

Open Space Subcommittee Meeting Public Notice

Monday, August 3, 2026, 4:30 PM

311 North Avenue, Conference Room or Remote via Zoom

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97328188504?pwd=ATM274zLGYENL8ZN5nQSE4HVh1t7pO.1>

Webinar ID: 973 2818 8504

Password: 078544

Telephone: 1 929 205 6099

1. Public Comment

2. Discussion Items

2.1.

- **TPL Ecosystem Services Proposal**

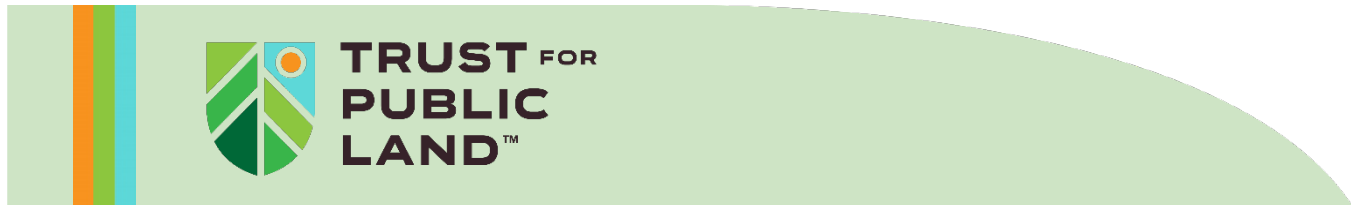
2.2.

- **NBCS Pilot Project**

3. Adjournment

4. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities and employment opportunities. The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who require special arrangements, auxiliary aid, service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Burlington, should contact the office of the Title II Burlington ADA Coordinator at 802-865-7000 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.



A Proposal for the City of Burlington, Vermont

Evaluating Burlington's Parks to Guide Better Land Use Decisions

About Trust for Public Land

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 3 million acres of public land, created more than 5,000 parks and outdoor spaces, and generated \$112 billion in public funding for parks and public lands. In Vermont, TPL has protected nearly 73,000 acres of land and connected over 8,900 residents to the outdoors.

TPL's Center for Community Impact unites research and learning, strategy, and technical assistance into one coordinated team. By aligning evidence, learning strategy, and on-the-ground capacity, CCI helps scale innovation and deliver measurable impacts for people and places across the U.S.

TPL has deep expertise in quantifying the economic value of parks, trails, and conserved lands, having published more than 60 economic analyses for jurisdictions across the country, including New York City, Plano, Baton Rouge, and Colorado Springs. TPL also conducts return on investment analyses, including a 2018 report on land conservation in Vermont.¹ These studies help decision makers understand how parks, trails, and open space contribute to economic development, public health, and environmental resilience.

Building on this work, TPL is expanding its focus to the intersection of parks, land use, and housing, in order to support communities in balancing growth with equitable access to open space. This includes work on integrating open space (including parks) and affordable housing through planning, policy, and funding strategies.

¹ https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Vt.ROI_.8_16_18final.digital.pdf

Project Overview

Burlington is facing increasingly complex land use decisions as it works to address housing needs, strengthen climate resilience, and maintain the parks and open spaces that contribute to the city's health, economy, and quality of life. Rather than treating these priorities as competing interests, Burlington has an opportunity to better understand and quantify the multiple public benefits its open space provides and incorporate that information into future planning and decision-making. By grounding these conversations in objective data and transparent evaluation criteria, the city can make more informed decisions that balance near-term needs with long-term community value.

To support this effort, TPL proposes a three-part scope of work that combines technical analysis with practical decision-support tools. The *Economic Benefits Analysis* and *Climate Cooling Analysis* will quantify the economic, environmental, and community value generated by Burlington's open space system, including its parks. Building on those findings, the *Decision Support Framework* will translate this evidence into practical criteria, governance practices, and policy tools that City staff and decision-makers can use when evaluating future proposals involving parks, public land, housing, and other civic assets. Together, these tasks will provide Burlington with objective evidence, nationally informed best practices, and a transparent framework for making more consistent, integrated, and data-driven land use decisions.

The proposed scope of work outlined below was developed in partnership with City planning staff and members of the Conservation Board, and it is intended to complement the City's ongoing PlanBTV2050 planning process. Rather than duplicating work being completed by the City's consultant team, these analyses fill important gaps by providing new data, tools, and decision-support resources that will inform and strengthen PlanBTV2050.

Scope of Work

Task 1: Economic Benefits of Burlington's Open Space

This analysis will quantify the economic, environmental, and community benefits generated by Burlington's open space, including its parks. The results will help decision makers quantify and communicate how these spaces function as essential public infrastructure, contributing to quality of life, climate resilience, public health, and economic wellbeing.

Key questions to answer: *What value does Burlington's open space provide to residents, visitors, and the city? How should the value of parks, trails, and open space be incorporated into planning, investment, and land use decision-making?*

TPL will quantify a set of benefits using established, data-driven methodologies. These economic analyses include:

- *Stormwater Management:* Quantifying the volume of stormwater managed by open space and the associated avoided infrastructure costs.
- *Air Pollution Removal:* Estimating the value of pollutants removed by trees and vegetation in open space using the U.S. Forest Service's i-Tree model.
- *Nature-Based Solutions:* Evaluating the economic and climate benefits of 3-5 selected nature-based solutions relevant to Burlington. These interventions may support cooling temperatures, increasing flood resilience, improving air quality, increasing habitat biodiversity and connectivity, and carbon storage and sequestration.

TPL will also identify ways that open space support placemaking, quality of life, and mental health benefits for residents and visitors to Burlington. (This information will be qualitative rather than quantitative.)

This analysis will be guided by a Technical Advisory Committee that will meet periodically to provide guidance on data collection and work products, ensure alignment with local planning efforts, and review work products. TPL will work with city staff to identify relevant stakeholders for the committee.

TPL's analyses will result in an estimate of the value of ecosystem services generated by Burlington's open space and provide a strong foundation for public communication, advocacy, and long-term planning.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Summary of the analysis of economic benefits generated by Burlington's open space, including methodology and key findings. All of this content will be incorporated into the final report.
- Virtual presentation to project committee

Task 2: Climate Cooling Analysis of Burlington's Open Space

TPL will conduct a custom analysis to evaluate the cooling benefits of Burlington's parks and open space. TPL has developed a best in class nationwide 30-meter-high resolution urban heat island dataset using Landsat imagery. Following past analyses in Chicago and New York City, TPL will use this data and methodology to conduct a similar analysis for Burlington, identifying and evaluating the hotspots and cool spots within Burlington. TPL will overlay these data with parks and open space boundaries to quantify the cooling benefit these spaces provide for the community, including estimating the mean cooling benefit provided across all open space as well as the heat reduction in the parks that provide the greatest cooling benefit. Quantification of land surface temperature will be measured in degrees Fahrenheit.

Key question to answer: *What is the quantifiable impact of Burlington's open space on land surface temperature and urban heat islands?*

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Memo on methodology and summary of key findings
- Map of Burlington's Urban Heat Island dataset
- Virtual presentation to project committee

Task 3: Decision Support Framework for Open Space and Housing in Burlington

This task will support Burlington in developing a framework for navigating complex decisions involving open space in the context of housing need, climate resilience, and long-term community benefit.

Key question to answer: *How can Burlington evaluate proposals involving public open space in a way that supports housing goals, protects long-term public value, and advances equitable access to open space and nature?*

TPL will draw on national best practices, the findings from Task 1 and 2, and local context to develop a policy and process-oriented decision framework tailored to Burlington.

Components will include:

- ***Burlington Context and Needs:*** TPL will review Burlington’s policy, planning, legal, governance, and public land decision-making context shaping decisions about open space (including parks), public land, and housing. This review will also synthesize relevant findings from the Economic Benefits Analysis and Climate Cooling Analysis to ensure the decision support framework is grounded in Burlington-specific evidence about the value and function of its open space system.
- ***Targeted Peer and Precedent Scan:*** TPL will identify how select peer cities or relevant jurisdictions are addressing similar pressures, with a focus on approaches and best practices that are directly applicable to Burlington. This may include public land disposition policies, parkland conversion standards, replacement requirements, interdepartmental review processes, or policies that integrate parks and green space into housing and land use planning.
- ***Decision Criteria and Considerations for Proposals Affecting Public Open Space or Publicly Controlled Land:*** TPL will develop high-level decision-making criteria and considerations to help Burlington evaluate future proposals that may affect public open space or publicly controlled land with open space value based on the previous two tasks. Burlington staff and decision-makers can use the framework to identify tradeoffs, document public benefits and impacts, and determine when additional analysis, mitigation, public engagement, or policy development is needed. The criteria TPL develops will focus on evaluating proposals involving open space, such as:
 - Relationship to adopted housing, open space, climate, and comprehensive planning goals
 - Impact on open space access, level of service, quality, ecological function, and connectivity
 - Equity implications, including who benefits and who may experience reduced access or diminished public value
 - Availability of alternative sites, design strategies, or co-location strategies that can better advance multiple public goals
 - Fiscal, legal, operational, stewardship, and maintenance considerations
 - Potential approaches for mitigation, replacement, reinvestment, or public benefit when public open space is affected
 - Governance and process considerations, including coordination among departments, agencies, and boards, as well as public engagement practices that support consistent, transparent decision-making

These criteria and considerations are intended to inform Burlington as it develops cross-department frameworks and a civic assets study during the

PlanBTV comprehensive planning process. The framework will not replace site-specific feasibility analysis, legal review, or formal public decision-making processes.

- ***Recommendations and Next Steps:*** TPL will provide high-level actionable guidance for near-term decisions and longer-term policy development.

Task 3 Deliverables:

- Summary of Burlington's context and needs, targeted peer and precedent scan, decision criteria and considerations, and recommendations to inform Burlington's ongoing comprehensive planning and cross-department frameworks. All of this content will be incorporated into the final report.
- Virtual presentation to project committee

Final Deliverables:

- Final report, including an executive summary, methodology, and description of findings and recommendations from Tasks 1, 2, and 3, professionally copyedited and designed
- In-person presentation to City leadership by up to 3 TPL staff members

Project Team

Jennifer Clinton is the Associate Director of Conservation Economics at Trust for Public Land, and will serve as project manager for this effort. She leads a portfolio of economic research projects that are used to advocate for land conservation and parks across the United States, focusing on the ecosystem services, public health, recreation, and economic development benefits provided by parks, outdoor recreation, and open space. She recently completed studies in Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, and New York. She also serves as a project manager for planning and technical assistance initiatives, including greenprinting and outdoor recreation efforts in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Jennifer holds a BS in Politics from Fairfield University and an MS in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of Connecticut.

Valerie Friedmann (she/her), AICP, is Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Trust for Public Land where she leads local policy research and field-building efforts to close the park equity gap. She develops policy frameworks and guidance that help local governments align land use, development policy, public investment, and community-centered decision-making to expand access to high-quality parks and the health, climate, and civic benefits they make possible. Previously, Valerie served as senior long-range planner and green space planner for the City of Lexington and taught landscape architecture at Auburn University. She holds a master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Tennessee and lives in Lexington, Kentucky.

Taj Schottland is a nationally recognized climate expert with more than 15 years of experience working to improve the natural environment for the benefit of people and wildlife. He currently serves as the national Director of Climate Resilience at Trust for Public Land. In this role, he leads the organization's national climate strategy, aimed at strengthening community resilience and protecting carbon-rich landscapes. Taj also leads TPL's Climate Smart Cities program, helping cities across the country use climate, health, and equity data to target high-impact investments. Taj holds a B.A. in Human Ecology from the College of the Atlantic, where his studies focused on international climate policy and on understanding and addressing the complex interactions between human societies and the environment.

Dale Watt is a Senior GIS Project Manager with the Trust for Public Land. He oversees projects with the Climate program, the 10-minute-walk team, and a variety of others across the Center for Community Impact's work. He develops and manages TPL's urban heat datasets. Dale works with TPL staff and partners to achieve useful analysis and tools that

informs park planning and decision-making. He has previous career experience in geospatial architecture on the cloud, wildlands conservation and scientific geospatial analysis, renewable energy siting, and spatial prioritization modeling. Dale graduated with a B.A. in Geography from Clark University and went on to receive an M.S. in GIS for Development and Environment, also from Clark University.

Sam Savin is Associate Director of Technical Assistance at Trust for Public Land. He has worked with over 20 communities across the country through TPL's 10-Minute Walk® Park Equity Accelerator. Through the Accelerator, Sam works with communities to define local priorities for park equity and develop and implement roadmaps to help them achieve those priorities. He conducts research, plans trainings and convenings, and helps build momentum for park equity. Sam has presented on his work at national conferences like the American Planning Association, the National Recreation and Parks Association, and Greater & Greener.

Project Schedule and Timeline

The project is anticipated to take approximately 11 months. A preliminary schedule is outlined below:

Phase/Task	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27
Project management & check-in meetings											
Define objectives and study areas											
Task 1. Economic Benefits of Burlington's Open Space											
Identify and recruit Technical Advisory Committee											
Convene Committee Meetings											
Stormwater Management Analysis											
Air Pollution Analysis											
Nature-Based Solutions Analysis											
<u>Submit Deliverables</u>											
Task 2. Climate Cooling Analysis of Burlington's Open Space											
Conduct GIS Analysis											
Create Burlington Map											
<u>Submit Deliverables</u>											
Task 3. Decision Support Framework for Open Space and Housing in Burlington											
Research Burlington context and needs											
Conduct peer and precedent scan											
Identify decision criteria for development proposals											
Identify recommendations and next steps											
<u>Submit Deliverables</u>											
Final Deliverables											
Draft Report											
Review Report Text											
Design Report											
Review Draft #2											
<u>Final Report Complete</u>											

Budget

**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
NEW ENGLAND
Burlington Housing and Parks Analysis
17-Jul-26**

<u>TASK</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Task 1 Economic Analysis	\$ 50,000
Task 2 Climate Cooling Analysis	16,000
Task 3 Open Space & Housing	45,000
PM General Project Management	13,000
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 124,000</u>

This budget accounts for one in-person presentation by TPL staff members. Optional additions (e.g., infographics, story maps, or additional presentations) can be included as needed and will be scoped separately.



Contact Information:

Jennifer Clinton
Associate Director, Conservation Economics
jennifer.clinton@tpl.org



MEMO

Date: July 29, 2026
To: Open Space SubCommittee
From: Dan Cahill
RE: Neighborhood Climate Resilience - Vegetation Pilot

Below is a DRAFT Vegetation Pilot concept. This draft is intended to act as a document for committee members to discuss, revise and adapt further. The goal is to have a version of this pilot program to implement along with the Nature Based Climate Solutions Grant Program in October when the Notice of Funding for 2026-27 grant applications are released. If all goes well, in September staff will present a final version of the pilot project to the Conservation Board for inclusion in the 2006-27 NBS Grant NOFO, intended for release in October.

Neighborhood Native Plant Initiative

The City, in partnership with UVM Plant and Soil Science Department and The Lake Champlain Basin Sea Grant, is taking steps to incentivize neighborhoods to participate in making Burlington more climate resilient. Specifically, this project aims to achieve this through a variety of measures:

- Growing Burlington's tree canopy
- Increasing pollinator and wildlife habitat by planting native plants
- Prioritize managing invasive species where they are having a significant impact on native plant and wildlife communities
- Filtering Stormwater Runoff

Resources to support this project are made possible by the Conservation Legacy Fund's Nature Based Climate Solutions Grant Program.

Projects must align with the goals and activities listed in the Open Space Plan.

Projects that involve collaboration among neighbors and community partners score higher.

Project sites within 300 ft. of a Burlington Natural Area (within a stewardship zone) score higher. Project sites within areas recently affected by Ash Tree removals score higher.

Projects that identify co-benefits of other provisions within the Open Space Plan score higher.

The City of Burlington understands that landscape change takes time (i.e. invasive removal requires consistent management over many years, tree canopy may not fill in for many years) We encourage projects that consider long-term commitment and/or impacts for climate resiliency.

1. Describe your project area. (please submit a drawing or map to support your project site description).



- a. Approximate Location: Address or Street Intersections,
 - b. Total Square Footage,
 - c. Current vegetation, and/or current or historical use of space.
 - d. Drawn maps or photos are helpful.
 - e. Ownership (public/private) - get creative, no idea is a bad idea. We want this grant opportunity to encourage discussion amongst neighbors, residents and the City, business and residents etc....
 - i. Do you have permission of the landowner(s) to explore this grant opportunity?
 1. If you are not the property owner, please attach a letter of support from the property owner. [including property owner contact info.](#)
 - a. If project spans multiple properties please include info for all properties.
2. Describe your project site goals. How does this project align with Initiative's climate resiliency goals? Include draft plant lists, planting schemes, or material lists.
3. Describe your maintenance and care plan for the first 3 years of the project after planting.
4. Project Budget. Include estimated plant & material costs
5. Budget Narrative -
 - a. Describe your costs, both direct and inkind,
 - i. for inkind volunteer labor please use the federal volunteer rate of [insert updated volunteer \$/hr rate]
 - b. Please include description of plant material and their genetics,
6. How may this project enhance community connections?
7. Successful projects are required to have an identified "project lead" and a "plant care lead." Project leads and plant care leads can be the same person, but do not have to be. Plant Care Lead's must have experience with planting trees and/or herbaceous and woody perennials as well as caring for and keeping alive plants. Please provide an overview of your project lead, and your plant care lead. Provide information about their experience and credentials that make them viable for their role.
 - a. For applicants who need assistance identifying project leads or plant care leads, please refer to the resource section of this application.
8. Does your project require permitting or digsafes clearance?
 - a. Permits
 - i. [enter series of questions here]
 - b. Digsafe
 - i. [enter digsafes parameters here]

Resources:

Project Lead and Plant Care Lead Support – Burlington Wildways [provide contact info]



Plant Source List: [vendors and agencies providing plant material with appropriate genetics]

Can Professor Hill's students and plants be resources here?