

# WHAT IS AN OPEN SPACE PLAN?

STRATHAM, NH

*One of the Town's goals identified in the Master Plan is to "Maintain our parks and natural areas in a way that protects our natural resources and balances the needs of people with varied interests and abilities." This can be achieved through community participation and development of an Open Space & Connectivity Plan.*

## SUMMARY

An Open Space & Connectivity Plan will allow the Town of Stratham to create an open space network that balances the protection of significant natural resources, the creation of opportunities for public access and recreation, and the enhancement of community character and desirability. The process for developing a Plan is to prioritize these needs and goals based on community feedback and the existing state of open space in Stratham. The role of the Open Space Planning Committee is to shepherd this process and to ensure that the voices of the community are heard and included in this prioritization exercise.

An Open Space & Connectivity Plan should first include a strong assessment of existing conditions; what we refer to as "The State of Open Space". This assessment should be wide reaching and include an understanding of topics such as existing protected lands, mechanisms and types of land protection currently utilized, public access points, historical and cultural resources, natural resources, trails, connectivity, and more. The existing conditions in Stratham will be summarized using both narrative form and mapping visuals. Utilizing this analysis, the committee can then reference and implement the broad vision and goals outlined in the [Town's Master Plan](#), and identify specific strategies and target areas related to open space to achieve the Town's goals. Strategies should be actionable tools that the community can use for the acquisition, protection, prioritization, and enhancement of open space. They should also include concrete steps the Town can take to implement the Open Space & Connectivity Plan.

## EXAMPLE

Our team at FB Environmental collaborated with project partners and the Open Space Planning Committee to create an [Open Space Plan](#) for the City of South Portland. This was arguably the most successful Plan that we have developed. The City immediately formed an Implementation Committee upon completion of the Plan, incorporated the new prioritization framework for both existing and future open space parcels, as well as acquired and protected critical parcels in the City. The success of this Plan was due to the committee's commitment to developing a Plan with tangible and realistic action items. We hope this Plan can serve as a good example for what an Open Space Plan can look like for Stratham!



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