

3/1/26 DRAFT: Recommended Action Steps to Implement the Leyden Open Space and Recreation Plan

Goal A. Ensure that the Town of Leyden maintains the integrity of drinking water, clean air, streams and wetlands, working farms and forests, remaining contiguous forests, scenic views, night-sky heritage and the diversity and integrity of native fauna and flora through the conservation of locally important natural and open space resources.

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP
	A1. Encourage landowners interested in protecting their land from development to work with Franklin Land Trust, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, other non- profit conservation organizations and state and federal conservation agencies.	a. Produce a landowner workshop and packet on estate planning and land protection options.	Open Space and Rec.Com.; Conservation Commission; Selectboard
	A2. Accept donated conservation open space and conservation restrictions from willing landowners that conserve working farms and forests, large blocks of contiguous forestland, drinking water supplies, streams and ponds, open fields, scenic views, and wildlife habitat.	a. Accept donated conservation open space and conservation restrictions from willing landowners.	Conservation Commission; Selectboard
		b. Submit an annual article in the Town Newsletter (Leyden Life) that explains choices that landowners have in regards to the long-term stewardship of their land, which can include donating land in fee, donating money into the town’s existing Land Acquisition Fund, or donating the development rights to the Town of Leyden. Include information in Town Annual Report.	Open Space and Recreation Committee; Conservation Commission;
	A3. Take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Town’s right-of-first refusal with regards to the sale and or development of Chapter 61 parcels or assign the right to a third party.	a. Continue to implement a clear tracking procedure protocol for the Town to process conversions of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B parcels to uses that trigger the granting of right-of-first-refusal to the Town.	Selectboard; Conservation Commission; Board of Assessors; Tax Collector

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		b. Implement procedures for the assignment to third parties (such as local land trusts), where appropriate, of the right of first refusal on conversions of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B parcels.	Selectboard; Conservation Commission; Agricultural Commission; Board of Assessors; Tax Collector
		c. Determine whether the existing Land Acquisition Fund could be used for the purposes of receiving private donations for open space protection. If it can be used in that way, promote its use in the Town Newsletter (Leyden Life).	Open Space and Rec Committee; Conservation Commission; Selectboard;
	A4. Facilitate a program of water quality monitoring for the rivers, brooks, streams and ponds in Leyden in conjunction with the Deerfield River Watershed Association, the Greenfield Water Department, and other entities.	a. Meet with Greenfield Water Department staff and representatives of the Deerfield River Watershed Association (DRWA) to discuss the potential for collaboration on water quality monitoring town-wide.	Conservation Commission; FRCOG; Select Board; Board of Health
	A5. Consider ways to encourage and support residents' regular testing of their private water supplies.	a. Disseminate information on appropriate tests and testing intervals and explore potential funding sources to assist private well owners.	Board of Health;
	A6. Promote state and private investment to protect local farm and forest landscapes.	a. Work with local land trusts, nonprofit conservation agencies, and state and federal programs (<i>such as MDAR's Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program and the USDA Forest Legacy Program</i>) to protect local farm and forest landscapes.	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Conservation Commission; Agricultural Commission; Select Board
	A7. Develop a program to insure the protection of Leyden's natural nighttime ambience.	a. Develop and implement a Dark Sky bylaw for the Town.	Planning Board

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		b. Disseminate educational materials to residents regarding the impact of night time light pollution resulting from the use of outdoor lighting which can cause negative effects on human health, road visibility, and nocturnal organisms and ways to provide adequate light for safe performance of outdoor tasks at night.	Planning Board
GOAL	B. Ensure that Leyden maintains its rural, small-town character, a strong sense of community and its history, provides affordable housing options and recreational opportunities to residents of all ages and abilities.		
	B1. Support the continued development of festivals and events to provide residents with year-round opportunities to get to know each other and become more involved in their community.	a. Support an active Recreation Committee to create and supervise recreational programs and services for residents of all ages and abilities.	Selectboard; Recreation Committee; Council on Aging; Library Trustees; Cultural Council;
	B2. Continue to explore changes to local zoning and subdivision regulations that would help to protect remaining farms, open fields, and large blocks of forest from adverse impacts by approval-not-required (ANR) and residential subdivision development.	a. Review zoning bylaws to continue adding components to help ensure that future development conserves the town’s rural character and environmental quality where possible.	Planning Board;
	B3. Encourage local “cottage industries” and farm and forest-based economic activities through the use of both zoning and non-zoning techniques.	a. Work with land trusts and the Woodland Partnership of NW MA to focus on strategies to support farm and forest-based businesses, and climate resiliency.	Planning Board; Selectboard; Board of Health; Agricultural Commission

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	B4. Seek to increase the market value of local agricultural and forest-based goods and services by expanding opportunities for direct sales to consumers via roadside stands, community events, etc.	a. Consider developing a list of local farms and farm stands that sell directly to the public to be published in the Newsletter and/or as a brochure.	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Agricultural Commission
	B5. Identify recreational needs of residents of all ages and abilities and develop new programs and facilities as appropriate.	a. Review results of the 2025 Open Space and Recreation survey and determine which new programs and facilities are most needed and have the best chances of succeeding.	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Recreation Committee; Council on Aging; Cultural Council
		b. Once the desirable programs and facilities are identified, seek to provide them.	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Recreation Committee; Council on Aging; Cultural Council
		c. Increase utilization of town recreation and community building resources including the Town Hall and Avery Field	Selectboard; Recreation Committee
	B6. Evaluate the feasibility of providing access to existing valued recreational resources including participation in the Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study	a. Identify areas with the greatest potential for providing public access to the Green River and other water bodies	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Recreation Committee; Selectboard
		b. Work with willing landowners to create access to trails in the Leyden State Forest.	Open Space and Rec. Com.; Trails Committee/Club

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	B7. Support the development of multi-user (walking/hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing) trail systems that tie into existing ones, which can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with trail easements from willing landowners.	a. Consider creating a Trails Committee/Club to work with Town officials and willing landowners to identify potential locations for multi-user trails and then develop them.	Selectboard; Recreation Committee; Open Space and Rec. Com.; Conservation Commission Trails Committee/Club
		b. Prepare and disseminate a map and brochure showing trails with public access points and parking capacity.	Recreation Committee; Open Space and Rec. Com.
	B8. Continue to maintain the Avery Ball Fields, and access to the Town Office Playground at the level residents have come to expect.	a. Develop clear guidelines for who is responsible for providing and maintaining existing programs and facilities.	Recreation Committee; Open Space and Rec. Com.; Selectboard
	B9. Continue to maintain Library Programming	a. Support an active Library though adequate funding for staffing and materials.	Library Trustees
	B10. Continue to join with neighboring towns to share resources for community events, library programming and other recreational needs.	a. Meet with corresponding boards and committees in neighboring towns to identify opportunities for collaboration on events and recreational programming.	Selectboard; Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee; Library Trustees; Cultural Council; Council on Aging
	B11. Take a proactive approach to environmental problems related to the spread of introduced pests, including invasive species.	a. Sponsor educational events and material for residents and the Highway Department regarding the management of invasive plant species.	Open Space and Rec. Committee; Highway Department; Conservation Commission

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		b. Sponsor educational events and materials for residents concerning the management of invasive pests and diseases impacting vegetation, including food crops, trees, animals and people.	Open Space and Committee; Tree Warden; Conservation Commission; Health District; FRCOG
	B12. Maintain and protect public shade trees and stone walls along the Town's scenic roads.	a. Produce a Scenic Roads Policy to be adopted as a Town Ordinance and provide the funding necessary to implement it.	Highway Department; Selectboard; Tree Warden; Planning Board; Open Space and Rec. Com.; Town Meeting Fence Viewer
	B13. Assess community needs for affordable housing.	a. Create working group to assess community needs for affordable housing.	Selectboard Affordable Housing Working Group
		b. Educate community about recent Accessory Dwelling Unit zoning regulations that encourage affordable housing, through articles in town newsletter, handouts and website postings.	Planning Board Affordable Housing Working Group
		c. Promote partnerships with non-profits including land trusts and citizens to create affordable housing options.	Affordable Housing Working Group
	B14. Share the history of Leyden with the community	a. Encourage the engagement of the community with the history of Leyden through the continuation of Historical Commission events and information shared	Historical Commission Recreation Committee Cultural Council

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		through the Town Newsletter, the Town website and social media.	
		b. Include the indigenous history of Leyden in town documents, on the Town website, etc.	Historical Commission