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1. PURPOSE

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 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. The three planning consultants provided an introductory presentation. This presentation 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 forum were divided randomly into five groups. Each group was lead by a facilitator, who was a member of the Open Space Planning Committee. Other committee members either floated between groups or were participants in a single group activity. Each group had access to a 36” x 66” base map of the City, colored dot stickers, markers, an easel, and a large flip chart.

The small group activities involved brainstorming open space priorities, suggestions of strategies moving forward, and plotting important locations on a map of the city. 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 neighborhood connectivity to open spaces, via trails as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The groups then developed potential strategies for acquiring additional open space and for engaging the public at the upcoming public forum in October.
In addition to the cooperative group activities, each participant was given a neighborhood comment cards to account for any opinions that were not voiced in the discussion.

The meeting lasted from 6:30 to 8:30pm, and was recorded by South Portland Community Television Participants were involved, enthusiastic, and took a city-wide approach to assessing open space opportunities.

**SPCTV Link:** [https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/NzNZ2CplDNbXMB16nIzGkJRlHjozGq/media/372805?autostart=false&showtabssearch=true](https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/NzNZ2CplDNbXMB16nIzGkJRlHjozGq/media/372805?autostart=false&showtabssearch=true)

**Attendance:**

- 39 South Portland residents and Committee Members
- City Staff: William Mann, *Economic Development Director*; Tex Haeuser, Planning and Development Director; Fred Dillon, *Stormwater Coordinator*; and Kevin Adam, *South Portland Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Director*
- Planning Consultants: Forrest Bell, FBE; Maggie Burns, FBE; Jessica Kimball, TJD&A

**Base Map of South Portland:**
4. SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

Each group sent one hour on the following activities:

1. **MAPPING IMPORTANT LOCATIONS.** The survey results show that the community values 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 Open Space Committee 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.
5. SMALL GROUP RESPONSES

GROUP 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Blake, Facilitator</td>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Krulik</td>
<td>Willard Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linden Thigpen</td>
<td>Meetinghouse Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Caricchio</td>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Clancy</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Coughlan</td>
<td>Knightville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd D Benz</td>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Benz</td>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS:

- Increase access to beaches that are currently private
  - Danforth Cove
  - East end of town
  - West end of beach
  - Need to be monitored by the city
  - Enforcement
  - Increased use deters unsafe/undesirable
  - Advertise Long Creek canoe access point
- Skatepark shouldn’t be at Mill Creek
- Mahoney Middle School re-development opportunities
• O’Neil Street
• 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
  o West end to Wainwright Sports Complex through Rigby Yard? Bridge?
  o Connect east and west sides of city
  o Don’t give up on railroad negotiations
  o Red Bank to schools
  o Work with developers to maximize benefit to public
  o Greenbelt to mall
  o Better pedestrian experience in west end, including sidewalks
  o Trail that circumnavigates city?
  o Calvary cemetery woods?
  o Connect all neighborhoods along city spine
  o Need proper funding for connectivity infrastructure
    ▪ Impact fees
  o Consider how increased tourism will affect city

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES
• Funding is key
• Partnerships with developers and businesses who are seeking opportunities
  o Corporate adoption
  o Clean ups
  o Coast Guard to caretake beaches
  o Adopt a park
  o Educational institutions
  o 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
  o Flyers to distribute at schools, libraries, buses
  o Bring friends and neighbors
  o 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Rottkov, Facilitator</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Wibby</td>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Wibby</td>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kat Taylor</td>
<td>Broadway Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Lewis</td>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia Grant</td>
<td>Willard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Gatti</td>
<td>Stanwood Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue H</td>
<td>Knightville</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 to wainwright from Cash Corner, start Rumery Street or other places?
- 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
  - Facebook page asking for small donations to pay for ads
  - More write ups in paper
GROUP 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Newman,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Gallo</td>
<td>Willard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Wibby</td>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Noakes</td>
<td>Pleasantdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Hutchison</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Hutchison</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alessa Leylie</td>
<td>Stanwood Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Wolf</td>
<td>Willard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Strubell</td>
<td>Knightville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody Meredith</td>
<td>Thornton Heights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS & CONNECTIVITY

- The Piggery (access?)
- Power line – potential trail connector?
  - Biking access thru Hinckley Park
  - Water access near Long Creek
  - Try to connect Cash Corner to greenbelt
- Community Garden (location not identified)
• Formalize existing rough trails
• Clearcut and connect pond (name not documented)
• Trail through railroad yard connecting to Pleasant Hill Rd 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 – open space to preserve
• Old Joe’s Pond – preserve
• Connect west side with more pedestrian/bike infrastructure
  o 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred Dillon, Facilitator</td>
<td>City of South Portland Stormwater Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Burger</td>
<td>Knightville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thea Sames</td>
<td>Willard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cole</td>
<td>Hillside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Gagnon</td>
<td>Thornton Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Morales</td>
<td>Thornton Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Crowell</td>
<td>Fickett St/Highland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Mann</td>
<td>City of South Portland Economic Development Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 eastern trail
• 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 playspaces for kids
• Improve bike lanes on all streets, especially on Route 77
• Identify government right of ways for trails
• Add a community garden at Sawyer Park
• Loop trails around developments (government or contractor easement)
• Review mowing habits to encourage root strength, improve soils to encourage growth
• Consider using the Pan Am rail line for connectivity?
• Biking and pedestrian infrastructure along DOT right of ways (power line property)

STRATEGIES
• Be bold
  o 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
• SPCTV 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
GROUP 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patti Smith, Facilitator</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Twomey</td>
<td>Pleasantdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Lewis</td>
<td>Meetinghouse Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathi Perkins</td>
<td>Country Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cally Field</td>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Hoffman</td>
<td>Meetinghouse Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Chase</td>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP

CONNECTIVITY:
- Connections to open spaces from neighborhoods via bike and pedestrian
- Increase public access to water – river, creeks, ocean
- Safer pedestrian crossings – Cash Corner, Broadway and Evans
- Connecting west and east side via trails and safer walkways
- More open space preserved on west side
- Unify west and east sides of city
6. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENT CARDS

The neighborhood comment cards were a way to receive open-ended 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
- Thornton Heights – 1
- Willard – 4
- Other – 2

Each individual comment card is transcribed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
<td>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 sledging park? Can we extend the greenbelt from wainwright to Scarborough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Corner</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
<td>Clean up and enforcement at West Highland Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
<td>Continued maintenance of Bug Light Park and Spring Pt, 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
<td>We seem to have much already with Beltway, but bit more water access, a few safe road crossings, bike space on roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry Village</td>
<td>Portland Street Pier – preserve Preserves open space/views from pipeline property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland (Fickett)</td>
<td>Connect private lots by asking owners to be part of a larger puzzle that would make an impact. Scarborough passes lots of land bonds – can’t we do the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knightville</td>
<td>Create bike lanes on Fickett Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean up beach next to Thomas Knight Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep Mill Creek Park as it is, no skateboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leave geese and ducks alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bicyclists are not careful around pedestrians on the greenbelt, same with dog owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knightville</td>
<td>Better water access to small beach under Casco Bay Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetinghouse Hill</td>
<td>Better pedestrian/cycling infrastructure and crossings all along Cottage Ave, more lighted crosswalks, bike lanes, speed bumps, rotary in the Cottage/Pillsbury intersection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean street/Meetinghouse Hill</td>
<td>More community gardens, especially in central and west sides of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvan sites – Ocean Street</td>
<td>Garden Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Trails in your hood” campaign – each neighborhood connected to next with local involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
<td>Our neighborhood needs 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!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Street</td>
<td>One digital website location that show all open spaces and what they can be used for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep properties clean, trash, dog waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We live near a paper street where people are starting to dump construction waste (end of Brenton Street)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantdale</td>
<td>Provide access to Burberry Creek to access Forest City Cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean up greenbelt trail, get volunteers or sponsors to maintain like roadways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantdale</td>
<td>Cross Broadway safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New water access for kayaking or swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preserve wildlife corridors and habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton Heights</td>
<td>A way to get through Cash Corner safely on a bike Community garden space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preserve existing open space – golf course/skillin memorial playing fields. Better access to the water (long creek area) for kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willard</td>
<td>I would really like to see “the piggery” purchased and preserved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase small lots for playgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willard</td>
<td>More partnership with land trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

Not labeled  | Protecting natural areas to preserve as flora and fauna – need woods and wetlands of sufficient size and diversity to support an abundance of nature

Not labeled  | 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 Dan Hogan after the forum:

Kudo’s to Michael Caudle, our fellow conservation commissioner, for his bold concept of connectivity for South Portland’s west end. While there are some expensive recommendations shown in his rendering, isn’t it time we put some serious resources into our human connectivity? In light of the experience of our wonderful Greenbelt, what better equalizer of benefits is there than the ability for all citizens to be able to reach our neighborhoods, open spaces, events, and yes, even shopping, in a healthy way?

One of the prominent themes brought up by all tables at our Open Space Public Forum was the need for more pedestrian and biking pathways. One important point I would add to Mr. Caudle’s concept is the need to connect the east side of our city with the west. To do that, we need a bridge over lower Long Creek near the west end of Veteran’s Bridge. By routing folks through the cemetery on Lincoln Street, the Greenbelt could be extended to the west end. This is not a new idea, it was already proposed around the time of the renovation of V.Bridge. I would say that the priority would be:
1. The portal or some other safe passage across Westbrook Street from the pathway on the north side of Long Creek.
2. A pedestrian bridge across Long Creek near the west end of Veteran's Bridge.
3. Connection to Thompson's Point from some point on the new greenbelt. Although this would be an exciting addition, it will need the agreement and financial cooperation of the City of Portland so would be a longer, more involved process. I would also rather focus first on the connection of our South Portland neighborhoods.

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.