

**SECTION  
6**

**COMMUNITY GOALS**

**A. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS**

The Town of Orange’s open space and recreation goals were developed through the following planning process:

- In 1991, a Master Planning survey was developed and sent to all the households in Orange. Seven hundred and forty-four (744) master planning surveys were returned, which represented a twenty-eight percent (27.6%) return rate.
- In 1996, graduate students from the Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst prepared an informal survey and used the results to develop a community goal.
- From May 2000 to April 2001, the Open Space Planning Committee and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department developed the 2002 Orange Open Space and Recreation Plan using several methods for involving public participation:
  - Six public meetings with a volunteer Open Space Planning Committee;
  - Mailing three to four drafts of each section of the plan to thirty-seven people representing key town boards, community groups, and non-profit organizations;
  - Two public information sessions on the Open Space Plan were held in February and March 2001;
  - A public forum was held on March 28, where about 20 people reviewed and discussed the inventory, analysis, community goals, objectives, and five-year action plan; and
  - Both the 1991 Master Planning Survey and the 1996 UMASS survey were used as the basis for the development of the overall open space and recreation goals or vision.
- In the fall of 2002, the Town administered a Master Plan survey to help guide the development of the Orange Master Plan, which was developed between 2002 and 2005. The survey was sent to an estimated 3,100 households with 362 responses for a 12 percent rate of return.

- From January 2007 to July 2007, Town officials and residents formed the Orange Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee and developed the 2007 Orange Open Space and Recreation Plan Update using a similar but truncated approach including five public meetings between March and July of 2007 and a public forum in June of 2007. Prior to each meeting the drafts of updated chapters were mailed to approximately fifty-three Town officials and residents.

## **B. STATEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL GOALS**

People live in Orange because they like the area. They like the combination of having a rural community that also has an historic downtown. Not surprisingly, they would largely prefer a more active downtown area that would provide economic opportunities for local business owners and residents. The continued development of the Riverfront Park on the Millers River is intended to stimulate the creation of jobs through increasing traffic into town from recreational boating enthusiasts.

An analysis of the 2002 Orange Master Plan Survey results found that:

- Job availability was the only issue that was selected as one of the most serious by over half (55%) of the 2002 survey respondents.
- Overall, 81 percent of survey respondents felt it was very important to protect public water supplies and their recharge areas.
- There was strong support among respondents for expanded recreational programs and activities, especially for teenagers, which 77 percent of respondents favored.
- 65 percent of respondents supported acquisition of open space, farmland, and forestland parcels by conservation groups to protect this land from development;
- 89 percent of respondents felt it was very important or important to protect farmland from development;
- 77 percent of respondents felt it was very important or important to protect historic buildings and landscapes.
- 82 percent of respondents considered important or very important to protect and preserve at least some types of historic resources.

According to the Master Planning Survey and the Ad Hoc Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, the ideal Orange has an historic downtown bustling with commerce, community-based cultural activities, and recreational programs for people of all ages, especially teenagers. Orange is working to redevelop and restore historical buildings and landscapes. In addition, farms and forests, prominent hills and monadnocks, and cool running streams are protected from development due to the stewardship ethic of local private landowners and the ingenuity of regional conservation organizations with ample support from Orange residents and Town officials. Building on these efforts and implementing the recommendations of this Open Space and Recreation

Plan, Orange will continue to be known for its clean water bodies and drinking water, its many protected forests and farms, its small community feel, and an economy that is fueled in part from vibrant regionally-recognized recreational activities and events.