



Hudson Master Plan Public Forum

Open Space, Recreation, and Historical Resources Summary Report

On Monday, January 14, 2013, the Town of Hudson convened a public forum to discuss the topics of open space, recreation, and historical resources for the 2013 Master Plan Update project. Approximately 50 people attended the forum, which was held at Town Hall from 7:00 PM until 9:30 PM. In addition to members of the public, the forum was attended by Michelle Ciccolo, Community Development Director; Linda Ghiloni, Parks and Recreation Director; Jennifer Burke, Planning Director; Kerin Shea, Community and Economic Development Assistant; Rodney Frias, Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee; members of the Master Plan Steering Committee; and representatives from the consulting team (Geoffrey Morrison-Logan, Alyssa Sandoval, AICP, and Nicole Benjamin-Ma). The following sections provide the results from the interactive group survey during the presentation and the results of the break out group discussions.

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, HISTORICAL RESOURCES SURVEY QUESTIONS

SURVEY

1. How long have you lived in Hudson?

1. Less than 1 year (2%)
2. 2 – 5 years (4%)
3. 6 – 10 years (11%)
4. 10 – 20 years (26%)
5. Over 20 years (54%)
6. Don't live here (2%)

2. How often do you use the active recreational facilities in Hudson?

1. Never, but would like to start (43%)
2. At least once a month (23%)
3. At least three times a month (16%)
4. At least once every week (7%)
5. Lost count (11%)

3. How often do you visit open space areas in Hudson for hiking, walking, or picnicking?

1. Never, but would like to start (33%)
2. At least once a month (31%)

3. At least three times a month (9%)
4. At least once every week (11%)
5. Lost count (16%)

4. What is the most common activity you do when you visit a Hudson park or open space area?

1. Walking/hiking (58%)
2. Biking (5%)
3. Using the ball fields (12%)
4. Playground/tot lot activities for kids (5%)
5. Picnicking (0%)
6. Boating/fishing (9%)
7. Aesthetics/views (5%)
8. Historical/cultural (7%)

5. How do you get to your favorite open space area or park?

1. Drive (59%)
2. Bike (7%)
3. Transit (0%)
4. Walk (34%)

6. Do you believe that your neighborhood has easy access to either a passive or active park and recreation facility?

1. Yes, within walking distance (62%)
2. Yes, short drive (31%)
3. Somewhat hard to get to (4%)
4. No, very difficult to get to (2%)

7. How can your neighborhood be better served?

1. New park or open space area (9%)
2. Expansion of existing park allowing different uses (23%)
3. Better connection between neighborhood and park (28%)
4. Doesn't really matter to me (40%)

8. What are the 3 most important issues regarding the Town's recreational and natural open spaces?

1. Maintenance (17%)
2. Insufficient parks/ playing fields (3%)
3. Parking (8%)
4. Loss of open space (11%)
5. Connectivity of open spaces/trails (16%)
6. Limits on use (7%)
7. Accessibility to Assabet River (16%)

8. Dogs (13%) Note: clarification added that this means need for a dog park
9. Condition of fields and Equipment (9%)

9. What should Hudson's first priority be to protect historical resources?

1. Protect historic buildings (31%)
2. Protect historic neighborhoods (13%)
3. Protect historic landscapes/scenic views (33%)
4. Protect scenic roads and stone walls (4%)
5. Protect and enhance connections to Hudson's cultural history (18%)

BREAK OUT GROUPS

The next part of the forum involved three breakout groups. Each attendee at the forum had an opportunity to participate in a break out group that discussed a series of discussion questions for a 50-minute period.

The following is a summary of the reports from each of the groups.

1. How can the Town make the public more aware of the open space, recreation, historic and cultural resources in Hudson?

Group 1:

- Notices through schools
- Senior Center newsletter
- Handout on Rail Trail (map)
- Scavenger hunt for kids - get something from each point in Hudson - tie in with Earth Day
- Map for Rail Trail with the locations of parking lots as well as all parks in Hudson
- Information table about Hudson parks at different community events
- Explore a sponsorship with one of the groups to see if they would do a public hike/walk

Group 2:

- Partner with schools
- Marketing flyers - hand out at fest
- Slideshow on website
- Interactive map of recreational facilities
- Community access TV
- Events - block party
- Earth Day - Town Fest
- The Bard in the Park
- 10K race (or 5K)
- Scavenger Hunt

Group 3:

- Access of info on website
- Pamphlets for each recreational facility
- Facebook page?

2. Given what has been accomplished to date and what still needs to be done, discuss the main priorities for the Town over the next few years.

Group 1:

- Moulton Field
 - Needs improvement
 - Better lighting
 - This park is an asset because there are few outdoor basketball courts in Hudson
 - Farina Field (Cox Street)
- Obtain easements for walking loop at Portuguese Club
- Canoe access on Assabet River
- Improved motorboat ramp on Fort Meadows Reservoir
- Need a dog park
- The Town should investigate whether Hudson Catholic would be a good location for a Community Center. There is a need for publicly accessible indoor recreational space.

Group 2:

- Dog park
- Prioritize existing parks
- How can we answer if we don't know what is "out there"
- Neighborhood parks
- Larger parks (Danforth, Rail Trail)
- Empty trash cans!
- Apsley Park - Implement existing master plan to rehab! – boat launch

Group 3:

- Kayak launch, school field, limited access to water resources
- Explore access behind High School to water
- Danforth Park maintenance seems lacking
- Improved access for boating
- Additional trails - Danforth, Wells, Gates (not Hudson)
- CPA funding
- Sidewalk on Chapin and River Streets
- Poison ivy maintenance
- Professional maintenance at Tripps Pond
- Trail all the way around Tripps Pond
- Gates Pond - dog park (not allowed) – need better dog control since this is a Town water source

3. Where should the Town focus its efforts in providing better connections between parks and adjacent neighborhoods and between parks and open spaces?

Group 1:

- Cultural District Designation – this would allow Hudson to provide better connections between open space, arts/cultural resources, and historical resources

Group 2:

- Should not have to check ownership prior to use!
- Rail Trail to Cellucci to Liberty Park
- Boat launch behind Fire Station
- Multi-generational access (older people)
- River getting clogged with invasive species

Group 3:

- Extension of Rail Trail to Maynard, Stow
- Central Mass Rail Trail
- Alternate access points to parks/trails
- Sidewalk systems in town
- River Street/River Road on the Berlin side
- Signage
- Parking

4. What are the benefits of historic preservation to the Town of Hudson? What tools would be most effective in preserving historic resources?

Group 1:

- Cultural District Designation
 - Arts District - community already has a thriving arts and theater community
 - Capitalize on what Hudson has
- Pursue Demolition Delay

Group 2:

- Older houses
- Commercial buildings downtown
- Demolition delay - Historical Society approval
- Balance property rights with community atmosphere
- Local (area) historical districts
- Architectural conservation district
- Recognize ancestors' contributions

Group 3:

- ID dates for historical resources
- Demolition delay - historic district
- Improve connections between resources marking signage
- Fix zoning
- Central Street inventory more research
- Park Street near Apsley park
- Parts of Lincoln and Pleasant
- Apsley Mansion
- Old mansions for National Registry
- Pond next to Senior Center