

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

2017



BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

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FOR

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Prepared For:

Bellingham Conservation Commission

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Section 1: Plan Summary

This 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan is an update of a previous plan completed in 2009. The plan contains the following major elements:

- A description of the public input utilized in developing the Plan;
- A demographic profile;
- A summary of recent and projected growth trends;
- An environmental description of the Town;
- An inventory of existing protected open space and recreation facilities;
- An analysis of open space and recreation needs;
- A statement of goals and objectives; and
- A seven-year action plan.

This plan stresses the need for protecting water resources and other sensitive environmental lands, including priority habitat areas and vernal pools. It recommends a combination of acquisition and regulatory measures to expand the open space and recreation inventory, protect natural resources, increase access to both passive and active recreation resources, linking open space areas to promote biodiversity and maintain migratory paths for wildlife and trails for humans, and expanding the range of recreation resources that are available to serve the needs of residents of all ages and diverse interests.

The Community Setting section notes the history and population growth of Bellingham. It notes that Bellingham lagged the growth rate of the state in the 1990's but has exceeded it since 2000. Population projections to 2030 by age cohort indicate modest growth to 17,356 persons from 16,882 in the 2010-2015 American Community Survey.

The Environmental Inventory and Analysis section describes the geology, soils and topography of the Town and includes a description of landscape character. It notes the major change in character that is occurring in the north end of town due primarily to commercial development. Major surface waters are noted and mapped along with public wells and aquifers. Priority habitat areas are also mapped and six species that are endangered, threatened or of special concern are identified. This section also identifies protection of water supply, managing stormwater, invasive species, cleanup of brownfield sites and consumption of land due to growth under conventional development patterns rather than compact development as among the environmental challenges facing the Town.

The Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest identifies 1764 acres of protected open space owned by the Town, State and federal Army Corps of Engineers. Another 538 acres are in use as public and private recreation facilities, and 292 acres are in limited protection as Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands.

Public input was used to develop the goals and objectives. The goals include the following:

- protect natural resources;
- acquire and/or protect additional open space;
- link existing open space and recreation land;

- improve park and recreation sites and facilities;
- develop additional recreation facilities;
- preserve/enhance community character;
- increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands; and
- improve regional cooperation and efforts.

The Action Plan makes recommendations addressing each of the goals. It also identifies the lead agency for each action, recommends implementation mechanisms, and includes a general schedule for each item. The key recommendations are also mapped.

Section 2: Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to help ensure that the open space and recreation resources of Bellingham are protected as the town continues to face rapid development pressures as well as the impacts of sprawl. Previous open space plans were completed in 1986, 1995, 2002 and 2009. The 1995 and 2002 plans encompassed a three-town region of Bellingham, Franklin and Blackstone. While the town has experienced substantial development in recent years, significant areas of open space, rural character, relatively compact development (at least in the older developed areas), and Town Center that are either vital or have much potential for enhancement exist. Without thoughtful planning and a vision to guide development, these desirable features are in danger of being lost, as they have been in many other towns.

It should also be noted that continuing to update its Open Space and Recreation Plan maintains Bellingham's eligibility for grants from the Division of Conservation Services of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. In the past, the Town has received grant funds to acquire Silver Lake and about 30 acres along the Charles River. It has also received funds to develop the Blackstone Street Fields.

Significant efforts to manage, acquire, plan for, or otherwise protect open space have been undertaken in Bellingham. These efforts have been on both an individual town and regional basis with the neighboring towns of Franklin and Blackstone. These past efforts include the following:

- The preparation of separate Open Space and Recreation Plans in all three towns in the 1980's;
- The formation of a tri-town open space committee;
- The adoption of zoning by-laws or preparation of a master plan to encourage open space preservation.
- The preparation of a regional Open Space and Recreation Plans in 1995 and 2002

Each of these efforts is discussed below.

B. Prior Open Space and Recreation Efforts

Bellingham completed its first Open Space and Recreation Plan in December 1986. Its preparation was overseen by the Conservation Commission and Parks Commission. The plan includes a conservation and natural resource inventory, a recreation inventory, a needs assessment, goals and objectives, and a five-year action plan.

Formation of Tri-Town Open Space Committee

In October 1986, representatives of Bellingham, Blackstone, and Franklin organized the Tri-Town Open Space Committee. The group was an outgrowth of a meeting organized by State Representative Daniel J. Ranieri, whose district at the time was composed of the three towns. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what interests the three towns had in common. Open space advocates in all three towns quickly realized that the old Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) rail bed, an abandoned rail line now owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, formed an important link from the vicinity of the Franklin State Forest through Bellingham to the Blackstone River in Blackstone and beyond to the Douglas State Forest.

The group's mission was to advocate for the expansion and linkage of open space resources in the three towns. In addition, as the rapid development of the mid-1980's threatened both open space and affordable housing in the area, the group recognized that linking the two issues could potentially result in more financially and politically feasible methods to preserve open space while also serving the public need of increasing affordable housing. The group also sought to formalize its organization by incorporating itself as a private non-profit community land trust. It successfully sought a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) to assist it in studying the feasibility of open space/affordable housing programs as well as in incorporating as a land trust.

Preparation of an Open Space/Affordable Housing Plan

In 1987, the Tri-Town Open Space Committee received a Strategic Planning Grant from what was then known as the Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD, now known as the Department of Housing and Community Development or DHCD). The Committee used the grant to accomplish two objectives. The first was to inventory the major undeveloped parcels in each town; identify sites suitable for an open space/affordable housing project; prepare concept development plans for each of the sites selected; and prepare a detailed pro forma analysis for one site in each town.

The second major objective was to research existing community land trusts and draft a set of by-laws for a regional land trust to serve the three towns; and develop an implementation strategy/action plan to promote open space and affordable housing. This project, completed in June, 1988, led to the establishment of the Metacomet Land Trust shortly thereafter. Metacomet Land Trust now has significant land and conservation restriction holdings in a region stretching from Wrentham to Sutton, as well as seven affordable housing units in Franklin.

C. Planning Process and Public Participation

This plan was produced under the auspices of the Bellingham Conservation Commission with the assistance of a consultant, PGC Associates, Inc. of Franklin. Input from Town officials and the general public was a critical component of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. Town officials and residents have first-hand knowledge of Town needs, problems and opportunities that need to be addressed. Their input is also necessary to establish goals and objectives, and to ensure that any recommendations are feasible and will draw sufficient support to warrant a reasonable chance for

implementation. Therefore, input from Town officials and the general public was an essential feature of the process of preparing this Plan.

The public participation element of this plan consisted of two major components: an open space and recreation survey and a public forum. First, a survey was used to solicit public input. The survey was available on the Town web site and paper copies were available at the May 25, 2016 Annual Town Meeting and the Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall. Postings about the survey was also advertised on the Town web site on 5/25/16, and the Conservation Commission Facebook page on 5/25/16 (52 people reached), 6/10/16 (750 reached) and 6/14/17 (279 reached). A summary of the survey results is presented in the Community Goals section. The complete results are presented in the Appendix.

The survey results served as input in developing a draft Open Space and Recreation Plan update. The draft plan was made available on the Town web site, was distributed to the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Selectmen, Parks Commission, Board of Appeals and Board of Health and was presented to a public forum held on March 8, 2017 at the Town Hall. The public forum was advertised on the Town web site and the Conservation Commission Facebook page on 2/26/17 (440 reached), 2/27/17 (268 reached), 3/3/17 (85 reached) and 3/6/17 (228 reached). The forum was also broadcast on cable TV.

The input from these sources was then used to produce a "final draft" that was distributed again to the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Selectmen, Park and Recreation Commission, Board of Appeals and Board of Health as well as to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Comments received are in the Appendix.

Section 3: Community Setting

A. Regional Context

Bellingham is located in the virtual center of a triangle formed by the cities of Boston, Providence, and Worcester. The town spans an area from the historic Blackstone Valley on its Western border (Blackstone) to the fast-growing I-495 corridor on its Northern and Eastern borders (Milford, Medway, Franklin). Map 1 illustrates the regional context of Bellingham.

This setting has both positive and negative implications on open space and recreation opportunities. On the positive side, the residents enjoy easy access to the recreational and cultural facilities of the three cities at the points of the triangle. They are also a relatively easy drive from such places as the Berkshires, Cape Cod, and the many other pleasurable amenities offered by Massachusetts and the rest of New England.

On a more local level, the town is bordered on the south by the City of Woonsocket, R. I., and on the north by the Town of Milford. These small urban centers supply many medical, professional, and retail services to the area. Other towns in the vicinity such as Mendon and Wrentham enhance the rural character of much of the area.

This same accessibility and character is attracting increasing levels of residential, commercial, and industrial development. This growth results in a decrease in open space, changes in the character of the area, and strains on the capacities of recreational (and other) facilities.

Bellingham straddles two major watersheds - the Blackstone River Watershed and the Charles River Watershed. Both of these resources are of regional importance.

Another regional resource is the SNETT trail, which originates in Franklin near the Franklin State Forest and passes through Bellingham and Blackstone and beyond to the Douglas State Forest. It connects to the Blackstone River Greenway (a multi-use trail that connects Providence and Worcester) in Blackstone and a section of the Greenway in Blackstone is also part of the SNETT.

Bellingham is part of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). It is also a member of the Southwest Area Planning (SWAP) sub region, one of eight sub-regions of MAPC. MAPC also has a project known as MetroFuture that includes Bellingham. MetroFuture is MAPC's regional development plan for metropolitan Boston. Among its major goals are to preserve and protect critical land resources; to shape the growth of the region by encouraging sustainable growth and compact development; to help preserve and enhance a "sense of place" for the region; and to fulfill the recreational needs of the region's population and to provide access, when appropriate, to protected open areas. The recommendations of this report (including recommended regulatory measures and open space acquisition and trail development) are compatible with MetroFuture.

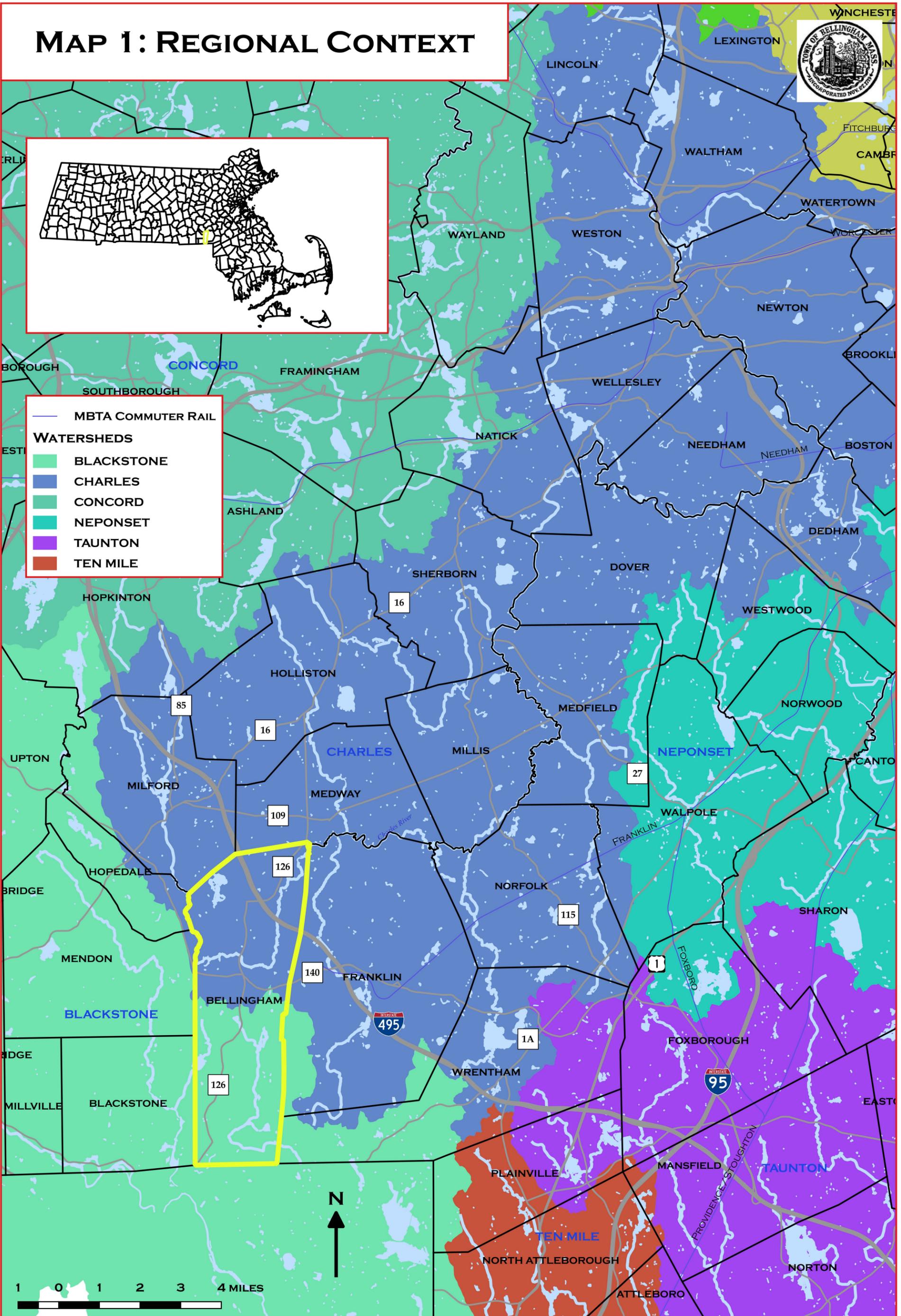
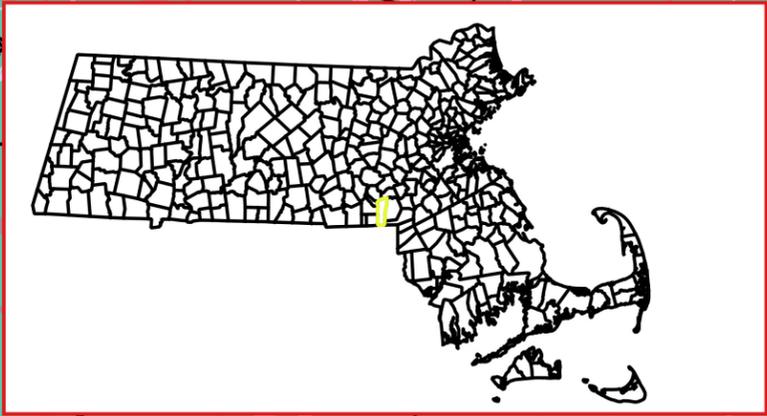
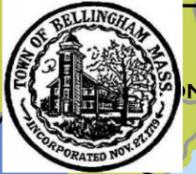
Bellingham participated in the 495 MetroWest Development Compact program in 2012. The SNETT was identified as local, regional and State Priority Preservation Area. Additional local Priority Preservation Areas identified include Beaver Pond, Jenks Reservoir and Bungay Brook. Local Priority Development Areas include Pearl Street Mill and Pulaski Boulevard/Route 126.

The State Division of Conservation Services has a statewide open space and recreation plan called Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Some of the findings of that plan for the region that includes Bellingham are discussed in Section 7, Analysis of Needs.

Among its abutting towns, Mendon (expires in 2020), Medway (expires in 2017) and Franklin (expires in 2023) have an up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan. Milford, Hopedale and Blackstone have expired plans.

The above discussion is not a complete picture of all the issues with local or regional impacts within Bellingham and its surrounding area. Rather, it provides examples to illustrate the point that many issues, particularly environmental ones, have impacts beyond town and city borders and must therefore be addressed in a regional context.

MAP 1: REGIONAL CONTEXT



— MBTA COMMUTER RAIL

WATERSHEDS

- BLACKSTONE
- CHARLES
- CONCORD
- NEPONSET
- TAUNTON
- TEN MILE

DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2017

PREPARED BY:



B. History of the Community

Bellingham enjoys a history rich in diverse cultures, strong commitment to town and church, and ongoing respect for the environment. While operating as a separate, independent town for centuries, Bellingham shares many historical roots with its surrounding towns. Church and government were almost synonymous in the early days of this region. Geographical boundaries dictated at which church (within one's denomination) one would worship. Towns developed gradually, forcing people to move farther and farther away from the center of town and the place of worship. This often resulted in the petitioning, by town residents, to form a new town, with a new place of worship and a shorter travel distance to church.

The Town of Bellingham is a long, narrow strip of land (8 miles long by 2 miles wide) and is named for the Third Governor of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, Richard Bellingham. A lawyer by profession, Bellingham had assisted with the writing of the Charter of the new Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Bellingham was originally part of Dedham. On May 11, 1719, town residents submitted a request to the town of Dedham to enable them to establish their own independent town. The residents asked that, "This day the Inhabitants of this town in that track of land lying between Mendon [which included present-day Blackstone] and Wrentham [of which Franklin was still a part] presented a petition to this town praying that they may be set off from this town by order to a township the town have granted it provided they can unite and [incorporate] together with the farms adjacent and some Assistance and [Enlargement] from the towns of Mendon and Wrentham so as to [capacitate] them to manage the affairs of a town and have the approbation of the General Court." Later that same year (on November 17, 1719), with signing the Bellingham Petition, Bellingham joined Norfolk County as an independent town.

Bellingham had its early days spent in the industry of farming. This remained the primary industry until the 20th century. The industrial revolution made headway in Bellingham through developing factories along the Charles River. Taking advantage of abundant water power, numerous mills producing goods from leather to cotton became part of Bellingham's industrial character. Some are still standing.

People are the driving force behind business endeavors in every town. In his book, *History of Bellingham, 1719 – 1919*, George F. Partridge (1919) describes several people who played significant roles in Bellingham's development. Among those described are:

1. General Eliakim Adams (1756 – 1807) – General Adams served his country as a Revolutionary War soldier. A granite monument was erected in his honor in front of the tomb of the North Bellingham Cemetery.

2. William T. Adams (1822 – 1897) – He was a pioneer author writing for young people under the pen name of Oliver Optic. During his literary career, he wrote 126 books and over 1,000 short stories. Two million copies of his books were sold – a remarkable accomplishment for that time.

3. Caroline F. Orne (1818) – Few women are mentioned in Partridge’s book; however, Orne is remembered as an author and a librarian. She wrote stories and poems which described early New England history.

Buildings, be they residential, commercial or industrial, provide significant insight to an earlier time. Among the historic structures in Bellingham, three come to mind when picturing the town. They are the old Town Hall, the Caryville Mill and the North Bellingham Mill. Town Hall, built by the Town of Bellingham and the Baptist Society was completed in 1802. Though built by one religious group, it was to be used by all members of different faiths. Maple Street is the site of the North Bellingham Mill. Built in 1810 by Joseph Ray, this mill currently is home to several businesses including the Scandia Cabinet Company. The Caryville Mill was the second textile mill in Bellingham. Constructed in 1830 by Joseph Fairbanks, it has recently been torn down.

Today many people live and work in Bellingham. However, it is mostly, a suburban community. It offers an easy commute to Boston, Worcester and Providence, RI. Its level of industrial and commercial development has increased substantially since the 1990s. Two power plants have been constructed, and three major regional shopping centers have been developed at Exit 18 of I-495. A fourth major shopping center comprising 500,000 square feet has been proposed. Large industrial and distribution centers have recently been constructed and proposed in the Maple Street/High Street area.

C. Population Characteristics

Population Growth

Bellingham experienced little population growth in the 1990's, but modest growth in the first decade of the 21st Century. As Table 1 illustrates, the town's population grew from 14,877 in 1990, to 15,314 in 2000, an increase of 2.9%. From 2000 to 2010, the population grew by 1,018 to 16,332, an increase of 6.6%. The increase from 2010 to 2015 was 350, or 2.1%. This compares to statewide growth rates during the 1990's of 5.5%, 3.1% from 2000-2010, and 1.7% between 2010 and 2015. Thus, while population growth lagged the state rate in the 1990's, it has exceeded it since 2000.

TABLE 1

POPULATION GROWTH, 1990-2015

	Population	Absolute Change	Percent Change
1990	14,877	NA	NA
2000	15,314	437	2.9%
2010	16,332	1,018	6.6%
2015	16,682	350	2.1%

Sources: 1990, 2000 and 2010 U. S. Censuses, U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Density

The population density is presented in Table 2:

TABLE 2

POPULATION DENSITY 1990-2015 (persons per square mile)

	Bellingham	Massachusetts
1990	802	767
2000	826	814
2010	880	839
2015	910	871

Sources: 1990, 2000 and 2010 U. S. Censuses, U.S. Census 2011-2015 American Community Survey

With a 2015 population of 16,682, and a total area of 18.55 square miles, the town has a density of 910 persons per square mile. This compares with a statewide density of 853 persons per square mile. From 1990 to 2014, Bellingham's density has increased from 802 to 910.

Average density is not necessarily an indicator of either the existence or quality of open space. Two towns with the same average density can have vastly different development patterns. One town could be developed into concentrated centers or villages surrounded by vast areas of open space, while the other could be characterized by low-density sprawl spread throughout its land area. This concept is further illustrated by the reduction in population of Boston while the suburbs grew. The City of Boston reached its highest population in 1950 at 801,444. This population was accommodated on about 46 square miles. In 2000, Boston's population was 26% less at 589,141. If the 212,303 people who left Boston were resettled in the suburbs at the current density of Bellingham, it would take 263 square miles, an area about fourteen times larger than the town, to accommodate them. Concentrating development in city, town and village centers is a key component of protecting open space.

Age

Table 3 presents an age breakdown by percentage for Bellingham 2010 and projected for 2020-2030. Like most area towns, the table indicates that the town is growing older. Almost all of the projected growth to 2030 is in the 55+ age cohort, while all of the younger cohorts except for ages 30-39 show a projected decline. This indicates a relatively lesser need for active recreation facilities such as ball fields, and playgrounds. Older persons require less intensive types of outdoor recreation facilities such as walking paths and passive parks. They also require indoor recreation space for such activities as arts and crafts. These needs will be discussed further in the Needs Analysis section.

Income

Bellingham's median family income in 2015 (latest figures available from U.S. Census American Community Survey) was \$104,283. This is well above the U.S. figure of \$66,011, and the state median family income of \$87,085. Among its abutting towns, Bellingham is below the figures for Medway (\$137,644), Franklin (129,423), Mendon (\$120,773) and above Blackstone (\$90,378) and Milford (\$86,261). Its median household income was \$88,460 compared to \$68,563 for Massachusetts and \$53,889 for the U.S.

The number of families below the poverty level in 2015 was 1.3%. This is roughly in the middle among the abutting towns which range from 1.1% in Mendon to 1.7% in Franklin. However, Milford) is an outlier at 8.2%. It is significantly lower than the Massachusetts (8.3%) and U.S. (11.5%) levels.

Ethnicity

The 2015 U.S. Census American Community Survey indicated that Bellingham's population was 94.2% white. Other races included Blacks or African-Americans, 0.9%; Asian, 2.6%; Two or more races, .9%; and Other 1.4%. Latinos of any race constituted 2.0%

Employment Trends

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the labor force in Bellingham has grown from an annual average of 9696 in 2010 to 9872 in 2015. It has

grown further to 10,125 in August 2016. The number of employed rose from an annual average of 8843 in 2010 to 9418 in 2015 (and to 9748 in August 2016). The unemployment rate declined from an annual average of 8.8% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2015 (and to 3.7% in August 2016). This compares to the state unemployment rate of 8.3% in 2010 and 4.6% in 2015 (and 3.8% in August 2016).

TABLE 3

POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO 2020, 2030 BY AGE COHORT

AGE GROUP	2010 U.S. CENSUS	2020	2030	Absolute Change 2010-2030	Percent Change 2010-2030
0-4	1,048	1,022	991	-57	-5.4%
5-9	1,074	983	956	-118	-11.0%
10-14	1,057	1,003	993	-64	-6.1%
15-19	1,047	916	846	-201	-19.2%
20-24	822	659	626	-196	-23.8%
25-29	855	906	824	-31	-3.6%
30-34	981	1,211	1,094	113	11.5%
35-39	1,198	1,204	1,290	92	7.7%
40-44	1,410	1,062	1,344	-66	-4.7%
45-49	1,619	1,238	1,276	-343	-21.2%
50-54	1,299	1,335	1,019	-280	-21.6%
55-59	1,081	1,523	1,169	88	8.1%
60-64	935	1,200	1,237	302	32.3%
65-69	606	896	1,277	671	110.7%
70-74	475	784	1,017	542	114.1%
75-79	340	437	649	309	90.9%
80-84	292	290	489	197	67.5%
85+	193	216	259	66	34.2%
TOTAL	16,332	16,885	17,356	1,024	6.3%

Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Commission projection, January 14, 2014

The largest industry, by far, in Bellingham in 2015 was Retail Trade with 1968 employees and 89 establishments (and average weekly wages of \$484). This was followed by Accommodation and Food Services with 756 employees and 50 establishments (average weekly wages of \$309), and Wholesale Trade with 720 employees and 32 establishments (average weekly wages of \$1337). There were 504 jobs in the Manufacturing sector with 32 establishments (average weekly wages of \$1094), and 382 in Construction in 68 establishments (average weekly wages of \$1098). The highest average weekly wage was in the Utilities sector at \$2637, but with only 56 employees and 4 establishments. This was followed by Wholesale Trade at \$1337, and Professional and Technical Services at \$1240. The average weekly wage for all industries was \$760.

D. Growth and Development Patterns

Patterns and Trends

As discussed in the History section above, Bellingham began as an agrarian community. Its access to waterpower initially, and to railroads later, led to the development of mills. In recent years, the location of industrial and commercial development has been influenced primarily by highways, particularly by I-495, but also by Routes 126 and 140. The intersection of high-tension electric transmission lines and natural gas trunk lines has also resulted in several power generating stations locating in and adjacent to the area. Residential growth initially occurred adjacent to the industrial and commercial growth but now occurs in all parts of town.

Bellingham has developed densely along its border with the City of Woonsocket. Pulaski Boulevard in south Bellingham remains a major commercial center in town. Development also occurred adjacent to the mills, which are on the Charles River in the north part of town and a town center developed at the intersections of Routes 140 and 126 in the central part of town. The intersection of I-495 and Route 126 has emerged as the commercial and industrial heart of Bellingham. In recent years, commercial and industrial development has also expanded in the Maple Street/Route 140 area.

Table 4 presents the land use changes between 1971, 1985 and 1999, and 2005 (most recent year available, but using a different methodology than used for the previous years) for various types of land uses. The table indicates that 880 acres of forest land, 13.3% of the total, was lost between 1971 and 1999. Agriculture declined by 25%, losing 220 acres.

The 2005 figures indicate that the land use categories that consumed the most developed land by far were low and medium residential development. Low density residential consumed 1235.5 acres and medium density residential consumed an additional 619.2 acres, for a total of almost 1855 acres. Multifamily residences and high density residential consumed 285 and 449.1 acres respectively. Industrial uses consumed 217 acres, and commercial uses consumed an additional 291.9 acres. Recreation uses accounted for 269.7 acres.

The changes in land use between 1971 and 1999 compared with the 1970 and 2000 populations help illustrate the relationship between population density and open space and the benefits of compact development patterns for open space preservation. The 1970 population was 13,967. This number was accommodated (in 1971) on 2404 residential acres – a rate of .17 acres per person. The 2000 population of 15,314 occupied 3212.9 acres in 1999, or .21 acres per person. More to the

point, the additional 1347 people required an additional 808.9 acres, or .60 acres per person, over 3 times the rate prior to 1971!

TABLE 4
LAND USE CHANGES, 1971 TO 1999, 2005

Category	1971 Acres	1985 Acres	1999 Acres	1971-1999 Change	1971-1999 % Change	2005 Acres*
Agriculture – crop	388.5	376.1	320.9	-67.6	-17.4%	128.9
Agriculture – pasture	494.3	429.6	338.6	-155.6	-31.5%	85.9
Agriculture – perennial [†]	0.0	0.0	2.7	2.7	> 100%	7.1
AGRICULTURE TOTAL	882.8	805.6	662.3	-220.5	-25.0%	221.9
Forest	6628.8	6319.7	5748.1	-880.7	-13.3%	5944.6
Brushland/Successional						48.2
Open land	594.0	525.0	600.5	6.5	1.1%	174.4
TOTAL OPEN	7222.8	6844.7	6348.6	-874.2	-12.1%	6167.2
Recreation – participation	145.4	150.1	235.4	90.0	61.9%	86.8
Recreation – golf course	11.1	5.6	0.0	-11.1	-100.0%	177.6
Recreation – water	5.3	5.3	5.3	0.0	0.0%	5.3
RECREATION TOTAL	161.9	161.0	240.7	78.9	48.7%	269.7
Urban – commercial	98.4	116.8	198.2	99.9	101.5%	291.9
Urban – industrial	44.3	98.6	277.7	233.4	526.5%	217.0
Urban – mining	350.8	383.9	167.3	-183.5	-52.3%	117.0
Urban – public or transitional	129.3	212.4	151.3	21.9	17.0%	79.9
Urban – residential – multiple [†]	11.9	36.5	107.1	95.2	801.4%	285.0
Urban – dense residential	251.5	255.2	271.2	19.7	7.8%	449.1
Urban –medium residential	1089.4	1173.6	1321.0	231.6	21.3%	619.2
Urban – low density residential	1051.2	1152.3	1513.6	462.4	44.0%	1235.5
Urban – transportation	128.2	128.2	128.2	0.0	0.0%	163.1
Urban - cemetery						44.2
Urban – other [#]	16.4	76.8	55.2	38.8	236.9%	450.8 [#]
URBAN TOTAL	3171.5	3634.4	4190.9	1019.4	32.1%	3952.7
Water –forested wetland	351.4	344.7	344.7	-6.7	-1.9%	737.0
Water – non-forested wetland						561.0
Water – open water	311.4	311.4	314.5	3.1	1.0%	341.5
WATER TOTAL	662.8	656.1	659.2	-3.6	-0.5%	1639.5
TOTAL AREA (acres)	12101.7	12101.7	12101.7	0.0	0.0%	12,025.6

Source: MassGIS and MAPC

*Prepared using a different methodology

[#]Junkyard (30.6), Powerline/Utility (183.1), Transitional (68.6), Transportation (163.1), and Waste disposal (5.4).

Infrastructure

Three infrastructure elements will be discussed briefly in this section: transportation, water supply, and sewer service. The most significant component of the transportation infrastructure is I-495. Its interchange at Route 126 has become a major center of commercial and industrial growth. It will continue to see intensive growth in future years. In addition, I-495 has facilitated access to jobs, goods and services, and recreational opportunities for residents of the town; attracting increasing numbers of new residents. The resulting increase in local traffic has, however, had a negative impact creating traffic jams and leading to more accidents.

Route 140 is also a major roadway. Besides serving as a commercial corridor, it serves as a link to Milford in the north and Franklin to the east. Route 126 traverses the entire length of Bellingham and serves as a link to Woonsocket to the south and to Medway, Holliston, Ashland and Framingham to the north.

Railroads also are an important transportation mode. The two commuter rail stations nearby in Franklin serve commuters and others in travel to Boston. They also have contributed greatly to attracting residents to the area. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has considered plans to expand passenger service to Bellingham and then to Milford, but there is currently no plan in place to do so. Freight rail also serves the town.

There are no airports in town, but there is one just outside its boundaries. The Hopedale Airport is just west of north Bellingham. It has a nearly 3200-foot runway, and also has fuel and repair services.

An important change in the transportation infrastructure is the addition of transit service by the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority. There is a North Bellingham Shuttle and a South Bellingham Shuttle, each of which provide service to the Franklin commuter rail station and major commercial and residential developments.

A significant feature still in development is the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT). This former rail line runs from Franklin State Forest through Bellingham and on into Connecticut. In Blackstone it is coterminous with the Blackstone River Greenway, a paved multipurpose trail. While Bellingham currently has few sidewalks or bicycle trails, the Master Plan includes recommendations to (1) “Construct sidewalks along the full length of every major road to enhance pedestrian use for access and recreational use,” and (2) “Establish off road pedestrian and bicycle trails for recreational use.”

Bellingham has a town water system, serving much of the town. In those areas not served, individual private wells are used to supply homes and other uses. The town uses gravel-packed wells as their source for municipal water. No surface water is used. The water systems will be discussed further in the Water Resources section of the Environmental Inventory and Analysis chapter of this report.

Bellingham also has a town sewer system. The system was built in phases. Phase I of the system, which ties into Franklin’s system, serves the Pilgrim Village neighborhood. It was completed around 1990. Phase II was completed in the mid-1990’s. Part of Phase II ties into the Franklin

system while the remainder ties into Woonsocket's system. Phase II serves that portion of the Wethersfield neighborhood from Caroline Drive to North Main Street. It also serves Douglas Drive, James and Rondeau Roads, and Silver Avenue. The main then follows Mechanic Street (Route 140) to Franklin. In south Bellingham, there is sewer service in Newland Avenue to Center Street, including Christine and Morin Roads. The main runs down Lizotte Drive to Pulaski Boulevard. It then runs through Muron to the Wrentham Road and Paine Street area where it crosses the Peters River and ties into Woonsocket's system. The Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Carrier Roads area is also connected to this main.

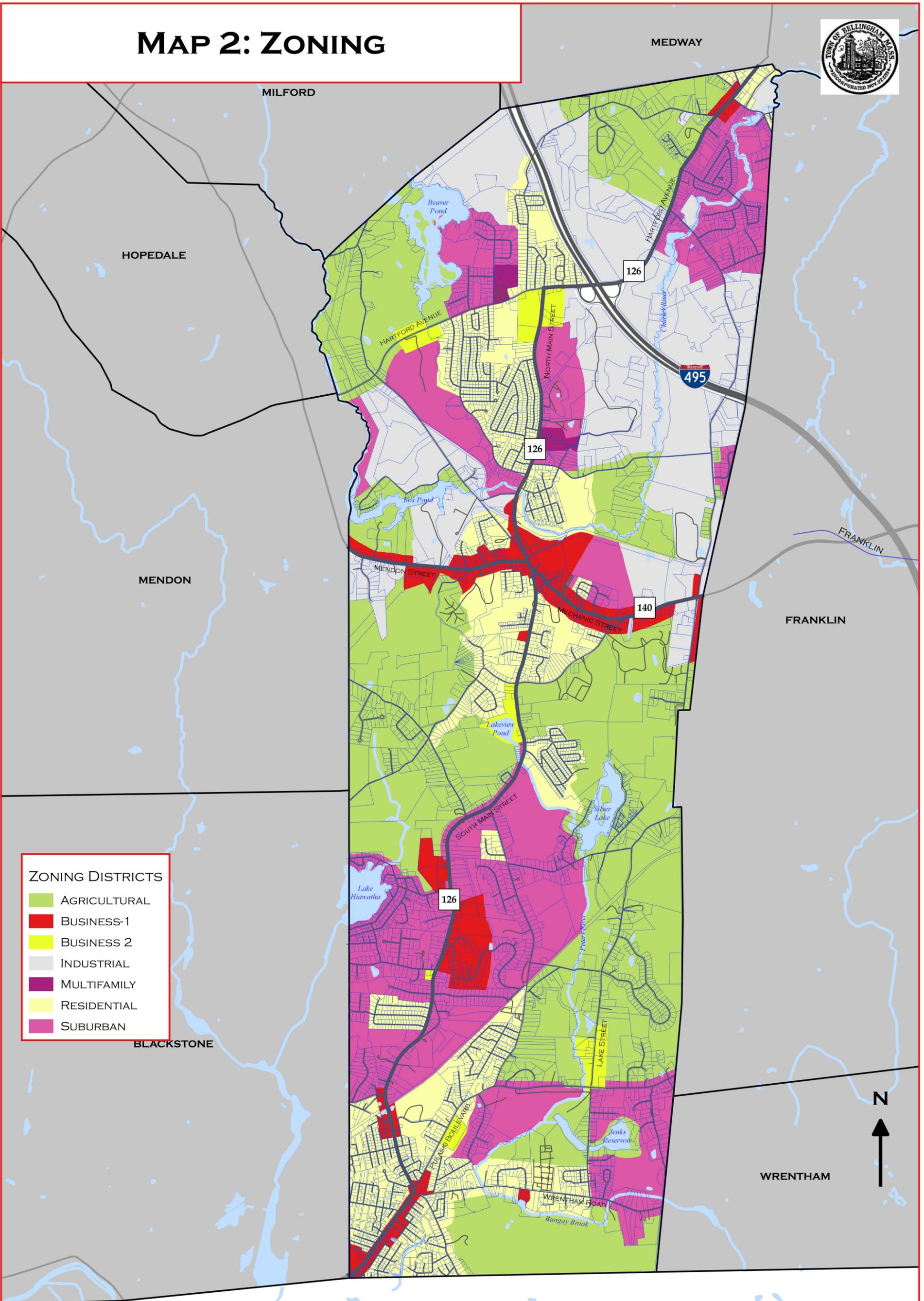
Bellingham has conducted a comprehensive wastewater management plan to determine where and how additional sewer service should be constructed. That study has recommended a treatment plant that would discharge its effluent into the ground as an alternative to a large regional plant that discharges into a river that carries it away.

Long-Term Development Patterns

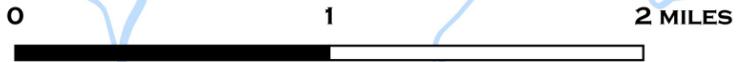
The primary land use control in town is its Zoning By-Law (Map 2 illustrates the zoning districts). This is supplemented by the enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act administered by the Conservation Commission. In addition, Bellingham has Water Resource Districts. These are overlay districts that help protect the water supply in town through measures such as limiting the percentage of the lot that can be rendered impervious, prohibiting the underground storage of hazardous materials and strictly regulating above ground storage, limiting the use of septic tanks, etc.

Bellingham also has a "cluster" or "open space" development by-law. This option retains the same density as underlying zoning would permit, but allows the lots to be reduced in size and to be located on only a portion of a developable parcel in order that the remainder of the parcel can be dedicated as conservation land. A built-out analysis for Bellingham prepared by MAPC in 2003 estimated the build-out population (that is, ultimate population based on current zoning, not projections) was estimated to be 20,411. This is approximately 35% greater than the actual 2014 population of 16,564. As stated in Table 3, the projected population in 2030 is 17,356. If these projections prove accurate, buildout is several years away. However, zoning can change and, like many area communities, Bellingham is affected by Chapter 40B developments which need not conform to zoning and could affect ultimate buildout.

MAP 2: ZONING



- ZONING DISTRICTS**
- AGRICULTURAL
 - BUSINESS-1
 - BUSINESS 2
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - MULTIFAMILY
 - RESIDENTIAL
 - SUBURBAN



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2017

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Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

As shown in Map 3, the entire town is situated on bedrock, primarily Avalon Granite. The Bellingham-Franklin line is straddled with a strip of Mopic Rocks on its northern end, and of Felsic Volcanics along its central border. The southern end of town is comprised of Narragansett Basin Sediment, Mopic Rocks, and a small area of other types of granites.

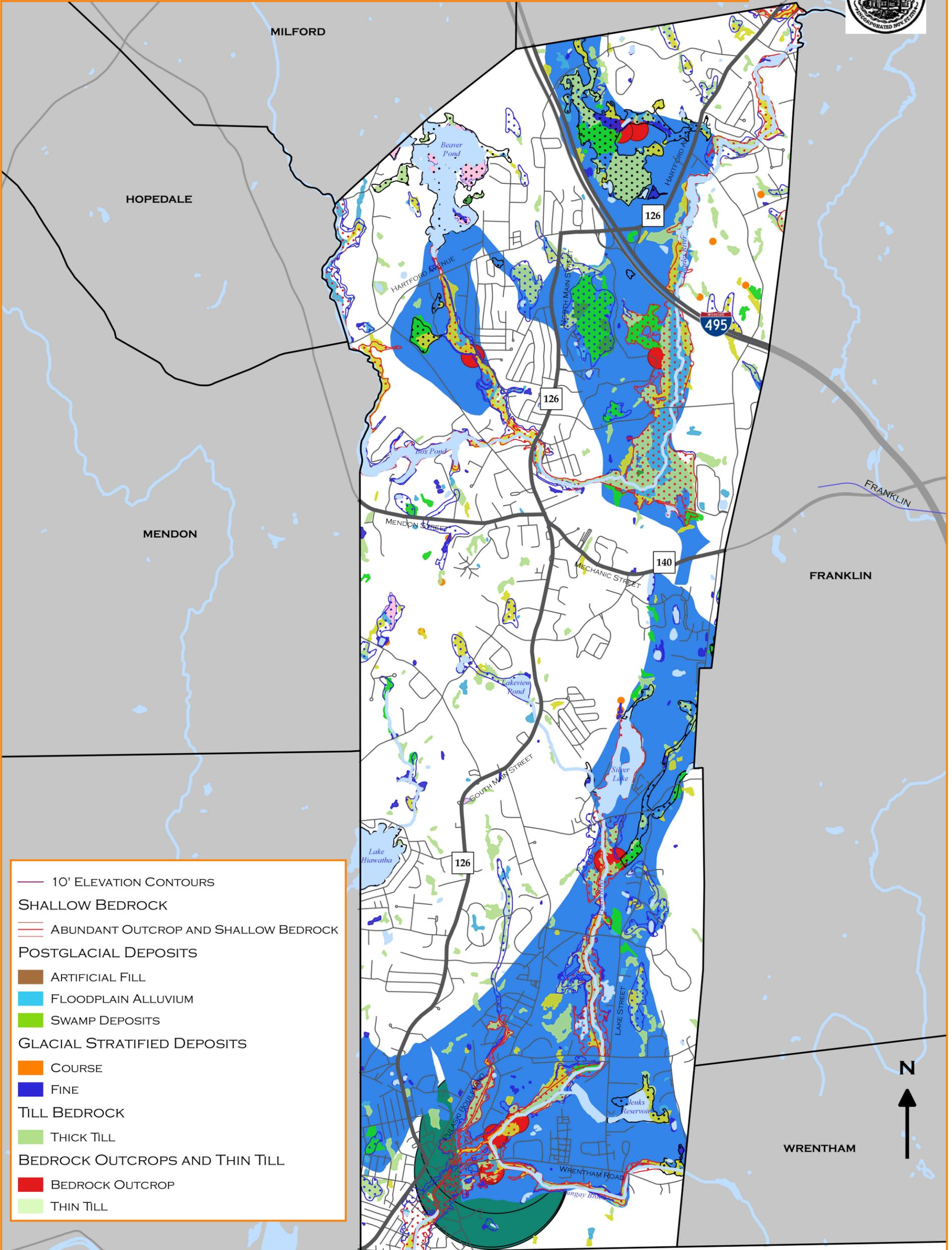
Repeated advances of glacial ice are primarily responsible for the current topography of the area, which is characterized by low, rounded hills and open valleys. The bedrock throughout the town is generally covered by stratified glacial deposits of sand and gravel (Hinckley, Merrimac, and Windsor soils) at lower elevations, while the hills have a veneer of glacial till (mostly Charlton, Paxton, and Montauk soils). As the glacier retreated to the north, glacial lakes drained and river systems developed on the new land surface. Alluvium (consisting mostly of organic matter, fine sand, and silt, but including fine gravel in some areas) was deposited along rivers and streams (U.S.D.A., undated).

Map 3 also illustrates the soil types in Bellingham. It indicates that Bellingham is composed of a very diverse group of soils. Soil characteristics have influenced development. In general, most soil types in southeast Bellingham, and an area along Route 126 south of Bellingham center, consist of the Woodbridge-Paxton-Montauk type, which is classified as Prime Farmland. Another area in northeast Bellingham (now the site of Maplegate Country Club) is also so classified.

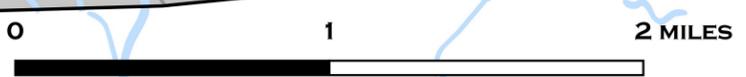
Overall, the topography of the town generally consists of elevations from just fewer than 200 feet above sea level to just under 400 feet. It is lowest at its southern end at about 200 feet and rises to about 300 to 350 feet in its center, and drops off to about 250 to 300 feet in most of its north end. The Charles River area approaches 200 feet.

Soil and topography limitations have an important impact on the development capacity of land. However, due the general nature of the soils in Bellingham, and the availability of water and sewer infrastructure in a significant portion of the Town, soil, geology, and topography do not provide a major limiting factor in overall development. They are significant factors in evaluating specific parcels or areas.

MAP 3: SOILS AND GEOLOGIC FEATURES



- 10' ELEVATION CONTOURS
- SHALLOW BEDROCK
- ABUNDANT OUTCROP AND SHALLOW BEDROCK
- POSTGLACIAL DEPOSITS
- ARTIFICIAL FILL
- FLOODPLAIN ALLUVIUM
- SWAMP DEPOSITS
- GLACIAL STRATIFIED DEPOSITS
- COURSE
- FINE
- TILL BEDROCK
- THICK TILL
- BEDROCK OUTCROPS AND THIN TILL
- BEDROCK OUTCROP
- THIN TILL



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

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B. Landscape Character

The Bellingham area offers a rich diversity of landscape character, including urban, suburban, small town, and rural/agricultural. The area includes hills, forests, fields, old stone walls, lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, and swamps. All these features work together to serve a variety of lifestyles and to create a pleasant environment in which to live and work. Since the natural features of the landscape are discussed elsewhere in this Chapter, this section will emphasize the man-made features.

The most urban area in Bellingham is south Bellingham near the border with Woonsocket, RI. The area is densely developed with residential, commercial and industrial uses. It serves as an example of advantageous dense development. This compact type of development is able to accommodate relatively large numbers of people within a small area thus allowing more areas to remain as open space, minimizing automobile traffic, and producing strong close-knit neighborhoods. This style of development was virtually abandoned after World War II in favor of the more land-intensive and automobile-oriented suburban style of development.

Virtually all development (including residential, commercial, and industrial) since World War II in Bellingham has been suburban in character. That is, most residential development has been in subdivisions containing lots of 20,000 to 80,000 square feet and located off the major streets. Commercial development has occurred in strips or shopping centers along state highways, and at Exit 18 of I-495.

Residential subdivisions are scattered throughout town and in many cases have transformed (and are transforming) the character of many streets from rural to suburban. It is this type of development which has been (and continues to be) the greatest agent of change to the character.

Bellingham has undergone a major change in character in the north part of town due to commercial development. On Route 126 at I-495, three new large regional shopping centers were developed in the 1990's. More recently, the area along Mechanic Street (Route 140) has undergone significant new commercial development, and new industrial development is taking place along Maple Street between Routes 140 and 126. Additional major changes include a proposed new 550,000 square foot shopping center near exit 18 of I-495 that has been on holding due to traffic concerns and pending intersection and on-ramp improvements in the area.

While "small town" character is evident throughout town, one of the best examples of it is represented in the town center, at the intersection of Routes 140 and 126. It has a white church with a steeple, Town Hall, school administration, and a variety of retail and service businesses. Unfortunately, it also has a disorganized milieu. The development of a Town Common resulted in a major improvement. There is opportunity to further enhance this area through creative zoning changes and innovative road designs to promote pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development.

Bellingham still has areas of rural/agricultural character. However, as discussed above, many of these areas have been transformed by suburban-style development. In the past, narrow, winding streets with old stone walls traversed farms and woods. Now they serve as collector roads for subdivisions or industries that have replaced the open space. For example, a 250,000 square foot industrial facility was recently constructed on Maple Street and a 400,000+ square foot facility is proposed on High Street. As the developments generate more traffic on these roads, the roads must be upgraded to handle it thus further changing the character of the area.

C. Water Resources

Map 4 illustrates the surface water resources of Bellingham. The town lies in the Blackstone and Charles River Watersheds. The southern part of town lies in the Blackstone River Watershed while the northern part lies in the Charles River Watershed. The major surface water bodies, in addition to the two rivers include:

- Jenks Reservoir
- Lake Hiawatha
- Silver Lake
- Lakeview Pond
- Box Pond
- Beaver Pond
- Peters River
- Stall Brook
- Bungay Brook
- Arnold's Brook
- White's Brook
- Beaver Brook

The Charles River begins in Hopkinton and winds its way through 23 cities and towns to Boston Harbor. According to the Charles River Watershed Association web site, among the major issues impacting the Charles are streamflow and stormwater runoff. Water quality has improved significantly since 1995, but much work remains to be done.

The Blackstone River begins in the Worcester area and flows through 29 cities and towns to Pawtucket, RI. Its Peters River tributary flows through Bellingham. As with the Charles, stormwater runoff is among the biggest issues impacting the Blackstone River, according to the Blackstone River Watershed Association. Other issues include sediments and wastewater treatment plant discharges. None of these surface water bodies serves as a source of drinking water. However, the town draws its public water supply from wells that tap aquifers associated with some of these water bodies.

It should be noted that there are two major types of aquifers in town. The most important types are sand and gravel aquifers. These were formed by melting glaciers at the end of the last ice age. The other type is found in the bedrock formations that underlie the entire area. The bedrock has cracks and crevices through which water travels.

It is only the sand and gravel aquifers, which are not very deep and are located near surface water bodies, that are capable of producing the hundreds of gallons of water per minute

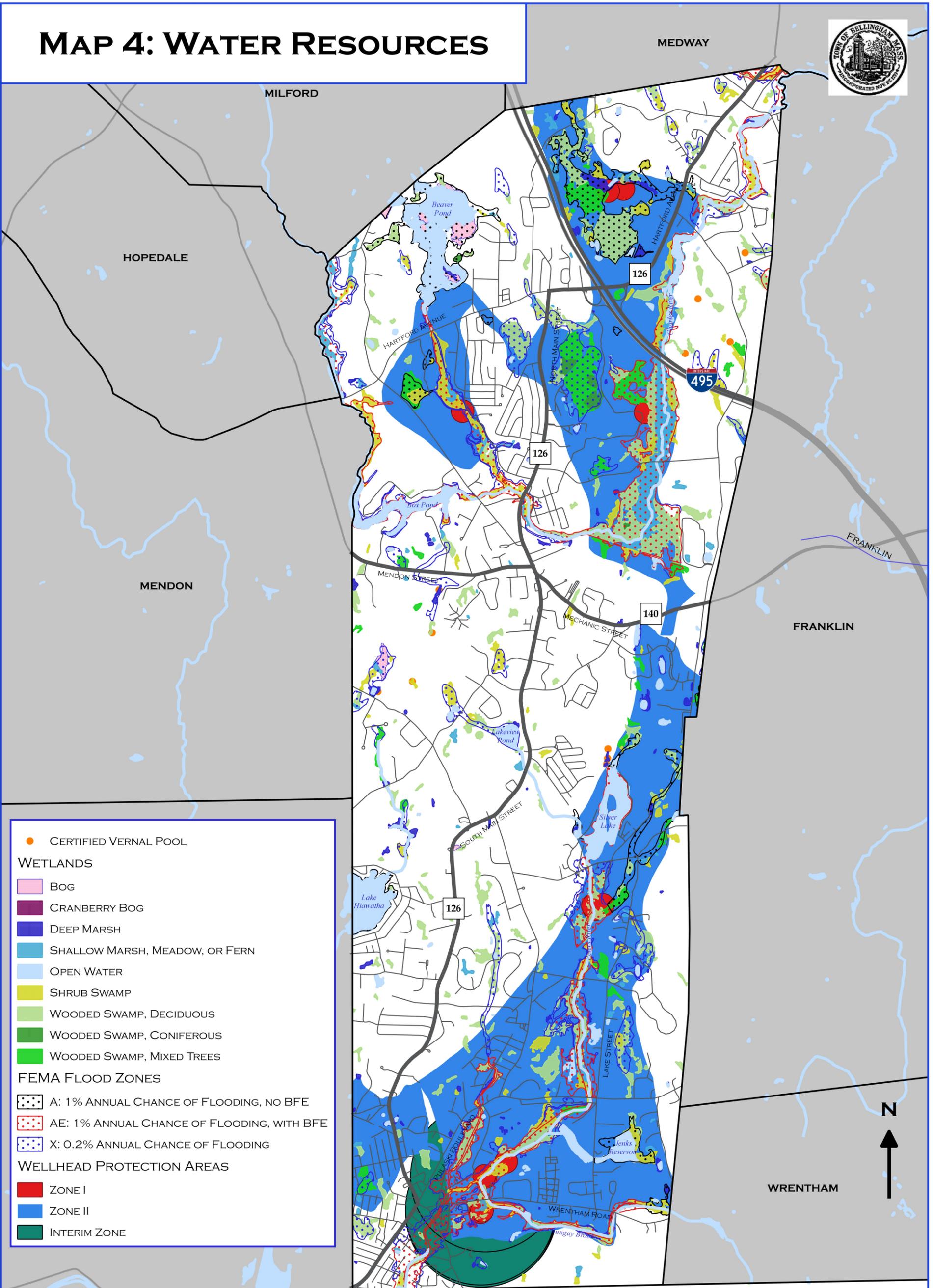
that are expected from municipal wells. Such wells range in diameter from 10 to 24 inches, and in depth from 20 to 80 feet with an average depth of about 50 feet. Their capacity averages around 500 gallons per minute (Walker, et al., 1975).

Wells for domestic use are very different. They are drilled into bedrock and intercept the water in cracks and crevices. They are commonly 6 to 8 inches in diameter, and deep enough (usually 50 to 300 feet) to intercept enough crevices to produce about 5 gallons per minute. Some such wells can produce as much as 50 gallons per minute. These are more likely to occur in lowlands than higher ground (Walker, et al., 1975).

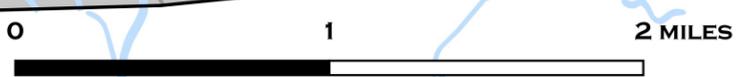
Map 4 also delineates the major aquifers and Zone II areas in town. Aquifers are underground layers of generally sand or gravel that yield water that flows through the pores in the sand or gravel. Zone II areas represent the recharge areas that feed specific wells. As the map illustrates, most of the aquifers are associated with, and are in close proximity to, surface water bodies. It is critical that these two systems be protected. Aquifers provide the municipal water supply and need to be protected.

Most wetlands in Bellingham are associated with the Charles River and its tributaries as well as the Peters River. They provide wildlife habitat, floodwater storage, and help clean water that passes through them. This last characteristic makes them particularly important when located on or near aquifers. Wetlands are already protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, and the Bellingham Wetlands Protection Bylaw enacted in 2010, which are enforced by the Conservation Commission. Aquifers in general are afforded protection by the Water Resource District by-laws. Municipal wellheads are provided with at least a 400-foot wellhead protection zone. The primary flood hazard areas generally follow the major water bodies. These include the Charles and Peters Rivers corridors as well as Beaver Pond, Lake Hiawatha and Jenks Reservoir. These are indicated on Figure 6, but more specific FEMA maps are available on the FEMA web site as well as at Bellingham Town Hall.

MAP 4: WATER RESOURCES



- CERTIFIED VERNAL POOL
- WETLANDS**
- BOG
- CRANBERRY BOG
- DEEP MARSH
- SHALLOW MARSH, MEADOW, OR FERN
- OPEN WATER
- SHRUB SWAMP
- WOODED SWAMP, DECIDUOUS
- WOODED SWAMP, CONIFEROUS
- WOODED SWAMP, MIXED TREES
- FEMA FLOOD ZONES**
- A: 1% ANNUAL CHANCE OF FLOODING, NO BFE
- AE: 1% ANNUAL CHANCE OF FLOODING, WITH BFE
- X: 0.2% ANNUAL CHANCE OF FLOODING
- WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS**
- ZONE I
- ZONE II
- INTERIM ZONE



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

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D. Vegetation

General Variety of Species

The Town of Bellingham consists of a variety of soil types and hydrologic conditions which support a wide array of vegetation and wildlife. The native forests of the area are mixed coniferous and hardwood trees. Major forest types are oak, red maple, and white pine. Canton and Charlton soils, which are common in the area, are well suited to oak and pine growth. Red Maple grows well in Woodbridge and Walpole soils, also found in town (U.S.D.A., undated).

Black choke cherry and witch hazel shrubs, swamp azalea and high bush blueberry (especially in wetter soils), and dewberry, cinnamon fern, sphagnum, and skunk cabbage are some common examples of the vegetation found in the upland and wetland areas. Other wild herbaceous plants and fruit-producing shrubs include bluestem, goldenrod, beggar tick, quack grass, ragweed, gray dogwood, autumn olive, and crabapple. Some additional wetland plants found in the area are smartweed, arrowhead, burr weed, pickerelweed, cord grass, rushes, sedges and reeds (U.S.D.A., undated).

Open areas such as cropland, pastures, meadows, and areas of grasses, herbs, shrubs and vines tend to attract kestrel, meadow vole, meadowlark, field sparrow, cottontail and red fox. Woodlands provide habitat for nuthatches, ruffed grouse, turkey, woodcock, thrushes, woodpeckers, squirrels, gray fox, raccoon, fishers, beavers and deer. Wetlands attract ducks, geese, herons, muskrat, otters, frogs and tree swallow. Even urbanized areas support raccoon, opossum, skunk, nighthawks, bats, Norway rat, English sparrow and starling (U.S.D.A., undated). All of these habitats are found in abundance. Map 5 displays vegetation and wildlife in Bellingham.

Public shade trees in Bellingham are protected by Chapter 87 of the Massachusetts General Laws under the jurisdiction of the Tree Warden. Additional protection is provided on Scenic Roads under the authority of the Planning Board. A public hearing must be held prior to the removal of a public shade tree. In addition, Bellingham requires new developments to retain and/or provide shade trees along public ways at a rate of 1 per 30 or 40 feet of frontage, depending on existing trees that are retained. It also requires at least 1 tree per 1500 square feet of parking area in commercial developments.

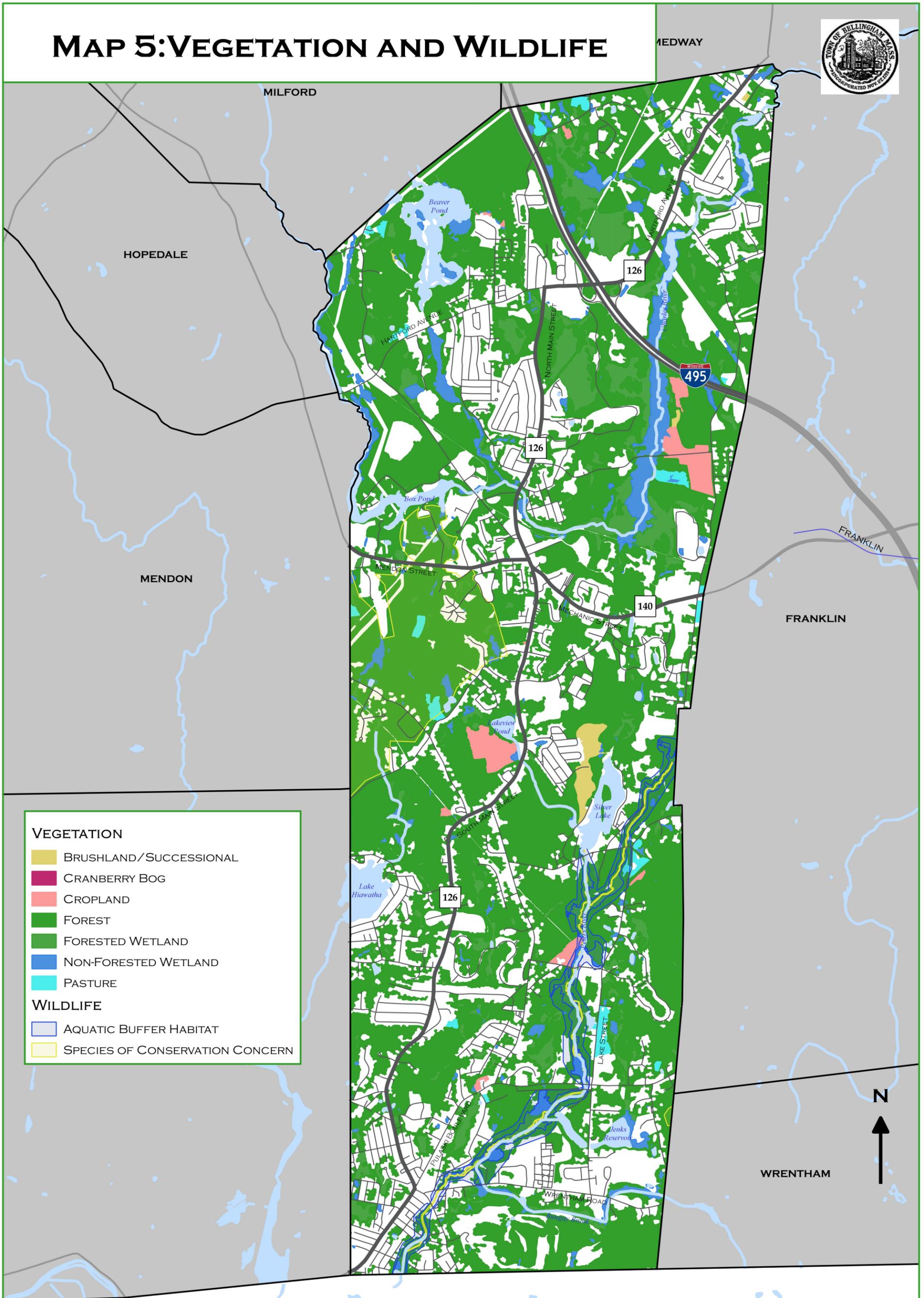
E. Rare and Endangered Species

Table 5 lists the rare and endangered species that have been observed. The list includes the scientific name and common names of the species, its taxonomic class, state rank and most recent observation as indicated by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. The table indicates that there have been six rare species identified in Bellingham.

DFW has designated both Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats of rare wildlife. These are habitats that may be home to some of the rare and endangered species and thus are worthy of protection. The Priority Habitats are intended to inform the public about rare plant and animal species locations. The Estimated Habitats of rare Wildlife show estimated habitats for all documented occurrences of rare wetlands wildlife within the last 25 years. Map 6 illustrates the

Priority Habitats in Bellingham. The Estimated Habitats are identical to the Priority Habitats in Bellingham.

MAP 5: VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE



VEGETATION

- BRUSHLAND/SUCCESSIONAL
- CRANBERRY BOG
- CROPLAND
- FOREST
- FORESTED WETLAND
- NON-FORESTED WETLAND
- PASTURE

WILDLIFE

- AQUATIC BUFFER HABITAT
- SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

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TABLE 5

RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Scientific Name	Common Name	Taxonomic Class	MESA Status*	Most Recent Observation
BELLINGHAM				
Ambystoma Opacum	Marbled Salamander	Amphibian	T	2007
Aristida purpurascens	Purple Needlegrass	Vascular Plant	T	1894
Lampetra Appendix	American Brook Lamprey	Fish	T	2011
Goodyera Repens	Dwarf Rattlesnake-plantain	Vascular Plant	E	1886
Panicum Philadelphicum	Philadelphia Panic Grass	Vascular Plant	SC	1986
Terrapene carolina	Eastern Box Turtle	Reptile	SC	2010#

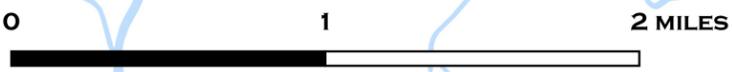
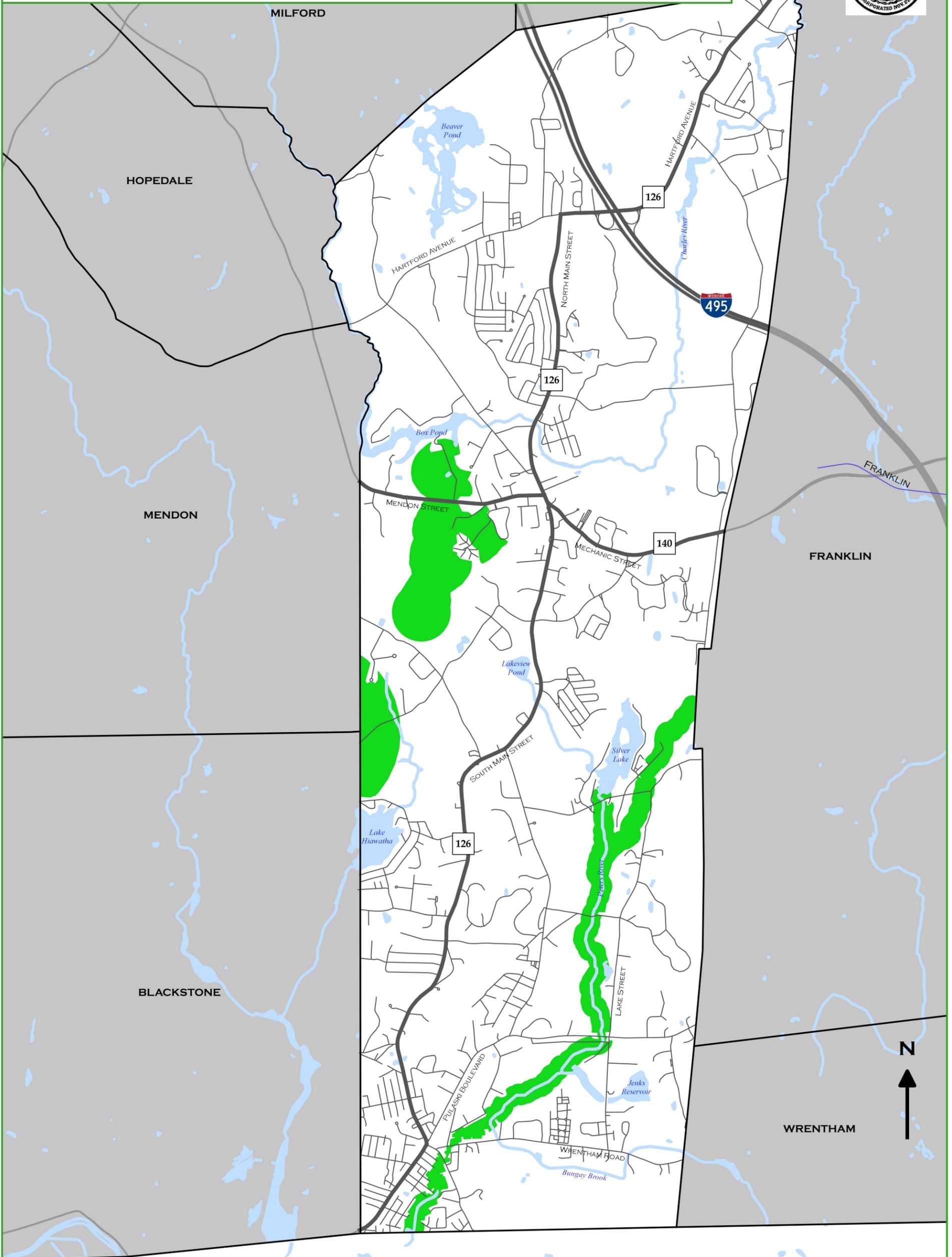
*Key to Status: E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

Source: Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, 2017, <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html>

#Additional sightings have been reported in 2014 and 2016 that are not reflected on the above web site.

As shown on Map 6, all current Estimated Habitats in town are also classified as Priority Habitats. Bellingham has three Estimated and Priority Habitats within its borders. One is along the Peters River south of Silver Lake and north of Pulaski Boulevard. The SNETT crosses this one. The second area is just south of Route 140 west of the town center. It is just south of Box Pond. The third area is just to the north of Lake Hiawatha and extends into Blackstone.

MAP 6: RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES



 PRIORITY HABITATS OF RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

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F. Fisheries and Wildlife

The kind and abundance of wildlife depends to a large extent on the amount and distribution of food, cover and water. Furbearers such as fox, mink, beaver and muskrat live in the area. Other mammals found in the town include deer, otter, weasel, fisher, cottontail, skunk, gray and red squirrels, flying squirrels, chipmunks, vole, mice and bats. Raccoons and woodchucks are plentiful. In recent years, opossum have expanded their range northward into the area. Coyotes have also been sighted.

Birds include hawks, kestrel, screech and great horned owls, grouse, pheasant, woodcock, turkeys and a great variety of songbirds. Cardinal, titmouse, and mockingbird have become increasingly numerous.

Common reptiles include garter and milk snakes as well as snapping and painted turtles. Red-backed salamanders are commonly found under rotting logs. Spotted salamanders are declining in number due to the impact of acid precipitation.

Bellingham has an abundance of fisheries in town. The Charles and Blackstone Rivers, plus the numerous other streams, lakes and ponds provide habitat for numerous fisheries. Among the species found in the area are brown, brook and rainbow trout; pickerel; perch; pumpkinseed (also known as sunfish, kibbie and sun bass); redbreast sunfish; smallmouth bass; largemouth bass, white sucker; carp; golden shiner; fallfish; creek chub; yellow bullhead; and brown bullhead (also known as hornpout and catfish) (Thompson, 1980).

There are also many certified and potential vernal pools in Bellingham. Both the surface waters map displayed on Figure 6 and the Estimated and Priority Habitat Map on Figure 10 display the locations of these resources. Vernal pools are important for supporting amphibians and invertebrate animals. They are filled with water in the fall and winter seasons and remain so into the summer. The late summer months completely dry the pools, preventing fish from establishing a permanent population. (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/vernal-pools/>).

There are several natural linkages within Bellingham and between Bellingham and abutting towns that facilitate wildlife migration. Many of these linkages involve private property, which may present future barriers to migration when such property is developed. Therefore, it is important to maintain these wildlife corridors by protecting linkages between the protected nodes of open space.

The Peters River Priority Habitat is primarily privately owned. It is linked to Town-owned Silver Lake by protected (by the Wetlands Protection Act) wetlands on private property along the Peters River. It is also close to, but not directly linked to, a 36-acre parcel that is the site of Wells #1 and #2. The north end of Silver Lake approaches, but is not linked to, the former Bellingham landfill site as well as the municipal complex on Blackstone Street. It should be a priority to link these areas.

Peters River is also linked to Franklin State Forest via the SNETT. Silver Lake is nearly linked with Franklin State Forest via the former landfill site and an open space subdivision in Franklin. The SNETT also provides a wildlife corridor link to Aldrich Brook, Fox Brook and Harris Pond in Blackstone.

An electric line right-of-way connects the Charles River corridor in Bellingham with the Franklin State Forest and a Priority Habitat in Franklin. A pipeline corridor connects the Priority Habitat south of Box Pond with the Charles River corridor and extends on into Medway.

G. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

There are many scenic areas and vistas in town. Several areas of Bellingham supply rural character with narrow streets and stone walls. The major water bodies, particularly the Peters and Charles Rivers, provide many scenic views. High Street provides a particularly scenic view of the Charles River as it crosses over it. Much of that view is protected as part of the Corps of Engineers' Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area.

Silver Lake, Jenks Reservoir, Beaver Pond, Lake Hiawatha and the other water bodies also provide scenic venues. Along South Main Street, Lakeview Farms provides a scenic landscape that is protected with an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.

As would be expected, the Scenic Roads offer scenic views. Maple Street, High Street and part of Farm Street still offer tree-lined pathways with stone walls, although these streets have seen increasing commercial and residential development in recent years.

Maple Street has historic mill buildings at the crossing with the Charles River. Pearl Street also had a mill building where it crossed the Charles River that was razed in 2016 due to its deteriorated condition. These mills and nearby housing formed the historic villages of North Bellingham and Caryville. There was a dam and waterfall visible from the Pearl Street bridge over the Charles River. This feature (a picture of which was on the cover of the 2002 OSRP update) was part of the water power system that ran the mill during its heyday. Along with the mill, the dam was removed in 2016 in order to restore the river to its natural flow. The old Town Hall, renovated in the 2000's, dates from 1802 and occupies a prominent position in Bellingham Center. It currently houses the Planning Board and other Town offices.

A large subdivision known as Pilgrim Village represents at least one former Native American settlement in Bellingham. Many artifacts, especially arrowheads, were found there during its development.

Other scenic views are offered from many of the hills and valleys in town, as well as along the Town's designated Scenic Roads. Historic individual buildings and streetscapes are also evident in the urbanized areas and mill villages throughout town. See Map 7. There are currently no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in Bellingham. These are State-designated areas that receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness and significance of their natural and cultural resources.

Bellingham hosts a unique geologic feature that bears its name. Bellingham Conglomerate, which is Red and gray metamorphosed conglomerate, sandstone, graywacke, and shale. Bellingham Conglomerate consists of conglomerate and lithic graywacke interbedded with chlorite phyllite and is confined to Bellingham basin according to the U.S. Geological Survey's Mineral Resources On-Line Data.

H. Environmental Challenges

One of the major environmental challenges in the area concerns both the quality and quantity of the water supply. Bellingham is totally dependent on wells, both municipal and private, for its water supply. Thus, it is imperative that both the quality and quantity of these water sources be maintained. Bellingham has been in the forefront of Towns addressing this issue. The State's efforts to encourage keeping wastewater local and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's MS4 storm-water management regulations will also help assure that more water is returned to the ground to recharge aquifers and in a way that maintains quality while also reducing flooding potential. Open space can be a key component in addressing this issue. Also, educational efforts regarding the use of fertilizers and pesticides as well as reduced lawn areas and native plantings can help reduce non-point source pollution to surface waters.

In October 2007, the Town's bylaw regulating illicit discharges to the municipal stormwater system became effective. In addition, Town Meeting approved a new bylaw and the Planning Board adopted new regulations for Erosion and Sedimentation Controls for new site developments and subdivisions. The Town's DPW has completed mapping of all detention basins, manholes, catch basins and outfalls.

The Town's landfill on South Maple Street was capped in the 1990's. The Town's recycling center is now located on part of the site, and a solar photovoltaic system is being installed on the capped landfill.

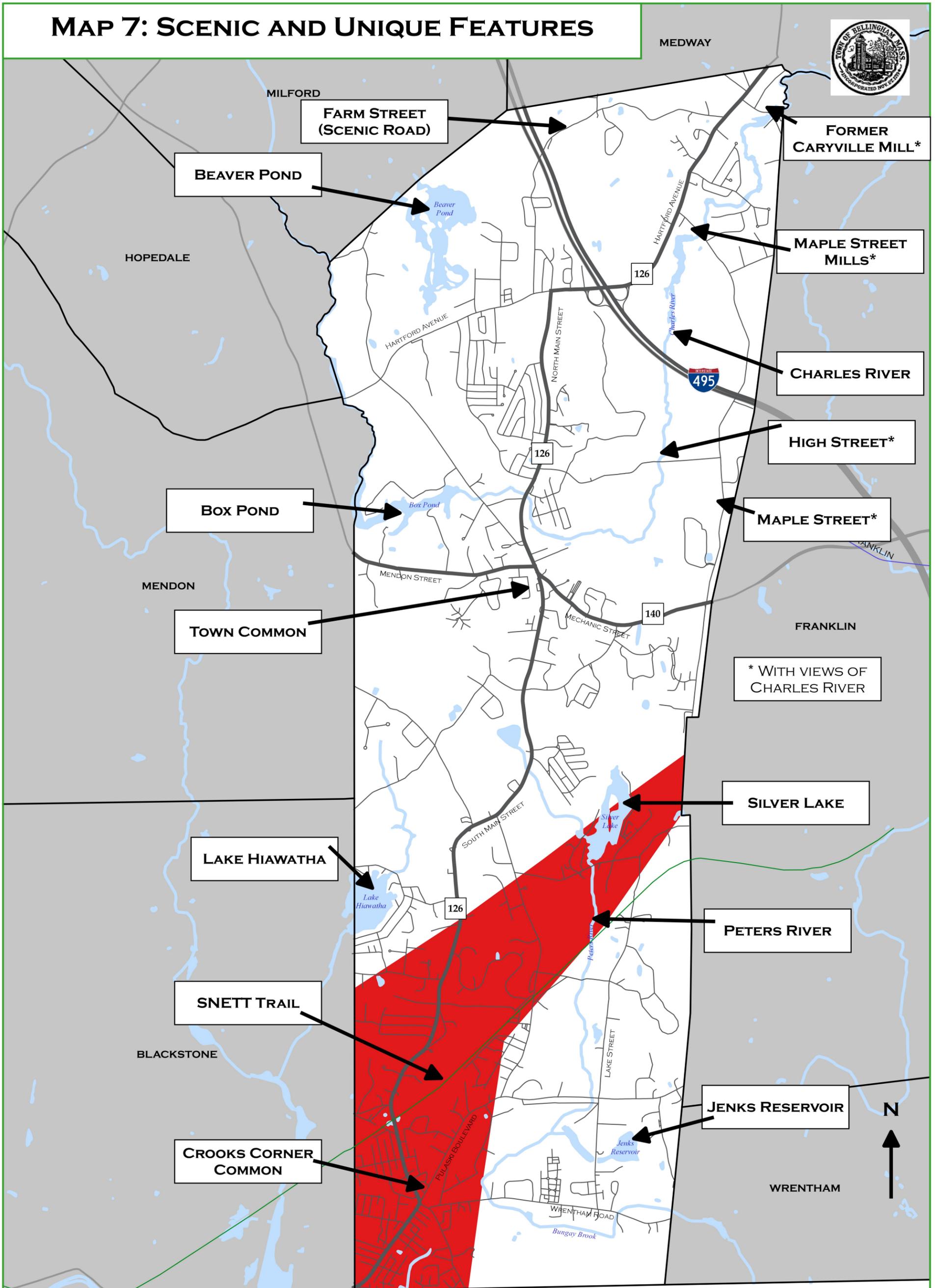
Bellingham lost 880 acres (13.3%, See Table 4) of forest between 1971 and 1999. Its open space development bylaw should help reduce future losses. Compact development measures can accommodate growth while also preserving open space.

Another environmental challenge is the cleanup and reuse of brownfields. Bellingham has contaminated sites that need to be cleaned up and reused. In addition to removing a threat to groundwater (and surface water), redeveloping such sites both returns the site to productive use and reduces the need to expand infrastructure and develop green field sites. An excellent example is the Town's successful effort to clean up the Caryville Mill and to prepare it for reuse. Another 21E site in Bellingham is the Scott Hills Auto Sales site on South Main Street. In addition, there was a site with an Activity Use and Limitation (AUL) at an electrical substation on Westminster Street. In accordance with a n Order of Conditions issued by the Conservation Commission to decommission the site, the AUL was terminated in April of 2015.

Bellingham has large areas of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Charles River Natural Valley Storage area within its borders. This system provides a passive means of avoiding flooding within

those areas and the towns upstream along the Charles River watershed by allowing flood waters to be stored on low lands that have been kept free of development rather

MAP 7: SCENIC AND UNIQUE FEATURES



* WITH VIEWS OF CHARLES RIVER

Bellingham Conglomerate

0 1 2 MILES

DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2017

PREPARED BY:



than constructing a large system of floodwalls, pipes, dams and other such measures. In addition to flood protection, it has the added benefits of maintaining open space and recreation lands, scenic views, wildlife habitat, etc. This philosophy provides an example that should be followed as development continues in the area. As mentioned above, stormwater can be recharged into the ground to avoid concentrations of runoff that result in flooding and to more closely mimic natural processes.

Invasive species also present a challenge to Bellingham and the region. In recent years, non-native insects and plants have damaged and in some cases replaced native species. While difficult to manage, efforts should be made to identify the invasives and address to the extent possible. The Town has conducted annual treatment for invasive aquatic species in Jenks Reservoir and Silver Lake, while Lake Hiawatha has been treated privately.

Related to the issue of invasives but an issue in its own right, is that of climate change. While a changing climate invites new species to the area, it also may cause greater and more frequent storms as well as periods of drought.

The site of Caryville Mill presents a challenge. The mill building has been torn down and the dam that had been used to generate power in the mill's heyday has also been removed, thus removing an obstruction in the Charles River and allows it to flow freely to improve its habitat. There are currently no plans for reuse of this site which is directly on the Charles River.

There are no environmental justice populations in Bellingham, and no obvious environmental equity issues. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. No sub-populations or areas have been identified as receiving unfair treatment.

Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

A. Protected Open Space

A critical responsibility in long-range municipal planning is protecting lands of conservation and recreation interest. Conservation lands are typically undeveloped parcels used for passive recreation and/or conservation, and protected from development through a conservation or deed restriction or by Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. Recreation lands are generally improved parcels used for, or have the potential to be used for, active recreation. Such parcels may be owned and/or managed by public, private or nonprofit entities.

Protected open space serves several valuable functions as both habitat and green infrastructure. Depending on the type (e.g. forest, meadow, wetlands, farmland, etc.) open space can provide habitat for both plant and wildlife, help replenish aquifers, reduce and absorb storm water runoff, produce a sustainable source of a wide range of resources, and absorb and/or treat pollutants. Open space also offers numerous active and passive recreational opportunities and add scenic views to the landscape.

Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of Massachusetts protects the right of the people of the Commonwealth to “clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment.” Municipal water supplies can be protected by Zones 1 and 2 designated by the Department of Environmental Protection. An Open Space and Recreation Plan facilitates a municipality’s ability to exercise the rights of its people under Article 97 by identifying open space and recreation lands, identifying appropriate protective measures and planning for future conservation and recreation needs.

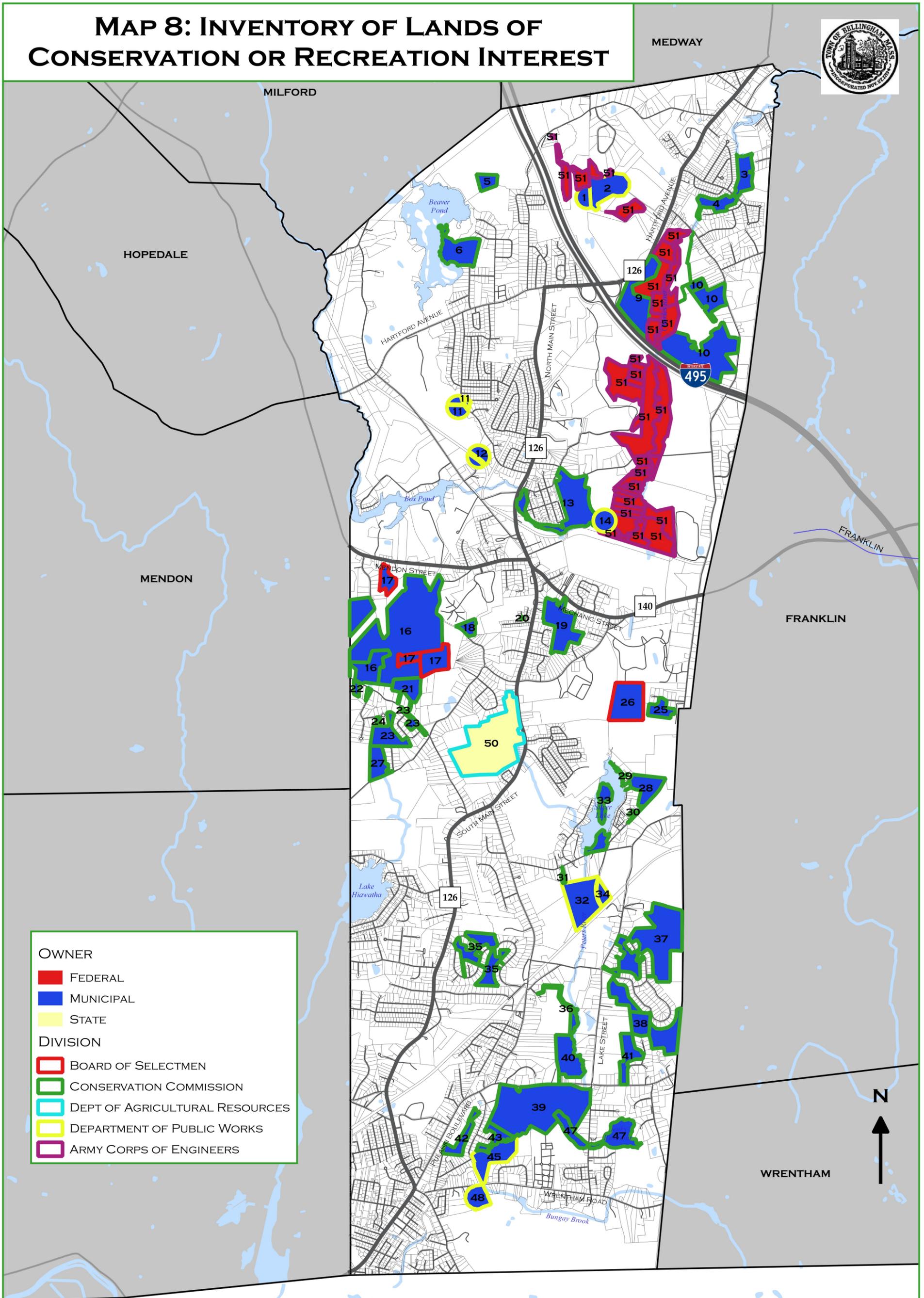
While it represents only a relatively small portion of its total land, Bellingham does have some important lands protected as open space. In this report, protected open space is defined as land that is designated to have no or minimal development on it. It must have legal protection for such status that includes public ownership and/or conservation restrictions recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands are not classified here as protected since their level of protection is minimal and the record shows that much land with such protection has been developed in recent years.

The town itself is the largest holder of protected land. As illustrated in Map 8 and tabulated in Table 6 the town owns 48 sites (including conservation restrictions) totaling 1219.4 acres. The largest site, acquired in 2003, is on Mendon Street and totals 184.85 acres in 4 parcels. Other large sites include 121.15 acres off Highridge Road that was acquired in 2010, and three parcels totaling 95.3 acres off Maple Street that was acquired in 2004.

Nine of the 48 sites, totaling 154.71 acres surround one or more town wells and their main function is to protect the Town's water supply. The Conservation Commission has custody over 844.53 acres. Most of Silver Lake (about 57 acres) is protected, as is a 48.5-acre site on High Street. An 11.74-acre parcel off Plymouth Road has the additional protection of a conservation restriction and a maintenance endowment held by Metacomet Land Trust.

Table 7 lists the state and federal lands in Bellingham. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has substantial conservation holdings along the Charles River in north Bellingham (see Map 8). It owns 334.69 acres in fee and holds conservation easements on another 72 acres for a total of 406.61 acres. These holdings are part of the Corps' Charles River Natural Valley Storage Project.

MAP 8: INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION OR RECREATION INTEREST



OWNER

- FEDERAL
- MUNICIPAL
- STATE

DIVISION

- BOARD OF SELECTMEN
- CONSERVATION COMMISSION
- DEPT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
- ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2017

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TABLE 6

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS (TOWN)

SITE#	LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES/ CONDITION	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RECREATION POTENTIAL ¹	PUBLIC ACCESS	LEVEL OF PROTECTION
TOWN OF BELLINGHAM									
1	Stall Brook	12-01A	7.84	I	Well #7/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
2	Stall Brook	13-05	28.02	I/A	Well #8/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
3	Plymouth Road#	14-50	15.98	S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
4	John Alden Circle	14-100	12.99	S	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
5	Hixon Street	17-03A	5.89	S	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
6	R. Belanger Dr.	17-05FF	24.5	S	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
7	Maple St.*	20-20	24.6	S/I	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
8	Hartford Ave/Crossroads Shopping Center^	24-9A	12.50	I/B	Conservation Restriction/NA	ConCom	No	No	Article 97
9	Hartford Ave/Charles River Center^	Portion of 19-6	6.74	I	Conservation Restriction/NA	ConCom	No	No	Article 97
10	Maple Street	26-3, 26-5 32.5	95.30	I	Conservation/Good	ConCom	No	Yes	Article 97
11	Taunton St	34-01-2 34.03, 34.24	11.27	S	Well #5/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
12	Robins Road	39-35	7.88	S/I	Well #9/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
13	High Street	40-19	47.70	R	Conservation/Good	ConCom	20% Active 80% Passive	Yes	Article 97
14	High Street	45-56	12.28	R	Well #10/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
15	High Street	42-2-1	11.70	I	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
16	Mendon/North Sts	Portion of 48-3 and 58-7	9.70	A	Former Railroad bed/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
17	Mendon St.	48-3, 48-3-1, 53-2, 53-3	184.85	A	Town/Good	BOS	Passive	Yes	Article 97

Continued ***Bold** indicates purchase with LAND (Formerly Self-Help) funds

#Metacomet Land Trust holds a conservation restriction on this parcel ^Conservation Commission holds conservation restriction

¹Passive means no facilities but available for trails, birdwatching, wildlife observation, etc. Active means facilities such as sports fields, courts, etc.

TABLE 6 (Continued)

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS

SITE#	LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES/ CONDITION	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RECREATION POTENTIAL ¹	PUBLIC ACCESS	LEVEL OF PROTECTION
TOWN OF BELLINGHAM (Continued)									
18	Saddleback Hill Road	49-33F	5.65	R	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
19	Mechanic St /Crystal Way	50-99B	22.6	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
20	Off Saddleback Hill Road	50-02, 50-03	23.9	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
21	North St.	58-1	14.99	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
22	North St.	58-08B 58-08E	3.45	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
23	Linda Way	58-0013-OS1 58-0013-OS2 58-0013-OS3 58-0013-OS4	23.81	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
24	North St/Lynn Ct	58-23	1.0	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
25	Sand Castle Ln	61-0001-0012	9.8	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
26	Off Blackstone	61-09	34.6	A	Town/Good	BOS	Passive	Yes	
27	Blackstone Fields/Maddie Way	62-4	15.0	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
28	Lakeview Ave	65-01	20.58	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
29	Lakeview Ave	65-09	.32	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
30	Blackmar St.	69-31	.14	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
	Blackmar St.	69-33	.06	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
	Blackmar St.	69-39	.23	A	Conservation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
31	Cross Street	72-6A	1.35	S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
32	Cross Street	72-10	36.00	S	Wells #1/NA	DPW	Passive (potential use for SNETT access)	Yes	Zones 1 and 2

Continued

¹Passive means no facilities but available for trails, birdwatching, wildlife observation, etc. Active means facilities such as sports fields, courts, etc.

TABLE 6 (Continued)

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS

SITE#	LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION*	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES/ CONDITION	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RECREATION POTENTIAL ¹	PUBLIC ACCESS	LEVEL OF PROTECTION
TOWN OF BELLINGHAM (Continued)									
33	Silver Lake/ Cross Street*	72-25	56.01	A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
34	Lake Street	73-02A	6.02	A	Water Dept./NA	DPW	No	Yes	Zones 1 and 2
35	Whitehall Way	75-16, 75-16A	33.19	B/S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
36	Rosenfeld Way	80-28	7.00	A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
37	Highridge Road	81-1	121.15	A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
38	Off Pulaski Blvd/Lake Street	85-3	12.00	A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Landlocked	Article 97
39	Pulaski Blvd/Arcand Park	88-08	96.2	S/A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
40	Pulaski Blvd	88-11	26.9	A	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
41	Pulaski Blvd	89-13C	16.95	A/S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
42	Deer Run A	91-6A	12.1	S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
43	Deer Run B	91-6B	8.0	S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	No	Article 97
44	Deer Run C	91-6B-1	3.45	S	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
45	Wrentham Road	91-50	32.85	R	Wells #3 & #4/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
46	230 Wrentham	91-	13.6	R	Conservation/ Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
47	Lake St/Jenks Reservoir	92-22 92-29	28.00	A	Conservation/ Recreation/Good	ConCom	Passive	Yes	Article 97
48	Wrentham Road	95-27J	12.78	R/A	Well #11/NA	DPW	No	No	Zones 1 and 2
	SUB-TOTAL		970.07						

***Bold** indicates purchase with PARC (Formerly Self-Help) fund

¹Passive means no facilities but available for trails, birdwatching, wildlife observation, etc. Active means facilities such as sports fields, courts, etc.

TABLE 7

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS (STATE AND FEDERAL)

SITE#	LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES/ CONDITION	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RECREATION POTENTIAL	PUBLIC ACCESS
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS								
49	SNETT Trail/Center St	80-15A 80-15E	42.23	S/R/A	Former Railroad right-of- way/Good	Department of Conservation and Recreation	Passive	Yes
50	South Main St/ Lakeview Farms^	59-5	95.5	A	Agriculture Preservation Restriction (APR)	Department of Agricultural Resources	No	No
	SUB-TOTAL		137.73					
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA								
51	Charles River	7-8A	.27	A/I/S	Flood Storage/Excellent	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Passive	Yes
		7-11A	8.90					
		12-54	3.90					
		12-55	7.00					
		13-3B	9.56					
		13-59	.73					
		19-08	12.80					
		19-10	6.50					
		19-11	10.40					
		19-12	.01					
		25-03	8.27					
		25-04	7.63					
		25-05	13.60					
		25-05A	20.30					
		31-01	47.20					
		31-1B	28.90					
		31-3A	3.08					
		31-3B	3.73					
		31-3C	3.91					
		31-3D	1.61					
		31-3E	26.53					

Continued Department of Agricultural Resources holds Agricultural Preservation Restriction

TABLE 7 (Continued)

PROTECTED OPEN SPACE PARCELS

SITE #	LOCATION/ DESCRIPTION	ASSESSOR'S MAP/LOT#	AREA (Acres)	ZONING	EXISTING USES/ CONDITION	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RECREATION POTENTIAL	PUBLIC ACCESS
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Continued)								
51	Charles River	36-02	2.87	A/I/S	Flood Storage	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Passive	Yes
		41-02	4.10					
		41-04	3.81					
		41-05	2.34					
		41-06	2.20					
		41-07	6.38					
		41-08	3.13					
		41-09	3.16					
		41-10	7.40					
		41-11	4.95					
		41-12	3.58					
		46-02	8.2					
		46-03	15.60					
		46-04	22.60					
		46-05	4.78					
		46-06	10.26					
		46-07	2.50					
	46-1A	2.00						
	SUB-TOTAL		334.69					

Sources: Bellingham Assessor's Office, 2017
 Bellingham Conservation Commission, 2017

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts also owns conservation land in Bellingham. The abandoned rail bed known as the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The portion of the trail in Bellingham equals 42 acres. In recent years, the Department of Conservation and Recreation interest in upgrading this trail, which runs from the Franklin State Forest to the Douglas State Forest, for multiple uses, has increased. The State also owns an Agricultural Preservation Restriction on Lakeview Farms on Main Street of 95.5 acres.

Thus, the total area of protected open space in Bellingham is 1763.82 acres, an increase of 249.1 acres from 1514.72 acres in 2009. All of the increase has been land acquired on behalf of the Conservation Commission, and includes direct purchase and land acquired from open space subdivisions. This represents about 14.6% of the Town's total area. A summary of Tables 6 and 7 appears below:

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM		1219.40
Conservation Commission	Conservation	844.53
Board of Selectmen	Conservation	219.45
Department of Public Works	Water Supply	154.94
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS		137.73
	Trail	42.23
	Agricultural Preservation Restriction	95.50
U.S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS		406.69
	Flood Storage	334.69 (Fee)
	Flood Storage	72.00 (Easement)
TOTAL		1763.82

Conservation and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions can be important elements of an open space program. The inventory listed in Table 6 includes the following restrictions:

<u>Site#</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Holder</u>
3	Plymouth Road	14.50	Conservation	Metacomet Land Trust
8	Hartford Ave/ Crossroads Shopping Center	12.50	Conservation	Conservation Commission
9	Hartford Ave/ Charles River Center	6.74	Conservation	Conservation Commission
50	South Main St/ Lakeview Farms	95.50	Agricultural	Massachusetts Dept. of Agriculture

Thus, 129.24 acres of Bellingham's protected open space, 8.5% of the total, consists of Conservation and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions.

B. Public and Private Recreation Facilities

A variety of recreational opportunities exist in Bellingham. While conservation land (listed in Tables 6 and 7) is usually also available for some recreation activities (hiking, bird-watching, etc.), recreation land here is defined as areas devoted and used primarily for one or more specific recreation uses that require:

- o A large portion of the site;
- o Man-made facilities or significant alteration of the natural landscape; and
- o Intensive maintenance.

Examples of recreation facilities include parks and playgrounds, schoolyards, country clubs/golf courses, campgrounds, beaches, picnic areas, etc. Such facilities can be publicly or privately owned and accessible. The recreation facilities in each town are discussed below.

Table 8 lists the recreation sites in Bellingham. As the table indicates, schoolyards provide the majority of the recreation sites in Town. These are supplemented by the Town Common and playgrounds and ball fields at North Bellingham Playground, the Blackstone Street Fields and the High Street fields. There are beaches at both Jenks Reservoir and Silver Lake.

Private facilities include the New England Country Club in south Bellingham, the Circle CG Campgrounds, and the Bellingham Sportsman Club. While not available to the general public, these facilities add to the diversity of recreation opportunities in Bellingham

TABLE 8
PUBLIC RECREATION SITES¹

NAME	LOCATION	AREA	EXISTING USES/FACILITIES	MANAGEMENT AGENCY	CONDITION/ZONING	LEVEL OF PROTECTION
TOWN-OWNED PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS						
A. North Bellingham Playground	Hartford Avenue	4.81	Small ballfield primarily used for soccer, basketball court, playground equipment	Parks Commission	Fair Suburban	Article 97
B. Crooks Corner Common	Crooks Corner	.84	Passive recreation	Parks Commission	Excellent Business 1	Article 97
C. Stallbrook School	Hartford Avenue	40.16#	Basketball courts, tennis courts, ballfield, playground equipment, play areas	School Committee	Good Agriculture	None
D. Former Clara Macy School	Monique Drive	14.00#	Small basketball courts, playground equipment, ball field	Parks Commission	Good Residential	Article 97
E. Middle School	Blackstone Street	28.30#	Football field, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground equipment	School Committee	Excellent Agriculture	None
F. High School	Blackstone Street	40+#	See Blackstone Street Fields	School Committee	Excellent Agriculture	None
G. Blackstone Street Fields	Blackstone Street	25+*	Soccer, football, field hockey and softball fields, basketball courts, playground equipment	Parks Commission	Excellent Agriculture	Article 97
H. South/Primavera Schools	Harpin Street	46.97#	Baseball/softball fields, basketball court, playground equipment	School Committee	Good Residential	None
I. Jenks Reservoir (Arcand Park)	Pulaski Boulevard	4.00	About 4 acres of 96.2-acre site is used for a beach and picnic tables, swings	Conservation Commission	Good Agriculture	Article 97
J. Silver Lake	Lake Street	57.36	Beach. Newly-added playground equipment	Parks Commission	Excellent	Article 97
K. High Street Fields	High Street	5.00	About 5 acres of this 48-acre site is used for softball fields and swings	Parks Commission	Good Residential	Article 97
L. Town Common	Mendon Street	7.85	Passive recreation, playground equipment	Parks Commission	Excellent Business 1	Article 97
Total Public Recreation Acreage (including schools)		274.29				

#Acreage includes entire school site. ***Bold** indicates PARC (formerly Urban Self-Help) funds used to construct.

¹All sites listed are publicly accessible

TABLE 9**PRIVATE RECREATION SITES**

NAME	LOCATION	AREA	EXISTING USES/FACILITIES	ZONING
PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS				
M. Bellingham Sportsmen Club	Lake Street	7.59	Ball fields, trails	Agriculture
N. New England Country Club	Paine Street	144.00	Golf and associated facilities	Agriculture
O. Circle CG Campgrounds	North Main Street	28.30	Camping, pool	Suburban
P. Maplegate Country Club	Maple Street	13.5	Golf and associated facilities (mostly in Franklin)	Industrial
Total Private Recreation Acreage		261.34		
TOTAL RECREATION ACREAGE		537.83		

Sources: Bellingham Assessor's Office, 2017
Metacomet Land Trust, 2002

C. Potential Inequities

As Map 8 illustrates, Bellingham's protected open space and recreation areas are well distributed throughout the Town. There are both large and small conservation areas and recreation sites within reasonable proximity to all areas of Town.

D. Chapter 61, 61A and 61B Lands

In order to encourage the preservation of certain activities and land uses (namely forestry, agriculture, and recreation), the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts allow a property tax break for these land uses. In return for this tax break, the property owners who take advantage of it must make the parcel available for purchase by the town in which it is located before it may be sold on the open market. Since towns rarely have the available funds to purchase these parcels, the law does not provide much protection. However, to the extent that the tax break may help keep the land use economically feasible, it does provide some incentive to continue the land use rather than make the land available for development. Furthermore, landowners who continue to maintain their lands under this program should be acknowledged for their stewardship efforts.

Named after the section of state law that allows this, Chapter 61 land is that which is used for forestry or woodlands, Chapter 61A land is used for agriculture, and Chapter 61B land is used for recreation.

As Table 10 indicates, Bellingham has six parcels totaling 62.16 acres classified as Chapter 61 lands. This is an increase from 52.16 acres in 2009.

There are presently six parcels of Chapter 61A lands that total 203.56 acres. This is an increase from 106.76 acres in 2009.

There are three parcels on Maple Street listed under Chapter 61B. They total 25.83 acres. This has not changed since 2009.

TABLE 10
CHAPTER 61, 61A AND 61B LANDS

LOCATION	OWNER	PARCEL.	ACREAGE	ZONING	PUBLIC ACCESS
Chapter 61					
7 Joseph Rosenfeld Way	Fairview Park Forest	80-12	37.10	Agriculture	No
10 Joseph Rosenfeld Way	Fairview Park Forest	80-44	1.06	Agriculture	No
14 Joseph Rosenfeld Way	Fairview Park Forest	80-45	1.00	Agriculture	No
South Main Street	Fleurette	83-119	13.00	Suburban	No
Scott Street	Fleurette	83-118	5.00	Suburban	No
15 Scott Street	Fleurette	83-12	5.00	Suburban	No
Total Chapter 61			62.16		
Chapter 61A					
425 Lake Street	Crooks	73-03	62.81	Agriculture	No
Lake Street	Crooks	73-02	39.5	Agriculture	No
50 Railroad Street	Galipeau	80-08	16.99	Agriculture	No
Railroad Street	Galipeau	80-08A	38.54	Agriculture	No
Farm Street	Whalen	3-07	17.00	Agriculture	No
Lake Street	Rhodes	84-09	28.72	Agriculture/Business 2	No
Total Chapter 61A			203.56		
Chapter 61B					
160 Maple Street	Maplegate	26-09	9.93	Industrial	No
Maple Street	Maplegate	32-09	3.57	Industrial	No
Maple Street	Gray Wall Realty Trust	26-06A	12.33	Industrial	No
Total Chapter 61B			25.83		
TOTAL CHAPTER 61, 61A & 61B LANDS			291.55		

Source: Bellingham Assessor's Office, 2017

Section 6: Community Vision

A. Description of Process

The primary method of establishing community goals involved a survey of local residents. The survey questions were partially based largely, on the questions that were asked in 2008 as part of the 2009 OSRP. This was done in order to determine whether there has been a change in viewpoints and/or priorities over the past 7 years.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 substantive questions (some with multiple parts) and a final question regarding demographic information about the responder. Paper copies were printed and were available at the May 25, 2016 Annual Town Meeting as well as in the offices of the Town Clerk and. The survey was also available on-line. A total of 191 responses were received, all but 5 were completed on-line.

An interesting result of the survey is that, for the most part, attitudes about priorities have been relatively stable. Table 1 presents the results of the question that asked respondents to identify the 6 top priority issues in 2008 compared to 2016. It should be noted a question about promoting Low Impact Development drainage methods was dropped from the 2016 survey and a question about installing solar panels on already-developed land was added.

As the table illustrates, the top three priority items, (1) protecting water resources, (2) protecting land for conservation purposes and (3) protecting wildlife habitat, remained the same, and the percentages they received were nearly identical in both years. The biggest changes occurred in the rise into the top 5 of land acquisition for recreation for organized recreation and protection of land that provides greenways or linkages between existing conservation areas each rose about 10 percent to take the #4 and #5 spots respectively.

The biggest drop in support occurred for the encouraging the use of green building techniques., which dropped from 58% to 37%. Slowing the pace of development dropped from 41% to 34%, while support for more commercial and residential growth both rose, from 13% to 19% and 7% to 12%, respectively.

A public forum was also held on March 8, 2017 to present the draft plan and to solicit comments from the public as well as Town officials. The draft was available on the Town web site and was sent to the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and other boards, committees and departments.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Based on the survey results and input from public officials, the following are the Open Space and Recreation goals:

1. Protect natural resources, especially aquifers and groundwater recharge areas
2. Acquire and/or protect additional open space.
3. Link existing open space and recreation land.
4. Improve park and recreation sites and facilities.
5. Develop additional recreation facilities.
6. Preserve/enhance community character.
7. Increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands
8. Improve regional cooperation and efforts

These goals are expanded with addition of a set of objectives for each goal in the Goals and Objectives section that follows the Analysis of Needs section in this report.

Section 7: Analysis of Needs

This needs analysis section is a compilation of needs derived from several sources. It includes input from the survey, needs identified in the town's 2010 master plan or other documents, input from town officials, and the data assembled in the Community Setting, Environmental Inventory and Analysis, and Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest sections of this report.

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

As the Community Setting section made clear, growth is proceeding in Bellingham. In addition to negative impacts on natural resources (wildlife habitat, water recharge areas, etc.), this development has impacted the character of the town by eliminating scenic views and transforming rural roadways into suburban collector roads. The need to conserve natural resources (especially water resources) and to preserve community character is evident. Thus, the need to acquire additional open space is important. Also important, especially in light of continuing growth, is to encourage sustainable development practices to reduce the negative impacts of growth on natural resources.

One method of conserving natural resources is to encourage compact development. Compact development results in more efficient use of land such that growth is accommodated while still preserving natural resources. Major impediments to compact development in suburban regions such as this one are the necessity to accommodate automobiles and the separation of uses mandated by zoning. A vicious circle is in effect. Since there is little transit service available in the region, all facilities must be designed to be accessed by automobiles.

Similarly, separation of uses requires that all trips be made by automobile since the resulting distances between uses precludes the possibility of walking. This results in ever-wider roads and massive parking lots (not to mention high levels of traffic), which in turn renders any kind of transit or pedestrian-oriented development nearly impossible. Parking generally becomes the limiting factor for developing a particular parcel rather than the density allowed by zoning. Transit as well as mixed-use development would help facilitate compact development and allow land to be used more efficiently. The Town's decision to join the Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority is an important first step in breaking the vicious circle. Additional measures to encourage compact development would represent a synergistic measure that would make transit service more feasible.

As growth continues, water resources are being strained. Protection of water resources was the highest priority for open space protection in the survey. Growth results in more water use while also increasing the amount of impervious surface. Policy changes at the state level to encourage more recharge of stormwater into the ground as well as efforts to remove contaminants prior to getting washed into stormwater better treatment of stormwater are helping protect water resources. The State's recent prohibition of phosphorus fertilizers and the Environmental Protection Agency's MS4 program are also helping to ensure that more and cleaner stormwater runoff is being returned to the ground to recharge aquifers, and that water discharged to nearby wetlands and streams is cleaner.

As noted above, Bellingham has undergone substantial development in recent years. Three major regional shopping centers have been developed at the I-495 and Route 126 intersection, a fourth is planned, two power plants have been built, large industrial and distribution facilities have recently been built and more are in the permitting stage, and the population increased by nearly 1400 since 2000 and by 350 between 2010 and 2015. Therefore, it is important to acquire more open space while the opportunity to integrate key parcels into a town and regional network is still available.

Since the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town has acquired nearly 250 acres of additional open space. Some specific sites suggested for future acquisitions include additional land along the Charles River, land adjacent to the Town-owned former railroad right-of-way and land around Beaver Pond.

B. Summary of Community's Needs

In addition, links among current and/or future open space and recreation facilities are needed within the region and between and the surrounding lands and facilities. Such links promote wildlife migration (thus allowing greater biodiversity) as well as provide opportunities for passive recreation for humans. It should be noted that the residents' survey demonstrated strong support for the creation of trails in town.

The 2012 SCORP survey of public officials found that trails and multiuse fields were the recreation elements most in need of more resources. This finding is also supported by the survey conducted for this OSRP as trails were rated as the highest recreation priority by far. Playgrounds, canoe launches and additional swimming facilities were also highly ranked.

Improvements to the open space behind Town Hall was identified as an important need in the master plan as well as lands along the Charles River. A trail link between the Town Center and Town conservation lands off High Street was cited in terms of walkways as well as canoe launches and landings.

Links among current and/or future open space and recreation facilities are needed both within the town and between the town and surrounding region. Such links promote wildlife migration (thus allowing greater biodiversity) as well as provide opportunities for passive recreation for humans.

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

As discussed above under Resource Protection Needs, compact development is a means of more efficiently using land to accommodate growth while protecting natural resources. Important steps to amend zoning bylaws and other measures have been taken. However, additional measures to encourage compact, sustainable development are a management need in town.

A continuing need is public access to already-protected open space. Facilities such as parking, signs, and trails coupled with improved public awareness through the Town web site, social media and other sources would result in greater use and appreciation of our natural resources. Also, the town has a young population that is straining recreational facilities and programs. These facilities and programs need to be expanded to respond to current and future needs. Also, the Town's Master

Plan identifies the need for sidewalks along major roads, but in addition to improving access to existing conservation lands and recreation facilities (especially for seniors and teens who are unable to drive), sidewalks can serve as recreation facilities themselves.

Measures needed to improve access to open space are twofold. First, there is a need for awareness among the citizens of where existing protected open space is located and what recreational opportunities are offered there. Second, there is a need for improved facilities (including features that permit usage by elderly and handicapped persons in compliance with `American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements) to allow increased usage by the public. In general, management plans, including trail maps, for each open space parcel should be developed in both paper and electronic formats.

The quality of recreation facilities is in need of improvement. Only 51% rated the quality as “good” (and only 3% as “excellent”) while 37% rated it as “fair” and 7% as “poor.” Also, playgrounds were cited as one of the top recreation priorities in the survey.

The Southern New England Trunkline Trail represents a potential major asset to the Town. Efforts to upgrade the trail have increased in recent years and with the completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway in Blackstone (coterminous with SNETT for a portion of its Blackstone route) should increase its priority for further development. The success of other rail trails in the area that have been converted to multiuse trails indicates a strong demand for such facilities, and this would represent a major asset for pedestrian and bicycle activities for people of all ages.

The survey also indicated strong support for adoption of the Community Preservation Act. While state matching funds have declined in recent years, the CPA remains a major tool that would be instrumental in achieving many of the goals of this OSRP.

Regarding increasing awareness of open space and recreation resources, a public education campaign could include a web site, slide show, cable TV video, presentations to civic groups, etc. Information on existing open space and its functions as well as desired expansions of the system could be included. Signage identifying the open space parcels would also enhance public awareness.

Facilities to enable existing assets to be better utilized are also needed. Examples of such needed facilities include a canoe launch site on the Charles River; playgrounds, swimming facilities and more hiking trails and bike paths. All such facilities should include handicapped accessibility in their design.

As indicated in the Landscape Character section of the Environmental Inventory and Analysis, Bellingham has a variety of aspects that contribute to its character. Its southern end has an urban character, its middle has small town characteristics, and much of its north end has become a major suburban shopping area. Agricultural and residential areas continue to be transformed into industrial and commercial areas. As mentioned above, compact development would help to accommodate the growth while still preserving much of the community character.

Section 8: Open Space and Recreation Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives listed below represents an expansion of those listed in the Community Vision section. They were developed by reviewing the objectives from the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan and identifying those that had been achieved or no longer relevant (and thus eliminated from the list), those which were still relevant (and thus retained) and then list was adjusted based on the residents' surveys and comments from public officials.

The goals and objectives of this updated plan are as follows:

GOAL: Protect natural resources, especially aquifers and groundwater recharge areas.

Objectives:

- *Acquire/Protect aquifer areas along the Peters River.*
- *Acquire/Protect Priority habitat area.*
- *Adopt policies and regulatory measures to adequately treat stormwater and encourage recharge to the maximum extent feasible.*
- *Protect vernal pools.*

GOAL: Acquire and/or protect additional open space.

Objectives:

- *Acquire/protect land adjacent to the Charles River and tributaries.*
- *Acquire/protect land in Blackstone St./South Maple St./Silver Lake area.*
- *Protect existing Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands.*
- *Ensure adequate access to Charles River and SNETT.*
- *Acquire/protect land near Beaver Pond.*

GOAL: Link existing open space and recreation land.

Objectives:

- *Develop greenway along Charles River.*
- *Provide trails/bike paths in Blackstone St./Silver Lake area.*
- *Improve links between Silver Lake to Franklin State Forest, including use of SNETT.*
- *Provide trails linking other parcels when appropriate.*

GOAL: Improve park and recreation sites and facilities.

Objectives:

- *Develop trails/bike paths within and between sites.*
- *Acquire parcel at Box Pond Dam.*
- *Improve maintenance at all open space and recreation sites/facilities.*
- *Maintain facilities at Silver Lake.*
- *Renovate High Street Fields.*

- *Increase public awareness of and access to existing park and recreation lands.*
- *Add signage to improve visibility and awareness of sites.*
- *Ensure facilities are universally accessible.*
- *Improve access to Charles River.*
- *Improve access to SNETT.*

GOAL: Develop additional recreation facilities.

Objectives:

- *Develop SNETT into multiuse trail*
- *Provide canoe launch at Charles River.*
- *Further develop passive recreation potential at High Street Field and Jenks Reservoir.*
- *Improve facilities for Scouting activities.*

GOAL: Preserve/Enhance Community Character.

Objectives:

- *Evaluate adoption of Community Preservation Act*
- *Implement master plan.*
- *Consider additional zoning changes for Town Center to encourage development into a more traditional New England Town Center*
- *Protect existing farmlands.*
- *Protect wildlife habitat and other natural resources.*
- *Review and amend regulatory measures to encourage and promote compact development.*

GOAL: Increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands

Objectives:

- *Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses.*
- *Add signage at locations where use is encouraged.*
- *Increase outreach efforts.*

GOAL: Improve regional cooperation and efforts

Objectives:

- *Protect/enhance regional resources including SNETT, Lake Hiawatha aquifer, Charles River/Peters River/Mine Brook corridor, Arnold's Brook and Blackstone River.*
- *Protect/link bordering resources such as Silver Lake and Franklin Town Forest.*

Section 9: Action Plan

A. Action Plan

This section contains the recommendations for action to improve and enhance the open space and recreation resources in Bellingham over the next seven years. In addition, some potential implementation mechanisms are identified and described. Finally, there is a summary in chart form which lists each of the recommended actions discussed below, identifies the lead agency or organization most appropriate for implementing the action, lists other agencies/organizations that should be involved, identifies appropriate implementation mechanisms, provides a schedule and suggests potential funding sources. Map 9 illustrates areas of interest regarding Bellingham's open space and recreation needs. The following are recommendations for Bellingham.

GOAL: Protect Natural Resources, especially aquifers and recharge areas

Objectives:

- *Acquire/Protect aquifer areas along the Peters River.*
- *Acquire/Protect Priority habitat area.*
- *Adopt policies and regulatory measures to ensure adequate of recharge of groundwater.*
- *Protect vernal pools.*

Protecting natural resources is a key objective of an open space and recreation plan. Water resources are at the top of the list to be protected. The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Bellingham Wetlands Bylaw and regulations provide protection for wetlands, and Bellingham has in place Water Resource District overlay zoning districts to limit development over aquifer recharge areas. A linked trails system, discussed below, would in some cases facilitate wildlife migration as well as provide human recreation opportunities.

Acquisition of additional land along the Charles River, at Beaver Pond and the area between Silver Lake, Blackstone Street, and South Maple Street (much of which is an aquifer recharge area) is recommended under a different goal. Recommendations to protect natural resources include the following:

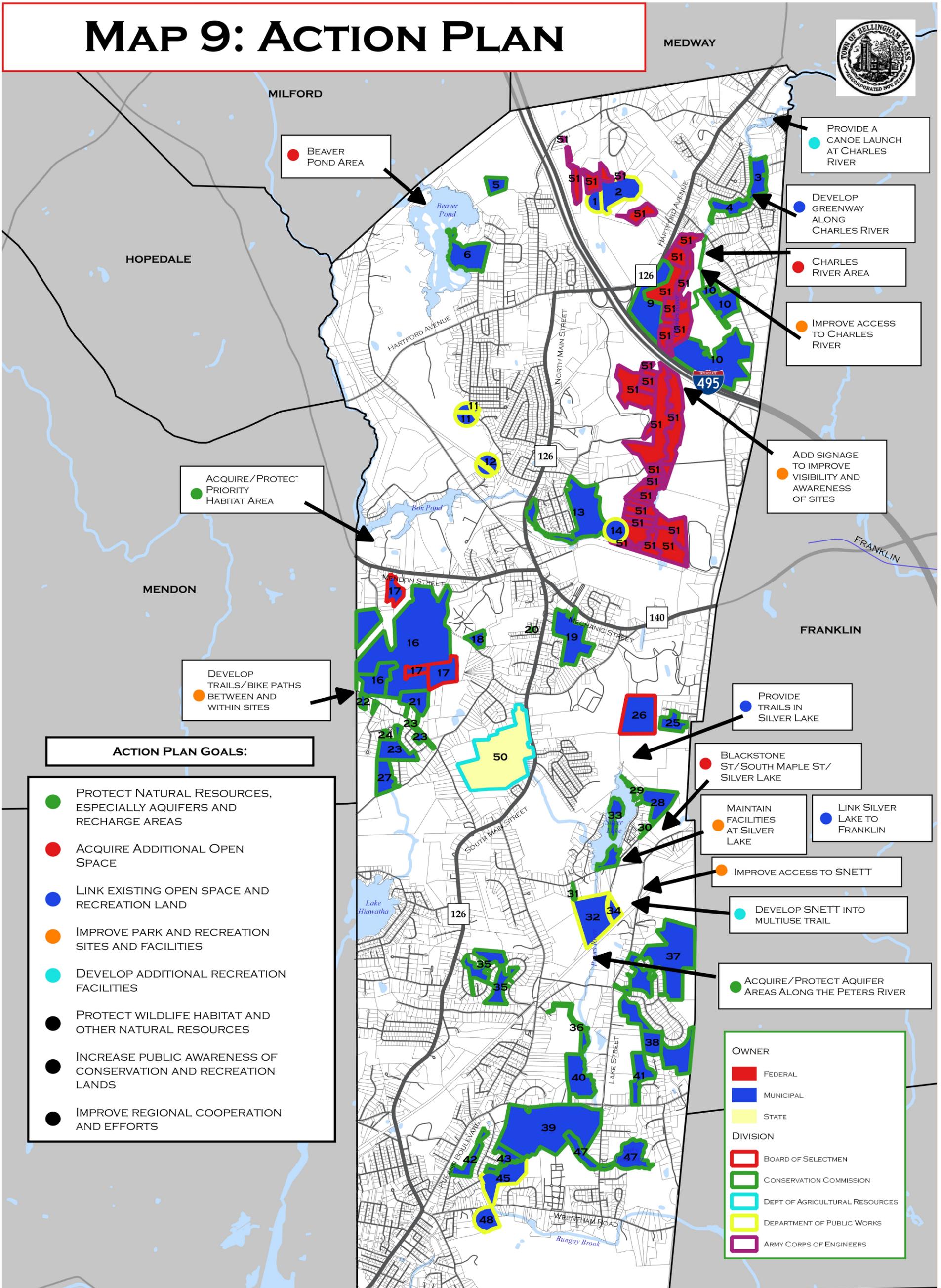
Acquire/Protect Aquifer Areas Along the Peters River – The Peters River corridor from the Corps of Engineers Natural Valley Storage Area across Silver Lake to the Woonsocket city line represents a major aquifer. The Town has four wells in this corridor, and owns some large parcels (Silver Lake, the former landfill site, and Jenks Reservoir in addition to the well sites) within it. The area is already protected by Water Resource Districts, but outright acquisition of additional parcels would offer more protection.

Acquire/Protect Priority Habitat Area –Bellingham's Priority Habitat Areas (as designated by the State's Natural Heritage program) are along the Peters River, the area south of Box Pond and the area north of Lake Hiawatha. Acquisition within these areas would help assure their protection.

Recharge Stormwater and Wastewater – Bellingham is working to ensure that more stormwater and wastewater gets recharged into the ground rather than carried out to sea via the river network. The EPA MS4 General Permit and Massachusetts Stormwater Management regulations require significant treatment of stormwater including encouraging recharge and removing illicit discharges into the Town stormwater system.

Protect Vernal Pools – Vernal pools provide important habitat for many species. Therefore, certified and potential vernal pools need to be protected.

MAP 9: ACTION PLAN



PROVIDE A CANOE LAUNCH AT CHARLES RIVER

DEVELOP GREENWAY ALONG CHARLES RIVER

CHARLES RIVER AREA

IMPROVE ACCESS TO CHARLES RIVER

ADD SIGNAGE TO IMPROVE VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS OF SITES

PROVIDE TRAILS IN SILVER LAKE

BLACKSTONE ST/SOUTH MAPLE ST/SILVER LAKE

LINK SILVER LAKE TO FRANKLIN

IMPROVE ACCESS TO SNETT

DEVELOP SNETT INTO MULTIUSE TRAIL

ACQUIRE/PROTECT AQUIFER AREAS ALONG THE PETERS RIVER

BEAVER POND AREA

ACQUIRE/PROTECT PRIORITY HABITAT AREA

DEVELOP TRAILS/BIKE PATHS BETWEEN AND WITHIN SITES

ACTION PLAN GOALS:

- PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES, ESPECIALLY AQUIFERS AND RECHARGE AREAS
- ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL OPEN SPACE
- LINK EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION LAND
- IMPROVE PARK AND RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES
- DEVELOP ADDITIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES
- PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES
- INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION LANDS
- IMPROVE REGIONAL COOPERATION AND EFFORTS

OWNER

- FEDERAL
- MUNICIPAL
- STATE

DIVISION

- BOARD OF SELECTMEN
- CONSERVATION COMMISSION
- DEPT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
- ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



DATA SOURCE: OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, MASSIT

TOWN OF BELLINGHAM - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2017

PREPARED BY:



GOAL: Acquire Additional Open Space

Objectives:

- *Acquire/protect land adjacent to the Charles River and tributaries.*
- *Acquire/protect land in Blackstone St./South Maple St./Silver Lake area.*
- *Protect existing Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands.*
- *Ensure adequate access to Charles River and SNETT.*
- *Acquire/protect land near Beaver Pond.*

The Town of Bellingham has just 21.3% of its land in open space and recreation uses (including school sites and private recreation areas). This is less than the state as whole. Thus, acquisition of additional open space for conservation and passive recreation should be a priority.

It should be noted that acquisition does not necessarily mean fee simple purchase. Acquisition can be accomplished through donation, purchase (or transfer) of development rights, purchase of scenic or trail easements, or other means. This topic is discussed further in the Implementation Tools section below.

The following are some lands that should be considered for acquisition:

Charles River Area – Much of the land adjacent to the Charles River is protected as floodplains as part of the Corps of Engineers Natural Valley Storage Project. The Town also owns some conservation land along Plymouth and John Alden Roads, Maple Street and the High Street well site and conservation land (including a recent acquisition of 11.7 acres along High Street). However, additional acquisitions should be sought to advance the goal of a developing a greenway along the river. Furthermore, the 20.87-acre Pearl Street Mill site, already owned by the Town should be protected and/or developed as park. In addition, the Town should transfer to the Conservation Commission the existing Town-owned land at the end of Cutler Street.

Blackstone St./South Maple St./Silver Lake - The town already owns most of Silver Lake, the old landfill site (about 68 acres) on South Maple Street, and a large parcel on Blackstone Street (112.6 acres, the site of the Town Library, Fire Station, Police Station, Senior Center, high school and DPW Garage) plus the middle school site. There are already trails in the area that are used informally. Acquisition of four privately-owned parcels totaling nearly 167 acres would create a large passive recreation area with potential to establish a trail/bike path system that could become a major node in a larger system that includes links to the SNETT, the Franklin State Forest and other major resources of the region and beyond. If these parcels cannot be acquired, then the option of acquiring trail easements or flexible development that results in part of the parcels remaining as open space should be pursued in order that the ability to develop a linked trail system is retained. The development of a trail system in this area as well as linkage with Franklin State Forest has been a priority for many years and much progress has been made, but more remains to be done.

Depot St. Parcel at Box Pond Dam - This site could provide a much needed canoe launch onto the Charles River, as well as an attractive picnic area. The site is problematic because the dam may need to be rehabilitated in the next few years. However, the site also has historic value as the location of a former box factory whose foundation is still visible. A park created at this location would provide an excellent walking destination from visitors at the Town Common as it is only one half mile in distance. Also, this site could become a key component in a Charles River Greenway.

Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B Parcels - These parcels, totaling about 291.55 acres, represent privately owned open space used for forestry, agriculture, and recreation. Most (203.56 acres) is in agriculture. In return for a tax break, the town has the right of first refusal on these parcels before they are sold. As discussed later in the Preserve/Enhance Community Character section, a stronger protection for these parcels would exist if their development rights could be sold so that the land remains in its present use.

Beaver Pond Area - The Town already owns 24.5 acres of conservation land on the banks of the pond. Most of the remaining banks of the pond are still undeveloped and an outlet of the pond is a tributary of the Charles River. The northeast bank of the pond is zoned Industrial while the west bank is zoned Agricultural (80,000 square foot lots). A 32-acre parcel currently privately owned and zoned industrial lies between two densely developed residential areas. This area should be specifically targeted for acquisition. The Town should negotiate public access easements and require conservation measures to protect the Pond.

GOAL: Link existing open space and recreation land.

Objectives:

- *Develop greenway along Charles River.*
- *Provide trails/bike paths in Blackstone St./Silver Lake area.*
- *Link Silver Lake to Franklin State Forest.*
- *Provide trails linking other parcels when appropriate.*

The action items for this set of goals and objectives overlap with those in the “Acquire additional open space” goal above, and will not be repeated here (but will be repeated in the summary chart that follows this section).

Develop greenway along Charles River – Bellingham has a good start toward developing a greenway along the Charles River as it already owns considerable acreage and the U.S. Corps of Engineers Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area adds considerably more. The former Pearl Street Mill site, while already owned by the Town provides an opportunity for a major node in the greenway that could be developed as a significant park once its cleanup is completed. It should be noted that most of the land along the Charles River in Franklin is protected so further acquisitions in Bellingham would result in a significant regional greenway.

Provide trails/bike paths in Blackstone St./Silver Lake Area – As noted above, there are already trails in this area that are used informally. Acquisition of four privately-owned parcels totaling nearly 167 acres would create a large passive recreation area with potential to establish a trail/bike path system that could become a major node in a larger system that includes links to the SNETT, the Franklin State Forest and other major resources of the region and beyond. Furthermore, the existing Town facilities located on Blackstone Street already attract visitors and could serve as access points to the trail system behind them.

Link Silver Lake to Franklin State Forest – This has been a long-standing goal and acquisition of parcels between would advance this cause. As discussed above, linkage to the Blackstone Street parcels also would result in a resource of regional significance.

Provide trails linking other parcels as appropriate -- Other areas where trails and/or bike paths should be considered include the Jenks Reservoir property, Beaver Pond, and former railroad rights-of-way.

GOAL: Improve park and recreation sites and facilities

Objectives:

- *Develop trails/bike paths within and between sites.*
- *Acquire parcel at Box Pond Dam.*
- *Improve maintenance at all open space and recreation sites/facilities.*
- *Maintain facilities at Silver Lake Silver Lake.*
- *Renovate High Street Fields*
- *Increase public awareness of and access to existing park and recreation lands.*
- *Add signage to improve visibility and awareness of sites.*
- *Ensure facilities are universally accessible.*
- *Improve access to Charles River.*
- *Improve access to SNETT*

Physical accessibility, in the form of parking or trails, is often nonexistent. Maintenance of existing facilities is difficult, especially during times of economic contraction. And finally, handicapped accessibility is often lacking even where facilities enabling access by the general public are present. Recommendations to reduce these barriers are as follows:

Develop trails/bike paths within and between sites - While some conservation lands are sensitive and it is not desirable to encourage human activity on them, in many other cases opportunities for recreation and educational activities are lost because of difficult access. Trails between the Town-owned Blackstone St. land and Silver Lake have already been discussed. There is also potential for connecting these areas to the Franklin State Forest. Other areas where trails and/or bike paths should be considered include the Jenks Reservoir property, Beaver Pond, and former railroad rights-of-way.

Of course, SNETT is a potential major trail/bikeway that will eventually be developed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Ideally, many of the trails/bike paths that are created should be linked forming a system that interconnects open

space and recreation areas within Town, and connects with trails in adjacent towns (SNETT provides the spine for such a system). In addition to the Blackstone River Bikeway, the Upper Charles Trail that is being developed from Milford to Framingham provides another opportunity for a link.

Acquire parcel at Box Pond Dam – As discussed above, this site could provide a much needed canoe launch onto the Charles River, as well as an attractive picnic area. A park created at this location would provide an excellent walking destination from visitors at the Town Common as it is only one half mile in distance. Also, this site could become a key component in a Charles River Greenway.

Improve maintenance at all open space and recreation sites/facilities – In difficult fiscal times, it is problematic to dedicate sufficient funds from Town budgets to maintain facilities at an adequate level. Innovative means of providing maintenance and upgrading sites needs to be explored. Using labor from the Department of Corrections and/or vocational technical high schools present one option. Private fund raising, including establishing a “Friends of Silver Lake” or similar type organizations is another. Fund raisers for specific purposes could be initiated, some of which could become annual events. Also, users of the sites and facilities could be encouraged to help at least identify issues that need attention by providing them with maps and checklists they can use to identify problem areas.

Maintain facilities at Silver Lake – Silver Lake is a major family-oriented recreation area. It is important to maintain its desirability by ensuring the beach is clean and facilitates remain in good condition.

Renovate High Street Fields – These softball fields could use some improvements. The parking lot and access to the concessions and picnic area are also in need of improvement.

Increase public awareness of and access to existing park and recreation lands – The survey of residents indicated that many residents are not aware of many of the sites and facilities in Town and/or what resources are available there. This is discussed in more detail under the specific increase public awareness, but it should include information on the Town web site, school programs, signage, maps and brochures, etc.

Add signage to improve visibility and awareness of sites - Signage can be useful in increasing public awareness. Signs identifying the Corps of Engineers Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area, SNETT (at major road crossings), the route to Silver Lake, and future bikeways and trails (among other sites) are recommended.

Ensure facilities are universally accessibility - All future facilities must include handicapped accessibility in their design by law. The Town completed an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan of many Town facilities in 2015. That evaluation did not include most of the recreation and conservation sites, but it was followed by a 3-year capital program to implement many of the recommendations. It is recommended that the Town

continue its commitment to universal accessibility by addressing the needs in the recreation and conservation facilities identified in the Appendix to this OSRP.

Improve access to Charles River - Access to the Charles River, could be improved through development of a park at the former Pearl Street Mill site. Also, as mentioned above, the Box Pond dam site would be a good location for a few parking spaces (as well as a canoe launch). In addition, the Maple Street and High Street parcels provide opportunities for additional access to the Charles River and potential trails and awareness of them should be improved.

Improve access to SNETT

Bellingham already has direct access (with parking available) to the SNETT since the Pinecrest School/Keogh Administration Building site directly abuts it. This access could be facilitated with signage, increased public information, and a marked trail leading from a parking lot to the SNETT. Another access point exists at Center St. and Fox Run Rd. The section of SNETT between Center St. and South Main St. was sold to a developer with the provision that a 25-foot strip would be returned to DEM after specified improvements were made. The developer did construct a short section of Fox Run Rd. on a portion of the SNETT right-of-way on which interested individuals could park to gain access to the SNETT. Additionally, the one-mile length of trail from Center Street to South Main Street has been deeded back to DCR. Also, the Center St. right-of-way at its intersection with Fox Run Rd. is very wide. Off street parking could be provided at this location if the Town deemed it necessary or desirable.

GOAL: Develop additional recreation facilities.

Objectives:

- *Develop SNETT into multiuse trail*
- *Provide canoe launch at Charles River.*
- *Further develop recreation potential at High Street Field, Jenks Reservoir and Silver Lake.*
- *Improve facilities for Scouting activities.*

Many of the action items to implement this goal and its objectives overlap with those under the “Improve park and recreation sites and facilities.” They are:

Develop SNETT into multiuse trail -- SNETT is a potential major trail/bikeway that will eventually be developed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Progress toward that goal has been made in recent years. Now that the Blackstone River Bikeway is completed in Blackstone along SNETT, improving the section that connects with that bikeway is even more compelling. SNETT also provides the spine that other trails in Bellingham could connect to as part of a larger interconnected system of trails.

Provide canoe launch at Charles River – Canoe and kayak access to the Charles River has been a long-standing objective. As mentioned previously, the Box Street dam site and Pearl Street Mill site each offer potential for this amenity.

Further develop recreation potential at High Street Fields, Jenks Reservoir and Silver Lake – All three of these sites are large and have potential to provide additional recreation resources.

Improve facilities for Scouting activities – Scouting activities serve both recreation and educational functions. They provide an important means of educating young people about environmental resources and stewardship. Therefore, such activities should be encouraged where appropriate.

GOAL: Preserve/Enhance Community Character

Objectives:

- *Evaluate adoption of the Community Preservation Act.*
- *Implement master plan.*
- *Consider additional zoning changes for Town Center to encourage development into a more traditional New England Town Center*
- *Protect existing farmlands.*
- *Protect wildlife habitat and other natural resources.*
- *Review and amend regulatory measures to promote compact development*

The need to protect and enhance the "community character" of Bellingham was strongly expressed in previous Open Space and Recreation Plans as well as the master plan and the sentiment remains at least as strong today. Community character is sometimes difficult to define, but (among other things) Bellingham is a small New England town with an agricultural heritage. It is a diverse town with an urban/suburban south end, small town center, old mill villages in the north end, and an emerging suburban commercial and industrial center at its I-495/Route 126 interchange.

Several steps that can be taken to preserve community character are as follows:

Evaluate Adoption of Community Preservation Act – Adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is one of the most effective measures available for implementing many of the recommendations of this Plan. The Community Preservation Act was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2000. It provides for towns to assess a property tax surcharge of up to 3%. The State then provides matching funds raised by a document recording fee at the Registries of Deeds. The matching funds can range from 5% to 100% depending on the number of towns participating and the amount of money they raise. The match was 100% for the first several years. However, as the funding source (recording fees at the Registry of Deeds) has declined due to the housing market decline and as more cities and towns (now 172, or 49%) have adopted the Act and become eligible for the funds, the match has declined. Abutting towns of Mendon, Medway and Wrentham are CPA communities

The funds raised can be used for four purposes: open space, recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing. A minimum of 10% each must be spent on open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. A Community Preservation Committee is established that recommends projects to Town Meeting, which must still approve expenditures from the Community Preservation Fund.

While the CPA has obvious direct benefits for open space and recreation acquisitions or projects, the historic preservation and affordable housing elements also have indirect benefits that advance the goals of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. First of all, historic preservation projects can result in an existing abandoned site being used for a particular purpose rather than developing a new Greenfield site. Also, the land associated with an historic building could become a link or access to nearby open space parcels. Similarly, the affordable housing component can be used to develop housing on a portion of a site while leaving the remainder as open space. In some cases, it could allow the town to break even on the acquisition of a parcel by developing housing on a small portion of it rather than require an expensive expenditure.

Implement master plan – The 2010 master plan incorporates many of the goals and objectives of the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Many of those goals and objectives are repeated in this 2017 version. Therefore, the plans are interrelated and support each other.

Consider additional zoning changes for Town Center to encourage development into a more traditional New England Town Center– Developing a Town Common in Bellingham Center on the former Almac’s supermarket site was one of the major recommendations of the 1995 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Since then new development has also enhanced the Town Center. Additional measures, particularly infrastructure improvements and adoption of new land use bylaws and regulations could further the goal to form a traditional New England town center.

Such an effort should include a review of the entire Town Center and adjacent uses with consideration given to village center zoning to produce a pedestrian-oriented environment with wide sidewalks, parking either on-street or to the side or rear of buildings, pedestrian amenities such as street lights and benches, etc. Traffic patterns, economic development efforts, and infrastructure needs should be studied and used to produce a redevelopment plan for the center. This would certainly protect and enhance the character of Bellingham Town Center. Infrastructure, including sewer capacity, would be an essential component of such an effort.

Protect Existing Farmlands – Another important aspect of Bellingham’s character is its agricultural heritage. In 1995, Bellingham had 375 acres of farmland in Chapter 61A. By 2009 that dropped to 107 acres. However, there has been a resurgence and Chapter 61A is now up to 203.56 acres. Wenger’s Farm is protected because its development rights have been purchased by the State under its Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program.

Chapter 61A protects farmland by providing a tax break as an incentive to retain the land in agricultural use. It also provides the Town with the right of first refusal if the parcel is sold. This protection is very weak. Often the value of the tax break is dwarfed by the value of the development rights of the property, and it is generally very difficult for the owner (even if he/she would prefer to continue farming) to turn down six or seven figure offers for the land. It is also difficult for the Town to raise the funds needed to exercise its right of first refusal in the limited time available. And, even in cases where the Town is able to exercise its purchase option, it is unlikely that the land will remain in agricultural use. The State's APR program is more effective because it purchases only the development rights, allowing the farmer to receive payment and continue farming as well.

A transfer of development rights program would also allow farmers to sell their development rights and continue farming. The development rights would be available for purchase by the private sector and used at another location in Town. This tool is discussed further in the Potential Implementation Mechanisms section below.

Protect wildlife habitat and other natural resources – Like agriculture, natural areas that serve as habitat for wildlife is part of Bellingham's character. While much land has been developed, there is significant privately-owned land in its natural state. Acquisition of some of these parcels through fee interests, easements, purchase of development rights, or flexible zoning and compact development can help preserve these habitat areas.

Review and amend regulatory measures to encourage and promote compact development –

Conventional zoning with large frontage and setback requirements, maximum lot coverage and excessive parking requirements can result in inefficient use of land that results in more loss of open space. While such requirements are appropriate and necessary on some sites, in other cases flexibility in these requirements can result in the same amount of development but in a pattern where the buildings are closer together leaving a significant portion of the site in a natural state.

GOAL: Increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands

Objectives:

- *Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses*
- *Add signage at locations where use is encouraged*
- *Increase outreach efforts*

Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses –

The inventory in Section 5 is a good start on this. The list could be reviewed to identify those parcels where public use is encouraged and those that are best left as habitat area only. Then use of those sites can be encouraged through signage, information on the Town web site, maps, etc.

Add signage at locations where use is encouraged - Signage can be useful in increasing public awareness. Signs identifying the Corps of Engineers Charles River Natural Valley

Storage Area, SNETT (at major road crossings), lands along the Charles River, and many of the other conservation lands that are less well known but could accommodate passive recreation are recommended to increase use and activities on those lands as well as built support for maintaining and expanding those resources.

Increase outreach efforts – A public information campaign should be produced to inform the public about available resources. Such an effort could include a survey to determine existing levels of awareness and opinions. Also, a web site could include results of the survey, an inventory of open space and recreation lands, maps and scenes of existing and proposed open space areas and recreation facilities, facts about growth and facility usage, and information about the benefits of the existing and proposed open space/recreation systems. The web site could be supplemented by a slide show or video that could be presented to meetings of civic/social/fraternal/business groups, at public hearings/meetings, and on public access cable TV, with references to the web site for additional information. At a minimum, a brochure/map would help increase awareness of open space and recreation opportunities.

GOAL: Improve regional cooperation and efforts

Objectives:

- *Protect/enhance regional resources including SNETT, Charles River/Peters River/Mine Brook corridor, Lake Hiawatha aquifer, Arnold's Brook and the Blackstone River*
- *Protect/link bordering resources such as Silver Lake and Franklin State Forest*

Many resources are shared with other towns. Therefore, some actions should be considered on a regional level. Most of the actions discussed below appeared in the previous OSRP's, but are still applicable in 2017.

SNETT - As mentioned above, this important resource has not even begun to reach its potential. Developed as a multiuse trail, this corridor could potentially link the Franklin State Forest with Silver Lake and recreation land on Blackstone Street in Bellingham, Harris Pond and the Blackstone River in Blackstone, and serve as a link to the Blackstone River Bikeway (which is coterminous with SNETT in Blackstone). Bellingham should support State efforts to invest in this corridor with almost unlimited potential. This was a major priority of previous Open Space and Recreation Plans, as well recent activity and the completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway in Blackstone makes upgrading the Bellingham section more compelling.

Charles River/Peters River/Mine Brook corridor - The Bellingham/Franklin town line is paralleled by the Peters River/Charles River on the Bellingham side and Mine Brook on the Franklin side. The Peters River is a tributary of the Blackstone River while Mine Brook is a tributary of the Charles. Of course, this regional resource links Bellingham with numerous communities all the way to Boston. What happens on the Charles and Blackstone Rivers and their tributaries can impact not only these other communities but Boston and Providence Harbors and the Atlantic Ocean as well. This corridor is the site of significant aquifers and public water supplies for both towns. Therefore, both Towns should be

notified of activities that affect these water bodies on either side of the Town line. Furthermore, efforts should be made to ensure that links allowing wildlife migration between these waterway systems remain open.

The Southwest Water Supply Protection Plan from the 1990's is an excellent example of regional action to protect a common resource (the Charles River and its associated aquifers) and should be considered for an update. The study determined well protection zones and aquifer recharge areas for each of the nine communities (including Bellingham) that participated in the study, it reviewed land use regulations (including zoning, earth removal, and water resource district by-laws), and surveyed threats to the water supply (such as underground storage tanks, landfills, salt use, hazardous materials, etc.

EPA's newMS4 General Permit, effective July 1, 2017, requires extensive treatment and testing of stormwater. This will help protect water resources.

On a more local level, Bellingham should work with Hopedale and Milford upstream as well as with Franklin and Medway downstream to establish a greenway along the Charles River. Other towns in the region should also be involved.

Lake Hiawatha Aquifer - As suggested above regarding the Charles and Blackstone Rivers, Bellingham and Blackstone should formally notify one another regarding development proposals or other activities that will affect this aquifer or the surface water of the Lake. Little has happened since the 1995 Plan, but this remains a regional priority.

Arnold's Brook – Arnold's Brook is a tributary of the Peters River (and ultimately Blackstone River). The comments above in reference to the Peters River apply to Arnold's Brook as well.

Blackstone River – The Blackstone River is not in Bellingham, but as noted above, Arnold's Brook and the Peters River both flow into it. Therefore, Bellingham should cooperate to ensure that activities along these waterways do not negatively impact downstream communities, and that associated wildlife migration corridors remain viable.

Protect/link bordering resources such as Silver Lake and Franklin State Forest - As discussed above, the proximity of these two resources and their affinity for each other make linkage between them a high priority. By their nature, both Franklin State Forest and SNETT are regional resources, and they are already connected. The foundation is now laid for an exciting recreational resource that can be enjoyed to a much larger degree by improving access and linking them to Silver Lake. The proximity of this resource to Silver Lake and other large town-owned parcels in Bellingham make a linkage a high priority for the region.

B. Potential Implementation Mechanisms

The ability to implement recommendations is the key to any plan. A combination of financial and regulatory measures is needed. Some of these potential measures are discussed below:

Financial

Land is very expensive to acquire. It is very difficult for municipalities to raise the funds needed for fee simple purchase. However, to the extent that such purchases avert residential development, they may be very cost effective. Various studies have indicated that residentially developed land requires \$1.11 to \$1.36 worth of services for every \$1 of tax revenue that it generates. Thus, in the long run, municipal purchase of land may actually be less costly than allowing the land to be developed.

Of course, the fiscal impact of land purchase is only one consideration. Such an action could be construed as exclusionary since it will reduce available land and increase housing costs in the community. Also, if a landowner were unwilling to sell, it would be an abuse of power to exercise eminent domain unless a clear municipal purpose can be demonstrated. A land acquisition effort must be based on the need to provide for future municipal services or to protect environmentally sensitive land. Such needs should be demonstrated in a master plan and/or a long-term capital improvements plan.

Some financial mechanisms that can be used to finance land acquisitions include:

Community Preservation Act – As discussed above, the Community Preservation Act allows cities and towns to adopt a property tax surcharge of up to 3% for the purposes of open space, recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing. A minimum of 10% of the funds raised must be spent on each the areas of open space, historic preservation and affordable housing. The remaining 70% is available for any of the three as well as recreation. A document recording fee is collected at the Registries of Deeds and the funds collected are used to provide matching grants ranging from 5% to 100% (depending on extent of participation) of the funds raised in each community. Until 2008, the match had been 100%, but has now been reduced to the vicinity of 20% due to a reduction in recording activity and additional towns adopting the CPA. This is the single most effective tool available to implement the recommendations of this Plan.

It is difficult to get approval of a tax increase. In fact, some communities that have adopted CPA are discussing eliminating it or reducing the surcharge. This is, in part, also due to the reduction in the state match. If the goals of the CPA are highly valued in a community, it is easier to get a favorable vote to adopt. It is also easier when specific projects can be identified that are likely to be pursued anyway and are eligible for CPA funding. That way, a case can be made that the overall tax burden will be reduced since the state match will offset some of the cost.

Bonding Capacity – As bonds for previously funded capital improvements (schools, police stations, libraries, water/sewer projects, etc.) are paid off, some or all of that bonding capacity could be dedicated to land acquisition. For example, if \$100,000 per year of bonding capacity were to become available, it could finance (at 3.5% interest) about a \$900,000 land purchase over 10 years or a nearly \$1.5 million purchase over 20 years. Of course, the land purchase would have to compete against other pressing capital needs. The Town must determine its priorities.

Debt Exclusion – Similarly, without waiting for other bonds to be paid off, the Town could seek voter approval to create new bonding capacity by excluding a specified amount from the limits of Proposition 2 ½. For example, if the voters approved a debt exclusion of \$1,000,000 for the

purchase of land, the specific amount needed to finance the purchase (including principal and interest) would be raised by increasing property taxes beyond the limit imposed by Proposition 2 ½. When the purchase was fully paid for, the authority to increase taxes would automatically expire and the property tax rate would revert to what it would have been had there not been debt exclusion.

Continued Annual Appropriation – The Town should continue its policy of annually appropriating an amount to a reserve fund dedicated to land purchases. The advantage of this option is that it could put the Town in a position to move quickly if a parcel (e.g. a Chapter 61, 61A or 61B parcel) becomes available and requires fast action. Also, while it takes a few years for such a fund to grow large, the fund could be used as a match for a grant, as a down payment in combination with bonding or used for appraisals and surveys.

Special Tax – A special tax could be enacted whose revenues would be dedicated to land purchases. However, authority for such special taxes is limited. Local governments can impose hotel/motel taxes and airport fuels taxes. For example, neighboring Franklin filed a home rule petition to allow it to dedicate its hotel/motel tax to acquisition of open space. Bellingham has only a small motel at present but additional hotels are in the planning stages and are likely in the future.

State/Federal Grants – State and federal grants are available for open space purchases and other purposes. Among the programs available is the LAND (formerly Self-help) Program of EOEAs' Division of Conservation Services. It will reimburse communities for up to 90% of the cost of acquiring conservation land. The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (also administered by the Division of Conservation Services and called PARK, formerly Urban Self-help)) will fund up to 50% of the cost of acquiring or developing recreation land. While this program has not been fully funded in recent years, there is renewed interest in this it and more funds should be available in the future. The Department of Food and Agriculture administers the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program, which purchases the development rights of farmland. The Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement administers the Non-Game Tax Fund, which uses voluntary contributions from state income tax form check off to purchase the habitats of endangered species.

The federal Community Development Block Grant program, administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) is a potential funding source. While not available for open space purchases, it can be used for infrastructure improvements that can facilitate park development.

And finally, the federal transportation funding program (SAFETE-LU) encourages the development of alternative modes of transportation, especially bicycle paths through old railroad rights-of-way and other corridors. This potential funding can be an important component of facilitating access to open space and recreation areas.

Regulatory

Regulatory measures can complement financial mechanisms to enhance a Town's ability to acquire land and protect community character. Some regulatory measures with potential to aid implementation of this Open Space and Recreation Plan include the following:

Flexible Zoning – This tool is essentially an overlay zoning district which, while maintaining the same density as the underlying zoning district, allows variations from the dimensional requirements (lot sizes, setbacks, frontages) in order to design a new development so that it minimizes environmental impact and/or results in protected open or recreation space for the general public. When combined with transferable development rights, it can be a powerful tool for protecting open space.

Some versions of this concept already exist in the area. Several towns, including Bellingham, have some form of Open Space Development By-laws (called Major Residential Development in Bellingham), which allows reduced lot sizes in return for open space. The State’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program purchases “development rights” allowing the original owner to continue owning and farming the land and still receive some payment for the land’s development value. Development rights may also be purchased from, or donated by, a landowner and a permanent “conservation restriction” placed on the land.

Open Space Development By-Laws are generally only applicable within one parcel or within contiguous parcels. With the APR program and conservation restrictions, the development rights are purchased and then relinquished, diminishing the total development potential of a community or area. Furthermore, funding for these programs is extremely limited. Their potency could be enhanced if a market were created for those development rights so that they could be sold and utilized elsewhere in the community. This would create a private market that would attract private capital to the land preservation effort.

Based on the above factors, it is recommended that flexible zoning, including transferable development rights, be adopted in Bellingham... The “community character” of the town that people want to preserve is based on development patterns that are presently no longer allowed according to current zoning by-laws. A flexible zoning by-law has the potential to preserve open space and natural resources, provide recreation lands, preserve and enhance community character, and reduce infrastructure and service maintenance costs. Furthermore, in a time of limited public resources, it utilizes private resources to achieve a public benefit.

A flexible zoning by-law would work in a manner similar to the open space development by-law but in an expanded capacity. Just as the open space development by-law allows higher density on one portion of a parcel in order to preserve open space on another portion of the parcel (but without changing the overall density allowed for that parcel by the underlying zoning district), a flexible zoning by-law would allow higher density on some parcels in return for the purchase of development rights from another (not necessarily adjacent) parcel.

Criteria would be established to determine whether a particular parcel qualifies to relinquish/receive development rights to/from another parcel. Potential criteria for a “donor” parcel would include current use in agriculture or proximity to existing open space, environmental sensitivity (containing or adjacent to important habitat, wetlands, waterways, floodplains, water resource district, etc.), serving as a scenic resource or located on a scenic roadway, lacking sewer service, etc.

Criteria for “recipient” parcels would include easy access to sewer and water service, proximity to roadways capable of handling the additional traffic, location outside a water resource district, location that allows a vehicular and pedestrian link between already developed areas, proximity to a “village center” or other area of commercial or institutional use, and a location that allows a development plan with a minimum environmental impact.

Village Center Zoning/Compact Development – Village center zoning is a broad term that has different implications for different people. As used here, it means encouraging development to concentrate around a few commercial/industrial/institutional centers and/or corridors rather than spreading throughout the town. It also means requiring all uses in the village center to relate to one another in terms of scale, design, setbacks, heights, etc., and to include pedestrian amenities to encourage walking and bicycling to and from as well as within the village center.

This tool addresses community character as well as open space issues. While this tool can stand alone as an effective regulatory measure, its efficacy can be improved if it is used in combination with a flexible zoning by-law as proposed above, with proximity to such a center or corridor qualifying a parcel as an eligible “recipient” of development rights. Infrastructure improvements should also be targeted to enhance the village center concept. Bellingham center is an area that could potentially benefit from such a designation.

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Protect natural resources, especially aquifers and recharge areas					
Acquire/Protect Peters River Aquifer	Conservation Commission	Planning Board, Selectmen DPW	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Acquire/Protect Priority Habitat Areas	Conservation Commission	Planning Board, Selectmen	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Adopt policies and regulatory measures to adequately treat stormwater and encourage recharge to the maximum extent feasible	Department of Public Works	Planning Board, Selectmen Conservation Commission	Comprehensive Water and Wastewater Management Plan, new regulations and bylaws	2017-2024	General Fund
Protect Vernal Pools	Conservation Commission	Planning Board, Selectmen	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	NA
Acquire and/or protect additional open space					
Acquire/protect land adjacent to the Charles River and tributaries	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Acquire/protect land in Blackstone St./South Maple St./Silver Lake area	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Protect existing Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND, APR Debt Exclusion CPA*
Ensure adequate access to Charles River and SNETT	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND, APR Debt Exclusion CPA*
Acquire/protect land near Beaver Pond	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*

Continued *CPA not adopted in Bellingham

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY (Continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Link existing open space and recreation land.					
Develop Greenway along Charles River	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2020	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Provide trails/bike paths in Blackstone St./South Maple St./Silver Lake area	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2019	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Improve links between Silver Lake and Franklin State Forest, including use of SNETT	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2020	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Provide trails linking other parcels where appropriate	Selectmen	DPW, Private groups	General Fund, private fund raising	2017-2019	General Fund Trails Grant
Improve park and recreation sites and facilities					
Develop trails/bike paths within and between sites	Parks Commission	Selectmen	General Fund	2017-2021	General Fund Trails Grant
Acquire parcel at Box Pond Dam	Selectmen	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Purchase, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2018-2020	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Improve maintenance at all open space and recreation sites and facilities	Selectmen	DPW, Private groups	General fund, private fund raising	2017-2024	General Fund
Maintain facilities at Silver Lake	Parks Commission	Selectmen	General Fund	2017-2024	General Fund
Renovate High Street Fields	Parks Commission	Selectmen	General Fund	2019-2021	General Fund
Increase public awareness of and access to existing park and recreation lands	Parks Commission Conservation Commission	Selectmen	General Fund	2017-2020	General Fund
Add signage to improve visibility and awareness of sites	Selectmen	Corps of Engineers, MADCR, Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Commission	General Fund	2017-2019	General Fund

Continued *CPA not adopted in Bellingham

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY (Continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Improve park and recreation sites and facilities (Continued)					
Ensure facilities are universally accessible	Selectmen	Parks Commission Commission on Disability	General Fund	2017-2021	General Fund
Improve access to Charles River	Parks Commission	Selectmen/Box Pond Association	General Fund	2017-2019	General Fund
Improve access to SNETT	Selectmen	School Committee, Private Groups, MADCR	General Fund	2017-2022	General Fund
Develop additional recreation facilities					
Develop SNETT into a multiuse trail including a paved pathway suitable for bicycles	Conservation Commission, MADCR	Selectmen Parks Commission	State appropriation/bonds	2017-2022	State earmark Debt Exclusion CPA*
Canoe Launch on Charles River	Parks Commission	Selectmen/Box Pond Association	General Fund	2019-2021	General Fund
Expand recreation at Jenks Reservoir and Silver Lake	Conservation Commission	Selectmen, Parks Commission, DPW, Private groups	General fund, private fund raising	2019-2021	PARC Debt Exclusion CPA*
Improve facilities for Scouting activities					
Preserve/enhance community character					
Evaluate Adoption of Community Preservation Act (CPA)	Selectmen	Study Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Housing Partnership	Town Meeting, Election	2017-2018	NA

Continued *CPA not adopted in Bellingham

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY (Continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Preserve/enhance community character (Continued)					
Implement master plan	Master Plan Implementation Committee	Planning Board Selectmen All other boards	Zoning Bylaws, General Bylaws, Capital Improvement Plan	2017-2024	General Fund State Grants
Consider additional zoning changes for Town Center to encourage development into a more traditional New England Town Center	Planning Board	Selectmen	Zoning Bylaws	2018-2020	NA
Protect Farmlands	Selectmen	Planning Board	Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of development rights	2017-2024	APR, CPA*
Protect wildlife and other natural resources	Selectmen	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	NA
Review and amend regulatory measures to encourage and promote compact development	Planning Board	Selectmen	Zoning Bylaw Revisions Site Plan Rules and Regulations, Capital Improvement Plans	2018-2020	NA
Increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands					
Provide an inventory of Town lands available for passive and active recreation uses	Conservation Commission, Parks Commission	Planning Board, Selectmen DPW	Web site	2017-2018	General Fund
Add signage at locations where use is encouraged	Selectmen	Corps of Engineers, MADCR, Conservation Commission, Parks Commission	General Fund	2017-2019	General Fund

Continued

*CPA not adopted in Bellingham

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY (Continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Increase public awareness of conservation and recreation lands (Continued)					
Increase outreach efforts	Conservation Commission, Parks Commission	Metacomet Land Trust	Survey Web site Slide show/video Cable TV Brochure	2017-2018	General Fund Donations
Improve regional cooperation and efforts					
Protect/enhance regional resources including:					
SNETT	MADCR Conservation Commission	Selectmen, Parks Commission	Open Space Bond Bill, Transportation Enhancement program	2017-2024	PARK Recreation Trails Grant
Lake Hiawatha Aquifer	Selectmen	Conservation Commission	Water Resource/Groundwater Protection Districts, Stormwater rules, Purchase, Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Charles River/Peters River//Mine Brook Corridor	Selectmen	Conservation Commission	Water Resource/Groundwater Protection Districts, Stormwater rules, Purchase, Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Arnold's Brook	Selectmen	Conservation Commission	Purchase, Phase II Stormwater Rules, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights, Shared information	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*
Blackstone River	Selectmen	Conservation Commission	Purchase, Phase II Stormwater Rules, Flexible Zoning/Transfer of Development Rights, Shared information,	2017-2024	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*

Continued

*CPA not adopted in Bellingham

ACTION PLAN SUMMARY (Continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	OTHER AGENCIES	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	SCHEDULE	POSSIBLE FUNDING
Improve regional cooperation and efforts (Continued)					
Protect/link bordering resources such as Silver Lake and Franklin State Forest	Selectmen	MADCR Conservation Commission	Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights	2017-2020	LAND Debt Exclusion CPA*

*CPA not adopted in Bellingham

PUBLIC COMMENTS



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

Tel: 508-966-5800 * Fax: 508-966-4425

June 27, 2017

Mr. Clifford Matthews, Chairman
Conservation Commission
Bellingham Municipal Center
Bellingham, MA 02019

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I am pleased to inform you that we have reviewed the Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Bellingham. The plan accurately reflects the goals of our community and is consistent with long term planning. We look forward to working with the Conservation Commission, Parks/Recreation Department and other Town agencies to implement this plan.

Please advise if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Soter, Chairman
Board of Selectmen



BELLINGHAM PLANNING BOARD

10 MECHANIC STREET
BELLINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02019
(508) 657-2892
PlanningBoard@bellinghamma.org

June 26, 2017

Anne Matthews
Conservation Agent
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, MA 02019

Re: Bellingham 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

At the June 22, 2017 Planning Board meeting, the Board unanimously voted in support of the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan update.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jim Kupfer, Town Planner.

Sincerely,

Brian T. Salisbury
Planning Board Chair



TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

Bellingham Municipal Center
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

July 10, 2017

Mr. Clifford Matthews, Chairman
Conservation Commission
Bellingham Municipal Center
Bellingham, MA 02019

Dear Mr. Matthews,

On behalf of the Parks Commission, I am pleased to express my support for the latest version of our Open Space and Recreation Plan. The plan accurately depicts the status of our current recreation facilities and programs.

Furthermore, the plan identifies several priorities for future efforts including activities on the Charles River and Southern New England Trunkline Trail in addition to our ongoing fields and parks. Once again, thanks to you and the Commission for completing this plan which will assist the Town in prioritizing and implementing future recreation efforts.

Sincerely,

William L. Roberts



SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

June 30, 2017

Denis Fraine, Town Administrator
Municipal Center
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, MA 02019

Dear Mr. Fraine:

Thank you for submitting the “Town of Bellingham 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan” to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for review.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires that all open space plans must be submitted to the regional planning agency for review. This review is advisory and only DCS has the power to approve a municipal open space plan. While DCS reviews open space plans for compliance with their guidelines, MAPC reviews these plans for their attention to regional issues generally and more specifically for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area.

Consistency with *MetroFuture* - *MetroFuture* is the official regional plan for Greater Boston, adopted consistently with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law. The plan includes 65 goals and objectives as well as 13 detailed implementation strategies for accomplishing these goals. We encourage all communities within the MAPC region to become familiar with the plan by visiting the web site at <http://www.mapc.org/metrofuture> and scrolling down to the PDF of the implementation strategies.

By citing the applicable *MetroFuture* goals and objectives, the Bellingham Open Space and Recreation Plan will help to advance several *MetroFuture* and local implementation strategies that relate specifically to open space, recreation, transportation (bicycle), and the environment generally. In fact, this plan identifies many positive connections with *MetroFuture* including a specific goal designed to improve efforts to protect and enhance regional open space resources,

Surrounding communities - The plan does acknowledge the Town’s efforts to collaborate with other communities in the SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) subregion of MAPC. It also specifically addresses the importance of regional resources including the Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) trail, the Charles River/Peters River/Mine Brook corridor, Arnolds Brook, Blackstone River, Silver Lake and Franklin State Forest. The plan also includes other regional planning efforts such as the *495/MetroWest Development Concept Plan* and the identified Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) within Bellingham.

Community Preservation Act - Adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a key strategy recommended by *MetroFuture*. We note that Bellingham has not adopted the CPA,

but we are encouraged to see that one of the objectives of the plan is “Evaluate Adoption of Community Preservation Act.” A recent survey conducted as part of the planning process indicates strong support for CPA.

Reforms to the program were passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2012). These reforms include broadened eligibility of recreational facilities, the option to exempt up to the first \$100,000 of commercial property value from the CPA surcharge, and the ability to use additional municipal revenue to qualify for state matching funds. These amendments should make CPA even more attractive to the Town, and may encourage residents to support the proposal. More detailed information on the 2012 amendments can be found at <http://www.communitypreservation.org> or by contacting MAPC’s Government Affairs staff.

Please be aware that MAPC is also working actively in the Legislature and with the Baker Administration to encourage the assignment of additional revenue into the state’s CPA matching fund. We encourage Bellingham to join those efforts, which will inure to the Town’s benefit when and if its voters adopt CPA.

The Bellingham Open Space and Recreation Plan should serve the Town well as it continues its efforts to preserve open space and provide for the recreational needs of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,



Marc D. Draisen
Executive Director

cc: Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Resources

REFERENCES

Bellingham Assessor's Office (2017) Property records

Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training (2017) (MassStats),
<http://massstats.detma.org> .

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, (2017)
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html>

Massachusetts Department of Revenue (2017) Division of Local Services, Municipal Data Bank, <http://www.dls.state.ma.us/mdm.htm>

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (2014) "Population Projections 2010-2030" Boston: MAPC

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (2016) Land Use 2005 from MassGIS

U.S. Department of Agriculture (undated) Soil Survey of Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office

U.S. Department of Commerce (various years) U.S. Census, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office

U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2011-2015

APPENDIX

Division of Conservation Services approval

ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

Report on Survey Results



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Charles D. Baker
GOVERNOR

Karyn E. Polito
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Matthew A. Beaton
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/eea>

January 16, 2018

Gino Carlucci
PGC Associates, LLC
1 Toni Lane
Franklin, MA 02038-2648

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Mr. Carlucci:

Thank you for submitting Bellingham's Open Space and Recreation Plan to this office for review for compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. I am pleased to write that the plan is approved. This final approval will allow Bellingham to participate in DCS grant rounds through November 2024.

Congratulations on a great job. Please call me at (617) 626-1171 if you have any questions or concerns about the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Cryan".

Melissa Cryan
Grant Programs Supervisor

ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

Introduction

The ADA Self Access Evaluation is “a detailed assessment of the recreation department and conservation commission [that]... includes a site-by-site inventory of all recreation and conservation areas and buildings, programs or services and a transition plan if any changes are necessary to make these public facilities, programs, or services accessible. The Assessment should ensure compliance with Federal anti-discrimination regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as Amended (“ADA”).¹

The requirements of the ADA are administered in Massachusetts by the Architectural Access Board (“AAB”), as set forth in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations.² The purpose of the ADA requirements is to “seek to create or adapt sites, buildings and facilities so that they can be approached, entered, and used by persons with disabilities.” For the purpose of an OSRP, public recreational and conservation facilities must be evaluated for compliance with the ADA in accordance with the Code of Massachusetts Regulations. It should be noted, however, that the DCS Workbook emphasizes the creation of an accessible system of facilities rather than an inventory of facilities in which every site is fully accessible.

¹ ADA

² 521 CMR 19:00

Part I: Administrative Requirements

1. Designation of an ADA Coordinator

The ADA Coordinator for the Town of Bellingham is its Town Administrator:

Denis Fraine
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, MA 02019
508-657-2801
dfraine@bellinghamma.org

The following letter signed by Michael Soler, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen officially designates the Town Administrator as the ADA Coordinator: A letter From Denis Fraine certifying the Town's nondiscrimination policy also follows.



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019
Tel: 508-966-5800 * Fax: 508-966-4425

April 6, 2017

Ms. Melissa Cryan, Grants Manager
Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan:

Please be advised that our Town Administrator, Denis Fraine, has been Bellingham's ADA Coordinator for the past 18 years.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,


Michael J. Soter
Chairman

cfc



TOWN OF BELLINGHAM

Bellingham Municipal Center
10 Mechanic Street
Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019
Tel: 508-657-2802 Fax: 508-966-4425

Denis C. Fraine
Town Administrator

April 13, 2017

Ms. Melissa Cryan, Grants Manager
Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan:

As the Town of Bellingham's ADA Coordinator, I hereby confirm that Bellingham's employment practices, including recruitment, personnel actions, leave administration, training tests, medical exams/questionnaires, social and recreational programs, collective bargaining agreements and wage and salary administration, are consistent with ADA requirements.

In the event you have questions regarding this matter, please advise.

Sincerely,

Denis C. Fraine

DCF/cfc

2. Grievance Procedures

The following ADA Compliance Policy is in place for the public to follow in the event that a complaint must be made in connection with accessibility of conservation or recreation facilities:

EQUAL ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Maximum opportunity will be made available to receive citizen comments, complaints, and/or to resolve grievances or inquiries.

STEP 1: The Town Administrator will be available to meet with citizens and employees during business hours. When a complaint, grievance, request for program policy interpretation or clarification is received either in writing or through a meeting or telephone call, every effort will be made to create a record regarding the name, address, and telephone number of the person making the complaint, grievance, program policy interpretation or clarification. If the person desires to remain anonymous, he or she may. A complaint, grievance, request for program policy interpretation or clarification will be responded to within ten working days (if the person making the complaint is identified) in a format that is sensitive to the needs of the recipient, (i.e. verbally, enlarged type face, etc.). Copies of the complaint, grievance, request for program policy interpretation or clarification and response will be forwarded to the appropriate town agency (i.e. park commission, conservation commission). If the grievance is not resolved at this level it will be progressed to the next level.

STEP 2: A written grievance will be submitted to the Town Administrator. Assistance in writing the grievance will be available to all individuals. All written grievances will be responded to within ten working days by the Town Administrator in a format that is sensitive to the needs of the recipient, (i.e. verbally, enlarged type face, etc.). If the grievance is not resolved at this level it will be progressed to the next level.

STEP 3: If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, citizens will be informed of the opportunity to meet 73 and speak with the Board of Selectmen, with whom local authority for final grievance resolution lies. Public Notification Notices in large print are posted in Town Hall indicating that the Town of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The Town's standard employment application includes a non-discrimination statement (see attached) and is posted on the Town's web site.

3. Public Notification Requirements

Notices in large print are posted in Town Hall indicating that the Town of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The Town’s standard employment application includes a non-discrimination statement and is posted on its web site. The following notice informs employees and the public that the Town of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of disability:

“The Town of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or homelessness in any phase of the employment process from the initial application for employment, up to and including the retention, promotion, termination/discharge of employees from the Town of Bellingham.

A copy of a portion of the first page of the Town’s application for employment is presented below:



Town of Bellingham Employment Application

The Town of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or homelessness in any phase of the employment process from the initial application for employment, up to and including the retention, promotion, termination/discharge of employees from the Town of Bellingham.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE) Position(s) Applied For:					Date of Application:	
Last Name		First Name		Middle Name (Mandatory)		
Address	Number	Street	City	State	Zip Code	
Telephone Number(s) Home: Cell:				Social Security Number ____/____/____		
Please Check Box Race: <i>requested- not required</i>		White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please Check Box Ethnicity: <i>requested- not required</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino				

4. Participation of Individuals with Disabilities or Organizations Representing the Disabled Community

Achieved through the survey of residents' opinions and preferences and the ADA Coordinator

Part II: Program Accessibility

The DCS Workbook calls for an inventory and a future transition plan that includes the buildings, recreation facilities and equipment (swimming areas, tot lots, etc.), programs, and services under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission or Recreation Department, including lessees or concessionaires. The inventory is an analysis of the existing conditions at conservation and recreation sites for compliance with the AAB regulations, while the transition plan identifies a path towards improved accessibility and ADA compliance.

Facility Inventory:

There are seven sites in the Town of Bellingham that are under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission or Conservation Commission and include the requisite facilities to require study for ADA compliance. Six of the seven are under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission and Arcand Park is under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. The sites offer a variety of opportunities for public use, however, their most frequently-reviewed facilities were recreation facilities, parking, ramps, site access/path of travel/entrances, rest rooms, and picnicking areas:

1. Recreation Facilities

Recreation facilities in Bellingham include beach areas, picnic sites, trails, tot lots, and playing fields and courts. The facilities were reviewed for their proximity to accessible paths and their compliance with accessibility requirements set forth by the AAB. Common requirements include accessible dimensions and features on equipment, proper signage including for the visually impaired, and accompanying programs and services that provide opportunities to the disabled community.

2. Parking

Any public recreation or conservation site with designated off-street parking shall comply with the parking and passenger loading zone provisions set forth in 521 CMR 23.00 ("the Parking Requirements"). The Parking Requirements set forth a minimum number of accessible spaces that must be provided according to the number of total spaces available in the lot, as follows:

Total Spaces In Lot	Required Minimum Number of Accessible Spaces
15-25	1
26-50	2
51-75	3
76-100	4
101-150	5
151-200	6
201-300	7
301-400	8
401-500	9
501-1,000	2% of total
1,001+	20 plus 1 for each 100 over 1000

Source: 521 CMR 23.2.1

Furthermore, one in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one space, shall be van accessible.³ Van accessible spaces must provide a minimum vertical clearance of eight feet, two inches at the parking space and along at least one vehicle access route to such spaces from site entrances and exits. The space shall also have a minimum dimension of eight feet in width, as well as an eight foot wide adjacent access aisle, and be marked by a sign designating it as “Van Accessible”.⁴ Alternatively, the van requirement may be satisfied by having all handicapped spaces eleven or more feet wide.⁵

3. Ramps

For the purposes of ADA compliance, any part of an accessible route with a slope greater than 5% shall be considered a ramp.⁶ Ramp designation triggers slope, rise, width, and landing requirements as well as gripping requirements on rails and surfaces. Site Access, Path of Travel and Entrances. Any accessible route shall provide a continuous unobstructed path connecting accessible spaces and elements inside and outside a facility.⁷ The route must adhere to width, turning radius, passing space, and slope requirements. Furthermore, an accessible route may also be designated as a walkway, giving rise to further requirements set forth in 521 CMR 22:00.

4. Rest Rooms

None of the facilities within the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission or Conservation Commission include permanent public toilet rooms. However, the beach facilities at Silver Lake and Arcand Park do provide portable toilets during the summer. Other sites also use portable toilets as needed. Those toilets are subject to accessibility standards set forth in 521 CMR 30.1.2 but were not available for review at the time of this report.

³ 521 CMR 23.2.2

⁴ 521 CMR 23.4.7

⁵ 521 CMR 23.4.7

⁶ 521 CMR 24:00

⁷ 521 CMR 20.1

5. Picnicking

Picnic areas are regulated under recreational facilities in 521 CMR 19.6. The regulations require that picnic facilities be accessible from an accessible route that is paved or hard packed.⁸ Additionally, 5% of tables provided at a site shall comply with 521 CMR 19.5.2, which sets forth dimensional requirements for accessible tables.

The following Facility Inventory is a comprehensive accessibility evaluation of all sites in the Town of Bellingham under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission or Conservation Commission with public facilities. It should be noted that, except those listed here, the conservation lands under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission have no parking or facilities of any kind so no accessibility evaluation has been done for those sites:

⁸ 521 CMR 19.6.1

North Bellingham Playground



Address: Hartford Avenue

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 4.81

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Small ballfield, small soccer field, basketball court, playground equipment.

This facility includes a softball field, a basketball court and some extra field space with soccer goals set up. An unmarked parking lot with no designated handicapped spaces provides access to the site. Most of the lot is paved with asphalt but its condition is deteriorating. The rest is loosely packed gravel. There are no pathways or ramps at the park to access either the court or the fields from the parking lot. There is a small bleacher area near the softball field which is not accessible. Additionally, there are dugouts for the softball field which are not accessible. There is also a portable toilet.

Crooks Corner Common



Location: Crooks Corner (Pulaski Boulevard/South Main Street)

Parcel No.:

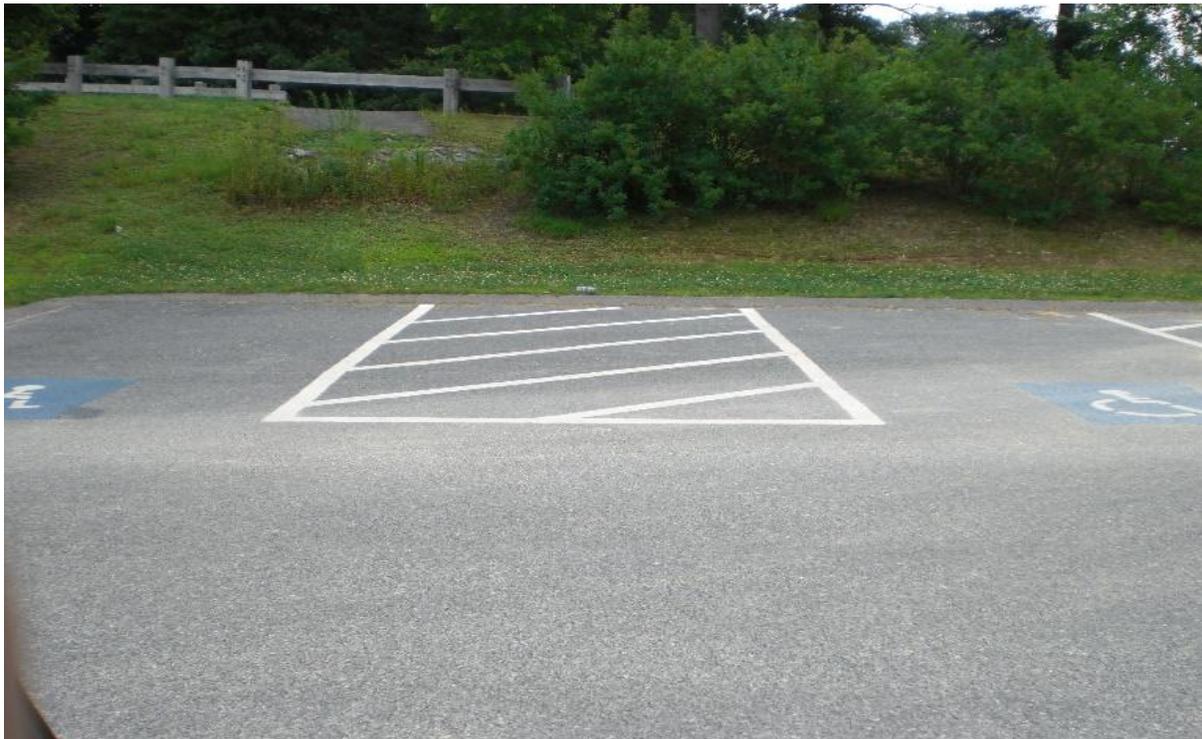
Acreage: 0.84

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Gazebo, pathways, benches

Crooks Corner Common is a small passive recreation area with no parking lot. It has a small gazebo, a flagpole and a grassy area. The gazebo is accessible by a three-foot-wide concrete path running from Pulaski Blvd to South Main St through the center of Crooks Corner Common. The path goes straight through the gazebo in the center of the park. It is not interrupted by any steps or ramps, so the interior of the gazebo is easily accessible by wheelchair. The pathway is accessible by the sidewalk which runs adjacent to the park. The flagpole is not accessible by a path.

Blackstone Street Fields



Location: Blackstone Street

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 25+

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Multiple fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, parking lot, path

The Blackstone Street Fields are accessible by an access road next to the new track on Blackstone Street that also provides access to the new High School. The road terminates at a small paved parking area with four designated handicapped spaces. The facility includes a football field, a full-sized soccer field, a multi-use field between them, and a baseball field with a soccer/football/lacrosse field at the back of the outfield. There is an unpaved path around the perimeter of the fields.

Arcand Park/Jenks Reservoir



Location: Pulaski Boulevard

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 4.00 (Arcand Park) 96,2 total

Jurisdiction: Conservation Commission

Facilities:

Jenks Reservoir consists of a small beach with picnic tables. The beach is accessible by an unpaved, unmarked parking lot that fits about 25 cars. There are no designated handicapped spaces. The site does not provide restrooms. There is an unpaved sand path from the lot to the beach, but nothing to provide handicapped access.

Silver Lake



Location: Lake Street

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 57.36

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Beach, playground, grills, picnic tables, parking lot

Silver lake includes a beach area, a new playground and four freestanding grills. It is accessed by an unmarked parking lot that can hold 25-50 cars. There are four designated handicapped spaces. There are no pathways, rails or ramps from the parking lot to any of the facilities. However, the new playground has a paved, handicapped accessible path around it.

Portable toilets are provided during the season. There are also four picnic tables with no paths leading to them, and four freestanding grills. There is an additional freestanding swing set also without a path.

High St Fields



Location: High Street

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 5.00

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Softball fields, batting cages, parking lot, concession stand, picnic tables.

The High St Fields recreation area includes three softball fields and two screened batting cages. The site is accessible by an unmarked paved parking lot that appears to hold about 25 vehicles, in addition to a dirt area for parking that extends outward from the paved area. There are four designated handicapped parking spaces at the facility.

There are no paths, stairs or ramps anywhere on the grounds. The fields each have dugouts which are not handicapped accessible, and portable toilets are provided. There are also five picnic tables near the concessions facility, two of which are handicapped accessible but none of which are accessible via a pathway.

Town Common



Location: Mendon Street

Parcel No.:

Acreage: 7.85

Jurisdiction: Parks Commission

Facilities: Gazebo, benches, playground, monuments

The Town Common is a passive recreation area accessible by two paved parking lots: one off North Main Street and the other off Mendon Street. In total, the lots have 25-50 spaces. The lots provide access to the common via a paved pathway network. The pathways provide access all around the site including to the parking lots, gazebo, small playground, and the monuments on Mendon Street. They are lined with benches. These benches have backs and rails. The gazebo is surrounded mostly by stairs but also includes a small handicapped ramp with a railing but a steep grade of about 40%. The benches inside the gazebo have no backs or rails.

TOWN COMMON

TOWN COMMON			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
20-50	0	1-2	
Specification for Accessible Spaces	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance	X		There are two marked spaces on the South Main St part of the parking lot, one near each end.
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle	X		
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		x	There are no marked van spaces
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces	X		
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.		x	The signs do not meet the minimum height requirement.
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)	X		Surface is paved with asphalt in good condition
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	X		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.		x	
RAMPS			
Slope Maximum 1:12		x	Ramp to access gazebo Slope much steeper
Handrails at 34" and 19" from surface	X		
Handrails extend 12" beyond top and bottom	X		
Handgrip oval or round	X		
Handgrip smooth surface	X		
Handgrip diameter 1.25 - 2"	X		
Non-slip surface	X		

TOWN COMMON
(Continued)

Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance	X		
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no designated disembarking area
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed	X		
No ponding of water	X		
Path of travel			
Path does not require the use of stairs	X		
Path is stable, firm and slip resistant.	X		
3 ft. wide minimum	X		
Slope maximum 5% and maximum cross pitch is 2%	X		
Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than 1/2 inch.	X		

NORTH FIELDS			
Parking			
<i>Total Spaces</i>	<i>Total Handicapped Spaces</i>	<i>Required Handicapped Spaces</i>	
0-25	0	1	
Specification for Accessible Spaces	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance		x	There are no marked spaces in this lot.
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle		x	No such area is marked
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		x	There are no marked van spaces.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces		x	
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.		x	No signs.
Surface evenly paced or hard-packed (no cracks)		x	Paved surface has many visible cracks
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	X		There is no visible slope
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.		x	No curb is present
Ramps		x	There are no ramps at this facility.
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance		x	There is no path for travel at this site
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no marked disembarking area.
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed		x	The asphalt pavement is deteriorating and cracking.
No ponding of water		x	Pavement is uneven and appears prone to ponding of water
Path of travel		x	There are no paths at this facility

CROOKS CORNER COMMON			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
0	0	0	
Specification for Accessible Spaces	Yes	No	Comments
Parking		x	There is no parking lot provided for this park.
Ramps		x	There are no ramps at this park.
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance	x		There is no passenger disembarking area, but there is an accessible path of travel crossing the entire site accessible from the sidewalk on either side.
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no marked disembarking area.
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed	x		The sidewalks which provide access are paved with asphalt.
No ponding of water	x		There was no apparent ponding of water.
Path of travel			
Path does not require the use of stairs	x		
Path is stable, firm and slip resistant.	x		The concrete path is in acceptable condition.
3 ft. wide minimum	x		3 feet.
Slope maximum 5% and maximum cross pitch is 2%	x		Maximum slope appears to be about 3%
Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than 1/2 inch.	x		Material changes from concrete to asphalt but no changes greater than 1/2 inch

BLACKSTONE STREET FIELDS			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
0-25	4	1	
Specification for Accessible Spaces			
	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance	x		The four closest spaces in the lot are all handicapped.
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle	x		
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.	x		All spaces have aisles wide enough to accommodate a van.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces		x	The international symbol is painted on the pavement in each designated space, but there are no signs.
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.			
Surface evenly paced or hard-packed (no cracks)	x		New asphalt.
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	x		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.		x	There are no cuts in the curb, but the roadway itself may provide access when the gate is open.
Ramps		x	There are no ramps at this facility.
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance	x		
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	No marked disembarking area.
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed	x		Dirt road ending in a paved handicapped parking area.
No ponding of water	x		

**BLACKSTONE STREET FIELDS
(CONTINUED)**

Path of travel			Note: the path goes around the perimeter but does not actually provide access to the bleachers for these fields.
Path does not require the use of stairs	x		
Path is stable, firm and slip resistant.		x	The pathway is dirt which can be slippery when wet.
3 ft. wide minimum	x		
Slope maximum 5% and maximum cross pitch is 2%	x		
Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than 1/2 inch.	x		The pathway is continuous dirt

**ARCAND PARK
(JENKS RESERVOIR)**

ARCAND PARK (JENKS RESERVOIR)			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
20-50	0	1-2	
Specification for Accessible Spaces			
	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance		x	There are no marked spaces in this lot
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle		x	There are no marked handicapped spaces.
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		x	There are no marked van spaces.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces		x	
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.		x	
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)		x	
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	x		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.	x		There is no curb, but there is a smooth transition to the path of travel.
Ramps			
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance	x		
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed		x	The surface is sand
No ponding of water	x		No ponding of water was evident.

**ARCAND PARK
(JENKS RESERVOIR) (Continued)**

Path of travel			
Path does not require the use of stairs	x		
Path is stable, firm and slip resistant.		x	Surface is sand.
3 ft. wide minimum	x		
Slope maximum 5% and maximum cross pitch is 2%		x	Slope down to beach is greater than 5%
Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than 1/2 inch.	x		

SILVER LAKE			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
26-50	0	2	
Specification for Accessible Spaces			
	Yes	No	Comments
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance	x		There are two handicapped spaces at the playground, and two more in the parking lot located close to the beach.
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle		x	There is adequate space, but the lines aren't marked
Van space – Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		X	There are no marked van spaces at this facility.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces	x		
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.		X	
Surface evenly paced or hard-packed (no cracks)	x		Surface is packed gravel
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	x		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.			No curb is present
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance		x	There is no path of travel
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no marked disembarking area.
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed	x		
No ponding of water	x		There is no apparent ponding of water

SILVER LAKE
(Continued)

Path of travel			There is no path of travel at this site, except in the new playground, which is fully accessible.
Picnicking			
A minimum of 5% of the total tables must be accessible with clear space under the table top not less than 30" wide and 19" deep per seating space and not less than 27" clear from the ground to the underside of the table. An additional 29" clear space (totaling 48") must extend beyond the 19" clear space under the table to provide access.		x	There are four standard picnic tables at the site, none of which meet the specified clearance requirements. Additionally, they are not accessible by any sort of accessible path.
For tables without toe clearance, the knee space under the table must be at least 28" high, 30" wide and 24" deep.		x	
Top of table no higher than 32" above ground	x		
Surface of the clear ground space under and around the table must be stable, firm, and slip-resistant, and evenly graded with a maximum slope of 2% in all directions.		x	Picnic tables are placed on the grass
Accessible tables, grills and fire rings must have clear ground space of at least 36" around the perimeter.	x		

HIGH STREET FIELDS			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
20-50	0	1-2	
Specification for Accessible Spaces			
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance	x		There are two marked spaces near the concessions and two more in the sand part of the lot near the fields.
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle		x	There is adequate space for this, but the lines aren't marked.
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		x	There are no spaces marked for vans.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces	x		
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.	x		
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)	x		Surface is hard packed gravel near the concessions and entrance, then sand near the fields.
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	x		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.		x	
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance		x	There is no path of travel
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no designated disembarking area
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed		x	
No ponding of water		x	Surface appears prone to ponding.

HIGH STREET FIELDS
(Continued)

Path of travel		x	
Picnicking			
A minimum of 5% of the total tables must be accessible with clear space under the table to not less than 30" wide and 19" deep per seating space and not less than 27" clear from the ground to the underside of the table. An additional 29" clear space (totaling 48") must extend beyond the 19" clear space under the table to provide access.	x		Two of the tables are standard while the other two are accessible. However, they are not accessible by a path.
For tables without toe clearance, the knee space under the table must be at least 28" high, 30" wide and 24" deep.	x		
Top of table no higher than 32" above ground	x		
Surface of the clear ground space under and around the table must be stable, firm, and slip-resistant, and evenly graded with a maximum slope of 2% in all directions.		x	The tables are located on a concrete platform.
Accessible tables, grills and fire rings must have clear ground space of at least 36" around the perimeter.		x	The tables are located at the edge of the platform.

CLARA MACY FIELDS

CLARA MACY FIELDS			
Parking			
Total Spaces	Total Handicapped Spaces	Required Handicapped Spaces	
20-50	0	1-2	
<u>Specification for Accessible Spaces</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Accessible Space located closest to accessible entrance	x		There are two marked spaces near the concessions and two more in the sand part of the lot near the fields.
Drop-off area is provided within 100 feet		x	There is no marked drop-off area
Minimum width of 13 ft. includes 8ft space plus 5ft access aisle		x	There is adequate space for this, but the lines aren't marked.
Van space - Minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft. wide plus 8 ft. aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft. wide with 5 ft. aisle.		x	There are no spaces marked for vans.
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces	x		
Sign minimum 5 ft. maximum 8 ft. to top of sign.	x		
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)	x		Surface is hard packed gravel near the concessions and entrance, then sand near the fields.
Surface slope less than 1:20 (5%)	x		
Curb cut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present.		x	
Site Access			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance		x	There is no path of travel
Disembarking area at accessible entrance		x	There is no designated disembarking area
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed		x	
No ponding of water		x	Surface appears prone to ponding.

REPORT ON RESULTS OF CITIZEN SURVEY OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

July 8, 2016

Introduction

The first step in preparing an update to the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) was a survey of residents. The survey questions were partially based largely, on the questions that were asked in 2008 as part of the 2009 OSRP. This was done to determine whether there has been a change in viewpoints and/or priorities over the past 7 years.

The questionnaire consisted of 14 substantive questions (some with multiple parts) and a final question regarding demographic information about the responder. Paper copies were printed and were available at the May 25, 2016 Annual Town Meeting as well as in the offices of the Town Clerk and. The survey was also available on-line. A total of 191 responses were received, all but 5 were completed on-line.

Results

An interesting result of the survey is that, for the most part, attitudes about priorities have been relatively stable. Table 1 presents the results of the question that asked respondents to identify the 6 top priority issues in 2008 compared to 2016. It should be noted a question about promoting Low Impact Development drainage methods was dropped from the 2016 survey and a question about installing solar panels on already-developed land was added.

As the table illustrates, the top three priority items, (1) protecting water resources, (2) protecting land for conservation purposes and (3) protecting wildlife habitat, remained the same, and the percentages they received were nearly identical in both years. The biggest changes occurred in the rise into the top 5 of land acquisition for recreation for organized recreation and protection of land that provides greenways or linkages between existing conservation areas each rose about 10 percent to take the #4 and #5 spots respectively.

The biggest drop in support occurred for the encouraging the use of green building techniques., which dropped from 58% to 37%. Slowing the pace of development dropped from 41% to 34%, while support for more commercial and residential growth both rose, from 13% to 19% and 7% to 12%, respectively.

Table 1: Selection of High Priority Items for Next Five Years

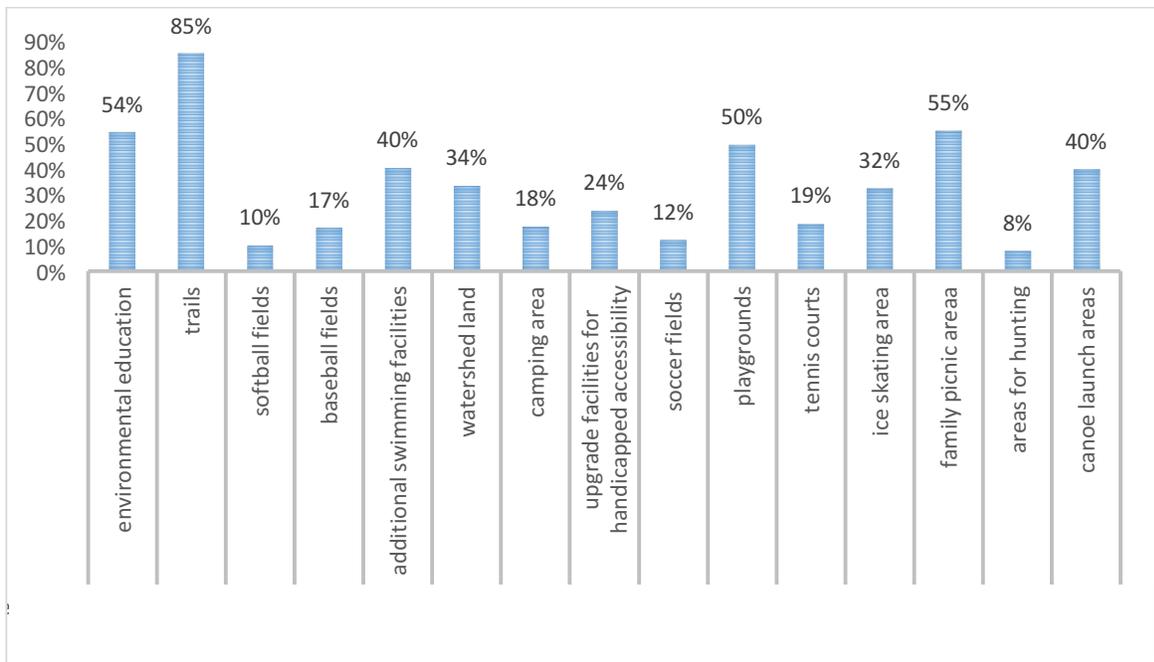
Please select up to 6 items from the list below that you believe should a high priority in Bellingham during the next five years.	2008		2016	
	Total Percentage	Rank	Total Percentage	Rank
A. Protection of farms and agricultural land	48.65%	5	44.0%	6
B. Protection of Water Resources (well sites, aquifers, watersheds, ponds, wetlands, etc.	85.59%	1	83.2%	1
C. Land acquisition for organized recreation (ball fields, soccer fields, playgrounds etc.	37.84%	8	48.2%	4
D. Land acquisition for conservation (trails, environmental education, hunting, etc.	74.77%	2	75.4%	2
E. Preservation of historic sites and buildings	45.05%	6	39.3%	7
F. Land acquisition for cemetery space	4.50%	17	3.1%	16
G. Land acquisition to provide new town facilities	5.41%	15	5.2%	15
H. Encouragement of more business growth	12.61%	11	19.4%	11
I. Encouragement of more residential growth	7.21%	14	12.0%	12
J. Encouragement of more industrial growth	5.41%	15	2.6%	17
K. Encouragement of Low Impact Development drainage methods	9.01%	13	NA	NA
L. Encouragement of "green" building techniques to lower energy use and reduce environmental impacts	57.66%	4	36.6%	8
M. Slowing the pace of development	40.54%	7	34.0%	9
N. Support for affordable housing initiatives	10.81%	12	9.4%	13
O. Protection of land that provides linkages or greenways between existing conservation areas	36.04%	9	46.1%	5
P. Protection of land for wildlife habitat	65.77%	3	65.4%	3
Q. Encourage placement of solar energy projects on previously developed sites	NA	NA	24.1%	10
R. Other	13.51%	10	6.8%	14

Figure 1 presents the results of the question about recreation priorities over the next five years. By far, with 85% choosing it as one of the top 6 priorities, trails was the highest priority item. This is perhaps not surprising since trails are a feature that all age groups can use. The next three items were family picnic areas, environmental education, and playgrounds, all with more than 50%. This represents a desire for more family-oriented recreation facilities.

Question 4 asked about lands that acquired or restored for future use for conservation or recreation purposes. Of the 74 persons who answered this question, 21 suggested the former Macy school site. Many of the responses suggested improvements to existing sites. Of the specific sites and general areas that were suggested, the High Street/Maple Street received several mentions and the Primavera School, Varney land, Blackstone and Lake Street areas, Beaver Pond and areas near SNETT each received multiple mentions.

Figure 1

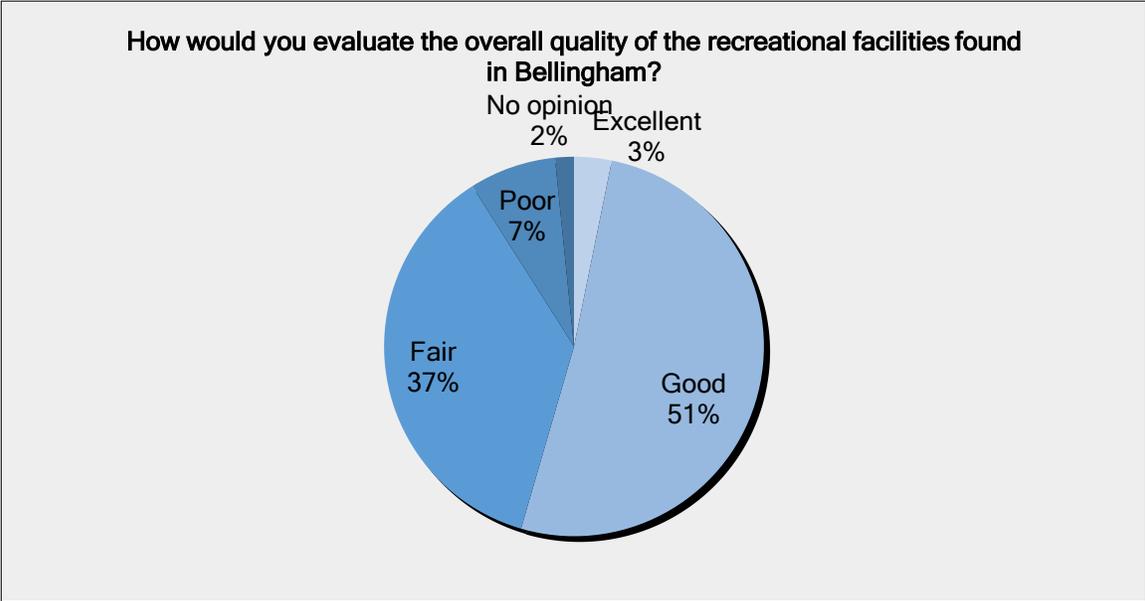
Recreation Priorities for Next Five Years



As Figure 2 illustrates, a majority (51%) of respondents rated the quality of recreational facilities as good. Another 37% rated them as fair while only 3% gave them an excellent rating. This indicates that there is room for improvement.

Figure 2

Quality of Recreation Facilities



Respondents were asked to rank their preferred methods of preserving open space. As Figure 3 shows, the most highly ranked method was purchasing conservation restrictions only. This was followed closely by outright purchase and using zoning bylaws to encourage open space as part of development projects.

Figure 3

Preferred Methods of Preserving Open Space

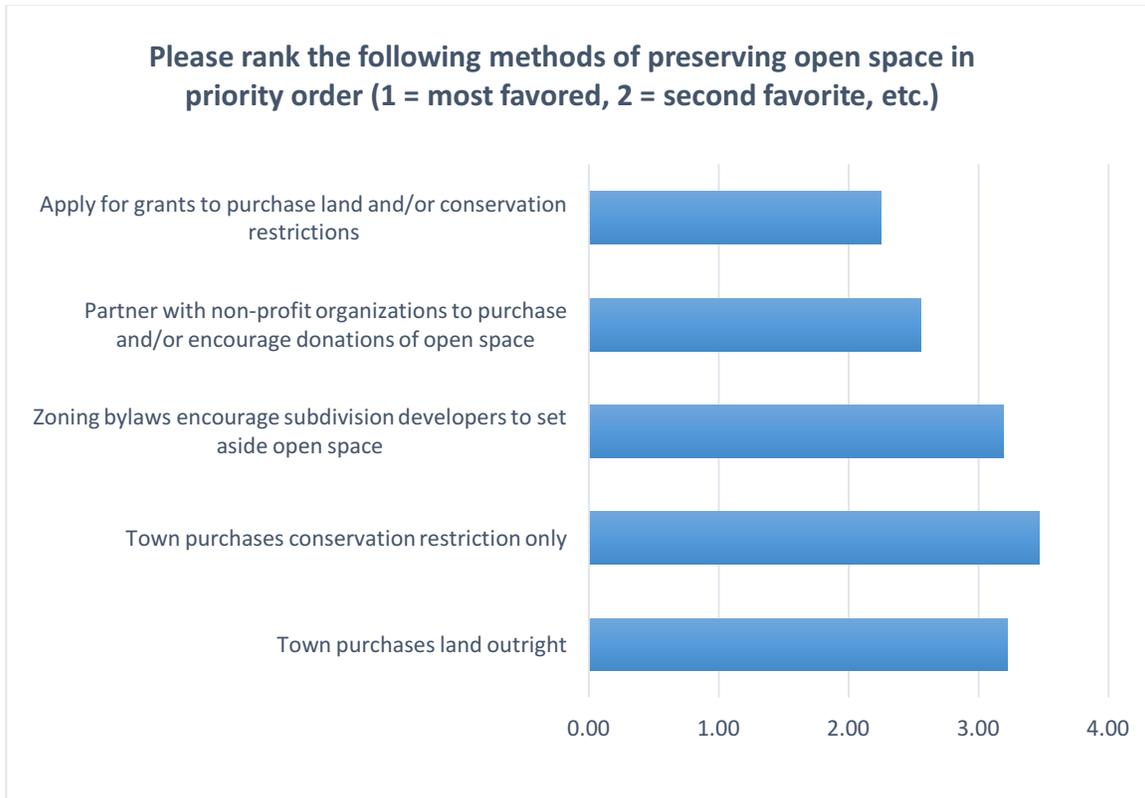


Table 2 presents the results of which open space sites were visited by the respondent or a member of their family. Town Common was the most visited site with 163 out of 192 indicating they had visited it. Silver Lake Beach followed closely with 152 and Arcand Park had 109.

Table 3 shows the result of a similar question focused on the recreation areas. There are some duplicate sites, and again Town Common and Silver Lake came out on top with 152 and 144 visiting those sites. The High School, Middle School and Blackstone Street Fields were visited by 123, 113 and 101 respondents respectively. The SNET Trail and the South/Primavera Schools were tied at 95.

Table 2: Most Visited Open Space Areas

Site	Number Who Visited
Town Common	163
Silver Lake Beach	152
Arcand Park	109
High Street	81
Maple Street	73
Pulaski Boulevard	68
Mendon/North Sts. (Former RR Bed)	53
Crooks Corner Common	39
Deer Run	36
Whitehall Way	33
High Ridge	32
Saddleback Hill Road	18
Maddie Way	10
Castle Lane	5

Table 3: Most Visited Recreation Areas

Site	Number Who Visited
Town Common	152
Silver Lake Beach	144
High School	123
Middle School	113
Blackstone Street Fields	101
SNET Trail	95
South/Primavera Schools	95
Stallbrook School	90
North Bellingham Playground/Fields	79
Former Macy School Playground	74
High Street Fields	62
Clara Macy School	55
Jenks Reservoir	28
Crooks Corner Common	28

Wildlife habitat was selected as the most important aspect of open space by 73% of respondents while just 0.5% thought it was not important (See Figure 4). Active recreation was chosen as the second most popular aspect of open space with 67% choosing it as most important. Passive recreation was next with 54% choosing it as most important, followed by private, protected land and scenic views with 52% and 47% choosing those aspects as most important.

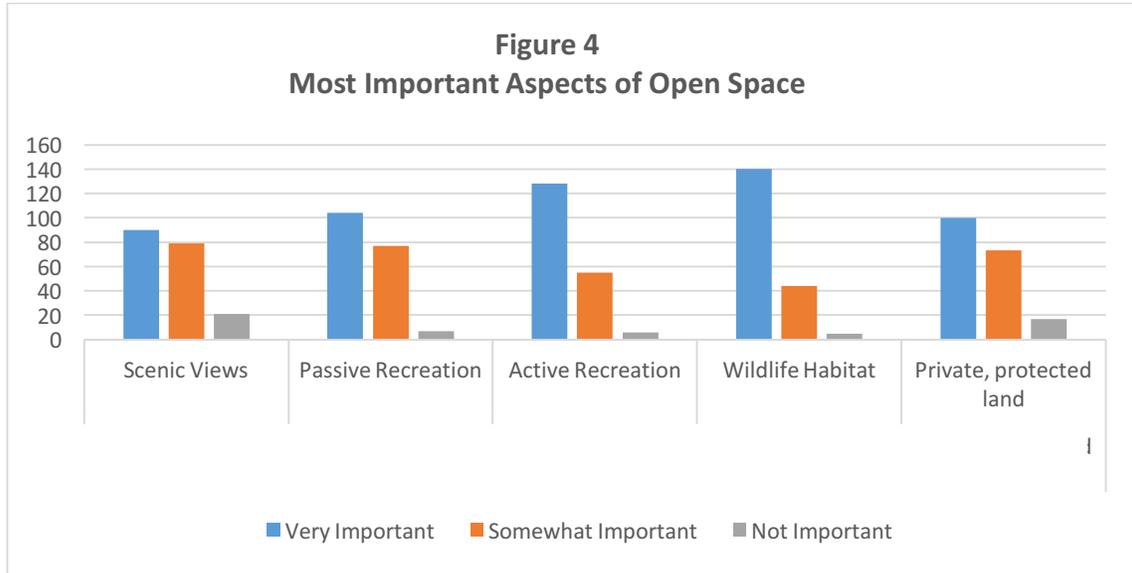
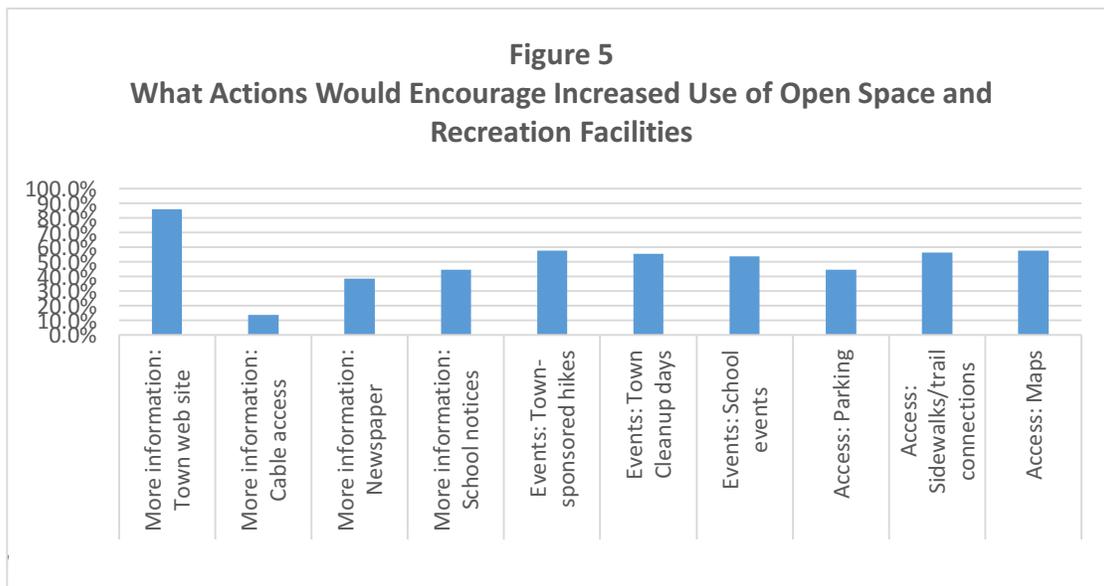
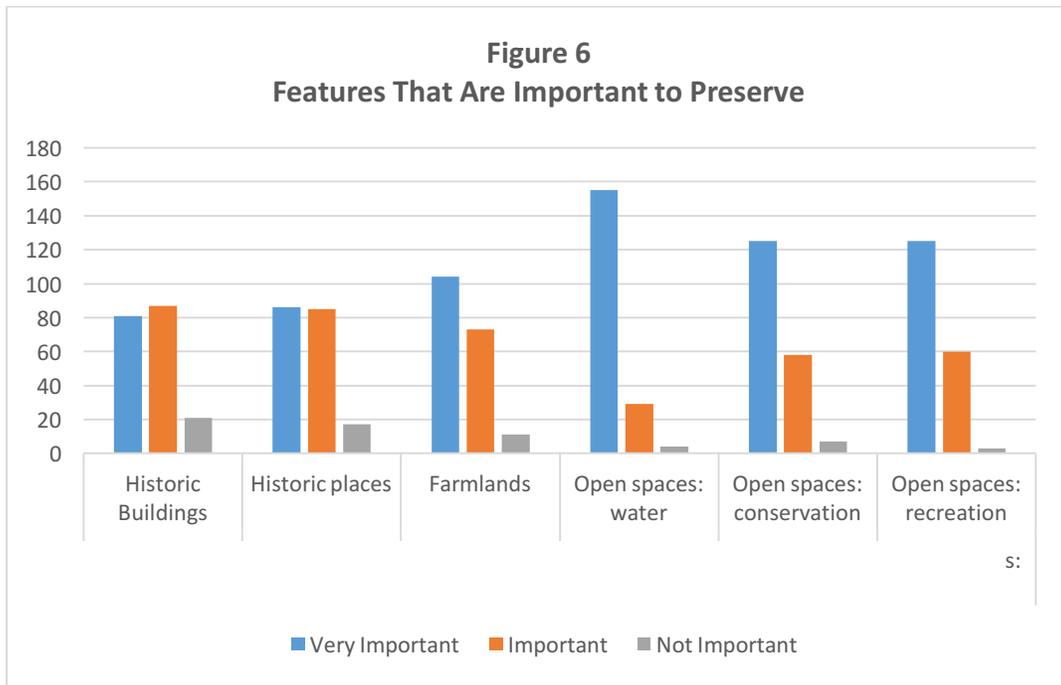


Figure 5 illustrates that more information on the Town web site was the most favored way of promoting use of open space and recreation facilities, with 86% specifying that option. Town-sponsored hikes, maps, sidewalk/trail connections, and school events were all in the 55% to 57% range.



Water was selected as the most important feature to preserve by 81% of respondents. Conservation and recreation were next with 65% selecting them as most important. Figure 6 presents the results of this question.



Walking was by far the most popular activity on open space sites, as nearly all (98%) of respondents chose it as an activity they do at open space sites. Biking was second most popular at 51%, followed by running and bird watching at 32% and 31% respectively.

Support for adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) was strong. Following a short paragraph explaining what the CPA is about, 72% expressed support for an effort to adopt CPA in Bellingham.

Table 4 illustrates what people believe the Town should spend money on. Fairly strong majorities (62%-63%) believe the Town should spend money to identify and maintain conservation areas and to develop recreation facilities. A smaller majority supported acquiring additional open space.

Table 4: Identification of Items the Town Should Spend Money On

	Yes
Identify and maintain conservation areas	63.1%
Develop recreational facilities	62.0%
Acquire open space	54.7%

APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS

Complete results of the survey, including demographic information about respondents, is included in the Appendix.

1. Do you feel that areas in Bellingham should be acquired or restored for the future use of town residents for recreation and conservation purposes?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	98.4%	188
No	1.6%	3
<i>answered question</i>		191
<i>skipped question</i>		0

2. Please read the list below, then check up to six items you believe should be a high priority in Bellingham during the next five years.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Protection of farms and agricultural land	44.0%	84
Protection of water resources (well sites, aquifers, watersheds, ponds, wetlands, etc.)	83.2%	159
Land acquisition for organized recreation (ball fields, soccer fields, playgrounds, etc.)	48.2%	92
Land acquisition for conservation land (trails, environmental education, hunting, etc.)	75.4%	144
Preservation of historical sites and buildings	39.3%	75
Land acquisition for cemetery space	3.1%	6
Land acquisition to provide new town facilities (please specify below)	5.2%	10
Encouragement of more business growth	19.4%	37
Encouragement of more residential growth	12.0%	23
Encouragement of more industrial growth	2.6%	5
Encouragement of "green" building techniques to lower energy use and reduce environmental impacts	36.6%	70
Slowing the pace of development	34.0%	65
Support for affordable housing initiatives	9.4%	18
Protection of land that provides linkages or greenways between existing conservation areas	46.1%	88
Protection of land for wildlife habitat	65.4%	125
Encourage placement of solar energy projects on previously developed sites	24.1%	46
Other (please specify)		13
<i>answered question</i>		191
<i>skipped question</i>		0

3. Check up to six items below that you feel should be a priority in Bellingham during the next five years.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
environmental education	54%	102
trails	85%	160
softball fields	10%	19
baseball fields	17%	32
additional swimming facilities	40%	76
watershed land	34%	63
camping area	18%	33
upgrade facilities for handicapped accessibility	24%	45
soccer fields	12%	23
playgrounds	50%	93
tennis courts	19%	35
ice skating area	32%	61
family picnic areas	55%	103
areas for hunting	8%	15
canoe launch areas	40%	75
Other (please specify)		15
<i>answered question</i>		188
<i>skipped question</i>		3

4. What areas in Bellingham should be acquired or restored for the future use of town residents for recreation or conservation purposes? In the space provided below, please describe the sites in detail.

Answer Options	Response Count
	74
<i>answered question</i>	
74	
<i>skipped question</i>	
117	

See End of Appendix

5. How would you evaluate the overall quality of the recreational facilities found in Bellingham?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	3.2%	6
Good	51.3%	97
Fair	36.5%	69
Poor	7.4%	14
No opinion	1.6%	3
<i>answered question</i>		189
<i>skipped question</i>		2

6. During the past year, did you (or a family member) visit any of the Town open space areas listed below, for passive recreation:				
Answer Options	Yes	No	Rating Average	Response Count
Whitehall Way	33	135	1.80	168
High Ridge	32	134	1.81	166
Maple Street	73	95	1.57	168
High Street	81	93	1.53	174
Mendon/North Streets (former railroad bed)	53	115	1.68	168
Saddleback Hill Road	18	145	1.89	163
Castle Lane	5	158	1.97	163
Maddie Way	10	152	1.94	162
Silver Lake Beach	152	33	1.18	185
Arcand Park	109	64	1.37	173
Pulaski Boulevard	68	100	1.60	168
Deer Run	36	128	1.78	164
Town Common	163	20	1.11	183
Crooks Corner Common	39	128	1.77	167
<i>answered question</i>				190
<i>skipped question</i>				1

7. During the past year, did you (or a family member) visit any of the Town recreation areas available listed below for active recreation (including as a spectator):				
Answer Options	Yes	No	Rating Average	Response Count
North Bellingham Playground/Fields	79	94	1.54	173
Crooks Corner Common	28	135	1.83	163
Stall Brook School	90	81	1.47	171
Former Macy School Playground	74	94	1.56	168
Clara Macy School	55	112	1.67	167
Middle School	113	57	1.34	170
High School	123	53	1.30	176
Blackstone Street Fields	101	73	1.42	174
South/Primavera Schools	95	72	1.43	167
Jenks Reservoir	37	128	1.78	165
Silver Lake	144	33	1.19	177
High Street Fields	62	105	1.63	167
Town Common	152	28	1.16	180
SNET Trail	95	76	1.44	171
<i>answered question</i>				189
<i>skipped question</i>				2

8. How would you rate the following features of current and future open space in Town?					
Answer Options	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Scenic Views	90	79	21	1.64	190
Passive Recreation	104	77	7	1.48	188
Active Recreation	128	55	6	1.35	189
Wildlife Habitat	140	44	5	1.29	189
Private, protected land	100	73	17	1.56	190
<i>answered question</i>					190
<i>skipped question</i>					1

9. What actions do you think would encourage or facilitate you and/or fellow residents to increase use of open space and recreation sites (Please check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More information: Town web site	85.8%	157
More information: Cable access	13.7%	25
More information: Newspaper	38.3%	70
More information: School notices	44.3%	81
Events: Town-sponsored hikes	57.4%	105
Events: Town Cleanup days	55.2%	101
Events: School events	53.6%	98
Access: Parking	44.3%	81
Access: Sidewalks/trail connections	56.3%	103
Access: Maps	57.4%	105
Other (please specify)		17
<i>answered question</i>		183
<i>skipped question</i>		8

10. How important is it to you to preserve the following?					
Answer Options	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Historic Buildings	81	87	21	1.68	189
Historic places	86	85	17	1.63	188
Farmlands	104	73	11	1.51	188
Open spaces: water	155	29	4	1.20	188
Open spaces: conservation	125	58	7	1.38	190
Open spaces: recreation	125	60	3	1.35	188
<i>answered question</i>					190
<i>skipped question</i>					1

11. Which of the following passive recreation activities do you do at Town open space sites?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Walk	97.8%	181
Run	31.9%	59
Bird watch	31.4%	58
Bike	50.8%	94
Other (please specify)		26
<i>answered question</i>		185
<i>skipped question</i>		6

12. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a Massachusetts state law (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) passed in 2000. It enables communities that adopt it to create a local dedicated fund for open space preservation, preservation of historic resources, development of affordable housing and the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation facilities. Funds for these purposes are raised through a voter-authorized surcharge on local property tax bills of up to 3%. Local adoption of CPA triggers annual distributions from the state's Community Preservation Trust Fund to the town's Community Preservation Fund. Currently, 156 cities and towns have adopted CPA. Would you support an effort to adopt the CPA?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	72.4%	134
No	27.6%	51
<i>answered question</i>		185
<i>skipped question</i>		6

13. Do you think the Town should spend funds to:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Identify and maintain conservation areas	63.1%	113
Develop recreational facilities	62.0%	111
Acquire open space	54.7%	98
Other (please specify)		14
<i>answered question</i>		179
<i>skipped question</i>		12

14. Please indicate the following demographic information:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	24.2%	46
Female	61.1%	116
Age: 18-25	5.3%	10
Age: 26-35	17.9%	34
Age: 36-50	48.9%	93
Age: 51-64	21.1%	40
Age: 65-74	5.3%	10
Age: 75+	0.5%	1
Residence: North Bellingham	28.9%	55
Residence: Central Bellingham	17.9%	34
Residence: South Bellingham	38.9%	74
	<i>answered question</i>	190
	<i>skipped question</i>	1

15. Please use the space below to tell us of any other ideas or suggestions you have related to conservation and recreation in Bellingham	
Answer Options	Response Count
	39
<i>answered question</i>	39
<i>skipped question</i>	152

See answers after Question 4 answers below

4. What areas in Bellingham should be acquired or restored for the future use of town residents for recreation or conservation purposes? In the space provided below, please describe the sites in detail.

We should just have more public park areas for outdoor activity rather than businesses.

7/5/2016 12:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not Sure

7/5/2016 12:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Any available lots along Pulaski between Crooks Corner and the Blackstone line. A series of mini-parks, and possibly development of the site of the former Coyles auction into some sort of family space (not another ball field!)

6/27/2016 12:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Land at the end of Blackstone Street off North St should be developed for hiking trails. Also the trails just west of Stallbrook Elementary School

6/24/2016 5:09 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The plot of land where Macy School used to be, in addition to the play ground and field that are already there.

6/23/2016 11:14 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Former Macy School property

6/23/2016 8:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Macy school playground and ball field

6/23/2016 6:58 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The playground and ball fields at Macy School should be reserved for recreation or conservation and the woods should remain untouched.

6/23/2016 6:22 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Land North High St. and south of 495. Backing up to Charles River

6/22/2016 11:41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Arcand park on lake street. All of maple street should be ripped up and re-done. Create more walking trails like the one on center street, maybe one in north bellingham

6/19/2016 11:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The mill on Pearl Street!!! I live right by it and hate that nothing has been done for so many years. It is such an eye sore and so much can be done. Either restore the mill into office buildings or tear down and put in a nice park for families (with fencing so that neighbors are separate)

6/19/2016 11:00 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Sadly some are already gone..... any area abutting SNETT, not sure where else is available

6/19/2016 10:16 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Maple st. No more commercial properties! Lets keep that land for the animals and recreational purposes!

6/15/2016 12:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Sliver lake needs clean water. Kasper park needs kid friendly mulch, and the fence needs repair. stall brook school tennis and basketball courts need to be refurbished

6/14/2016 11:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Land between rte. 126, cross st, silver lake rd, douglas dr; land between rte. 126, fox run rd, SNETT; land behind Bellingham town hall; expansion of high st; land between rte. 126, Hartford ave, Monique dr, caroline dr; land between stall brook school, Saint Brendan's parish.

6/14/2016 10:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Former Macy school. Primavera school

6/14/2016 6:42 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

north field, Macy, stall rook area

6/14/2016 6:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The former Macy School Property. Excellent place for ball fields, rec facilities, and open space.

6/14/2016 11:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The old Clara Macy school could be used for recreational purposes.

6/14/2016 10:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Area behind the high school. I walk there a lot and see many deer. Please leave this area untouched

6/14/2016 10:30 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Box Pond & dam

6/14/2016 10:11 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Anywhere in South Bellingham could use improvement. Not many seem to use the "park" at Crook's Corner...can something be done with that parcel to attract people to use it?

6/14/2016 9:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Macy's school land

6/14/2016 9:33 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The island in the middle of silver Lake should have a bridge and a nice nature trail.

6/12/2016 1:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I am not sure if they are already or not, but the 2 lakes, wetland on Silver Lake Rd (may be part of residents property but, should not be developed)

6/11/2016 9:48 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I cannot understand why the Macy school property is not being kept for these purposes.

6/11/2016 7:47 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Connection to bike trails established in neighboring towns

6/11/2016 4:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Unknown

6/11/2016 4:22 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Play ground at the old Macy school

6/11/2016 2:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Land off of Blackstone street and Lake street, these areas are currently fields.

6/11/2016 1:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Box pond and Beaver pond should have legal canoe/fishing access. Varney Sand pits on Depot st should allow ATV only.

6/11/2016 10:34 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

It's too late for the beautiful field on High street and Maple but the land across from the box company should be preserved

6/11/2016 9:11 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Land at end of high street. One side already sold to victory. Where is all the wildlife going to go. As well, high street already extremely dangerous for walking, running, and biking due to narrow roadways.

6/11/2016 8:05 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

clara Macy playground

6/10/2016 9:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Spaces in or around the town center.

6/10/2016 6:40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Macy School playground, ball field and parking area, Silver Lake

6/10/2016 5:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The area just pass Larry's. There seems to be a lot of land over there.

6/10/2016 2:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Unknown what is available.

6/10/2016 2:27 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Would be great to upgrade turf field/track area to include tennis courts and BETTER PARKING for sporting events.

6/10/2016 1:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

* Protect undeveloped space on maple street / High Street. * Protect undeveloped land on lake street - before Bellingham lumber

6/10/2016 12:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Biking Trail(like in Molford), Public Swimming Pool, Birds watch

6/10/2016 12:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

What (I think!) used to be the old parking lot for Silver Lake Park. If the concrete could be broken up and turned back into green space, that would be great!! If you're facing the beach standing on Cross St, I'm talking about the area to the left that is currently fenced off, ugly, and overgrown. Also, if there is any vacant space or buildings in South Bellingham along Pulaski, it would be great to turn them into green space or a productive park.

6/10/2016 12:06 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Make the trails behind Arcand easier to get up the steep hill that has eroded. And to have it open year round. Also more access to the Charles River in the different locations in town. Are the Trails across the street from Petes Bluebirds open to the public? If so a trail map and marked parking would be nice. I enter thru my neighborhood but it would be easier to park by the gated area. Also the list of open spaces you included on this survey I don't know where any of them are. An updated website with location is highly needed and would be much appreciated.

6/10/2016 11:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Gibbs gas station, macy school

6/10/2016 10:38 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The land between Silver Lake Rd. and Center/Cross St.

6/10/2016 9:22 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Old Primavera School. Great location for a new baseball field. Updating of the High School Varsity baseball field.

6/10/2016 9:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Our lakes are completely land locked with housing. Allow Access To Residents. Our only beach access is two swamps.

6/10/2016 9:08 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS GOOD , JUST KEEP ALL UPDATED.

6/10/2016 9:05 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Arcand Park silver Lake

6/10/2016 9:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

access to beaver pond, maybe by varney brothers

6/10/2016 8:53 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Unused railroad tracks

6/10/2016 8:47 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Jenks pond desperately needs to be taken care of. It is a travesty that it has been allowed to get to the state that it's in

6/10/2016 8:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Old site of Macy school for additional recreational picnic, playground and ball fields.

6/10/2016 8:25 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I have no idea. I just moved to Bellingham less than 2 years ago.

6/10/2016 8:12 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Stop building municipal buildings and not maintaining them so that they are too expensive to fix. Macy school should never have deteriorated to the point that it did. Residential buildings are privately built and maintained for 100 years or more. Why not municipal buildings?

6/10/2016 8:11 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Primavera School

6/10/2016 7:56 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Arcand Park. Better sand brought in and policed more.

6/10/2016 7:14 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

part of the area where macy school was is perfect for playground, ball fields, picnic area. There is nothing in this side of town besides the common and that is too wide open for smaller kids, not enough parking. macy area already have nice field, playground, contained area that is safe for all.

6/9/2016 8:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Behind high school

6/9/2016 8:38 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

all the wetlands off 126 in the southern part of town. they extend quite a long ways along the power line. Plus the areas that connect the SNETT trail through town

6/9/2016 7:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I don't know of a specific site, but the north end of town desperately needs a FENCED playground area. Families in the north are going to Medway or Franklin because the parks are nicer than the common, fenced in and closer than Silver Lake - which isn't open year-round. Adding more swimming areas at Silver Lake would be a good idea too. I was there last summer and everyone was kicked out of BOTH sides for at least 30 minutes on a Friday afternoon for the camp kids to use. Also, since there are very few safe streets for bike riding in town (because lets face it, all of Bellingham is essentially a cut-through for Rhode Islanders that are somehow worse drivers than Massachusetts residents), it would be nice if the SNETT was paved like the one in Milford. Little kids can't use the trail for bikes like it is.

6/9/2016 6:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The recently torn down Macy school site The land behind the high school The land around Silver Lake and Arcand Park The SNETT trails and surrounding areas The land behind Stall Brook School

6/9/2016 5:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

There is a lot of open land along Maple street that I would like to see preserved. With the large processing plant and the landscaping businesses, we already have too many trucks driving down that road. In addition, I would hate Maple Street to be just one big line of buildings in the years to come.

6/9/2016 5:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The former site of Clara Macy Elementary school would be an ideal spot for recreational purposes. Open space, a playground, sports fields, etc. would be ideal for this location. These are the types of things that will help our wonderful town stay desirable.

6/9/2016 5:05 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The old Macy school land should be turned into recreational space for the town. Not housing!

6/9/2016 4:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Continue improving SNETT trail and improve other walking/hiking trails. Continue improvements to expand swimming at Silver Lake and Arcand pond. Stock ponds/lakes with fish to help the winter kill.

6/9/2016 4:21 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Macy property

6/9/2016 4:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Macy school lot, Crooks corner gazebo lot , the old "Beverly" lot, vacant lot S Main & Elm

6/9/2016 3:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Farm land off Lake street near Cross Street

6/6/2016 1:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Keep Macy playground and ball field

5/29/2016 7:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Varney land next to High Street fields

5/24/2016 11:58 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Upgrade Arcand park. Better sand, upgraded playground and more of a town presents.

5/5/2016 9:35 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The Varney Brothers Property between Scott Hill and Blackstone st a very beautiful area with lots of wildlife. It could be used for both purposes with more of the land being used for conservation purposes.

5/5/2016 3:54 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

An inventory should be done of all the open space remaining in Bellingham. It should be prioritized by most environmentally sensitive/important to most disturbed/degraded. Current property ownership should be determined and owners approached for possible conservation restriction/tax benefit options as well as willingness to consider donations/sale to the town.

5/4/2016 8:40 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

16. Please use the space below to tell us of any other ideas or suggestions you have related to conservation and recreation in Bellingham.

I would LOVE to see a dog park!

7/5/2016 12:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

If a family enjoys organized sports I think they should do just that. However, there needs to be more balance in development when town owned land becomes available.

6/27/2016 12:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We love to walk our dogs at High St. fields, but it's often difficult to do so because of all the 4-wheelers. They tear up the paths, and I worry about the bikes coming around the corner when I am walking dogs. I would like to have those areas set aside for walking, and keep the 4-wheelers out.

6/23/2016 6:22 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Basketball courts for public

6/22/2016 8:48 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

No more houses, no more warehouses, enough with that please. To much traffic!!

6/19/2016 10:16 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I'd love to be able to walk to more open space locations, creating better connections (sidewalks/trails) would be amazing

6/14/2016 10:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I would like to see more recreational activities during the weekends. I would also like to see recreational activities listed with more information on the town website.

6/14/2016 9:27 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

increase minimum lot size for new housing - slow down residential and commercial building

6/14/2016 1:13 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A community farm would be great

6/14/2016 10:11 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Being an animal advocate, I am concerned about all the wildlife being spotted in residential areas. Are we driving them out of their natural habitats with too much building? The design at Silver Lake and the upkeep are both awesome if you have children....what about a recreation site geared more for adults to enjoy. I spent some time recently at the Town Common, also a beautifully restored areas and was saddened to see the memorial bricks my family and I purchased in memory of my late brother and mother covered in chalk! More definition or separation if an adult just wants a quiet spot to read a book.

6/14/2016 9:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Guided easy hikes on trails, bird watching walks, more kid / teen oriented outdoor activities so they develop a love for nature

6/11/2016 9:48 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Need more access to open water for boating and fishing

6/11/2016 2:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Open ATV trails. ATVs do no harm to hiking trails. It is Dirtbikes that gouge trails making them unsafe for hikers, bicycles, and ATVs.

6/11/2016 10:34 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Put clear directions to recreation areas on town website

6/10/2016 5:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Would be nice to have a beautification committee...simple upgrades to lamp posts and landscaping would make main thoroughfares so much more attractive. Similar to Holliston Ctr, for example.

6/10/2016 1:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I think the town common would be a wonderful spot for farmer's markets as well as other functions. The town of Natick is always busy with many different activities. Our Common is very beautiful and it is a shame there is not more activities there.

6/10/2016 1:36 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Allow the use of OHV in the town and provide access to trail system that has been used for decades.

6/10/2016 1:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Please stop the massive subdivisions ie) silver lake - and large warehouses such as on maple st.

6/10/2016 12:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Extend SNETT like it is now between Central St and Lake St, Open Market with our farmers products, Public/Town Pool, dirt road bikes trail away from homes.

6/10/2016 12:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I believe that we should embrace the development of new housing and new recreational buildings in bellingham.... but we should make it a priority to maintain the environment for the wildlife in bellingham. The wildlife and the many beautiful green areas in bellingham are what make us unique compared to other towns. It's good that we as a town are growing, but we should make it a point to preserve the things that keep our town beautiful. Thank you.

6/10/2016 12:25 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Keep being active - the Conservation FB page is a great resource for Bellingham residents (if they follow it). Updates on there and other public forums.

6/10/2016 12:06 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

More info on Facebook cinservation page about the different locations in town to take Nature walks.

6/10/2016 11:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Clean up eye soars, granite curbs, fix water plant, take away gas lines from residential areas and school, ban fracking, solar panel town owned building, and fix sewer surcharge issue, expand watershed, wild life protection conservation land

6/10/2016 10:38 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Please widen the southern stretch of Lake st or add sidewalks so local residents don't have to risk our lives trying to go to Arcand park

6/10/2016 9:27 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I think the town should do all it can to acquire open space whenever possible. The amount of development in town will eventually take it all away.

6/10/2016 9:22 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Stop restricting people's rights to use land for dirt bikes and atvs. Also stop restricting shooting

6/10/2016 9:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Clean up arcand Park

6/10/2016 9:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

fix the roads & traffic

6/10/2016 9:01 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

We are a very active family. However, I am unaware of recreational spaces in the streets listed in q7. Need to publicize these areas more.

6/10/2016 8:11 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Less affordable housing

6/10/2016 8:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

having open space for kids to play in this area very important, the wethersfield neighborhood roads are awful for kids to ride bikes etc, so give them a place they can do this, plus area dog park would be nice too

6/9/2016 8:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Consolidate efforts on a sports complex for all to enjoy

6/9/2016 8:38 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

mountain biking activities bring out kids and adults and create programs and conservation that sustain themselves. People love to ride and care for the trails they ride on. A town mountain biking program would be a huge win for the town!

6/9/2016 7:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Complete SNETT trail and a pool

6/9/2016 6:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Considering the shape of the schools and water, voters probably won't want to do anything that increases taxes. Maybe work with what we've already got - the open space list was extensive - fix it up and then advertise that it exists.

6/9/2016 6:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

With an active, young family, would love to see more recreational facilities, such as tennis courts, indoor swimming, ice rink (outdoor preferred). A field house would be a wonderful addition to the current facilities around the high school/middle school. Walking and biking trails are highly desired as well, the recent work on the SNETT off Center St. is really nice, and would like to see similar trails in town.

6/9/2016 5:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We live in a beautiful area! The SNET trail is a family favorite. I would like to see more efforts into improving Arcana Park. Bellingham is becoming a big walking community. We really enjoy walking to South when the weather is nice. It would be nice to see more sidewalks! Thank you for putting out this survey!

6/9/2016 4:52 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I lived in North Bellingham for 7 years, South for 11, involved in Scouting for 10 years and never heard of some of the areas. Clearing we need to have better communication of what is available as open land/ hiking/general outdoor use

6/9/2016 4:21 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The Town has to step up and peserve more of it's land before more of it is gone and it is to late! The roads will be clogged with cars worse with uncontrolled development and the storm runoff and the wildlife will have no place to go!

5/5/2016 3:54 AM [View respondent's answers](#)