

# Durham Open Space Plan and Conservation Strategy

## Public Workshop

February 26, 2026



# Agenda

## **Presentation**

What is an Open Space Plan

Process and Timeline

Existing Conditions

Survey Results

Next Steps

## **Q&A**

## **Interactive Stations**

# What is an Open Space Plan?

- Establish a **townwide strategy** for land conservation, preservation, and natural resource management
- Assess how open spaces and natural resources can **provide ecological and community services**
- Serve as a **tool for coordinating projects**, policies, programs
- Set a strategy to be incorporated into upcoming Comprehensive Plan update



# How is this being funded?

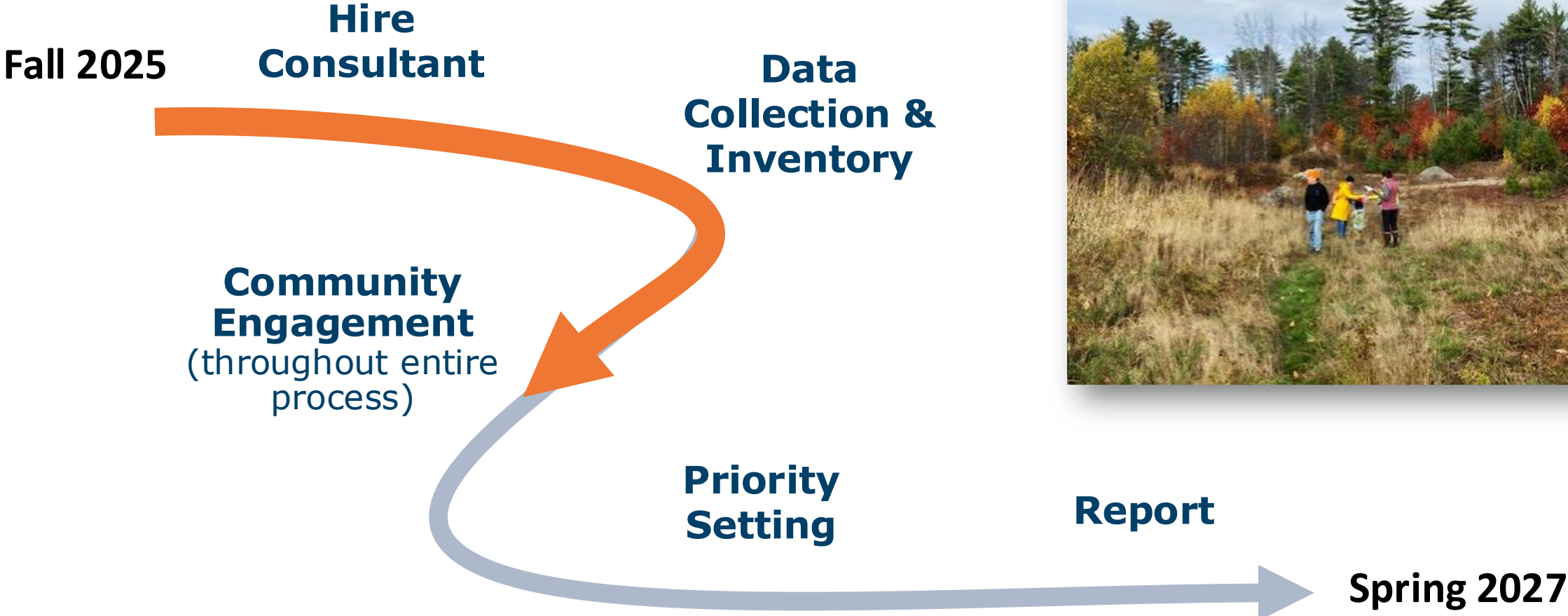
## Community Action Grant!

Grant Details:

- \$80,000
- No cost to the town
- 24 Months

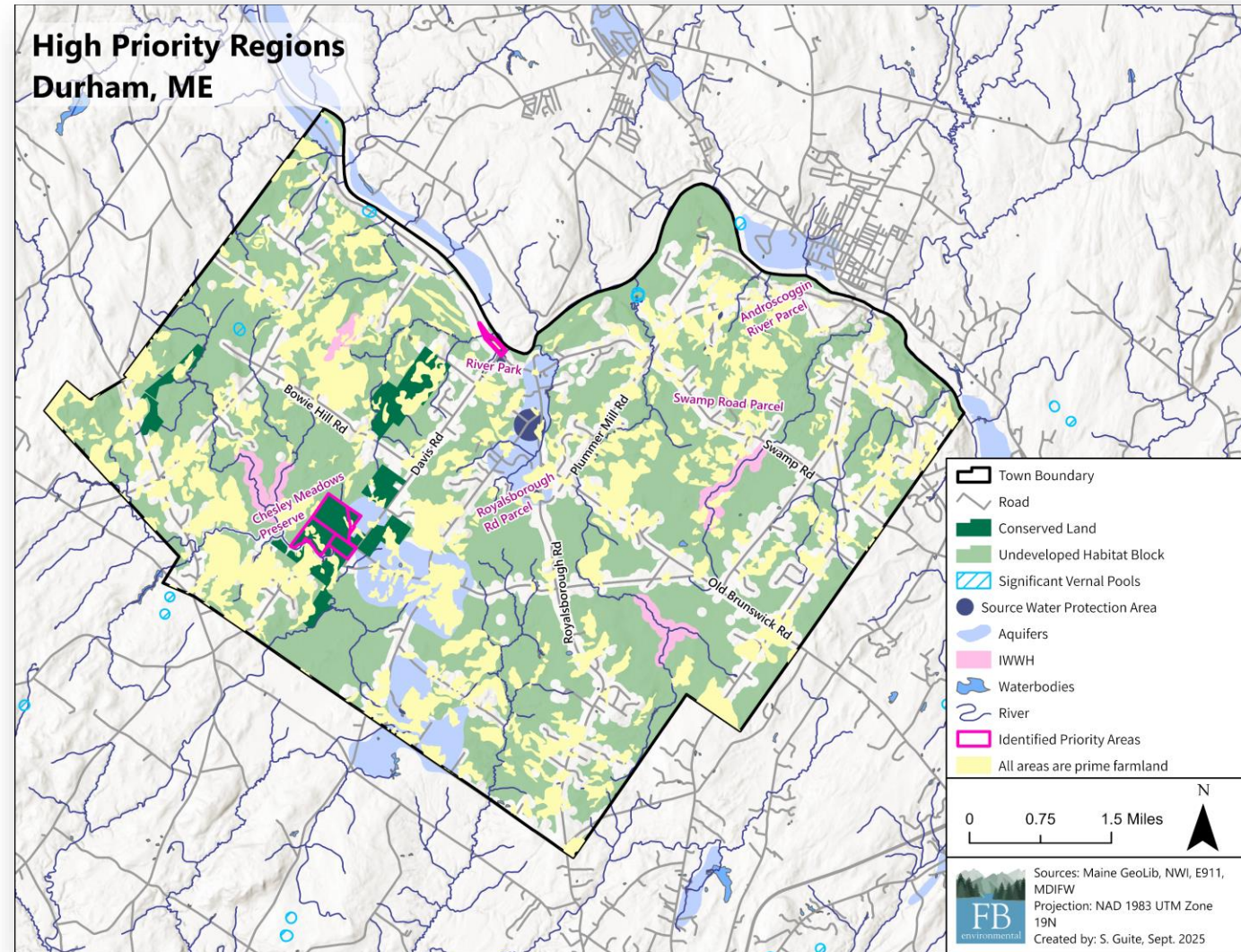


# Process and Timeline



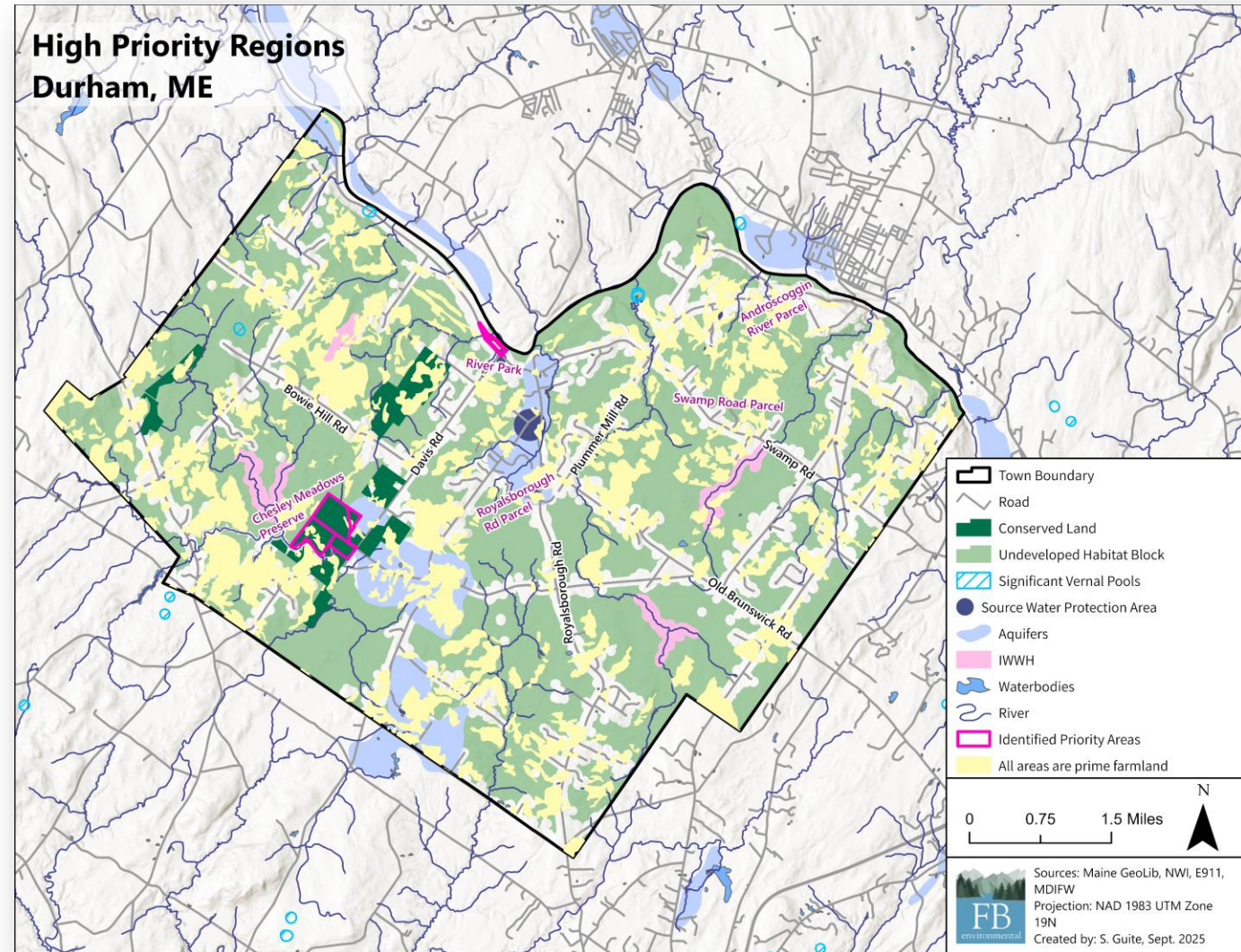
# Existing Conditions

- More than 750 acres of conserved land
- 7% of Durham's lakes and streams are within conserved lands
- **Water Resources:**
  - 3,500+ acres of wetlands (5.1% conserved)
  - Water quality impairment issues



# Existing Conditions

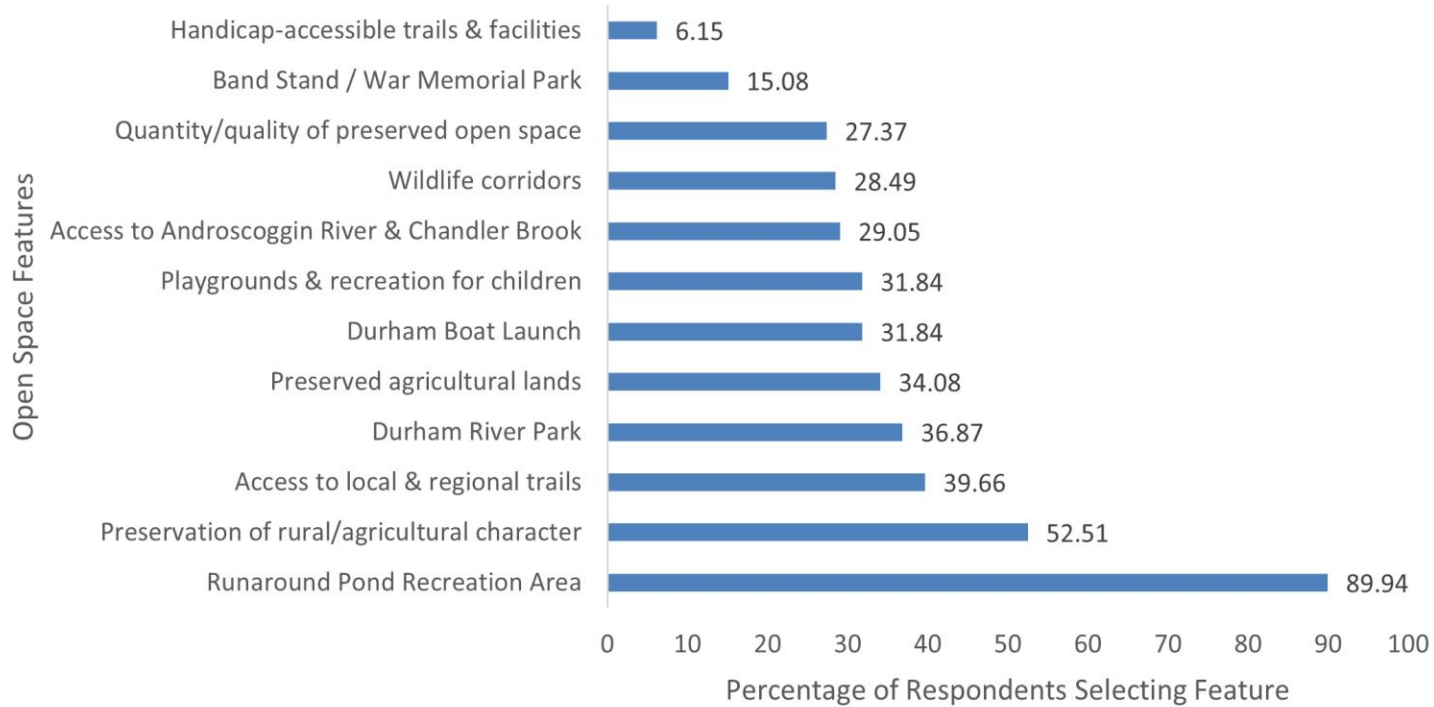
- **Habitat:**
  - Some of the most undeveloped habitat blocks in southern Maine
  - Endangered, rare, threatened, and species of special concern
- **Agriculture:**
  - 418 acres in Maine Farmland Program
  - 5,700+ acres of farmland of statewide importance (23.1%)



# What We Heard from Durham Residents

**Durham Open Space Survey: Dec 5 – Jan 31 | 180 responses | 99% current residents**

**Durham's Best Open Space Features**



## Best Open Space Features

1. *Runaround Pond Recreation Area: 90%*
2. *Durham's Rural Character: 53%*
3. *Access to Local & Regional Trails: 47 %*
4. *Durham River Park: 37 %*

**Key Takeaways:** Residents strongly value preserving Durham's rural identity and investing in key recreation areas like Runaround Pond.

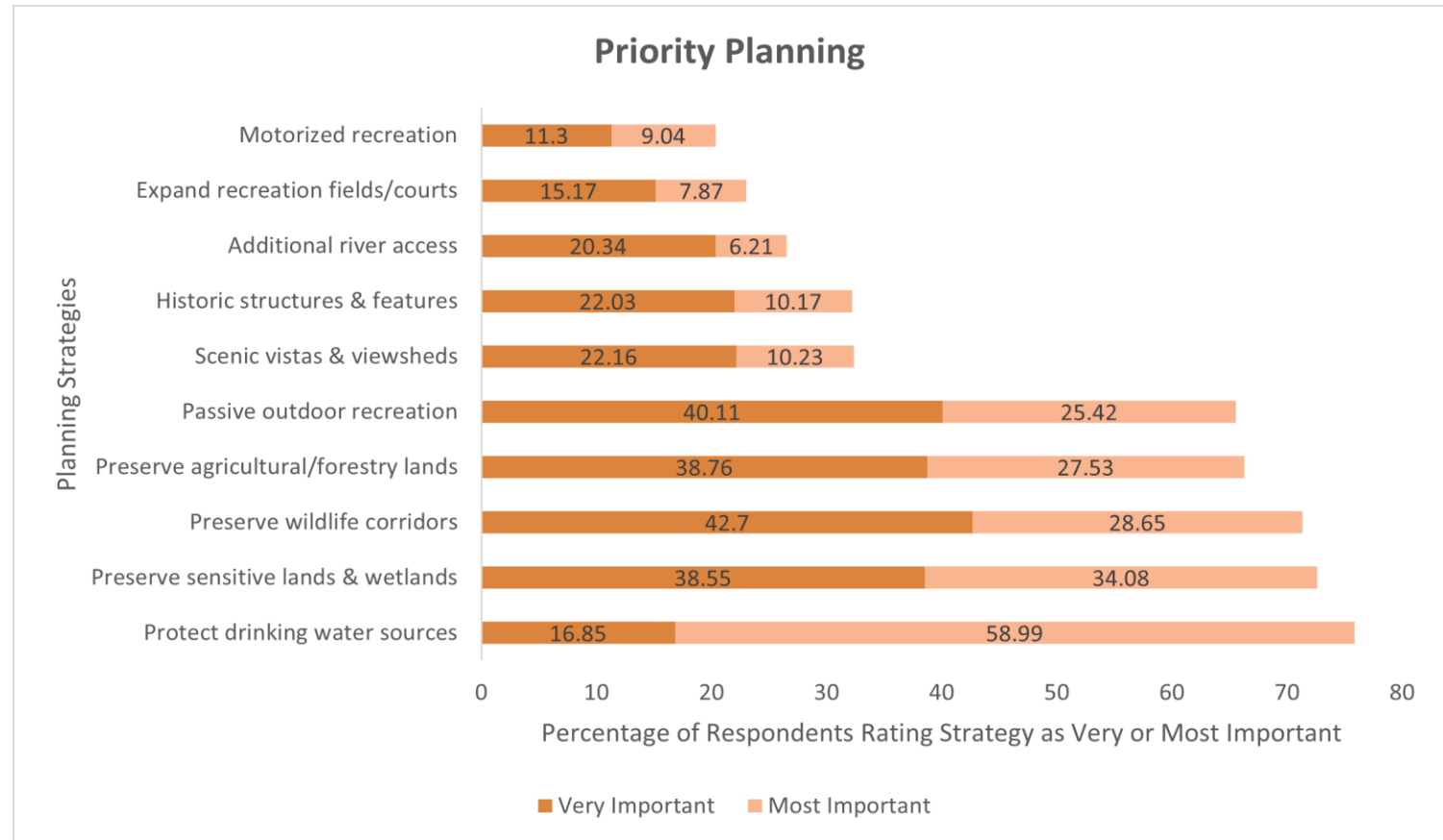
# What Residents are Prioritizing:

## Durham Open Space Strategies

### Top Priorities Identified:

- Protect Drinking Water
  - **59% rated Most Important**
- Protect Sensitive Lands & Wetlands
  - **34% rated Most Important**
- Preserve Wildlife Corridors
  - **29% rated Most Important**
- Preserve Agricultural & Forestry Lands
  - **28% Most Important**

There was also **strong support** for Passive Outdoor Recreation like hiking, bird watching, and kayaking.

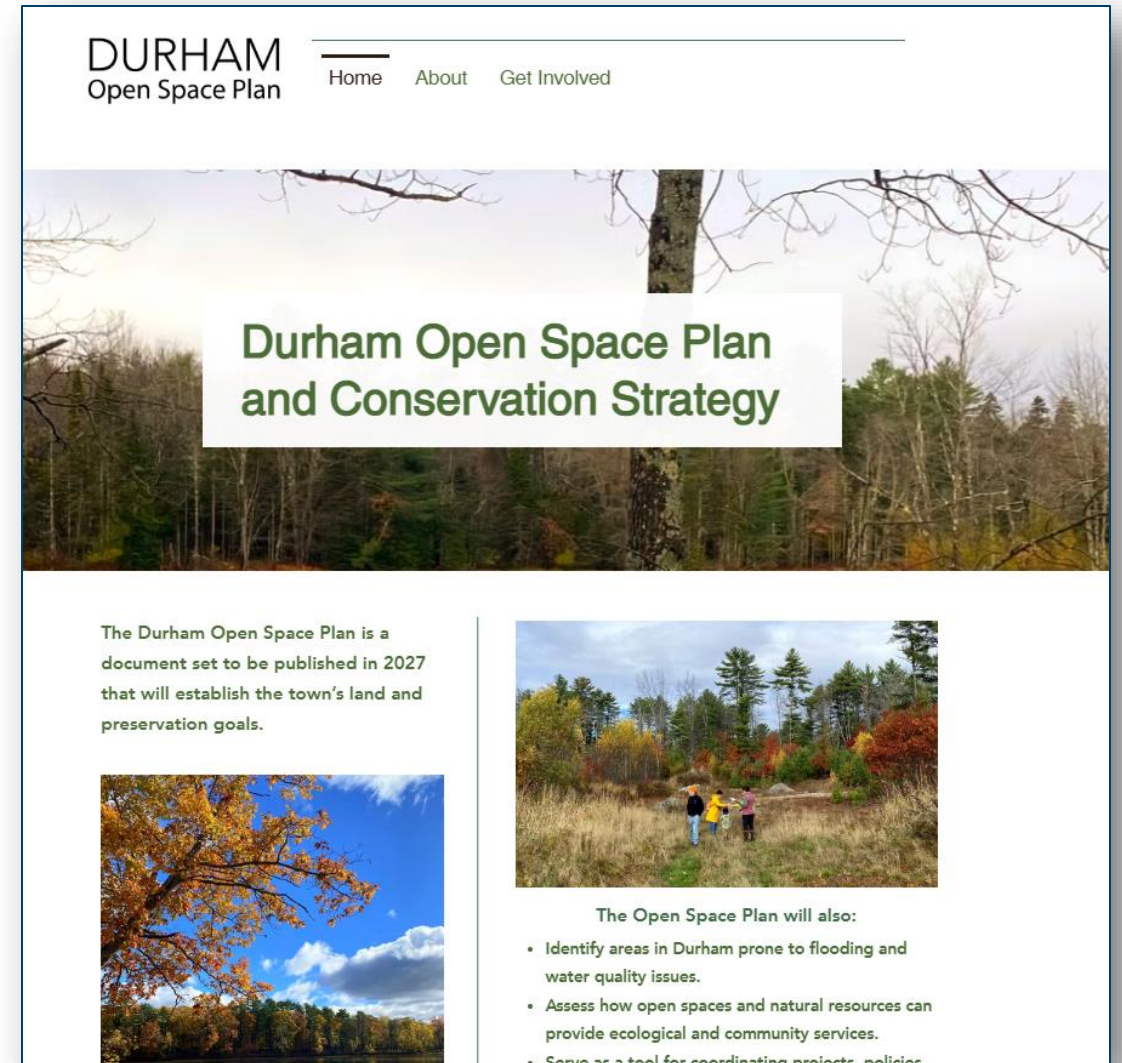


# What happens next?

- Stay involved through the project website:



- Future public workshop – anticipated Fall 2026
- Questions
- Interactive stations

A screenshot of the Durham Open Space Plan website. The header includes the logo 'DURHAM Open Space Plan' and navigation links 'Home', 'About', and 'Get Involved'. The main banner features a forest scene with the title 'Durham Open Space Plan and Conservation Strategy'. Below the banner, there is a text block stating the plan is set for 2027 publication. To the right, a list of goals is provided, including identifying flood-prone areas and assessing natural resources. Two small images show autumn foliage and people in a field.

[DurhamOpenSpacePlan.com](https://DurhamOpenSpacePlan.com)

**Questions?**

**Head to the  
Stations!**



# Interactive Stations



# Thank you



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