

Thank you for making many of the changes we suggested in our last round of feedback. We were very pleased to see that you have incorporated environmental justice, community gardens, and other topics that we proposed. The Natural Resources and Conservation Committee (NRCC) provides the following additional suggestions on the Environment, Recreation, Land Use, and Water & Utilities sections:

Environment

- The city will need increased funding and staffing to achieve these actions/goals. Should this plan include goals for increased staffing and/or increasing the tax rate, reallocating the city budget, pursuing grant funding, etc.?
- Action: conduct study of wildlife species present in South Burlington.
- Action: increase public awareness of safely coexisting with wildlife
- “Climate and Climate Change” section should be stronger, given that climate resilience is one of the city’s new goals and we are now in a “code red” climate crisis, with affects being felt right here in South Burlington.
 - Include implementation of Climate Action Plan
 - Recommend voluntary lifestyle changes from residents and businesses to reduce fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions
 - Include natural carbon storage in soils, wetlands, forests, etc. through conserving open spaces and restoring/enhancing existing habitats.
 - Include community gardens and local agriculture as a way to increase food resiliency
- Include pollinator habitat in this action: “Actively promote replacement of lawns with shrubs, trees, and/or vegetable garden areas”
- Consider including an appendix with definitions of terms like “Class II/III wetland,” “aquifer recharge,” etc.
- Some parts of Water Quality section may fit better under Water & Utilities (i.e. culverts) or are repetitive of what is already in that section

Recreation

- Goals: How were these metrics chosen? Where will these acres be located compared to where residents live?
 - Provide 7.5 acres of developed recreation land for every 1,000 residents
 - Provide 20 acres of natural recreation land for every 1,000 residents
- Accessibility: Expand GMT bus routes to include stops at parks and open spaces

Land Use

- Include need for community garden space in “Principally Residential-Higher Scale” and “High-Scale Mixed Use” sections
- The “51% conserved” statistic feels a bit misleading, or at least doesn’t fully reflect the nuances of the different types of conservation. Consider adding a table that breaks down the different methods of conservation, whether they are permanent or could be reversed by a change in city policy, and what sort of development is/is not allowed on each type. Example:

Method	# Acres or % of land area	Explanation
Conservation Easement		A conservation easement held by a third-party organization provides permanent legal protection, even if a property is sold or transferred. Conservation easements may allow for certain types of development or land use.
Zoning		Zoning offers a level of protection, but it is not guaranteed to be permanent protection as zoning could be changed. Two types of zoning are used for open space:
		Park & Recreation – city-owned parks and natural areas
		SEQ-Natural Resource Protection – a sub-district in the southeast quadrant with restrictions on development to preserve natural features. Certain types of development on parcels in this area is permitted.
Habitat Block		South Burlington’s Land Development Regulations designate Habitat Block Overlay District, which must be left in an undisturbed, naturally vegetated condition. There is an exception for parcels that are substantially habitat-block covered: up to 30 percent of the land area can be developed, with restrictions. This not guaranteed to be permanent protection as the LDRs could be changed.
Permit		Permanent protection provided through an Act 250 permit, such as transfer of development rights.

The NRCC has put together an inventory of open spaces that may be useful in calculating total acres. We can provide this to you if you would like. The definitions in the table above come from this project.

Water & Utilities

- Make it clear that elevated chloride levels come from road salt and deicer. Encourage commercial property owners to reduce road salt application.
- In “Water Use” section, include finding and repairing leaks (both in city-owned distribution system and privately owned plumbing) and encouraging residents and businesses to install low-flow fixtures and water-efficient appliances as methods for reducing water use.