



# Report to Town Council on the Mill Brook Open Space

Executive Summary

Mill Brook Open Space  
Steering Committee

February 19, 2019

Windsor Town Council

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MILLBROOK OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE

Hilary Carpenter

Steven Fraysier

Margaret Harvey

Nigel Pepin

Aaron Szotka

### TOWN COUNCIL

Donald Trinks, Mayor

Jody Terranova, Deputy Mayor

Nuchette Black-Burke

James Govoni

Donald Jepsen, Jr.

Joseph McAuliffe

Richard O'Reilly

Michael Tustin

Kenneth Wilkos

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Eric Barz, Town Planner

Todd Sealy, Assistant Town Planner

Tom Hazel, Environmental Planner

Marian Madison, Planning Secretary

### TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE

Peter Souza, Town Manager

### EFFECTIVE DATE

February 19, 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the findings of the Mill Brook Open Space Steering Committee charged with developing a recommended land management plan for the Mill Brook open space property. After numerous public meetings, two open houses and a community survey, the committee developed the following mission, vision, guiding principles and objectives/strategies.

### MISSION

To preserve and enhance the Mill Brook open space with diverse wildlife habitats, while connecting residents and visitors to nature through passive recreation and education.

### VISION

The Mill Brook open space will become an open space park that complements existing parks and trails and is readily accessible for passive recreation and environmental education in harmony with the natural environment.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### Land Management

Maintain a diverse open space that protects and enhances environmental resources, natural habitats, and features while providing passive recreational opportunities.

- Preserve and enhance significant environmental features including wetlands, woodlands, meadows, and water features that support wildlife.
- Develop buffers to create separation from natural and urban areas.
- Balance the desire for public access with the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.
- Maintain natural areas and open space for passive recreational opportunities.
- Develop land management programs that are economically feasible, provide access for the community, and are beneficial for wildlife.

#### Trails

Provide a safe, accessible system of trails that offers diverse outdoor experiences within a variety of habitats and landscapes, accessing significant views and features, and connecting to Windsor Center and the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Encourage recreation for all ages and abilities.
- Provide access for a range of passive recreation activities.
- Accommodate multiple uses and varied degrees of difficulty of the trail system.
- Control access to provide privacy and limit trespassing through abutting properties.
- Remove redundant and dead-end trails, creating larger contiguous habitats free from human intrusion.

## Trails (continued)

- Develop trail maintenance programs that are economically feasible.
- Provide a variety of trail surfaces and experiences.
- Provide a pedestrian linkage to Windsor Center.
- Provide maps and way finding signs (if permitted by the conservation easement).
- Provide site furnishings such as benches, bike racks, dog waste stations, and trash containers.

## Habitat

Foster a diversity of habitats composed of wildflower and grass meadows, successional forests, established forests, and wetlands to support a diversity of wildlife.

- Promote connectivity, biodiversity, and conservation of the Mill Brook open space habitats.
- Identify and conserve wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within the open space and the Mill Brook corridor.
- Protect critical areas and control access around the Mill Brook, ponds, and wetlands.
- Develop a system of trails that protect plant and animal habitats and provides large contiguous habitats.
- Foster native plant communities and remove or control the spread of invasive species where necessary.
- Develop annual and long-term maintenance regimes to accommodate breeding/nesting times and maintain the diversity of habitats.

## Activities

Provide outdoor educational opportunities and a range of year-round passive recreation activities such as walking, hiking, biking, picnicking, bird/wildlife watching, sledding, and cross-country skiing.

- Where appropriate promote a variety of uses within the trail system.
- Provide opportunities for four seasons of activity.
- Provide a range of activities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.
- Use interpretative materials to educate residents and visitors on features such as native species and habitats.

## Building Reuse

Priority should be given to uses that are compatible with or enhance the use of the open space while maintaining public access.

- Protect access to the open space from both Pigeon Hill Road and Mack Street.
- Building uses should be compatible with or enhance the use of the open space.
- Generate revenue to offset building and open space maintenance costs.
- Explore possible partnerships for non-profit uses that could provide stewardship.

