

SECTION 8

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives outlined in this section are based on the vision of an ideal Orange that has emerged from the planning process that the Town has undergone in recent years. According to this vision, the ideal Orange would have an historic downtown bustling with commerce, community-based cultural activities, and support programs for children, teens, and elders. Commerce and industry would be located in well defined pockets, hidden or designed to protect the character of the historic districts. Development would be offset by a largely protected greenbelt of forested hills, prominent monadnocks, pristine streams, and farmlands. Most people would live in areas where residential development already exists around Orange Center and the other village centers. Within these village centers, parks, playgrounds, sports fields and natural areas would be within walking distance and would be accessible to the physically handicapped as well. Play lots for young children would be scattered throughout districts with homes that lack yard space. The hills, lakes, beaches, trails, and connected protected open spaces would provide almost unlimited recreation, scenic vistas, and wildlife viewing possibilities within a regionally recognized greenway that stretched from New Hampshire to the Connecticut River and the Quabbin Reservation.

Goal A: Ensure that the Town of Orange retains its predominantly rural character and maintains or improves the quality of its air and water and the diversity and integrity of native flora and fauna through the conservation of locally and regionally important natural and cultural resources.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate with all town boards to ensure that the findings and recommendations of the Orange Open Space and Recreation Plan are reflected in decisions dealing with, or affecting, Orange's natural, recreational, and open space resources.
2. Prioritize land protection for farmland and large contiguous blocks of forestland.
3. Take advantage of the Town's right-of-first refusal with Chapter 61 parcels and of its right to assign the right to an appropriate third party.
4. Support farmland protection through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.

5. Ensure the conservation and stewardship of large blocks of interior forest and connecting wildlife corridors through the purchase of conservation restrictions with funds from the Forest Legacy Program and other sources and through donations where possible. Consider where appropriate the incorporation of “Firewise” best management practices when planning for forest conservation near development.
6. For Town-owned parcels of land determine: 1) potential uses and designated manager; 2) a stewardship work plan, if any; and, 3) a means for coordinating open space related issues among Town boards and committees.
7. Facilitate a program of water quality monitoring for the rivers, brooks, streams, lakes, and ponds in Orange.
8. Promote and help protect historically significant landscapes, the National Historic District (NHD) in downtown Orange and the proposed NHD in North Orange, and Tully village centers and farm landscapes.

Goal B: Ensure that the Town of Orange improves the quality, quantity, and accessibility of its recreational resources for current and future generations.

1. Increase the number of parks, play areas, and sports fields in and around Orange Center.
2. Improve recreational programs for citizens of all ages and abilities and support all the organizations that provide them.
3. Support the development of community arts festivals and events, such as the Garlic & Arts Festival, Town Hall events, Celebrate the Harvest, and Starry, Starry Night.
4. Develop multi-user trail systems that can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with trail easements, particularly where they can be tied into existing systems.
5. Support the continued development of the Riverfront Park, which adds needed public access to the Millers River and provides a handicap accessible open space in the downtown area.
6. Continue to support initiatives that enhance the recreational access along the Millers River Greenway between Orange and Athol Town Centers.