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December 23, 2009

Ken Parker  
Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee  
46 Brookside Avenue  
Webster MA 01570

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Mr. Parker:

Thank you for submitting Webster's expanded Open Space and Recreation Plan Action Plan to this office for review. I am pleased to write that the plan has been approved for an additional two years. This will allow Webster to participate in DCS grant rounds through March 2016.

Congratulations on a great job. Please call me at (617) 626-1171 if you have any questions or concerns about the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Cryan".

Melissa Cryan  
Grants Manager

## SECTION 9 - SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

**Important Note:** Successful implementation and completion of any of these strategies is contingent upon sufficient availability of funding and staffing levels in the appropriate department, board or commission assumed to be responsible for each individual strategy. Currently, the Town of Webster is without some key staff, commissions and/or boards that could be valuable assets in the implementation of this Plan. These include a Town Planner, an active Historical Commission, a Recreation Committee, and a standing Open Space Committee. This is not to say that the Open Space and Recreation Plan cannot be implemented without them, rather it is to say that the creation of these would ease the implementation and magnify the results. Additionally, it is imperative that the Open Space and Recreation Plan be posted on the Town’s website and be made available at the library and town hall so that all who are interested can have adequate access to the Plan. Likewise, projected timeframes may need to change depending upon the availability of funding and staffing. Where possible funding sources and/or technical assistance is indicated for the various action items. Since many actions are of a planning or coordinating nature to be carried out by town employees, “town budget” is the listed funding source. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds is listed as a potential source, though the town has not taken the necessary action to adopt it at town meeting. Some potential funding sources are detailed in Appendix A.

A graphic depiction of the Town’s Seven - Year Action Plan can be seen on the map that follows the matrix below (Map 6: Action Plan Map).

### Goal A. Protect large areas of undeveloped space in Webster.

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Acquire more land for conservation and passive recreation in Webster.</b>			
a. Hire a town planner, whose duties would be to coordinate the acquisition of land.	1	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget, CPA
b. Create and maintain an open space map that includes all protected open space, all chapter lands, all unbuilt town owned property, all tax-title property, and tracts of undeveloped private property.	1	Open Space Committee, Assessor	Town Budget, CPA, CMRPC, Mass GIS
c. Post the newly created open space map on the town’s website.	2	Town Administrator	Town Budget
d. Develop, with public input, a priority list for land acquisition/protection, preserving the ability to expend funds on targets of opportunity.	2	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget

e. Develop a working relationship with a local land trust.	2	Open Space Committee	Town Budget, Dudley Land Trust
f. Develop a presentation/handbook for landowners and officials on ways to protect land.	2-3	Open Space Committee, ConCom	Town Budget, Dudley Land Trust
g. Establish policies and procedures to ensure all tax-title property is considered for public use prior to disposal.	3	Town Administrator	Town Budget
h. Establish policies and procedures for timely decision making on exercising the town's rights regarding chapter lands.	1	Planner, Town Administrator	Town Budget
i. Research available funding tools, including the Community Preservation Act.	Ongoing	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget
j. Establish and begin to implement a schedule of grant writing and fundraising.	3	Planner	Town Budget
k. Acquire the first property under this program	5	Planner, Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget, CPA, LAND program
l. acquire the second property under this program	7	Planner, Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget, CPA, LAND program
<b>2. Educate the citizens, school children, and Town officials in Webster about open space issues and the role they play in the community's redevelopment.</b>			
a. Begin an education campaign about the benefits, focusing on historic preservation and open space, of adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA).	2	Open Space Committee	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Prepare a town meeting article proposing the adoption of the CPA.	3-4	Town Administrator, Open Space Committee	No funding required, volunteer effort
c. Create an informational packet that explains the powers and limitations of Town boards and commissions. This packet would be distributed to prospective and new members to ease their transition into public service.	1	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget

d. Develop a policy and budget funding to allow members of town boards and commissions to participate in training and conferences annually.	Ongoing	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget
e. Encourage the Webster Education Foundation to develop a relationship with in-town conservation groups	5-7	Planner, WEF, WLA, FRC	Volunteer fundraising
<b>3. Increase open space within land that is to be developed.</b>			
a. Create open space residential development bylaw which allows smaller lots in exchange for open spaces subject to approval by the ConCom and Planning Board site reviews.	1	Planner, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Create a manual for developers, surveyors and engineers, as a guide to planning for open space.	4	Planning Board	Town Budget
c. Use the open space map as a guide to create the most desirable tracts of open space across development boundaries.	Ongoing	Open Space Committee	Town Budget
d. Create incentives for developers to create recreation areas, open land, and wildlife corridors.	4-5	Planning Board	Town Budget, Agricultural Preservation and Conservation Restrictions, Chapter 61 tax benefits
e. Adopt and implement the Smarter Land Use Program	5-7	Planner, BOS, Planning Board, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget
<b>4. Implement the French River Greenway.</b>			
a. Promote the release of \$250,000 in planning funds earmarked in the Acts of 2006 and the Environmental Bond Bill of 2008.	1	BOS	Town Budget

b. Work with other trail interests to maximize connections.	Ongoing	French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, MHD, Fed Land and Water Conservation Fund, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
c. Identify preferred routes within Webster.	2-3	French River Connection, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, FRC, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
d. Identify segments for acquisition of rights and completion of engineering.	3-4	French River Connection, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, FRC, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
e. Educate the public and landowners on the benefits of the greenway; seek input on public preferences regarding its uses.	3	French River Connection	Town Budget, Greenways and Trails Demo Grant Prog.
f. Identify funding needs and sources.	Ongoing	Planner, French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC
g. Submit grant requests as required to complete French River Park section	2	Planner, French River Connection, Office of Community Development	Town Budget, Community Development Block Grants
h. Submit grant requests as required to complete Webster Riverwalk section	4	Planner, French River Connection, Office of Community Development	Town Budget, Office of Community development

i Submit grant requests as required to complete a third section	6	Planner, French River Connection, Office of Community Development	Town Budget, Office of Community development
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**Goal B. Preserve Webster’s natural resources, especially its remaining open space, wetland and wildlife communities and scenic views.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Preserve and protect watersheds to ensure water quality and maintain wildlife habitat.</b>			
a. Review the lake watershed protection district by-law and make changes as experience dictates.	4-5	ConCom, Planning Board, Webster Lake Association	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Consider extending appropriate elements of the lake watershed protection district to the French River.	4-5	ConCom, Planning Board	Town Budget, WLA, FRC, CMRPC
c. Present a French River watershed protection district by-law to the town meeting	6	Planning Board	Town budget
d. Ensure open space priorities appropriately consider core habitat, supporting habitat, and living waters areas.	2-5	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, DCR
e. Incorporate waterside parcels in the open space priority list.	2	Open Space Committee, Webster Lake Association, French River Connection	Town Budget
f. Identify funding sources that apply to river/stream/lake/pond protection and restoration and schedule a list of grant request submittals.	Ongoing	Planner, Webster lake Association, French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, WLA
<b>2. Protect water supply sites</b>			

a. Identify threats to wellfield water quality.	Ongoing	Board of Health, DPW	Town Budget, DEP Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
b. Upgrade and maintain town-owned wells to ensure their long-term viability as a potable water source.	Ongoing	DPW	Town Budget, DEP Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
<b>3. Protect important wetland resources areas throughout Town</b>			
a. Determine needed elements of a wetlands protection by-law.	1	ConCom	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Draft by-law and create an informational presentation for the public.	2-3	ConCom	Town Budget
c. Present a Wetland Protection Bylaw for passage at a town meeting.	3-4	ConCom	Town Budget
<b>4. Identify and certify vernal pools.</b>			
a. Map certified and potential vernal pools, locating them on parcels.	2	Open Space Committee, ConCom	Town Budget, Volunteer Effort, DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
b. Work with state agencies to educate the public on vernal pools.	2-3	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife

c. Establish a “citizen science” program to submit data to certify vernal pools and identify additional potential vernal pools.	3-5	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, volunteer effort, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
d. Complete certification activity for all identified vernal pool candidates	7	ConCom, Open Space Committee	Town Budget, volunteer effort, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>5. Develop town-wide best management practices for the collection and treatment of stormwater.</b>			
a. Develop a stormwater management bylaw which would dictate structural and non-structural management techniques and would include provisions for maintenance and upkeep.	2-3	DPW, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC, DEP
b. Create a guidebook for developers that explains the requirements of the new stormwater bylaw.	4-5	DPW, Planning Board	Town Budget, DEP
c. Investigate the implementation of Low Impact Development stormwater techniques.	4-5	DPW, Planning Board, ConCom	Town Budget, DEP
d. Incorporate guidance for the implementation of low impact techniques in appropriate by-laws and regulations	6-7	Planning Board	Town Budget

**Goal C. Preserve the quality and character of Webster Lake for all residents to enjoy.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Identify and preserve important viewsheds at Webster Lake</b>			
a. Identify and incorporate viewsheds into the Open Space Map.	1	Open Space Committee	Town Budget
b. Ensure the enforcement of the Scenic Roads bylaw.	Ongoing	Zoning Board of Appeals	Town Budget, MHD
c. Put up signs identifying scenic roads.	5	DPW	Town Budget

d. Review development proposals to ensure compliance with the town's scenic roads bylaw.	Ongoing	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals	Town Budget
e. Research and develop a tree preservation plan	6-7	ConCom, Planning Board, Zoning Board	Town Budget
<b>2. Retain the classic, scenic, and family friendly atmosphere of Memorial Beach.</b>			
a. Develop a site master plan that will guide refurbishment of existing amenities and identify appropriate additions.	2-3	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund
b. Develop a capital plan that addresses costs for maintenance and enhancements and balances these with fees collected.	3-4	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget
c. Determine additional funding required and submit grant requests and/or conduct capital campaigns as required.	4-5	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget
d. Complete the implementation of the site master plan to the extent funded	6-7	DPW	Town Budget, Land and Water Conservation Fund
e. Identify areas at Memorial Beach to remain undeveloped and develop a strategy for their permanent protection.	2-3	Planner, Open Space Committee	Town Budget
<b>3. Protect the water quality of the lake.</b>			
a. Support long term, comprehensive measurements of water quality within the watershed, especially early warning indicators.	Ongoing	Webster Lake Association, Board of Health, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget, WLA, DEP Section 604b Grant Program Water Quality Management Planning
b. Take timely action against identified pollution sources.	Ongoing	Board of health, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget, DEP

c. Continue the program for the installation of catch basins.	Ongoing	Town Administrator, DPW	Town Budget, DEP Section 319 Nonpoint Source Competitive Grants Program
d. Establish a program of active monitoring for the appearance of invasive species	2	WLA	Volunteer effort
e. Take early action against invasive species	Ongoing	Webster Lake Association, Board of Health, ConCom, DPW	Town Budget, WLA
f. Establish a station to clean the hulls of boats launched at public sites to avoid introduction of invasive species.	3-5	Town Administrator, DPW	DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>4. Maintain the quality of the recreational experience of all lake users</b>			
a. Vigorously enforce all safety, speeding, and alcohol regulations.	Ongoing	Police department	WLA, WPD
b. Develop regulations governing boat noise.	2-3	Town Administrator	WPD

**Goal D. Improve and expand the town's open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of all residents of Webster.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Maintain the town's current recreation areas as needed</b>			
a. Develop a town maintenance plan for all recreation areas.	1-2	DPW	Town Budget
b. Incorporate maintenance resources in the towns budget or capital plan.	2-3	Town Administrator, DPW	Town Budget
<b>2. Create new recreation facilities as needed</b>			
a. Determine total need for sports fields for all users, including time to rest/rehabilitate.	1-2	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget
b. Compare the requirements for field use against total availability and determine needs for additional fields.	2-3	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
c. Budget for the acquisition/development of new fields as necessary.	3-7	DPW, Town Administrator	Town Budget, CPA,
d. Identify land for, and implement, a dog park.	2-4	Open Space Committee, BOS, Town Administrator, DPW, Animal Control officer	Town Budget, local animal protection groups.
<b>3. Improve parks and playgrounds within or adjacent to established neighborhoods.</b>			
a. Survey neighborhood residents and users to determine improvement needs.	2	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
b. Incorporate identified needs into the capital budget.	3-4	DPW, Recreation Committee	Town Budget
c. Secure grants or other funding.	Ongoing	Planner, recreation Committee	Town Budget
d. Promote volunteer programs within neighborhoods to construct, improve, and maintain their parks.	3-7	Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Recreation Committee, DPW	Town Budget, volunteer effort, FRC, WLA

<b>4. Make accessibility modifications as required to parks and recreation facilities.</b>			
a. Review access requirements and determine compliance.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator	Town Budget
b. Budget for compliance actions as required.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator	Town Budget, CDBG, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)
c. Obtain funding to meet compliance requirements.	Ongoing	ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator	Town Budget
<b>5. Consider using small, odd-shaped lots for recreation purposes.</b>			
a. Create a list, from the Open Space map, of all unusable town-owned property.	2-3	Open Space Committee, Assessor, DPW	Town Budget
b. Establish a program whereby citizens can clean up a parcel and establish a park, beauty spot, community garden, etc.	2-4	Town Administrator, BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
c. Determine what assistance the town will offer.	2-4	BOS	Town Budget
d. Publicize the program and promote a small number of pilot examples.	3-5	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
e. Complete the program for all appropriate parcels	6-7	Recreation Committee	Town Budget
<b>6. Create a new annual cultural or fun event for Webster.</b>			
a. Work with downtown merchants to organize a street fair, concert series, or other annual event.	3-4	Recreation Committee	Town Budget, Webster Dudley Business Alliance
b. Establish a revolving fund to support it.	3-4	Town Administrator, BOS	Town Budget
<b>7. Create paddling access on the French River.</b>			
a. Identify a series of launch points which will offer varied paddling experiences.	1-2	French River Connection	Town Budget, FRC, DLT, DCR

b. Use town-owned land and/or secure agreements from landowners to establish access points.	2-3	Town Administrator	Town Budget, FRC, DCR
c. Obtain funding and engineering support from the Office of Fishing and Boating Access to build launch points on town owned land.	2-4	Town Administrator, DPW	DCR, Mass Department of Fish and Wildlife
d. Build additional launch points on private land	5-7	French River Connection	FRC
e. Secure the commitment of volunteers to maintain the launches.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	No funding required, volunteer effort

**Goal E. Link active and passive recreation areas.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Identify corridors that link existing recreation and conservation areas.</b>			
a. Create a map that places Webster in the context of neighboring towns to assist in locating the best areas for connecting open space, trail systems, and wildlife corridors.	1	Open Space Committee	Town Budget, DCR, Mass GIS
<b>2. Work cooperatively with Dudley, Oxford, and Thompson to realize the vision of the French River Greenway.</b>			
a. Appoint a town representative to the ad-hoc French River Greenway Steering Committee.	1	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
<b>3. Work cooperatively with other parties on implementation of the Quinebaug Valley Trail.</b>			
a. Maintain appointments of active members of the QVT advisory committee.	Ongoing	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
<b>4. Ensure there are active town representatives on CMRPC and QSRVNH committees.</b>			
a. Review committee structures and make appointments from appropriate boards or from among interested, qualified citizens.	Ongoing	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Ensure that committee minutes are shared with Town officials.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	No funding required, volunteer effort

**Goal F. Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Webster.**

Objective	Year	Responsible	Funding Sources and/or TA
<b>1. Work with property owners to preserve buildings that contribute to the historic look and character of the area</b>			
a. Appoint an active historic commission to take the lead on this goal.	1	BOS	No funding required, volunteer effort
b. Identify candidate buildings for preservation, starting with those listed in the state's database	2-3	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation
c. Investigate a downtown signage and façade renovation program which would provide financial assistance and/or incentives for meeting guidelines established by the town	3-5	Historic Commission, OCD	Town Budget, Community Development Block Grant
d. Document and publicize the renovation program	6	Historic Commission	Town Budget
e. Complete a pilot application of the program	7	Historic Commission, OCD	Town Budget, Community Development Block Grant
f. Put up signs on buildings clarifying their historical/ architectural significance	5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation
g. Develop a program of historical walking tours of downtown.	5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, volunteer effort
h. Establish, with downtown merchants, a "pride" beautification program.	2-3	Town Administrator	Webster Dudley Business Alliance
i. Investigate the creation of a local historic district and historic designations for individual structures outside the district.	4-5	Historic Commission	Town Budget, Mass Preservation

h. Appropriately budget for the maintenance and renovation of public buildings.	Ongoing	Town Administrator	Town Budget, CDBG, American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act)
i. Consider granting tax credits to property owners who restore buildings to their original character and style.	5	Historic Commission, Assessor, BOS	Town Budget, Mass Office of Business Development
<b>2. Encourage the adaptive re-use of existing vacant and underutilized buildings.</b>			
a. Consider creating a zoning overlay district that would express the kinds of uses that would complement those already existing and include design elements such as façade, landscaping, signage, etc.	2-3	Historic Commission, Planning Board	Town Budget, CMRPC
b. Consider a policy of tax incentives for the appropriate re-use of existing buildings.	3-4	BOS, Assessor	Town Budget, Mass Office of Business Development
c. Apply the policy to a pilot project	5-6	Planner	Town Budget, Mass Office of Business Development