



Land Management and Acquisitions Committee
Parks and Community Programs
271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Date: June 26, 2019
To: Town Council
Cc: Nathan Poore, Town Manager
Lucky D'Ascanio, Parks and Community Programs Director
Amanda L. Stearns, Open Space Manager
From: Land Management and Acquisitions Committee (LMAC)
Re: Proposed Implementation Strategy for FY20 and FY21
2018 Open Space Plan

LMAC is pleased to present to the Town Council a recommendation for implementation of the [2018 Open Space Plan](#) for years FY20 and FY21. The 2018 Open Space Plan was prepared by the Long-Range Planning Committee+ (included members of LMAC) as directed by the Council in 2016. The development of the plan included an on-line survey, numerous public meetings, reviews by associated committees and staff, as well as several public input meetings. LMAC kicked off the work of developing an implementation strategy in January with a dedicated 1/2 day workshop to organize, consolidate and prioritize actions.

LMAC categorized the actions as: "Acquisition", "Management" and "Communication" and concluded that management, as a category, is the number one priority for the coming years. While acquisition of key connections and desired properties will always be a priority, the accumulation of 2,500 acres and approximate 50 miles of trails calls for a formal management strategy to maintain the quality of these resources. All actions were categorized then prioritized. Some actions were combined while others were separated to assure efficiency in implementation. Once that occurred, the actions were further organized by "Implementation Tasks (those that are distinctive projects)", "Ongoing Tasks (those that reoccur each year)" and "Tasks by Others (those to be initiated and completed by other departments)". The result is the attached table which has seven implementation tasks, ten ongoing tasks and three tasks by others. Also attached is a reference to all Open Space Plan recommended actions as well as the original list of Goals and Recommended Actions from the plan.

The Implementation Tasks are all projects which may require multiple years to complete. The attached list shows projects in priority order. The following tasks are recommended by LMAC for FY20 and FY21.

FY20 – With this strategy being developed after the FY20 budget was passed, there is no money included in the open space budget to support the completion of these tasks, so they will be completed by staff and LMAC as time permits.

- 1. Improvement of the existing Geographical Information System (GIS) framework** – The comprehensive GIS system is managed comprehensively by the Information Technology Department (Jennifer Phinney, IT Director). We

will work with Jen and the Town's GIS consultant Spatial Alternatives to develop a list of improvements to assist in data collection, management and analysis. This will increase accuracy of information and efficiencies in maintaining records, organizing work and communicating with the public. This task will remain a top priority concurrent with all other tasks until implemented. There may be funds available in the IT budget to begin work this year. A funding request appears in FY21.

2. **Develop a comprehensive trail management plan** – While this task was not specifically addressed in the 2018 Open Space Plan, trail management and protection are mentioned. LMAC identified it as a top priority as the town does not have a trail management plan for its approximate 50 miles of trails. The development of a comprehensive policy for management of existing trails and development of new trails is crucial for the success of the recreational component of the open space program. This plan will be coordinated and integrated with individual property management plans. Portions of this work will be more efficient (trail inventorying and rating as well as a work order program) with development of GIS tools for staff and volunteers.
3. **Review and update the Open Space Rating Guides used by LMAC in evaluating potential acquisition and trail properties** – One role of LMAC is to recommend open space properties for purchase by the Council. The new Open Space Plan has modified the goals for acquisition and these need to be incorporated into the rating guides.
4. **Develop and/or update land management plans for all open space properties (Year 1)**. – There are currently fifteen conserved lands that have management plans. Of these, two were updated in 2011, one in 2012, nine in 2013 and the remaining three in 2017. All need to be updated to be integrated with the new Terrestrial Invasives Management and Control Plan developed in 2018, the 2018 Open Space Plan and the Trail Management Plan being developed, as well as a review of management policies and goals.

FY21 – Total budget request estimated at this time is \$10,000. This would purchase a GPS unit for collecting data and support a seasonal position to collect data. As the communication strategy develops there may be a need for publication funds.

1. **Improvement of the existing Geographical Information System (GIS) framework** – Continued priority for all years.
2. **Develop and/or update land management plans for all open space properties (Year 2)**. – Continue to work on plans as time permits.
3. **Improve the ongoing efforts of staff and LMAC by developing a communication and outreach strategy to appropriately apprise/the public of open space**. – Current efforts need to be reviewed and expanded to meet the goals of the Open Space Plan. This effort should be in collaboration with the general Council commitment to public outreach and communication.

LMAC looks forward to working on these projects and trusts that the Council finds value in completing them. We are happy to answer any questions or provide more information.