

Salem Open Space Plan Update

4/3/2025 DRAFT Planning Priorities from Salem Documents

This document is the summary of goals and priorities identified by RPC from existing Salem documents with goals and priorities related to open space protection. The specific goals and priorities from those source documents are identified, along with associated links. **The goal at the April 3, 2025 meeting is to discuss if the Task Force feels these statements reflect the open space planning priorities for Salem, and then how to prioritize them in the context of the data and practical aspects of identifying open space protection actions.**

RPC Identified Salem Open Space Planning Priorities

- Purchase easements for flood mitigation, landslides, subsidence (2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan)
- Connect Town Center with open space and neighborhoods (2024 draft Master Plan)
- Invest in gathering places that connect residents with nature through recreation and entertainment (2024 draft Master Plan)
- Connect parks, open spaces, waterways through recreational access (2024 draft Master Plan)
- Promote and implement environmental conservation projects to enhance the natural resources and beauty of the town (2024 Town Wide Goals)
- Identifies and maps habitat blocks and wildlife corridors, especially the Spicket River corridor (2023 Saving a Place for Wildlife)

Reviewed Supporting Documents:

Town of Salem Open Space Report 2010

The existing Open Space Plan does not provide strong justification or prioritization based on supporting documentation

Town of Salem Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2018

p. 82 - Hazard Mitigation Actions include purchase of easements for mitigating flooding, landslides, subsidence

Town of Salem Master Plan 2024 draft – Adoption anticipated in April 2025

p. 8 – Vision Statement – “Central to this vision is a vibrant Town Center that connects Salem’s beautiful natural spaces and residential neighborhoods.”

p. 25 – Connectivity & Recreation Enhancements – Depot Village Advisory Committee will create a vision and master plan for the Town and State-owned parcels in Depot Village to “guide future recreational and community open space development on publicly owned parcels.”

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p. 40 – Guiding Principles – “Invest in public infrastructure and gathering places that connect residents with nature and each other through recreation and entertainment.”

p. 80 – Gathering Spaces – “Focusing on reinforcing Salem’s gathering spaces also provides a spatial framework for protecting the Town’s natural areas.”

p. 89 – Gathering Spaces – Enhance and Expand Parks and Open Spaces – “Continue to invest in recreational access to the Town’s rich natural resources, especially those mentioned in the Master Plan engagement (see Recreation wishlist for details.)”

“There was a broad interest in:

- A linked network of quality parks, open spaces, and waterways specifically through bike trails.
- Recreation-based spaces as a way to address the need for gathering spaces for residents to meet.
- Beautification and access to natural resource such as public waterbodies.”

p. 89 - “Recreation Wishlist:

- Completion of the Rail Trail with dedicated parking
- Water access and enhancement at Millville Lake, Arlington Pond, Spicket River, and Bodwell Pond
- More playgrounds, fields, courts (pickleball)
- Dog park
- Skate park
- Splash pad and/or swimming pool
- Hedgehog Park air quality, lighting, and amenities like benches and trash receptacles
- Creative reuse of former Wastewater Treatment Plan
- Parks geared toward passive recreation
- Town Forest trail network
- Educational signage on local wildlife
- Public toilets
- Enhanced lighting

Town of Salem Zoning Ordinance - [Article VII Open Space Preservation](#)

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- Purpose to support preservation of undeveloped land per Master Plan & Open Space Plan.
- Compact development to preservation, infrastructure efficiency, recreation and natural resource protection.

2024 Conservation Commission Goals:

- Continue conservation easement monitoring and identify conservation easement problem areas
- Create pollinator gardens and develop preservation and O & M plans on Conservation and/or Town owned property
- Explore options at Meadow Glen
- Complete Bill Valentine Park improvements per existing plans
- Schedule Town Forest Maintenance/Clean Up day annually
- Discuss and implement solutions to trails needing attention, review and update trail markings as needed
- Create RFP/Q for design-build, including permitting, to construct a handicapped accessible bridge over wetland and other trail work on Trail F
- Work with Code Enforcement Officer regarding encroachments identified by SELT
- Explore measure to maintain the condition of the bridge leading from parking lot to Town Forest
- Explore measures to address changing water levels effect on the trail system

2024 Town Wide Goals (Departments and Committees)

Environmental Sustainability and Conservation objectives:

- Promote and implement environmental conservation projects to enhance the natural resources and beauty of the town (e.g., Bill Valentine park improvements, Town Forest pollinators plantings).
- Update and enforce regulations to protect the town's wetlands and other natural habitats (e.g., updating the Wetland Ordinance).
- Support sustainable infrastructure development and the use of green technologies in town projects (e.g. sustainable planning for the Bike Ped Corridor, asset management programs in Municipal Services).

Saving a Place for Wildlife, 2023 StoryMap

- Identifies and maps habitat blocks and wildlife corridors
- Highlights the Spicket River corridor

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- Recommends actions for property management to foster wildlife habitat and native species

Forest Management Plan for the Salem Town Forest 2018

General Recommendations include timber harvesting for habitat improvement and protection, water quality protection, yearly trail maintenance, and using educational signage and brochures.

Salem Capital Improvement Plan

There is no mention of open space or conservation planning in the [CIP](#).