

Lavin Property Vision Project Community Engagement Plan

The Town of South Hero acquired the 96-acre Lavin Property in 2025, funded entirely by state and federal grants for the purpose of developing a community wastewater system. To ensure the Town is well prepared to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity, the Town received a planning grant to develop a community supported vision for the property’s use and development. While it was purchased for its future wastewater value, it has potential to benefit the community in other ways as well. The Selectboard has appointed a Steering Committee to guide the Lavin Property Vision Project, which will unfold concurrently with the Wastewater Committee's efforts to design a community wastewater system at the site.

The purpose of this project is to define a vision and guiding priorities for how this land can be used to benefit the public good and further the vision and goals of the town plan in addition to being used for community wastewater. The Community Engagement Plan will outline the engagement opportunities that will be undertaken by the Town to complete the project.

Community Engagement Plan

Public Engagement Spectrum of Participation

The Community Engagement Plan is based on the Spectrum of Participation model initially developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).



For this project, public participation is proposed at the inform, consult, and involve level. Final decision-making authority on adoption of the vision is the responsibility of the Steering Committee and the Selectboard.

| Level of Participation | Description | Project Activities | Additional Details |
|------------------------|--|---|--|
| Inform | Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website • Social media outreach/postings • Press releases, as needed • Flyers • Postcard mailer | The project website will be regularly updated each month with deliverables, meeting agendas and minutes. NRPC will support the Steering Committee with social media messaging & flyers as needed. A postcard mailer will be sent to advertise primary outreach events. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Consult</p> | <p>Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters and informational flyers for use at public events, including Town Meeting • Final presentation on draft report • Interviews with developers, landowners, state resource providers and other local stakeholders | <p>NRPC will provide flyers and/or posters to as needed, at a minimum for Town Meeting 2027. Outreach on the draft report and a final presentation will provide an opportunity to comment on the draft vision and report. The vision will also be developed with input obtained from interviews with key developers, landowners and state resources providers, and other local stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>Involve/ Collaborate</p> | <p>Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Walk on Lavin Property • Community visioning event #1 • [Potential] Community visioning event #2 | <p>Public visioning session will focus on developing a shared community vision for use and development at the Lavin Property. Summaries of the community visioning session will be posted to the project website and social media to ensure residents are aware of how their feedback is used in the planning process.</p> |

Community Engagement Schedule

| Events | Date |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Project Website Published, First Front Porch Forum Posting | April 10 - 13 2026 |
| Review of Community Engagement Plan | April 14, 2026 |
| Finalize Community Engagement Plan | May |
| Informational Postcard Mailed | |
| Ongoing FPF postings to advertise events | Throughout summer and fall |
| Community Walk at Lavin Property | June 2026 |
| Vision Session #1 | August 2026 |
| Vision Session #2 | October or November 2026 |
| Tabling event – location? | Coordinated with Vision Session #2 |
| Stakeholder interviews and report development | Fall-Winter 2026/27 |
| Draft Report available for review | February 2027 |
| Tabling event at Town Meeting | March 2027 |
| Final Presentation to Selectboard | May 2027 |

Community Engagement Key Events

Community Walk – The Lavin Vision Project Steering Committee will host a community walk on the Lavin Property. The purpose of the walk will be to foster broad-based excitement, local buy-in and support for the property’s use and development by allowing residents to walk on and see the new town-owned land. The Steering Committee will coordinate with the Conservation Commission, the South Hero Land Trust and others on an itinerary for the walk. A sub-committee focusing on organizing the walk may be created. It is anticipated that the walk will be held in June.

Vision Session #1 – This vision session will involve brainstorming and mapping ideas for the layout, use and development of the Lavin Property. There will be a presentation on the existing conditions report, status of the wastewater project and overview of this project. Small groups will then work with maps, markers and other materials to make a plan for the property. Each group will present their vision. The maps will be recorded for use at Vision Session #2.

Vision Session #2 – This vision session will build on the work from Vision Session #1. The Steering Committee will present refined concept vision sketches from session 1 that are grouped into several opportunities, scenarios and/or components. A draft vision statement may be ready for presentation and review. NRPC will either create basic digital sketches of the vision options or use AI to create digital renderings. The Steering Committee may create an opportunity to poll the community on favored ideas. NRPC may also prepare a basic visual preference survey to gain more detailed input on design considerations. Finally, NRPC may provide initial information on opportunities and resources for implementing the vision.

Community Engagement Stakeholders

NRPC will coordinate interviews with the following stakeholders during vision development. Depending on progress during the engagement process, certain interviews may take place during a committee meeting, while others will be done privately with an update provided at the committee meeting. Interviews may be conducted with the following stakeholders:

- Residents
- CIDER
- Local Motion
- South Hero Land Trust
- CIEDC – Andy Julow
- Business owners
- Conservation Commission
- Farmers – orchards, dairy farmers, other
- School board/principal

Pre-Existing Community Engagement Resources

There are several recent engagement resources that will be referenced during this project including:

- The Recreation Commission Survey
- Town Plan and Town Plan Survey
- Wastewater Committee Engagement efforts

Public Engagement Deliverables

- Website and FPF messaging as needed.
- A postcard and flyer advertising the series of events – community walk and 2 visioning sessions.
- Tabling materials for 1 event and Town Meeting
- Materials for visioning sessions.

DRAFT