



# Sudbury Master Plan Update Community Conversation

## *Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation*

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As part of its Master Plan update process, the Town of Sudbury hosted a series of **community conversations** throughout October 2019. These individual meetings allowed participants to dig deeper into issues that shape the quality of life in town. A total of five meetings were held at the Lower Meeting Room of Town Hall and focused on the following topics:

- Transportation, Mobility, and Connectivity (Including Complete Streets Projects): October 10
- Economic Resilience, Town Services, and Infrastructure: October 15
- Public Health, Housing, and Equity: October 24
- Historic and Cultural Assets: October 28
- Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation: October 29

The conversations were organized around small group discussions. After a brief presentation on the Master Plan update, an overview of the topic, and what issues in Sudbury were heard to date from prior public input opportunities, participants dove into their conversations. The objectives of these discussions were to understand the full spectrum of issues and needs in Sudbury, gain a better understanding of what direction residents felt the town should be headed, and what types of projects, policies, or initiatives they supported moving forward.

At the tables were topic “primers,” highlighting facts and stats in Sudbury, maps, and other information to inform participants about the issues. Discussions were recorded on flipcharts and personal worksheets if participants chose to use them.

## **Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation**

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Approximately 29 people attended the Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation. **The purpose of this summary is to document what was discussed at the Community Conversations meetings. Below are comments and discussion from those that attended the meetings and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town or new town policies or actions.**

### **1. What current and future issues around natural environment, open space and recreation were missing from the opening presentation?**

**Drinking Water:** Participants discussed the need for more mechanisms to protect water quality and drinking water supply in town as climate change and population increase.

**Climate Change:** Participants voiced concerns about an increase in flooding, downed trees, and powerlines, as storm events strengthen and occur more often due to climate change. These impacts increase road closures and impact evacuation routes during storm events.

**Recreation:** Participants discussed the increased demand for more recreation space, particularly ball fields, for both organized and pick-up sports. Additionally, the Town does not have a large gather space for community events. Funding for maintenance of recreational resources and programming is also an issue.

**Conservation/Open Space:** Participants noted the need for better management of the Town's conservation areas, including trail maintenance and controlling invasive species.

**Accessibility:** There is a need for recreational and conservation areas to be more accessible for persons with disabilities.

**Education:** Participants noted that there is a lack of education about invasive species and how to properly dispose of waste, specifically dog waste.

## 2. Based on these issues, where should we be headed and how do we get there?

**Climate Change and Natural Hazards:** Because they were concerned about the impacts of climate change, participants felt the Town should be proactive in adapting and mitigating these impacts. They highlighted the importance of moving forward with the efforts of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program in Sudbury.

**Connectivity:** Existing recreation and conservation areas can be linked together through the rail trail system. These connections should also integrate links to neighborhoods and commercial areas to encourage more walking and biking to do daily errands, which improves physical and mental health. Connecting these resources to schools can encourage youth environmental stewardship programs.

Where connections cannot be made off-road, it will be a challenge to incorporate more walkways and bikeways along local streets. However, where there are opportunities within the right-of-way, connections should be made to a larger walking and biking network.

**Addressing Needs of All Residents:** Planning for future recreational resources needs to consider demographic changes in the community, such as the growing number of older residents. Increasing opportunities for those with disabilities should also be a priority. The Town needs to examine and address barriers to accessibility at existing resources and ensure that new facilities are accessible where possible.

**Conservation Area Management:** Participants noted the need for better management of land acquisition. They suggest the town should prioritize lands to acquire, which would allow for a process and methodology. Participants also discussed the need to focus on maintaining existing resources before acquiring new ones.

Managing conservation areas is also an issue and participants suggested developing an invasive species management plan.

**Natural Resource Management:** Sudbury's natural resources contribute to its sense of place, and much of these resources are on privately owned land. Participants talked about public outreach and education on the importance of protecting natural resources on their properties as well as promoting environmental stewardship. This includes the management of trees, water usage during drought, and stormwater management.

**Recreational Spaces:** There is an increasing demand for sports fields and more diverse recreational programming. To increase sports fields availability, residents suggest revisiting the field agreement with the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. They also suggest looking at ways to improve programming for better utilization of spaces and fields.

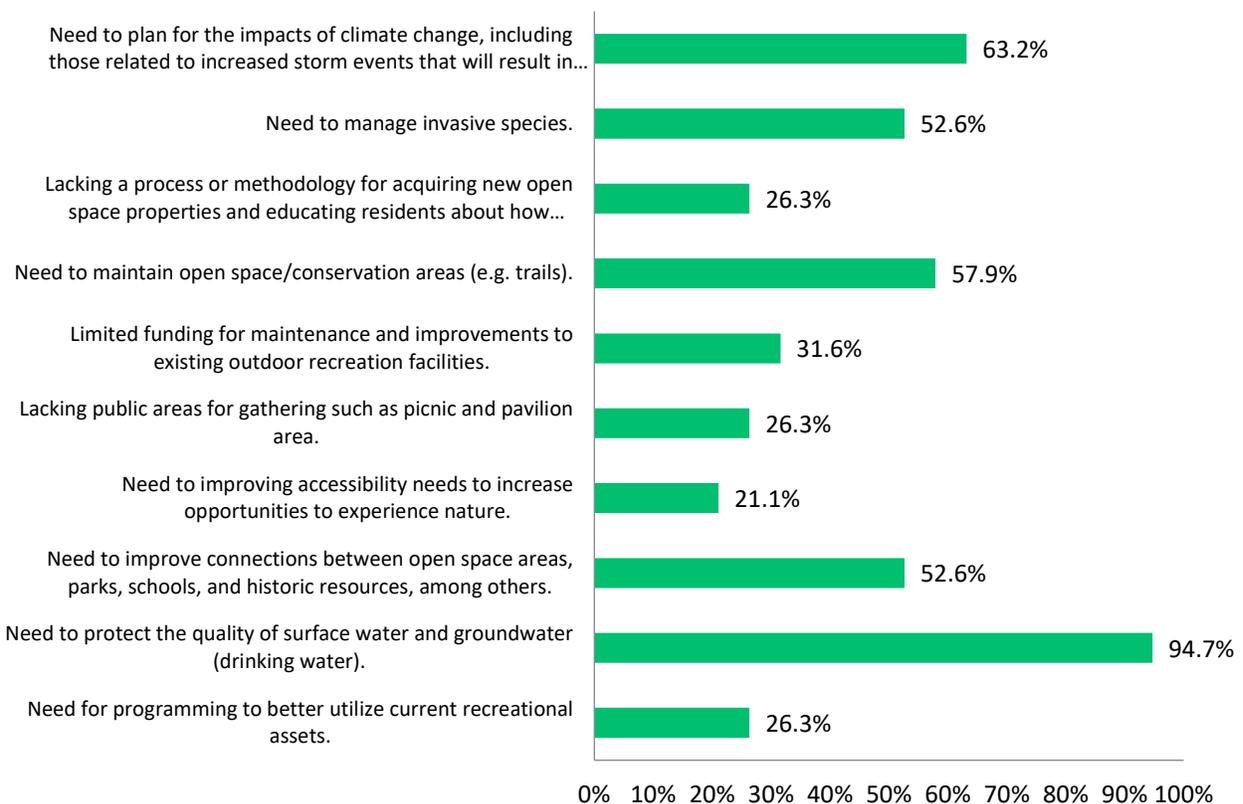
**Funding:** Participants suggested re-examining funding allocation for the maintenance of recreation facilities to increase resources dedicated for capital planning.

## Follow-up Survey

Following the Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation community conversation on October 29, 2019, the Town administered an online survey to provide an opportunity for those who could not attend the meeting to give input on the questions asked during small group discussions. Similar to the community conversation, the goal of the survey is to understand issues that are important to residents, what is working to address the issues and ideas on how the Town should move forward. The survey was available from November 6-15, 2019, and 19 people responded.

**The purpose of this summary is to document comments and feedback through the survey. Below are comments and discussion from those that took the survey and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town and new town policies or actions.**

1.) The following issues were identified at the public meeting on October 29th. Please select issues with which you agree. (Answered: 19, Skipped: 0)



Other issues are we missing? (Answered: 7, Skipped: 12)

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| Need to develop/construct additional playing fields.   | Underutilization of school facilities for general public recreation programs when school not in session. |
| Reservation systems for fields/courts to encourage use and generate stats on usage, ensure adequate availability of fields | Too much development. Roads need to be widened.<br>Reduce effluent from existing building                |

Maintenance/capital replacement of facilities like fields and the Atkinson Pool.	Need for a plan for the Camp Sewataro property
Need to consider negative effects of rail trails e.g. rumor of Cavicchios selling if rail trail	goes through. The town should work with them to find a mutually agreeable solution

2.) What is the Town doing that is working and/or what could be better? (Answered: 10, Skipped: 9)

Continue/improve communications with regional land conservation groups such as SVT.	The Town needs to be more strategic about our sharing facilities with Lincoln-Sudbury High School.
Good conservation lands, good athletic fields.	Sudbury correctly places a high value on our open space and natural resources.
The Towns open space plan prioritizes parcels for purchase needs to be updated	Tear down strip malls, car dealers and condos
Attention to preserving and expanding open space.	Be more proactive in offsetting our collective carbon emissions and stop using herbicides and reduce pesticides.
Need open space inventory to see what percentage of the town is still consider open space.	

3.) What are some new ideas the Town should be thinking about? (include specific locations, if applicable.) (Answered: 9, Skipped: 10)

Need more sidewalks and connecting trails, bike lanes.	Add traffic capacity. Tear down shopping plazas and restore fields and farms
Bury Power Lines and keep Broadacress pristine (not housing)	Build a town hockey rink (recreation) at a location such as Davis Field, Sewataro or at the High School
Organize community events — weekend soccer/softball tournaments for adults and families	Maintain current resources before acquiring more.
Support and collaborate with user groups for organized sports and field maintenance.	Have SPS admin and Park and Rec indoor programming operate out of small annex on school property.
Partner with Lincoln or Concord for an indoor pool in near term.	We could expand the sale of Transfer Station stickers to cover resident “beach sticker.”
Get revenue from long term ground lease of Fairbanks to redevelop Fairbanks property with age 55+ apartments, a new Senior Center, and professional space	We should offer outdoor swimming at Sewataro for residents, and add a sidewalk on Haynes RD from Bruce Freeman to Sewataro.
Assess if a YMCA or pool/rink operator would build and operate an Atkinson pool replacement on leased town property (at LS?)	Bike registrations sent out with census (like pets, with a nominal fee) to collect data and funds for maintaining sidewalks and rail trails

## Respondents Profile

Comparing the demographics of survey respondents to the overall town population can help understand if responses are representative of the community and if we are reaching all residents.

### How long have you lived in Sudbury? (Answered: 18, Skipped: 1)

Less than 2 years	0.0%
2-5 years	0.0%
6-10 years	16.7%
More than 10 years	83.3%
Not a resident	0.0%

### Which geographic area in Sudbury most closely represents the area you reside?

(Answered: 17, Skipped: 2)

North Sudbury	29.4%
Central Sudbury	41.2%
South Sudbury	29.4%
Other (please specify)	0.0%

### What is your race/ethnicity? (Answered: 18, Skipped: 1)

American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Asian	5.6%
Black or African American	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.0%
White	72.2%
I prefer not to answer.	22.2%
Other (please specify)	0.0%

### How old are you? (Answered: 18, Skipped: 1)

Under 18	0.0%	36-45	16.7%
18-25	3.0%	46-65	44.4%
26-35	0.0%	Over 65	38.9%

# ATTACHMENT

## Participant Worksheets from Community Conversation Meeting

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During the Community Conversation meeting, participants were encouraged to answer the questions on the Participant Worksheets. **The following are transcribed from the worksheets and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town or new town policies or actions.**

1. What current and future issues around Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation were missing from the opening presentation?

- Conduct GIS analysis and Buildout analysis to see the number of parcels and density.
- Flood plain alteration
- Homeowner educational program