

Diane N. Tradd
Assistant City Manager/Director

R. Eric Slagle
Director of Development Services

David Fuller
Building Commissioner

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager

EMD

FROM: Christine McCall, Senior Planner
Yovani Baez-Rose, Design Planner

DATE: May 15, 2019

SUBJECT: Open Space and Recreation Plan

On behalf of the Department of Planning and Development, we are pleased to submit the final copy of the Lowell Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019-2025. This plan is a comprehensive update to the 2013 Lowell Open Space and Recreation Plan and has been developed in response to changing needs of the public as expressed during an extensive community outreach process.

DPD hosted a series of public meetings, attended neighborhood meetings, events, and hosted focus group style meetings to hear directly from residents about how our open spaces and recreation programs are used and how they could be improved. To increase transparency throughout the process, DPD staff created reports that detailed all the ideas shared during the year-long planning process.

We submitted our draft open space and recreation plan to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services (DCS) on December 9, 2018 and received conditional approval through February 2024.

At the request of DCS, we made the following changes to our plan:

1. Section II (B) –included language discussing how public meetings were advertised.
2. Section IV (C) –made changes to include DCS as a funder to the Mulligan Park and South Common projects. Made note that Bellegarde Boathouse has received public funding and must be open to the public.
3. Section IV (D) –included information about the City’s Urban Forestry program and public shade tree planting schedule.
4. Section IV (G) –identified specific neighborhoods that lack in open space.
5. Section V – updated our inventory chart to include zoning districts, property addresses, current use, potential use, and level of protection.
6. Section IX –identified specific funding sources for each initiative. DCS informed us the City was eligible for an additional two years of eligibility, so we updated our goals, objectives, and action plan over seven years.

For final approval of our OSRP, we are required to receive letters of review and approval from City Council, Planning Board, and NMCOG. Final approval of our Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2019-2025 will allow us to participate in DCS grant rounds and receive final grant payments.



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

May 14, 2019

Melissa Cryan
Grants Manager
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

A Multi-Disciplinary
Regional Planning
Agency Serving:

Dear Ms Cryan:

BillERICA
Chelmsford
Dracut
Dunstable
Lowell
Pepperell
Tewksbury
Tyngsborough
Westford

The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) has reviewed the Revised Lowell Open Space and Recreation Plan. NMCOG staff finds that the Plan thoroughly addresses the review comments provided by your office. Furthermore, the Plan's focus on enhancing the quality of the City's open spaces and recreation assets, and on adding additional bicycle accommodations and amenities, will benefit the region overall, as well as those visiting the National Park.

As you are aware, Lowell is a Gateway City with a very diverse population. The City is commended for recognizing and accommodating the needs of the entire community, including those with disabilities and mobility challenges, and non-English speaking residents. Such an approach ensures that the City's special resources and facilities can be enjoyed by all, impacting the overall quality of life, health, and sustainability of the City, the region, and the Commonwealth.

Pat Wojtas
Chair

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have questions regarding NMCOG's support for the updated Plan. We look forward to the successful implementation of the Action Plan over the next several years.

Beverly A. Woods
Executive Director

Sincerely,

Beverly Woods
Executive Director

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FAX: (978) 454-8023

www.nmcog.org

Cc: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager
Lowell NMCOG Councilors
Lowell Conservation Commission
Diane Tradd, DPD



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
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Tel: (617) 626-1000
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February 5, 2019

Christine McCall
Department of Planning and Development
JFK Civic Center – 50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. McCall:

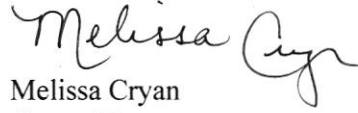
Thank you for submitting the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan for Lowell to this office for review and compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. This plan was particularly thorough and has been conditionally approved through February 2024. Conditional approval will allow the city to participate in DCS grant rounds through February 2024, and a grant award may be offered to the city. However, no final grant payments will be made until the plan is completed.

1. Introduction – the Planning Process and Public Participation section should discuss how the public meetings were advertised. Also, please note that DCS helped fund the renovations at Mulligan Park and South Common.
2. Water Resources – Bellegarde Boathouse is listed as private in this section, but it is not. It has received public funding and must be open to the public.
3. Vegetation – has the city undertaken any planting of public shade trees? If so, please discuss.
4. Environmental Challenges – the Environmental Equity section must identify the areas that are lacking in open space.
5. Section 5 – this section should include a definition of the word “protected”. Please have separate tables for protected open space and unprotected open space. The table that lists city-owned conservation and recreation properties must be expanded to include columns on current use (more specifics are needed), recreation potential (list specifics), type of grant, if any, used to purchase and/or renovation the property, and zoning. Are the properties listed in Table 5.1 also included in Appendix B? If not, they need to be.
6. Community Goals – please note that DCS reviews and approves OSRPs, not DCR.
7. Seven Year Action Plan – the goals and objectives should each have a more specific funding source identified. DCS now allows for a seven year action plan. If the goals and objectives are spread over seven years instead of five, the plan will receive an additional two years of eligibility.

8. Letters of Review – letters from the Regional Planning Agency, Planning Board, and Chief Municipal Officer are needed.

Congratulations on working on such an important task for your community! Please contact me at (617) 626-1171 or melissa.cryan@state.ma.us if you have any questions or concerns, and I look forward to reviewing your final plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Cryan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Melissa Cryan
Grants Manager