



Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

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Please click the link to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/95009409009>

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Webinar ID: 950 0940 9009

1. Agenda

1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

2. Consent Agenda

Subject	2.1. August Meeting Minutes
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	2. Consent Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	
Recommended Action	
Subject	2.2. Battery Park Special Use Permit Request (Pride Parade Fest)
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	2. Consent Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	
Recommended Action	
Subject	2.3. Calahan Park Special Use Permit Request (BFC Jamboree)
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	2. Consent Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	
Recommended Action	

3. Public Forum - Time Certain, 6pm

Subject	3.1. Verbal Comments
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	3. Public Forum - Time Certain, 6pm
Department	Council and Board
Type	

4. Deliberative Agenda

Subject	4.1. Vegetation Ordinance Overview and Approvals
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	4. Deliberative Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	Action

Subject	4.2. Legacy Fund Funding Approval – Ecosystem Services Analysis
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	4. Deliberative Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	Action

Subject	4.3. Nature Based Climate Solutions Grant Review Committee
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	4. Deliberative Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	Action

Subject	4.4. Appendix D, Section 7
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	4. Deliberative Agenda
Department	Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
Type	Information

Subject	4.5. Commission Member Chair, Foundation Seat Election
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Meeting September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

Category 4. Deliberative Agenda

Department Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

Type Action

Subject 4.6. Comprehensive Plan Update

Meeting September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

Category 4. Deliberative Agenda

Department Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

Type Information

5. Standing Items

Subject 5.1. Parks Foundation Update

Meeting September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

Category 5. Standing Items

Department Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

Type

Recommended Action

Subject 5.2. Director's Report

Meeting September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

Category 5. Standing Items

Department Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

Type

Recommended Action

Subject 5.3. Commissioner's Items & Volunteer Hours

Meeting September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom

Category 5. Standing Items

Department Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

Type

Recommended Action

6. Adjournment

Subject	6.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	September 8, 2026 - Parks Commission Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 5:30 PM, 645 Pine St., Front Conference Room or Remotely via Zoom
Category	6. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

Parks Commission Meeting

August 11th, 2026 at 5:30pm

645 Pine St., Front Conference Room & Zoom

Staff in Attendance: Lewis, Sauve, Cahill, Comai, Schmidt, Madalinski, Gustin, Holmes & O'Daniel

Commissioners in Attendance: Lantieri, Boehm, Mobley, Davis, Bergmann, Mamo & Etter

Lantieri opened the meeting at 5:31pm by welcoming everyone and introducing the newest Commissioner, Frank Mamo.

1. Agenda

1.1 Motion to amend/adopt agenda

Lantieri noted that there was one amendment to the agenda needed, which was to include the June minutes as an item to be approved with the Consent Agenda.

Bergmann made a motion to amend the agenda to include the June minutes as an item to be approved with the Consent Agenda, Mobley seconded.

All were in favor of the amended agenda, none opposed.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 Burlington Greenway Special Use Permit Request (Old Spokes Home)

2.2 Burlington Greenway Special Use Permit Request (Sarah Ramsey Strong 5K)

2.3 Calahan Park Special Use Permit Request (GBGSL Fall)

2.4 Pomeroy Park Special Use Permit (Momo's Market)

2.5 June minutes

Davis made a motion to accept the consent agenda, Bergmann seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

3. Public Forum – Time Certain, 6pm

3.1 Verbal Comments

Public forum was opened at 6:02pm.

Colin McNeil was present online and wanted to make a comment about Smalley Park. He shared that it doesn't feel like it is being maintained and wanted to put in a request that the City keep this park in mind and keep maintaining the softball field so it is available for all users now and in the future and so that it doesn't go into disrepair.

Scott Gustin and Zoe Richards were present in person and noted that this was a sneak peek of an action item that will be in front of the Commission next month. Gustin began by sharing that they are talking to trust for public land about doing an ecosystem services analysis for Burlington.

Richards introduced herself as a long-term member of the Conservation Board. She then explained that ecosystem services are a way of recognizing the value that many of the healthy ecosystems that are present within the City have, like street trees, wetlands and

functional forests, which is an infrastructure that we rely on as a City. She continued that they reduce storm water and air pollutants and keep us cool, among other things, and that there is a goal of calculating some of those benefits so that when an appropriate use for an open space is being discussed, there is a way of calculating what that value is. She shared the example that a relatively healthy ecosystem will absorb more stormwater than any built green stormwater infrastructure. She continued that it is really worth understanding what Burlington already has and what its value is, especially when trade-offs are needed when discussing how to approach open space, like when building is involved. This will be helpful for the important process of thinking about the value that natural systems and healthy ecosystems play within the City because it will allow for continued investment in those being healthy. Richards shared that nature-based climate solutions are one of the most impactful climate solutions that you can have for a City because it is things that people can really feel and see and understand, like dropping the temperature of the City by growing enough trees. She shared that she feels this will set the stage to continue to invest in the City's existing healthy ecosystems.

Gustin shared that ecosystem services are a recurring theme in both the new open space plan that was adopted earlier this year, but also in the 2022 nature-based climate solutions addendum, including a few action items related to execution and implementation of nature-based climate solutions and evaluation modification of those processes. He continued that this study will be looking in City-wide green spaces, which includes public, private and institutional properties including the core ecological areas like Rock Point and Arms Forest but also the green connective tissues through the neighborhoods and community at large. Gustin noted that fundamentally, it is about improved decision making for important decision making, like building more housing. He continued that by doing this study, it will give the City an opportunity to better understand and quantify the multiple public benefits of the open spaces and incorporate that information into future decision making. He shared that there are 2 primary components to this study that they are anticipating: the economic benefits of open spaces and the climate cooling benefit of these green spaces throughout the community. Gustin then shared that there are 3 primary topic areas: humanities climate solutions, stormwater management and air quality. He concluded by explaining that they are hoping to fund this out of the Conservation Legacy Fund, for roughly \$79,000, and will need the Commission's approval to do so.

Richards chimed in that this was something that the Planning Commission requested during the Open Space Plan planning process.

Mobley asked if they felt this would be done in time to impact the Plan BTV work that is happening.

Gustin and Richards answered yes.

Public forum was closed at 6:12pm.

4. Deliberative Agenda

4.1 Tree Ordinance Update

Gustin began by sharing his screen with the current working draft of the tree and vegetation ordinance, noting that this was not an action item tonight, but another review of a draft that had been updated since the initial review by this body, the Conservation Board and City Council's ordinance committee. He continued that there will be one more round of revisions before coming back as an action item for support for an adoption in September. He then went through the changes that were made by other bodies from the last draft. The highlights were that the authority section definitions were fleshed out a bit, the City Arborist and City Land Steward titles in regards to trees were solidified, definitions about climate resilience were added and definitions about different types of vegetation were discussed.

Cahill noted that the introductions in the definitions were related to some pieces that were added around removing plant material from City property and then providing clarity around what that process is, which is coming up more and more in the realm of seed collection for native seeds to make sure there are enough for the birds, insects and natural processes as well as folks who are interested in growing from seed.

Gustin continued that this part also provided more detailed provisions around removal, cutting and pruning vegetation and trees on public property. He shared that they also articulated the role of the Conservation Board a bit more and added in reviewing the annual goals and objectives prepared by the City Arborist and/or Land Steward and also serving as a public forum for the community around things like the ash tree management, for example. He continued that they fleshed out more detail around obstruction of streets, which he shared articulates the responsibilities for the private property owners who have trees or shrubs that are on public street right of ways with the potential of encroachment and enables follow-up and enforcement action to compel compliance in those instances. Gustin continued by touching on shade trees, which are a tree on public property planted by a public entity – like a street tree or a tree in a park, but not trees in public forests. He then mentioned an additional category called “other trees” that was added and noted that where zoning is involved, it refers to the comprehensive development ordinance. Gustin shared the final highlights that they worked out a bit more were mitigation measures or applications that include tree removal. He shared that if someone requests approval to remove a certain amount of trees and approval is given, there are mitigation measures on a caliper caliper basis. He used the example of someone removing 100 inches, which need to be replaced, which can happen on-site or off-site, and off-site requires a consultation with the Land Steward or City Arborist. He continued that if off-site is not feasible, a payment based on plant appraisal needs to be made into a tree fund. He shared that the other option is installing and maintaining on-site green infrastructure.

Mobley asked if there was a storm event and someone were to lose trees in their yard, does this come into play in this scenario?

Gustin answered no, only if someone sought approval to intentionally remove trees on private public and institution properties, with private property governed by the zoning code in this ordinance-based reference to that.

Mamo asked if there was any consideration to change or review the way trees on public lands are reviewed or approached, noting that the removal of ash trees in the Old North

End altered the neighborhoods noticeably. He shared that he felt the communication from Parks about why they were removing the trees was excellent, but that it created a renewed understanding of how important trees in public spaces are, especially in the ONE where people don't have large yards so most of the trees are public trees.

Cahill answered that after the ash tree removal, there were lessons learned and space for adaptations to be made. He did note however, that adding complexity and process to work plans when the department and City are working with less resources and employees would be a challenge, but one worth meeting.

Gustin noted that the process for removing shade trees is articulated in the state statute and a primary point in this ordinance is to provide a defined community process.

Cahill chimed in that it also allows for it to be staff-led in the way that integrating the process with a body allows for diverse and robust dialogue. He feels there could also be space for community process and engagement with mourning the loss of trees, like honoring them with other plantings.

Comai agreed that having a really active tree board on the Conservation Board will be helpful in the future to have an open public discussion about what the tree team is doing and for presenting their yearly plans and long-term goals. He continued that he has heard of communities who review every public tree that might be taken down and shared that this would not be helpful here. He shared that his team often runs into situations where there's a storm-damaged tree and they make the decision on the spot when they respond to the call if the remainder of the tree needs to come down because it is a public safety issue. Comai continued by reflecting on how he and his team feel the impacts of all of the ash removal in the Old North End every day, noting that they're out there caring for and growing the trees. He shared that they have been planning for this for 8 years and have been planting new trees ahead of removals as much as possible, including planting 214 trees in Wards 2 and 3, in addition to other trees since then across all of the Wards.

Lantieri asked if his team is aware of where they will be planting and removing every year.

Comai answered for the most part, yes, and that they have been very systematically removing ash trees since 2024, which included removing all of the ash in one area at the same time to streamline the process. He shared they are currently aware of some larger, older trees that looked okay last year but will need to come down this year due to drought conditions and sidewalk replacement work. He continued that outside of things like that, removals aren't always known ahead of time, especially when storm or vehicle damage is involved. Comai shared that they do know in advance where they will be planting and shared that they currently have a list of 110 locations that could be planted this fall. He noted that their policy is to plant a new tree in a removal location within a calendar year if the site is viable. He closed by sharing that yes they have a work plan but it can change daily with incoming See Click Fixes and emergency calls consistently coming through.

Lantieri thanked him and reiterated that the Tree Board will be a great venue to see what the work plan is while also understanding the pieces can that ebb and flow.

Gustin chimed in that the next step will be to update the draft to its final form to be approved by the Conservation Board, this body and then City Council, ideally in September and October.

4.2 Trail System Review

Cahill opened by sharing that the Department is on the cusp of kicking off some of our trail system maps of the parks and coming to this body to review system alignments with the trails has been a helpful step in this process. He noted that trails have been ranked highly as a beloved and vital asset within the park system, so anytime there is work being done to align those trails, forest stewardship and system development can come along with it, which is why giving the Commission a chance to be involved and ask questions is so important. He continued that while they're not expecting controversy, but when and if there is community dialogue, having the support of a space where that can happen is helpful for the staff doing the work. Cahill noted that while this is a bit of alignment of a process it is also celebrating getting better wayfinding for the parks system. He closed by sharing that the plans in the packet were all guided by safety, sustainability and accessibility, which is how these trail system changes are developed. Schmidt introduced himself and explained that in his role as Conservation Field Coordinator, he oversees the natural areas and trails and conservation projects happening in those areas. He reiterated what Cahill noted about safety, accessibility and sustainability and shared that they don't actively make changes to trail plans by looking through the lens of user conflict, unsafe conditions or ecologically unsustainable conditions, which all prompt trail changes. He continued that because they are doing this new wayfinding thing, they wanted to make sure there are trails that they want to put on maps and for people to know about. He then shared the Leddy Park map, noting that there are a lot of social trails that have bisected the 2 main trails. He noted that this is an area of user conflict so the hope is to take an area with old social trails and put a little more attention into it, recognizing that there are a lot of people who walk there but now there are a lot of bikers because of the bike park. He continued that they want to do work preemptively to make sure that each of the user groups feel like they have a space that is safe and accessible and where there can be different types of experiences on the trails. He continued that with all of this in mind, he is proposing 2 separate trails, a pedestrian and a multi-use trail, going the same directions and closing the little cross social trails to eliminate all of those intersections. He noted that this would involve minimal trail development, but give folks a nice option for walking. Schmidt then shared that something they do now when building trails is purposely slow the flow of traffic of all kinds, which is done so that multiple user groups can use the trail safely. He continued by noting that this is in a lower priority ecological zone of Leddy Park. Schmidt then brought everyone's attention to another trail connecting to Leonard Street that community members have been asking for for a long time. He shared that he has been working with Madalinski from the Planning Team and that it would be an incredibly easy spot to put a trail in and it would be a really nice access point for the community. Schmidt then touched on Kieslich Park, noting that they will not be changing the trails that are present, but have rehabilitated some old social trails that

had become overgrown and will be adding in a wayfinding kiosk. Next he showed the Arms Forest map, noting that no changes will be made to this trail system either, but the already approved trails map will be on the kiosk that has been installed at the meadow. Mobley shared that Arms Forest was mentioned on her tour of the new high school, which she felt was extremely positive and exciting.

Schmidt shared that he worked with a BHS YES class to rehabilitate the trail that runs from the high school into the forest, which was just a first step in more thoroughly integrating BHS students into that forest system and having them play a role in the stewardship of it.

Cahill noted that there was some minimal disturbance to the forest during construction and the school district was great about working with us on how to restore different pieces of it. He continued that there's aspirational intention to have students help with that restoration work over time.

Schmidt continued by touching on Oakledge, noting that a majority of the social trails at Oakledge are not safe, accessible or sustainably built, so the goal is to close those, especially the really dangerous ones that are very steep and eroded. He continued that part of that process will involve making the safe trails that they want to make the official trails more inviting to encourage use of those instead.

Davis asked how they close the social trails.

Schmidt answered that closing a popular social trail is a work in progress and involves brushing in to discretely dissuade use over time. He continued that the other trail at Oakledge that goes from the upper parking lot through the meadow, is a great birding area and one of the few areas in Burlington that could actually be ADA accessible with a durable surface that has the right grades to actually accommodate a wheelchair. He noted that these trails exist already, but are often wet so putting in something like a gravel path would make them accessible in many different ways. He shared that the trail map that would be posted at the site would ideally include these for future use.

Davis asked how this would all work with the budget.

Lewis answered that the Conservation team has been very creative coming up with ways to make lemonade out of lemons. He continued that they have the funds that are available and maximize them to the best of their abilities utilizing the talents they have on their full-time team, seasonal staff and volunteers. He noted that the trail system is not as incorporated into the capital budget program as much as it probably should be, which was identified through the budgeting processes. He feels there is opportunity to tie in some of these efforts to make sure there are appropriate funds for the build out of these capital goods.

Schmidt chimed in that everything in the proposal can be done in-house both by hand and machine, so it's more a matter of time and what we don't do when we do big projects like this.

Cahill noted that the permitting piece will take time and is something that needs to be explored.

Lantieri shared that this is all very exciting and could be a great opportunity to engage the public and volunteers.

Schmidt agreed, noting the positive experience so far with engaging the public in removing buckthorn from Oakledge Park.

Boehm made a motion to support the implementation and alignments needed to achieve the trail plans, Bergmann seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

4.3 Burlington Area Community Garden Program Appeal Body

Cahill opened by sharing a brief history of the community garden program, noting that the first site was opened in 1972 at Oakledge park for 1 year and then the idea of community gardens took hold across the US through a private endeavor, Garden Way Carts, who created community gardens to help sell their products via newsletters. Cahill continued that Tommy Thompson's efforts to create community gardens in the Burlington area came from these funds as a part of the back to the land movement, but were lacking any sort of longevity or infrastructure. He continued that eventually Garden Way got out of the business and they hired Larry Sommers from Eating Well Magazine helped these go from private endeavors to public, so in the early 80s it became a nonprofit that had a board. He shared that that board oversaw the community garden program for 4-5 years until they could not fund it anymore, and then Bernie Sanders, who was Burlington's Mayor at the time, made it a program through the Parks and Recreation Department. Cahill continued that the board became an advisory board through the transition and especially during those early years making sure the City held its promise but over time as the City investment into the program was becoming stronger, especially when things turned the corner to having Meghan O'Daniel in her role supporting the gardens, the advisory board eventually chose to disband. He shared that this has not been felt for the most part – there is a robust network of site leaders that Meghan supports and coordinates, who act as a larger body of thought partners and community gardeners. Cahill noted, however, that one specific and important function was lost in the disbanding of the advisory board – being an appeal committee in the event that someone is disinvited from the program and that those individuals have due process to appeal those decisions made by staff. Cahill noted that this is a very rare occurrence and we do our best to work with folks before it gets to this point, but are realizing this is a bit of a gap in the process and sometimes the conversation needs to extend beyond staff. He concluded that we are looking to the Parks Commission to provide that function in the event that there is an appeal where a gardener could come before you and be heard, which would put the board in a place to render a final decision.

Mobley asked if this had been run through legal. She also noted that this would provide a point of engagement, albeit somewhat challenging, which has been a goal of the current commission and there is value in that. She also shared curiosity about potential training opportunities in mediation for Commissioners to be able to participate in this comfortably.

Boehm felt that this was a good idea and agreed that there should be more process figured out. She then asked if there are other examples of this in other aspects of the City that could be referenced.

The group then discussed potential frameworks and policy for this process and the general agreement was to check in with the City Attorney's office next.

Davis asked how many site leaders there are and if they get paid.

Cahill answered that there are around 30 because we encourage more than 1 per site and they do not get paid.

Davis asked if they were the people monitoring the plots.

Cahill answered that yes, they are the first line of interpretation of the plot maintenance policy.

Mamo asked how often this happens.

Cahill answered maybe 3 times in the last 15 years.

The group then discussed how to proceed – noting that they are open to taking on this responsibility but would like to have this brought to the City Attorney's office and have a policy in place.

Boehm made a motion to accept the role of the appeal body for the BACG program for cases that require due process for participants of the program contingent on Parks staff providing a policy and process for the Commission to follow, Mobley seconded.

All were in favor, none opposed.

4.4 Calahan Park – Upcoming Updates

Madalinski began by explaining that he was at the meeting to give the Commission some updates on projects in different stages of design completion that are expected to go into construction at Calahan Park in the next year. He began by speaking to the courts, sharing that they put out an RFP in the spring of 2025 for the design of a bioretention basin, the reconstruction of the basketball and tennis courts and a tree trench stormwater feature that would go in between the two sets of courts, all of which were in the comprehensive plan. He continued that around the same time, the department applied for an LWCF grant with the hopes that it would fund all of this, which was expected to cost roughly in the \$1.2 million range. He then shared that after they got through their contracting and had the design engineer onboard, they learned that they had not gotten the LWCF grant and the official cost estimate came back at closer to \$2 million. All of this resulted in the Planning Team peeling back pieces that the comprehensive plan had initially included, like a large retaining wall near the basketball courts and all of the stormwater pieces, and taking them out of the scope. He continued that this led them to potentially building just 1 basketball court instead of 2. Madalinski also shared that they also did some creative moving around of bond funds so that all of the courts can still be built at the same time and to hopefully put lighting in for each of them. He continued that by peeling back the scope like they did, they are more in the \$700k to \$800k range now and they're just about ready to bring the drawings forward for permitting and to submit them to the zoning department. Because Madalinski was not able to share his screen, he then described what was included on the drawing he had been hoping to share: moving and building 1 basketball court with 10' fencing around it that would be lit, a connecting pathway between the basketball and tennis courts that connects to the new entrance, grading to make everything ADA accessible, one of the sets of 4 tennis courts will be converted into pickleball courts and all of the

tennis/pickleball courts will be lit and controlled by a timer. Madalinski shared his hope for feedback and thoughts on outreach to the community, especially about the lighting and noise considerations that go along with that.

Mobley suggested tabling at events to help get the information out could be a good approach and noted that doing this outreach is a good idea.

Madalinski then gave an update about the Calahan pathway, sharing that after hearing from neighbors about the various trees that were planned for removal, they worked with their design engineer and BED to make some changes so now the sugar maple, Norway maple and the pine tree next to the playground will remain. He noted that the pine tree will need to have some limbing done and BED will need to do some additional work to put another pole in and relocating some cables.

Lantieri shared that he feels the community will be pleased to hear that you all are responding to their feedback.

4.5 Commission Members & Ward Distribution

Lantieri asked everyone to share what Ward they were in.

Davis said she was in Ward 4.

Lantieri, Boehm, Bergmann, Mobley and Etter said they were in Ward 5.

Mamo said he was in Ward 2.

4.6 Comprehensive Plan Update (Intern Surveying Overview)

Holmes introduced herself, sharing that she was one of the Parks Planning interns, and explaining that she would be presenting the Commission with an update on what they have been up to this summer. She continued that they have been gathering community input in parks in support of PlanBTV 2050, specifically in regards to the revision of the BPRW comprehensive plan, which fits into that, noting that they especially focused on the waterfront (Starr Farm, Oakledge and Waterfront Parks) which did not get an in depth look for the 2015 plan. She then shared that over the course of 10 weeks they conducted 15 minute passerby counts in those locations and on the Greenway, noting whether people were passive or active and their demographics. This enabled them to model an average week day and weekend day in each of these locations from 8am – 8pm. She shared that they also conducted 175 interviews in these parks and at events in other locations to gather more individual feedback. Homes then noted their guiding questions – who is using the parks, how do people use the parks and what do people love the most about the parks/what do they wish was different? She then shared some of their findings: toddlers, youth and seniors were overrepresented in comparison to the overall demographics of BTV, seniors were equally distributed amongst the locations while toddlers and youth were more present at Oakledge and Starr Farm, Oakledge had two times as many passive park users than active while Starr Farm mainly had active users, people spent more time at Oakledge than other parks with over 80% of survey respondents there saying they planned to spend over an hour at the park, more people at Oakledge and Starr Farm were coming from home compared to a higher number of people treating Waterfront Park as more of a stop in their day instead of the destination, around 60% of the people at Waterfront Park were from out of town

(destination location) with people from 15 states represented and some people from Canada as well, and over half of the people at Oakledge were from out of town but relatively close by (regional park) while 80% of people surveyed at Starr Farm were from the New North End (neighborhood park). Holmes then polled the group to see which park they thought had the most visitors, the answer being Oakledge. She then shared a graph of the number of visitors to each park by the hour as well as a different graph showing how people got to the parks noting that Oakledge had the most people who came by car, Starr Farm had the most people who came through their own power (biking/walking) and Waterfront had the most different modes of transport, including public transit and boat. Holmes continued that with this data, a deeper picture of each park and how they are used can be painted. She reiterated that Oakledge tends to have younger users engaged in passive activities and is used more like a regional destination for things like swimming, picnics and lawn games, while Waterfront Park is used like an extension of downtown and functions more like a square or a plaza for visitors to Burlington and Starr Farm is used as a neighborhood park for New North End residents. She summarized that changes to the parks should begin with recognizing what they already are and how they are used and can be used to make informed decisions and help determine how to spend resources. Holmes then touched on comment themes throughout the process, noting that most comments were positive and the ones that were negative were mostly about unhoused people in parks, but with the understanding of the complexity of the problem. Holmes then shared that Greenway users shared that they felt it was a “treasure” and a “critical resource for the city”. Holmes then shared that people were overall very happy with the recreational facilities available and felt a sense of community through events such as Juneteenth and Leddy Beach Bites. She mentioned that many people were interested in more bathrooms and waterfountains throughout the park system. Holmes then shared some direct quotes from folks surveyed and what it was like to interact with people in the parks over the summer. She then shared that their next step will be synthesizing this data and writing a report so that it can be used by the Department.

The Commissioners shared their excitement about this process and the data gathered.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Parks Foundation Update

Lantieri noted that the Pomeroy playground opening happened, which was a big milestone for the Parks Foundation and their Playgrounds for All campaign. He then shared that they are a separate non-profit that raises money specifically for park projects, and in this case, playground equipment. He continued that the Parks Commission has a member that attends their meetings, which he has been doing, but he became an official member of the Parks Foundation at the last meeting so he asked others to consider being the Parks Commissioner who attends. Lantieri then asked if anyone attended the Pomeroy playground opening.

Lewis shared that he attended and that it went well with a lot of positive feedback and energy. He thanked the YMCA for joining the event and bringing children over to use the

new playground. He gave kudos to the Planning Team for putting all of those efforts together.

Mamo shared that he attended the opening and that he and his family use that playground and park daily.

Lantieri thanked all who were involved and thanked the Parks Foundation for the generous donation that made it happen and for continuing to fund the Playgrounds for All campaign.

5.2 Director's Report

Lewis referenced the report and also highlighted the City's July 3rd event, BPRW and PACC engagement with the resolution that was recently passed at City Council, additional conversations in the Ordinance committee around e-motos and measures that staff are taking in the field, summer programming wrapping up and fall programming starting soon and that there will hopefully be a Leddy Manager hired soon.

Mobley noted that in reference to the Burlington Forward resolution, she feels that there is a juxtaposition that she understands but hopes that the cuts that were made to the department in 2025, which were deep and impactful, are not forgotten as engagement and responsibilities are potentially being added with fewer resources to support what is already being done. She continued that she hopes there will be space to have bigger conversations about this.

Lewis shared his appreciation for that and noted that he's confident that the Council recognizes that and is taking that into consideration.

5.3 Commissioner's Items & Volunteer Hours

Lantieri shared that he's been focused on volunteer engagement and will be meeting with Cahill and O'Daniel later this week. He had 25 hours to report since the last meeting.

Davis had 3 hours to report visiting parks, gardens and the bike path.

Etter had 1.5 hours to report.

Mobley had 5 hours to report for various Plan BTV meetings.

Mamo shared that since he had taken his oath at the end of July, he focused on the Pomeroy Playground opening and getting a feel from the community of what is working and what might not be in that park. He also noted that he's a daily bike commuter and uses the Greenway daily and has experienced some of the e-moto issues. He also met with Lewis prior to the meeting. He had 3 hours to report.

Bergmann had 2 hours to report.

Boehm didn't have any hours to report, but noted that she's organizing a get together for Champlain parents who are becoming Edmunds parents, and will be getting food from the new vendor at Oakledge.

Lantieri thanked everyone and brought up reviewing Commissioner roles, noting that this is the time for nominations and to vote on the vice chair and chair roles. He continued that if anyone is interested in the roles that it will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Boehm noted that while she is technically Vice Chair and is more than happy to continue in the role, she is not trying to position herself for the Chair position so invited anyone who may be interested in that to explore stepping into the role.

6. Motion to Adjourn

6.1 Motion to adjourn

Boehm made a motion to adjourn, Bergmann seconded.
All were in favor, none opposed.



MEMO

Date: September 8th, 2026
To: BPRW Commission
From: KJ Doyle, Event Manager
RE: Burlington Pride Parade and Festival Special Use Permit for September 13th, 2026

Request for a Special Use Permit at Battery Park to allow amplified sound.

The Burlington Pride Parade and Festival will end their parade through the city by celebrating in Battery Park! The day includes various tents with commercial vendors, nonprofit organizations, a Kids' tent and entertainment in the bandshell.

The amplified sound will take place between 12pm – 3pm, and includes both music and speeches. They have already requested Battery Park. They have the necessary Certificate of Insurance.

Staff contacts for the event is Chris Vaccaro.

It is on a day with no conflicting events.

Staff Recommendations:
Allow for Special Use Permit



MEMO

Date: September 8th, 2026
To: BPRW Commission
From: Meghan O'Daniel, Community Garden & Parks Outreach Coordinator
RE: BFC Jamboree Special Use Permit for October 17th & 18th 2026

Request for a Special Use Permit at Calahan Park for a youth soccer jamboree event.

Burlington Football Club (BFC) is hoping to host their first community-focused soccer event at Calahan Park on October 17th and 18th. They want to make the jamboree about more than just the games, but also a celebration of the greater Burlington community! There will be matches happening throughout the weekend and local partners and vendors present for attendees to interact with. Their larger purpose is to not only create an affordable soccer opportunity for kids but to also promote the positive influences in the Burlington community that make it so wonderful. They are expecting 200-250 attendees.

They are working with the Department on details of the event including the necessary insurance requirements.

Contact for the event is Kyle Marlow.

It is on a weekend with no conflicting events.

Staff Recommendations:

Allow for Special Use Permit

Department of Permitting & Inspections

Zoning Division
645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone: (802) 865-7188

William Ward, Director
Scott Gustin, AICP, CFM, Principal Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
Kirk Dressing, Associate Planner
Joseph Cava, Permit Technician
Matt Clark, Code Compliance Officer



TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Scott Gustin, Principal Planner & Zoning Division Manager
DATE: September 8, 2026
RE: Vegetation Ordinance Amendment

The city's current Vegetation Ordinance dates to 1962 and was most recently amended in 1995. The Open Space Plan adopted earlier this year calls for updating this very out-of-date ordinance. A team consisting of city and state staff and a volunteer from Branch Out Burlington have taken on the task of amending the Vegetation Ordinance.

The effort to amend the ordinance began this past spring and included review of drafts by the Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Board, and the City Council Ordinance Committee. Comments from those draft reviews are reflected in the proposed ordinance amendment now before you for adoption.

The amended Vegetation Ordinance establishes local rules for management of vegetation citywide, including the City's urban forest. The primary goal is to establish and maintain diversity in age and species in trees that make up our urban forest, as well as broad diversity in native species of vegetation in our open spaces.

The amended ordinance includes a number of housekeeping items missing in the current ordinance such as definitions, authorities, and jurisdiction. Reference is made to statutory provisions for shade trees and applicable enabling statutes. The City Arborist and City Land Steward are identified as the statutory tree warden and deputy tree warden, respectively, and authorities for each are noted.

Roles for the Conservation Board, within the context of the Vegetation Ordinance, are articulated and include application review (as currently is the case), collaboration with the City Arborist and City Land Steward, and function as host for community discussions as to the urban forest.

The Vegetation Ordinance Team:

- Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront
 - Dan Cahill, City Land Steward
 - VJ Comai, City Arborist
 - Sophie Sauve, Parks Planning Division Director
- Permitting & Inspections
 - Scott Gustin, Principal Planner
- Branch Out Burlington
 - Jacob Holzberg-Pill
- VT Forest, Parks, & Recreation
 - Elise Schadler

The amended ordinance fleshes out responsibilities for private property owners with vegetation along public rights-of-way, particularly vegetation that encroaches. It articulates protective measures for vegetation on public property and outlines review parameters for applications that include tree removal. The amended ordinance relies on existing permit standards in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance as to tree cutting and describes mitigation measures to offset impacts related to tree removal.

Chapter 29 VEGETATION

Introduction

~~29-1 Planting certain trees prohibited. Statement of Purpose~~

~~29-2 Park commissioners to approve location and manner of planting. Applicability, Authority, & Severability~~

~~29-3 Cutting, pruning or removing trees prohibited; exception. Definitions~~

~~29-4 Removing plants, vines, etc., prohibited. Jurisdiction~~

~~29-6 Attaching board, notice, wire, stay or support to tree prohibited. Authority of the City Arborist and City Land Steward~~

~~29-7 Penalty. General Prohibitions~~

~~29-8 Protection of Vegetation on Public Property~~

~~29-9 Obstruction of Streets~~

~~29-10 Penalties and Enforcement~~

~~29-11 Tree Removal~~

Introduction.

The Burlington Vegetation Ordinance establishes policies, regulations, and standards necessary to ensure that the City maintains robust tree and vegetation cover in a healthy manner that also mitigates risk to life and property. The goal is to establish and maintain diversity in age and species in trees that make up our tree canopy, as well as broad diversity in the presence of native species of vegetation in our open spaces, including but not limited to natural areas, parks, greenbelts, and trees and vegetation on private property.

29-1 Planting certain trees prohibited. Statement of Purpose.

~~No person shall plant or cause to be planted or assist in planting in any of the city parks or streets any variety of poplar, cottonwood or willow tree.~~

~~(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3916)~~

29-1.1. The City of Burlington hereby finds that the preservation of existing vegetation and promotion of new plantings in all public and private ways and places is a public purpose that protects the public health, general welfare, climate resilience and aesthetics of City of Burlington for all its citizens. The provisions of Vegetation Ordinance shall be as a civil ordinance within the meaning of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59.

29-2 Park commissioners to approve location and manner of planting. Applicability, Authority, & Severability.

~~No tree in a street, public park or other city property shall be planted except with the approval, and in accordance with the rules, of the board of park commissioners, who shall have the power to prescribe how such trees shall be planted, at what distance apart and of what variety. A tree shall be provided with supports and guards whenever, in the opinion of the board of park commissioners or its agents, such supports or guards may be desirable.~~

(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3851)

29-2.1. Applicability

The terms and provisions of the Burlington Vegetation Ordinance shall apply to all trees and vegetation within the City of Burlington, except as otherwise provided herein.

29-2.2. Authority

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority contained in V.S.A Title 13, Chapter 77, *Trees and Plants*, and Title 24, Chapters 59, *Adoption and Enforcement of Ordinances and Rules*, 61, *Regulatory Provisions; Police Power of Municipalities*, Subchapter 11: *Miscellaneous Regulatory Powers* and 67, *Parks and Shade Trees*.

29-2.3. Severability

Should any part or provision of this ordinance be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any part thereof other than the part held to be invalid.

~~State law reference—Authority to appropriate sum of money to plant trees, 24 V.S.A., § 2507.~~

29-3 Cutting, pruning or removing trees prohibited; exception. Definitions.

~~No person shall cut, prune or remove a tree or shrub in a street, public park or other city property, except with the approval and consent of the board of park commissioners or of the duly appointed tree warden or city forester.~~

(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3852)

~~Charter reference—Power of city council to remove or trim trees when necessary, § 48(XXXI).~~

~~Cross reference—Authority to remove trees, shrubs or plants from cemetery, § 9-75.~~

~~State law reference—Cutting shade trees, 24 V.S.A. § 2508 et seq.~~

29-3.1. Area of Disturbance- An area proposed to be disturbed in any manner, temporary or permanent, as a result of construction activities, plus a buffer zone of 20 feet.

29-3.2. Caliper - See “tree caliper” as defined in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

29-3.3. City Arborist - The City of Burlington employee of that same title having the primary responsibilities of administration and enforcement of the Burlington Vegetation Ordinance applicable to the city owned spaces that they manage. Primarily these spaces are city ROW and city parks. The City Arborist shall serve as the tree warden per VSA 24, Chapter 67.

29-3.4. City Land Steward- The City of Burlington employee of that same title having the responsibilities of administration and enforcement of the Burlington Vegetation Ordinance applicable to the city owned spaces that they manage. Primarily these spaces are natural areas, large and small, in city parks, Urban Wilds, and in the City ROW. The City Land Steward shall serve as a deputy tree warden per VSA 24, Chapter 67.

29-3.5. City right-of-way (ROW)- The real property or other legal instrument, such as an access easement, associated with transportation infrastructure, including but not limited to streets and public paths. For the purposes of this ordinance, this term is synonymous with “public way” as defined in VSA 24, Chapter 67.

29-3.6. Climate Resilience - The ability of communities, ecosystems, and businesses to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the hazardous effects of climate change, such as extreme weather, flooding, and droughts.

29-3.7. Conservation Board – The board of the same name as included in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

29-3.8. Critical Root Zone - An area of root space that is within a circle circumscribed around the trunk of a healthy tree using a radius of 1 foot per inch Diameter at Breast Height (DBH).

29-3.9. DBH (diameter at breast height) – Standard measurement of tree’s diameter taken at breast height, (4 ½ feet above the ground).

29-3.10. Deputy Tree Warden – The person(s) appointed by the City Council per VSA 24, Chapter 67 who has the same authority over shade trees as the Tree Warden but who is directed by the Tree Warden. See also City Land Steward.

29-3.11. Developer – Any landowner, agent of such landowner, or tenant with the permission of such landowner who makes or causes to be made, development, or who has applied for a zoning permit within the jurisdiction of the city.

29-3.12. Drip Line – The circumference on the ground directly below the outermost branches of a tree.

29-3.13. Germplasm – The living genetic resources – such as seeds, tissues, or reproductive cells – that contain the hereditary information of a species.

29-3.14. Herbaceous vegetation – Plants that grow from their roots in the spring (perennial) or from a seed (annual). Their growth is soft and fleshy and the above-ground growth dies back each fall.

29-3.15. Heritage Tree – See Specimen Tree as defined in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

29-3.16. Natural Area – Lands that are managed for environmental conservation; wildlife habitat; rare, threatened, and endangered species; education and ecological interpretation; and passive recreation.

29-3.17. Natural seed bank - the dormant, viable seeds naturally stored in the soil or in plant canopies, waiting for the right environmental conditions to germinate.

29-3.18. Pocket Forest - A small and biodiverse cluster of trees and shrubs planted in a tiny urban or suburban space, often no larger than a tennis court.

29-3.19. Pollinator Garden - A specialized landscape designed to support native bees, other pollinating insects, and hummingbirds throughout their life cycles by providing nectar and pollen

resources, native host plants, and managed to provide year-round habitat.

29-3.20. Public Property – All property owned, leased, or occupied by the City or any of its administrative agencies or departments. For the purposes of this ordinance, this term is synonymous with “public place” as defined in VSA 24, Chapter 67.

29-3.21. Public Trees – Trees (shrubs and all other woody vegetation) on any public property, including park, playground or other property owned or controlled by the City of Burlington or within any city right-of-way. See also Shade Tree.

29-3.22. Rain Garden – Per US EPA, A rain garden is a depressed area in the landscape that collects rainwater from a roof, driveway or street and allows it to soak into the ground.

29-3.23. Shade Tree - Per VSA 24, Chapter 67, a shade tree is a shade or ornamental tree that is, in whole or in part, within the limits of a city ROW or public property, provided the tree was planted by the city, or is designated as a shade tree due to its cultural, historical, or aesthetic significance to the character of Burlington.

29-3.24. Sight Triangle - A sight triangle (or sight distance triangle) is an unobstructed, triangular-shaped area at an intersection, driveway, or road corner designed to ensure drivers have a clear view of traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists. See also Sec. 5.2.6 (d), Clear Sight Triangle, of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance and as may be amended.

29-3.25. Treebelt - The area between the sidewalk and the street on which trees are planted; or from the curb to the outer edge of the city right of way on a given street.

29-3.26. Tree Warden – The person appointed by the City Council per VSA 24, Chapter 67 who controls all shade trees within the City of Burlington. See also City Arborist.

29-3.27. Urban Wild - A category of city-owned parcels managed by Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront and deemed as high-priority conservation lands. Burlington’s “Urban Wilds” are those properties that “provide habitat for rare and endangered plant and animal communities, wetlands and other riparian systems, flood plain, unique geological and hydrological features, important wildlife habitat and travel corridors, areas important for scientific research and education, scenic vistas, trails, passive recreation, sustainable forest communities, and cultural features.”

29-4 Removing plants, vines, etc., prohibitedJurisdiction.

~~No person shall take or carry away a plant, flower, vine, vase, pot or other vessel used for flowers or plants in a street, public park or other city property.~~

(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3855)

29-4.1 The City Arborist, along with the City Land Steward, shall have control of all trees, including but not limited to shade trees and vegetation in any public property within the city limits relative to the spaces that they each manage and shall have the authority to plant, maintain, remove, and replace such vegetation.

29-5 Hitching horses or other animals to trees or shrubs prohibited**The Authority of the City Arborist, City Land Steward, and Conservation Board.**

~~No person shall hitch a horse or other animal to a tree, shrub or fence in a street, public park or other city property, nor leave a horse or other animal untied or tied within reach of such tree, shrub or fence, nor permit a horse or other animal to injure or deface such tree, shrub or fence.~~

(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3853)

29-5.1. The Director of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department may hire persons to be the City Arborist or the City Land Steward. It will be the City Arborist's and City Land Steward's responsibility to make recommendations in order to provide care, protection, preservation and removal of municipal vegetation specific to the public areas managed by each.

Per VSA 24, Chapter 67, the tree warden (City Arborist) controls all shade trees within city limits and enforces all laws related to shade trees and may manage infested or infected trees. The tree warden may also make cooperative and financial agreements with other entities and accept funds and resources to effectuate management of the city's urban forest. The deputy tree warden (City Land Steward) has the same authority as the tree warden but is directed by the tree warden.

29-5.2. The Conservation Board shall serve as an advisory board to the City Arborist, City Land Steward, and in their capacity reviewing zoning permit applications, to the Development Review Board as set forth in the Comprehensive Development Ordinance. For the purposes of this ordinance, duties of the Conservation Board include:

- Review of zoning permit applications involving tree removal per Section 29-10 of this ordinance.
- Assist with coordination of Arbor Day celebrations.
- Review annual goals and objectives prepared by the City Arborist and/or City Land Steward as to the urban forest.
- At the request of the City Arborist and/or City Land Steward, host community discussions as to maintenance of the urban forest.

29-5.3. No tree in a public property shall be planted except with the approval of the City Arborist or City Land Steward where applicable. Each will have the power to prescribe how such trees shall be planted, at what distance apart, and what variety. Planted trees will be provided with supports and guards whenever in the opinion of the City Arborist or Land Steward such supports or guards may be desirable.

29-5.4. Cutting, pruning, or removing trees and shrubs and herbaceous vegetation is prohibited. No person shall cut, prune, or remove a tree, shrub, or herbaceous vegetation in a public property except with approval and consent of the City Arborist or City Land Steward as applicable to the respective public areas managed by each.

29-6 Attaching board, notice, wire, stay or support to tree prohibited**General Prohibitions.**

~~No person shall attach a board, card, notice, advertisement, wire, stay or support to a tree in a street, public park or other city property without the written consent of the board of park commissioners.~~

~~(Rev. Ords. 1962, § 3854)~~

Charter reference—~~Power of city council to prohibit and punish willful injury to trees, § 48(XXXII).~~

No person shall hitch a horse, attach an animal, or any other object such as bikes, signs, wires swings, slack lines, hammocks etc. to a tree or shrub in a public property without written consent of the City Arborist or City Land Steward as applicable.

29-7 ~~Penalty~~Protection of Vegetation on Public Property.

~~A violation of any provision of any provision of this chapter shall be a civil offense punishable by a civil penalty of from fifty dollars (\$50.00) to five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The waiver penalty for purposes of the municipal complaint (civil ticket) shall be fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each offense. Each day the violation continues shall be a separate offense. The superintendent of parks, waterfront manager, city arborist and all law enforcement officers are authorized to issue a municipal complaint for a violation of this chapter.~~

~~(Ord. of 1-9-95)~~

29-7.1. Protection. Without written permission from the City Arborist; no person or city agency shall: (1) undertake any development activity including, but not limited to, the excavation of any ditches, tunnels, or trenches or changing the grade (adding or removing soil), and the laying of pavement within the dripline of any public tree or shrub; (2) move or park vehicles associated with any construction or development activity which may affect any vegetation, including trees or shrubs on public property; (3) compact the soil within the drip line of trees.

29-7.2. Root Protection. No person or city agency shall deposit, place, store or maintain of the city any stone, brick, sand, concrete or other materials which may impede the free passage of water, air and fertilizer to the roots on any public tree or shrub within the dripline on unpaved surfaces except by written permission of the City Arborist or City Land Steward as applicable.

29-7.3. Guarding. Guarding during construction or excavation: (1) unless the City Arborist or City Land Steward for good cause, determines otherwise, all trees or shrubs on any public property directly impinging on any excavation or construction of any building, structure or street work shall be guarded to protect the critical root zone. The critical root zone is the area of root space that is within a circle circumscribed around the trunk of a healthy tree using a radius of 1 foot per inch diameter at breast height.

29-7.4 Collection. Without written permission from the City Land Steward; no person shall collect seed or germplasm from any public property. Permission may be requested if seed or germplasm collection is intended solely for ecological restoration, scientific research, and regional seed increase. Collection of seed or germplasm from public property may not be utilized for the development of patentable cultivars, non-native applications, or profit-driven, trademarked varieties that fall outside of the mission of regional biodiversity support. Collectors

must provide to the City Land Steward a target species list and associated locations, and collection protocols that outline respect to population size, species life cycle, and natural seed production, ensuring that a natural seed bank remains healthy to feed local wildlife and allowing the populated to persist in the landscape.

29-8 Obstruction of Streets.

29-8.1. Private Property Pruning. The city shall have the right to prune any tree or shrub on private property when it interferes with the proper spread of light along the street from and or interferes with visibility of any traffic control device, sign, or is impeding views within the site triangle of an intersection.

29-8.2. Obstruction. It shall be the duty of any person owning private property bordering on a city ROW to ensure that trees and shrubs on that property are pruned in a manner that will not obstruct or shade streetlights, obstruct the passage of pedestrians on sidewalks, obstruct vision of traffic signs or obstruct views within the sight triangle of an intersection. If trees are interfering with utility wires, it is the obligation of the appropriate utility company to correct the situation.

29-8.3. Property Owner Responsibility. Should any person owning private property bordering on any city ROW fail to comply as hereinabove provided, the City Arborist or designee shall order the owner to take corrective action within fifteen (15) days after receipt (certified letter) of written notice. The order requires herein shall be served by mailing a copy of it to the last known address of the property owner.

29-8.4. Removal of Hazardous Conditions. Every owner of any tree overhanging any city right-of-way within the City shall remove all dead, diseased or dangerous trees, or broken or decayed limbs, which poses a threat to safety of the public or other trees.

29-8.5. Private Owner Compliance If any person owning real property bordering on any city ROW fails to comply as herein above provided, the City Arborist or designee shall order the owner to take corrective action within fifteen (15) days after the receipt of written notice. The order required herein shall be served by mailing a copy of it to the last known address of the property owner. In the event that required corrective action is not taken by the property owner, the City Arborist shall have the authority to undertake the required corrective action. In such case, a penalty fee of \$500 shall be assessed to the property owner per Sec. 29-9.1 of this ordinance.

29-9 Penalties and Enforcement

29-9.1. Penalty.

Shade Trees: Whoever shall willfully mar or deface a shade tree, or who willfully and critically injures or cuts down a shade tree, without the written permission of a tree warden or legislative body of the municipality shall be fined according to the provisions of VSA 24 § 2510.

Other Trees: Except provided for in Sec. 9.3, Enforcement, below, a violation of any provisions of this ordinance shall be a civil offence punishable by a civil penalty from one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The waiver penalty for purposes of the municipal complaint (civil ticket) shall be seventy five dollars (\$75.00) for each offense. Each day the violation continues shall be a separate offense. The [Superintendent of Parks] Director of Parks

and Recreation, [Waterfront Manager], Superintendent of Park Planning and Development, City Arborist, City Land Steward, and all law enforcement officers are authorized to issue a municipal complaint for a violation of this chapter

29-9.3. Parking on sidewalks and treebelts.

The penalty for parking on a sidewalk or treebelt in violation of this ordinance shall be as per Motor Vehicles & Traffic/Section 20-66 Penalty (B) (3) of the City Code of Ordinances.

29-9.3. Enforcement. The Tree Warden and Deputy Tree Warden have enforcement authority over all shade trees within the City of Burlington. Enforcement and appeals processes as to shade trees shall be as per VSA 24, Chapter 67. Enforcement as to trees on private property shall be per the Comprehensive Development Ordinance, as may be applicable. This ordinance does not preclude enforcement measures as per applicable state statute.

29-10 Tree Removal.

29-10.1. Shade Trees

(1) The removal of any shade tree shall be subject to the provisions of VSA 24, Chapter 67.

29-10.2. All other Trees

Including, but not limited to, all public trees that are not shade trees and trees on private or institutional property.

- (1) Application for tree removal requiring a zoning permit per Article 3 of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance (CDO) shall require review by the Conservation Board who will provide a recommendation to the Development Review Board. The application plan shall indicate the size, species, and location of all trees to be removed.
- (2) Conservation Board review will occur within the parameters set forth in the CDO including, but not limited to, consideration of the size, species, and location of all trees to be removed and proposed mitigation measures.
- (3) A planting plan illustrating the size, species and location of trees to be installed is required, unless other mitigation measures are proposed instead. The planting plan shall include a chart summarizing sizes of trees to be removed and trees to be planted.
- (4) Removal of heritage trees is strongly discouraged.
- (5) The Conservation Board shall consult with the City Arborist in its review of the proposed application for compliance with city's tree removal mitigation measures. The Conservation Board shall also consider the impact, if any, on all trees with a caliper of 6 inches or greater and shall make recommendations for the preservation of existing trees and for the species, size, and location of new plantings.

29-10.3. Application. Application plans shall illustrate the location of the protective tree fence around trees to remain, including details of such. Additionally, the following measures must be addressed by the applicant and inspected by the city arborist prior to the start of work:

- Protective tree fence must be installed.

- All trees to be removed and all trees to remain within the area of disturbance must be clearly marked at the base of each tree with visible non-removable marking indicating the status of each tree.
- It is recommended that permanent spray paint be used for trees to be removed (red) and trees to remain (green).

29-10-4. Mitigation Measures.

- (1) Except as provided for in (2) below, new trees shall be planted caliper-for-caliper for removed trees. For example, removal of a 20 inch caliper tree may be offset with planting five 4 inch caliper trees. Replacement trees may be planted onsite or offsite within the City of Burlington. Offsite planting shall be subject to Conservation Board recommendation in consultation with the City Arborist or Land Steward.
- (2) In the event that replanting per (1) above is impractical or impossible as determined by the Conservation Board, the applicant shall:
- A. Make payment to a designated city tree planting fund in an amount determined in accordance with the current Guide for Plant Appraisal as reviewed and approved by the City Arborist or City Land Steward; and/or.
 - B. Install and maintain onsite green stormwater infrastructure utilizing appropriate native plant species that mitigates the 10-year storm event (see City Code of Ordinance, Chapter 26).
 - C. Mitigation measures in items (1) and (2) A and (2) B above may be used in whole, or in part, for mitigation of tree removal. For example, mitigation for tree removal can include replanting new trees, payment into a planting fund, and/or installation of green stormwater infrastructure.

Department of Permitting & Inspections

Zoning Division
645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone: (802) 865-7188

William Ward, Director
Scott Gustin, AICP, CFM, Principal Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Principal Planner
Kirk Dressing, Associate Planner
Joseph Cava, Permit Technician
Matt Clark, Code Compliance Officer



TO: Parks Commission
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: September 8, 2026
RE: Ecosystem Services Analysis

Funding approval is sought for use of Conservation Legacy Fund monies to pay for a Burlington ecosystem services analysis by Trust for Public Land (TPL). The Conservation Board initiated the idea of doing an ecosystem services analysis in March 2026. Both that Board and the Parks Commission reviewed and commented on draft project proposals earlier this summer.

Ecosystem services are a recurring theme in the Open Space Plan adopted earlier this year and also in the 2022 Nature-Based Climate Solutions Addendum (NBCS).

Open Space Plan references to ecosystem services:

- Core ecological areas, including parklands
- Smaller scale connective green networks through the community
- Cooling power of trees at a variety of scales and environments

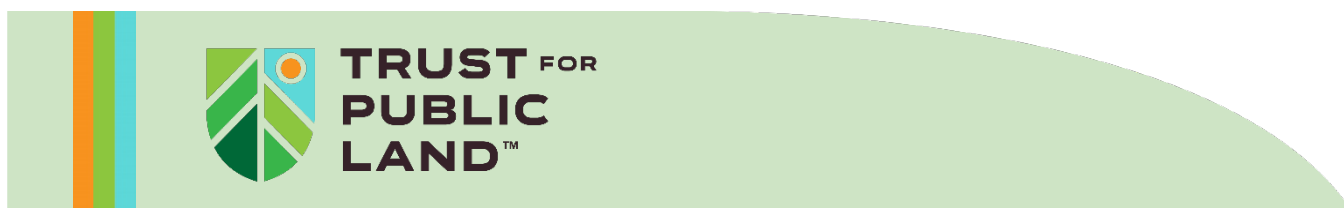
NBCS Addendum references to ecosystem services:

- Action item as to NBCS practices for tree planting to maximize delivery of ecosystem services
- Action item as to retrofitting existing infrastructure to integrate NBCS to yield as many ecosystem services as possible
- Strategy for community gardening and agroforestry, improving air quality, cooling, wildlife habitat and improving water quality
- Canopy retention and enhancement for sequestering carbon and for cooling the city in summer

Burlington is simultaneously facing housing and climate crises. The proposed TPL ecosystem services analysis will provide a better understanding, and quantification, of the multiple public benefits its open spaces provide and will help inform future decision making that integrates continuing growth with our community's green spaces. The proposal includes two primary components:

- Economic benefits of Burlington's open space
 - Stormwater management
 - Air pollution removal
 - Nature-based climate solutions
- Climate cooling analysis of Burlington's open space

The project is expected to span nine months with a total cost of \$108,000. Approval for use of Conservation Legacy Fund monies in this amount is requested.



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 (CCI) unites research and learning, strategy, and technical assistance into one coordinated team, including conservation economics and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). 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.

TPL's GIS team provides best-in-class conservation planning and GIS services in support of our mission to connect everyone to the outdoors. The team brings geospatial information to planning, research and design through cutting-edge technology and software architecture that deliver customized and scalable solutions. From artificial intelligence solutions to community-generated data, we use technology to enhance the quality and

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

pace of park creation, land protection, natural resource planning, and public funding for conservation.

The results of these analyses will help support communities as they balance development with equitable access to open space through planning, policy, and funding strategies.

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 scope of work that will:

- 1) quantify the economic, environmental, and community value generated by Burlington's open space system, including its parks;
- 2) estimate the climate cooling benefits of its open space; and
- 3) identify how select peer cities are addressing pressures on open space in a way that supports housing goals, protects long-term public value, and advances equitable access to open space and nature.

The study will provide Burlington with objective evidence and nationally informed best practices that can support Burlington in 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? How do other communities estimate the economic benefits of open space, and how do they leverage that information?*

These analyses will be guided by the 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 first work with city staff to identify relevant stakeholders for the committee.

Next, TPL will identify up to 5 case studies of cities in the U.S. that have estimated economic benefits of open space and incorporated that into policy and planning. The cities will be selected in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee and will focus on peer cities or relevant jurisdictions that are addressing similar pressures.

Third, TPL will quantify a set of benefits for open space 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. The types of nature-based solutions will be selected by the client and Technical Advisory Committee.

The ecosystem service analyses (stormwater management and air pollution removal) rely on map-based land cover data, which will define the boundaries of open space in the city. We anticipate this will include at least forested areas and parkland that are managed and maintained by the city, but the final definition of open space will be shaped by the client and Technical Advisory Committee. (For example, agricultural lands or street trees may or may not be included depending on the goals of the analysis.) The nature-based solutions analysis may not rely on mapped data and therefore can address a broader range of open space types, if necessary.

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.)

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:

- Memo on the analysis of economic benefits generated by Burlington's open space, including methodology, key findings, and peer city case study summaries. This will be included in a final report summarizing both tasks.
- Virtual presentation to project committee

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

Open spaces with trees and vegetation provide cooling benefits to the surrounding areas, mitigating extreme heat events through tree shade and cooling air through evapotranspiration.² TPL will quantify the cooling benefits of Burlington's open space through a geographic information system (GIS) analysis and identify how other cities across the U.S. are using similar information to better advocate for open space protection.

Key question to answer: *What is the quantifiable impact of Burlington's open space on land surface temperature and urban heat islands? How do other communities estimate the cooling benefits of their open space, and how do they leverage that information?*

First, TPL will identify up to 5 case studies of cities in the U.S. that have estimated the cooling benefits of open space and incorporated them into policy and planning. The cities will be selected in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee and will focus on

² Trust for Public Land. "The Heat is On." 2022. https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/The-Heat-is-on_A-Trust-for-Public-Land_special-report.pdf

peer cities or relevant jurisdictions that are addressing similar pressures. (These may or may not be the same cities as those selected in Task 1; including a city for both is subject to data availability.)

Next, TPL will conduct a custom GIS 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.

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Memo on methodology and summary of key findings, including results of the GIS analysis and peer city comparison. This will be included in a final report summarizing both tasks.
- Map of Burlington's Urban Heat Island dataset
- Virtual presentation to project committee

Final Deliverables

- Final report, including an executive summary, methodology, and description of findings and recommendations from Tasks 1 and 2, 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.

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.

Project Schedule and Timeline

The project is anticipated to take approximately 9 months, and it accounts for two rounds of review of the final deliverables. 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
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									
Peer City Scan									
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									
Peer City Scan									
Create Burlington Map									
<u>Submit Deliverables</u>									
Final Deliverables									
Draft Report									
Review Report Text									
Design Report									
Review Draft #2									
<u>Final Report Complete</u>									

Examples of Our Work

The Economic Benefits of Parks and Recreation in Colorado Springs

TPL worked with Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services to estimate the economic benefits of the parks, trails, and recreation facilities they maintain. One of the key findings was the benefit of stormwater management – the parks and open space in Colorado Springs is worth \$10.5 million in avoided costs each year.

<https://www.tpl.org/resource/the-economic-benefits-of-parks-and-recreation-in-colorado-springs>

Climate Cooling Analysis in Chicago

TPL conducted a GIS analysis to evaluate how much cooler parks were compared to the citywide average in Chicago, and then assessed cooling benefits by park size and neighborhood. The results were integrated into an op-ed piece for our local field staff.

We found that on average, the city of Chicago has a temperature of 97.7° F. In comparison, Chicago's parks have a mean temperature of 90.3° F. Non-park areas of Chicago have a mean temperature of 98.5° , for an 8.2° difference.

Individual park averages range from as low as 76° F to as high as 111° F. Chicago's community areas also show wide disparities. The coolest is O'Hare, at 91.9° (the coolest populated is Uptown at 92.1°). The hottest is Clearing (104°) followed by Gage Park (103.3°).

Vermont's Return on Investment in Land Conservation

TPL conducted an economic analysis and found that every \$1 invested in land conservation by the State of Vermont returns \$9 in economic value in natural goods and services, such as water quality protection, flood mitigation, and food production, to the Vermont economy.

https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Vt.ROI_8_16_18final.digital.pdf

Budget

**THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
NEW ENGLAND
Burlington Housing and Parks Analysis
11-Aug-26**

<u>TASK</u>		<u>Budget</u>
Task 1	Economic Analysis	\$ 69,000
Task 2	Climate Cooling Analysis	29,000
PM	General Project Management	10,000
Total Expenses		<u>\$ 108,000</u>

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



Contact Information:

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