



Public Workshop 1

# Town of Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan

November 18, 2025

# Meeting Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Plan Overview**
- **Timeline and Process**
- **Focus Group Interviews**
- **Next Steps**



# Introduction



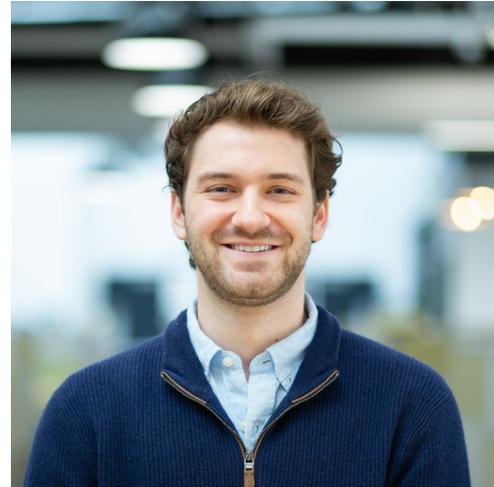
# Consultant Team



**Julia Mintz**  
Project Manager



**Nour ElZein**  
Project Planner



**Matt Dowding**  
Project Planner



**Devon King**  
Project Planner

# What is open space?



**Conservation land**

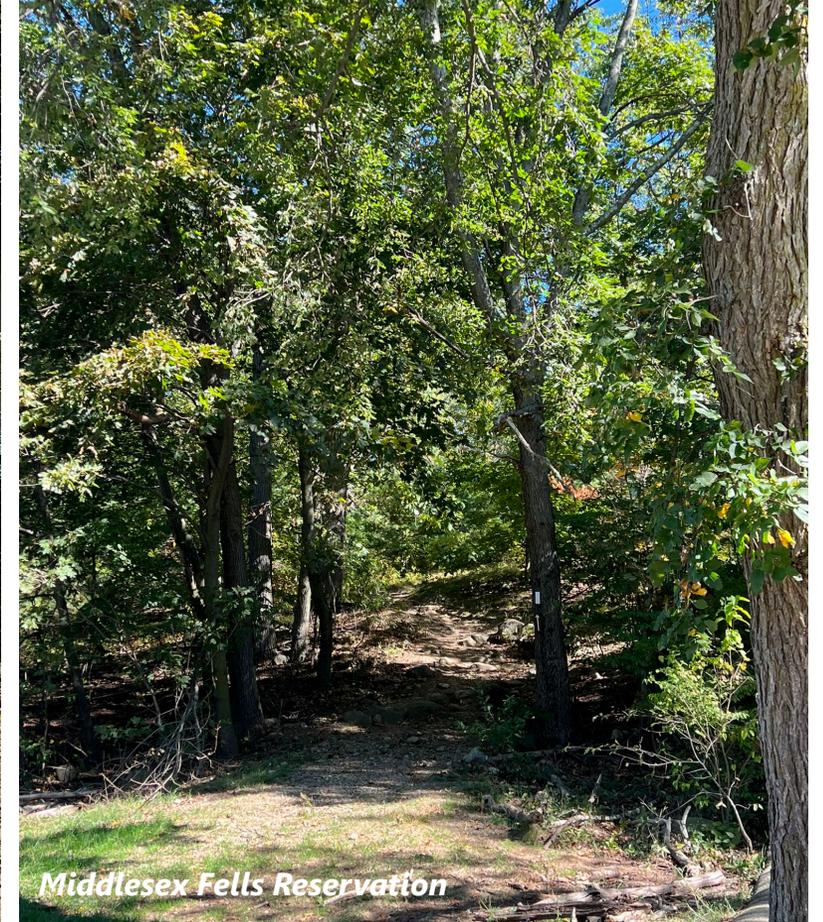
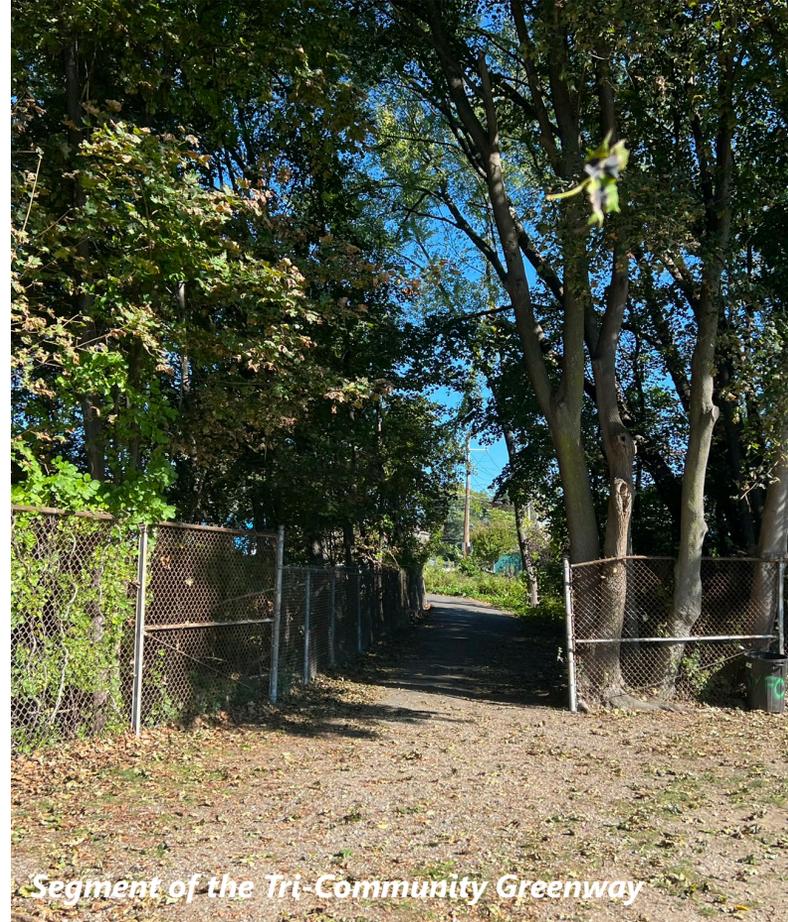
**Forested Land**

**Agricultural Land**

**Public Amenities (Road green buffers,  
Undeveloped land, brownfields, etc.)**

**Recreation Land**

## Open space use: Passive recreation



*Low-impact activities that require no to minimal disturbance of natural/cultural resources, such as walking, hiking, and birdwatching*

## Open space use: Active recreation



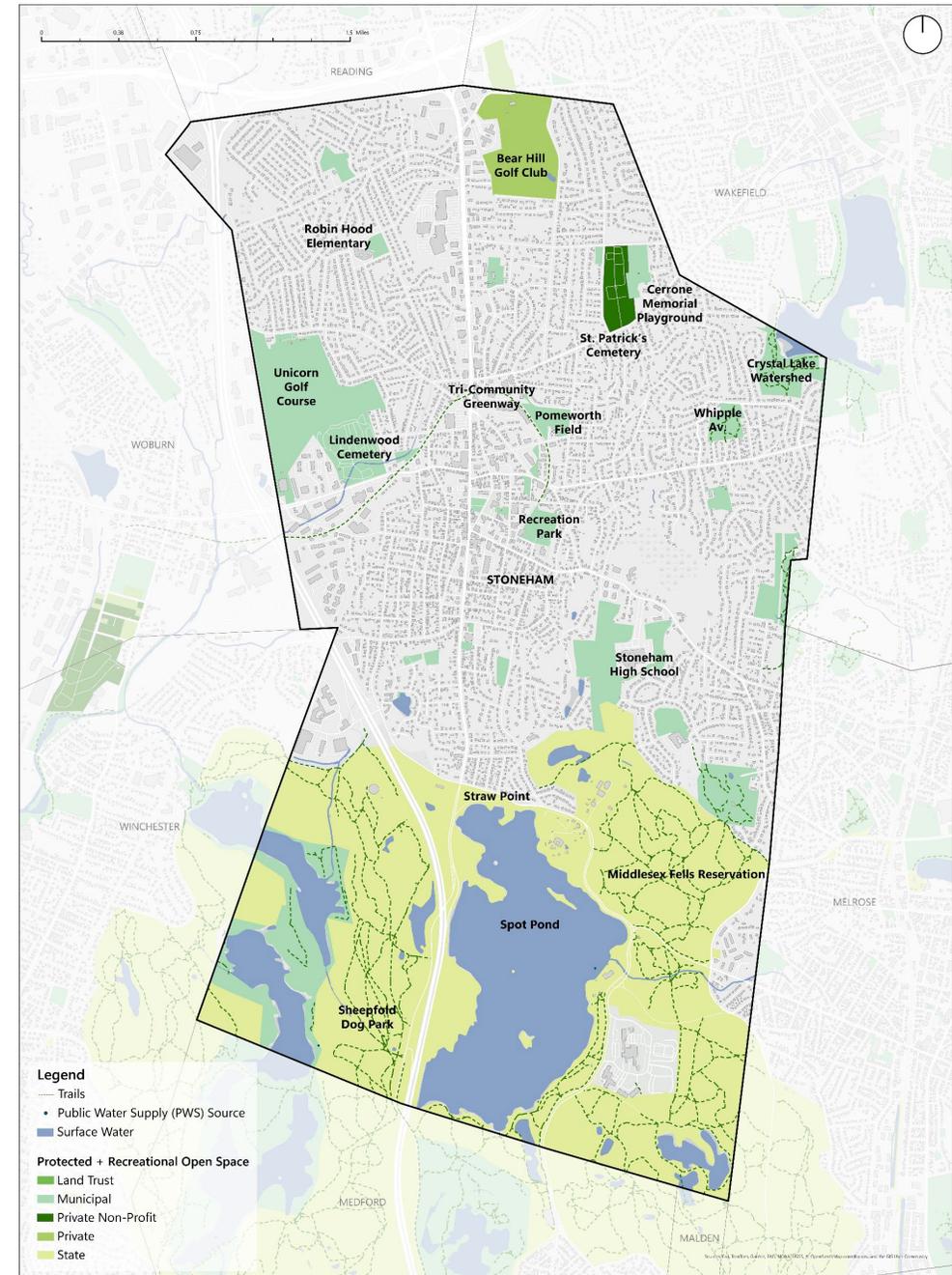
*Recreational activities that require areas that have been significantly modified from their natural condition such as athletic fields and playgrounds*

# Plan Overview



# What is an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)?

- Engages the community to understand local priorities and needs for open space, recreation, and natural resources
- Guides how the Town plans for land use, growth, and climate resiliency through clear goals and strategies
- Makes Stoneham eligible for state grants from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Division of Conservation Services (DCS)



# OSRP State Requirements



1. Plan Summary
2. Introduction
3. Community Setting
4. Environmental Inventory & Analysis
5. Inventory Of Lands Of Conservation & Recreation Interest
6. Analysis Of Needs
7. Goals and Objectives
8. Ten Year Action Plan
9. Public Comments
10. References

# 2018 OSRP Plan Goals

- Implement the Tri-Community Greenway and Stoneham Complete Streets programs to facilitate walking, hiking and bicycling.
- Improve Annual Maintenance of Parks and Recreation and Conservation sites.
- Improve all neighborhood playgrounds, and all town recreation facilities, within the town over the next 10 years.
- Assign Conservation Commission or other committee to work with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on expanded use of Spot Pond and Middlesex Fells Reservation.
- Acquire additional areas for recreational facilities or conservation area.
- Develop a plan for the continuation and expansion of the breadth and frequency of events at the Common, as well as other locations such as Whip Hill Park.
- Expand funding for open space and recreation facilities and programs and improvements.
- Increase public awareness of open space and recreation opportunities.
- Increase management, including by DPW staff as well as volunteers, at some of the smaller, less known, conservation areas.
- Coordinate with other Plans and Boards.

2018 OSRP: 7-year timeline

2026 OSRP: 10-year timeline

## 2018 PLAN UPDATE



## Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan



June 2018

## Timeline & Process



# Timeline

## Project Initiation

- Internal Kickoff Meeting
- External Kickoff Meeting
- Windshield Survey
- Data Review

## Stakeholder Interviews

- Stakeholder Interview #1
- Stakeholder Interview #2
- Stakeholder Interview #3

## Public Engagement

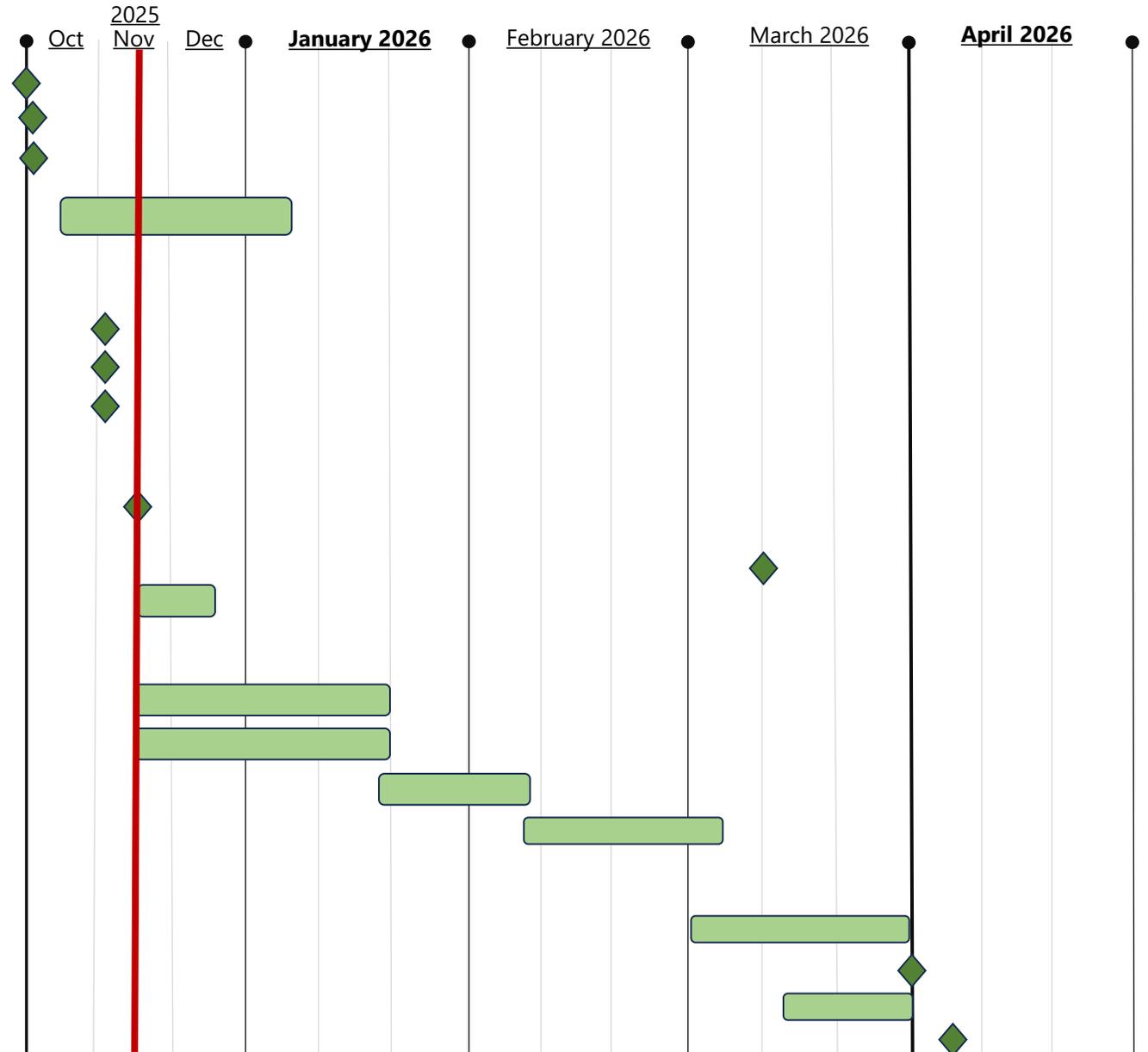
- Public Workshop #1
- Public Workshop #2
- Online Survey

## Plan Production

- Needs Analysis
- Draft Plan
- Committee Review/Comment Period
- DCS Review/Comment Period

## Final Planning

- Final Plan Development
- Final DCS Submission/Approval
- Letters of Support
- Final Submission



*\*\*Additional Activities: Committee Meetings (x5), Local Board/Committee Presentation (x2)*

## Focus Group Interviews



# Focus Group Interview Groups

## Public Facilities

- **Brian Blumsack**, *Town of Stoneham Recreation Director*
- **Brian McNeil**, *Facilities Town Director*
- **Kristen Spence**, *Director on the Council on Ageing*
- **Andrea Baez**, *Chief Operating Officer for the Girls and Boys Club Metro North*

## Recreation & Athletics

- **Brian Blumsack**, *Town of Stoneham Recreation Director*
- **Kyle Manacek**, *Stoneham Little League*
- **David Pignone**, *Athletic Director of Stoneham*
- **Paul Checca**, *President of Stoneham Soccer Club*

## Natural Resources & Environment

- **Brian Blumsack**, *Town of Stoneham Recreation Director*
- **Chris Redfern**, *Executive Director for Friends of the Fells*
- **Brett Gonsalves**, *Stoneham Director of DPW*
- **Jenny Lecoq**, *Founder and Chair of the steering committee for Keep Stoneham Beautiful*

# Focus Group Key takeaways

## Public Facilities

**Aging Infrastructure:** Many buildings, playgrounds, and fields need upgrades and maintenance.

**Limited Funding:** Capital and maintenance budgets restrict improvements and ADA updates.

**Maintenance Gaps:** Upkeep is largely reactive and often dependent on volunteers.

**Access Issues:** Popular sites face parking congestion and traffic safety concerns.

## Recreation and Athletics

**High Demand & Scheduling:** Growing interest in youth and adult sports, including pickleball, creates field shortages and scheduling challenges.

**Indoor Recreation Gaps:** Limited indoor spaces restrict programs, especially in winter and during daytime hours.

**Seasonal Amenities:** Facilities like the ice rink and sledding hills could see more use with better promotion and programming.

**Expanding Nature-Based Recreation:** Trails and greenways are highly valued; more investment could enhance access and experiences for all ages.

## Natural Resources & Environment

**Accessibility Gaps:** Many facilities remain partly non-ADA compliant; improved ramps, paths, and adaptive features are needed.

**Connectivity Needs:** Incomplete sidewalks, missing bike paths, and informal trails limit safe access to open spaces.

**Inclusive Programming:** Older adults and non-athletes need more varied, year-round opportunities.

**Mobility & Access:** On-demand transportation for older adults is valued and could be expanded to support broader access.

## Next Steps



## Participate in the Stoneham OSRP Survey

*Scan to access the Community Survey!*



**<https://arcg.is/rnuGO0>**

Thank you!

