



LOWELL OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN
2025 UPDATE



WHAT IS THE OSRP?



OPEN



SPACE &



RECREATION



PLAN

The City is updating its **Open Space and Recreation Plan!** This Plan is an important document created in collaboration with the community to identify and prioritize needed park and open space improvements. The City is required to update its OSRP every 7 years to maintain eligibility for state grants to fund open space improvement projects.

WHAT IS “OPEN SPACE?”

OPEN SPACE INCLUDES:

- * Conservation Land
- * Forested Land
- * Recreation Land / Parks
- * Agricultural Land
- * Green buffers along roadways
- * Vacant Lots
- * Brownfield Sites



LOWELL OPEN SPACE AT-A-GLANCE



90+
Public
Parks



700+
Acres of
Open Space

8+
Miles of
Trails

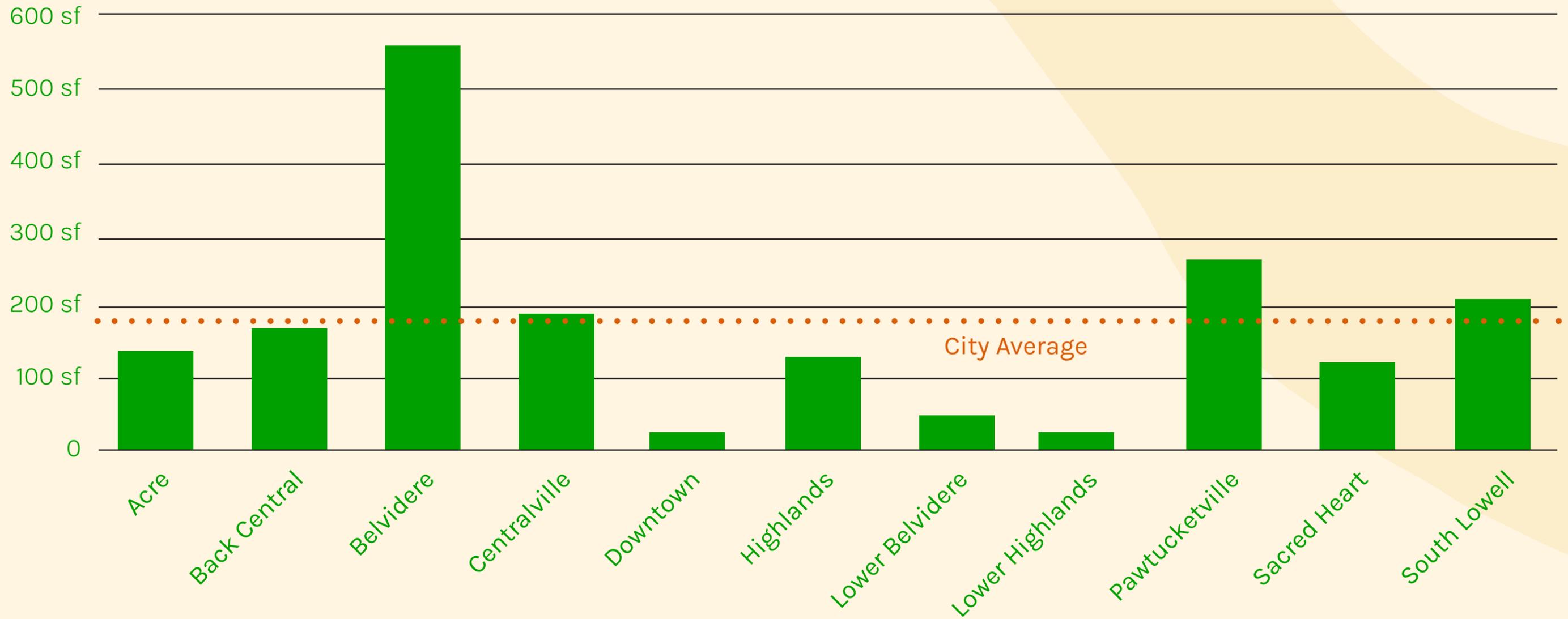


92%
of Residents
Live Within a
10-minute Walk
of a Park

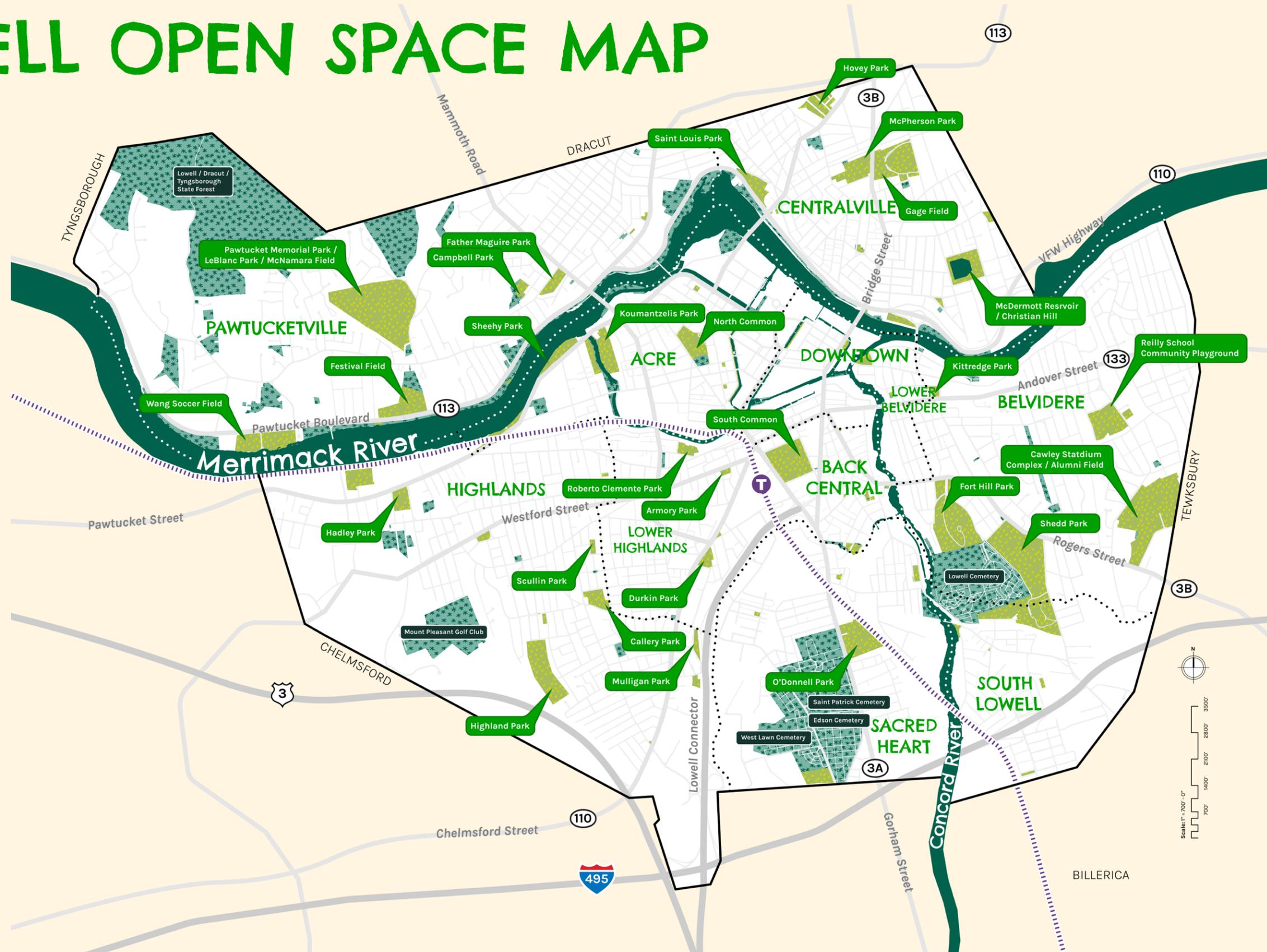


HOW IS OPEN SPACE DISTRIBUTED IN LOWELL?

PARK SPACE PER PERSON BY NEIGHBORHOOD:



LOWELL OPEN SPACE MAP



WHAT GOES IN THE OSRP?

WE ARE REQUIRED BY THE STATE (DCS) TO INCLUDE THESE SECTIONS IN OUR PLAN:

1. Plan Summary
2. Introduction
3. Community Setting
4. Environmental Inventory + Analysis
5. Inventory Of Lands Of Conservation + Recreation Interest
6. Community Vision
7. Analysis Of Needs
8. Goals + Objectives
9. **7-Year Action Plan**
10. Public Comment

WHAT IS THE 7-YEAR ACTION PLAN?

Goal 1: Strengthen pedestrian connections throughout all neighborhoods to provide residents safer access to parks, open spaces, and the opportunity to walk for exercise and leisure.

#	Action	Responsible Entity	Possible funding sources	Implementation year							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Install appropriate signage, and/or rectangular flashing beacon signs at high traffic crosswalks across the City to alert drivers to pedestrians in crosswalks	City Engineering, DPD, City Electricians	State-MassDOT Complete Streets, City Capital Funds	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Enforce ordinances against parking on sidewalks and parking too close to intersections to provide pedestrians full access to sidewalks and give drivers optimal views of pedestrians in crosswalks	LPD	City Capital	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	Extend the Vandenberg Esplanade to create the Pawtucket Falls Overlook	DPD, LNHP, DCR, MassDOT, NMCOCG	City Capital Funds, State MassDOT, Federal-LNHP			x	x	x			
4	Continue working to complete phases of the CRG	DPD	State-Recreational Trails, City Capital Funds	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	Continue support advancing the Bruce Freeman Rail trail Connection in Lowell	Bruce Freeman Rail trail, DPD	State-MassTrails, City Capital Funds	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	River Meadow Brook Design Planning	DPD	City Capital Funds, State Earmarks							x	x
7	Planning and design of the Merrimack Riverwalk-North Bank	DPD, DCR	City Capital Funds, State LWCF							x	x
8	Build the Merrimack Riverwalk Phase II-Bridge Street Node	DPD, LNHP	City Capital Funds, State Earmark	x	x						
9	Continue to research viable solutions to connect Western Avenue Studios to Downtown and Acre neighborhoods.	DPD, Western Ave Artists Association	City Capital Funds	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	Continue to pursue viable solutions to connect Hawk Valley Farm, Pawtucket Memorial Park and Regatta Field.	DCR, LPCT, DPD	City Capital Funds	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

The 7-Year Action Plan is one of the most important chapters in the OSRP. It identifies which high priority open space projects the City will invest in over the next 7 years.

We need the community's help to align these priorities with neighborhood needs and desires!

WHAT ARE OUR CURRENT OSRP GOALS?



Goal #1: Strengthen pedestrian connections throughout all neighborhoods to provide residents safer access to parks, open spaces, and the opportunity to walk for exercise and leisure.



Goal #2: Install cycling infrastructure across the City; prioritize non-vehicular modes of travel and recreational opportunities for residents.



Goal #3: Increase the types and availability of water-based recreation opportunities for residents.



Goal #4: Prioritize improved maintenance, security, and preservation of parks and open spaces across the City and enhance these spaces with the new amenities requested by residents.

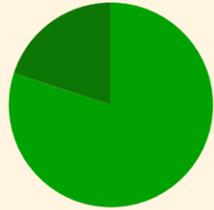


Goal #5: Streamline communication to the public about parks, open spaces, amenities, and events to increase knowledge of and access to these offerings.



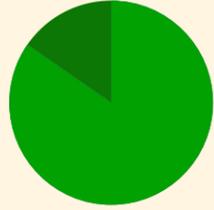
Goal #6: Increase recreational opportunities and modify existing parks and open spaces so that all residents regardless of age, ability, and neighborhood of residence can enjoy them.

HAVE WE MADE PROGRESS ON THESE GOALS?



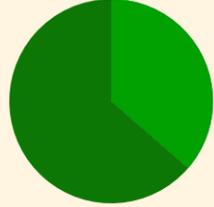
Goal #1: **12/15**

Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!



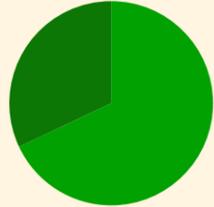
Goal #2: **11/13**

Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!



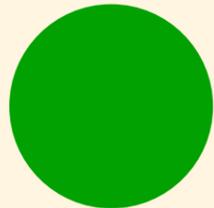
Goal #3: **4/11**

Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!



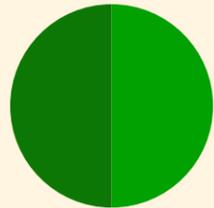
Goal #4: **17/25**

Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!



Goal #5: **14/14**

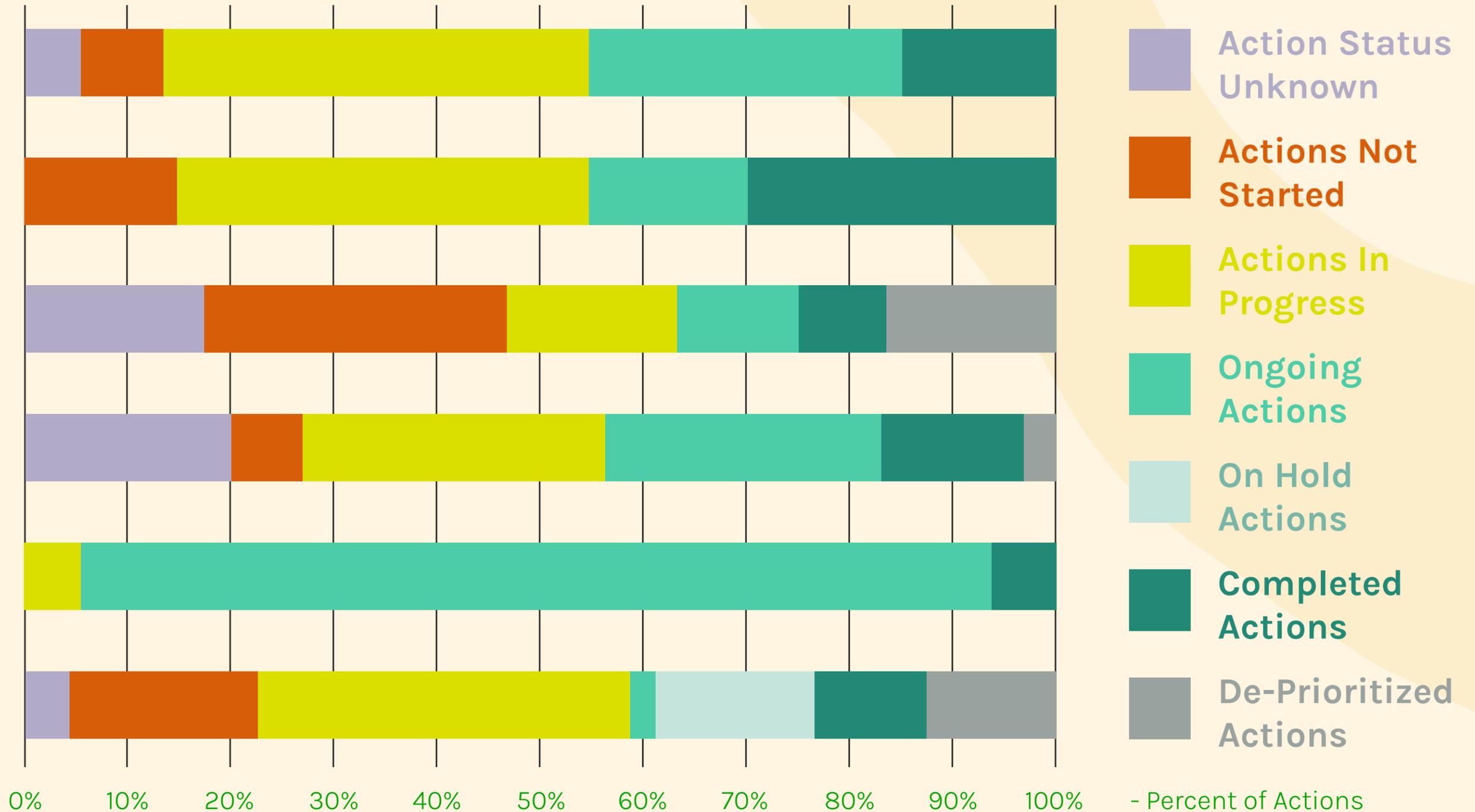
Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!



Goal #6: **21/42**

Actions COMPLETED, ONGOING, or IN PROGRESS!

2019 - 2026 OSRP IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS



OSRP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OSRP Goal 6 / Action 13: Install a shade structure over the bocce court; renovate basketball court and skate park at Clemente Park.*

*This park is scheduled to undergo a \$1.8 million renovation in 2025! Further community engagement revealed a desire for better event space over upgrades to the skate park. The skate park and one basketball court will be removed to make space to support festivals and events in the park. The renovated park will include one upgraded basketball court, 8 new volleyball courts, and a new universally accessible playground.

OSRP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OSRP Goal 6 / Action 11: Install a shade structure at Armory Park.*

*Further exploration of this OSRP Action determined that a splash pad and tree planting would be a more effective investment in cooling than installing a shade structure. The splash pad includes a rain garden to help sustainably manage water runoff and 13 new shade trees planted.

OSRP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OSRP Goal 6 / Action 17: Construct Phase II of the South Common Master Plan.*

*The City has surpassed this action and completed phase 3 as well! A fourth phase is currently underway to explore introduction of a dog park at South Common. The before and after above shows the stage and rain garden that was constructed as part of phase 3. (The after photo was taken before the planting had a chance to grow in).

OSRP PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



OSRP Goal 6 / Action 24: Continue efforts to increase green space and improve accessibility at JFK Civic Center Plaza.*

*The crumbling steps of the JFK Civic Center building were replaced with built-in planters featuring native pollinator-friendly plant species. A temporary ADA-accessible ramp is scheduled for installation in 2025. A permanent ramp requires further study due to the presence of a tunnel discovered underneath the plaza during surveying.

BUILDING ON **LOWELL** FORWARD

The City's Comprehensive Master Plan, *Lowell Forward*, was completed in 2024 following an extensive 18-month community engagement process.

The updated OSRP will adopt the seven open space goals identified in *Lowell Forward* as the framework for the 7-Year Action Plan. Through further community engagement, the OSRP will identify and prioritize specific actions to advance these goals.



“One of my great wishes for public space in Lowell is that it belongs to everyone, but that each person feels like it’s something that’s theirs, like an extension of their backyard.”
- Lowell Forward, page 150

LOWELL FORWARD OPEN SPACE GOALS

Goal 1: Strengthen Social Resiliency, Equity, Access, and Maintenance to, and of, Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails.



Goal 1.1: Equitably invest in and maintain open space facilities including recreational facilities, open spaces, and trails in alignment with OSRP priorities, and to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all ages and abilities.



Goal 1.2: Improve physical access to parks and outdoor programs by improving pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure along key routes.



Goal 1.3: Improve equitable communication about parks and outdoor programs by reducing barriers to participation. Examples include: developing a multilingual wayfinding strategy and a language access center.



Goal 1.4: Prepare an open space master plan for the Pawtucket Canal and surrounding industrial/non-residential lands (from Pawtucket Street at the Merrimack River to the Thorndike Street Bridge), considering both sides of the Pawtucket Canal.

LOWELL FORWARD OPEN SPACE GOALS

Goal 2: Strengthen Climate Resilience and Sustainability in Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails.



Goal 2.1: Plant trees along priority corridors and within urban heat islands in alignment with the City's Urban Forestry Plan.



Goal 2.2: Reduce impervious surfaces and install green infrastructure, where applicable, to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate flooding, and create a maintenance plan.



Goal 2.3: Initiate a public stormwater management awareness and education campaign, in partnership with universities and nonprofits, to inform businesses and residents about effects of stormwater pollution on Lowell's waterways and ways in which they can help reduce stormwater runoff.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?



REACH OUT TO SIGN UP
FOR PROJECT UPDATES
VIA THE OSRP E-MAIL
NEWSLETTER!



Email Hotline:
openspace@lowellma.gov



Phone Hotline:
978-674-4225



Digital Engagement Station:
<https://tinyurl.com/37a2y2n9>



Mobile Engagement Station:
Coming Soon to a Park Near You!

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT STATION

CITY of LOWELL

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS BUSINESS HOW DO I... Search...

Urban Forest Initiative
Rain Garden Initiative
Pollinator Garden Initiative

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT STATION

LOVELL FORWARD

Get Involved!

- **BECOME A PARK CHAMPION**
volunteer opportunities coming soon!
- **TAKE THE DEEP DIVE SURVEY**
link coming soon!

TAKE THE QUICK SURVEY:

What park improvements should the City prioritize in the next ten years?

- Safety and Lighting
- Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Climate Resilience and Education
- Arts and Cultural Programming
- Sports and Recreational Programming

[Vote](#)

[See all available polls](#)

Get In Touch!

Email Hotline:
openspace@lowellma.gov

Phone Hotline:
Coming Soon!

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events:
More events coming soon!

Event:	Location:	Date:	Time:
MRWCP Community Conversation	Saint Anne's Episcopal Church, Edson Hall (8 Kirk Street)	Tuesday, February 4, 2025	6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

DOWNLOADS:

[2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS JUNE](#)

At the Digital Engagement Station you will find ways to **get involved** like taking a survey or volunteering to collect park data, kid-friendly downloads like the OSRP Coloring Book and OSRP Park Libs, ways to **get in touch** with the planning team, upcoming community engagement **events**, and a **dashboard** where engagement results will be reported back in infographic form.

MOBILE ENGAGEMENT STATION



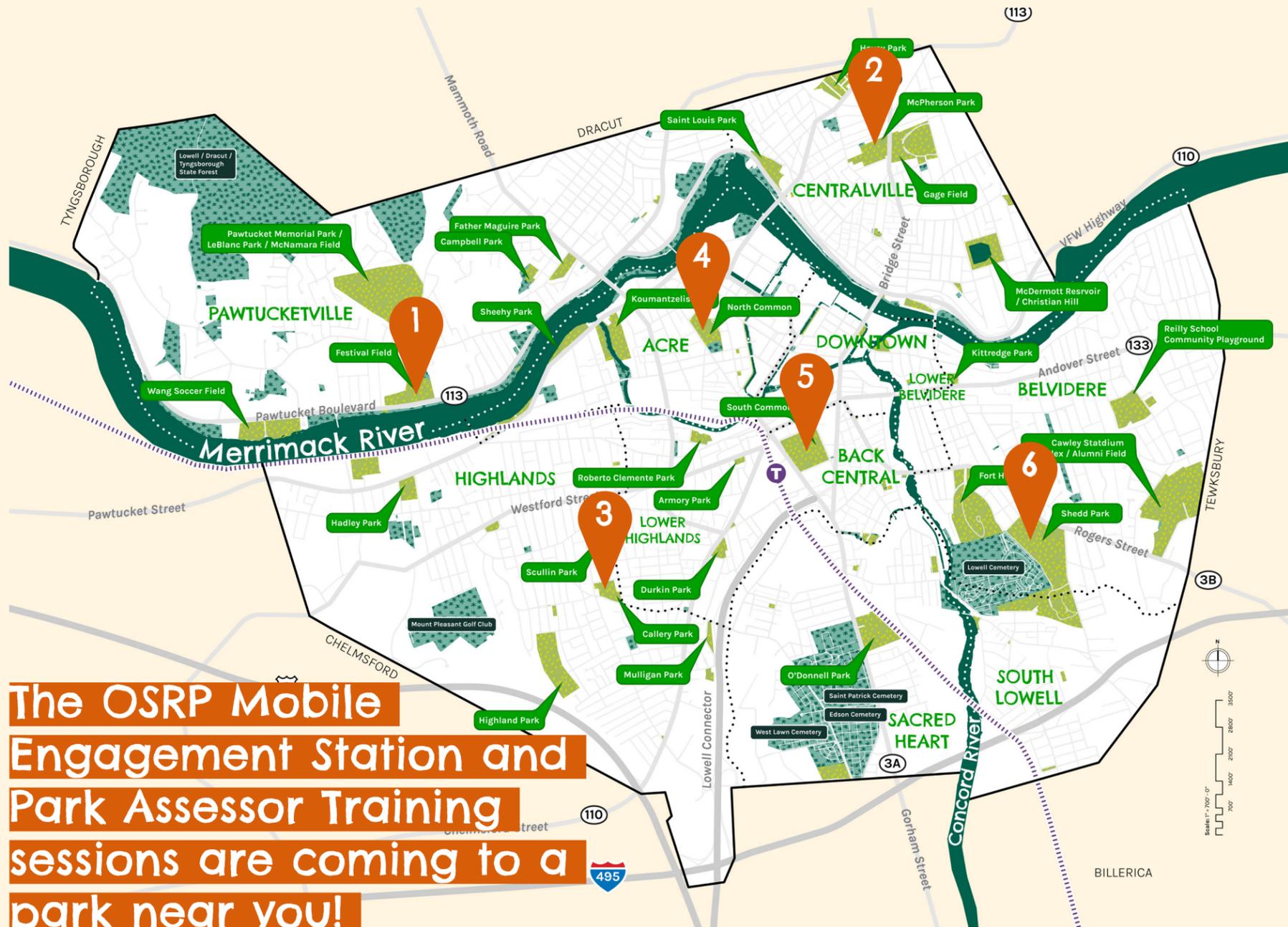
The Mobile Engagement Station features informational and interactive boards, a participatory budgeting activity, and physical versions of the activities offered at the digital engagement station including the **Deep Dive Survey**, the **OSRP Coloring Book**, and **OSRP Park Libs**. All materials will be translated in Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer.

PARK CHAMPIONS WANTED!



Wherever the mobile engagement station goes, DPD will also be conducting **Park Assessor Training sessions!** At these sessions you will learn how to use the Park Assessment Tool to collect data on your local park/s to help the City prioritize the most critical park improvement projects. We need as many volunteers as we can get to collect data on the City's 80+ public parks!

LOWELL 2025 PARK COUNT TOUR

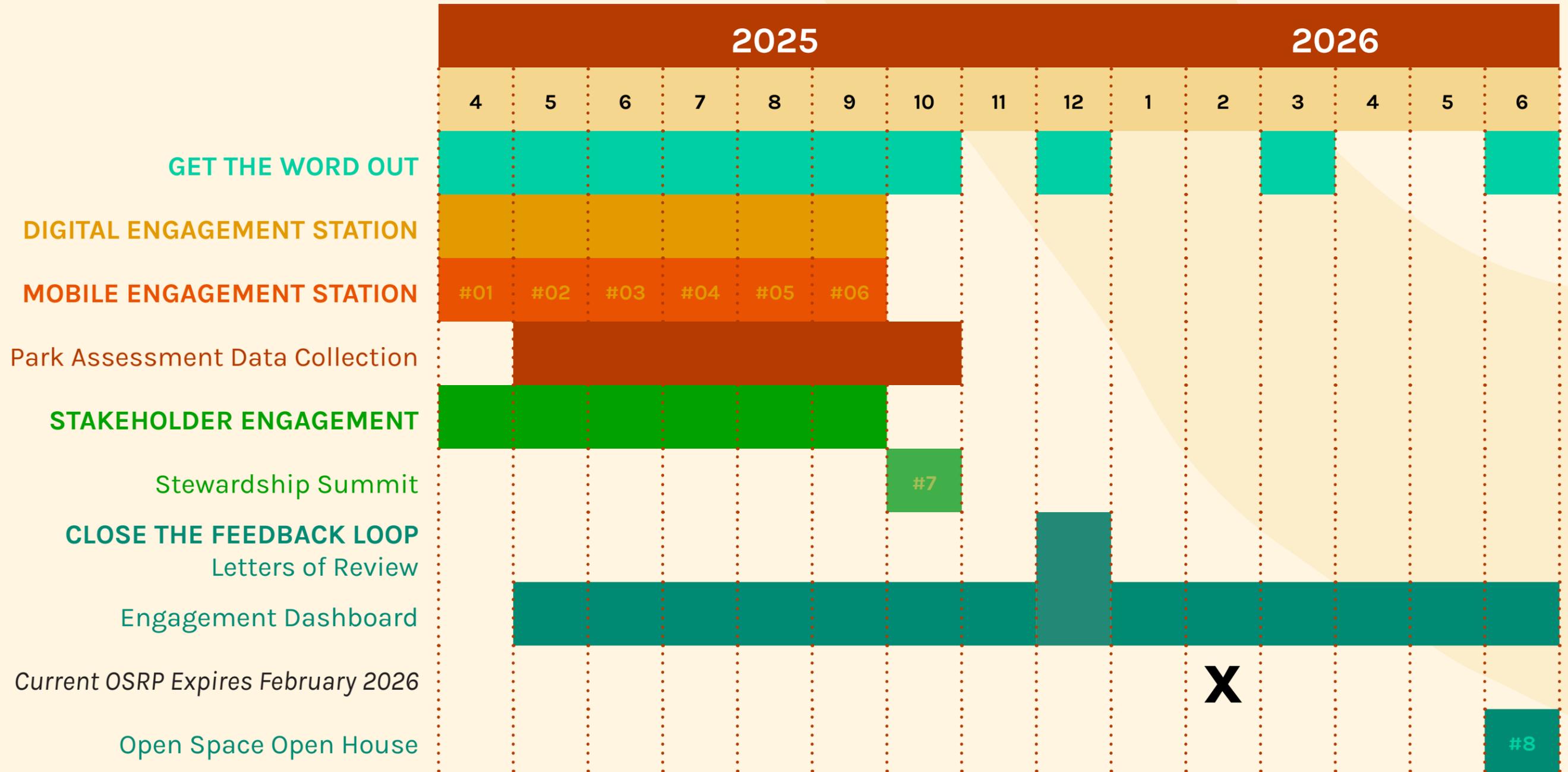


The OSRP Mobile Engagement Station and Park Assessor Training sessions are coming to a park near you!

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

- 1 **APRIL** Pawtucketville Festival Field
- 2 **MAY** Centralville: McPherson Park
- 3 **JUNE** Highlands + Lower Highlands: Callery Park
- 4 **JULY** Acre + Downtown: North Common
- 5 **AUGUST** Back Central + Sacred Heart: South Common
- 6 **SEPTEMBER** Belvidere + Lower Belvidere + South Lowell: Shedd Park

OSRP PROJECT TIMELINE



OSRP PROJECT BUDGET

Translation & Interpretation Services

Engagement Materials

Consultant Services (Mapping; Plan Writing)

Total OSRP Project Budget

\$150,000

This project is funded through City of Lowell Capital Funds.

