

APPENDIX F | COMMENT LETTERS

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One Mercantile Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608
www.cmrpc.org

Janet A. Pierce
Trish Settles
Sujatha Mohanakrishnan
Diane Shea
Robert Hassinger

Executive Director
Deputy Director
Deputy Director
Business Mgr.
Commission Chair

May 20, 2021

Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St., Ste. 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: City of Worcester 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan;

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is writing this letter in support of the City of Worcester and its recently completed 2020-2027 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The City and the Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission are to be commended for their hard work putting this Plan together.

The authors have done a very thorough job and the final document appears compliant with the standards for such plans as promulgated by your office. Worcester has recognized the need to balance new development to accommodate its projected population growth with the need to protect open space. The plan also acknowledges the importance of preserving the City's environmental assets like water and air quality, habitat and wildlife corridors, and tree canopy, which contributes to the entire region's environmental health. The plan also correctly emphasizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to open space and recreational opportunities across the City. Lastly, this plan acknowledges the necessity of adapting open spaces to climate change-related hazards like flooding, and leverages the opportunity to enhance the City's overall resilience through strategic open space planning.

Worcester's Open Space and Recreation Plan provides the City with the specific guidance and action steps needed to accomplish its goals and objectives. Maybe most importantly, Worcester's Plan balances growth with open space preservation and maintenance to protect environmental quality, protect the City's unique historic assets and character, and meet the City's current and future needs for active and passive recreation.

The City of Worcester will be well served by having a State-approved, up-to-date plan, which will help develop its recreation facilities and programs, and preserve and protect its valuable open spaces and natural resources.

Please consider this letter to be a demonstration of CMRPC's support for the Plan and the process used to develop it. We find Worcester's Plan to be fully consistent with CMRPC's 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts (2000), its 2004 Update, and the 495 MetroWest Development Compact Plan, (2012). We believe that the plan is also consistent with and supportive of the 2017 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Trish" followed by a stylized surname.

Trish Settles, AICP
Deputy Director

Cc: Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission
Worcester Department of Public Works and Parks
Worcester City Council

**City of Worcester, Massachusetts
Planning Board**

Albert LaValley
Chair



Eleanor Gilmore – *Clerk*
Conor McCormack
Edward Moynihan

June 9, 2021

Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: City of Worcester's Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan (2020 Update)

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Worcester Planning Board has reviewed the City's draft of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Update (2020-2027) and voted at its meeting of May 26, 2021 to offer support for the Plan which we believe the Plan will serve the City well in coming years.

The Board specifically recognized the critically important role of the Plan in creating high quality recreational spaces and programs for Worcester residents, while preserving open space and protecting our environment. In particular, we identified the strengths of the Plan as its focus on equitable access to open space in environmental justice neighborhoods, emphasis on building an open space network to improve quality of life for all communities - especially in dense urban neighborhoods, and encouragement of creative strategies for land acquisition (e.g., via tax title) to return properties to beneficial uses for the public.

Overall, the Board found the draft Plan comprehensive and informative and we look forward to the incorporation of its recommendations into other long-range planning initiatives, including the *Worcester Now* | *Worcester Next* citywide master plan to begin later this year.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Albert LaValley
Chair

City of Worcester Planning Board
Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street, Room 404 (4th floor), Worcester, Massachusetts 01608
Telephone: (508) 799-1400 x31440 Fax: (508) 799-1406
Email: planning@worcestermass.gov
Website: www.worcestermass.gov/planning-regulatory





Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Letter of Review of the Worcester Open Space & Recreation Plan

Ms. Cryan:

The Worcester Open Space & Recreation Plan (2021) is the result of a collaborative effort between Worcester residents, community stakeholders, and the City of Worcester. The plan was delayed due to the Covid19 pandemic but final development of the plan was fostered through and extensive public outreach effort that included an online survey that generated over 1,000 responses, targeted stakeholder engagement, and over twenty meetings throughout the community to gather/confirm information, set goals/objectives and develop a seven year action plan.

The plan updates the prior 2013 Open Space & Recreation Plan to reflect many achievements to date, including capital improvements at 22 locations through the city, with an additional 10 plans in process, as well as the completion of 19 master plans specific to park and open space properties. More than 61 detailed site assessments were conducted, which will serve as valuable resources for current and future park improvement planning activities. Looking forward, the plan's goals and objectives were refined and expanded to incorporate new priorities, such as improving resiliency of City open spaces and funding new programs and facilities to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I enthusiastically endorse this effort and I respectfully submit the Worcester Open Space & Recreation Plan (2021).

Sincerely,

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



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cm2022jan31041114

CITY OF WORCESTER

In Committee

April 14, 2022

The Committee on Veterans' Memorials, Parks And Recreation to whom was referred February 8, 2022 the Communication of City Manager Transmitting informational communication relative to the resubmittal of the City of Worcester's Open Space and Recreation Plan; having considered the same, most respectfully reports recommending adoption of the accompanying Order.

For the Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nelson Vega", is written over a rectangular area with a light gray dot grid pattern.

Clerk

cm2022jan31041114

CITY OF WORCESTER

ORDERED: That

The City Council does hereby approve the Open Space and Recreation Plan, as submitted by the City of Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission.