all that apply)

- 1. Anthoine Creek Park
- 2. Bug Light Park
- 3. Clarks Pond Trail
- 4. Dyer School Recreational Facilities
- 5. East Coast Greenway / Greenbelt Walkway
- 6. Firefighter's Memorial Park
- 7. "GE" Erskine Park
- 8. High/Sawyer Park
- 9. Hinckley Park
- 10. Home Depot Trail
- 11. Jordan Park
- 12. Kaler School Recreation Facilities
- 13. Legere Park
- 14. Legion Square Park
- 15. Lincoln School Recreational Facilities
- 16. Long Creek Trail
- 17. Mahoney Middle & Brown Elementary Rec Facilities
- 18. Memorial Middle School Rec Facilities
- 19. Mill Creek Park
- 20. Pierce Street Park
- 21. Pope Preserve
- 22. Red Brook Trail
- 23. Red Brook Extension
- 24. Redbank Community Park
- 25. Santo "Sam" Dipietro Memorial Park
- 26. Sawyer Park
- 27. School Street Park
- 28. Skillin Elementary Recreation Facilities
- 29. Small Elementary Recreation Facilities
- 30. South Branch Trail
- 31. South Portland High School Recreation Facilities
- 32. South Portland Municipal Golf Course
- 33. Spring Point Shoreway
- 34. Thomas Knight Park
- 35. Trout Brook Nature Preserve
- 36. Wainwright Recreation Complex
- 37. Wilkinson Community Park
- 38. Willard Beach
- Other: _____

OPEN SPACE IN THE FUTURE

There are many types of open spaces in South Portland. What types of open space should the city prioritize for preservation.

| | NOT A PRIORITY | LOW PRIORITY | MODERATE PRIORITY | HIGH PRIORITY |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Small green spaces throughout the city | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Large tracts of open land | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Areas adjacent to existing parkland | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Connections between existing open spaces | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trail linkages between neighborhoods | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Areas without nearby open space | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Scenic viewpoints | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Water access points | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Community gardens | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Significant wildlife habitat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Water resources | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Nature trails | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

In the preservation of open space, which of the following goals should be a priority for the city?

| | NOT A PRIORITY | LOW PRIORITY | MODERATE PRIORITY | HIGH PRIORITY |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Protect significant natural resources and wildlife habitat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide open space that is easily accessible | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Connect open spaces and neighborhoods | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide outdoor recreation facilities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Promote opportunities for health and wellness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provide the public with water access | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Maintain community character | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How important is open space to you and your family?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

If you have additional thoughts or know places you would like to see preserved as open space, please leave your comments below:

Your answer

If you would like to receive information about the Open Space Strategic Plan, please provide us with your email address.

Your answer

AN OPEN SPACE PUBLIC MEETING: TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2018

[BACK](#)

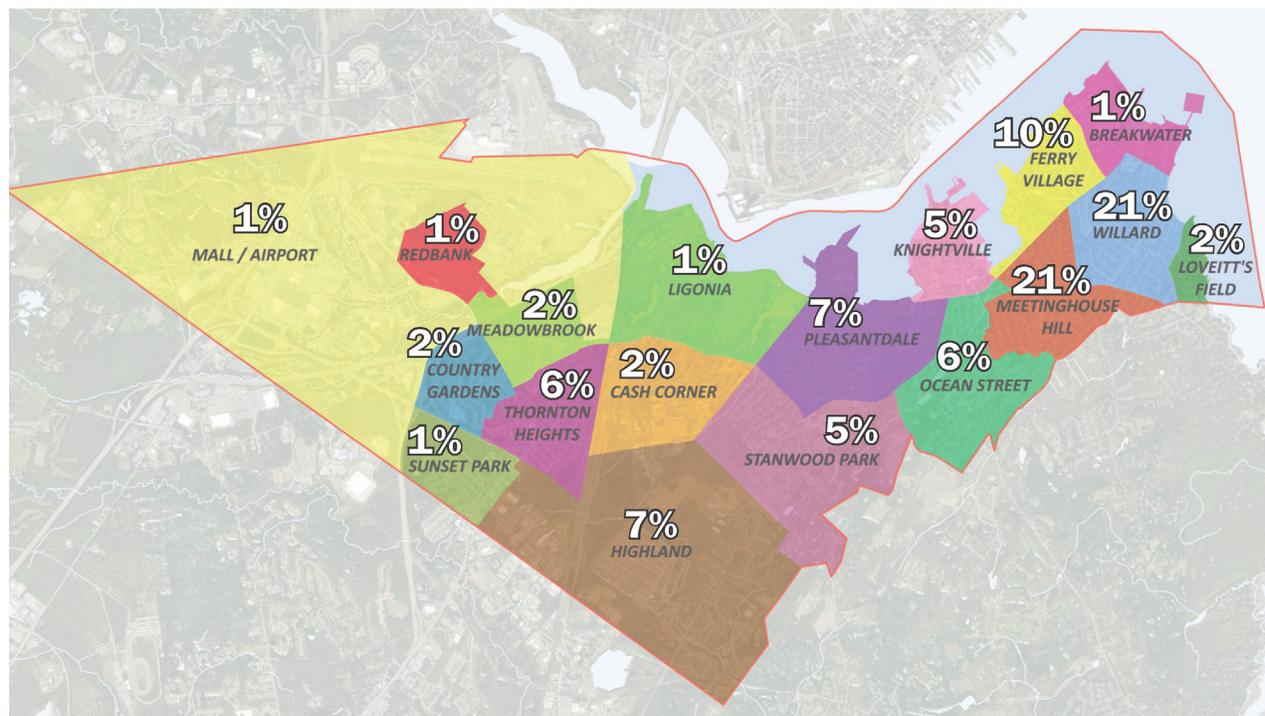
[SUBMIT](#)

 Page 4 of 4

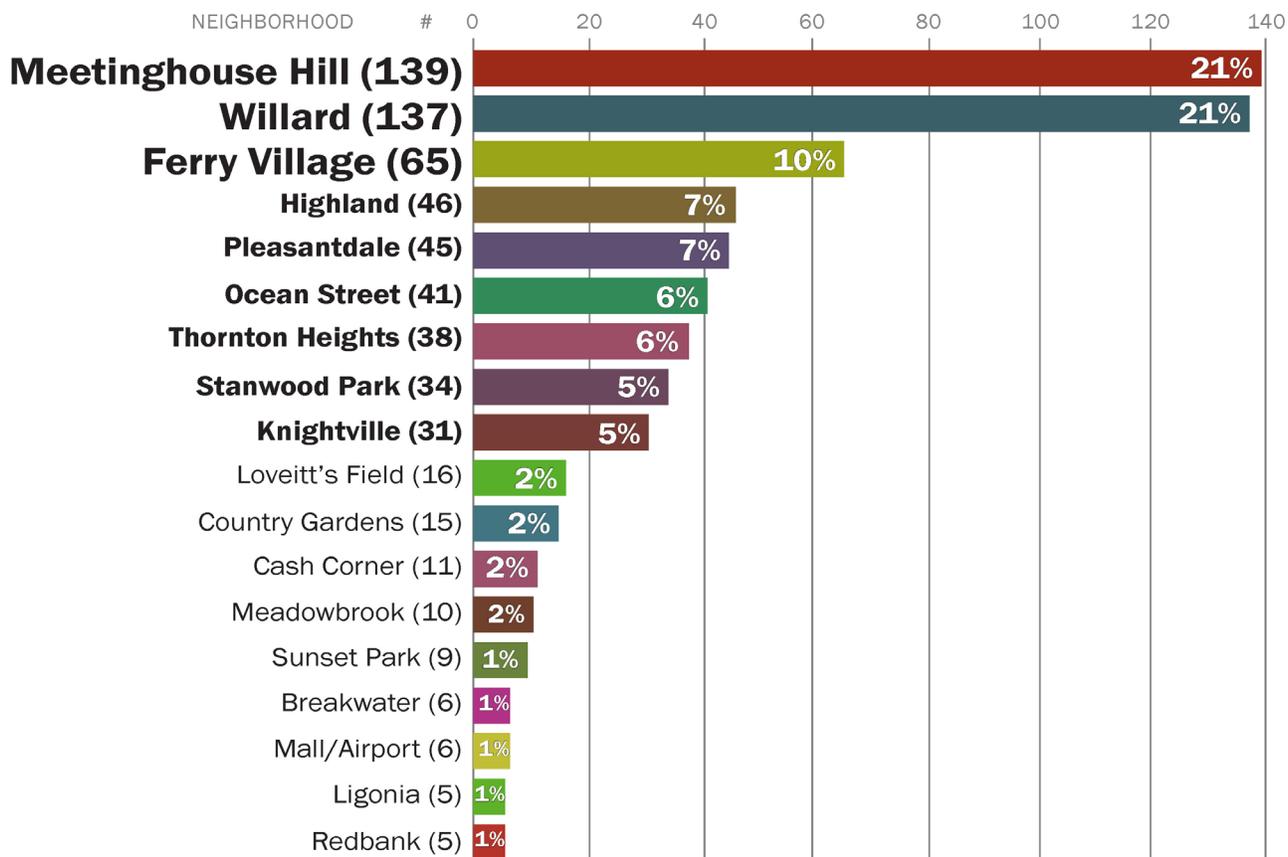
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**ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY
RESPONSES**

What neighborhood do you live in?

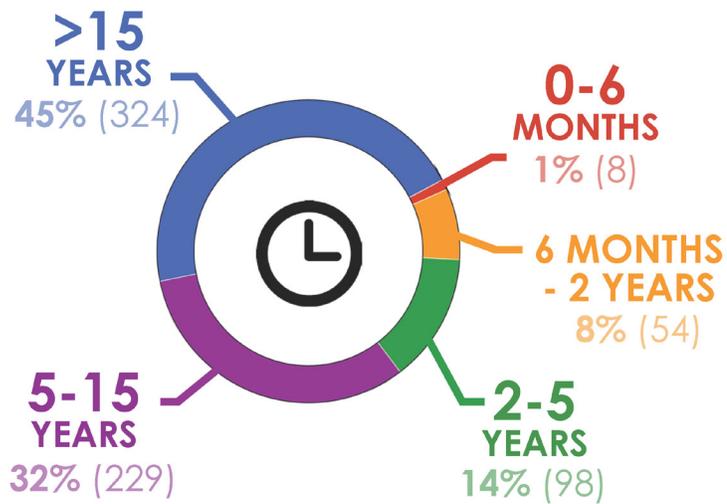


665 Responses



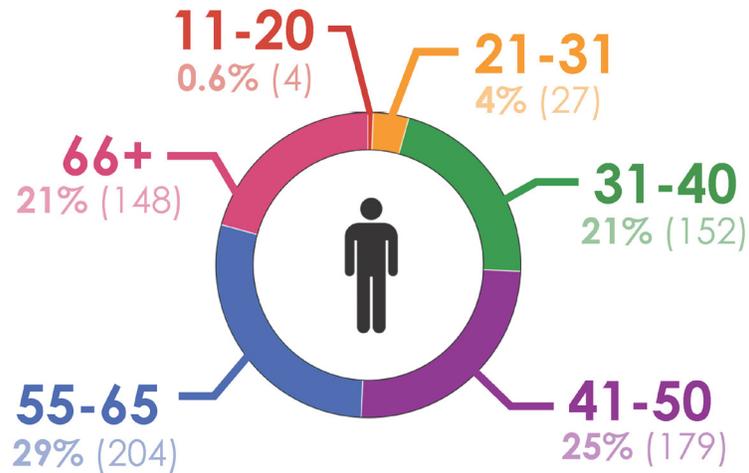
How long have you lived in South Portland?

713 Responses



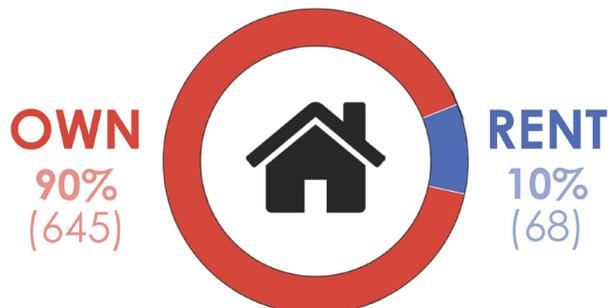
What age bracket are you in?

714 Responses



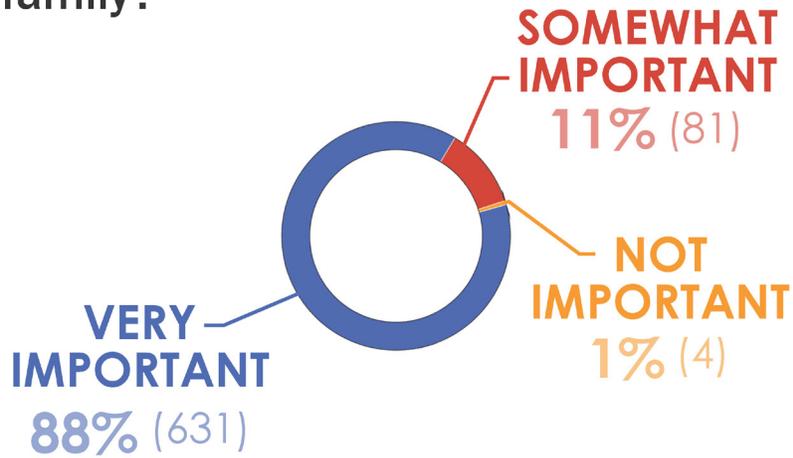
Do you rent or own your home?

713 Responses

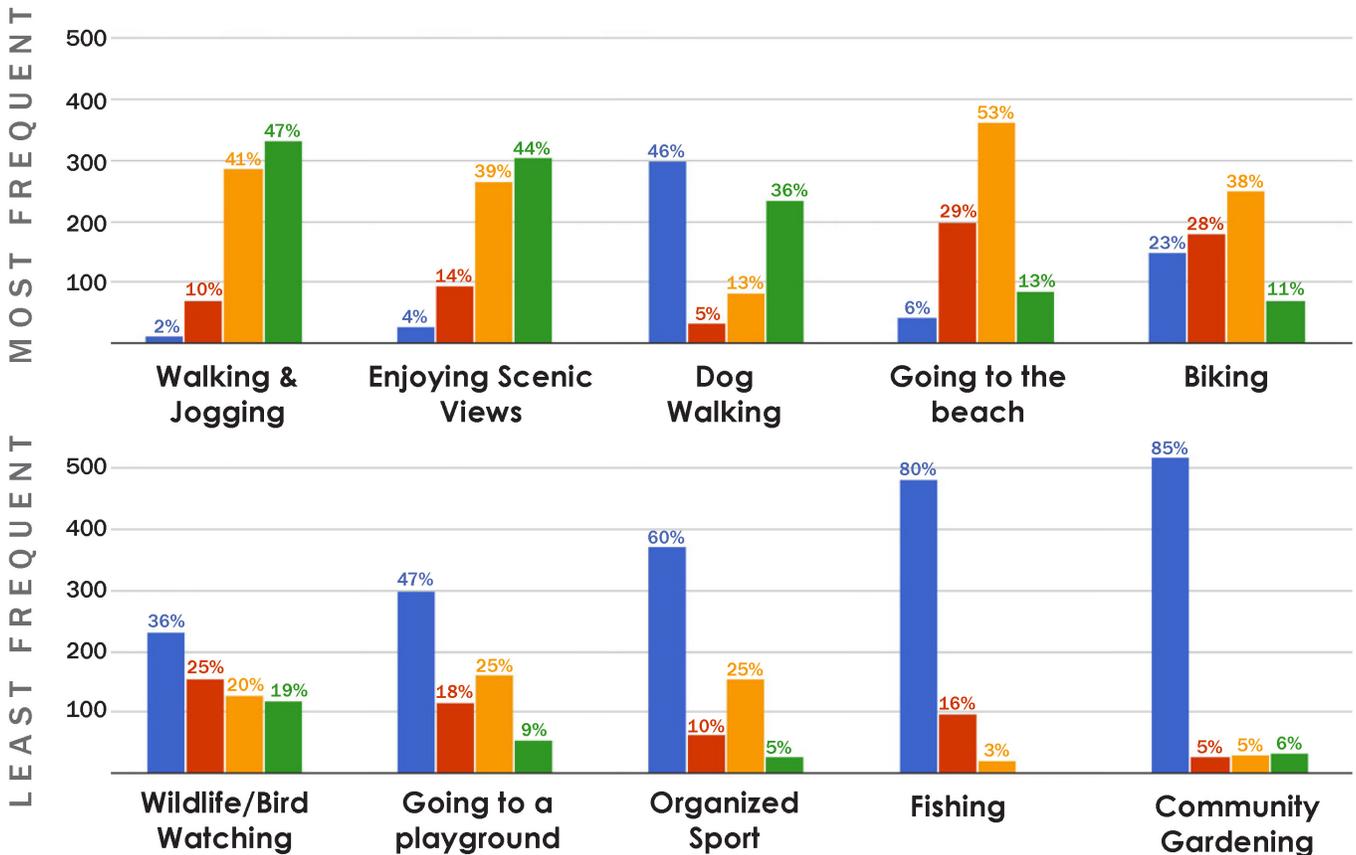


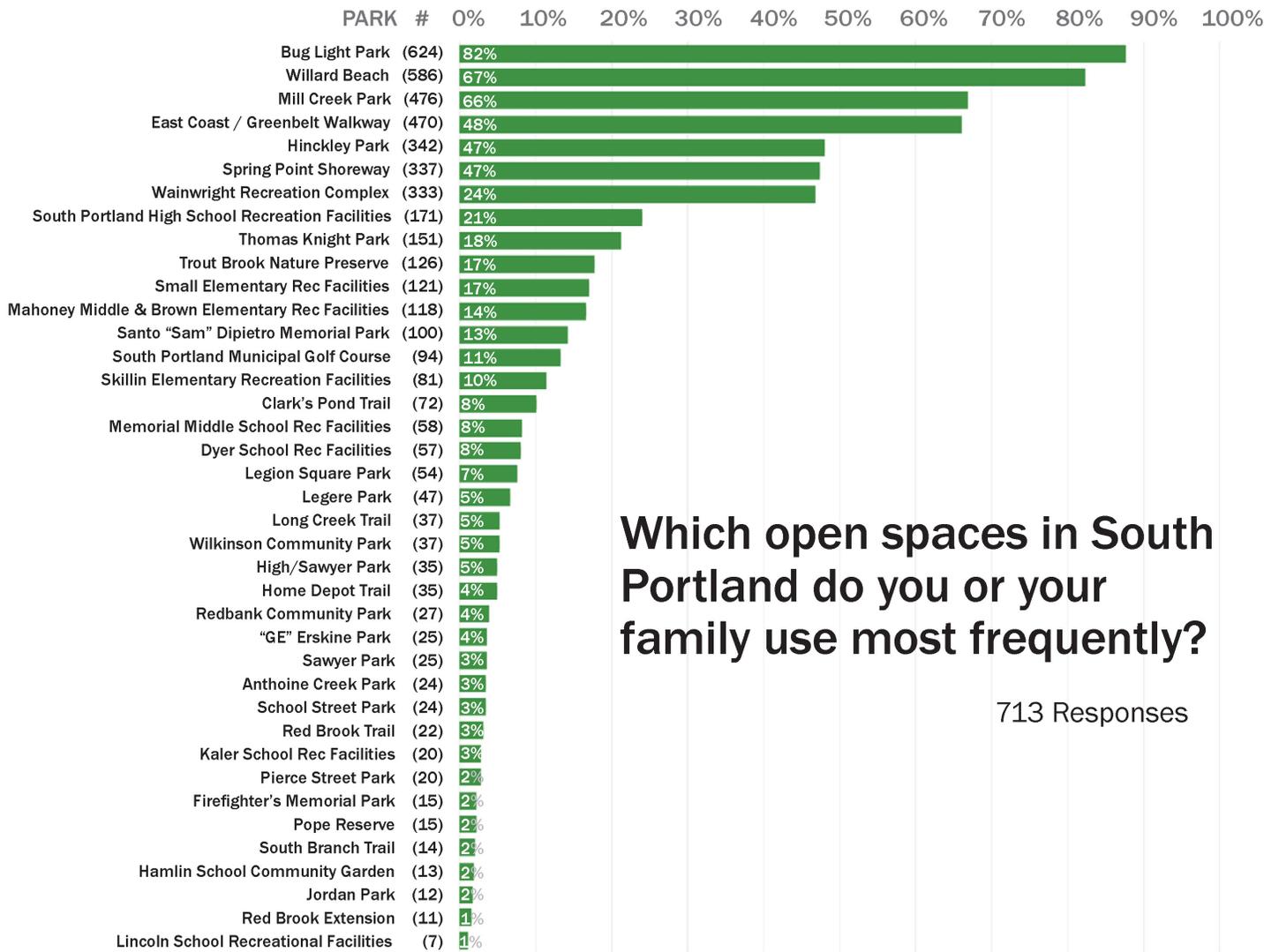
How important is open space to you and your family?

712 Responses



How frequently do you or your family participate in the following recreational activities in South Portland Open Spaces?

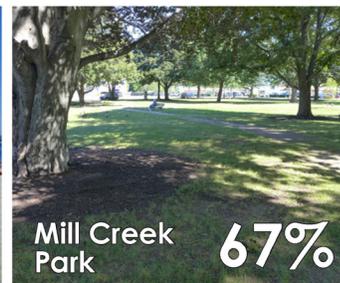




Which open spaces in South Portland do you or your family use most frequently?

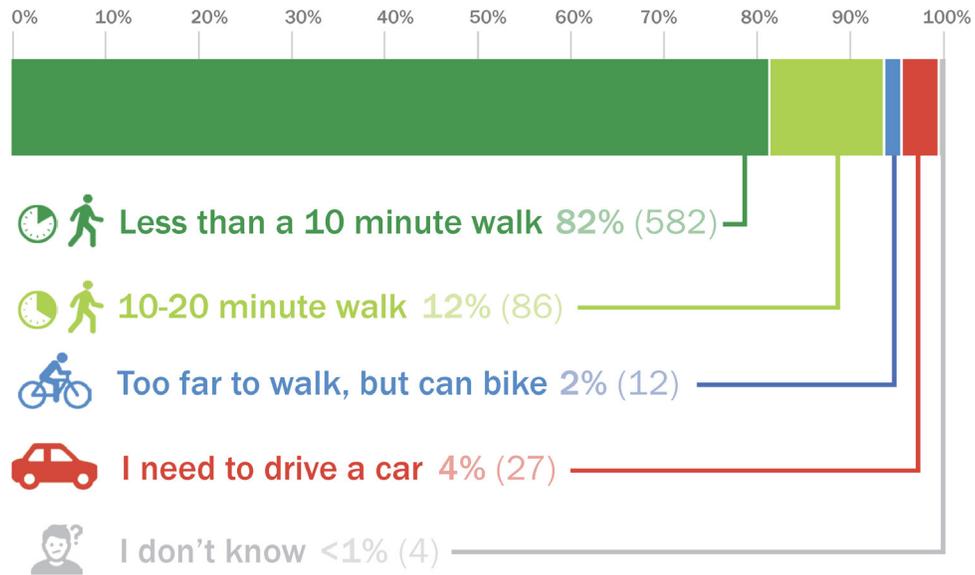
713 Responses

THE MOST VISITED OPEN SPACES

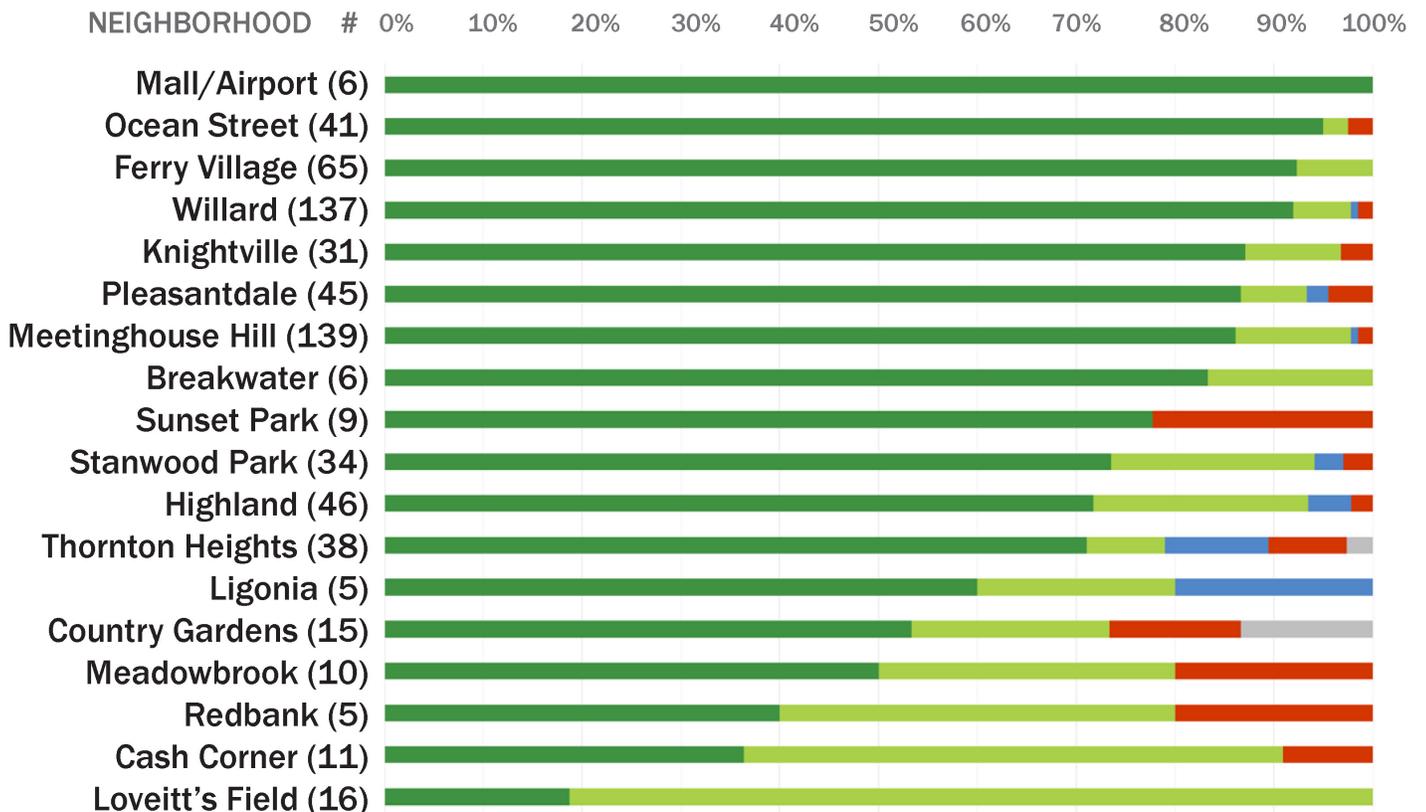


How long does it take to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?

710 Responses

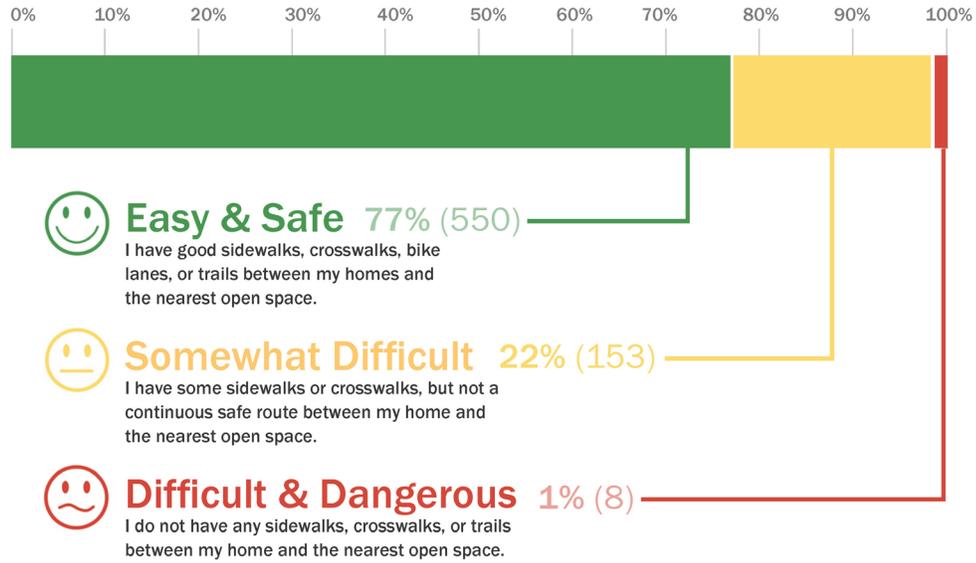


Distance To Open Space By Neighborhood

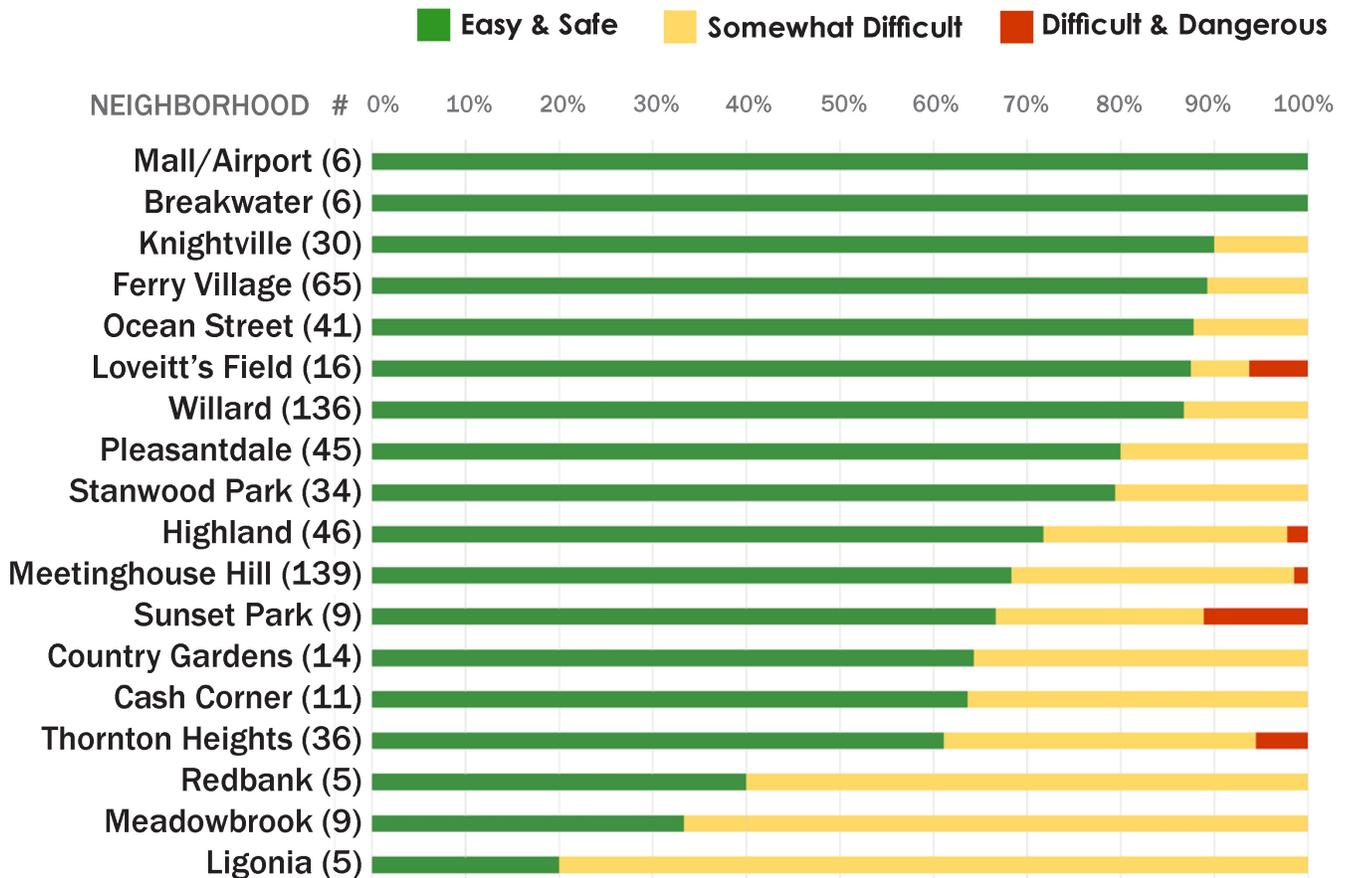


How easy is it to get to the nearest park, trail, or open space?

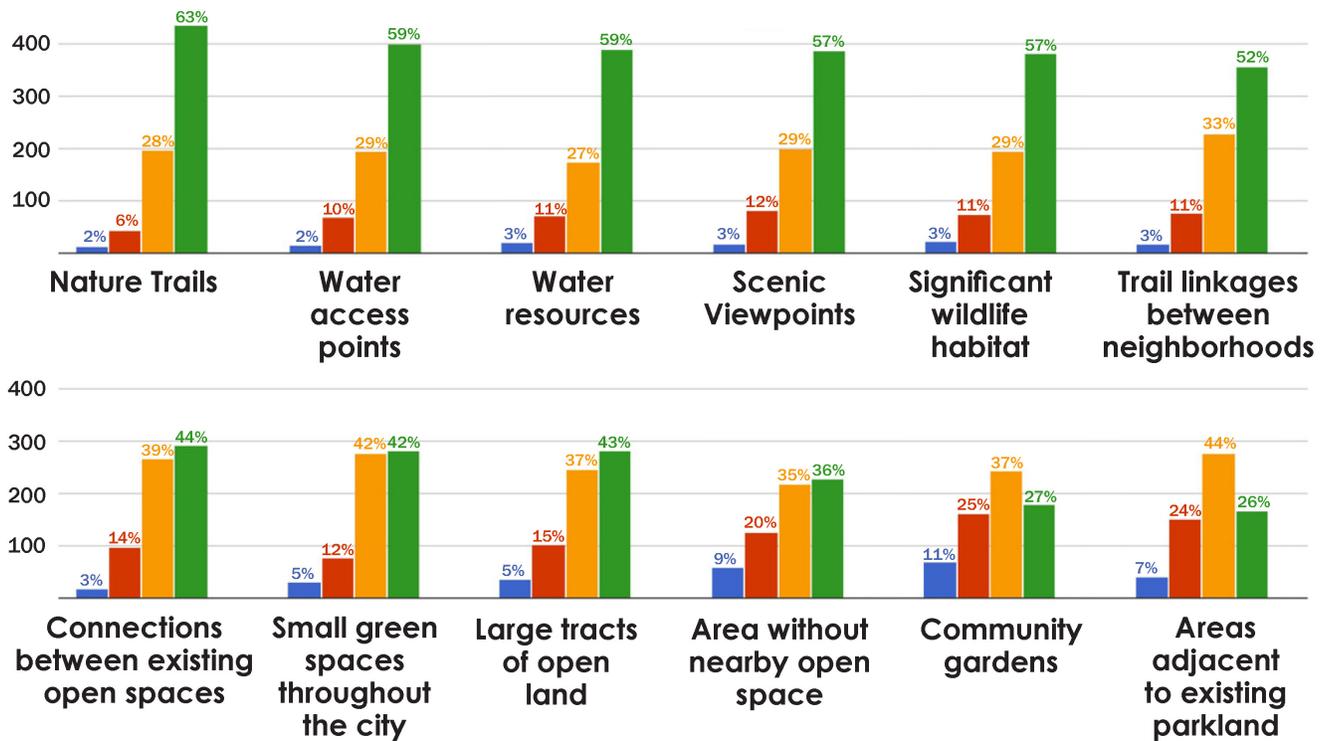
708 Responses



Open Space Access By Neighborhood

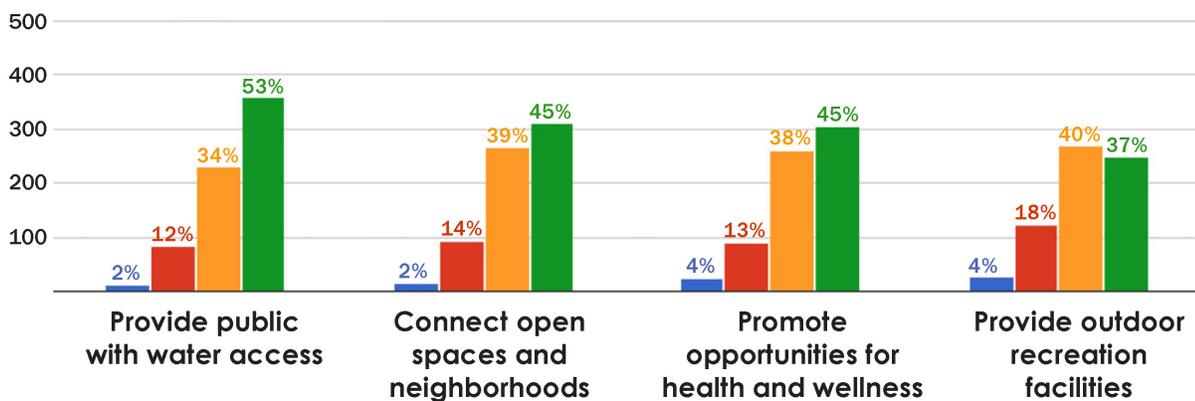
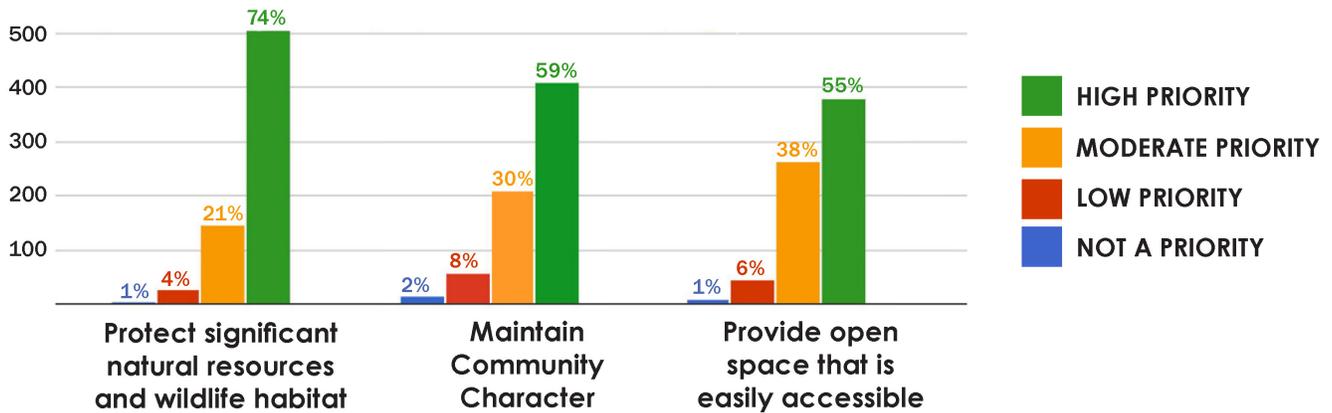


What types of open space should the city prioritize for preservation?



IN ORDER OF HIGHEST PRIORITY

In the preservation of open space, which of the following goals should be a priority for the city?



IN ORDER OF HIGHEST PRIORITY



APPENDIX F

GRANT PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

GRANT PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

There are a number of grant programs in the State of Maine that provide assistance to open space, active transportation, and conservation efforts. The is a list of grant programs, organizations, and funding sources. The City of South Portland or the South Portland Land Trust (SPLT) may be eligible for funding through the following:

Bureau of Parks and Lands: Land and Water Conservation Fund

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land_water_conservation_fund.html

Land for Maine's Future

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/>

Project Canopy Assistance Grants

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/project_canopy/grants/index.html

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/programs-resources/grants/outdoor-heritage-fund.html>

Bureau of Parks and Lands: Maine Recreational Trails Program

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational_trails_program.shtml

Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Funding

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/pga/funding/>

Coastal Community Grant Program (Municipal Planning Assistance Program)

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/financial_assistance.shtml

National Parks Service Community Assistance in Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>

National Recreation and Park Association

<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Grant-Fundraising-Resources/>

Rails to Trails Conservancy

<https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/doppelt-family-trail-development-fund/>

Open Space Institute: Community Forest Fund

<https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/funds/community-forest-fund>

Open Space Institute: Resilient Landscapes

<https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/funds/resilient-landscapes-funds>

The Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program

<http://mnrpc.org/>

The Casco Bay Estuary Project

<https://www.cascobayestuary.org/about-us/grant-opportunities/>

Davis Foundation

<https://www.davisfoundations.org/dcf/apply>

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program

<https://www.fws.gov/gomcp/funding.html>

Maine Coast Heritage Trust Land Trust Program

<https://mcht.org/conservation-work/land-trust-program>

Fund for Maine Land Conservation (State of Maine)

<https://www.maineecf.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/fund-for-maine-land-conservation/>

Communities for Maine Future

https://www.maine.gov/decd/meocd/other_programs/maines_future.shtml

Maine Trails Funding Program

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational_trails_program.shtml

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation

<https://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/>

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>

Healthy Forest Reserve (U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/forests/>

Land & Water Conservation Fund (U.S. Department of the Interior)

<https://www.doi.gov/lwcf>

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (U.S. Department of the Interior / U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act.php>

Grant Programs for Local Government from the USFWS(U.S. Department of the Interior / U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

<https://www.fws.gov/grants/local.html>

Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program Act (U.S. Department of the Interior / U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>

Community Development Block Grant Program (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

Maine Farmland Trust (Private)

<https://www.maineFarmlandtrust.org/>

The Open Space Institute (Private)

<https://www.openspaceinstitute.org/about>

Elmina B. Sewall Foundation (Private)

<https://www.sewallfoundation.org/>

The Davis Conservation Foundation (Private)

<https://www.davisfoundations.org/dcf/apply>