



# Improving Health and Well-Being For All

# 9

*We will strive to meet the needs of all residents for physical activity, education, mobility, social interaction and sense of community, healthy food, health care, and public safety. We will do so by helping residents where their needs are the greatest.*

## GOALS:

9-1. Health and well-being will be integrated into municipal decision-making, with a focus on providing for the equitable distribution of services.

9-2. Physical activity and other beneficial health behaviors will be prioritized.

9-3. Partnerships will provide better outcomes with regard to determinants of community health, well-being, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

9-4. Town-owned recreational facilities and Town-run programs will be enhanced.

## Introduction

Health and well-being are fundamental to the quality of life and the sustainability of Hanover. These indicators are influenced by environmental and socioeconomic conditions. They are also related to equal access to resources and opportunities, feeling like an empowered part of the community, and being valued for who you are, principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion or DEI.

To this end, the Town seeks to improve determinants of health and well-being with special consideration of persons that have limited access to resources or are otherwise deprived of rights or privileges.

The following sections present the Town of Hanover's goals, their context, and related strategies that support achieving the community's vision for improving health and well-being.

## **EQUALITY**

Affords all people regardless of gender, race or other factors, the same treatment and opportunity

## **EQUITY**

Ensures fairness and justice in the distribution of resources and opportunities.

## **INCLUSION**

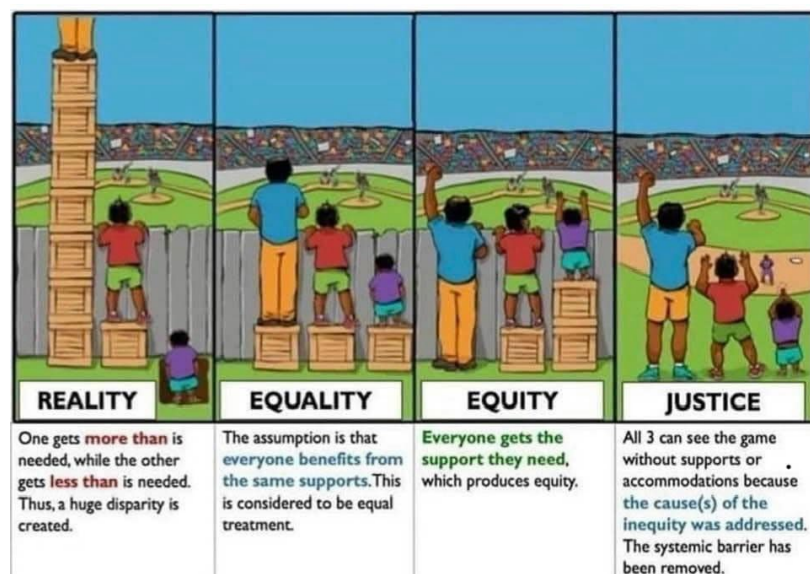
Emphasizes active engagement and empowerment of marginalized groups.

## **DIVERSITY**

Recognizes and values differences among people.

## **JUSTICE**

Refers to fairness and impartiality in the treatment of individuals and the distribution of resources in society.



Credit: @restoringracialjustice

## **Goal 9-1: Health and well-being will be integrated into municipal decision-making, with a focus on providing for the equitable distribution of services.**

In Hanover, public health, safety, and general welfare have been fundamental imperatives in all decision-making. Now, more than ever, municipal governments play a larger role in achieving positive public health outcomes by contributing to healthy environments and supporting healthy lifestyles. They also focus on DEI as benefits to individual and community well-being. For Hanover, this means consideration of DEI and modifying standard operations to incorporate these elements as a basis for good decisions, programs, and policies.

Hanover is a safe community. The Town's 2022 Crime Index score of 43 of a possible 100, places the risk of crime at less than half of that in

the nation. Hanover Police most commonly respond to these crimes: destruction/damage/vandalism, identity theft, simple assault, other forms of larceny and theft from building. With its focus on the core values, integrity, respect, fairness, excellence, and positivity, that department has dedicated resources for fraud prevention, domestic violence, sexual assault, and persons with special needs. While the police presence is more obvious in the downtown area, patrols cover the entire community. Hanover Police are also called to assist in on-campus crime as the Campus Safety and Security does not have law enforcement or arrest authority. The most prevalent on-campus crimes are rape, burglary, domestic/dating violence, and liquor law violations.

In the aftermath of an extreme weather event that causes power outage and road closure, the Town should be prepared to respond to the basic needs of people affected. Older residents, those living in more rural areas, and residents with no power back-up are at greater risk.

Land use regulations contribute to health and well-being in both direct and indirect ways. Impacts like truck traffic and noise are minimized by rules which separate uses such as manufacturing and residences. Areas of higher housing density in the downtown make possible more efficient service delivery and access to facilities. While residents of less densely settled areas enjoy a rural landscape, they are automobile-dependent and have less convenient access to the range of businesses, services and facilities found in the downtown. This pattern of land use by its nature results in unequal access.

Land use rules can separate demographic groups from one another. Restricting certain housing types, and thus the people who can afford to live there, can stratify neighborhoods by income. Allowing multi-family dwellings and mixed-use housing in most residential districts is one way to enable people with different incomes to live proximate to each other.

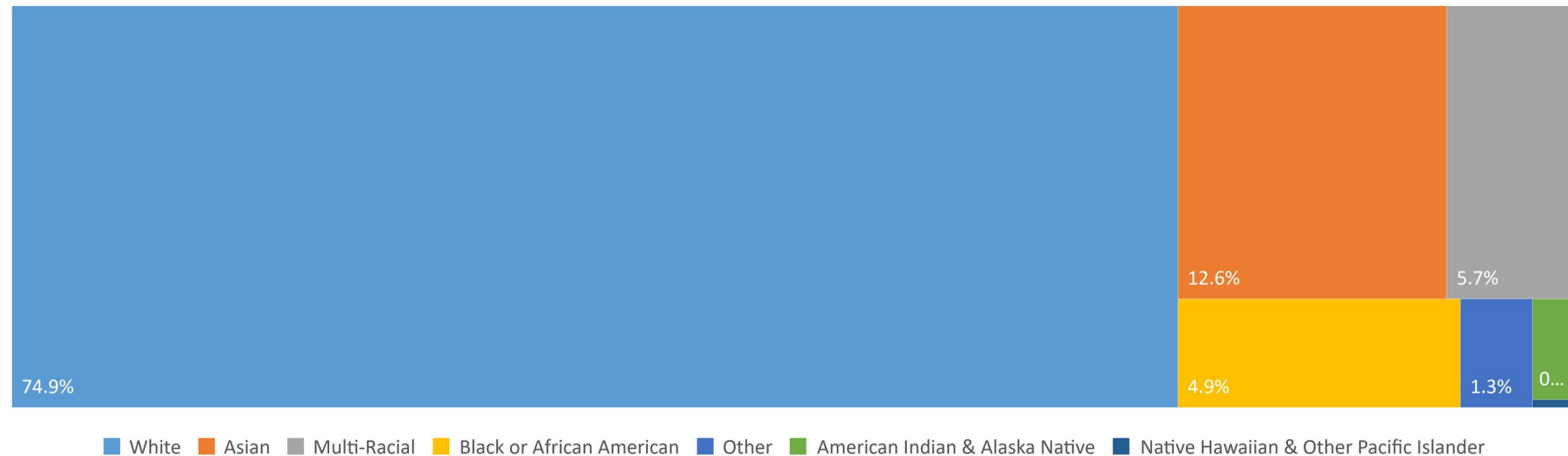
While it is not possible or desirable to homogenize Hanover so that the same services and facilities are equally available in the downtown and rural areas, consideration should be given to ensure that there are not particular groups of people consistently presented with less access.

Development standards can also afford health benefits, such as those defining complete streets, which enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of travel, thus encouraging walking and other forms of micro-mobility.

According to the *2016-2020 American Community Survey*, income inequality in Hanover is high – approximately 30 percent of households in Hanover earn less than \$50,000 per year, the same percent as those that earn over \$200,000 per year. Additionally, nearly 16 percent of households in Hanover are below the U.S. Census-defined poverty level, compared to 11.3 percent in Grafton County and 7.8 percent in New Hampshire. This level of inequality means that some residents have easier access to high quality health-supporting resources. It is important for the Town to understand how this equity gap is manifesting itself within the community, and how the Town can work to close the gap through additional or enhanced services.

Low-income status also limits a person's ability to afford high quality housing, leaving them to reside in units that may have health hazards, such as asthma and allergy triggers, dampness, mold, pests, injury hazards, and poor indoor air quality, or with other safety concerns such as limited accessibility and poor maintenance. A quarter of Hanover housing was built pre-1950. This increases the likelihood that lead paint is present, and that drainage, insulation, heating and ventilation systems are outdated. [Chapter 3, Expanding Housing Opportunity](#) discusses affordable housing needs in Hanover.

Figure 9-1: Hanover’s Racial Composition, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, Hanover’s non-White population comprises 25.1 percent of its total population, with the highest non-White race being Asian (12.6 percent) (see Figure 9-1). Community members have suggested that the Town can do better to enable broader social inclusion.

Neighborhood location and income disparity create sets of more obvious differences between people’s ability to access Town services and facilities than do racial and cultural differences. For that reason, a Health, Well-being, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Survey is suggested to identify ways in which the Town can support individual and community health and well-being.

### Goal 9-1: Supporting Strategies

- **Strategy 9-1.1:** In Town department, board, and committee decision-making, consider health, diversity, equity, and inclusion impacts.
- **Strategy 9-1.2:** Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Town’s provision of services.
- **Strategy 9-1.3:** Implement health-supporting changes to the Town’s land use regulations with specific consideration given to multi-family and workforce housing, the geographic distribution of land uses, and mixed-use development.

- **Strategy 9-1.4:** Adopt policies to improve health and wellness of Town employees.
- **Strategy 9-1.5:** Conduct a Health, Well-Being, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey to inform municipal decision-making.
- **Strategy 9-1.6:** Ensure that diverse perspectives, including those belonging to people of color and younger persons, are involved in decision-making.

## Goal 9-1: Performance Metrics

- Review land use regulations and implement changes to support community health
- Review the demographic composition of Town departments, boards, and committees to better understand groups represented in municipal decision-making
- Implementation of a health, well-being, diversity, equity, and inclusion survey

## Goal 9-2: Physical activity and other beneficial health behaviors will be prioritized.

Residents of Hanover are physically active. According to 2020 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Places data, only 15 percent of Hanover residents reported no leisure-time physical activity. The Town's built and natural environment supports this level of activity, including its approximately 118-mile trails network with 13.6 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The Town's open space lands (see [Figure 9-2](#)) provide

recreation opportunities as well as a respite from the busy-ness of the built environment. Residents count the Town's open spaces among its major assets and among their reasons for living in Hanover.

Active transportation infrastructure in the Town, including multi-use paths and sidewalks, are well-used. This infrastructure is particularly robust in the downtown area, evidenced by National Walkability Index scores of 'Above Average Walkable' and 'Most Walkable.' However, such infrastructure is lacking in the rest of the Town.



*Credit: Hanover Bike Walk*

There is strong community support to expand and enhance bike and pedestrian accommodations to reduce dependency on motor vehicles, injuries from motor vehicle accidents, and exposure to air pollution, as well as to mitigate chronic disease. Furthermore, community members would like to see the Town's active transportation infrastructure be accessible to all, regardless of ability. This desire also extends to the Town's other public facilities.

People of all ages benefit from being together to create a social fabric, particularly with and among those in the community from diverse cultural backgrounds and the elderly. Social interaction can positively affect a person's health and sense of well-being.

Hanover's residents are relatively young with only 15.7 percent of the population over the age of 65. However, this age cohort is rising – increasing by two percent since 2010.



*Credit: Hanover NH Community Gardens*

Access to and consumption of healthy foods is another behavioral health factor that can help prevent or mitigate diseases (e.g., diabetes). Hanover residents are fortunate to have the Co-op Food Store as a convenient local downtown retail destination.

For those in need, the Hanover Community Food Panty, operating out of the United Church of Christ, and regional food shelves served by Willing Hands, Inc. are resources. For many children in the community, Hanover schools are an important food source. Related to healthy

foods, Hanover has a popular community garden, as well as a few active farms.

Active lifestyles, a variety of opportunities for social interaction, and access to healthy foods, bolsters health and well-being in our community.

## Goal 9-2: Supporting Strategies

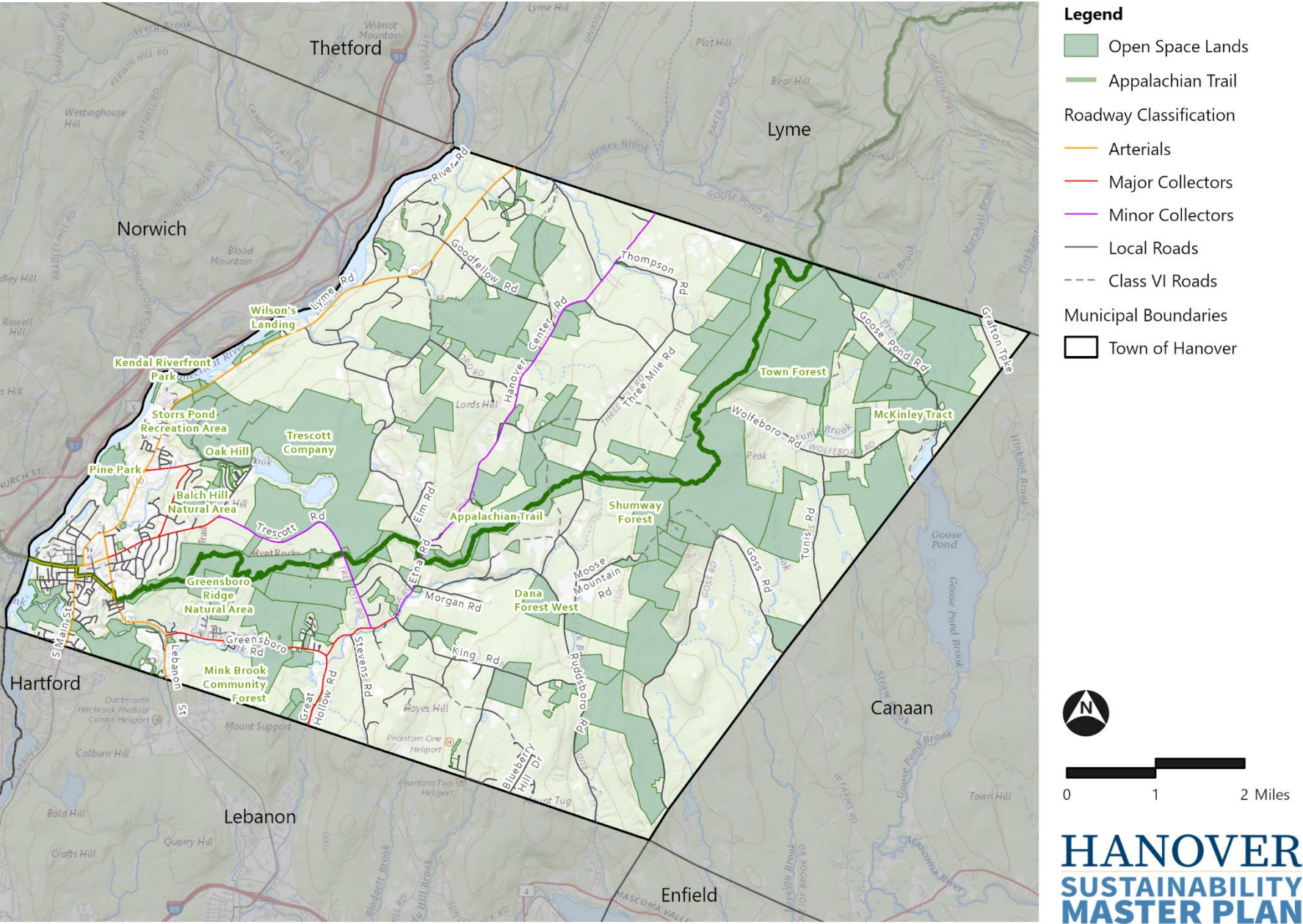


- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.1:** Guided by the current Walk Bike Plan, improve walkability and active transportation options.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.2:** Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), address the shortage of accessible public restrooms; continue to implement ADA compliant streetscape and sidewalks; and modify municipally-owned outdoor gathering spaces and furnishings to be ADA-accommodating.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.3:** Support ADA compliance and improvements to privately-owned commercial and retail properties.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.4:** Connect existing non-governmental organizations with people who face food insecurity.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.5:** Explore the implementation of free universal school breakfasts and lunches with focus on healthy foods.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.6:** Improve access to healthy foods by supporting the distribution of fresh produce at local food shelves.



Indicates a strategy that enables greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Figure 9-2: Open Space Lands



Source: Town of Hanover, CAI Technologies - AxisGIS

- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.7:** Expand the presence of farm stands throughout the community and make sure people know where they can buy locally produced food.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.8:** Expand the local community garden program.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.9:** Promote regionally grown food by encouraging residents to participate in community supported agriculture (CSA) programs.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-2.10:** Increase intergenerational opportunities for health care, social gathering, and education.

## Goal 9-2: Performance Metrics

- ▶ Number of Walk Bike Plan recommendations implemented
- ▶ Length and percent of ADA non-compliant sidewalks
- ▶ Number of ADA accessible public restrooms in the downtown
- ▶ Report on possibility of free universal school breakfasts and lunches
- ▶ Number of outlets for locally grown produce
- ▶ Number of residents participating in regional CSAs
- ▶ Number of local community gardening plots
- ▶ Number of intergenerational community events

## Goal 9-3: Partnerships will provide better outcomes with regard to determinants of community health, well-being, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Progress toward better outcomes with regard to community health and well-being relies on partnerships with area institutions and non-profits.

Proximity to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) and Alice Peck Day Hospital (APD), members of Dartmouth Health, is one of the benefits of living in Hanover. Dartmouth Health has a vested stake in the communities it serves, and it partners with communities and organizations to support access to affordable housing and other health-building opportunities. Hanover can join these efforts to promote positive health outcomes, particularly those with a beneficial DEI impact.

In addition, Hanover residents are fortunate to have good access to health resources, evidenced by only 3.8 percent of residents with no insurance coverage and the County's population to primary care physician ratio of 508 to 1. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, high income inequality in Hanover may mean that not everyone can enjoy the same level of access to health resources, which may result from factors such as an inability to pay or limited transportation.

One future condition that could adversely impact accessibility to Hanover's health resources is climate migration. Due to additional demand as climate change drives people to New Hampshire and the rest of Northern New England, access to medical services and facilities may become constrained.

Health indicators for the Town of Hanover show lower rates of disease incidence compared to Grafton County and New Hampshire. Further, environmental factors that potentially impact health, such as the presence of air pollution, allergens, and other chemicals and compounds, are less prevalent in Hanover than other places. However, Hanover's downtown area has higher concentrations of particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), which present a higher lifetime cancer risk from inhalation of air toxics. These concerns primarily derive from fossil fuel-burning stationary sources, such as boilers, and proximity to automobile traffic. Notably, the downtown area contains the Town's highest concentrations of minority and low-income people.

Radon is a naturally occurring gas present in the granite underlying much of Hanover. It can present a health hazard as it outgasses into the home, and as it outgasses from ledge or soil and is trapped in non-ventilated basements and crawl spaces. Fortunately, many of Hanover's residents rely on surface water provided by the municipal water system. All Hanover residents should take care to monitor radon in the lowest level of their home and in their well-supplied water. When unhealthy concentrations are present in either air or water, remediation is necessary.

Town-owned recreation facilities are limited compared to the opportunities residents would like. As a result, the Town has leveraged partnerships, exemplified by its use of recreation facilities at the Ray Elementary School, Richmond Middle School, and Hanover High School after school hours. Other key partners in providing recreational opportunities include Dartmouth College and the Hanover Improvement Society. The College provides recreational facilities for their students and athletes and makes some of these facilities available for use by area residents. The Hanover Improvement Society owns and operates Campion Rink, the Nugget Theaters, and the Storrs Pond

Recreation Area, which offers a heated pool, swimming pond, and a splash pad. It also hosts ski and hiking trails, disc golf, tennis, and camping. Paid membership is required for the use of these non-municipal amenities, which may present a barrier to accessibility for some in the community.



*Splash Pad at Storrs Pond. Credit: Hanover Improvement Society*

### Goal 9-3: Supporting Strategies

- **Strategy 9-3.1:** Work with Dartmouth Health to help realize their community goals within Hanover, including food, shelter, and health care.
- **Strategy 9-3.2:** Create programs to strengthen food security, such as working with the Dartmouth Organic Farm.

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### Goal 9-3: Performance Metrics

- ▶ Number of hours community-owned recreation facilities are open to the public for organized or informal events
- ▶ Amount of community-generated greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide equivalents [CO<sub>2</sub>e]) within the stationary source sector
- ▶ Number of radon remediation systems installed



- *Community-Desired Recreational Amenities. Credit: VHB*

**Goal 9-4. Town-owned recreational facilities and Town-run programs will be enhanced.**

While a wealth of recreational opportunities is available to Hanover's residents and visitors, these are not sufficient to meet the needs of Hanover residents. Hanover Parks and Recreation provides programs for all ages, including school athletic programs, and does so at Town-owned facilities such as Costello Field, Richard W. Black Community Center, Sachem Athletic Fields, and Tenney Park Pavilion and Fields. These offerings ought to be improved, particularly with respect to ensuring their equitable distribution, enhancing community awareness, reflecting the diversity of Hanover's residents, adjusting schedules to meet demand, and addressing accessibility and safety deficiencies.

Thoughtful recreational programming not only contributes to individual well-being but also builds community.

Residents would like to see additional Town-owned recreational facilities, as well as an improved scheduling system for rentals and programs. The word cloud on the previous page presents the types of recreational facilities and activities desired by the Hanover community.

## Supporting Strategies

- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.1:** Create new recreation opportunities in places where residents have more than a 5-minute walk to a public open space or trail.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.2:** Enhance trail access and connectivity.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.3:** With both hard copy and digital materials, provide more information to residents regarding the availability of recreational facilities, including parks, trails, and drop-in activities.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.4:** Ensure that the community's diversity is reflected in its recreational offerings.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.5:** Redesign the Hanover Parks and Recreation's programming for residents, but especially school-aged children and their after-school options.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.6:** Recognize that non-profits have stepped up to provide recreation facilities and programs and that many families cannot afford to participate.

- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.7:** Assure that community-owned facilities are available for use during as many hours as there is demand for their use.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.9:** Provide after-school transportation so that all students can participate in after-school sports and programs.
- ▶ **Strategy 9-4.10:** Develop a comprehensive recreational facility plan that assesses accessibility and safety (e.g., sidewalk presence/maintenance, crosswalks, lighting, provision of shaded spaces, etc.).

## Goal 9-4. Performance Metrics:

- ▶ Percent of residents able to access a public park within 5/10/20 minutes by walking
- ▶ Number of reservations made via the Department Parks and Recreation's website
- ▶ Percent of Hanover residents participating in a Parks and Recreation event and/or class
- ▶ Number of students accessing after-school programs using publicly provided bus or van options
- ▶ Number of new recreational facilities or programs
- ▶ Findings of public recreational facilities assessment

HANOVER  

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SUSTAINABILITY  
**MASTER PLAN**