



**2020 - 2027**



# **OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN**

Town of Boylston

*Prepared by:*

Boylston Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee  
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission



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## **Committee**

The Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee includes the following members:

Seth Ridinger, *Chair*

Gerry Quam, *Vice Chair*

Elaine Jones, *Clerk*

Crystal Byron

Helen Dexter

## **Consultant**

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

## **Acknowledgements**

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee would like to thank all of the residents who responded to the community survey and the volunteers who participated in the focus group. Boylston's community of dedicated Town staff, board members, volunteers, and residents has helped make this planning process a success.

# PLAN SUMMARY

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This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is a reflection of Boylston's commitment to protecting and preserving its highly valued open space and recreation resources. The town's residents acknowledge the significance of existing open spaces towards rural aesthetics, water quality and supply, health and wellness, local economy, and recreation opportunities. Residents are eager to maintain the town's existing open space resources while recognizing the need to balance these conservation efforts with local fiscal needs and tax-base concerns.

This Plan is an update to Boylston's first OSRP which was completed in 2005 as a component of the Town's then ongoing comprehensive Master Planning process. Town staff and a core team of volunteers revisited the 2005 Plan and evaluated changes that have occurred in the town and region since its completion. This updated OSRP builds on an understanding of Boylston's current place in the region, its history and sense of self, its demographics, and its growth and development patterns. A thorough review of the geology, landscape, water resources, vegetation, wildlife and fisheries, other unique and scenic resources, as well as environmental challenges, was necessary to develop a clear picture of the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The Town has engaged in various conservation planning efforts to date and taken many steps to expand, improve, and enhance its open space and recreation resources. Some of the major accomplishments over the last 20 years include: Boylston Comprehensive Plan (2000), Open Space and Recreation Plan (2005), Boylston Community Development Plan (2005), Route 140 Corridor Plan: Shrewsbury Street, Boylston (2010), and the Central Thirteen Prioritization Project (2012).

Overall, this Plan provides an updated inventory of Boylston's open spaces and environmental resources, presents the needs and challenges associated with the town's open space and recreation opportunities, and lays out a seven-year plan with detailed action steps, time frames, and responsible parties to guide Boylston's progress in an organized manner. It also offers an overview of Boylston's history, physical development, and demographic profile. An ambitious public outreach process was conducted in order to gain feedback from the Boylston community and create a wholly inclusive Plan. Based on previous planning efforts, input from Town residents and stakeholders, and an analysis of up-to-date data, the following goals have been established:

- Goal I:** Be proactive about continuing to enhance and preserve Boylston's town character and small, New England town feel
- Goal II:** Preserve and protect Boylston's open spaces, including waterbodies, woodlands, farms, and parks
- Goal III:** Maintain, add, and enhance recreational facilities and programs as needed
- Goal IV:** Regulate and guide development to be consistent with town character, and to protect open space and natural resources

These goals are further discussed in the Goals and Objectives (Section 8) and the Seven-Year Action Plan (Section 9).

# INTRODUCTION

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## Statement of Purpose

The Town of Boylston developed this plan to coordinate efforts between Town departments, private organizations, landowners, and citizens as these efforts relate to acquisition, protection, and management of open space and recreation resources particularly in light of continued residential and commercial development pressures. In order to secure and protect valuable parcels of open space, it is essential to bring forth today's issues and concerns regarding development, land exchanges, and open space and recreation needs. Boylston's 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan builds on past and recent planning initiatives to provide a framework for priority needs and actions. This document serves as an update to the town's 2005 OSRP and an updated, approved plan is necessary to qualify for State program funding for acquisition and protection of open space and recreational facilities. It will also guide efficient capital spending, help the town's bond rating, and increase Boylston's opportunities to receive State grant money.

This document has blended community perspectives with up-to-date data to create a plan with goals, objectives, and action items that are most appropriate for the town of Boylston. With a clear and concise layout, it is anticipated that this OSRP will be a "living document" to guide decision-making regarding the town's open space and recreation resources.

## Planning Process and Public Participation

### Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) was formed in 2019 to guide this process of updating the existing OSRP. This Committee met at least once per month, both in-person and virtually in compliance with Open Meeting Law, to plan for public engagement efforts and discuss elements of the OSRP. All meetings were summarized in writing by the Clerk and meeting minutes were posted on the Town website. The meetings that were held virtually were recorded and posted on the Town's Vimeo page.

### Community Survey

A community survey was developed in order to gain perspectives from members of the public on the strengths and challenges associated with the town's open space and recreation opportunities. The survey included 17 questions and took approximately 15 minutes for participants to complete. The survey was available online and hard copies were available for pick-up and drop-off at the Town Clerk's office and the Boylston Public Library. The survey was launched on November 29, 2019 and ran until January 31, 2020. The survey was promoted using the Town of Boylston website and social media platforms, the CMRPC Facebook page, a promotional article in the Telegram & Gazette released on January 6, 2020, local radio and television broadcasts, and by word of mouth. There were 290 responses

to the survey which equated to 6.5% of the town's total population, or over 10% of the town population over the age of 18.

12% of those who responded to the survey were under the age of 35, 53% of respondents were ages 36-55, and 35% of respondents were age 56 or over. 51% of respondents said they have children under the age of 18 living with them. 62% of respondents have lived in the town for more than 10 years. 79% of respondents have between 2 and 4 people living in their household.

The full results of the community survey are included in Appendix B.

## **Public Forum and Focus Group**

A public forum was planned for March 30, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the Boylston Town Hall. The agenda included a presentation about the importance of planning for open space and recreation and a summary of planning efforts thus far, an interactive activity and discussion surrounding the goals and action plan, plus a photo contest open to all ages. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social distancing mandate occurred during this time, causing the planned event to be postponed. It became evident that all events and gatherings would continue to be postponed or cancelled throughout the spring and summer months due to health concerns, and the OSRP Committee made the difficult decision to cancel the public forum. The Committee, with assistance from CMRPC staff, brainstormed ways to gather valuable public input on the Plan without risking the health of the public or delaying the timeline. It was decided to host a virtual focus group of town stakeholders to discuss the goals and action plan of the OSRP.

The virtual focus group was held on June 4, 2020 at 6:00 pm, using the platform Zoom. The Committee decided who should be invited and the date/time was selected based on everyone's availability. Each participant was emailed a spreadsheet of the goals and action plan ahead of time. Committee Chairman Seth Ridinger guided the introductions and discussion during the focus group. In all, there were 12 attendees. The following groups were represented:

- Open Space and Recreation Committee
- CMRPC
- Conservation Commission
- Planning Board
- Board of Health
- Board of Assessors
- Boylston Resident Advisory Committee
- Boylston Youth Soccer Association
- Guardians Youth Lacrosse

The focus group proved to be a successful form of public input as the stakeholders gave their perspectives and feedback on each of the goals and action items presented. The action plan was amended to include these suggestions and the draft plan was revised to incorporate any additional input that the stakeholders provided. Community members who were not participating in the focus group were able to watch a recording of it on the Town's Vimeo page.

A draft of the plan was made available on the Boylston Town website for viewing and comments. It was also emailed directly to those who submitted their email addresses when responding to the community survey, indicating they were interested in being further involved with the OSRP. Feedback was then incorporated into the draft plan and action plan. When the public forum was canceled, measures were deliberately taken to still involve the community in this planning process to the greatest extent possible.

# COMMUNITY SETTING

## Regional Context

Boylston has a total area of 19.7 square miles, consisting of a land area of 16.0 square miles and a water area of 3.6 square miles. The town is located in Central Massachusetts and is part of Worcester County. Boylston is bordered by Sterling and Clinton in the north, Berlin and Northborough in the east, Shrewsbury in the south, and West Boylston in the west. It is ~7 miles northeast of the City of Worcester, ~35 miles west of Boston, and ~40 miles northwest of Providence, Road Island.

The majority of the town lies within the southern edge of the Nashua River Watershed, which drains into the Wachusett Reservoir. The watershed encompasses all or part of 31 diverse communities, 7 in southern New Hampshire and 24 in central Massachusetts. Additionally, as described in the Watersheds section of this Plan, the southwest corner of the town is considered part of the Blackstone River Watershed, which drains to the south, while the eastern portion of Boylston lies within the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord River (SuAsCo) Watershed, which drains to the east.

The Wachusett Reservoir is a defining feature connecting Boylston to the wider community. Boylston's landscape changed significantly in 1908 when 4,380 acres (17.5 km<sup>2</sup>) were flooded between Boylston, West Boylston, Clinton, and Sterling. This created the second largest body of water in the state of Massachusetts as well as ~10 miles of waterfront along Boylston's north-western border. The Wachusett Reservoir has an aggregate capacity of 65 billion US gallons (250,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>) and an area of almost 7 square miles (18.2 km<sup>2</sup>). It is part of the water supply system for metropolitan Boston, providing two-thirds of the Commonwealth's population with drinking water, and is maintained by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).<sup>1</sup>

Today, Boylston is a primarily suburban, middle-to-upper income community. It is largely forested with intersecting subdivisions. There are over 6.5 square miles of open space under some type of protection. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Boylston had an average monthly employment in 2018 of 1,403 at 162 establishments. However, many of the town's residents commute to places of employment outside of Boylston. The town is home to a flourishing public school system (Boylston belongs to the Berlin-Boylston school district which offers a local elementary school and shared junior-senior high school, located in Boylston), a small but vibrant library, a Historical Society, the highly popular Tower Hill Botanic Garden, and two golf courses. Residents value the natural beauty of their community and the conservation of open space, which protects water quality, wildlife habitats, farms, and forests, and provides increased recreational opportunities.



*Aerial view of Hillside Complex  
Photo Credit: High Flyin' Drone Imagery LLC*

<sup>1</sup>Massachusetts Water Resources Authority website: <http://www.mwra.com/>



## History of the Community

The first settlers of Boylston arrived in 1717, after receiving a grant of land that comprised the present town of Shrewsbury plus the lower two-thirds of present-day Boylston and all of West Boylston. The first settlement occurred in the early 1720's when several families from Lancaster moved to the area.

Only a couple decades later, in 1742, the number of people in Boylston had grown to warrant the creation of a separate town. The Colonial Governor turned down the request, however an agreement was made to create a quasi-independent area called the Second or North Parish of Shrewsbury. Organizing of the new precinct included choosing officials, building a meetinghouse, and seeking a minister to fill the pulpit. The choice of minister fell on 25-year-old Ebenezer Morse, a Medfield native and Harvard University graduate with a background in medicine, law, and divinity studies. Boylston was his first and only congregation.

By 1774, the population of the North Parish had grown to 500 residents. Members of the community were split between those who supported the revolutionary movement and those who remained loyal to the Crown. Reverend Ebenezer Morse led the Tories, and was later removed from his church.

In 1786, the North Parish was finally granted the status of a separate town, which was named Boylston in honor of the prominent Boston family of the same name. Primarily an agricultural community with a number of tradesmen, the town had a school, a Meeting House, a general store, several taverns, and in 1792, a Social Library that was housed in the home of the town minister.

As the town continued to grow, a second meetinghouse was built by residents of the western part of town, however this action was met with some heated opposition. Citizens of Boylston's western portion of town were led by Revolutionary War hero, Major Ezra Beaman, and petitioned to separate from Boylston. The petition was granted in 1808, and the new community took the name West Boylston.

When Fort Sumter was attacked and President Lincoln called for volunteers, 80 Boylston men enlisted in the Union Army. The first man to enlist was John Roberts, a French Canadian immigrant. He was also the first Boylston man killed in action. By the end of the Civil War, Boylston had lost nine men.



*Historic John B. Gough House, 1848  
Photo credit: Bing Images*

Agriculture was the base of the economy in Boylston's early years, however this changed when mills arrived in the area in the early 1800s, as the Nashua River was a good source of water supply. With the arrival of the railroad in 1870, the village center of Sawyer's Mills became a prosperous industrial community. Half of Boylston's tax base and population depended on it by 1895.

The town's population began to change when Boylston experienced a flood of immigrants during the nineteenth century. As early as 1840, Irish families came to Boylston to secure employment in the textile mill at Sawyers Mills. Subsequently, the town experienced an influx of immigrants from French

Canada, Germany, and Italy, contributing to the community's "melting pot." In 1895, the Commonwealth began the construction of the Wachusett Reservoir, which would supply water to metropolitan Boston. Over 200 acres of Boylston land was acquired for this project, including three schools, a general store, a post office, a Catholic Chapel, plus 39% of its population was displaced. The construction of the Wachusett Reservoir also brought a halt to the mills and the thriving industrial community, causing many families to leave and find work and homes elsewhere.

The twentieth century brought many changes to Boylston, along with the rest of the nation. Trolley cars, electricity, telephones, and automobiles were a few of the technological advances that transformed the life of this agricultural community. During the period of Prohibition, some Boylston residents engaged in the illegal production of liquor and many were apprehended for doing so.

Boylston residents have answered the call to duty time after time in historic wars. 41 men were sent overseas and participated in some of the most famous battles of World War I. Although some were wounded and some gassed, all of these Boylston men returned home to their families. About 156 men and women were enlisted in World War II and three Boylston men made the ultimate sacrifice: Pvt. John Barton, Pvt. William Brown, and Pvt. Burton. The Boylston Historical Society in the Town Hall houses uniforms and letters from World War II Boylston soldiers.

Following World War II, the return of men and women in the service led to greater suburbanization and construction increased in the Morningdale area to meet the new housing demands for young families. Completion of Routes I-290 and I-495 again spurred a surge in building, allowing easy access from Boylston to major cities such as Boston and Worcester.

Present-day Boylston proudly retains much of its rural and colonial charm. It contains a National Historic Landmark, the John B. Gough House at Hillside, and the remainder of Barlin Acres (or the Keyes-Dakin House) which was home to a founder of the town and was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Boylston's only local historic district, Boylston Center, was established in 1979 and contains structures recognized for their historical significance. The Windsor Park and City Gardens residential district of Boylston contains modest cottages and represents two early 20<sup>th</sup> century real-estate subdivisions. These historic assets can be viewed in the Unique Features Map.

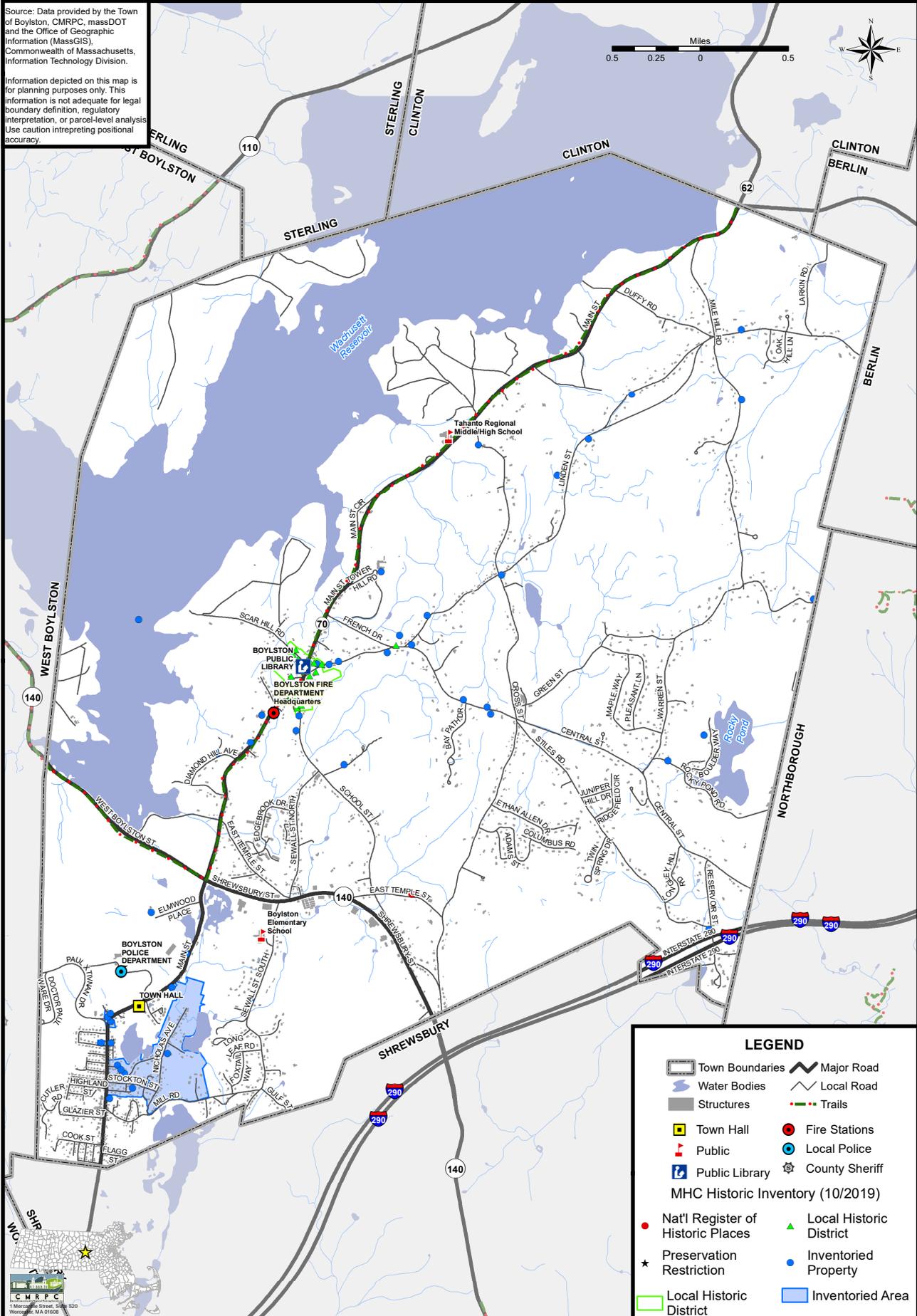


*Boylston Town Common  
Photo credit: Bing Images*

# UNIQUE FEATURES OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



**LEGEND**

	Town Boundaries		Major Road
	Water Bodies		Local Road
	Structures		Trails
	Town Hall		Fire Stations
	Public		Local Police
	Public Library		County Sheriff
<b>MHC Historic Inventory (10/2019)</b>			
	Nat'l Register of Historic Places		Local Historic District
	Preservation Restriction		Inventoried Property
	Local Historic District		Inventoried Area



## Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# Population Characteristics

## Population Change

Boylston is a small, rural-suburban community, located only about 10 miles from the second largest city in New England. The town has experienced a few periods of rapid population expansion, including the years following the end of the Second World War. Between 1940 and 1960, the town’s population grew by 41%. Since 2000, Boylston has grown by 4.9%, which is a greater increase than all of its surrounding neighbors, other than Berlin (8.8%) and Northborough (5.5%). Boylston is anticipated to increase its population by approximately 4% by 2030 and an additional 5% by 2040<sup>2</sup>. However, this estimated growth pattern will be influenced by many factors including building permits and housing development, economic conditions, and lifestyle choices of current and future generations.

Figure 1: Boylston Population Growth with Projections, 1930-2040

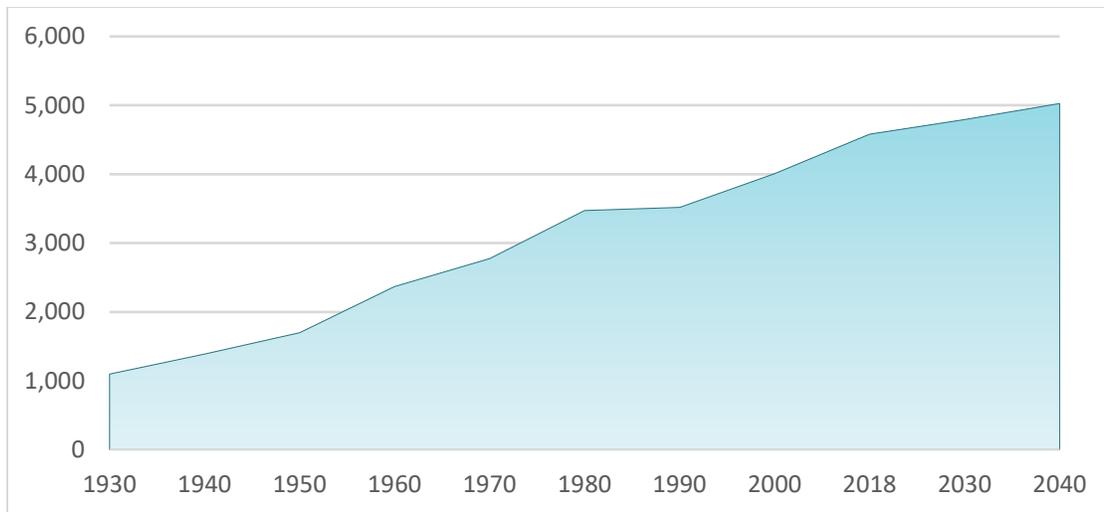


Table 1: Boylston and Neighboring Communities Population Change, 1930-2018

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018	Percent Change 2000-2018
<b>Boylston</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>2,367</b>	<b>2,774</b>	<b>3,470</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,355</b>	<b>4,581</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Berlin	1,075	1,057	1,349	1,742	2,099	2,215	2,293	2,380	2,866	3,144	8.8%
Clinton	12,817	12,440	12,287	12,848	13,383	12,771	13,222	13,435	13,606	13,899	2.1%
Northborough	3,013	2,382	3,122	6,687	9,218	10,568	11,929	14,013	14,155	14,985	5.5%
Shrewsbury	6,910	7,586	10,594	16,622	19,196	22,674	24,146	31,640	35,608	37,037	3.9%
Sterling	1,502	1,713	2,166	3,193	4,247	5,440	6,481	7,257	7,808	8,052	3.0%
West Boylston	1,255	1,822	2,570	5,526	6,369	6,204	6,611	7,481	7,669	7,941	3.4%
Worcester	195,311	193,694	203,486	186,587	176,572	161,799	169,759	172,648	181,045	185,195	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1930-2010; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2014-2018

<sup>2</sup> CMRPC Population Projections

## Age

Along with population change, it is important to examine the age distribution within a community. Different age brackets tend to have alternative recreation needs and opinions on ways to utilize open space. Many communities in the Commonwealth have been experiencing aging populations and a need for greater passive recreation opportunities such as bird-watching, walking trails, community gardens, or picnic areas. Other communities are home to many families that require more active recreation opportunities such as playgrounds, playing fields and courts, ice skating rinks, or splash parks. Understanding the age demographics of a community is important to anticipate the open space and recreation needs of its residents.

*Table 2: Population Change by Age Group, 2010-2018*

Age Group	Massachusetts			Worcester County			Boylston		
	2010	2018	Percent Change	2010	2018	Percent Change	2010	2018	Percent Change
Total Population	6,547,629	6,830,193	4%	798,552	822,280	3%	4,355	4,581	5%
Under 5 years	367,087	362,681	-1%	46,823	44,671	-5%	221	221	0%
5 to 19 years	1,254,056	1,226,228	-2%	164,624	156,570	-5%	875	933	6%
20 to 29 years	917,193	990,481	7%	98,704	109,323	10%	323	375	14%
30 to 39 years	821,811	880,470	7%	99,334	99,442	0%	458	527	13%
40 to 49 years	984,388	880,270	-12%	127,056	111,650	-14%	807	596	-35%
50 to 59 years	929,823	978,172	5%	116,785	125,100	7%	787	839	6%
60 to 69 years	635,006	782,677	19%	73,312	93,211	21%	479	569	16%
70 to 79 years	354,593	440,247	19%	39,171	49,618	21%	251	285	12%
80 years and over	283,672	288,967	2%	32,743	32,695	0%	154	236	35%
Median age	39.1	39.4	1%	39.2	40.1	2%	44.5	44.5	0%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2014-2018*

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates show 25.2% of the Boylston population are under the age of 20; 8.1% between the age of 20 and 29; 11.5% from 30 to 39 years of age; 13.0% from 40 to 49 years; 18.3% from 50 to 59 years; and 23.8% over the age of 60 years (Table 2). Boylston has a higher percentage of residents over the age of 40 than both Worcester County and Massachusetts. The population between the ages of 25 and 54, which is an important group because it includes the parents of school age children, has decreased from 50% of the town's population in 2000 to the current rate of 38%. Since 2010, Boylston has seen the greatest increase occur in the 80 years and over age category (+35%) and the greatest decrease occur in the 40 to 49 years age category (-35%). Boylston's median age (44.5 years) remains well above the county (40.1 years) and state's (39.1 years) median age, indicating an older population<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2018

The population under 5 years of age experienced no change between 2010 and 2018. The population of those ages 5-19 years increased by 6% over the same time period. While many small Massachusetts communities have aging populations and are met with fewer young families moving into town, Boylston remains a popular community to raise children. According to elementary school enrollments from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as of 2019, Boylston has 0.17 elementary students per household, which matches the state average that is also currently at a rate of 0.17

The number of youth participating in organized sports remains on the rise in Boylston. The Guardians Youth Lacrosse program nearly doubled its number of participants between the two most recent seasons, and the need for safe, readily available recreational fields remains a priority for athletes, parents, and coaches. The demographic trends also indicate that additional recreational facilities and activities for seniors will be needed during the next decade, with an emphasis on passive forms of recreation. The open space and recreational needs of seniors should be balanced with the needs of youth and families, as both age groups are prominent parts of the Boylston community.

**Household Characteristics**

It is additionally significant to understand changes in household characteristics when assessing the open space and recreation needs of a community.

Based on Table 3, it is evident that family households, particularly married-couple families, are the dominant household type in Boylston. Family households constitute over 68% of Boylston households, while non-family households make up 32%. The county and the state estimates alternatively show lower rates of family households and higher rates of non-family households. Of the family households, there is a much higher rate of married-couple families in Boylston compared to Worcester County and Massachusetts.

There is a lower rate of householders living alone in Boylston (25.7%) compared to Worcester County (27.4%) and Massachusetts (28.6%). It is also important to note that there are higher rates of households with individuals under the age of 18 *and* households with individuals over the age of 65 in Boylston compared to the county and state.

*Table 3: Households by Type, 2018*

	Boylston	Worcester County	Massachusetts
Total Households	1,771	307,294	2,601,914
Family households	68.5%	65.7%	63.5%
With own children under 18 years	27.0%	28.4%	26.8%
Married-couple family	57.9%	49.4%	47.0%
With own children under 18 years	21.8%	19.9%	18.7%
Nonfamily households	31.5%	34.3%	36.5%
Householder living alone	25.7%	27.4%	28.6%
Households with individuals <18 years	29.7%	31.2%	29.4%
Households with individuals 60+ years	42.3%	38.7%	39.7%
<i>Source: American Community Survey Estimates 2014-2018</i>			

## Income

Income and earnings are important factors for determining how people are willing to spend their money, particularly when planning for recreation.

Boylston has a higher median household income and per capita income than both Worcester County and Massachusetts (Table 4). Additionally, while the county and state have averages of approximately 10% of residents living below the federal poverty level, Boylston maintains a much lower average, with only 3.7% of residents estimated to be living below the federal poverty level. Boylston’s current median household income (\$98,520) has increased significantly since 2000 when it was at \$67,703, an increase of over 30% in 18 years. Comparably, the Worcester County and Massachusetts median household incomes have also increased by over 30% in this same time period. Boylston has a greater percentage of residents earning over \$200,000 annually than either the county or state, indicating a greater concentration of wealth in town.

Despite relatively high income averages, Boylston has experienced significant increases in median home prices and with a market that is dominated by single-family homes, the town has demonstrated a need for additional affordable housing for its residents. The Town should maintain awareness of income levels and other factors of the economy when planning for open space and recreation.

*Table 4: Household Income, 2018*

	Boylston	Worcester County	Massachusetts
Total households	1,771	307,294	2,601,914
Less than \$10,000	2.0%	5.2%	5.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.1%	4.6%	4.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4.2%	8.0%	7.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.8%	7.8%	7.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11.4%	10.3%	9.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.1%	15.8%	14.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.6%	12.6%	12.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.5%	18.2%	17.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10.2%	8.8%	9.5%
\$200,000 or more	18.0%	8.7%	12.0%
Median household income (dollars)	98,520	71,895	77,378
Per capita income (dollars)	46,857	36,169	41,794
Percent below poverty level	3.7%	10.4%	10.8%
<i>Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey Estimates</i>			

## Employment and Occupation

Boylston is conveniently located close to several major cities and centers of employment which offer a variety of jobs. Many residents live in Boylston and commute to their jobs outside of town, however an estimated 9% of residents work from home. The average commute time to work is 29 minutes and almost 20% of residents have commutes longer than 45 minutes. One third of residents work outside Worcester County, and the majority of commuters are either driving alone (82.3%) or carpooling (6.8%).

The majority of Boylston residents (52%) are employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. The greatest increase in Boylston employment since 2000 has been in the service industry, which gained 211 jobs or an increase of 50.4%. According to the most recent American Community Survey estimates, the greatest loss of jobs since 2000 occurred in the sales and office industry, which decreased by 26 jobs or -6.0%. However, the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 resulted in an economic shutdown and an unprecedented amount of workers were furloughed or laid off across the United States, including Boylston. Many of these jobs were in the leisure and hospitality industry, which includes food service, amusements, recreation, hotels, and more. While the economy will re-open and rebuild in the coming years, this will undoubtedly have an enormous long-term impact on both the livelihoods of workers and spending habits of consumers. Some changes that Boylston may experience include an increase of those working from home permanently, a greater need for fast internet connections for households, a focus on outdoor recreation and dining experiences, and a greater need for affordable housing.



*Notice of closure during COVID-19 pandemic  
Photo credit: Parks & Recreation*

*Table 5: Boylston Employment by Occupation, 2018*

Occupation	Employed	Percent of Total
Total civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,531	100%
Management, business, science, and arts	1,316	52.0%
Service	419	16.6%
Sales and office	433	17.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	174	6.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving	189	7.5%

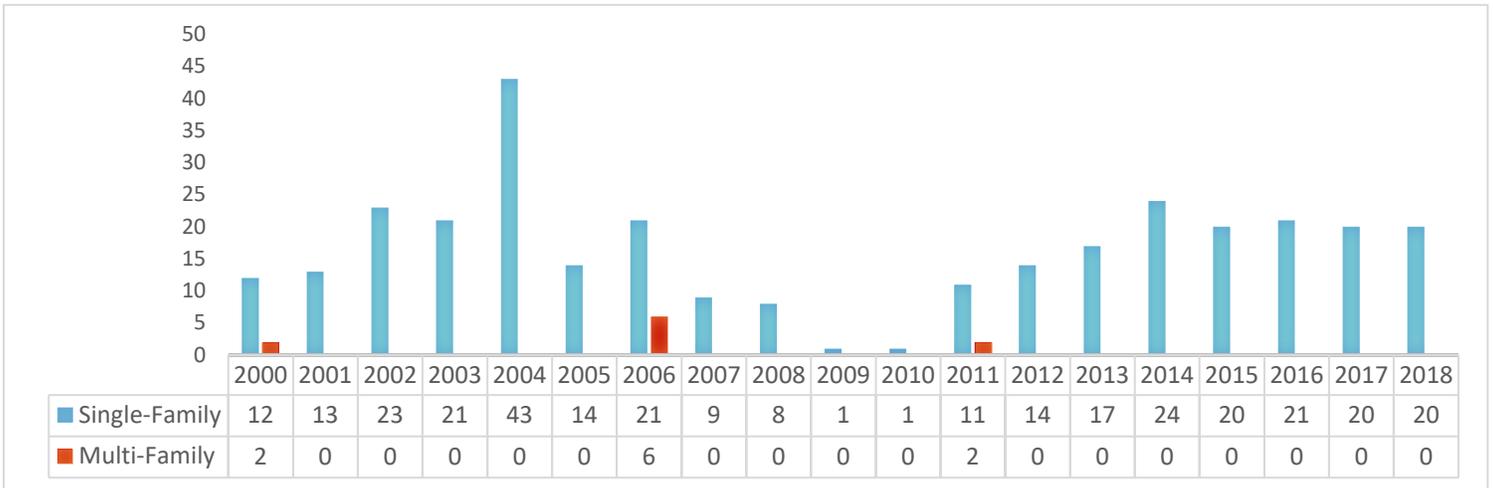
*Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2014-2018*

## Residential Growth

Boylston experienced a surge in housing unit building permits issued between 2000 and 2006, which was part of a major housing boom that occurred on a national level. The housing crisis in 2008 was a national event that had immediate local impacts which communities like Boylston have slowly been recovering from. Between 2007 and 2010, residential growth fell to fewer than 9 building permits per year. Since

2011, residential growth in Boylston has gradually been on the rise and building permits have remained between 11 and 24 issued permits per year. With an aging population and fewer younger residents moving into town, Boylston may be facing a rate of growth that is slower than that of other Massachusetts cities and towns. As can be seen in Figure 2, the vast majority of issued building permits are for single-family structures as the town’s zoning is unfavorable to dense residential development. Only 8 permits in total have been granted for multi-family structures since 2000.

Figure 2: Boylston Housing Unit Building Permits, 2000-2018



As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 economic shutdown in 2020 is likely to have a major longer-term effects on housing. As working from home becomes a more plausible option for workers in the long-term, attractive small towns like Boylston may see an influx of residents who no longer need to commute and are looking to relocate away from pricier metro areas. Additionally, the demand for affordable housing will continue to rise as unemployment rates remain high and market rate housing becomes unfeasible for many families and individuals. Changes in residential growth may have drastic changes in the town’s land use and demographics, both of which have direct implications for open space and recreation.

## Growth and Development Patterns

The southwest section of Boylston around the village of Morningdale is mostly built out with very little vacant buildable land. There is limited potential for future growth in this section of town. The southeast portion of Boylston along Sewall Street and bordering Shrewsbury has vacant land that is well drained and has suitable topography for building, however it lies within the Zone II and Zone III for both Boylston and Shrewsbury public water supply wells, which has implications for constraints on density. Watershed protection should remain a priority as the town wells are threatened by a lack of publicly owned land to protect their recharge areas, other than the Zone I required protected space immediately surrounding the wells.

There is increasing pressure to provide much needed affordable housing in Boylston and the Town has been exploring “friendly” 40B options under the State affordable housing program. A recently proposed development would be on a 19-acre parcel at the corner of Route 140 and Sewall Street. A zoning change

was made in 2017 to include multifamily use in the Route 140 Mixed Use Industrial Zoning District. Recent developments include construction of 66 units of apartments along N. Sewall Street and a 30-unit Senior Residential Development on S. Sewall Street, accompanied by a traffic design study for the Route 140/Sewall Street intersection area. Since 2011, Boylston has issued an average of 18 housing building permits per year. This varies due to the phasing of permitted residential subdivisions.

Approximately one-third of the town is owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection, due to Boylston hosting a large portion of the Wachusett Reservoir. More than two-thirds of the town is subject to the Watershed Protection Act (WsPA), which regulates land disturbance and land use around the primary water supplies serving Greater Boston – the Quabbin Reservoir, the Wachusett Reservoir, and the Ware River – and their tributaries. The state’s ownership of so much land in Boylston, coupled with WsPA restrictions, contributes to the limited amount of development that can occur here and the areas that development is restricted to. Planning efforts have shown that residents desire Boylston to remain a small town and prefer that the business activity be concentrated along Route 140<sup>4</sup>.

Route 140 has become the focus of commercial development for Boylston due to the area’s physical, infrastructure, and economic characteristics, plus land use regulations, market demand, and competing opportunities in the region. Development constraints in this corridor include the lack of sewer service, current zoning, wetlands, poorly drained soils, and steep slopes. The Route 140 corridor is zoned for both commercial and industrial development and although the zoning has been in place for decades, there are large tracts of vacant land. The proximity to I-290 and an available interchange continues to make this area attractive for development.

Like many of the surrounding towns, Boylston has large areas covered with thin glacial till, including the eastern half of the planning area from the Shrewsbury town line to East Temple Street. Since till-based soils tend to transmit water slowly, they are often unsuitable for septic systems and water supplies. In addition, swamp deposits exist in several parts of the corridor planning area. As might be expected, the swamp deposits occur in low-lying areas and usually coincide with wetlands. The soils tend to be dense, poorly drained, and wet.

The historic Boylston Center has had most of the frontage lots built upon, as these lots were developed prior to current zoning codes, and most of the open space consists of wetlands and other land with building restraints. This section of the town drains directly to the Wachusett Reservoir and has been designated as part of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Land along Route 70 North and part of the “East Woods” lie in the watershed for the Wachusett Reservoir where much of the land is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Historically, large scale development in the northeast section of Boylston has been rare due mainly to the physical restraints of the land such as rock outcroppings, high water tables, slopes and poor soils, coupled with the lack of municipal water or sewers. However, changes in Title 5 allowing mounded septic systems and increased percolation rates, along with increased demand for land which has raised raw lot prices, have contributed to making it economically feasible to develop land in this area of town. This trend will likely continue since Boylston is a very desirable place to live and people are willing to

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<sup>4</sup> Route 140 Corridor Plan: Shrewsbury Street, Boylston, MA (2010)

commute longer distances in order to live in a place like Boylston. The close proximity to I-290 makes it easy to access the interstate highway system. Skyrocketing costs of housing in the Boston metro area have also made Boylston a more enticing community as it is comparably more affordable.

*Table 6: Land Use Change in Acres, Boylston 1971-2016*

Land Use	1971	1985	1999	2005	2016
Agriculture	294.53	292.07	224.61	224.90	375.37
Forest	8,433.88	8,113.38	7,673.50	7,344.66	6,937.95
Recreation & Urban Open Space	159.90	162.16	375.91	362.96	225.59
Multifamily Residential	0.00	44.06	46.40	26.76	55.56
Moderate-Density Residential	253.64	294.37	300.46	147.79	n/a
Low-Density Residential	582.72	792.11	1,214.19	931.97	614.25
Commercial	39.09	42.06	48.17	44.17	219.21
Industrial	7.23	19.12	22.65	46.53	26.43
Transportation	28.17	28.17	28.17	32.00	399.92
Open Land, Mining & Other Uses	385.05	406.09	261.76	149.89	51.56
Wetlands	101.67	92.31	92.76	899.34	1,312.30
Water	2,359.67	2,359.67	2,356.99	2,428.99	2,421.74
Total	12,645.56	12,645.55	12,645.56	12,639.91	12,639.96

*Source: MassGIS Land Use 1971, 1985, 1999, 2005, 2016*

It is imperative to clarify that the 2016 Land Cover/Land Use dataset from the State does not fully conform to the classification schemes of previous land use data from MassGIS (1951-1999; 2005), therefore it is a challenge to compare land use of 2016 to previous years. This statewide dataset contains a combination of land cover mapping from 2016 aerial imagery and land use derived from standardized assessor parcel information for Massachusetts<sup>5</sup>. Moderate-density residential is no longer a category in the 2016 data, as the only residential categories are single-family (low-density), mixed-use primarily residential, and multi-family. The 2016 commercial category also encompasses mixed-use primarily commercial, accounting for the significant increase of acreage in the commercial category. With improvements in satellite imagery technology and GIS, tree cover over roads/right-of-ways which was previously considered forest, has been amended to be classified as transportation. Local road areas were not classified in 2005 as transportation, only larger roads such as highways, which accounts for the spike in acreage within the 2016 transportation category. The increase in acreage classified as wetlands is not due to a sudden increase in the amount of wetlands in Boylston, but rather an improvement in the ways these lands are now categorized. In summary, it is important to note that changes in acreage in Table 6 may reflect changing methods of land use classification, as opposed to actual on-the-ground changes.

Taking into account the evolving classification methods, Boylston’s change in land use offers some insight into what potential housing, commercial, and open space needs might exist. Reviewing historical land use patterns is significant in order to clearly comprehend the former land uses and understand over time

<sup>5</sup> <https://docs.digital.mass.gov/dataset/massgis-data-2016-land-coverland-use>

how the uses change with varying need. Significant increases or decreases in certain categories may signal a need for action, as the Town aims to strike a balance between developed land versus land that should be preserved.

## Infrastructure

There are 75 miles of roadways within the town of Boylston. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) roadways include MA-140 and MA-70, totaling 10 miles (13%). Interstate 290 intersects Boylston in the south for about 1.5 miles (1.5%), with an entrance on Church Street. There is also an entrance on State Route I-70, just south of Boylston in Shrewsbury. A majority of the roadways (85%) within the town are classified as local roadways. The major east-west roadways in Boylston are Central Street and Route 140. The major north-south roadway is MA-70. There is no interchange access point to I-290, however the closest interchange for this interstate is located just south of the town's border in Shrewsbury.



*Massachusetts Route 70 in Boylston  
Photo Credit: Bing Images*

The region is not connected by rail or bus service, although the Town of Boylston is a member of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. The closest fixed route bus service extends to the West Boylston Walmart via Park Avenue and West Boylston Street<sup>6</sup>. Boylston is within the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit buffer. This provides transportation via regular WRTA fixed route bus service and paratransit service to seniors and people with disabilities who live within the 37 communities that comprise the WRTA's service area<sup>7</sup>. A new prepaid automated system has replaced the former cash and ticket system as of 2019. Those who wish to travel using the commuter rail can go to the nearest MBTA stations at Worcester, Grafton, or Westborough to ride the Framingham/Worcester line. International air service is available approximately one hour away at Logan International Airport in Boston and national air service is available approximately 30 minutes away at the Worcester Regional Airport. View the Regional Context map for more details.

Boylston has no public sewer and currently has no plans to provide sewer in the future. The entire town is served by private septic systems, many of which are in failing condition. The Town maintains a water department that combines two small water districts. The Boylston Water District is a body corporate under and according to the provisions of Chapter 421 of the Acts of 1951 of the General Laws of Massachusetts. It is governed by an elected board of three commissioners and the day-to-day operations are conducted by the Superintendent, who is appointed by the Board of Commissioners<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Worcester Regional Transit Authority website: <https://www.therta.com/>

<sup>7</sup> WRTA Paratransit Service website: <https://www.wrtaparatransit.com/>

<sup>8</sup> Boylston Water District website: <http://www.boylstonwaterdistrict.org/>

The Town of Boylston's water supply consists of five gravel packed groundwater wells, all of which are 90 feet deep and draw water from deposits of gravel and sand. Four of the wells are located in proximity of Route 140 and Route 70. Additionally, there are five pumping stations, three storage tanks, and two booster stations that service the customers of the Boylston Water District. The remainder of the town, particularly the area north of the Town Center, is served by private wells. Various individual housing projects are hooked up to the public water supply and/or common septic systems.

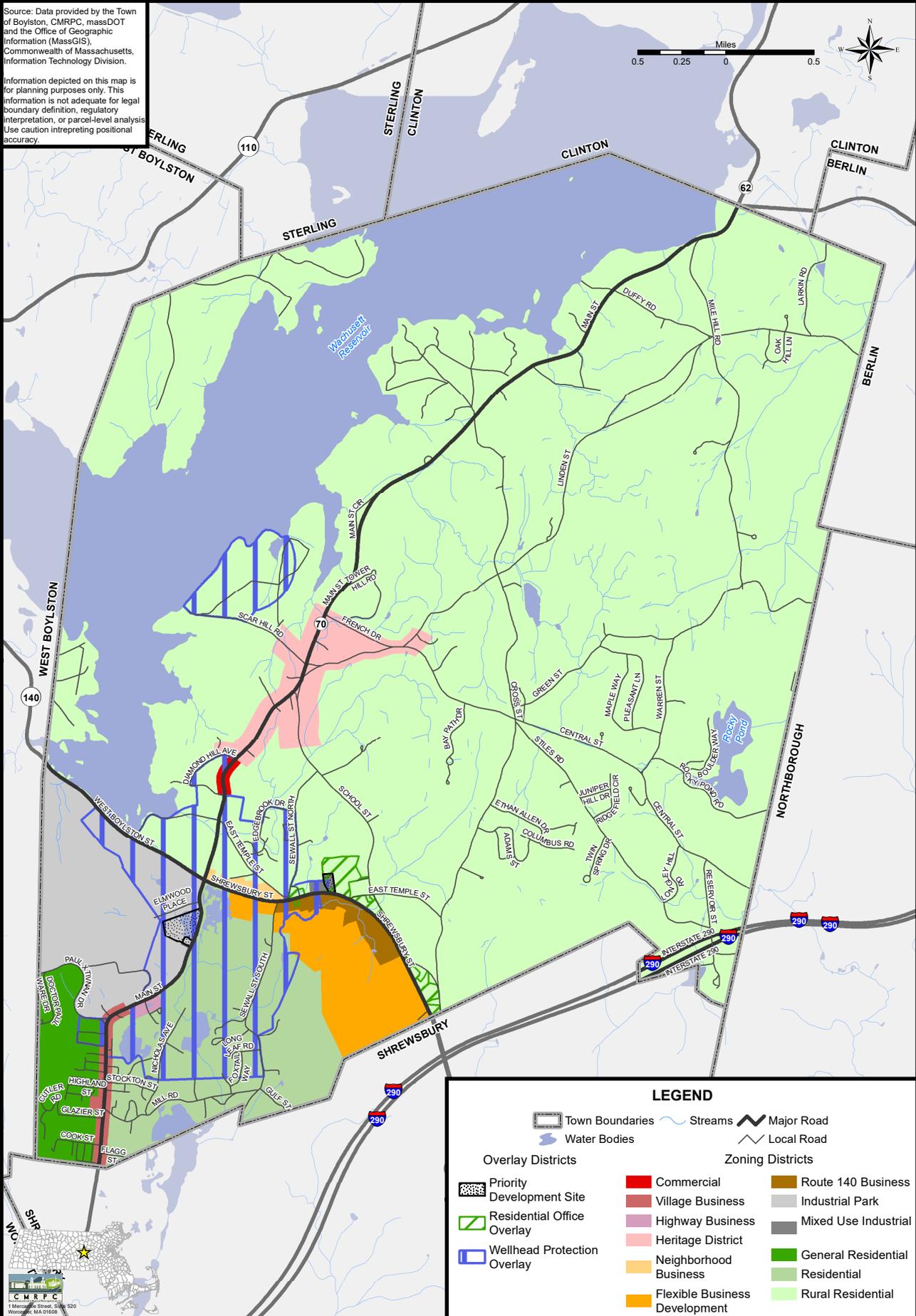
The Boylston Water District voted in 2011 to enact mandatory water use restricts effective May 1<sup>st</sup> until September 30<sup>th</sup> each calendar year. Water supply protection measures have also been established by the Boylston Water District for coordinating local project review. A Wellhead Protection District Bylaw has been established to ensure quality drinking water is provided to Boylston residents by means of limited land use controls within direct recharge areas of the Boylston and Morningdale Water District Wells.

# ZONING DISTRICTS & OVERLAYS

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, MassDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



**LEGEND**

Town Boundaries	Streams	Major Road
Water Bodies	Local Road	
<b>Overlay Districts</b>		
Priority Development Site	Residential Office Overlay	Wellhead Protection Overlay
<b>Zoning Districts</b>		
Commercial	Village Business	Highway Business
Heritage District	Neighborhood Business	Flexible Business Development
Route 140 Business	Industrial Park	Mixed Use Industrial
General Residential	Residential	Rural Residential

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

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## Geology, Soils, and Topography

The Town of Boylston is approximately 19.75 square miles or 12,640 acres. Within its land area, there are many sand and gravel deposits, areas of fine grain deposits, and flood plains. Fewer parts of town consist of till or bedrock. Between Main Street and Sewall Street is where the largest area of sand and gravel deposits is located. It extends east of Sewall Street south to the town line, except for the areas around Sewall Brook, Sewall Pond, and Spruce Pond, which is a flood plain alluvium area. Other sand and gravel locations are can be found near Tahanto Regional Middle/High School and running north toward the town of Clinton, including Sawyers Bluff and the area around Pine Grove Cemetery and Tahanto Point, just west of the Wachusett Reservoir.

The majority of the land in Boylston is till, bedrock, or some combination of both. The areas north of Central Street beyond the Mount Pleasant Country Club have the tendency to be more rough and stony terrain with rock outcrops. Three main soil types exist in Boylston, including:

*Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor:* Very deep, nearly level to steep soils that are excessively drained and somewhat excessively drained. Located on outwash plains.

*Paxton-Woodbridge-Canton:* Very deep, nearly level to steep soils that are well drained and moderately well drained. Located on uplands.

*Chatfield-Hollis:* Moderately deep and shallow, gently sloping to moderately steep soils that are well drained or somewhat excessively drained. Located on uplands.

Different soils are more suitable for different purposes, be it residential construction, farmland, fruit orchards, open space, or a variety of other circumstances. Boylston has a mix of forest communities, including a white pine/oak forest and mixed oak forests. The white pine forest is dominated by white pine, red oak, and white oak, plus a scattering of red maple, black birch, and black cherry. Shrubs include lowbush and highbush blueberries, black huckleberry, witch-hazel, and American chestnut sprouts. These forests are frequently located on glacial till soils of drumlins and moraines. The mixed oak forest is dominated by red, white, and black oaks, plus pitch pine and white oak can also be found. In the mixed oak forest, both lowbush and highbush blueberries and black huckleberry can be found, and soils are often shallow.

# SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES

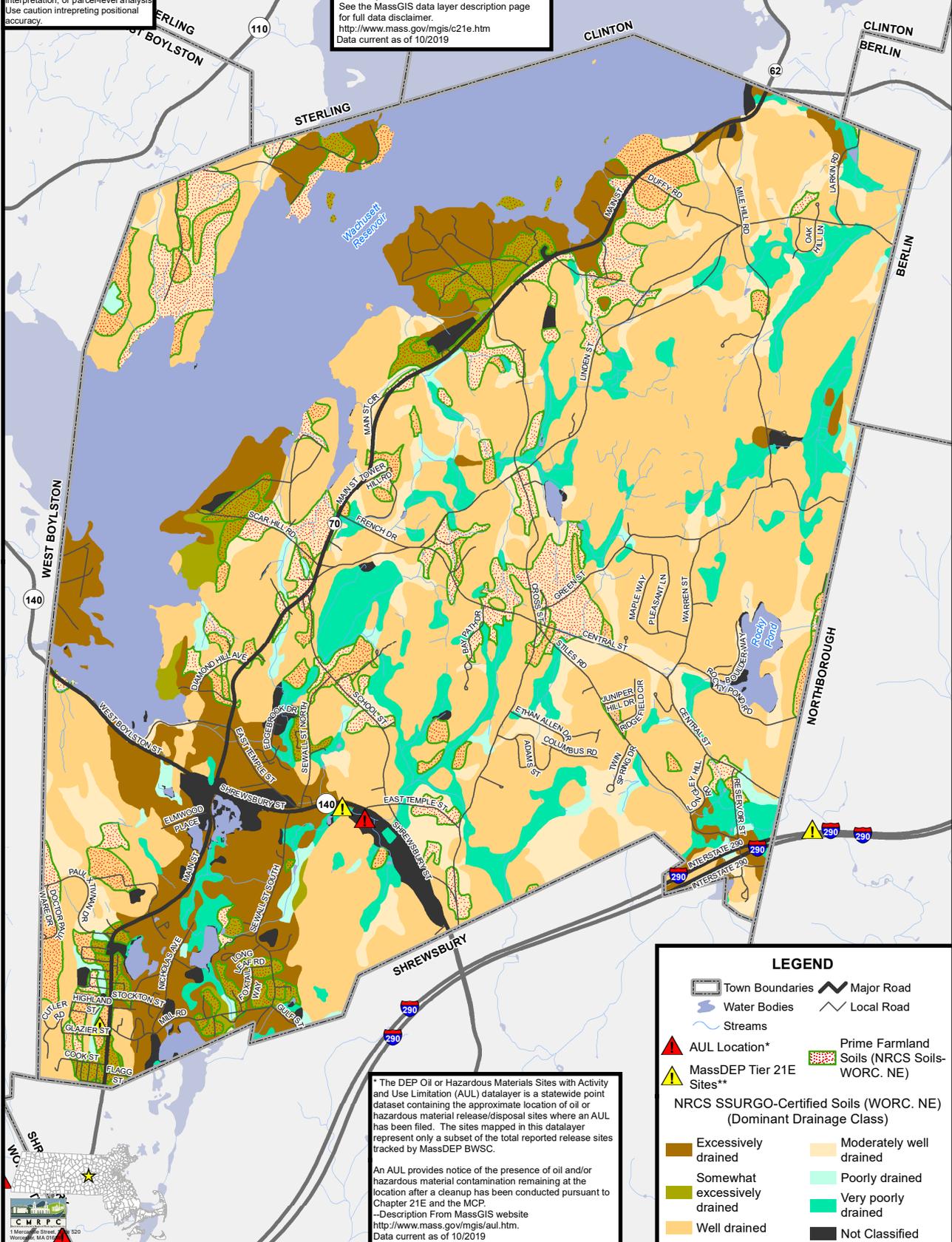
## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, MassDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.

\*\*Location data contained in this datalayer are based on MassDEP staff interpretation of information provided by PRPs and their LSPs. Point features in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" of site locations based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.

----Description From MassGIS website  
See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.  
<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/c21e.htm>  
Data current as of 10/2019



**LEGEND**

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Water Bodies
- Local Road
- Streams
- AUL Location\*
- MassDEP Tier 21E Sites\*\*
- Prime Farmland Soils (NRCS Soils-WORC, NE)
- NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils (WORC, NE) (Dominant Drainage Class)
- Excessively drained
- Somewhat excessively drained
- Well drained
- Moderately well drained
- Poorly drained
- Very poorly drained
- Not Classified

\*The DEP Oil or Hazardous Materials Sites with Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) datalayer is a statewide point dataset containing the approximate location of oil or hazardous material release/disposal sites where an AUL has been filed. The sites mapped in this datalayer represent only a subset of the total reported release sites tracked by MassDEP BWSC.

An AUL provides notice of the presence of oil and/or hazardous material contamination remaining at the location after a cleanup has been conducted pursuant to Chapter 21E and the MCP.

----Description From MassGIS website  
<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/aui.htm>  
Data current as of 10/2019



# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

## Landscape Character

The Boylston landscape is characterized by mostly rolling hills with many scenic views from several locations within the Town. The view from Hillside, the site of the Town office complex, looks east towards Shrewsbury with church steeples visible in the distance. Mount Wachusett can be seen from the Route 140 area and off Linden Street. Mount Monadnock and the New Hampshire hills can be seen from Linden Street and parts of the East Woods. Mount Wachusett and the Reservoir and the western towns can be seen from Tower Hill. The center of Boylston is a typical picturesque New England small town with a center Common, old Burying Ground, white church, and stone public buildings surrounded by 18<sup>th</sup> century homes.



*Scenic view from the Parks and Recreation Office  
Photo Credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

The land north of Route 140 is about 80% covered with second growth mixed pine and hardwood forest. Most of this land was farmed in the past and the previous agricultural land has returned to woods. This land, as in most other Worcester County towns, is crisscrossed with miles of beautiful stone walls. This is an aesthetic as well as wildlife habitat asset. The existing farmlands lend a rural character to the Town. Boylston's history as an agricultural community today makes the preservation and protection of this remaining land at the forefront of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Town of Boylston has large undisturbed tracts of forestland throughout the community; it makes up almost 60% of the remaining undeveloped land and several areas of significant environmental interest. The primary type of forest habitat that exists is known as the transition hardwoods or a white pine/hemlock forest. White pine is commonly used for lumber and hemlock is commonly used in construction. The many ponds provide for recreational opportunities such as swimming, fishing, and canoeing. The Wachusett Reservoir, in addition to being a major water source, provides an excellent fishing spot as well. The hills of Boylston include the following:

- Tower Hill (591 ft.) is located in the western section of the town, near the Wachusett Reservoir, and can be accessed off of Route 70;
- Green Hill (604 ft.) and Faggot Hill (554 ft.) are located in the northwest section of the town, on the eastern side of Route 70;
- Kendall Hill (535 ft.), Pulpit Hill (515 ft.), and Diamond Hill (620 ft.) are located along the western border of the town, proximate to the Wachusett Reservoir;
- Stiles Hill (581 ft.), Barnard Hill (561 ft.), and Longley Hill (669 ft.) are located in the southeastern section of Boylston, near the Shrewsbury border;
- Rattlesnake Hill (548 ft.) (which also extends into Berlin) and Larkin Hill (576 ft.) are located in the northeast corner of the town just south of Route 62; and
- Apron Hill (630 ft.) is centrally located in between Cross St, Central St, and Linden St.

The Town of Boylston Highway Department and the Cemetery Commission are actively engaged in assessing, maintaining, and, where necessary, removing and replanting public shade trees and street trees. The topography of Boylston can be viewed on the Soils and Geologic Features Map.

Although the town retains its agricultural, rural, and colonial history to a certain extent, Boylston is very much a suburban community of Boston and Worcester. The Town has little in the way of commercial businesses and service providers, but has an excellent school system and other unique features like the Tower Hill Botanic Garden, a beautiful public library that was renovated in 2017, and a very active historical society. Living in Boylston offers both the opportunity to enjoy the charm of a smaller community as well as the benefits of living near denser population.

## Water Resources

The water resources in town provide not only a private and public water supply for thousands of people, but they also function as flood control, recreational opportunities (such as swimming, boating, and fishing), wildlife habitat areas, ground water supply, pollution prevention and storm damage control sources.

### Rivers, Streams, Ponds

Almost 19% of Boylston’s coverage is surface water (2,356 acres) and 0.7% (93 acres) is wetlands. The Town has a mix of ponds, streams, wetlands and aquifers while the community’s dominant feature is the Wachusett Reservoir.

### Ponds

Some smaller ponds in Boylston include Rocky Pond, which received its name from the many boulders that surround it, Pout Pond, Halls Pond, Flagg Pond, Sewall Pond, Spruce Pond, and Newton Pond/Mud Pond, which is partially located in Shrewsbury as well.

Located fully in Boylston, Rocky Pond offers water for an abundance of wildlife. Many cottages dot its shoreline and it is adjacent to agricultural land. It is glacial in origin and is used recreationally for swimming, boating, and fishing. The pond contains peat bog with pitcher plants and it contains only native plant species.



*Flagg Pond*

*Photo Credit: OSRP Committee*

Sewall Pond consists of eleven spring-fed acres. Sewall Pond is part of the Blackstone River Watershed and feeds into Mud Pond (Newton Pond), which feeds into Lake Quinsigamond. Sewall Pond is home to a variety of wildlife such as deer, great blue heron, beaver, and rare species such as the wood turtle. However, its water quality remains threatened by contamination from stormwater runoff. Sewall Pond no longer has a public beach.

Camp Harrington (YMCA) and Gothering Beach have historically provided recreation and beach facilities available to both Boylston and Shrewsbury residents for decades, however the property has been sold and partially developed, and the beach is no longer open to the public for recreational use. 18 acres of this property remain undeveloped. The future of this once popular beach is unknown. Townsfolk would like to see the land conserved and open to the public for recreational use, however the logistics and price of land acquisition and maintenance remain great barriers.

Spruce Pond has high scenic value, containing peat bog mats, black spruce trees, and a wide variety of wildlife.

## Brooks



*Wrack Meadow Brook*  
*Photo Credit: SVT*

French Brook, sometimes referred to as Mill Brook, flows through the easterly and north central parts of the town into the Wachusett Reservoir. It is called French Brook because prior to the construction of the Reservoir, the brook flowed for a long distance through land that was once owned by a settler named Jonathan French. It took on the additional name of Mill Brook from the fact that there were several saw mills built upon the stream. There are two small brooks in the northeasterly part of the town, one of which is known as Hastings Brook, which flows into the Wachusett Reservoir. The other brook is called Wrack Meadow Brook and flows into North Brook in Berlin, which is a tributary of the Assabet River.

Malagasco or Muddy Brook as it is more generally called, rises easterly of the village of Boylston Center and flows into the Wachusett Reservoir. It has been designated an Outstanding Resource Water. Sewall Brook flows east of Cross Street, crosses Route 140 and south to Sewall Pond (Blackstone Watershed). Cold Harbor Brook starts at Rocky Pond and flows southeasterly into Northborough and is located in the SuAsCo Watershed.

## Reservoirs

In 1908, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) dammed the south branch of the Nashua River to create the 4,135-acre Wachusett Reservoir as a clean, safe, drinking water supply for the Boston Metro area. The Wachusett Reservoir is located in Boylston, West Boylston, Clinton and Sterling and it covers 6.5 square miles (4,135 acres). Thirty-seven (37) miles of shoreline border the reservoir and it has an average depth of 48 feet. Gradually, throughout the past 30 years, almost 80% of the shoreline has been opened for fishing. While fishing is permitted, there is no boating or ice fishing allowed in the winter at the reservoir. Other recreational activities are limited or prohibited on publicly-owned



*Trail along the Wachusett Reservoir*  
*Photo credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

watershed lands surrounding the reservoir. There are three main tributaries that feed the reservoir, the Quinapoxet and Stillwater Rivers, plus the Quabbin Reservoir. The Quinapoxet and Stillwater empty into Thomas Basin and the Quabbin Reservoir is connected to the Wachusett through an underground aqueduct.

The Reservoir and its watershed serve as the location of the former Sawyers Mills, breathtaking scenery, fishing spots, and trails for hiking and cross-country skiing.

## **Wetlands & Floodplains**

According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Boylston has nine Certified Vernal Pools and many Potential Vernal Pools<sup>9</sup>. Vernal pools are small, shallow ponds characterized by lack of fish, periods of dryness, a variety of wildlife species such as amphibians and other organisms that spend their lives in vernal pools. Clusters of potential vernal pools indicate particularly good habitat for species that depend on vernal pools such as water scorpions, spotted turtles, wood ducks, water bugs, ribbon snakes, salamanders (several species), fairy shrimp, isopods, wood frogs, spadefoot toads, and fingernail clams. Certified vernal pools are protected if they fall under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.00), however certification only establishes that it functions as a vernal pool and does not determine that the pool is within a resource area protected by the Wetlands Protection Act. Certified vernal pools are also afforded protection under the state Water Quality Certification regulations (401 Program), the state Title 5 regulations, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act regulations.

## **Aquifers**

Aquifers are glacial formations that are capable of storing and yielding significant quantities of water to serve as a private or public water supply. Water saturates the soil during periods of precipitation that in turn migrates downward to the saturated zone. The water table is the area between the saturated zone and unsaturated zone and when more precipitation enters the aquifer than is taken out, the water table rises. Boylston has made several efforts to protect areas around private and public wells from contamination, including the adoption of a Wellhead Protection District in 1999. This district includes the Zone II areas, which are areas of an aquifer that contribute water to a well under pumping and recharge conditions.

Boylston has some very productive aquifers located near or along the Wachusett Reservoir and in the southwest corner of Town near Spruce, Sewall, Hall and Newton Ponds. Morningdale Water District Wells 1 and 2 and Boylston Water District Wells 1 and 2 are located in this area. The two water districts have combined to form the Boylston Water District, previously described in the Infrastructure section of this plan. Boylston Water District Well 3 is located at the intersection of Routes 70 and 140 and off Scar Hill Road near the shore of the Wachusett Reservoir within DCR land near the Pine Grove Cemetery. The average number of gallons of water used per resident per day for the Boylston Water District is 66 gallons per day. The quality of the water derived from these wells is excellent. The only water treatment required

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/vernal-pools>

is to maintain pH and alkalinity to adjust for corrosion control, by means of adding sodium hydroxide. The water is also treated with sodium hypochlorite for disinfection<sup>10</sup>.

Aquifer recharge areas consist of the Quinsigamond valley extending from Route 140 south to Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester and beyond, with municipal wells in Boylston, Shrewsbury and Worcester. The Nashua River valley, including the Wachusett Reservoir, consists of extensive deposits of water bearing gravel.

## **Watersheds**

One unique characteristic of Boylston is that three different watersheds divide it. The largest is the Nashua River Watershed, which drains into the Wachusett Reservoir. In the eastern portion of town is the Concord Watershed (also known as the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord, or SuAsCo, Watershed) that drains east, and in the southwest corner is the Blackstone River watershed, which drains to the south.

### **Nashua River Watershed**

The Nashua River Watershed is unusual in several of its characteristics. The watershed is located in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire, with 454 square miles and 74 square miles being located in each state respectively. The Nashua River itself flows for almost 56 miles with 46 of those miles flowing through the state of Massachusetts. Twenty-four Massachusetts and seven New Hampshire communities encompass this major watershed. The Nashua River was previously a glacial lake that flowed to the south through Worcester and its surrounding area. Its name derives from the Native American word Nash-a-way which means “river with the pebbled bottom.” As a result of the Pleistocene glaciation, the direction of the river actually reversed thereby creating the Nashua River Valley. The mainstream of the river flows northward from its impoundment at the Wachusett Reservoir (a large portion of which is in Boylston), and it travels through north-central Massachusetts before emptying into the Merrimack River in southern New Hampshire. The Wachusett Reservoir provides drinking water to two-thirds of Massachusetts’ population.

Although not actually in or near the Town of Boylston, the Squannassit and Petapawag (“swampy place/land”) are Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) that have local and regional significance. These were designated in 2002 and are located in the Nashua River Watershed. Because Boylston is also in this watershed, it is important to note their designation in this plan, from a regional perspective. These two ACECs have an amazingly diverse concentration of very significant environmental resources, and as a part of their designation, providing long-term stewardship of these environmental resources is important. The Squannassit and Petapawag ACECs are rich in hydrological, geological, ecological and cultural resources such as variable soils, diverse habitat types, rich biodiversity, rare, threatened and endangered plants and wildlife, natural communities and even ancient archaeological sites as well.

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<sup>10</sup> 2019 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for Boylston Water District

Several major priorities exist for the continued protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife population, and recreational opportunities provided by the diverse natural populations and open space areas in the Nashua River Watershed. The Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) is a non-profit organization with the mission to “to work for a healthy ecosystem with clean water and open spaces for human and wildlife communities, where people work together to sustain mutual economic and environmental well-being in the Nashua River watershed.” The goals that guide this organization include:

- Restore and protect water quality and quantity for people, fish, and wildlife
- Conserve open spaces for water quality, wildlife habitat, farms, forests, and recreation
- Encourage careful land use with well-planned development

Tahanto Regional Middle/High School, East Woods, Boylston Town Center, Tower Hill Botanic Garden, and The Haven Country Club (formerly Mount Pleasant Country Club) are located within this watershed (north of Route 140).

### **Concord River Watershed**

The Concord River Watershed flows into the Merrimack River and is located in the Metro West area of Massachusetts. This watershed is located in all or part of 36 communities in Massachusetts and it has a total drainage area of 377 square miles. The Sudbury, Concord, and Assabet Rivers are the three major rivers that run through the watershed and in 1999, they were all recognized for their ecological, historical, scenic and recreational values. Also within this watershed are two national wildlife refuges (NWR), the Great Meadows NWR and the Assabet NWR. The very first designation of an ACEC, the Great Cedar Swamp in Westborough, which is one of the largest wetlands in Central Massachusetts, is within this watershed.

OARS has the mission to protect, preserve, and enhance the natural and recreational features of the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers, their tributaries and watersheds. Their priorities for these areas include the following:

- Raise awareness of the natural beauty of the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord rivers, their habitat values and their importance to the watershed communities, as well as bring attention to the problems that affect the rivers
- Conduct various monitoring programs to assess the health of the rivers and safety for recreation
- Work collaboratively with community members, local, state, and federal officials, and other stakeholders, with the goal of the rivers becoming healthy enough for swimming and fishing, as required by state and federal standards

Rocky Pond, Wrack Meadow, and Straw Hollow are located within the Concord River Watershed.

## **Blackstone River Watershed**

The Blackstone River originates in the Worcester area (as a series of streams) and flows to the south into Rhode Island for 48 miles where it empties into Narragansett Bay. This watershed encompasses all or part of 29 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and over 1,300 acres of lakes, ponds and reservoirs. Major tributaries to the Blackstone River are the Quinsigamond, West, Mumford, Mill, and Peters Rivers.

The Blackstone River has a great deal of historical significance to Massachusetts and Rhode Island, helping the Valley earn its designation as the “Birthplace of America’s Industrial Revolution”. Due to the power of the river, settlers took advantage of the benefits that it had in their livelihoods. The Blackstone River supplied hydropower, water, and disposal venues for mills producing thread, cloth, dyed materials, hats, rubber, wire, and machinery. By the early 1900s the status of being “America’s hardest working river” took its toll on its ecosystems<sup>11</sup>. All of this activity left the Blackstone River severely polluted with untreated sewage, detergents, solvents, heavy metals, and other industrial wastes.

The Blackstone River Watershed Association is a non-profit that was founded in 1976 as an organization dedicated to restoring, enhancing, and preserving the river and its watershed. Their mission is to engage, educate and advocate to improve water quality in the Blackstone River Watershed. To achieve this goal, the priorities of this organization include:

- Engage the public in watershed stewardship activities
- Educate members, supporters, and residents on watershed protection strategies
- Advocate to local residents, community leaders, non-profit partners, and state regulators to take actions that will help to ensure our waterways continue to provide healthy habitat and enjoyable recreational opportunities

Hillside Field and Gym, Spruce Pond, Boylston Elementary School, Sewall Pond, Newton Pond, and Morningdale Manor Playing Fields and Playground are located within this watershed.

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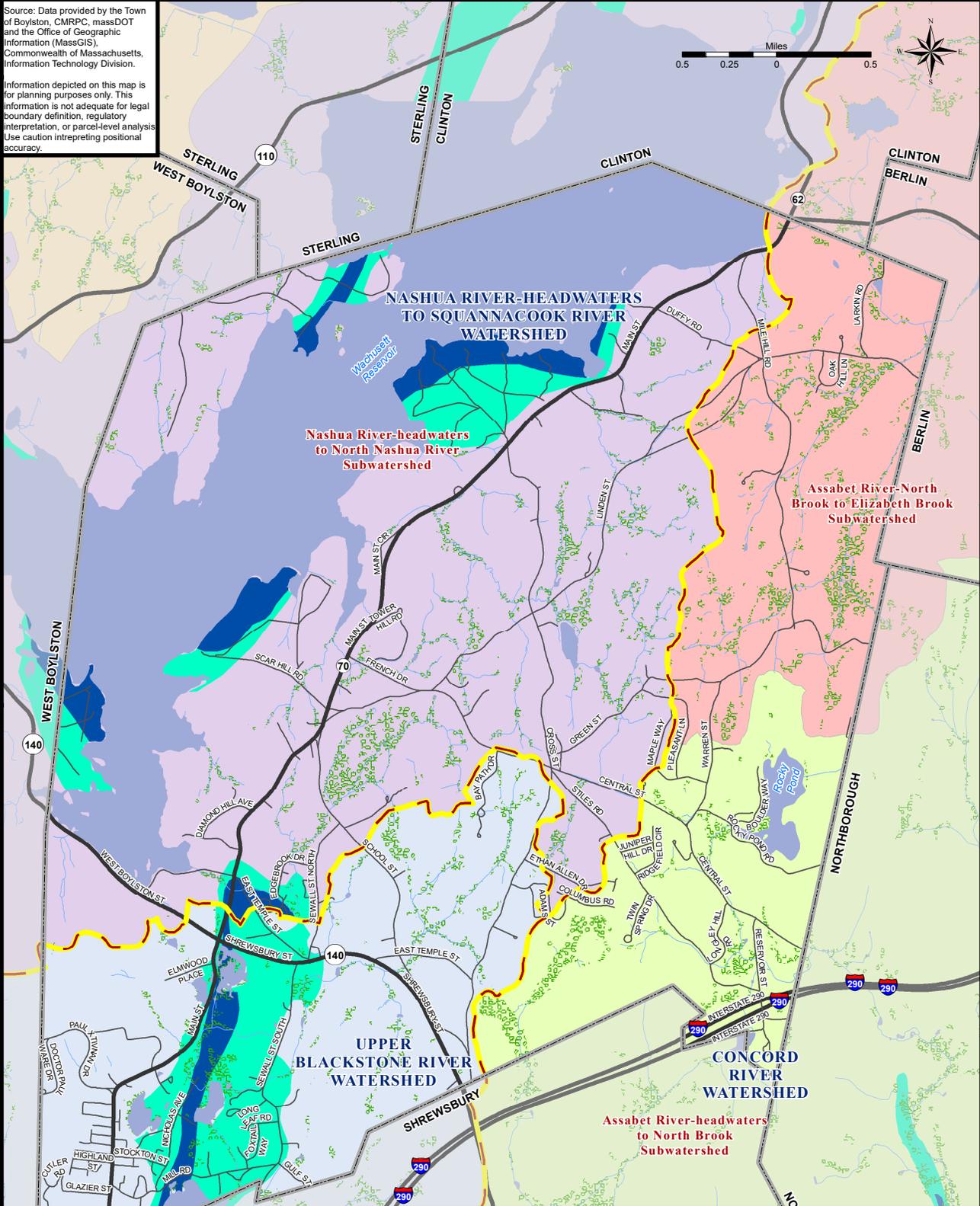
<sup>11</sup> [http://www.thebrwa.org/about\\_us.htm](http://www.thebrwa.org/about_us.htm)

# WATER RESOURCES MAP (PART A)

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, MassDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



**LEGEND**

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Water Bodies
- Streams
- DEP Wetlands
- Aquifers
  - High Yield (> 300 gpm)
  - Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)
- NCRS HUC Subbasin Boundary
- NCRS HUC Watershed Boundary
- NCRS HUC Subwatersheds
  - Assabet River-North Brook to Elizabeth Brook
  - Assabet River-headwaters to North Brook
  - Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River
  - Quinsigamond River
  - Stillwater River

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

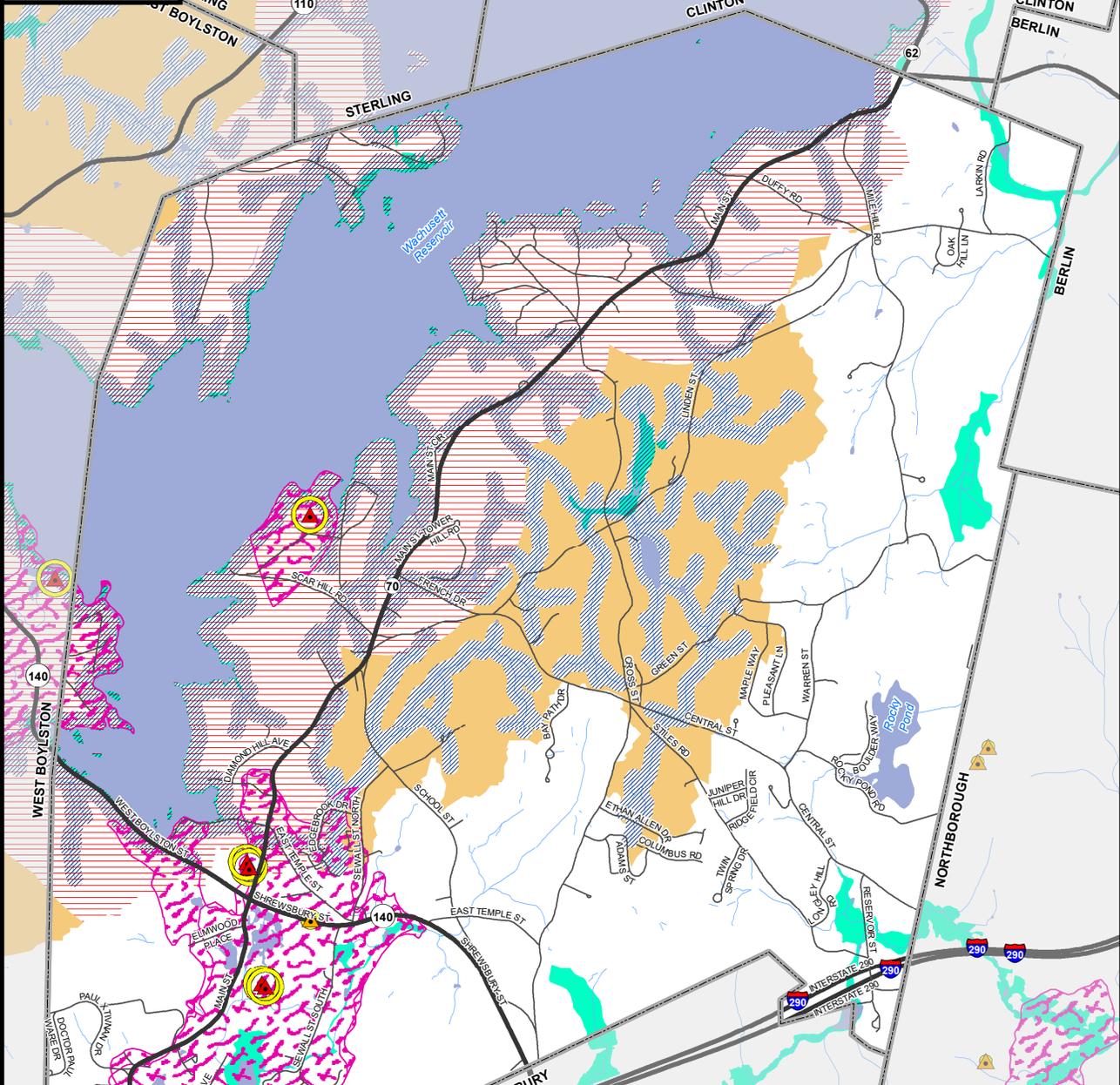
# WATER RESOURCES MAP (PART B)

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.

- (1) Data current as of 01/2019
- (2) Data current as of 10/2019
- (3) Data current as of 04/2017



### LEGEND

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Town Boundaries</li> <li> Water Bodies</li> <li> Streams</li> <li> 100-year Flood Area (FEMA)</li> <li> National Flood Hazard Layer, DFIRM/Q3 Data)</li> <li> DEP Approved Zone I (2)</li> <li> Approved Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II) (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Major Road</li> <li> Local Road</li> <li> Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (2)</li> <li> Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone A (3)</li> <li> Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone B (3)</li> <li> Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone C (3)</li> </ul>	<p>Public Water Supplies (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Community Groundwater Well</li> <li> Community Surface Water Source</li> <li> Transient Non-Community</li> </ul>
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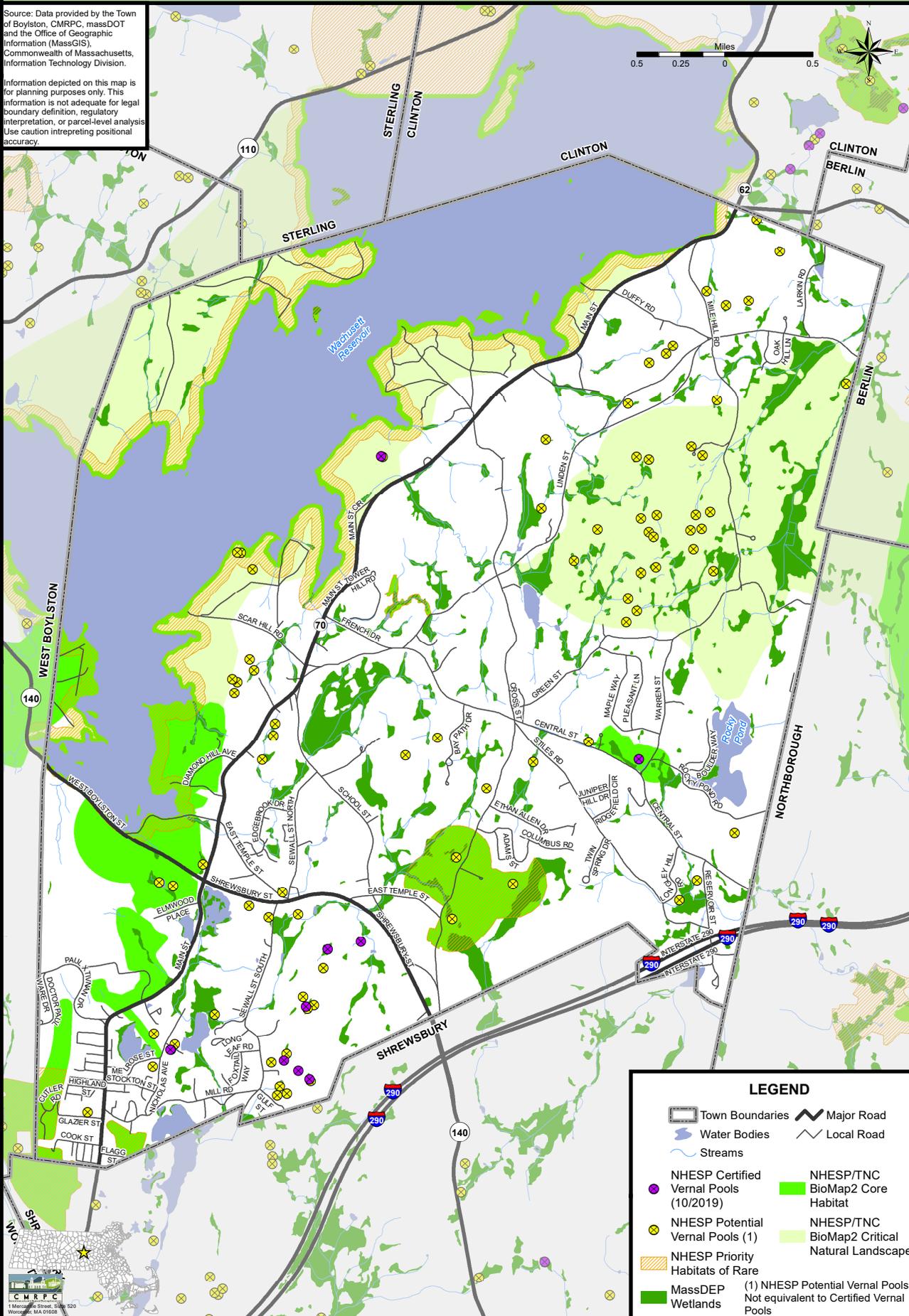
# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# HABITAT FEATURES

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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**LEGEND**

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Water Bodies
- Local Road
- Streams
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (10/2019)
- NHESP/TNC BioMap2 Core Habitat
- NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (1)
- NHESP/TNC BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare
- MassDEP Wetlands
- (1) NHESP Potential Vernal Pools: Not equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

## Vegetation

In addition to the many varieties of common vegetation mentioned above, the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife identifies a number of rare plant species in Boylston:

- **New England Blazing Star** (*Liatris novae-angliae*) – A perennial plant with tall purple spikes of flower heads that bloom from late August through October. These plants prefer open areas with dry, sandy, low-nutrient soils, usually sandplain grasslands or coastal heathlands. This is a plant variety of special concern in Boylston, and it was most recently identified in 1932.
- **Broad Waterleaf** (*Hydrophyllum canadense*) – A perennial waterleaf that grows to be slightly over a foot tall. It has light green marking on the leaves that resemble a water stain on a piece of paper. Its leaves resemble maple leaves and it has pinkish-purple flowers. The Broad Waterleaf likes rich, moist, limy woods and it is considered an endangered species, last observed in Boylston in 1943.
- **Adder’s Tongue Fern** (*Ophioglossum pusillum*) – A small terrestrial fern with a green stalk with one leaf and a fertile spike. There is a large variation in size, shape, and position of the blade and it appears any time after June. This fern prefers boggy meadows, acidic fens, the borders of marshes, wet fields and moist woodland clearings. It was last seen in Boylston in 2000 and is considered to be a threatened species.

The NHESP updated the state’s “Estimated Habitat” and “Priority Habitat” maps in January 2020, which forms the basis for much of this information. This program also identifies the importance of management and monitoring of conservation lands as important priorities. For example, wetland health depends on ensuring water quantity and quality. Similarly, the control of invasive non-native species is crucial if native habitats and species are to be preserved.

### Non-Native Exotic (Invasive) Species

Invasive plant species are abundant in the natural environment in Boylston and throughout Massachusetts. Non-native species were introduced intentionally in some areas of the state for erosion control and food supply for wildlife. However, fruits and seeds were spread unintentionally by wildlife and human nature and slowly, natural habitats across the state are being degraded. Identifying an invasive plant can be done by looking for the following characteristics:

1. It grows and matures quickly
2. It spreads quickly
3. It can flower or set seed all season
4. It has no known diseases or pests to control it
5. It thrives in many habitats and it is difficult to remove or control

Some invasive species that have been found in Massachusetts throughout the entire state include but are not limited to<sup>12</sup>:

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<sup>12</sup> MassAudubon, Invasive Plants <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants>

**Common Name****Scientific Name**

Bishop's Goutweed	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Tree-of-Heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
Japanese Barberry	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>
Common Barberry	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>
Asiatic Bittersweet	<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>
Black Swallow-Wort	<i>Cynanchum louiseae</i>
Autumn Olive	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>
European Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Yellow Iris	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>
Bell's Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera x-bella</i>
Japanese Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>
Morrow's Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera morrowii</i>
Creeping Jenny	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>
Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Two-leaved Water Milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum heterophyllum</i>
European Water Milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>
Common Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
Japanese Knotweed	<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>
Crisped Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>
Common Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>
Black Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>
Multiflora Rose	<i>Rosa multiflora</i>
Sycamore Maple	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Norway Maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>
Japanese Stilt-Grass	<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>
Kudzu	<i>Pueraria montana</i>
Mile-a-minute Vine	<i>Persicaria perfoliata</i>
Wild Chervil	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
Porcelain Berry	<i>Ampelopsis brevipedunculata</i>
Wineberry	<i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i>
Winged Euonymus	<i>Euonymus alatus</i>

In order to better protect existing native plant species, towns and individuals should take the initiative to educate themselves and others about the adverse impacts of non-native species. Awareness of what invasive species look like and how to deal with them is important to natural habitat restoration. Additionally, planting native species wherever possible is another way to discourage the growth of

invasive species. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife)<sup>13</sup>.

A major threat to local maple tree populations, including Norway, red, silver, and sugar maples, is the invasive Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), which was first detected in Worcester in 2008. Currently, 110 square miles in Worcester County are regulated for the ALB, including the town of Boylston. Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, USDA APHIS, and the U.S. Forest Service are all working collaboratively to eradicate ALB from the state<sup>14</sup>. Currently the only effective means to eliminate ALB is to remove infested trees and destroy them by chipping or burning. 35,000 trees were killed by the beetle or felled by foresters trying to contain the infestation, which changed the landscape of neighborhoods in towns including Boylston. However, local initiatives have resulted in the replanting of over 30,000 trees in the quarantined area. Experts state that in place of an unhealthy monoculture of trees susceptible to invasive pests, the forests of Worcester and its surrounding towns in the quarantine area are now more diverse and resilient.

**Keep an eye out  
for the ALB!**



These destructive beetles have antennae stretching 3 inches and symmetrical white spots on their shiny black shells. If spotted, record where and when it was found and, if possible, try to capture a picture. Report findings here: [www.AsianLonghornedBeetle.com](http://www.AsianLonghornedBeetle.com) or contact 1-866-702-9938

## Fisheries and Wildlife

In Boylston, there are four areas of estimated habitat for rare wildlife, according to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). These areas are designated as such so as to educate the public about their importance to rare, threatened or endangered species that need the environment for breeding habitat dwelling. The first area is around Sewall Pond, which includes a portion of the Sewall



*Hummingbird at Tower Hill  
Photo credit: Steve Forman*

Brook area, and the second area is just south of Route 140, which includes Spruce Pond, Flag Pond, and the pond and wetland area south of Elmwood Place. A third area is at Stiles Hill extending down to Barnard Hill, and the fourth area includes Rocky Pond and the wetlands nearby and it also includes portions of East Woods. NHESP also identifies “priority” sites for rare species and natural communities. Priority sites are the most important (estimated) natural habitats in Massachusetts for rare, threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species.

<sup>13</sup> Email - [Mass.Wildlife@mass.gov](mailto:Mass.Wildlife@mass.gov); Phone - (508) 389-6300

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/guides/asian-longhorned-beetle-in-massachusetts#-history-of-alb-in-massachusetts->

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife identifies a number of rare animal species in Boylston:

- **Blue-Spotted Salamander** (*Ambystoma laterale*) – These animals have a long, slender body, short limbs with long digits and a narrow, rounded snout. Their defining characteristic is by their brilliant sky-blue spots on the lower sides of the body. They require moist, moderately shaded environments and they favor northern hardwood/hemlock forests that have depressions for seasonal flooding (usually vernal pools). These salamanders are a species of special concern and they were last seen in Boylston in 2000.
- **Marbled Salamander** (*Ambystoma opacum*) – These salamanders are similar to the Blue Spotted Salamander as young adults. They are short and stout with a stocky body, short limbs, and a broad, rounded snout. The front limbs have four digits and the back have five. They have a dark brown/black background splashed with bold silver-white or grey band like markings that converge to create black “spots.” They prefer deciduous to mixed southern hardwood woods dominated by oak and hickory species with White Pine. Wooded vernal pools or the like are required for breeding. They are a threatened species, last seen in 1999 in Boylston.
- **Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) – A heavy, goose sized water bird with a thick black, pointed bill. Its head and neck are black glossed with green and it has a broad color of white and black lines. Its back is cross-banded black with white spots. The loon appears slightly different in the winter. Loons are a water dependent inland bird that nest during breeding times along shorelines, wintering in oceans and bays. It is a species of special concern and was last seen in Boylston in 2018.
- **Pied-Billed Grebe** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – A stocky water bird with short wings, tail and a stout thick bill. The bird is uniformly brown in the summer with a black band on its bill. Its appearance changes slightly in the winter. This bird prefers to nest in marshes, lakes, large ponds and other wetlands and they spend winters in lakes, rivers, and estuaries. They are an endangered species and were last noted in Boylston in 1978.
- **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Adult Bald Eagles have a white head and tail, brown body, pale yellow eyes and a bright yellow beak and feet. Their body can be up to three feet with a wingspan between 6-7 feet. They usually inhabit coastal areas, estuaries, and larger inland waters as they require a high amount of water to land edge with stands of forest. Bald Eagles are considered threatened and they were last spotted in 2018 in Boylston.
- **Bridle Shiner** (*Notropis bifrenatus*) – A small, straw colored minnow with a distinct dark lateral band that goes from snout to the base of the caudal fin. It has a large eye and a pointed mouth. They are found in clear water such as streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds, and they prefer sites with a high coverage of submerged aquatic vegetation. These fish are a species of special concern and were last noted in Boylston in 1951.



*Blue-spotted salamander*  
Photo credit: Mass Audubon

- **Wood Turtle** (*Glyptemys insculpta*) – A medium-sized turtle with roundish segments on its upper shell that resemble a wood-grained cross-section of a branch with growth rings. They prefer to live in riparian areas near slower moving streams, with sandy bottoms and heavily vegetated stream banks. They are species of special concern, last seen in Boylston in 1983.
- **Orange Sallow Moth** (*Pyrrhia aurantiago*) – A noctuid moth with a wingspan of 25-33 mm. The forewing is orange, the outer wing margin pink in the male. The postmedial and antemedial lines consist of wavy lines of black spots. Adult Orange Sallow Moths fly in August. This moth inhabits xeric and open oak woodland on rocky uplands (ridges, hilltops, and steep slopes), and the edges of old fields, utility line rights-of-way, and other openings within such habitat. This species has a status of special concern and their last recorded sighting in Boylston occurred in 2008.



Wood Turtle

Photo credit: Mass Audubon

In addition to rare, threatened, and endangered species, the Town of Boylston also has some common wildlife animals that require food, shelter, and corridors to pass through safely. Some of these animals include: Fisher Cat, Red and Gray Foxes, Bobcat, Eastern Coyote, Porcupine, River Otter, Mink, Southern Bog Lemming, Water Shrew, Beaver, Opossums, Shrews, Moles, Bats, the Eastern Cottontail Deer, Chipmunks, Woodchucks, Red and Gray Squirrels, Skunks, Weasels, Black Bear, Moose, different varieties of marshland and grassland birds, plus a wide variety of other amphibians and freshwater fish.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) updates and maintains the State’s Reptile and Amphibian List, which includes threatened, endangered, and common species. This list was updated as recently as 2020 according to the MassWildlife website<sup>15</sup>. Reptiles and amphibians that currently dwell or have been seen in the past in Massachusetts are listed. While the list is comprehensive, it does not break down habitat of the animals by town. Specific counties are mentioned in some cases, and in others the location stated is “statewide”, in which case the reptiles and amphibians listed may be found in Boylston. Reptiles and amphibians not already described in this Plan that may be located in Boylston include:

- **Eastern Newt** (*Notophthalmus viridescens*) – Yellowish/brown or olive in color on top with a yellowish belly and black and red spots, this creature grows to approximately five inches. This animal has four toes on the front feet and five toes on the back feet and their habitat is primarily ponds, lakes, streams, and marshes.
- **Northern Dusky Salamander** (*Desmognathus fuscus*) – Gray, tan, or brown in color, this salamander is small in size ranging from 2.5-4.5 inches in length. With a keeled tail, they are found in forest brooks, seepage areas, and near springs.
- **Spring Salamander** (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*) – Dark reddish in color and also has aquatic gills near the head area. This is another animal commonly found near brooks and streams.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/amphibians-and-reptiles-in-massachusetts>

- **Eastern Red-backed Salamander** (*Amphibia caudata*) – These salamanders can occur in two color phases, lead-back (consistent gray to black color) and red-back (orange to red stripe down the length of their body and tail). In both phases, they are distinguishable by their mottled white and black undersides and five toes on their hind feet. They are often found in or under logs, leaf-litter, and burrows of deciduous forests.
- **Northern Two-lined Salamander** (*Eurycea bislineata*) – A small salamander that almost never reaches more than 3.5 inches in length. Two dark lines run from the back of the eyes to the tip of the tail on this salamander. Streams, rocky bottoms, and springs near streams are where one can find this creature.
- **American Toad** (*Anaxyrus americanus*) – This toad is medium in size, between two and three inches, and it has spots that only contain one to two warts. The belly is usually spotted, particularly in the front chest area.
- **Fowler’s Toad** (*Anaxyrus fowleri*) – This toad is similar to the American Toad only it has three or more warts in the largest dark spots. It is gray to reddish in color and has almost no spots along its belly.
- **Spring Peeper** (*Pseudacris crucifer*) – Considered to be a Chorus Frog that is tiny in size, usually no more than one inch long. Marks on the back of this frog usually form what looks to be an “X.” The call of this frog gives it its distinction and it is usually brown, gray, or green in color.
- **Gray Treefrog** (*Hyla versicolor*) – A small- to medium- sized frog, gray, green or brown in color with large disks on the end of their finger like appendages. This frog is typically found in trees.
- **American Bullfrog** (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) – This is a large frog that can grow up to six inches in length. They are usually a dull green or brown in color and can be found near ponds and streams.
- **Green Frog** (*Lithobates clamitans*) – This is a medium sized frog that has a very distinctive coloration behind the eye. Typically, they prefer warm water and a variety of plants for their habitat, and sometimes a damp woodland area near decaying vegetation.
- **Pickerel Frog** (*Lithobates palustris*) – This frog has a distinctive square leopard pattern on its back with orange or yellow coloring within its hind legs.
- **Northern Leopard Frog** (*Lithobates pipiens*) – A smooth-skinned green, brown, or sometimes yellow-green frog covered with large, oval dark spots, each of which is surrounded by a lighter halo. Adult body lengths range from 2 to 4.5 inches. They generally live near slow-moving or still water along streams, rivers, ponds and wetlands, but will often venture into well-covered grasslands as well.
- **Wood Frog** (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) – A medium sized frog reaching up to 2.75 inches in length. This frog has a black mask near its eyes and it varies in color from brown to black to olive. Interestingly, this frog has the ability to lower the glucose in its cell fluids in order to survive extreme low temperatures.



*American Bullfrog*  
Photo credit: Mass Audubon

- **Snapping Turtle** (*Chelydra serpentina*) – One of the largest and most common turtles in Massachusetts, they can weigh up to twenty pounds. This turtle can be aggressive, is greenish brown in color and it has a long tail.
- **Eastern Musk Turtle** (*Sternotherus odoratus*) – A small, dull colored turtle with the ability to secrete a smelly musk scent from its glands. This turtle prefers lakes, ditches, and quiet ponds.
- **Painted Turtle** (*Chrysemys picta*) – A very shy animal with a colorful shell, this turtle lives on both land and water. The shell is typically green with yellow markings on the back and sides and the edges marked in red. The head has yellow markings and the neck and legs, red.
- **Blanding’s Turtle** (*Emydoidea blandingii*) – A bright yellow throat and chin, this is a somewhat large yet shy turtle. They are primarily an aquatic turtle but can be found wandering on land, never far from a pond or stream.
- **Eastern Box Turtle** (*Terrapene carolina*) – A well-known turtle, this type can be found in a variety of environments, fields or forests and they prefer moist areas. They have a high domed shell with orange and yellow markings. The adult box turtle grows to be five to six inches in size.
- **North American Racer** (*Coluber constrictor*) – A quick-moving, nervous snake that prefers bushy or light-wooded areas. This snake can grow to be four to six feet in length and its color is an olive to grayish color and its belly is a yellowish white color.
- **Ring-necked Snake** (*Diadophis punctatus*) – This snake has a yellow/orange ring around its neck and it spends the day hidden beneath objects like logs and rocks because it is nocturnal. They feed on salamanders and can grow between 10-15 inches in length.
- **Eastern Ratsnake** (*Pantherophis allegheniensis*) – This snake is a constrictor with three different color patterns, plain, striped and blotched. They live in hardwood forests, wooded canyons, swamps, farmlands, fields and barnyards. This snake is a climber and is only nocturnal in the summer months.
- **Eastern Hog-nosed Snake** (*Heterodon platirhinos*) – This species is 24-26 inches long usually and it varies in color and pattern between brown and yellow and spotted and solid. They prefer heavily wooded areas for their habitat.
- **Milksnake** (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) – This snake is marked in broad bands of yellow and red with black striping in between. This is a constrictor snake that prefers woodland areas.
- **Northern Watersnake** (*Nerodia sipedon*) – Mostly found in aquatic areas, this snake can grow to be two to three feet long. The color ranges from a reddish brown to gray to dark brown with dark cross-bands. They like to eat small fish, salamanders, and juvenile turtles.
- **Smooth Greensnake** (*Opheodrys vernalis*) – A bright green snake with an off-white or yellow colored belly. They are typically found in marshes, fields, or wet meadows.



*Eastern Ribbonsnake*  
Photo credit: Mass Audubon

Other species that are commonly found in Massachusetts and perhaps Boylston include DeKay's Brownsnake (*Storeria dekayi*), Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*), Eastern Ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis sauritus*), and the Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*).

## Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

The Town Center in Boylston is considered a scenic resource due to its charming, traditional New England village characteristics. The Town Center's pristine churches, pedestrian-friendly streets, and historical structures are important to the residents of the community to preserve and protect as the town continues to struggle with development pressures.



*Great Blue Heron at Rocky Pond*  
Photo Credit: Susan Bailey, [www.beasone.org](http://www.beasone.org)

An additional scenic and historic resource is the John Gough Estate at Hillside, a national historic landmark since 1975. This is located in the Blackstone River Watershed and has the potential to be included in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. This estate is a unique example of the connection made in the mid-1800s between structure and landscape. The house on the property is architecturally connected to its time (early Italianate architecture), and the landscape features on the 12-acre estate are equally charming. The views of and from the estate are important to local residents. The land has been protected by a preservation agreement between the residents of Boylston and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The preservation area includes the house, the land, the tree-lined drive, stonewalls, unique plantings, and views of Boylston, a carriage house, horse barn, and the remains of an apple orchard. There is also a demonstration forest and a signed nature trail, as well as an American chestnut nursery. Flagg Pond is a good fishing resource and an example of pond succession.

Covering roughly 70 acres, Rocky Pond is the largest natural pond in Boylston, and its water is particularly clean, being primarily spring-fed. There are only a few minor streams which flow into the pond, and a majority of its shoreline is protected from development because the New England Forestry Foundation owns portions of it. There are suggestions of a Native American settlement having been on the northern shore of Rocky Pond. In 1677, 200 acres north of the pond (the "Rocky Pond Grant") were given to Thomas Eames of Framingham as compensation for his family's suffering during King Philip's War. Potential threats to this resource include development and water quality concerns due to stormwater management issues.

A unique feature of Rocky Pond is the "floating island", which was blown across the pond to the western shore during the 1938 hurricane. The pond is home to turtles, and a variety of fish and birds, all native species. No exotic species exist in Rocky Pond.

The Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) is a partially-completed rail trail connecting 25 communities and consisting of multiple branches along the former Massachusetts Central Railroad. Over the past 80+ years, it has been cleaned up and modified for use by cyclists, hikers, joggers, walkers, and cross-country

skiers. Volunteers, property owners, state government agencies, and business partners have worked diligently to transform this former railroad line (shattered by a hurricane in 1938) into a recreational gem of Central Massachusetts<sup>16</sup>.

Although the trail does not pass through Boylston, but rather its neighboring communities of West Boylston, Sterling, Clinton, and Berlin, the MCRT provides a valuable regional resource to both locals and visitors seeking such a recreational opportunity. The trail consists of sections that are either completed, under active construction, closed, or an unofficial path<sup>17</sup>. There is still much work to do with property owners and cleanup of this trail, but the MCRT has great potential to offer a much needed east-west trail linking communities across Massachusetts. The rail trail is regarded as an important regional recreational facility.



*Tower Hill Botanical Garden  
Photo Credit: Worcester County Horticultural Society*

The Worcester County Horticultural Society, the third oldest active horticultural society in the United States, operates Tower Hill Botanic Garden as its headquarters on a 171-acre site of formal gardens, woodland trails, meadows, and educational facilities in Boylston. Tower Hill has been in operation since 1986 and welcomes over 150,000 visitors per year. The botanic garden features a four-season display of the finest plants for cultivation in New England. Carefully planned gardens and collections of ornamental, edible and native plants, plus trails that enhance the natural features of this beautiful property and a robust program and event schedule make Tower Hill a must-see destination and top attraction in Boylston. With a mission to connect people to

plants, Tower Hill Botanic Garden states: “Through its programs, classes and, above all, its gardens and curated natural landscape, Tower Hill seeks to explain, illuminate, and demonstrate the centrality of plant life for all people.”<sup>18</sup>

The Wachusett Reservoir and the surrounding watershed, considered a scenic and unique resource for both their water value and recreational value, are managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Division of Water Supply Protection. Walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and shore fishing are allowed at some points along the reservoir shoreline. There are miles of forested fire roads south of Route 110 in West Boylston and Boylston. The reservoir was created by the construction of Clinton Dam, completed in 1908 on the South Branch of the Nashua River.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.tkmaps.com/MCRT/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.towerhillbg.org/>

In 2001, NHESP developed BioMap, a comprehensive mapping tool encompassing Massachusetts in order to identify areas most in need of protection to ensure native biodiversity. The BioMap identified Core Habitat areas based on verified data and the mapped areas were to be those most suitable to support viable plant and wildlife species. A similar effort in 2003 was the Living Waters Project whose goal was to promote the strategic protection of freshwater biodiversity in Massachusetts. Since changes in water flow and degradation in water quality threaten these and other freshwater species, Natural Heritage developed the Living Waters conservation plan to identify our most critical sites for freshwater biodiversity in the



*Wrack Meadow*  
Photo Credit: SVT

Commonwealth. Core Habitats represented the rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds where the Commonwealth should focus proactive conservation activities in order to protect freshwater habitats. Wrack Meadow was identified as a NHESP Core Habitat and contains a number of endangered species.

In 2010, both of the aforementioned maps were replaced by BioMap2<sup>19</sup>, which includes over 4,000 records added to the NHESP database since BioMap's inception in 2001. This report and map thoroughly discuss biodiversity in Massachusetts and state that, when protected, biodiversity enhances water supply and watershed protection, plus recreational opportunities and aesthetic benefits. The goal of the project was to produce a statewide map which could guide the protection of the state's vulnerable natural resources. Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape are identified in these new maps and are defined as follows:

**Core Habitat** – Identifies key areas to ensure the long-term persistence of species of conservation concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. The specific subcomponents of *Core Habitat* include Species of Conservation Concern, Priority Natural Communities, Aquatic Core, Forest Core, Wetland Core, and Vernal Pool Core.

**Critical Natural Landscape** – Identifies larger landscape areas that are better able to support ecological processes, disturbances, and wide-ranging species. The specific subcomponents of *Critical Natural Landscape* include Foraging Habitat for Tern Species, Landscape Blocks, Upland Buffers of Wetland Core, Upland Buffers of Aquatic Core, and Upland Habitat to Support Coastal Adaptation.

The areas identified as Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes in Boylston can be viewed in the Habitat Features map. The BioMap2 Report for Boylston can be read on the MassGIS website<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/biomap2-conserving-the-biodiversity-of-massachusetts-in-a-changing-world>

<sup>20</sup> [http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town\\_core/Boylston.pdf](http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town_core/Boylston.pdf)

## Environmental Challenges

There are significant wildlife habitat and water resources within the town of Boylston which require thoughtfully planned conservation efforts. The Town faces several major environmental challenges to ensure the further protection of resources such as the Wachusett Reservoir, Rocky Pond, Sewall Pond, and Spruce Pond.

### Hazardous Waste

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for keeping a database and enforcing the cleanup of sites that are contaminated with toxic or hazardous waste. DEP indicates that 40 sites in Boylston have reported releases of hazardous waste that are in various stages of remediation, the most recent report of which was reported on December 19, 2019<sup>21</sup>. Many of them took place at gas and service stations have been cleaned up and no longer pose a threat to the surrounding area. None of the active sites appear to pose an imminent threat to the environment as they are contained and there are plans to clean and monitor the sites.

### Non-Point Pollution Sources

The pollution of Boylston's water and ground water resources is important to identify and manage for the health of residents and wildlife that dwell there. Non-point source (NPS) pollution is runoff that has been altered and contaminated by outside sources such as salt and sand from roadways, failing septic systems, underground storage tanks, landfills, gas stations, agricultural runoff, fertilizer from lawns, and erosion. These pollutants may enter into water bodies from runoff caused by snowfall and rainfall thereby harming water quality. Additionally, Route 12 bisects the Wachusett Reservoir, creating a vulnerability due to the potential fuel spill in the event of an accident. The challenge is to reduce the negative impact of pollutants to a minimum or eliminate their impact completely. Part of that process is to have an appropriate monitoring and management system in place to identify when pollution levels are of concern and identify what measures should be taken to remediate the problem.

The Town of Boylston has a Stormwater Control Bylaw in place to establish minimum requirements and procedures to control the adverse effects of increased post-development stormwater runoff, non-point pollution associated with new development and redevelopment, and erosion and sedimentation associated with construction. Those who meet the applicability of the bylaw must obtain a Stormwater Control Permit before beginning construction.

Low Impact Development (LID) refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat<sup>22</sup>. LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. LID techniques capture water on site, filter it through vegetation, and let it soak into the

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<sup>21</sup> <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/portal#!/search/wastesite>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/nps/urban-runoff-low-impact-development>

ground<sup>23</sup>. Examples of LID techniques include permeable paving, rain gardens, green rooftop systems, vegetated buffers, rain barrels and cisterns, and site design that minimizes disturbance.

NPS is a major contributor to the water quality degradation within our watersheds. Some of the many ways to reduce the impacts of NPS include:

- Keep storm drains that connect to our lakes, streams and rivers clear of debris
- Apply any lawn chemicals sparingly, if at all
- Control soil erosion
- Minimize the amount of salt and sand added to roadways in winter months
- Encourage the adoption or strengthening of construction/sediment control bylaws in town
- Have septic systems pumped and inspected every 3-5 years
- Conduct further outreach and education to local residents about NPS
- Purchase environmentally friendly household cleaners

The Town of Boylston has an opportunity to identify how much NPS is harming its natural resources and formulate a plan for what to implement as a protection measure.

## **Solid Waste Facilities**

According to information from the DEP, as of 2020, there are three classification groups (land disposal, handling/transfer, and combustion) and 21 specific classes for categorizing solid waste facilities in Massachusetts. The majority of these sites are landfills and only a few of them are actually active. A solid waste facility exists in Boylston on Mile Hill Road, just north of its intersection with Green Street. The landfill has been closed and capped. At this time, there are no known environmental problems with this solid waste facility, however it should continue to be monitored and managed. Additionally, an inactive dump site is located on Route 140 and an illegal disposal site which has been closed is located on Route 70<sup>24</sup>.

## **Flooding**

There are several areas throughout Boylston that are prone to 100 year and 500 year flooding, according to the FEMA maps. For the most part, they can be found along the shore of the Wachusett Reservoir and the major ponds.

## **Underground Storage Tanks**

Boylston has fourteen (14) underground storage tanks located within town boundaries<sup>25</sup>. Underground storage tanks are important to inventory and monitor due to their potential adverse environmental effects should there be a leak, spill, or some other type of issue. Due to the sensitive nature of much of Boylston's natural environment, this list should continue to be updated and the sites monitored by the Town and DEP. Underground storage tanks are located at:

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/low-impact-development>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/lists/massachusetts-landfills-transfer-stations-compost-sites-recycling-facilities>

<sup>25</sup> <https://ma-ust.windsorcloud.com/ust/?0&0%3F>

- 300 Central Street – The Haven Country Club
- 215 Main Street – Digital Equipment Corporation
- 1001 Main Street – Tahanto Regional High School
- 590 Main Street – Texaco Ken Lema's Automotive
- Route 140 – Robert F. Desmarais Construction
- Sewall Street – Town of Boylston
- 170 Shrewsbury Street – Verizon Massachusetts #864201
- 328 Shrewsbury Street – Nouria Store #04035
- 50 Shrewsbury Street – Armored Motor Services of America
- 240 Shrewsbury Street – Caprera Construction Company
- 200 Shrewsbury Street – New Boylston Trust
- 270 Shrewsbury Street – Boylston Gas & Market
- 74 Main Street – Wagner Brothers, Inc.
- 67 Main Street – Wagner Motors

### Stormwater Management

The Town remains in compliance with the federal and state stormwater requirements. The Town filed its Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and submitted to EPA and MassDEP its Annual Report of the Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit before the September 30, 2019 deadline. The Boylston Town Administrator oversees the Stormwater Management Program and compliance with the Small MS4 General Permit, along with the SWMP Team consisting of two Conservation Commission members, the Highway Department Superintendent, and the Board of Health Agent. Information on the Town's efforts related to stormwater management can be found on the Stormwater Committee website<sup>26</sup>.



Think Blue Massachusetts is a statewide educational campaign run by the Massachusetts Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition to help residents and businesses do their part to reduce polluted runoff and keep Massachusetts lakes, rivers, and streams clean and healthy. Learn more at [thinkbluemassachusetts.org](http://thinkbluemassachusetts.org)



<sup>26</sup> <https://www.boylston-ma.gov/stormwater-committee>

# INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION & RECREATION INTEREST

There are numerous benefits provided to a community through the protection of open space. Assuring farmers will be able to continue their livelihoods without the threat of development, providing passive recreational opportunities to residents and visitors, or maintaining natural habitats for local flora and fauna are all valid examples of why protecting open space in Boylston is a significant endeavor.

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, open space includes conservation land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks, and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways, or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation. This section provides information about Boylston's current open space. The inventory matrix and maps include both public and private open space, specifically parks, forests, wildlife management areas, conservation lands, and significant other open space parcels drawn from data provided by the Town, MassGIS, CMRPC, and the Sudbury Valley Trustees.

Determinations of each site's condition, recreational potential, and public access were made based on observation by the Town's consultant.

The Open Space Matrix column headings are defined below.

- **Site Name:** Names the open space site.
- **Acres:** Provides the site's acreage or an approximation in cases of the non-park and playground parcels. One acre is 43,560 square feet or 1/640 of a square mile.
- **Owner:** Indicates the owner of the property and the agency or department responsible for managing and maintaining the parcel.
- **Level of Protection:** Indicates if the site, either by virtue of its zoning or by the fact that it has received state or federal funding, is protected from sale and building development.
- **Public Access:** Indicates if the public can access the site. Definition of Open Space In this Plan, the term "open space" was defined as "all parks, forests, trails, playgrounds, and fields of significant size owned and managed for recreation, agriculture, or conservation uses."



*Scenic view from Elmer's Seat  
Photo Credit: GWLT*

## Types of Open Space and Recreation Land Protection

Open space within a town, whether publicly or privately owned, can be protected against development in a number of different ways. The following are all forms of open space protection employed (or potentially employed) in Boylston. Of these types of protection, only protection through deed restrictions or funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund or Self-Help programs (often requiring the placement of a deed restriction) are considered by the Division of Conservation Services to be “in perpetuity.”

- **Article 97 Protection:** A codification of the “Public Trust Doctrine,” Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects all publicly owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes under the care of a Conservation Commission. Before these properties can be sold, transferred, or even converted to a different use, this amendment requires a two-thirds vote of the Town as well as a two-thirds vote of the State House of Representatives and Senate.
- **Land & Water Conservation Fund Protection/Self-Help Funding Protection:** In the case of many Boylston playgrounds, the receipt of grant funding affords these parcels protection as parklands, essentially in perpetuity. Note that for these properties, protection under Article 97 would apply as well.
- **Protection through Ownership (“Fee”):** In most cases in Boylston, the open space in question has been acquired in its entirety (“in fee”) by a public or private conservation interest—a State or Federal agency, or nonprofit organization such as the Trustees of Reservations or the New England Forestry Foundation. In many cases, such ownership will trigger other forms of protection, such as Article 97. If the owner is a nonprofit organization, the land could in theory be sold and/or developed, but doing so could contradict the group’s conservation purpose.
- **Protection through Conservation Restrictions, Easements, or other Deed Instruments:** Due to the high costs of acquiring land, it has become increasingly popular to acquire conservation restrictions limiting future development. Similarly, access easements can provide permanent public access to a property. In certain situations, deed restrictions or easements may be granted by a private party as part of a development approval process. As with any matters involving real property, care must be taken in the drafting of the restrictions to ensure the rights and interests of all parties are represented and clearly documented. Conservation Restrictions must be approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. Chapter 61, for example, is a way to help protect forestland in Massachusetts through encouraged preservation. Landowners who wish to ensure the long-term, but not permanent protection of forests may be offered helpful tax benefits. Should the owner wish to end the agreement, the Town has the authority to recover tax benefits given and they have first right of refusal on the purchase of the land if it is to be sold for non-forestry purposes.

Table 7: Inventory of Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Inventory of Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest				
Site Name	Acres	Owner	Level of Protection	Public Access
<b>Commonwealth of Massachusetts</b>				
Wachusett Reservoir	2,346.38	State (DCR)	Permanent	Limited
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>2,346.38</b>			
<b>Town of Boylston</b>				
Miscellaneous	25.01	Town	Permanent	Unknown
Manor Playground	12.70	Town	Limited	Residents Only
Morningdale Water District	8.05	Town	Limited	Unknown
Town Tennis Courts	1.27	Town	Limited	Residents Only
East Woods	236.97	Town	Permanent	Public
Northborough Reservoir	2.96	Town	Limited	Unknown
Tahanto Regional High School Athletic Fields	25.89	Town	Limited	Public
Mile Hill Conservation Area	43.19	Town	Permanent	Public
Wrack Meadow Conservation Area	19.65	Town	Permanent	Public
Boylston Water Supply Land	3.02	Town	Limited	Unknown
Pine Grove Cemetery	19.90	Town	Limited	Limited
Boylston Elementary School Playground	11.04	Town	Limited	Public
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>409.66</b>			
<b>Land Trust Ownership</b>				
Mile Hill Woods	30.14	SVT	Permanent	Public
Falby Forest	133.22	NEFF	Permanent	Public
Minacapelli Forest	14.61	NEFF	Permanent	Public
Fawcett Memorial Forest	6.07	NEFF	Permanent	Public
Mile Hill Conservation Area	33.62	SVT	Permanent	Public
Wrack Meadow Conservation Area	88.54	SVT	Permanent	Public
Elmer's Seat	7.18	GWLT	Permanent	Public
Sydow Forest	45.46	NEFF	Permanent	Public
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>358.84</b>			
<b>Private Ownership</b>				
Tower Hill Botanic Garden	140.11	Worcester Horticultural Society	Permanent	Private (Public Welcome)
Kim WPR	31.79	Unknown	Permanent	Unknown
Davidian Kerop APR	9.91	Davidian Realty LLC	Permanent	Unknown
Tougas Family Farm APR	14.93	Tougas Family	Permanent	Unknown

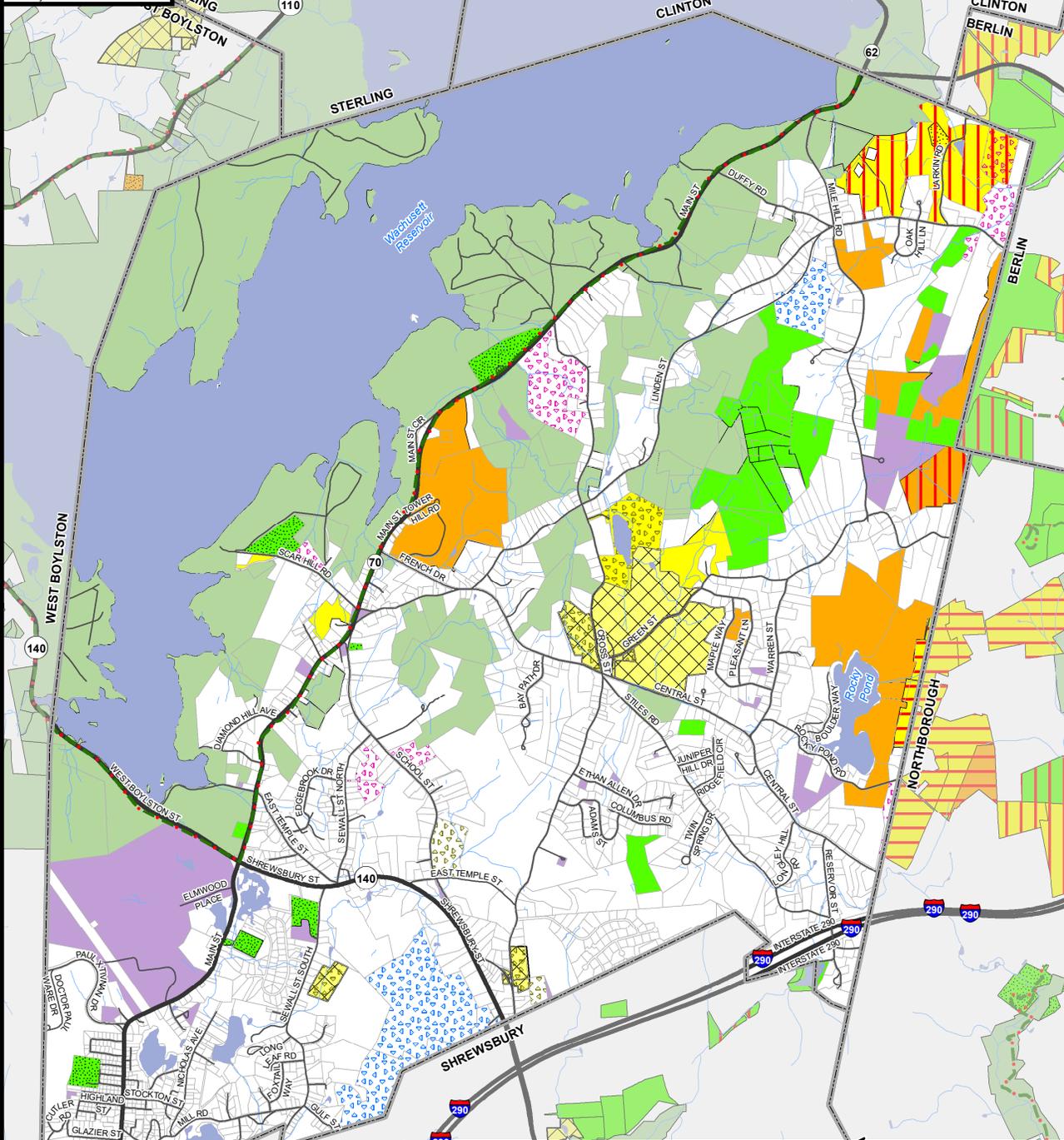
Coldwell CR	0.30	D J Coldwell Trust	Permanent	Unknown
The Haven Country Club	203.14	The Haven Country Club	Unprotected	Private (Members Only)
Mount Pleasant WPR	55.12	Boylston Recreation and Golf LLC	Permanent	Unknown
White WPR	38.02	Judith Farmer White	Permanent	Unknown
Boylston Sportsmen's Club	11.76	Boylston Sportsmen's Club	Unprotected	Private (Members Only)
Worcester Pistol and Rifle Club	12.75	Worcester Pistol and Rifle Club	Unprotected	Private (Members Only)
Bernfeld CR	54.53	Bernfeld Family Limited Partnership	Permanent	Unknown
Hamilton WPR	2.26	DCR	Permanent	Unknown
Woodbury WPR	2.67	DCR	Permanent	Unknown
Prince WPR	12.72	Richard H Prince	Permanent	Unknown
Golas CR	114.67	Golas Family	Permanent	Unknown
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>704.67</b>			
<b>Total Open Space:</b>	<b>4,201.92</b>			

# OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, MassDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



LEGEND		Open Space Ownership Level of Protection	
Town Boundaries	Major Road	Federal	Perpetuity*
Water Bodies	Local Road	State	Limited
Streams	Trails	Municipal	None
Chapter 61 Land	Town Owned Land	Private	
Chapter 61A Land	Agricultural Preservation Restriction	Non-Profit	
Chapter 61B Land	Conservation Restriction		

Open Space data from MassGIS, current as of 08/2019

\* Open Space listed as "Perpetuity" will only show a solid Ownership color.

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# COMMUNITY VISION

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## Description of the Process

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in June 2019 to oversee the production of this Plan. The Committee met on a regular basis to discuss key issues and review drafts of the Plan.

Community input was gathered through a community survey that reached 290 respondents as well as a virtual Focus Group for stakeholders in the town held on June 4, 2020. The community survey was intended to gather input on the needs and concerns of residents regarding the Town's open space and recreation facilities. Respondents were asked to provide input on items such as how frequently they use recreation or open space areas in town, whether they would be willing to pay additional taxes for the Town to provide various recreational activities/amenities, and what the town's priorities for expenditure should be. The primary focus of the focus group was to obtain consensus on the goals and action items of the Plan and to inform the stakeholders of the significance of the Plan. The goals listed in Section 8 were all agreed upon by members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee as well as those who attended the focus group as representatives of various boards and committees in town.

A major theme that emerged from responses to the survey was that the Town of Boylston should prioritize maintaining and investing in its existing Town-owned land for open space and recreation uses. Many concerns were raised in the survey about the town's rapid residential and commercial development, and how to balance this with open space conservation. According to the survey, the Town's priorities for expenditures for open space and recreation should be acquiring conservation lands for passive recreation use as well as expanding connections for walking (e.g. sidewalks, connecting trails). 82% of respondents agreed that if adequate funding was available, they would be in favor of the Town acquiring the former YMCA Camp Harrington property for open space or recreation purposes, deeming it a very significant property for future recreation in Boylston. The focus group also brought up concerns about the quality of the town's outdoor recreational fields for youth sports and the need for an improved communication plan for use of the fields and courts. The focus group additionally offered support for making the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee a permanent standing committee of the Town.



*Summer Star Wildlife Sanctuary  
Photo Credit: SVT*

## Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The overall open space and recreation vision for Boylston is to preserve the Town’s valuable open space and natural areas, and provide ample opportunities for active and passive recreation for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Utilizing public input from a community survey and focus group of town stakeholders, the following goals were identified to contribute to the vision of the town. Residents feel that it is important for Boylston to:

- Protect ecologically sensitive areas from development;
- Allow for connective wildlife corridors between areas preserved as open space;
- Protect water quality and water resources to safeguard the town water supply and private water supply;
- Acquire lands for public open space and facilities such as school sites, playgrounds, and recreation facilities;
- Acquire and protect land for conservation, habitat preservation, and water supply protection;
- Connect existing open spaces with continuous walkways, trails, and bike-paths;
- Plan for both passive and active open space recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities; and
- Manage residential growth and development.



*Fun for all ages at Center Playground  
Photo Credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

# ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

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Boylston residents place very high value on preserving the natural environment and providing recreational opportunities to the community. Boylston has a unique small-town, New England character that residents eagerly want to maintain. In recent years, the community has faced challenges regarding how to balance residential and commercial development with the protection of natural resources and provision of recreational opportunities for all. The update of this OSRP has included an assessment of existing open space and recreation resources, public input through surveys and a focus group of stakeholders, and regular meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Committee, all efforts which have resulted in the identification of resource protection and community needs.

## Public Input

Responses to the Open Space and Recreation provide insight to residents' priorities and concerns regarding the themes of resource protection, open space preservation, and active and passive recreational opportunities. The following conclusions were derived from the community outreach process:

- 82% of survey respondents felt that the preservation of open space and natural areas in Boylston is very important, while 13% felt it is somewhat important.
- The top three reasons for the Town to acquire and/or preserve open space include:
  - Preserving the rural character of the town
  - Protect wildlife habitats of flora and fauna
  - Protect water quality and water resources
- Residents prioritized increased general maintenance of existing fields, courts, and landscape, and would be willing to pay additional taxes for these amenities. 88% of respondents also said that the Town should focus on maintaining existing Town-owned land for open space and recreation uses.
- Recreational activities and amenities that survey respondents said Boylston needs more of and they would be willing to pay additional taxes for include:
  - Hiking/walking/running trails
  - Sidewalks
  - Community recreation center
  - Public access points to water bodies
  - Bike trails
  - Safe bike lanes
- Establishing a requirement for all new residential developments to include conservation/open space areas had the support of 91% of survey respondents.
- 63% of survey respondents said that they would support the establishment of a Wetlands Bylaw to limit development activities near wetlands resource areas.

- The most popular recreation or open space destinations in town, according to survey respondents, include:
  - Tower Hill Botanic Garden
  - Town Common
  - Boylston Elementary School Playground
  - Fields at Tahanto Regional Middle/High School
  - Center Courts and Playground
  - Town Hall Gymnasium
  - Hillside Playground
  - Morningdale Manor Playing Fields and Playground
- There are a number of open space areas in town that are unknown to residents, including East Woods, Scar Hill Ballfield, Summer Star Wildlife Sanctuary, DCR Forest Trails, and Hillside Trails.
- The top three priorities identified in the survey for Town expenditures for open space and recreation include:
  - Acquiring conservation lands for passive recreation use
  - Expanding connections for walking (such as sidewalks and connecting trails)
  - Improving passive recreation opportunities on existing conservation land
- An overwhelming majority (82%) of respondents agreed that if adequate funding was available, they would be in favor of the Town acquiring the former YMCA Camp Harrington property for open space or recreation purposes.

## Resource Protection Needs

There are several prominent resource protection needs in Boylston.

### **1. Protect local wetlands and water bodies, particularly the Wachusett Reservoir, from development pressures, stormwater runoff, and invasive species.**

The protection of wetlands and water resources from development, pollution, and habitat-destroying invasive species remains critical not only to the town but also to the region, as the Wachusett Reservoir provides drinking water to 3 million people. Stormwater management is an important component of this issue, as the wetlands, streams, ponds, vernal pools, reservoirs, and other natural resources are impacted by how effectively stormwater is managed. Low impact development (LID) is an effective method of mitigating the harmful impact of stormwater runoff flowing directly into water bodies. Land conservation efforts that protect sensitive water bodies should be pursued, such as a strict local Wetlands Bylaw. Non-native aquatic vegetation such as variable milfoil, mudmat, Asian waterwort, and Water Chestnut have been discovered in the reservoir, which pose threats to native species and water quality<sup>27</sup>. Climate change is likely to lead to increases of non-native species in Massachusetts water bodies. Continued monitoring of species, public education and outreach, plus a continued ban of public boating on the reservoir are ways that non-native aquatic species invasions can be controlled.

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<sup>27</sup> *Wachusett Reservoir: Aquatic Invasive Species Summary, Historical Update and Ongoing Actions* (2016). Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Water Supply Protection.

**2. Protect woodlands from invasive species and forest pests, particularly from potential re-infestations of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB).**

Many invasive species are already so prominent in Northeast forests that eradication would be nearly impossible. However, managing and limiting the spread of existing invasive species, plus early detection of new invasive species is a more realistic focus. Invasive species can threaten native species populations and their habitats, scenic resources, and water resources. As previously described, the ALB invasion resulted in the removal of thousands of trees in Boylston, completely changing the landscape of some parts of the town. When planting new trees, residents should understand that diversity of trees and plants, as opposed to monoculture, can help prevent the spread of pests. Residents can also help stop the spread of future invasive species such as the ALB by reporting detections to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

**3. Take measures to prevent habitat fragmentation due to development, road construction, or clearing land for agriculture.**

Unfragmented tracts of forestland provide higher quality habitat than small, fragmented parcels of land. Fragmentation limits access to essential resources like food, water, and shelter for local wildlife. Wildlife corridors are one effective tool to help sustain wildlife populations, habitats, and overall biodiversity. These corridors can reduce vehicle-animal collisions along with other harmful impacts of habitat fragmentation. Smaller, undeveloped pieces of land and trail easements can help connect larger preserved areas. Conservation easements can be a cost-effective method of resource protection and preventing forest fragmentation. Additionally, linked trail systems not only provide environmentally-friendly transportation and recreation opportunities for residents, but they also help with wildlife connectivity. Increased sidewalks, bike lanes, and paths can also reduce the amount of deadly vehicle-animal collisions, air pollution, and noise pollution from cars. Encouraging zoning and development types with minimal impact on open space will be an important step, as well. Synergy among neighboring communities, non-profit groups, landowners, State agencies, and regional partners will be essential to conservation and preservation.

Significant unfragmented areas in Boylston that are important sites for biodiversity include the land around Rocky Pond, East Woods, and Wrack Meadow, plus Cold Harbor Brook, French Brook, and North Brook. As these sites are located on the watershed divide, the Concord River Watershed Association has expressed concern for these areas for reasons including: they are divided by roadways; they are becoming increasingly fragmented by development; there is increased development on Rocky Pond; there is a golf course in the area; and there is an imminent threat of development in Wrack Meadow.

**4. Balance development pressures with open space preservation.**

The town of Boylston is an attractive community due to its small-town charm, open space, safety, excellent public school system, and ease of access to employment centers of Worcester and Boston. The landscape is defined by forests and low-density residential development along winding roadways. The State's control over about one-third of the town, in addition to more than two-thirds of the town being subject to the Watershed Protection Act, contributes to the limited

development that occurs here. While residents enjoy their small town, pressures to promote economic vitality through commercial and residential development persist. The planning process showed that residents would favor zoning that provides for increases in density in existing developed areas in exchange for open space in less developed or environmentally sensitive areas. A majority of survey respondents also supported the creation of a Wetlands Bylaw with a 50 ft. buffer. It is of the utmost importance to preserve large, contiguous areas of open space such as East Woods and Wrack Meadow. Striking a balance between future land protection and development is a high priority for the town.

## 5. Build local capacity to achieve open space and recreation initiatives.

With limited funding and staffing from the town able to be dedicated to preservation efforts, the Town will need to be creative with its management strategies. There are a number of ways that the Town can acquire funding and technical assistance for open space and recreation initiatives. Upon completion and approval of this OSRP, the Town will become eligible to apply for grants from the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) and Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) programs. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) has not been passed in Boylston, which is a tool that could help the community preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities through the creation of a local Community Preservation Fund. The lack of staffing, such as a full-time Conservation Agent, results in the need to build a strong volunteer base. Providing educational outreach, clean-up days, positions on committees, and other volunteer opportunities will be an important step to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Action Plan.



*Volunteers building an ice rink  
Photo Credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

## Land Acquisition

There are opportunities for the Town of Boylston to connect additional open space parcels with DCR owned land around the Wachusett Reservoir. Even if acquiring an entire parcel is not possible, creating a connected trail network would at least give residents some access to additional open space. The first step for Boylston to take would be to identify specific parcels of land they are interested in protecting and conserving. Having a “wish list” will be helpful in guiding any acquisition processes. Any open space acquisition scheme— whether to preserve one acre or 10,000 acres —needs to prioritize parcels. Before any parcel is to be purchased, and before any money is sought for preservation, the community must assess the natural values of the land (both objective and subjective measurements) and determine in advance which lands are the highest priorities to preserve. Rather than waiting passively for opportunities to arise, Boylston (or private land trust or other entity) must proactively seek preservation opportunities for the most valued parcels. Priorities stated clearly in advance can lead to such opportunities, whether as a result of grant funding, private donation, or contributions as a result of a

land use approval process. Such an approach contrasts sharply with the piecemeal, ad hoc decision-making processes that so often determine open space acquisitions.

Although there is local interest in protecting open space and acquiring additional parcels, there is no internal mechanism in place to guide the decision-making process. Regardless of the reason for which a parcel may be desired by the Town, there are no criteria defined to assist the Town in determining whether a parcel should be purchased. If additional land is to be procured, it is important to know what criteria should be applied because it will be impossible for the Town to purchase every parcel brought before them. This is particularly critical for land in the Chapter 61 program since the Town has a very limited window of opportunity in which to exercise its right of first refusal and offer to buy the land.

While the Town may have “unofficially” adopted several criteria for open space purchases (mostly based on natural and water resource protection, waterfront location, and open space and habitat), it is recommended that more specific criteria be applied in future decision-making.

There are a number of temporarily protected land parcels in Boylston that are in either the Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B preservation programs. When land is removed from these programs, the Town has only 120 days to exercise its right of first refusal to purchase the property. With the numerous legal complications that can arise, as well as the procedural requirements that must be met for a municipal purchase of land, 120 days does not provide much leeway for the Town to exercise this right.

The OSRP and the Assessor’s records provide an inventory of all parcels that are currently in one of these preservation programs. A more detailed field survey of each parcel will yield additional information regarding how the land compares with the criteria listed below. The goal of this assessment is to provide the Town with the decision-making tools to ascertain how the parcels should be prioritized and whether a particular parcel should be purchased when such an opportunity arises.

The most significant factors to consider include protection of regional or local drinking water sources, natural resources and scenic views, creation of regional and local networks or corridors of open spaces and trails (and identifying the barriers to do so), and maintaining the rural character of the Town. These factors have been repeatedly stressed in the goals and objectives and during the course of public participation forums held as part of the OSRP processes. Given the nature of the three watersheds and potential non-point pollution sources as described in Section 4, open space acquisitions affecting water quality and within local watersheds should be considered for a high level of priority. An additional high priority should be the creation or extension of regional open space and trail networks that connect with those in other watershed towns. In no particular order, the specific criteria used to evaluate sites for purchase should include the following:

- Agricultural features such as open fields, the existence of prime agricultural soils, scenic views from and into agricultural land, visible stone walls, whether some portion of the land is currently in active agricultural use, and the presence of structures used in the agricultural setting (such as barns, silos, etc.) and its proximity to land with an existing Agricultural Preservation Restriction.
- Location of the parcel in relationship to other protected land including other land owned by the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or other not-for-profit organizations such as conservation organizations or land trusts. Is the land adjacent to land set aside as a result of cluster or open space preservation development? Will it contribute to needed civic space near

village centers or adjacent recreational areas? Is it located in a neighborhood currently underserved with respect to open space area?

- Does the land create new or expanded connections to an existing regional or local trail network for walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, or other recreational opportunities? Can the land provide public access to water?
- Proximity to valuable regional or local environmental resources including existing and potential drinking water sources, wetlands, waterfront, ponds, lakes, streams, and significant unfragmented vegetative and wildlife habitat or wildlife corridors including habitat for rare or endangered species.
- Presence of scenic resources such as special landscape characteristics such as steep slopes and unique geological features, a view into the parcel or a view from the inside of the parcel to adjacent properties or scenic waterfront resources.
- Proximity to historic and cultural resources.
- Potential environmental problems with the site must be identified, particularly if there is a likelihood of a hazardous waste liability problem arising from previous uses at the site. Although this has not been a significant problem in Boylston, some lands such as agricultural land, could present some problems from pesticide or herbicide residue, for example. Significant long-term legal and cost issues may place such a parcel in a lower priority classification. However, these problems are not insurmountable and if the costs for remediation are known, they can be managed and factored into the purchase price.
- Finally, the cost of the parcel needs to be considered, especially when compared with others. If the land has a high potential for development with few environmental constraints, it may cost more than an equivalently sized parcel with severe limitations on future development.

One approach is to assign points to these factors to assist in the decision-making process. Priority can be given (or points assigned) to parcels that may exhibit characteristics from more than one category. For example, a piece of land that has agricultural features, contributes to a water supply area, and provides a connection with an existing trail network may receive more points and be given a higher place on the priority list than a parcel that only can demonstrate two of these factors. Conversely, points can be subtracted from any parcel that may raise hazardous waste liability or high cost factors.

Working with developers and landowners to gather land gifts, easements or restrictions for conservation purposes are all important as well. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee should collaborate to develop town support for the funding of any land acquisition when it becomes available. Once this Plan is approved, it will help the town access State funding to assist with land preservation efforts. The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee should continue to think about land that Boylston should be acquiring and working to implement that goal would be an excellent way to allow this vision to come to fruition.

The Town of Boylston should educate the public about the Chapter 61 program, APR program, conservation restrictions, and other ways of preserving land. Encouraging landowners to participate in these programs will help protect important open space parcels.

## Recreation and Community Needs

Boylston residents take pride in the wide range of recreational opportunities available in town, and continue to strive to improve these existing resources. The following recreation and community needs have been identified through the development of this Plan, including the critical community outreach component.

**1. Maintain the existing playing fields, courts, and facilities in town.**

A recurring notion from the public outreach process was that residents feel strongly about maintaining and investing in existing recreational facilities. Many residents believe that there are an adequate number of playing fields and courts, however they require some much-needed maintenance and updates. Comments about the status of the Town's basketball and tennis courts were prevalent throughout the survey. It was also suggested that lights be installed at Hillside fields to accommodate more practice times. Improvements, including accessibility updates, were also suggested for the Hillside Gym, Hillside snack shack, Manor Playground, Town Common, and Center Courts and Playground.

**2. Provide a Parks and Recreation Commission office that is fully accessible to all members the public and is conveniently located.**

As of 2020, the Parks and Recreation Commission office is located in the basement of 215 Main Street, the same building as the Boylston Police Department. This location can be difficult for patrons to find. The Commission ideally would like to be located within Town Hall, to be closer to other Town offices, however there are no restroom facilities in the basement level of Town Hall where there is available office space. Plans are underway to add bathrooms so this space can be used by the Parks and Recreation Commission while adhering to ADA standards. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure the Parks and Recreation Commission office has a convenient location that is easy to access for all community members.

**3. Improve accessibility at Town-owned recreational facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

The Town falls short when complying with ADA requirements for recreational facilities. The women's restroom at Hillside Gym can only be accessed by stairs. Hillside Field has handicapped parking spaces however there is no handicapped accessible trail from the parking lot to the field and playground. Center Courts and Playground also lack designated accessible parking spaces, line striping, or compliant signage, however there are plans in place for improvements to be made to this outdoor facility. Amenities such as ramps, elevators, accessible toilets, or access routes are not common in Town-owned properties. While some facilities have the occasional accessible swing or picnic table, overall the Town recreational facilities are in need of many updates to accommodate residents and visitors of all abilities.

The ADA Self-Assessment can be viewed in Appendix A.

**4. Provide a safe network of connections between open space areas, recreational facilities, and other town facilities through the development of additional sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and crosswalks.**

It is important not only to maintain open space and recreation resources, but to ensure that they can be safely accessed by the public. A call for more bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails was made clear by residents who provided their input on the needs of the community. Improving road safety for cyclists continues to be a challenge for a community like Boylston, which is defined by winding roads designed to prioritize motorized vehicles. The Complete Streets<sup>28</sup> and Safe Routes to Schools<sup>29</sup> programs are two methods the Town of Boylston can utilize to improve safe alternative transportation options.

The trail systems in town should be analyzed to identify key linkage points that could be acquired by trail easements, fee acquisition or other land protection tools. While the Mass Central Rail Trail does not run directly through Boylston, providing and promoting a connecting trail system to the MCRT could have many recreational and economic benefits for the town. The presence of trails benefits communities in countless ways, including encouraging physical activity, improving mental health, increasing property values of adjacent properties, protecting important natural resources, and more. Having accessible trails that are on level terrain, paved, or use other wheelchair-friendly materials such as packed crushed stone are additionally important for inclusivity.

**5. Improve amenities associated with trails and conservation lands such as maps, trail markers, parking, improved trail conditions, and information available online.**

While many agree that Boylston has plentiful trails and conservation lands, ensuring the community is knowledgeable about the location, safety protocols, parking availability, restrictions of use, etc. for these properties is essential. Trail markers and signage help hikers follow a given path and can come in different forms, from flags and paint to more permanent posts and affixed markers. Maps that are available online and in hard-copy are additionally important to encourage greater use, ensuring those using the properties do not stray from designated trails. There are community-based sites such as *AllTrails* and *TrailLink* that allow anyone to upload information about trails, however there should be a comprehensive and user-friendly map of all trail systems and conservation properties available through the Town. Trails need regular maintenance such as clearing fallen trees and overgrowth, removing dangerous roots and loose rocks, cleaning up litter, and much more, which can be excellent tasks for volunteer groups such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Information regarding Town-owned recreation properties can be found on the Boylston Town website and the Parks and Recreation Commission website, along with social media posts by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Many residents noted that there were properties in town they were unaware of, indicating more information should be available online regarding ownership, allowed activities, trailheads, parking, warnings of ticks or poison ivy, and overall conditions of

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<sup>28</sup> Complete Streets Funding Program: <https://www.mass.gov/complete-streets-funding-program>

<sup>29</sup> Safe Routes to School Program: <https://www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school>

properties, water bodies, and trails in Boylston. The Town can work cohesively with entities like the DCR and Sudbury Valley Trustees to improve the amenities described.

**6. Consider recreational desires identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan survey, assessing needs of all ages and abilities in Boylston.**

Many suggestions from community members were made regarding future needs of recreational facilities. This direct insight to what the community would like to see in their town is important to consider as demographics and interests change. The survey showed that residents preferred expenditures be focused on passive recreation opportunities including expanding connections for walking and biking, enhanced passive recreation opportunities at conservation lands, and acquiring additional lands for passive recreation use. Passive recreation such as walking, bird-watching, and fishing requires significantly less funding for maintenance and upkeep than active recreation facilities such as a swimming pool or athletic field. Suggestions from the community survey included lacrosse fields to accommodate the growing programs, indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, splash park, dog park, snowmobile trails, ice skating rink, skate park, recreation facilities for the senior center, and Town sponsored events. It was also suggested that activities in the early evening which accommodate the schedules of working adults should be hosted. Recreational activities, whether passive or active, should regularly be assessed regarding the extent to which they are available for residents of all ages and abilities. While playgrounds may be highly popular for families with young children, those without children living at home might prefer the option of joining a softball or pickleball league. The full survey results are included in Appendix B of this Plan.

## **Golf Courses**

The Town of Boylston has one 18-hole private golf course at The Haven Country Club that is only available for members. This high-quality course has hosted the annual New England PGA Pro-Pro Championship every year since 1976, as well as having been selected as host course for both the Men’s and Women’s Massachusetts Opens in past years. Another golf course in town is Cyprian Keyes Golf Club, also an 18-hole championship course, which is open to the public. Cyprian Keys additionally has a 9-hole par-three course.

## **Playgrounds**

One tot lot exists at Morningdale Manor Park. Playgrounds are also located at Boylston Elementary School, Hillside Complex, and Town Center.



*Playground at Hillside Complex  
Photo Credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

## Field and Court Sports

Listed below is an up to date inventory of all the courts and fields Boylston has available for recreational activities. Those interested in visiting or reserving the facilities for use can visit the Boylston Parks and Recreation website for more information<sup>30</sup>.

Table 8: Recreational Facilities in Boylston

Recreational Facilities	
Baseball & Softball Fields	Morningdale Manor Park
	Tahanto Regional Middle/High School
	Boylston Elementary School
Soccer & Football Fields	Hillside Complex
	Scar Hill Road
	Lions Youth Football Field (corner of Routes 140 & 70)
Basketball & Tennis Courts	Town Center
	Morningdale Manor Park
Other Fields/Open Space	Town Common
	Hillside Complex
	Tahanto Regional Middle/High School
	Boylston Elementary School
	Tower Hill Botanical Garden

## Swimming

Locals occasionally swim in Rocky Pond, in addition to fishing and paddling that occurs there. Gothing Beach at the YMCA Camp Harrington property was formerly open for swimming, with a bathhouse and convenient parking, however it is no longer open for public use. Many residents have expressed that they would like to see this property return as a public beach.

## Recreation Areas

Some of the above mentioned properties are also used for passive and active recreation purposes. Much of the open space in Boylston is available for passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, walking, wildlife observation, and similar activities. Additional areas for passive recreation include: Fawcett Memorial Forest, Falby Memorial Forest, Town Common, Hillside, Wachusett Reservoir, Wrack Meadow, Old Boylston Cemetery, Pine Grove Cemetery, Tougas Farm, East Woods, Tower Hill, the Davidian Brothers Farm, as well as various other public ways.

<sup>30</sup> <https://boylstonma.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>

## Management Needs

Ensuring that this Open Space and Recreation Plan will not sit on a shelf will be key to achieving the goals and objectives. Thus, it is imperative that Boylston specifically designate an entity or board to be in charge of implementing the recommendations found in the Action Plan. Ideally, such an entity should continue the work of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee as a standing committee of the Town, appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Town already has a Parks and Recreation Commission, which is an elected board. This committee would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Plan, along with public outreach and education on its significance.

Given the small staff at Town Hall it is important that these committees and commissions continue to function, recognizing the volunteer nature of their memberships. The need for volunteers is increasingly important and it is the role of the committee overseeing the plan's implementation to encourage and excite the local community, educating them on the importance of open space and recreation resources in Boylston. The Action Plan assigns responsibility for various action items to appropriate stakeholders in order to ensure they are carried out.

### SCORP

The assessment of recreational needs for Boylston detailed in this Open Space and Recreation Plan are not just local in nature. In 2017, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts updated a document called the *Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*<sup>31</sup>, which was submitted to the National Park Service by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The SCORP is a planning tool that also looks at open space and recreation, but from a regional perspective. The purpose of the plan is to help direct the best investment of funds and effort towards protecting and enhancing recreation resources.

The Town of Boylston is located in the Central Region, which is characterized by population growth driven by residential, commercial/office and light industrial development. The result of this growth has been that greater demand has been placed on existing recreational facility capacity that has not expanded in response to this increased level of demand. This region has further significance due to the concentration of regional water supplies, including the Wachusett Reservoir, part of which is located in Boylston.

As part of the planning process for the SCORP, a regional meeting was hosted by CMRPC to understand the assets and challenges of open space and recreation in the Central Region. A representative from Boylston was in attendance of this meeting on November 9, 2017. Demand for recreational amenities included bikeways connecting to existing paths, small boat launches, and more accessible trails/parks/playgrounds/open spaces. The goals of the SCORP are:

1. Provide access for underserved populations
2. Support the Statewide Trails Initiative
3. Increase the availability of water-based recreation
4. Support the creation and renovation of neighborhood parks

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<sup>31</sup> SCORP: <https://www.mass.gov/files/massachusetts-scorp-2017-for-submission.pdf>

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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In addition to the broad and overarching vision presented in Section 6, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee and other residents came to an agreement on a number of more specific goals for open space and recreation. The goals described in this section are the long-range aspirations for the Town of Boylston for the protection of natural resources and the management of recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors to the town. Each goal is accompanied by a set of objectives which are conceptual steps that will lead to the goal's successful completion. Furthermore, action items laid out in Section 9 are more specific and tangible steps to implementing the goals and objectives.

These goals are the product of synthesizing the data, input from the public participation process, and numerous meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee into a cohesive vision for the future of Boylston's future open space and recreation. Previous town studies, particularly the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan, were used as a basis to guide the development of these goals and objectives.

The following is a set of goals and objectives for the 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town of Boylston to guide the next seven years. Section 9 will detail the Seven Year Action Plan to accomplish these goals and objectives.

## **GOAL 1 - Be proactive about continuing to enhance and preserve Boylston's town character and small, New England town feel.**

### **Objectives:**

- A. Market and promote Boylston's open space and small town charm as a way of inspiring community pride
- B. Create a permanent standing Open Space Advisory Committee
- C. Promote coordination among the various Town boards, committees, and commissions responsible for open space and recreational facilities
- D. Actively involve local businesses, organizations, and schools in beautifying Boylston through cleanup days and streetscape improvements

## **GOAL 2 - Preserve and protect Boylston's open spaces, including waterbodies, woodlands, farms, and parks.**

### **Objectives:**

- A. Develop criteria for open space acquisition
- B. Protect and provide access to priority parcels through the purchase of land, acceptance of donated land, or implementation of conservation restrictions
- C. Permanently protect Town-owned property from future development
- D. Further educate property owners of the Chapter 61 Program to conserve lands and encourage them to participate
- E. Create a funding strategy for open space acquisition and management

- F. Continue to collaborate with other communities from a regional perspective on opportunities for increased open space connection and wildlife preservation

**GOAL 3 - Maintain, add, and enhance recreational facilities and programs as needed.**

**Objectives**

- A. Determine the needs for additional recreational facilities
- B. Develop a plan for improving and updating existing indoor and outdoor facilities
- C. Create funding sources to make ongoing improvements
- D. Enhance access to existing facilities and promote such areas in specific neighborhoods
- E. Recruit volunteer groups to help with the maintenance, upgrade, and clean-up of facilities (such as the Boy Scouts, etc.)
- F. Explore the possibility of linking existing natural resources, open space, and recreation facilities with a contiguous network of greenways and foot trail corridors

**GOAL 4 - Regulate and guide development to be consistent with town character, and to protect open space and natural resources.**

**Objectives:**

- A. Boards and commissions should meet on a regular basis to discuss preservation activities and development proposals
- B. Ensure that development regulations create development that has the least impact on the environment
- C. Work with developers to maximize the preservation of open space areas and protection of environmentally sensitive areas
- D. Promote both redevelopment and reuse of existing properties that are being underutilized to help minimize the amount of new construction

# SEVEN YEAR ACTION PLAN

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The Seven Year Action Plan incorporates the goals and objectives of the previous section with specific action items to ensure the implementation on a year-to-year basis of these steps. The action plan additionally identifies committees, boards, or employees who will be responsible for implementing certain objectives and action items. An advisory committee is needed to take charge of ensuring this plan is used and followed. The committee will be responsible not only for overall implementation of the Plan, but also for public outreach and education regarding actions being taken and to help make this effort successful.

The Seven Year Action Plan is often the most difficult component of an Open Space and Recreation Plan. Unlike the lofty goals and objectives of the previous sections, here is where the rubber meets the road, where the planning ideals are translated into concrete actions. An Action Plan can be difficult to commit to and be problematic to review over time. Items that have been accomplished fade from view, while the more intractable problems continue to haunt the town. Financial and political trends may change, advancing some items while leaving others untouched. For these reasons alone, many communities are hesitant to put in writing the full scope of their intentions.

The following action plan intends to deliver on the promise of the goals and objectives expressed throughout this process, with a program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next seven years. All of the actions in this plan have been deemed essential for the Town to achieve its open space goals.

These actions are targeted to address the physical as well as the organizational issues confronting the Town in regards to open space and recreation, as described and analyzed in Section 7. The seven year action plan works to correct these “process” problems, while still maintaining a focus on the substantive issues of open space and recreation preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management, and maintenance.



*Sledding at Hillside Fields*

*Photo Credit: Boylston Parks & Recreation*

# BOYLSTON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN

## Goal 1: Be proactive about continuing to enhance and preserve Boylston's town character and small, New England town feel

	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
1a	Market and promote Boylston's open space and small town charm as a way of inspiring community pride	Post information about all trails and outdoor opportunities on the Town website	2020	Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission
1b	Create a permanent standing Open Space Advisory Committee	Track the progress on this action plan and report annually to Town boards and committees	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee
		Update and revise the plan to reflect the town's changing needs	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee
1c	Promote coordination among the various Town boards, committees, and commissions responsible for open space and recreational facilities	Ensure all commissions, committees, and boards mentioned in this Plan receive a copy of it and understand their role in its implementation	2020	Open Space Advisory Committee
1d	Actively involve local businesses, organizations, and schools in beautifying Boylston through cleanup days and streetscape improvements	Support the semi-annual "Keep Boylston Beautiful" initiative	ONGOING	Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission Town Administrator

## Goal 2: Preserve and protect Boylston's open spaces, including waterbodies, woodlands, farms, and parks

	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
<b>2a</b>	Develop criteria for open space acquisition	Identify and create a priority list for land acquisition and preservation consisting of properties most important to protect for their wildlife and habitat resources	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission
<b>2b</b>	Protect and provide access to priority parcels through the purchase of land, acceptance of donated land, or implementation of conservation restrictions	Consider targeting land-owners and educating them about land preservation and conservation opportunities, such as the Conservation Restriction Review Program or the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission Conservation Commission
		Investigate possible uses of the former YMCA property	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission
<b>2c</b>	Permanently protect Town-owned property from future development		ONGOING	Conservation Commission Planning Board Board of Selectmen Town Administrator
<b>2d</b>	Further educate property owners of the Chapter 61 Program to conserve lands and encourage them to participate	Post educational materials about the Chapter 61 Program on the Town website and promote these materials on social media platforms	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission
<b>2e</b>	Create a funding strategy for open space acquisition and management	Research available State and Federal funding tools as a way to acquire identified land parcels of interest	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission
		Identify partnership opportunities with non-profit organizations and private entities	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee
		Explore the possible adoption of the Community Preservation Act for financing historic preservation and open space projects	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Planning Board Board of Selectmen
<b>2f</b>	Continue to collaborate with other communities from a regional perspective on opportunities for increased open space connection and wildlife preservation	Work with regional land trusts, neighboring towns, and other agencies to prioritize remaining desirable properties for watershed protection, habitat preservation, and trail networks	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission

### Goal 3: Maintain, add, and enhance recreational facilities and programs as needed

	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
3a	Determine the needs for additional recreational facilities	Create an organizational chart and communication plan to clarify ownership of recreational lands, costs of use, and responsibility for maintenance	2020	Parks & Recreation Commission Open Space Advisory Committee Town Administrator
		Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs, resources, and conditions of existing fields and facilities	ANNUALLY	Parks & Recreation Commission Open Space Advisory Committee
3b	Develop a plan for improving and updating existing indoor and outdoor facilities	Complete construction of Center Court Playground	2020-2027	Parks & Recreation Commission
		Rebuild Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	2020-2027	Parks & Recreation Commission
		Relocate the Parks & Recreation Commission Office to a more accessible location for community members	2020-2027	Parks & Recreation Commission
		Improve Hillside Gym bathrooms, including accessibility compliance with ADA regulations	2020-2027	Building Inspector Highway Department Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission
3c	Create funding sources to make ongoing improvements	Explore various funding opportunities including State / Federal grants, Community Preservation Act (CPA) Program, increasing building permits, forming non-profit organization partnerships, etc.	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee
3d	Enhance access to existing facilities and promote such areas in specific neighborhoods	In accordance with the ADA Access Self-Evaluation, make Town-owned recreation areas and facilities more accessible	2020-2027	Building Inspector Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission
3e	Recruit volunteer groups to help with the maintenance, upgrade, and clean-up of facilities (such as the Boy Scouts, etc.)	Create and regularly update a list of maintenance and improvement projects that could be undertaken by volunteer groups	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee Parks & Recreation Commission
3f	Explore the possibility of linking existing natural resources, open space, and recreation facilities	Seek funding and technical assistance through the DCR's Greenways & Trails Program	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee

with a contiguous network of greenways and foot trail corridors	Identify right-of-ways and public easements that can be linked to existing trail systems	2020-2027	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission Planning Board
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**Goal 4: Regulate and guide development to be consistent with town character, and to protect open space and natural resources**

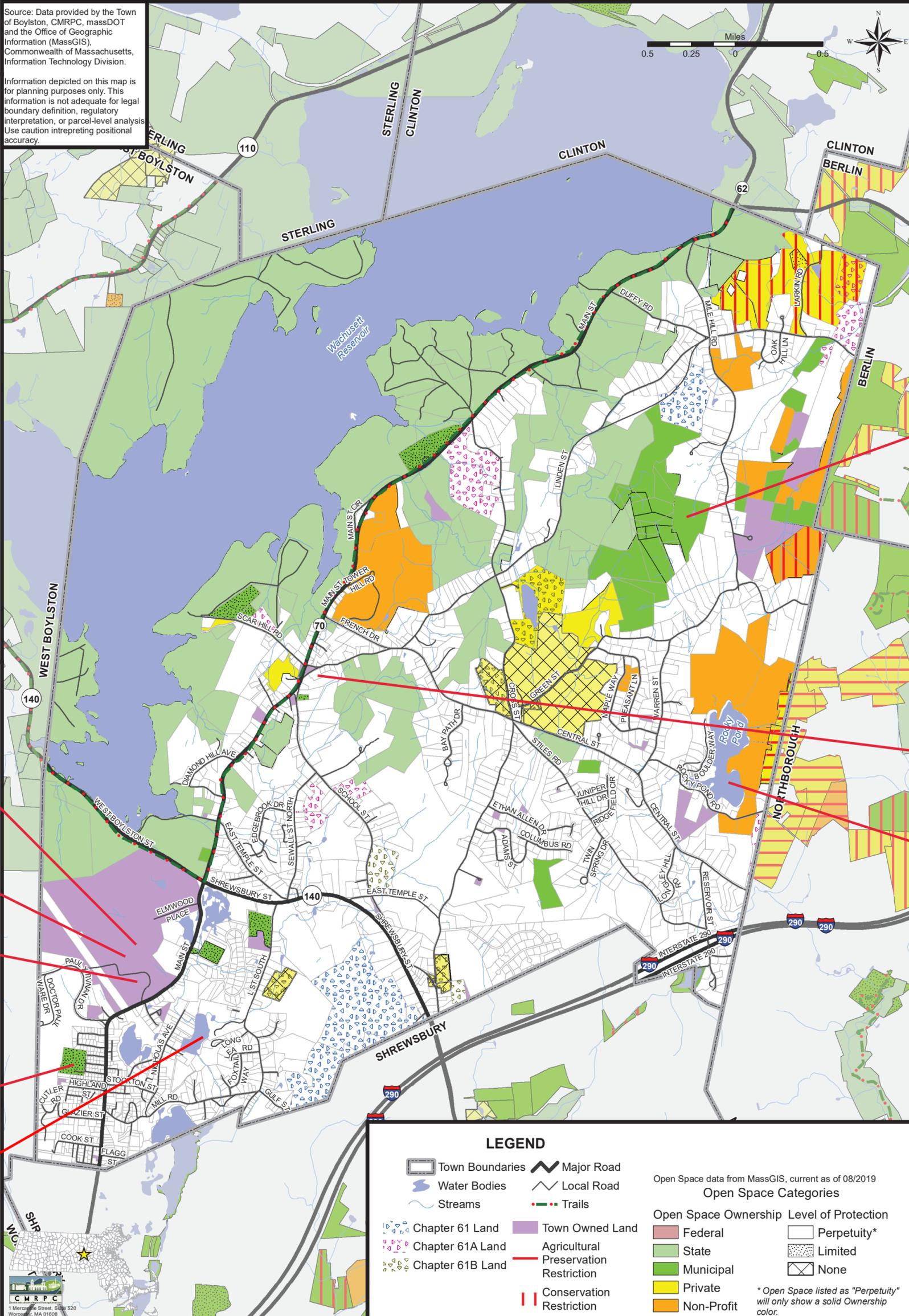
	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTIES</b>
<b>4a</b>	Boards and commissions should meet on a regular basis to discuss preservation activities and development proposals	Host a task force meeting annually with all boards and commissions to review status of OSRP action items	ANNUALLY	Open Space Advisory Committee Board of Selectmen
<b>4b</b>	Ensure that development regulations create development that has the least impact on the environment	Explore zoning change to establish a No Disturb Zone around wetland resource areas of 50 feet or more	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Conservation Commission Planning Board Board of Selectmen
		Consider bylaws to promote dark night skies and a healthy level of noise	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Planning Board Board of Selectmen
		Incorporate guidance for the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in appropriate by-laws and regulations	2020-2023	Open Space Advisory Committee Planning Board Board of Selectmen
<b>4c</b>	Work with developers to maximize the preservation of open space areas and protection of environmentally sensitive areas	Explore zoning change to require conservation of open space with new subdivisions	2020-2023	Conservation Commission Open Space Advisory Committee Planning Board Board of Selectmen
		Investigate creating incentives for developers to create recreation areas, open land, and wildlife corridors	2020-2023	Planning Board Board of Selectmen Open Space Advisory Committee
<b>4d</b>	Promote both redevelopment and reuse of existing properties that are being underutilized to help minimize the amount of new construction		ONGOING	Building Inspector Planning Board Town Administrator

# 2020-2027 ACTION PLAN

## BOYLSTON OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.



### Ongoing Actions

- 1a: Post information about all trails and outdoor opportunities on the Town website
- 1d: Support the semi-annual "Keep Boylston Beautiful" initiative
- 2c: Permanently protect Town-owned property from future development
- 3a: Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs, resources, and conditions of existing fields and facilities
- 4d: Promote both redevelopment and reuse of existing properties that are being underutilized to help minimize the amount of new construction

3d: Make Town-owned recreation areas and facilities more accessible

3b: Relocate the Parks & Recreation Commission Office

3b: Improve Hillside Gym bathrooms, including accessibility compliance with ADA regulations

3b: Rebuild Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground

2b: Investigate possible uses of the former YMCA property

3f: Identify right-of-ways and public easements that can be linked to existing trail systems

3b: Complete construction of Center Court Playground

4b: Explore zoning change to establish a No Disturb Zone around wetland resource areas of 50 feet or more

### LEGEND

Town Boundaries	Major Road	Open Space data from MassGIS, current as of 08/2019
Water Bodies	Local Road	Open Space Categories
Streams	Trails	Open Space Ownership
Chapter 61 Land	Town Owned Land	Level of Protection
Chapter 61A Land	Agricultural Preservation Restriction	Federal
Chapter 61B Land	Conservation Restriction	State
		Municipal
		Private
		Non-Profit
		Perpetuity*
		Limited
		None

\* Open Space listed as "Perpetuity" will only show a solid Ownership color.

Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Boylston's 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan included input from many local residents and town staff. Upon completion of the final draft of this plan, copies were circulated for review to the Boylston Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Planning Board, Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, and Sudbury Valley Trustees, as well as the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. Based on their suggestions, minor changes were made to the plan. Letters of their review and support are included in this section.

# REFERENCES

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The following resources were utilized in the preparation of this plan:

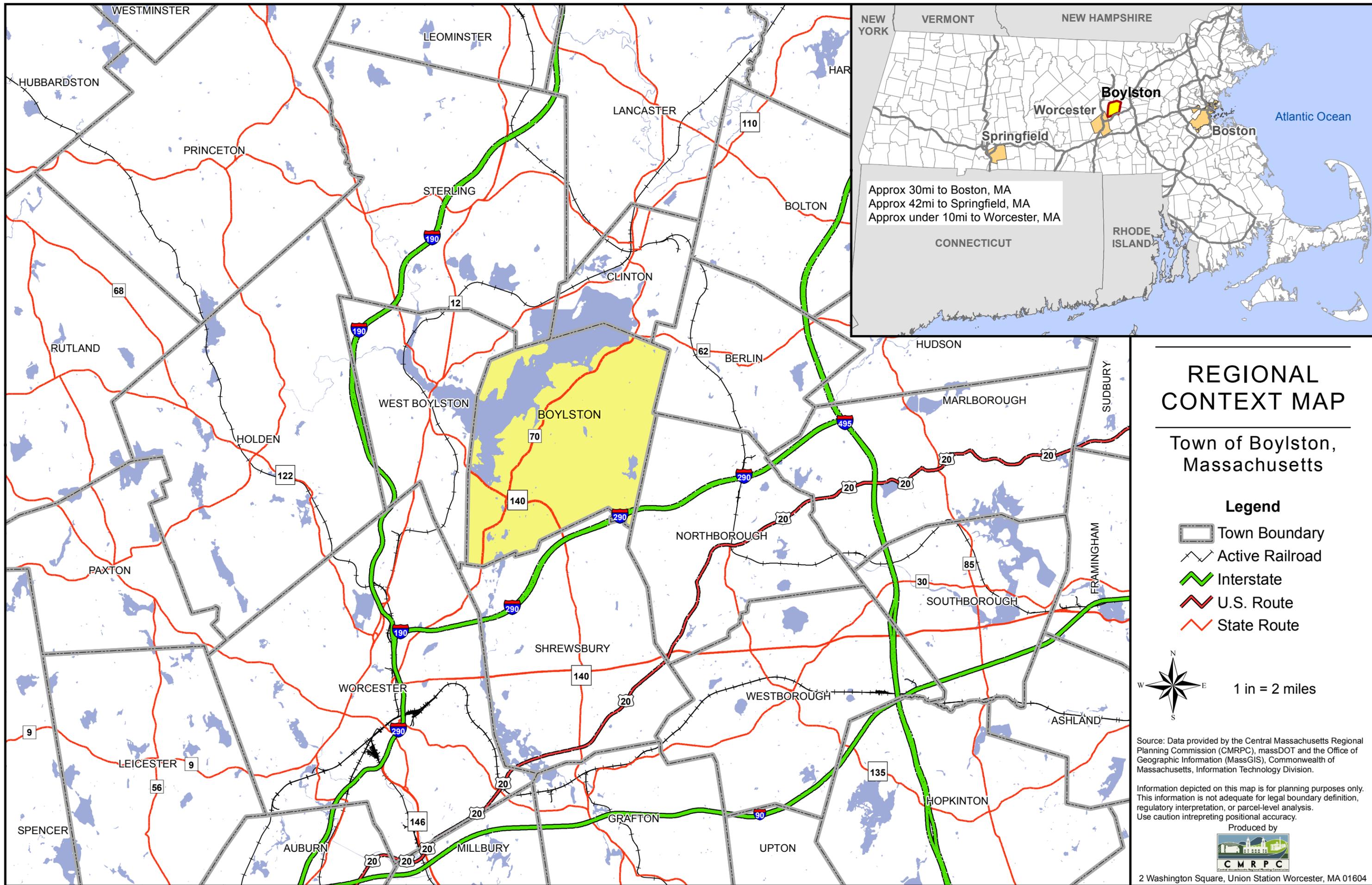
- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Division of Conservation Services, Open Space and Recreation Planner’s Workbook (2008)
- Massachusetts General Laws – The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS) was used for GIS data sources
- MuniMapper: Boylston, MA
- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- Town of Boylston Zoning Bylaws and Zoning Maps
- Town of Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (2005-2010)
- Town of Boylston Assessor’s Data
- Route 140 Corridor Plan: Shrewsbury Street, Boylston, MA (2010)
- U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- CMRPC Population Growth Projections
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education school enrollment data
- SOCDs Building Permits Database

# MAPS

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The following maps are included in this section:

- Regional Context Map
- Boylston Zoning Map
- Soils and Geologic Features Map
- Unique Features Map
- Water Resources Maps, Parts A and B
- Habitat Features Map
- Open Space Inventory Map
- Environmental Justice Map



# REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

## Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

### Legend

-  Town Boundary
-  Active Railroad
-  Interstate
-  U.S. Route
-  State Route



1 in = 2 miles

Source: Data provided by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Produced by



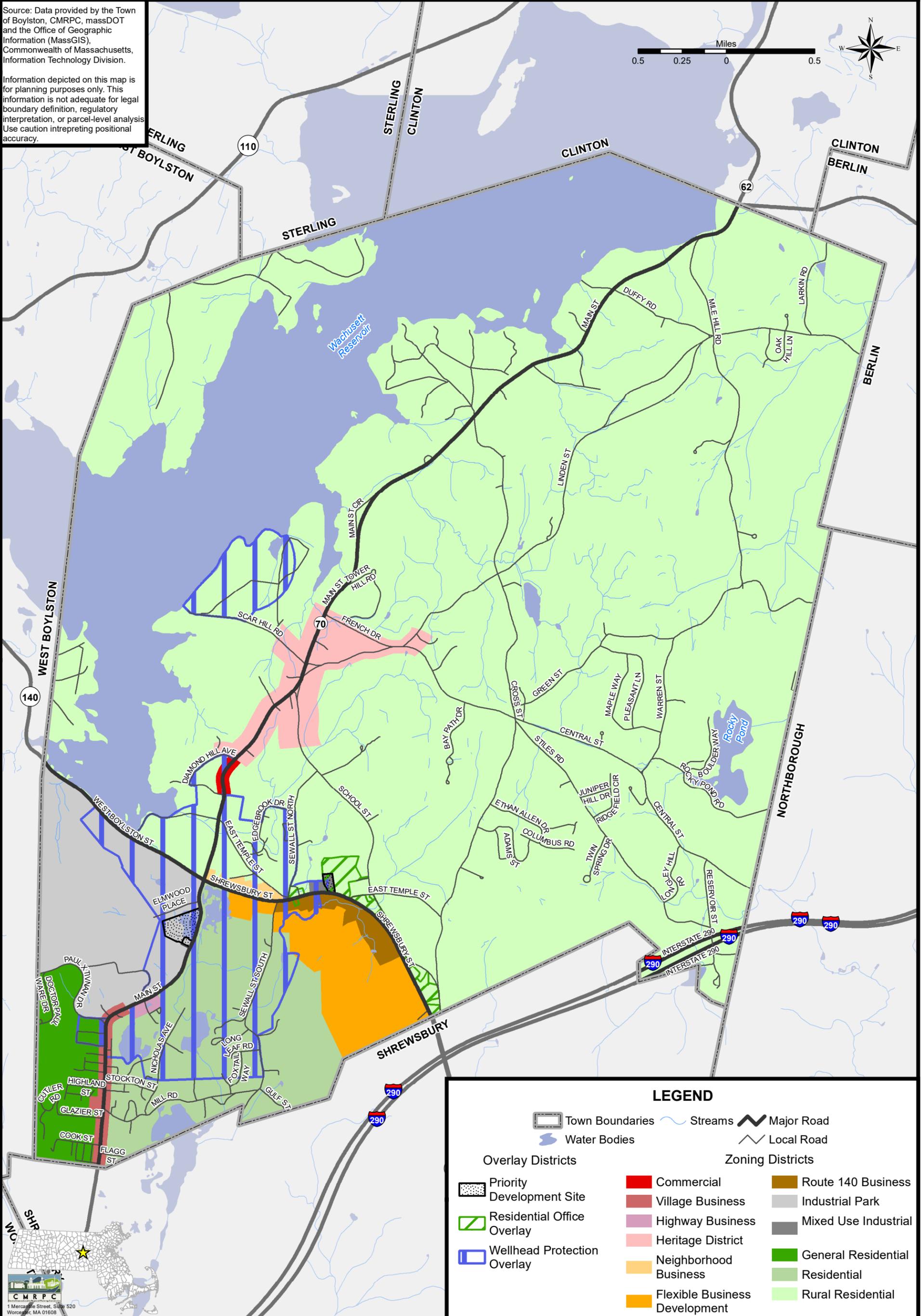
2 Washington Square, Union Station Worcester, MA 01604  
Date: 4/28/2017 Path: H:\Projects\O\_Boylston\_GIS\m039\_Locus\_11x17.mxd

# ZONING DISTRICTS & OVERLAYS

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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**LEGEND**

Town Boundaries	Streams	Major Road
Water Bodies	Local Road	
<b>Overlay Districts</b>		
Priority Development Site	Commercial	Route 140 Business
Residential Office Overlay	Village Business	Industrial Park
Wellhead Protection Overlay	Highway Business	Mixed Use Industrial
	Heritage District	General Residential
	Neighborhood Business	Residential
	Flexible Business Development	Rural Residential



CMRPC  
1 Mercutio Street, Suite 520  
Worcester, MA 01608

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

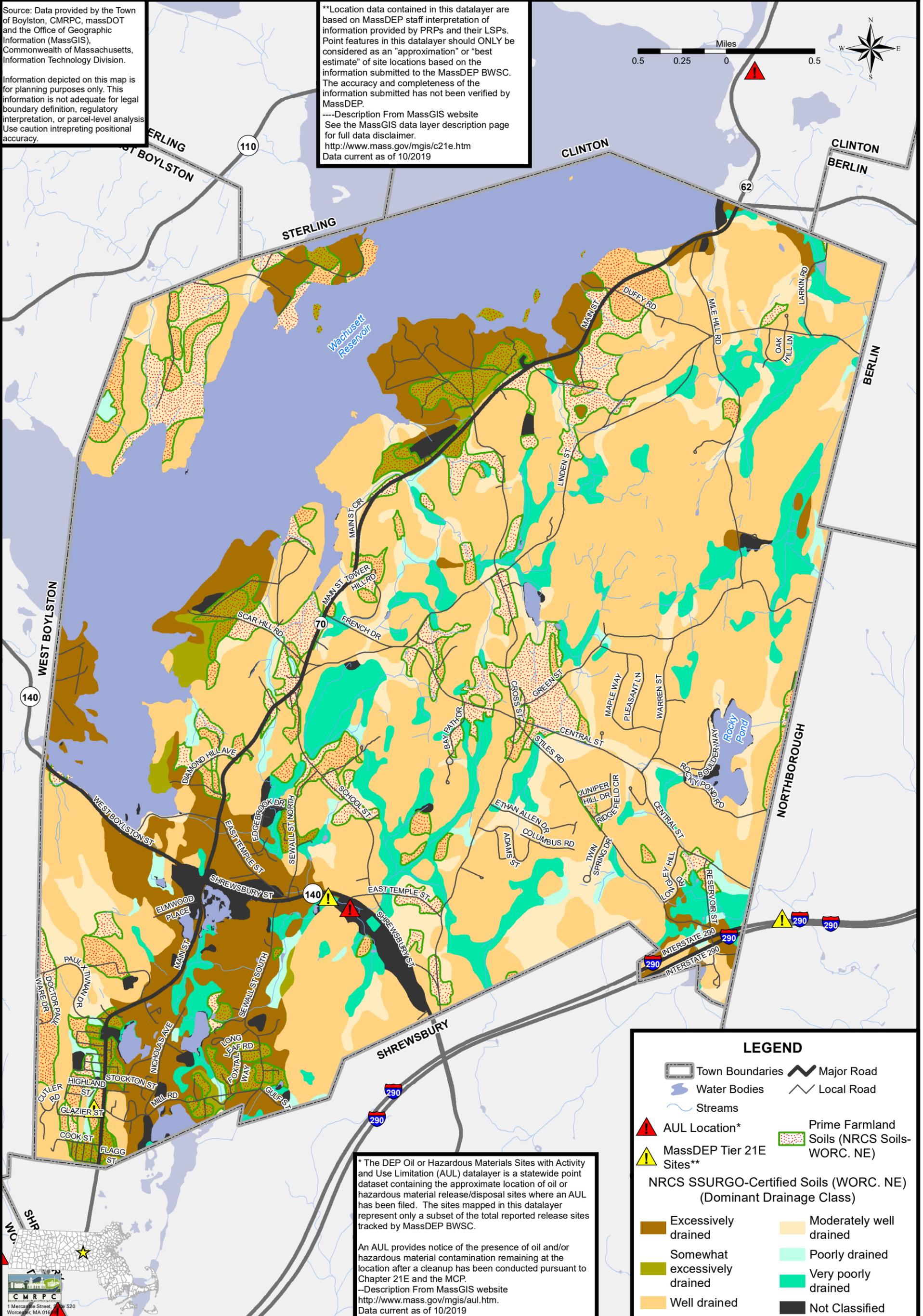
Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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\*\*Location data contained in this datalayer are based on MassDEP staff interpretation of information provided by PRPs and their LSPs. Point features in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" of site locations based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.

----Description From MassGIS website  
See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.  
<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/c21e.htm>  
Data current as of 10/2019

Miles  
0.5 0.25 0 0.5



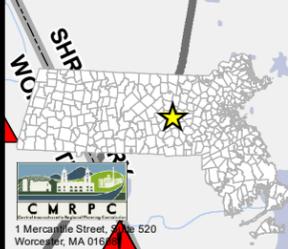
### LEGEND

	Town Boundaries		Major Road
	Water Bodies		Local Road
	Streams		Prime Farmland Soils (NRCS Soils-WORC. NE)
	AUL Location*		NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils (WORC. NE) (Dominant Drainage Class)
	MassDEP Tier 21E Sites**		Excessively drained
			Somewhat excessively drained
			Well drained
			Moderately well drained
			Poorly drained
			Very poorly drained
			Not Classified

\* The DEP Oil or Hazardous Materials Sites with Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) datalayer is a statewide point dataset containing the approximate location of oil or hazardous material release/disposal sites where an AUL has been filed. The sites mapped in this datalayer represent only a subset of the total reported release sites tracked by MassDEP BWSC.

An AUL provides notice of the presence of oil and/or hazardous material contamination remaining at the location after a cleanup has been conducted pursuant to Chapter 21E and the MCP.

---Description From MassGIS website  
<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/aul.htm>  
Data current as of 10/2019

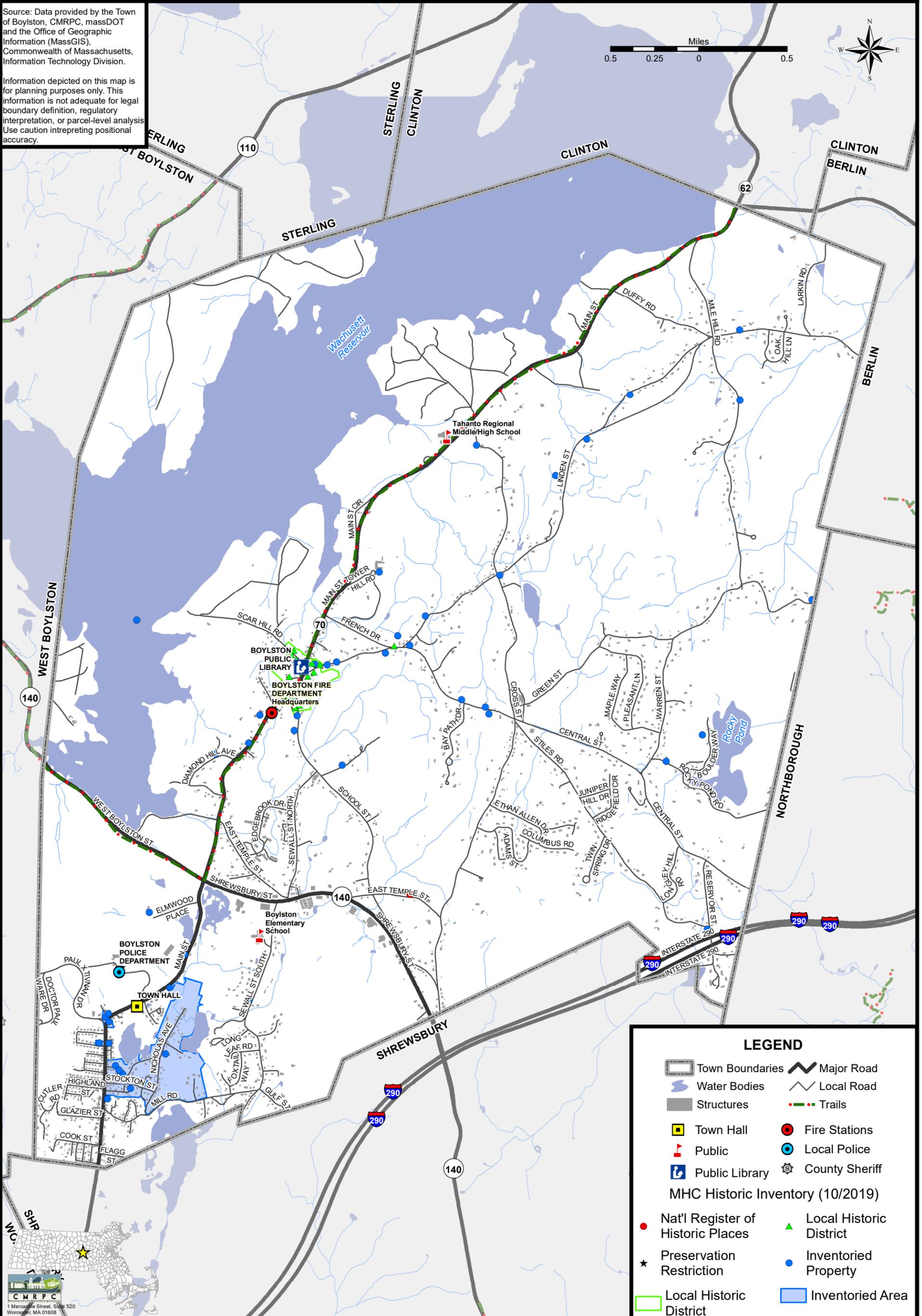


# UNIQUE FEATURES

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

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**LEGEND**

	Town Boundaries		Major Road
	Water Bodies		Local Road
	Structures		Trails
	Town Hall		Fire Stations
	Public		Local Police
	Public Library		County Sheriff
<b>MHC Historic Inventory (10/2019)</b>			
	Nat'l Register of Historic Places		Local Historic District
	Preservation Restriction		Inventoried Property
	Local Historic District		Inventoried Area District



CMRPC  
1 Mercutio Street, Suite 520  
Worcester, MA 01608

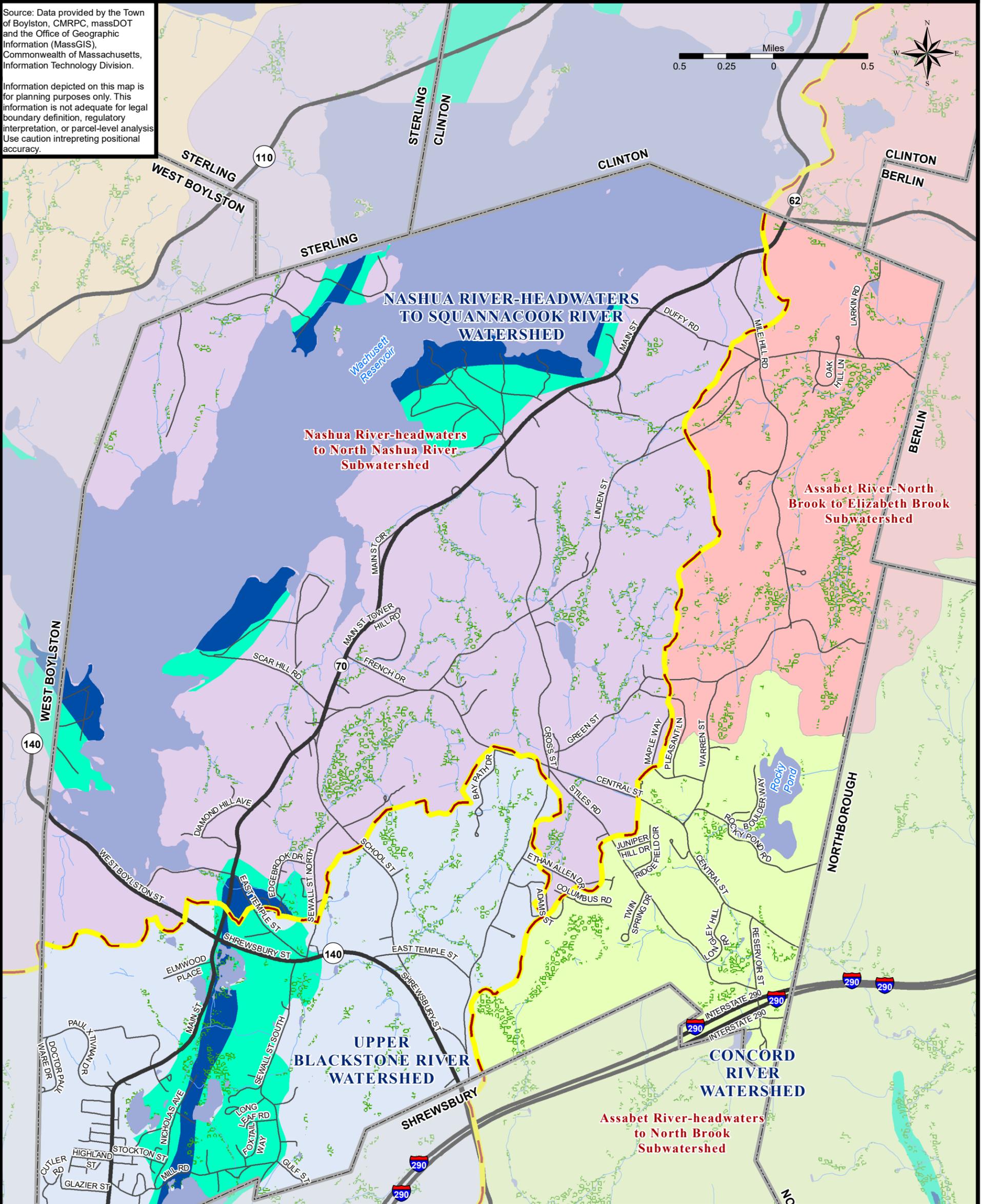
# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# WATER RESOURCES MAP (PART A)

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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**LEGEND**

Town Boundaries	DEP Wetlands	NRCS HUC Subbasin Boundary	NRCS HUC Watershed Boundary
Major Road	Aquifers	<b>NRCS HUC Subwatersheds</b>	
Local Road	High Yield (> 300 gpm)	Assabet River-North Brook to Elizabeth Brook	Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River
Water Bodies	Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)	Assabet River-headwaters to North Brook	Quinsigamond River
Streams		Stillwater River	



# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

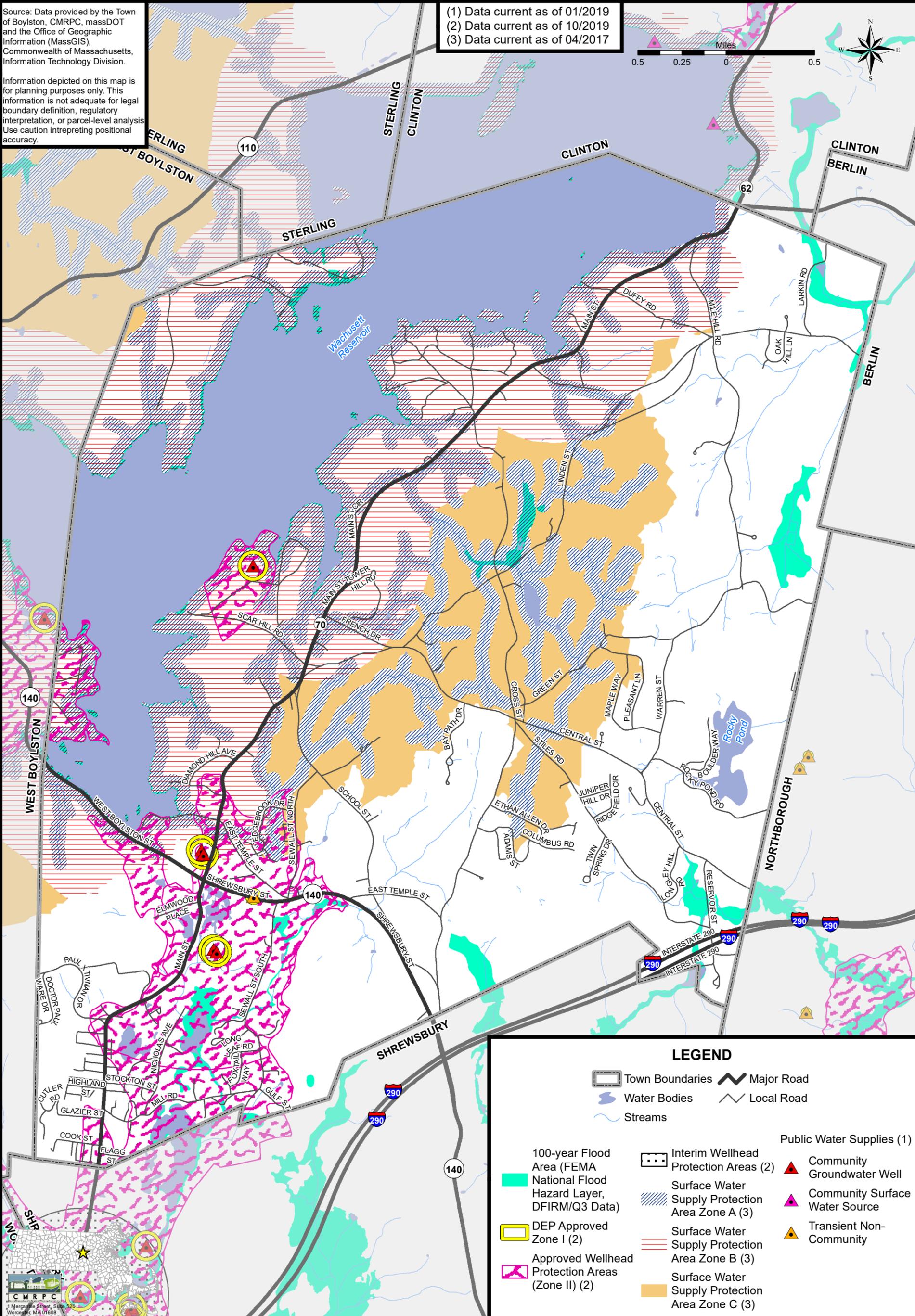
# WATER RESOURCES MAP (PART B)

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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- (1) Data current as of 01/2019
- (2) Data current as of 10/2019
- (3) Data current as of 04/2017



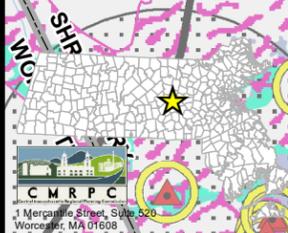
### LEGEND

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Water Bodies
- Local Road
- Streams

- 100-year Flood Area (FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, DFIRM/Q3 Data)
- DEP Approved Zone I (2)
- Approved Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II) (2)

- Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (2)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone A (3)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone B (3)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone C (3)

- Public Water Supplies (1)**
- Community Groundwater Well
- Community Surface Water Source
- Transient Non-Community

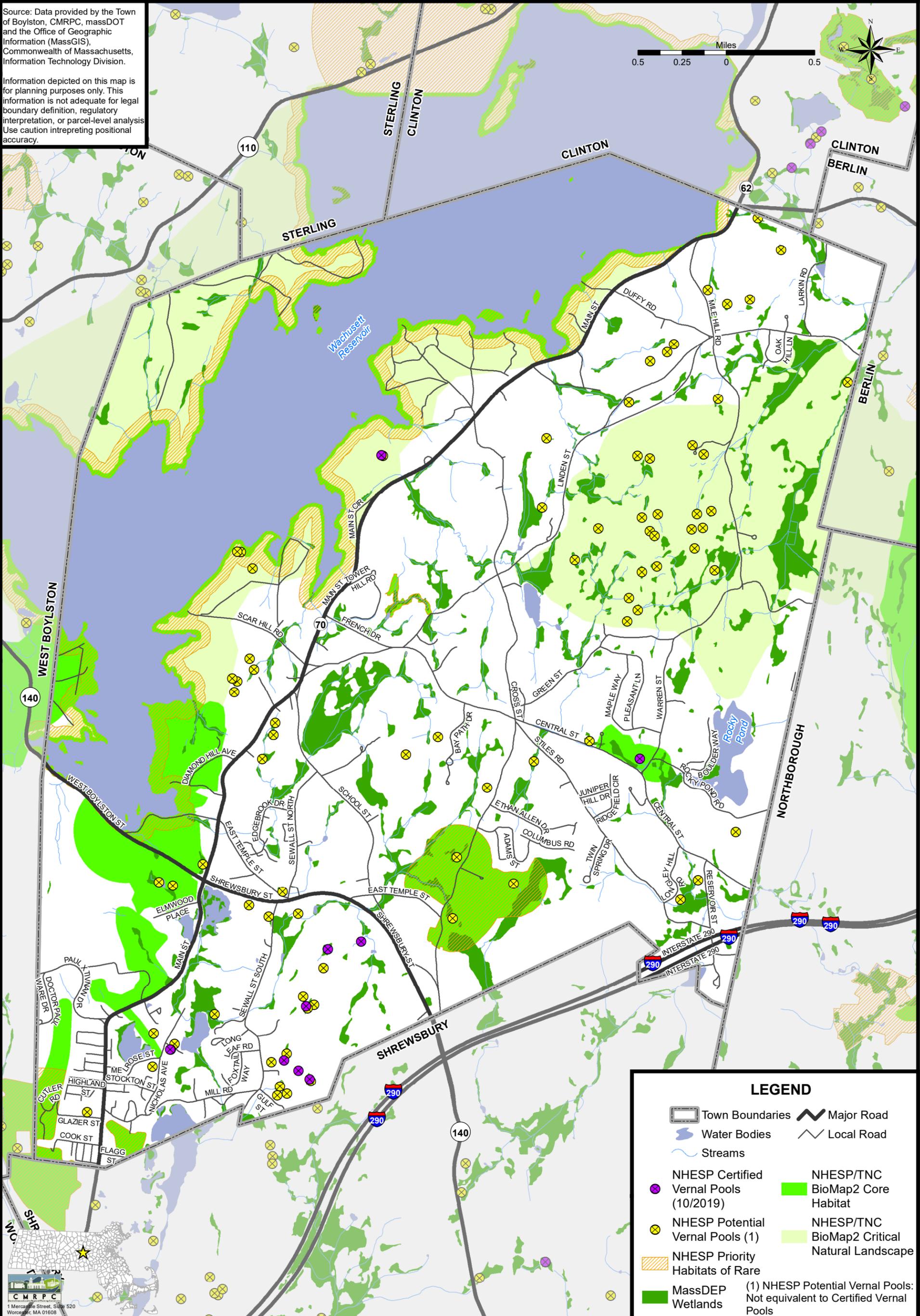


# HABITAT FEATURES

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

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**LEGEND**

Town Boundaries	Major Road
Water Bodies	Local Road
Streams	
NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (10/2019)	NHESP/TNC BioMap2 Core Habitat
NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (1)	NHESP/TNC BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape
NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare	
MassDEP Wetlands	(1) NHESP Potential Vernal Pools: Not equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools



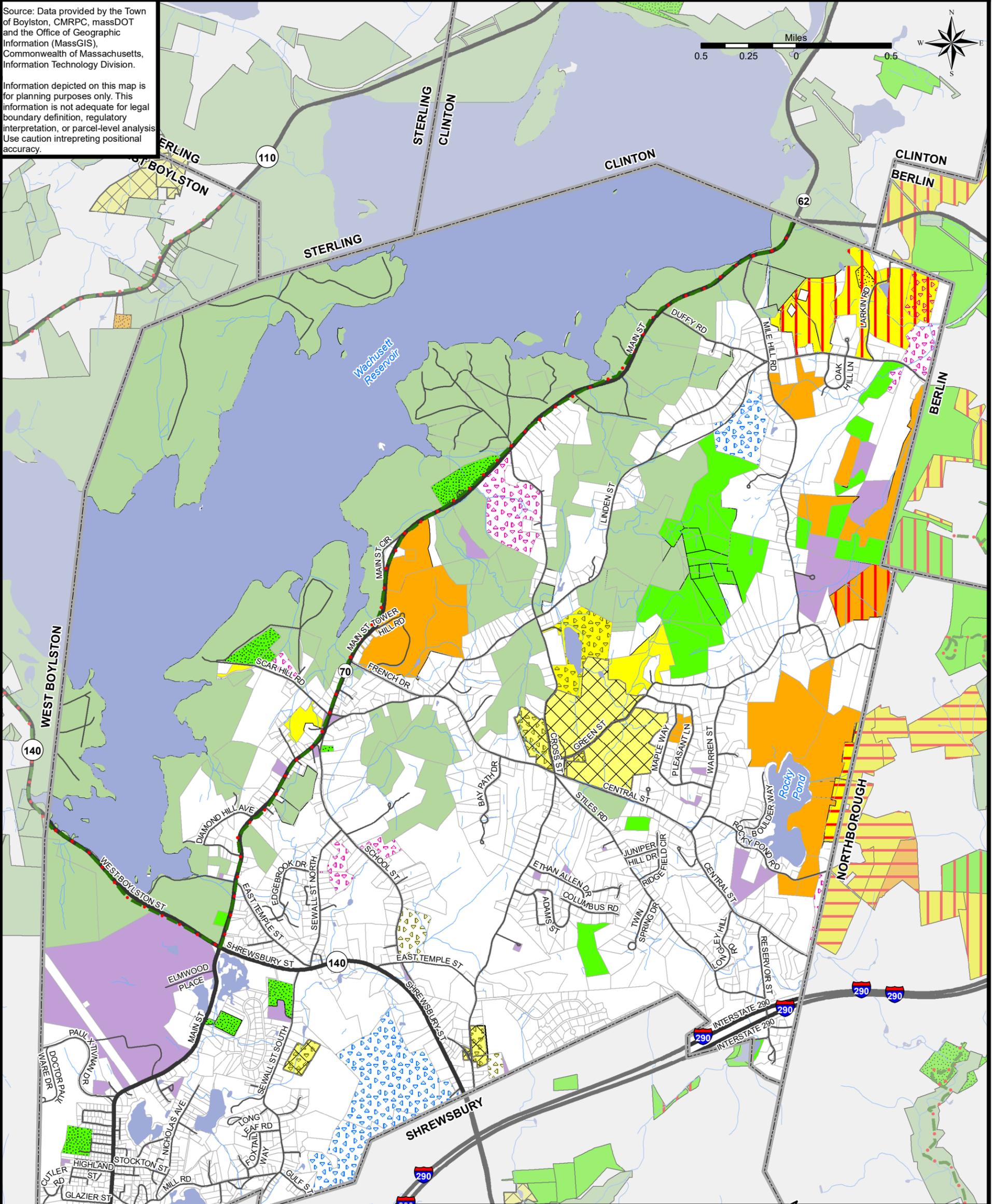
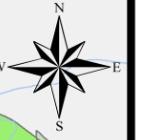
# OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Miles  
0.5 0.25 0 0.5



### LEGEND

- Town Boundaries
- Major Road
- Water Bodies
- Local Road
- Streams
- Trails

- Chapter 61 Land
- Chapter 61A Land
- Chapter 61B Land
- Town Owned Land
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- Conservation Restriction

Open Space data from MassGIS, current as of 08/2019  
Open Space Categories

- | Open Space Ownership | Level of Protection |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Federal              | Perpetuity*         |
| State                | Limited             |
| Municipal            | None                |
| Private              |                     |
| Non-Profit           |                     |

\* Open Space listed as "Perpetuity" will only show a solid Ownership color.

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

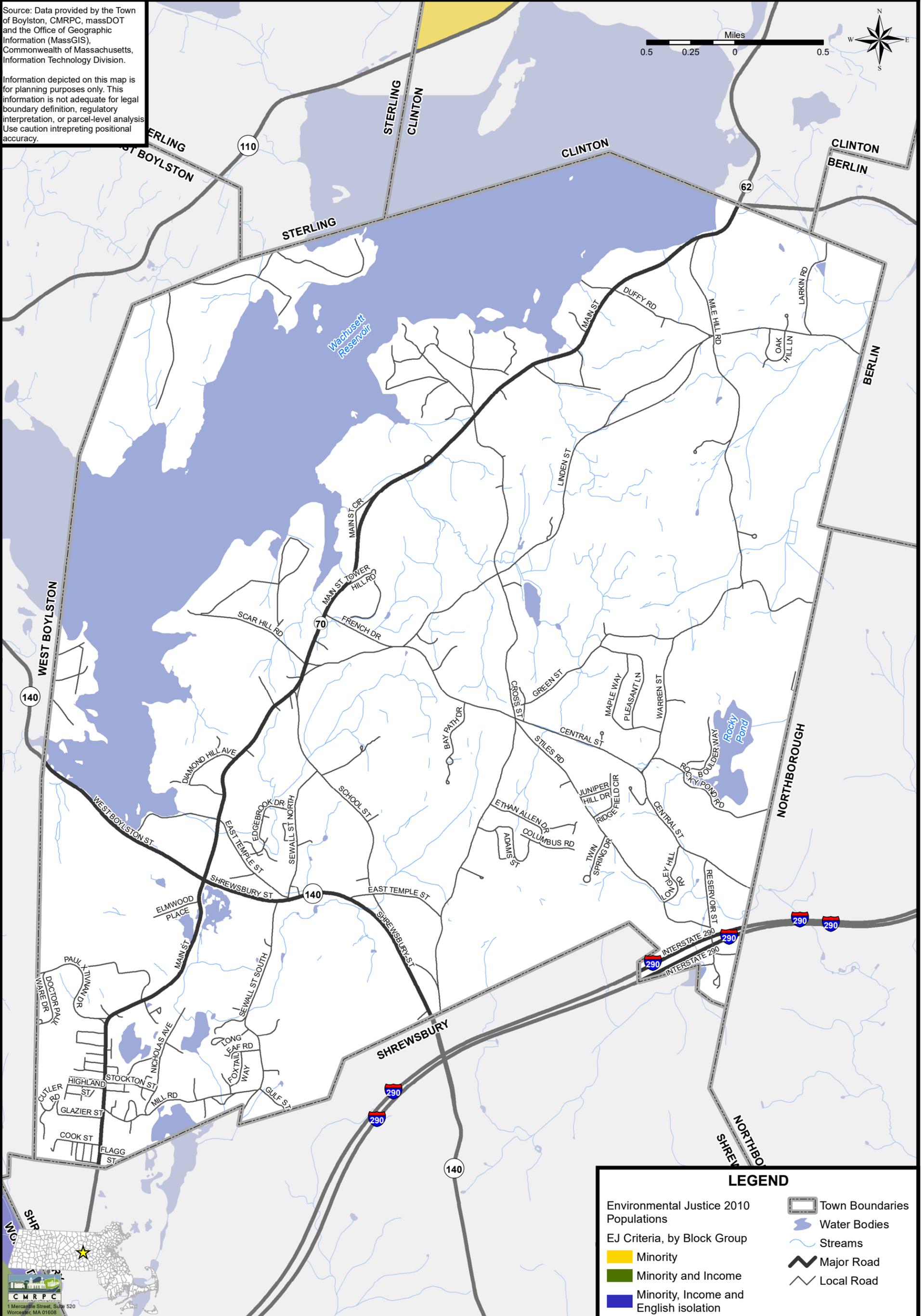


# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MAP

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Source: Data provided by the Town of Boylston, CMRPC, massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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**LEGEND**

Environmental Justice 2010 Populations	Town Boundaries
EJ Criteria, by Block Group	Water Bodies
Minority	Streams
Minority and Income	Major Road
Minority, Income and English isolation	Local Road

# Town of Boylston, Massachusetts

# APPENDIX A:

## ADA ACCESS SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

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This Appendix contains the required documentation for Boylston’s ADA access self-evaluation report. The administrative requirements of this Plan section requests the designation of an ADA Coordinator. The Town of Boylston currently designates Administrative Assistant, Alison Mack, as such and an official letter declaring this designation is included in this Appendix.

This Appendix includes the following documents:

- Facility Inventory ADA Self-Evaluation
- Town of Boylston ADA Coordinator Designation Letter
- ADA Compliance of Employment Practices Letter, signed by ADA Coordinator
- Public Notification of Non Discrimination Policy and ADA Grievance Procedures (Current)
- Equal Opportunity Policy and ADA Grievance Procedures (Proposed Language)

A representative of the disabled community was involved in the process of completing the ADA Self-Evaluation Facility Inventory. Irene Symonds, a member of the Boylston ADA Committee, reviewed a draft of the self-assessment and provided helpful comments on each of the Town-owned facilities that were evaluated. Appropriate changes and additions were made after receiving her input.

The Boylston Human Resources Administrator is currently in the process of revising the Town Employee Handbook. The Equal Employment Opportunity and Discrimination Grievance Procedure language has been proposed, however at the time of this plan’s approval it has not been officially accepted. The language in the current Employee Handbook is included in this Appendix, along with the proposed new language.

ACTIVITY	EQUIPMENT	NOTES	TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
			Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
Picnic Facilities	Tables & Benches	Located adjacent to accessible paths	no	n/a	n/a	yes	
		Access to Open Spaces	yes	n/a	n/a	yes	
		Back and Arm Rests	no	n/a	n/a	no	
		Adequate number	n/a	n/a	n/a	yes	Morningdale Manor Fields/Playground: Has 8 tables
	Grills	Height of Cooking Surface	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Located adjacent to accessible paths	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Trash Cans	Located adjacent to accessible paths	n/a	no	n/a	yes	Morningdale Manor Fields/Playground: Trash cans available in season
	Picnic Shelters	Located adjacent to accessible paths	n/a	no	n/a	n/a	
Located near accessible water fountains, trash can, restroom, parking, etc.		n/a	no	n/a	n/a		
Trails		Surface material	n/a	no	no	n/a	
		Dimensions	n/a	no	no	n/a	
		Rails	n/a	no	no	n/a	
		Signage (for visually impaired)	n/a	no	no	n/a	
Swimming Facilities	Pools	Entrance	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Location from accessible parking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Safety features i.e. warning for visually impaired	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Beaches	Location from accessible path into water	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Handrails	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Location from accessible parking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Shade provided	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Play Areas (tot lots)	All Play Equipment i.e. swings, slides	Same experience provided to all	yes	no	n/a	no	Center Courts/Playground: One accessible swing
	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths	no	no	n/a	no	
		Enough space between equipment for wheelchair	no	no	n/a	yes	
Game Areas: *ballfield; *basketball; *tennis	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths	no	no	yes	no	
		Berm cuts onto courts	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Equipment	Height	no	no	no	n/a	
		Dimensions	no	no	no	n/a	
	Spectator Seating	n/a	no	no	n/a		
Boat Docks	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Handrails	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Fishing Facilities	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

ACTIVITY	EQUIPMENT	NOTES	TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
			Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
	Equipment	Handrails	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Arm Rests	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Bait Shelves	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Handrails	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Fish Cleaning Tables	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Programing	Are special programs at your facilities accessible?	Learn-to-Swim	n/a	yes	yes	n/a	
		Guided Hikes	n/a	yes	yes	n/a	
		Interpretive Programs	n/a	yes	yes	n/a	
Services and Technical Assistance	Information available in alternative formats i.e. for visually impaired		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Process to request interpretive services (i.e. sign language interpreter) for meetings		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

<b>PARKING</b> <i>Specification For Accessible Spaces</i>	<b>Total Spaces</b> Up to 25 26-50 51-75 76-100 101-150 151-200 201-300 301-400 401-500	<b>Required Accessible Spaces</b> 1 space 2 spaces 3 spaces 4 spaces 5 spaces 6 spaces 7 spaces 8 spaces 9 spaces	<b>TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY</b>				
			<b>Center Courts &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Hillside Field</b>	<b>Hillside Gym</b>	<b>Morningdale Manor Playing Fields &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Comment/Transition Notes</b>
Required Number of Accessible Parking Spaces			no	yes	yes	yes	Hillside Gym has easy access, handicapped parking. Hillside Field has handicapped parking however there is no handicapped accessible trail from the parking lot to the field & playground. Morningdale Playing Field has accessible parking for handicapped patrons
Accessible space located closest to accessible entrance			no	yes	yes	no	Center Courts/Playground lacks designated accessible parking space, line striping, or compliant signage
Where spaces cannot be located within 200 ft of accessible entrance, drop-off area is provided within 100 ft.			no	yes	yes	no	
Minimum width of 13 ft includes 8 ft space plus 5 ft access aisle			no	yes	yes	no	
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.			no	yes	yes	no	
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces			no	yes	yes	no	
Sign minimum 5 ft, maximum 8 ft to top of sign			no	yes	no	no	
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)			no	yes	yes	no	
Surface slope less than 1:20, 5%			no	yes	no	yes	
Curbcut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present			no	n/a	yes	n/a	
Curbcut is a minimum width of 3 ft, excluding sloped sides, has sloped sides, all slopes not to exceed 1:12, and textured or painted yellow			no	n/a	yes	n/a	

<b>RAMPS</b> <i>Specifications</i>		<b>TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY</b>				
		<b>Center Courts &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Hillside Field</b>	<b>Hillside Gym</b>	<b>Morningdale Manor Playing Fields &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Comment/Transition Notes</b>
Slope Maximum 1:12		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Minimum width 4 ft between handrails		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handrails on both sides if ramp is longer than 6 ft		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handrails at 34" and 19" from ramp surface		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handrails extend 12" beyond top and bottom		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handgrip oval or round		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handgrip smooth surface		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Handgrip diameter between 1½" and 2"		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Clearance of 1½" between wall and wall rail		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Non-slip surface		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Level platforms (4ft x 4 ft) at every 30 ft, at top, at bottom, at change of direction		n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	

<b>SITE ACCESS, PATH OF TRAVEL, ENTRANCES</b> <i>Specifications</i>		<b>TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY</b>				
		<b>Center Courts &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Hillside Field</b>	<b>Hillside Gym</b>	<b>Morningdale Manor Playing Fields &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Comment/Transition Notes</b>
<b>SITE ACCESS</b>	Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance	no	no	yes	no	
	Disembarking area at accessible entrance	no	no	yes	no	
	Surface evenly paved or hard-packed	no	no	yes	yes	
	No ponding of water	no	no	yes	no	
<b>PATH OF TRAVEL</b>	Path does not require the use of stairs	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Path is stable, firm and slip resistant	no	no	yes	n/a	
	3 ft wide minimum	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Slope maximum 1:20 (5%) and maximum cross pitch is 2% (1:50).	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than ½ inch	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Any objects protruding onto the pathway must be detected by a person with a visual disability using a cane	no	no	yes	n/a	

SITE ACCESS, PATH OF TRAVEL, ENTRANCES <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
	Objects protruding more than 4" from the wall must be within 27" of the ground, or higher than 80"	no	no	yes	n/a	
	Curb on the pathway must have curb cuts at drives, parking and drop-offs	no	no	yes	n/a	
ENTRANCES	Primary public entrances accessible to person using wheelchair, must be signed, gotten to independently, and not be the service entrance	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Level space extending 5 ft. from the door, interior and exterior of entrance doors	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Minimum 32" clear width opening (i.e. 36" door with standard hinge)	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	At least 18" clear floor area on latch, pull side of door	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Door handle no higher than 48" and operable with a closed fist	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Vestibule is 4 ft plus the width of the door swinging into the space	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Entrance(s) on a level that makes elevators accessible	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Door mats less than ½" thick are securely fastened	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Door mats more than ½" thick are recessed	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Grates in path of travel have openings of ½" maximum	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Signs at non-accessible entrance(s) indicate direction to accessible entrance	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
Emergency egress – alarms with flashing lights and audible signals, sufficiently lighted	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a		

STAIRS AND DOORS <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
STAIRS	No open risers	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	Hillside Gym: Women's restroom only accessible by stairs
	Nosings not projecting	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Treads no less than 11" wide	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handrails on both sides	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handrails 34"-38" above tread	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handrail extends a minimum of 1 ft beyond top and bottom riser (if no safety hazard and space permits)	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handgrip oval or round	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handgrip has a smooth surface	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Handgrip diameter between 1¼" and 1½"	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	1½" clearance between wall and handrail	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	

STAIRS AND DOORS <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
<b>DOORS</b>	Minimum 32" clear opening	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	At least 18" clear floor space on pull side of door	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Closing speed minimum 3 seconds to within 3" of the latch	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Maximum pressure 5 pounds interior doors	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Threshold maximum ½" high, beveled on both sides	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Hardware operable with a closed fist (no conventional door knobs or thumb latch devices)	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Hardware minimum 36", maximum 48" above the floor	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Clear, level floor space extends out 5 ft from both sides of the door	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Door adjacent to revolving door is accessible and unlocked	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Doors opening into hazardous area have hardware that is knurled or roughened	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	

RESTROOMS – ALSO SEE DOORS AND VESTIBULES <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
5 ft turning space measured 12" from the floor		yes	n/a	yes	n/a	Hillside Gym: Only the Men's restroom on first floor is accessible. Women's restroom only accessible by stairs Morningdale Manor Fields/Playground: One portable toilet is available during in-season months
<b>AT LEAST ONE SINK:</b>	Clear floor space of 30" by 48" to allow a forward approach	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Mounted without pedestal or legs, height 34" to top of rim	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Extends at least 22" from the wall	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Open knee space a minimum 19" deep, 30" width, and 27" high	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Cover exposed pipes with insulation	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Faucets operable with closed fist (lever or spring activated handle)	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
<b>AT LEAST ONE STALL:</b>	Accessible to person using wheelchair at 60" wide by 72" deep	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Stall door is 36" wide	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Stall door swings out	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Stall door is self closing	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Stall door has a pull latch	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	

RESTROOMS – ALSO SEE DOORS AND VESTIBULES <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
	Lock on stall door is operable with a closed fist, and 32" above the floor	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Coat hook is 54" high	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
TOILET	18" from center to nearest side wall	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	42" minimum clear space from center to farthest wall or fixture	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Top of seat 17"-19" above the floor	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
GRAB BARS	On back and side wall closest to toilet	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	1¼" diameter	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	1½" clearance to wall	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Located 30" above and parallel to the floor	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Acid-etched or roughened surface	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	42" long	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
FIXTURES	Toilet paper dispenser is 24" above floor	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	One mirror set a maximum 38" to bottom (if tilted, 42")	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Dispensers (towel, soap, etc) at least one of each a maximum 42" above the floor	yes	n/a	yes	n/a	

FLOORS, DRINKING FOUNTAINS, TELEPHONES <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
FLOORS	Non-slip surface	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	Center Courts/Playground: Material under play equipment is not stable, firm, or slip resistant
	Carpeting is high-density, low pile, non-absorbent, stretched taut, securely anchored	n/a	n/a	no	n/a	
	Corridor width minimum is 3 ft	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Objects (signs, ceiling lights, fixtures) can only protrude 4" into the path of travel from a height of 27" to 80" above the floor	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	Spouts no higher than 36" from floor to outlet	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Hand operated push button or level controls	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Spouts located near front with stream of water as parallel to front as possible	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	If recessed, recess a minimum 30" width, and no deeper than depth of fountain	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	If no clear knee space underneath, clear floor space 30" x 48" to allow parallel approach	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	

<b>TELEPHONES</b>	Highest operating part a maximum 54" above the floor	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Access within 12" of phone, 30" high by 30" wide	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Adjustable volume control on headset so identified	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

<b>SIGNS, SIGNALS, AND SWITCHES</b> <i>Specifications</i>		<b>TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY</b>				
		<b>Center Courts &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Hillside Field</b>	<b>Hillside Gym</b>	<b>Morningdale Manor Playing Fields &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Comment/Transition Notes</b>
<b>SWITCHES, CONTROLS AND SIGNS</b>	Switches and controls for light, heat, ventilation, windows, fire alarms, thermostats, etc, must be a minimum of 36" and a maximum of 48" above the floor for a forward reach, a maximum of 54" for a side reach	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Electrical outlets centered no lower than 18" above the floor	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Warning signals must be visual as well as audible	n/a	n/a	no	n/a	
<b>SIGNS</b>	Mounting height must be 60" to centerline of the sign	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Within 18" of door jamb or recessed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Letters and numbers a t least 1¼" high	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Letters and numbers raised .03"	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Letters and numbers contrast with the background color	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

<b>SWIMMING POOLS, SHOWER ROOMS &amp; PICNIC FACILITIES</b> <i>Specifications</i>		<b>TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY</b>				
		<b>Center Courts &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Hillside Field</b>	<b>Hillside Gym</b>	<b>Morningdale Manor Playing Fields &amp; Playground</b>	<b>Comment/Transition Notes</b>
<b>SWIMMING POOLS – accessibility can be via ramp, lifting device, or transfer area</b>	Ramp at least 34" wide with a non-slip surface extending into the shallow end, slope not exceeding 1:6 with handrails on both sides	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Lifting device	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Transfer area 18" above the path of travel and a minimum of 18" wide	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Unobstructed path of travel not less than 48" wide around pool	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	Non-slip surface	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>SHOWER ROOMS - showers must accommodate both wheel-in and transfer use</b>	Stalls 36" by 60" minimum, with a 36" door opening	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	Hillside Gym: No transfer use
	Floors are pitched to drain the stall at the corner farthest from entrance	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Floors are non-slip surface	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Controls operate by a single lever with a pressure balance mixing valve	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Controls are located on the center wall adjacent to the hinged seat	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Shower heads attached to a flexible metal hose	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	

SWIMMING POOLS, SHOWER ROOMS & PICNIC FACILITIES <i>Specifications</i>		TOWN OWNED OPEN SPACE OR RECREATION PROPERTY				
		Center Courts & Playground	Hillside Field	Hillside Gym	Morningdale Manor Playing Fields & Playground	Comment/Transition Notes
	Shower heads attached to wall mounting adjustable from 42" to 72" above the floor	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Seat is hinged and padded and at least 16" deep, folds upward, securely attached to side wall, height is 18" to the top of the seat, and at least 24" long	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Soap trays without handhold features unless they can support 250 pounds	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	2 grab bars are provided, one 30" and one 48" long, or one continuous L shaped bar	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
	Grab bars are placed horizontally at 36" above the floor line	n/a	n/a	yes	n/a	
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	yes	n/a	n/a	no	Center Courts/Playground: One picnic table has ADA extension but needs to be moved away from the fence
	For tables without toe clearance, the knee space under the table must be at least 28" high, 30" wide and 24" deep	n/a	n/a	n/a	no	
	Top of table no higher than 32" above ground	yes	n/a	n/a	no	
	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	no	n/a	n/a	no	
	Accessible tables, grills and fire rings must have clear ground space of at least 36" around the perimeter	yes	n/a	n/a	no	



Town Administrator  
April C. Steward

TOWN OF BOYLSTON  
221 MAIN STREET  
BOYLSTON, MA 01505-1930

July 6, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

This correspondence confirms that the ADA Coordinator for the Town of Boylston is: Alison Mack, Administrative Assistant, 221 Main Street Boylston, MA.

Thank you,

April C. Steward  
Town Administrator



# TOWN OF BOYLSTON

221 Main Street  
Boylston, Massachusetts 01505

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*BOARD OF SELECTMEN*  
*James A. Underwood*  
*Matt Mecum*  
*Seth Ridinger*

*Tel: 508-869-2093*  
*Fax: 508-869-6210*

07/07/2020

Alison Mack  
Admin Assistant to the BOS and Town Administrator  
ADA Coordinator  
221 Main Street  
Boylston, MA 01505

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to attest that the Town of Boylston's employment practices, including recruitment, personnel actions, leave administration, training, tests, medical exams/questionnaires, social and recreational programs, fringe benefits, collective bargaining agreements, and wage and salary administration are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Regards,

Alison Mack

## **Grievance Procedures – Town of Boylston**

The following grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies or the provision of services, activities, programs and benefits by the Town of Boylston.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, telephone number of complainant and location, date and description of the problem. Reasonable accommodations, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complainant, will be made available for persons with disabilities who are unable to submit a written complaint.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to the Boylston ADA Coordinator, Town Hall – 221 Main Street, Boylston, MA 01505. Sue Olsen, Town Administrator serves as the ADA Coordinator until the Board of Selectmen appoints a permanent Coordinator.

Within fifteen calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, and where appropriate in a format accessible to the complainant such as audiotape. The response will explain the position of the Town of Boylston and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or/his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 15 days after receipt of the response to the Board of Selectmen or their designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Boylston Board of Selectmen or their designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the Board of Selectmen of their designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate in a format accessible to the complainant such as audiotape, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Boylston Board of Selectmen or their designee and responses from the ADA

Coordinator and the Boylston Board of selectmen or their designee will be kept by the Town of Boylston for at least three years.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

### **General Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Town of Boylston to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided maximum opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs, services, and activities offered by the town. It is the town's goal that such participation as equal as possible to that of able-bodied persons. Therefore, the town's primary focus will be architectural modifications, assistive listening devices and equipment, and sign language interpreters upon request and availability. This approach may not always be feasible or sufficient to ensure equal access and benefit.

In providing its services, programs and activities the Town of Boylston shall not:

- 1) Deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in or benefit from a benefit, service or activity.
- 2) Afford a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in or benefit from any aid, benefit or service that is not equal to that offered to others.
- 3) Deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards, commissions, or any other entity of the Town of Boylston.
- 4) Limit a qualified individual with a disability the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage or opportunity received by other individuals receiving the aid, benefit or service.

It is the policy of the Town of Boylston to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided maximum opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs, services and activities. It is the goal that such participation is in the same manner as that of non-disabled persons. Toward achieving this, the Town has a primary focus to identify barriers to access and remove or modify them to use assistive devices or procedures when necessary.

### **Reasonable Modifications Policy**

The Town of Boylston shall make a reasonable program or service modification whenever a person requests such an accommodation, unless it can be demonstrated by the town that such an accommodation would impose an undue burden or fundamental alteration to the program or service. Final

decisions regarding requests for reasonable modifications will be made by the ADA Coordinator in a timely manner. These modifications shall be made within thirty (30) working days of the request or as soon as is reasonably possible. Individuals seeking to contest a denial of a request for reasonable modifications will be given a copy of the grievance procedure in the format appropriate for their needs.

The town will comply with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations relative to the use of assistive equipment, including trained assistance animals. In addition, no arbitrary restrictions or limitations will be placed on the type or number of assistive equipment items, including assistive animals, that people with disabilities may bring with them to town facilities.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Any prohibitions or limits upon the eligibility of qualified individuals with disabilities to receive services or practice any occupation or profession are not allowed under this policy.

### **Assurance Regarding Surcharges**

It is the policy of the Town of Boylston that surcharges are never charged to participants (nor any other interested party or person) for reasonable accommodations under any circumstances. Such accommodations include, but are not limited to: American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, Computer Aided Real Time (CART) translators, architectural accessibility, computer accessibility hardware or software, Braille material, listening devices, closed captioning etc.

### **Integrated Services Assurance**

The Town of Boylston strives to ensure that all of its services, programs, and activities are provided in the most integrated setting possible. People with disabilities will not be required to participate in separate programs even if separate programs that are specifically designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities are offered.

Services will not be provided to any person with a disability in a manner or at a location different from that available to other service recipients unless the potential for removal of architectural barriers or the use of assistive devices and equipment have been found to be inadequate or inappropriate to the needs of the individual. In all cases, the affected individual will be fully involved in the consideration and decision-making process.

## **Significant Assistance Assurance**

It is the policy of the Town of Boylston that programs to whom the town provides significant support or who the town sponsors may not discriminate against people with disabilities.

## **Accessible Transportation Policy**

It is the policy of the town that whenever transportation services are provided they will be accessible to participants in town programs regardless of disability. When transportation services are provided and an individual is in need of accessible transportation they should make their request in writing to the ADA Coordinator. Requests must be made at least five days in advance of the need. As with all of the town's transportation services, all requests are subject to the availability of space. When a request can not be met, notice will be given as soon as possible and at least one day before the requested date of service.

If a person needs a wheelchair van every effort will be made to accommodate this need. If the town is providing transportation for anyone to or from a particular event or service and someone requests wheelchair accessible transportation, then the town will be responsible for the arrangement and the cost of that transportation.

## **Community Referral Assurance**

Whenever the Town of Boylston participates in or funds programs or makes references to other programs or services, it is the policy that such programs and services must be accessible or usable by a person with a disability. The town will gather information regarding which of the programs and services that it refers people to are accessible, and those that are not. The town will make efforts to gather at least one accessible provider in each of the categories of service in which the town makes referrals.

## PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR THE REVISED TOWN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Town recognizes the right of individuals to work and advance on the basis of merit, ability, and potential without regard to gender, gender identity and expression, race, color, national origin, ancestry, transgender, religion, age, disability, genetics, military status or sexual orientation. The Town has a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity in all of its hiring programs and activities.

The Town takes affirmative measures to ensure equal opportunity in the recruitment and hiring, rate of compensation, and all terms and conditions of employment. The Town is committed to fostering and encouraging a workplace comprised of individuals of diverse backgrounds, races, genders, abilities, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ability and ages.

All Town employees are required to take diligent, affirmative steps to ensure equal opportunity and respect for diversity. The policy of the Town is to recruit and hire without regard to gender, gender identity and expression, race, color, national origin, ancestry, transgender, religion, age as defined by law, disability, genetics, military status or sexual orientation as defined by law. Decisions about employment are made with consideration of the development of a diverse workforce.

### *Discrimination Grievance Procedure*

Anyone who feels that he/she has been discriminated against by the Town on the basis of their race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age, disability, participation in discrimination complaint-related activities, sexual orientation, genetics, or active military or veteran status or any other basis prohibited under applicable law in employment practices, is urged to report their grievance to their department head. The department head must notify the Town Administrator and/or the Human Resources Administrator of any grievance and work to resolve the grievance in an appropriate manner.

The determination to provide an accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis. This is an interactive process through which the department and the individual with a disability engage in a discussion concerning an accommodation request and the Town's ability to accommodate this request. The department will make a "reasonable effort" to determine the appropriate accommodation.

*Note: Verification of the disability by a treating physician may be required. (If medical verification is required, the person requesting accommodation must sign a release.)*

# **APPENDIX B: BOYLSTON OSRP COMMUNITY SURVEY & RESULTS**

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## Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

Dear Residents,

Please help the Town of Boylston update our Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) by participating in this important survey **which should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete**. Your insight as a Boylston community member is necessary to create a vibrant plan which will allow the Town to qualify for state funding for the acquisition, protection, and enhancement of open space and recreational facilities. This survey is being conducted to understand the needs and concerns of residents regarding the Town's open space and recreation facilities. This plan will help us balance the preservation of open space with development in a manner consistent with the character of Boylston.

Please familiarize yourself with the following terms which are used throughout the survey:

*-Open Space:* Public and privately-owned undeveloped lands which are important for a variety of reasons, including habitat for wildlife, water resource protection, passive recreation, agriculture, forestry, or simply because of their scenic qualities.

*-Active recreational facilities or active recreation:* Land used for active recreational purposes, such as athletic fields and courts, swimming facilities, or golf courses.

*-Passive recreation:* Non-consumptive uses such as wildlife observation, walking along wooded trails, biking along scenic roadways, and canoeing or kayaking on waterways.

Responses to this survey will be completely anonymous and not attributed to individuals. **If you choose to submit your name and email address at the end of this survey you will be entered to win a raffle prize such as a gift certificate to a local business!**

**Surveys must be completed by Friday January 10, 2019.** Please return hard copy surveys to the following locations:

- Town Clerk's office at Town Hall (221 Main St)
- Boylston Public Library (695 Main St)

A public forum will be held in early 2020 to share the survey results and gather additional comments.

Sincerely,

*The Boylston Open Space and Recreation Committee*

*With staff support from The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)*

**For more information please contact: [boylstonopenspace@gmail.com](mailto:boylstonopenspace@gmail.com)**



# Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

## 1. How important is it to you that open space and natural areas in Boylston are preserved?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
Importance:	<input type="radio"/>					

## 2. What are your top five (5) most important reasons for the Town to acquire and/or preserve open space?

- Preserve rural character of the town
- Manage residential growth
- Preserve historic assets
- Protect water quality & water resources
- Protect wildlife habitats of flora and fauna
- Provide active recreation facilities (i.e. sports fields, courts)
- Provide areas for passive recreation (i.e. hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing)
- Preserve existing agricultural land
- Provide egress to existing conservation land in order to increase landscape connectivity, habitat space, and ecological value
- Preserve unique scenic areas
- Provide areas for hunting
- Provide boat ramps and access to water bodies
- Facilitate the development of additional affordable housing
- Other (please specify)

**3. Which of the following recreational activities or amenities do you feel the Town of Boylston needs more of? If it is needed, please indicate whether you are willing to pay more taxes in order for the Town to provide it.**

	Does NOT Need	Needs but I am NOT willing to pay more taxes	Needs and I am willing to pay more taxes	Don't Know/Not Applicable
Playgrounds and children's play equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiking / walking / running trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horseback riding trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snow shoeing / cross-country skiing trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snowmobile / 4-wheeling / ATV trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe bike lanes on existing roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trail markings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor team playing fields / courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indoor sports recreation facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community recreation center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tennis courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lawn games (i.e. horseshoes, shuffleboard, bocce)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hunting areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor / indoor swimming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Does NOT Need	Needs but I am NOT willing to pay more taxes	Needs and I am willing to pay more taxes	Don't Know/Not Applicable
Spray or splash park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ice skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public access to water bodies for swimming, boating, or fishing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disc golf / frisbee golf course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor amphitheater or performance space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skate park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased general maintenance of existing fields, courts, and landscape	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify):



## Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

### 4. In order to preserve open spaces in Boylston, would you be willing to:

	Yes	No	No opinion
Support a requirement for all new residential developments to include conservation/open space areas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vote to allocate town funds to acquire or otherwise conserve more open space?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favor zoning that provides for increases in density in existing developed areas in exchange for open space in less developed or environmentally sensitive areas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consider allowing an easement (i.e. public access or development restriction) on a portion of your property in order to add to existing open spaces or connect to open spaces (e.g. to access a hiking trail or extend a bike path)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 5. Would you support the Town of Boylston establishing a Wetlands Bylaw to limit development activities adjacent to any wetlands resource area?

- Yes, with a no disturb zone around wetlands resource areas of 25 ft.
- Yes, with a no disturb zone around wetlands resource areas of 35 ft.
- Yes, with a no disturb zone around wetlands resource areas of 50 ft. or more
- No, I would not support this bylaw
- Would need more information



	Almost daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	I know about it, but never go there	I don't know about this place
Morningdale Manor Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Town Hall Gymnasium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Fields at Tahanto Regional High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Hillside Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Hillside Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Scar Hill Ball Field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) Forest Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
Summer Star Wildlife Sanctuary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				

Other areas in Boylston or nearby communities:



# Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

## 8. How often do you go to a park or other open space in Boylston to...

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
Participate in or watch a formal youth sports league?	<input type="radio"/>				
Participate in or watch a formal adult sports league?	<input type="radio"/>				
Participate in an informal playgroup or pick up game?	<input type="radio"/>				
Attend a special event at a park?	<input type="radio"/>				
Utilize public play area / playground?	<input type="radio"/>				
Utilize hiking, biking or cross country ski trails?	<input type="radio"/>				
Visit a park or other open space?	<input type="radio"/>				
Walk or jog on a sidewalk or public way	<input type="radio"/>				

**9. What should our Town's priorities for expenditures for open space and recreation be? Please choose your top 3 priorities.**

- Acquiring land for new public active recreation areas
- Improvements to existing athletic fields
- Acquiring conservation lands for passive recreation use (e.g., trails)
- Improving passive recreation opportunities on existing conservation land
- Expanding available parking at open space destinations
- Expanding available parking at recreational destinations
- Expanding connections for walking (e.g. sidewalks, connecting trails)
- Expanding connections for biking (e.g. off-road paths, on-road lanes, and rail trails)

What do you recommend?

**10. If adequate funding was available, would you be in favor of the Town acquiring the former YMCA Camp Harrington property for open space or recreation purposes?**

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Comments:



# Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

## 11. How would you describe the Town of Boylston? (Check one box per row)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A rural town	<input type="radio"/>				
A bedroom community	<input type="radio"/>				
A suburb of Worcester	<input type="radio"/>				
A town in transition	<input type="radio"/>				
An arts community	<input type="radio"/>				
Historic	<input type="radio"/>				
Progressive	<input type="radio"/>				
Unique	<input type="radio"/>				
Crowded	<input type="radio"/>				
Safe	<input type="radio"/>				
Family-friendly	<input type="radio"/>				
Age-friendly	<input type="radio"/>				

**12. Additional Comments: Please use this opportunity to submit any additional comments that you feel are important to Boylston's open space and recreation planning and protection efforts. Your input is highly valued.**



# Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

## Demographic Information \*\*\* OPTIONAL \*\*\*\*

### 13. What is your age?

- Under 18 years old
- 18 to 25 years old
- 26 to 35 years old
- 36 to 45 years old
- 46 to 55 years old
- 56 to 65 years old
- Over 65 years old

### 14. How many people live in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8 or more

### 15. How long have you lived in Boylston?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10-20 years
- More than 20 years

### 16. Do you have children under the age of 18 living with you?

- Yes
- No

**17. If you would like to be entered to win a raffle prize for taking this survey and you would like to be provided with updates on the Open Space and Recreation Plan (including the date, time, and location of the upcoming public forum), please include your name and email address:**

Name:

Email Address:

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please write **YES**:



## Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019

**Thank you for your input. We really appreciate your involvement.**

Sincerely,

The Boylston Open Space and Recreation Committee

*Seth Ridinger, Chair*

*Gerry Quam, Vice Chair*

*Elaine Jones, Clerk*

*Helen Dexter*

*Crystal Byron*

With staff support from

*The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)*

If you have further comments or questions, or if you are interested in volunteering on matters related to open space and recreation please contact: [boylstonopenspace@gmail.com](mailto:boylstonopenspace@gmail.com)

If you have chosen to take this survey by hand, please mail or deliver your hard copy response to the Town Clerk's office at the Town Hall located at:

Town of Boylston  
221 Main Street  
Boylston, MA 01505

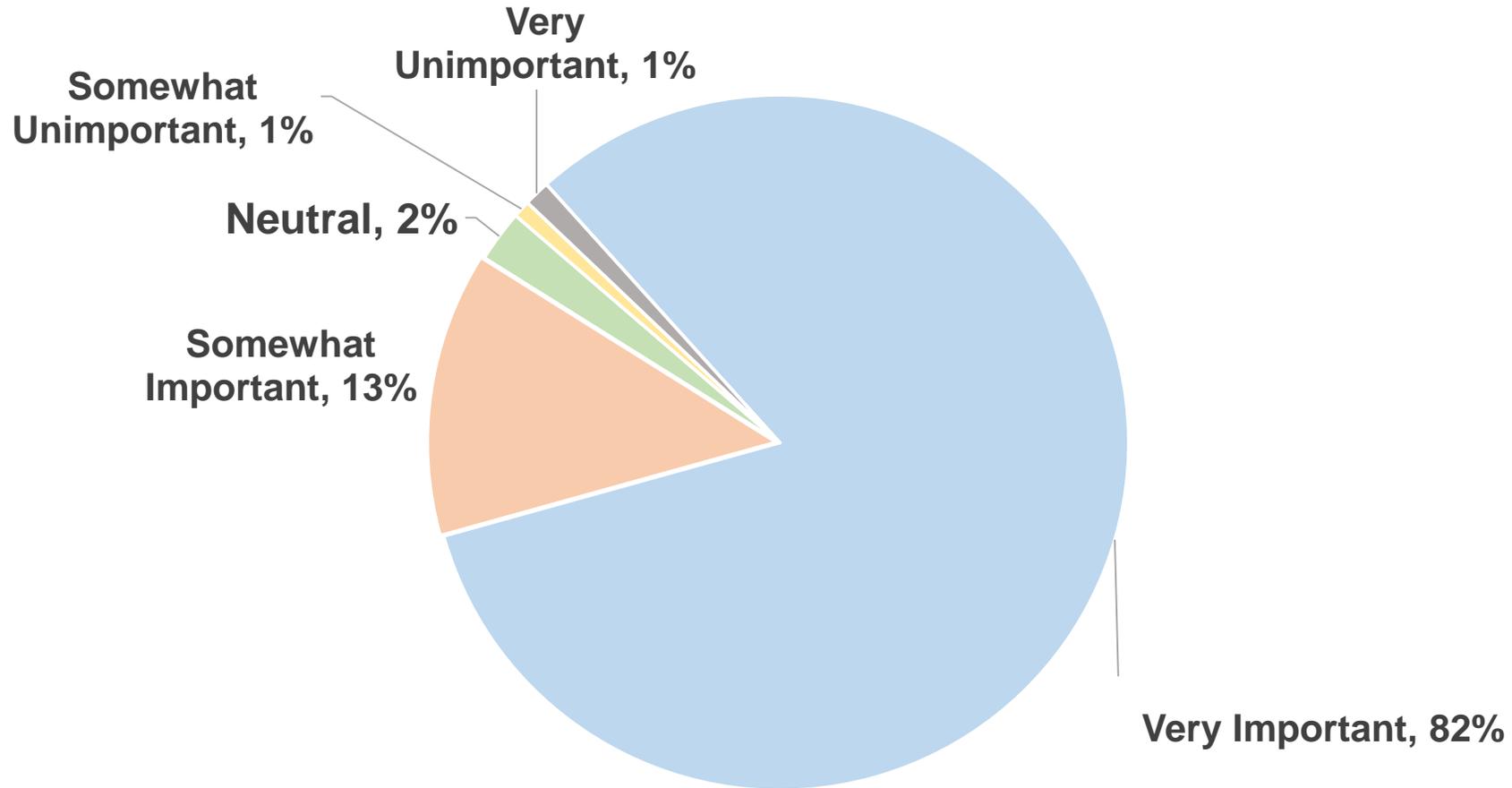
Or drop off to staff at the Boylston Public Library (695 Main St)

# Boylston Open Space & Recreation Plan: Results of the Community Survey 2020

290 responses (6.5% Boylston population)



# How important is it to you that open space and natural areas in Boylston are preserved?



## Top reasons for the Town to acquire and/or preserve open space:

1. Preserve rural character of the town (70%)
2. Protect wildlife habitats of flora and fauna (69%)
3. Protect water quality & water resources (64%)
4. Provide areas for passive recreation (61%)
5. Manage residential growth (58%)
6. Provide active recreational facilities (36%)
7. Provide egress to existing conservation land (32%)
8. Preserve unique scenic areas (31%)
9. Preserve existing agricultural land (25%)
10. Preserve historic assets (22%)
11. Provide boat ramps and access to water bodies (9%)
12. Facilitate the development of additional affordable housing (6%)
13. Provide areas for hunting (5%)

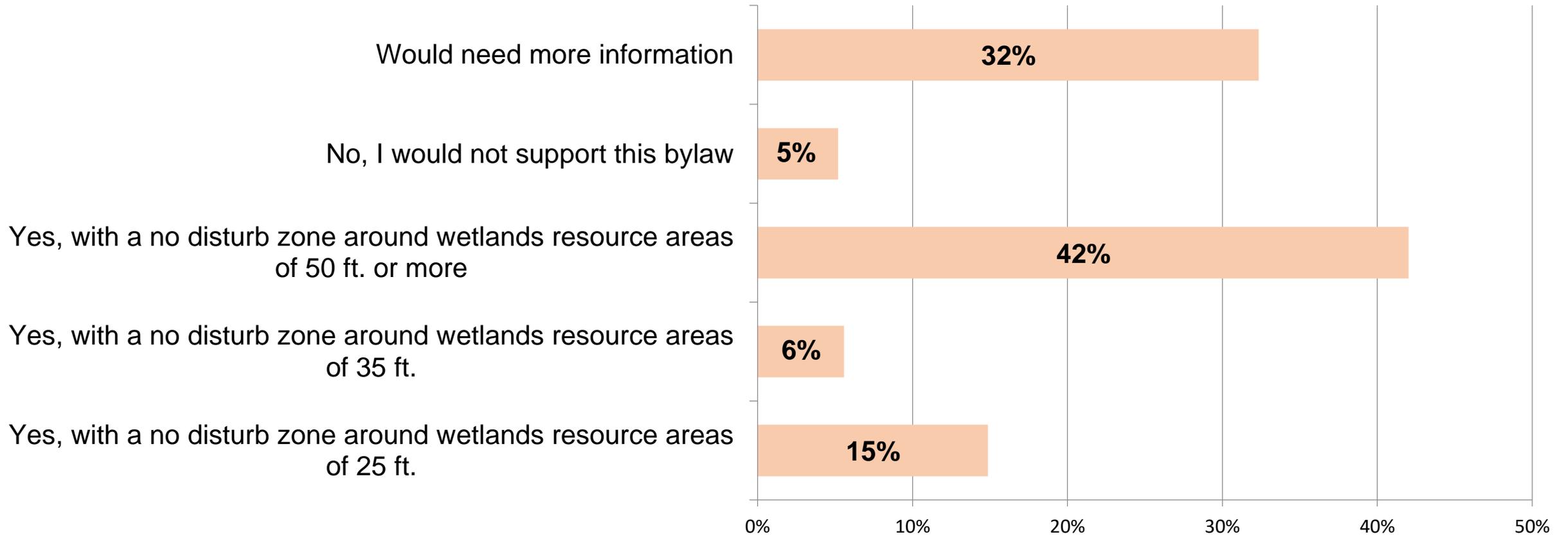
Which of the following recreational activities or amenities do you feel the Town of Boylston needs more of?

If it is needed, please indicate whether you are willing to pay more taxes in order for the Town to provide it.

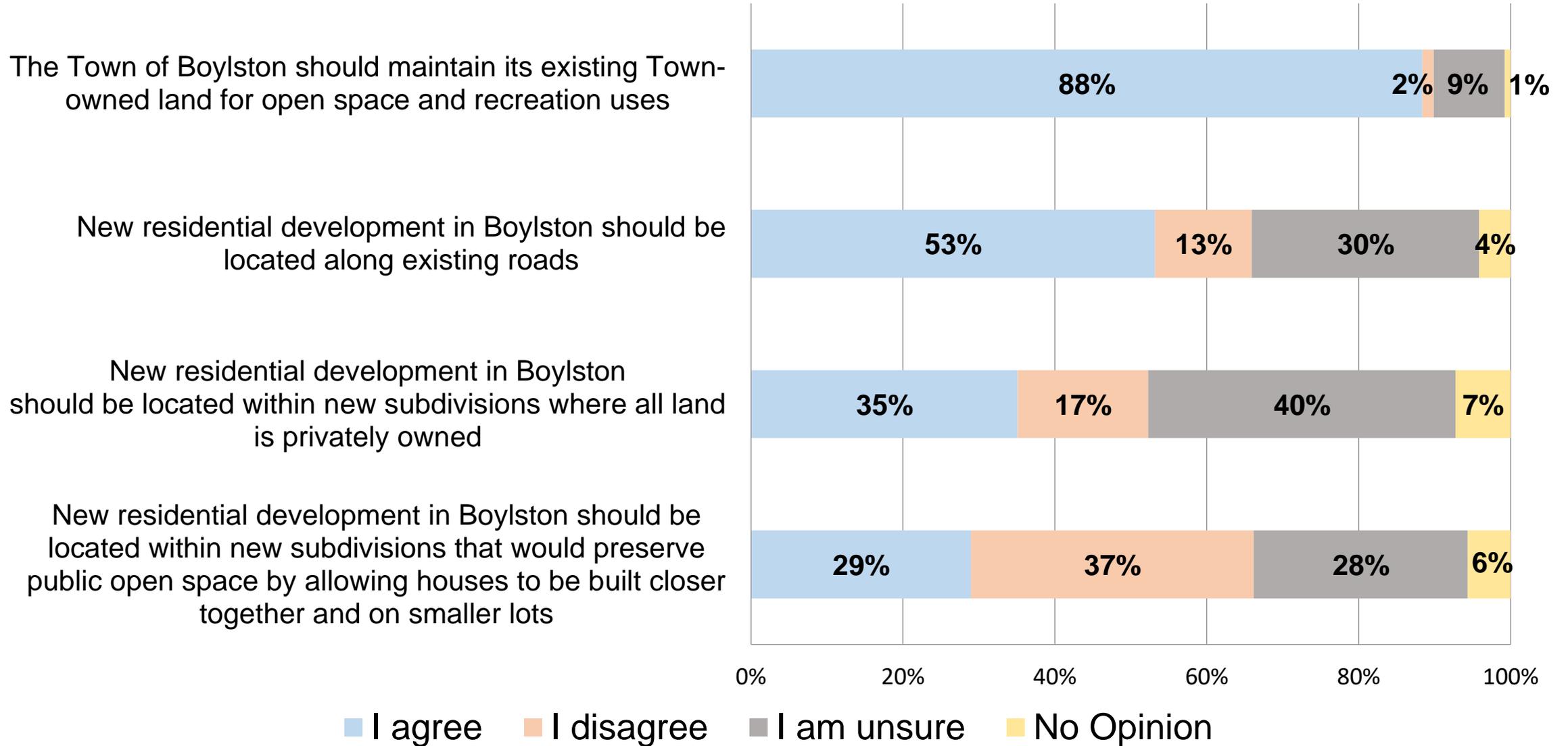
	Needs AND I am willing to pay more taxes
Increased general maintenance of existing fields, courts, and landscape	45%
Hiking / walking / running trails	38%
Sidewalks	37%
Community recreation center	33%
Public access to water bodies for swimming, boating, or fishing	33%
Bike trails	31%
Safe bike lanes on existing roads	31%
Outdoor / indoor swimming	30%
Spray or splash park	25%
Playgrounds and children's play equipment	24%
Trail markings	23%
Indoor sports recreation facilities	23%
Dog park	23%
Outdoor team playing fields / courts	20%
Snow shoeing / cross-country skiing trails	19%
Picnic areas	19%
Community gardens	18%
Ice skating	16%
Outdoor amphitheater or performance space	14%
Tennis courts	12%
Skate park	10%
Lawn games (i.e. horseshoes, shuffleboard, bocce)	10%
Snowmobile / 4-wheeling / ATV trails	7%
Disc golf / frisbee golf course	5%
Horseback riding trails	4%
Hunting areas	3%

In order to preserve open spaces in Boylston, would you be willing to:	Yes	No	No Opinion/ Unsure
Support a requirement for all new residential developments to include conservation/open space areas?	91%	3%	5%
Vote to allocate town funds to acquire or otherwise conserve more open space?	84%	11%	5%
Favor zoning that provides for increases in density in existing developed areas in exchange for open space in less developed or environmentally sensitive areas?	49%	36%	15%
Consider allowing an easement (i.e. public access or development restriction) on a portion of your property in order to add to existing open spaces or connect to open spaces (e.g. to access a hiking trail or extend a bike path)?	15%	46%	17%

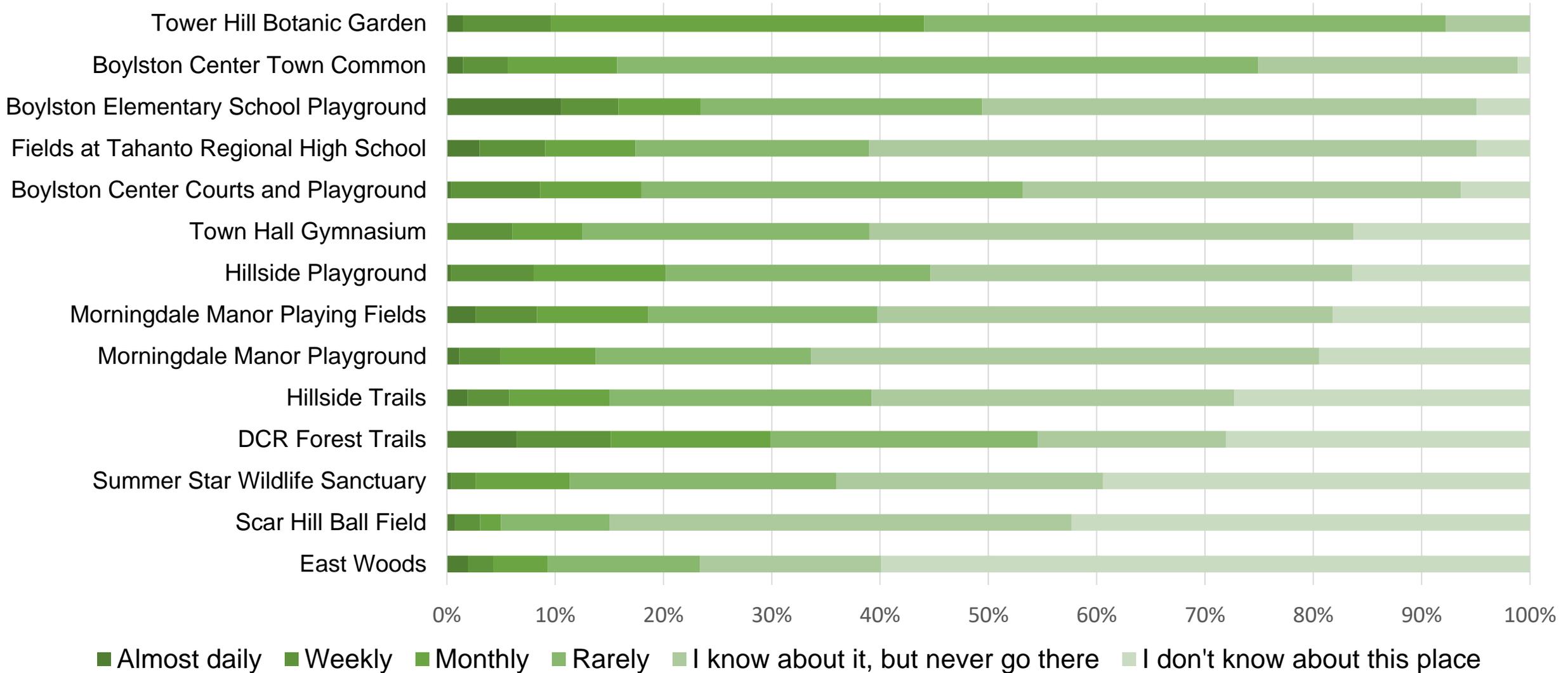
# Would you support the Town of Boylston establishing a Wetlands Bylaw to limit development activities adjacent to any wetlands resource area?



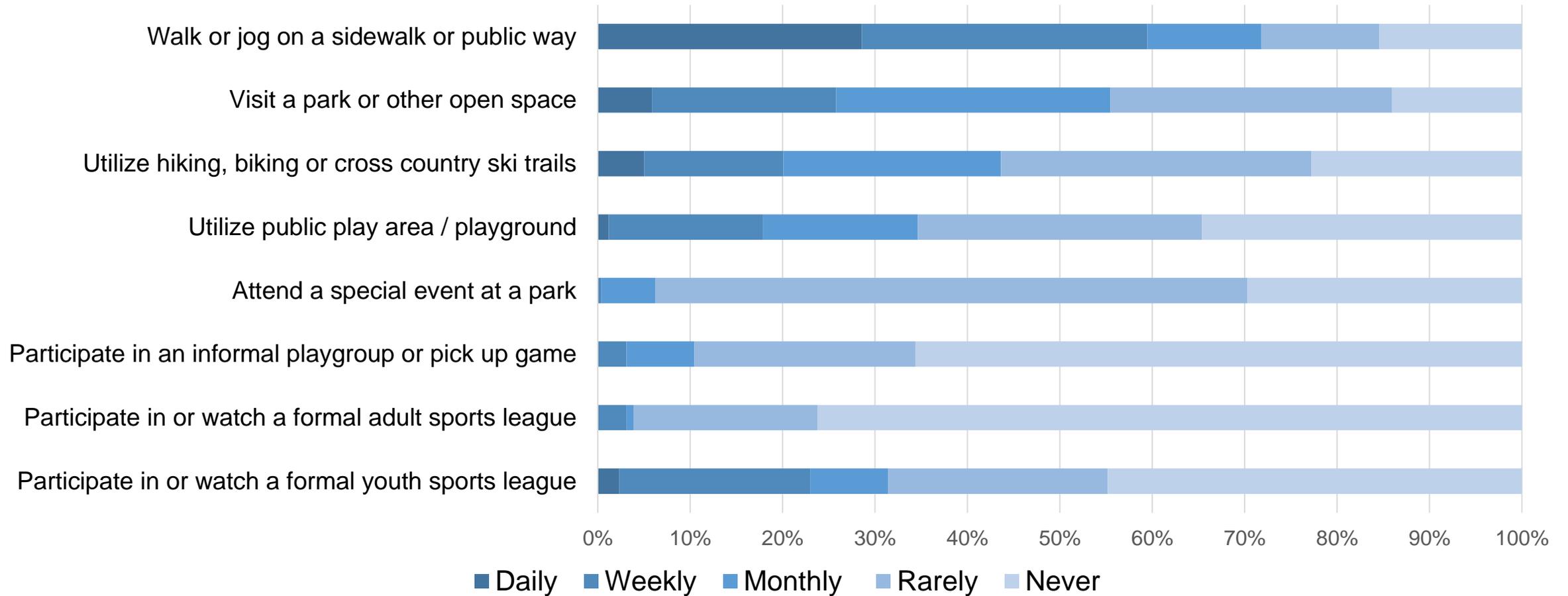
# Please select if you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding land use in Boylston:



# How often do you use the following recreation or open space areas in Boylston?



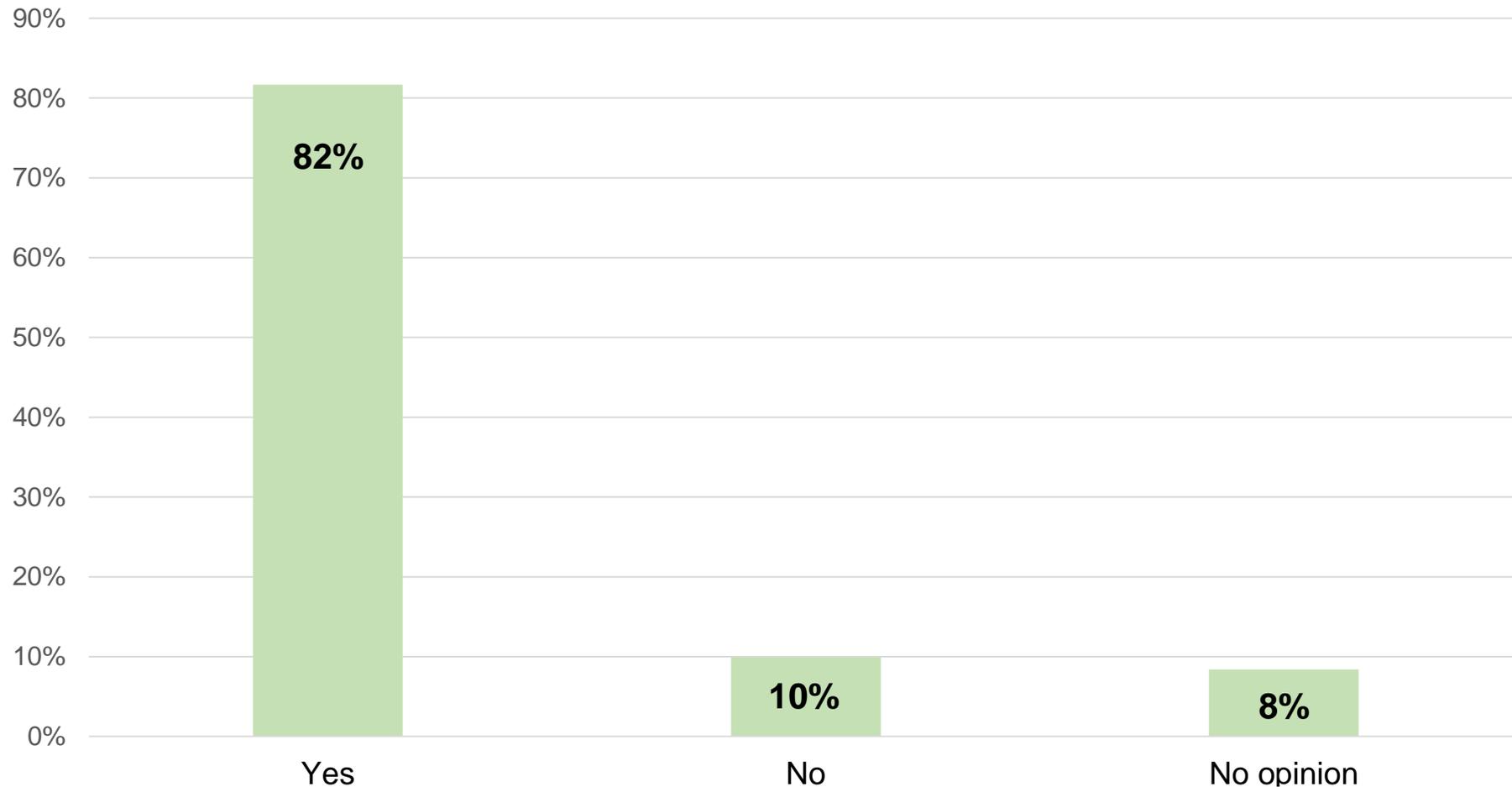
# How often do you go to a park or other open space in Boylston to...



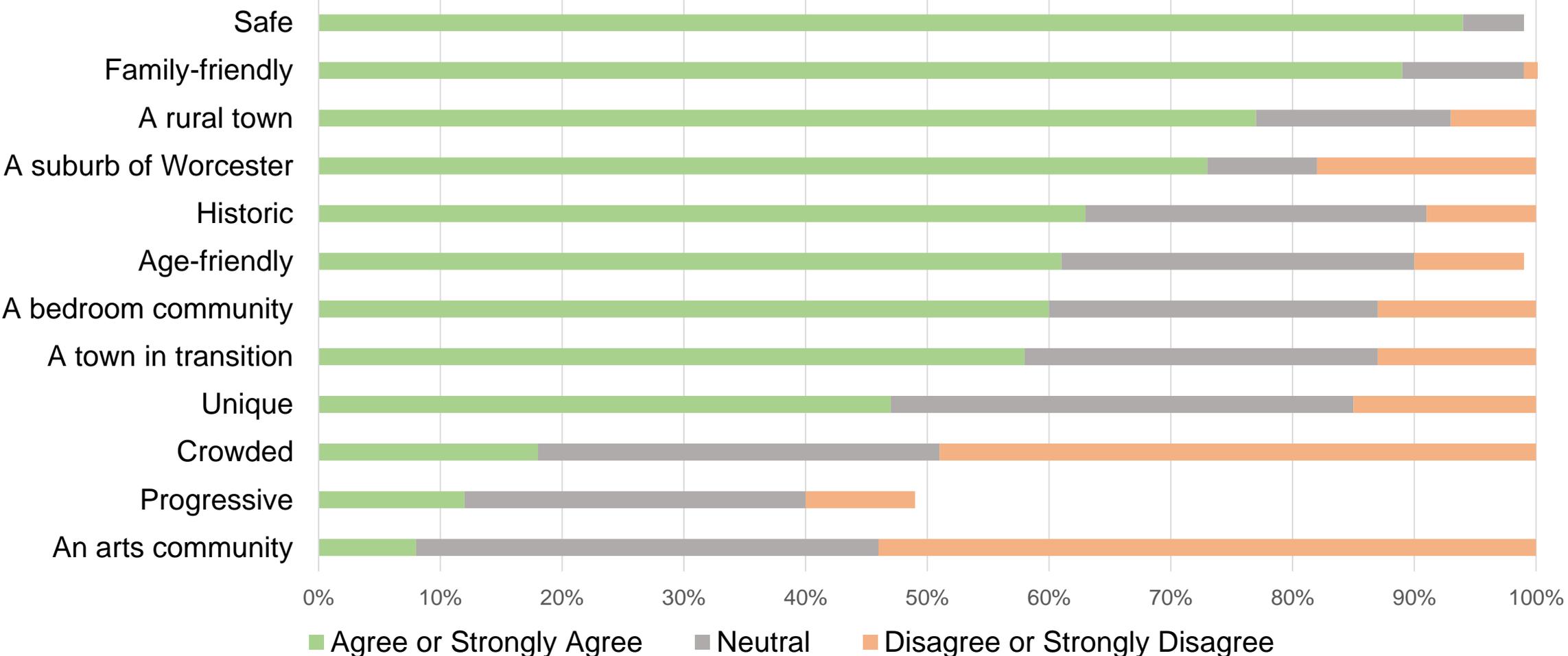
## What should our Town's priorities for expenditures for open space and recreation be? Please choose your top 3 priorities.

Acquiring conservation lands for passive recreation use (e.g., trails)	56%
Expanding connections for walking (e.g. sidewalks, connecting trails)	56%
Improving passive recreation opportunities on existing conservation land	52%
Expanding connections for biking (e.g. off-road paths, on-road lanes, and rail trails)	41%
Improvements to existing athletic fields	31%
Acquiring land for new public active recreation areas	27%
Expanding available parking at open space destinations	13%
Expanding available parking at recreational destinations	6%

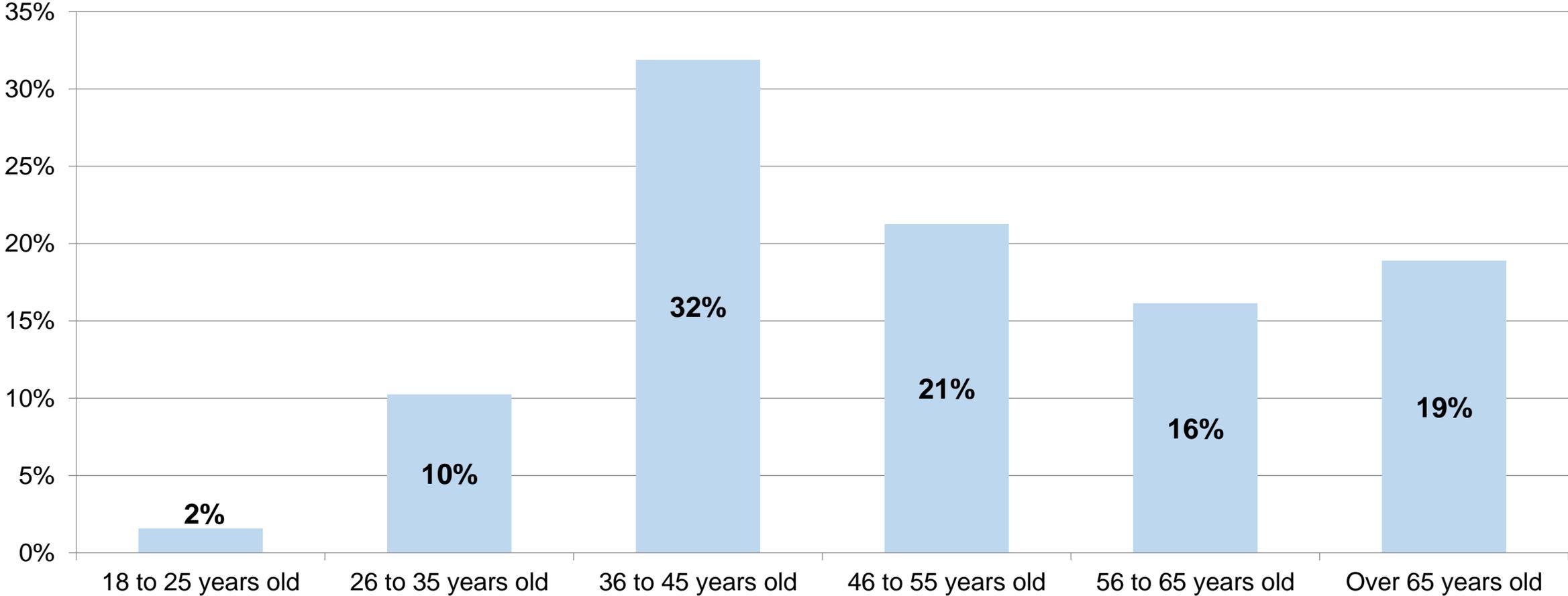
If adequate funding was available, would you be in favor of the Town acquiring the former YMCA Camp Harrington property for open space or recreation purposes?



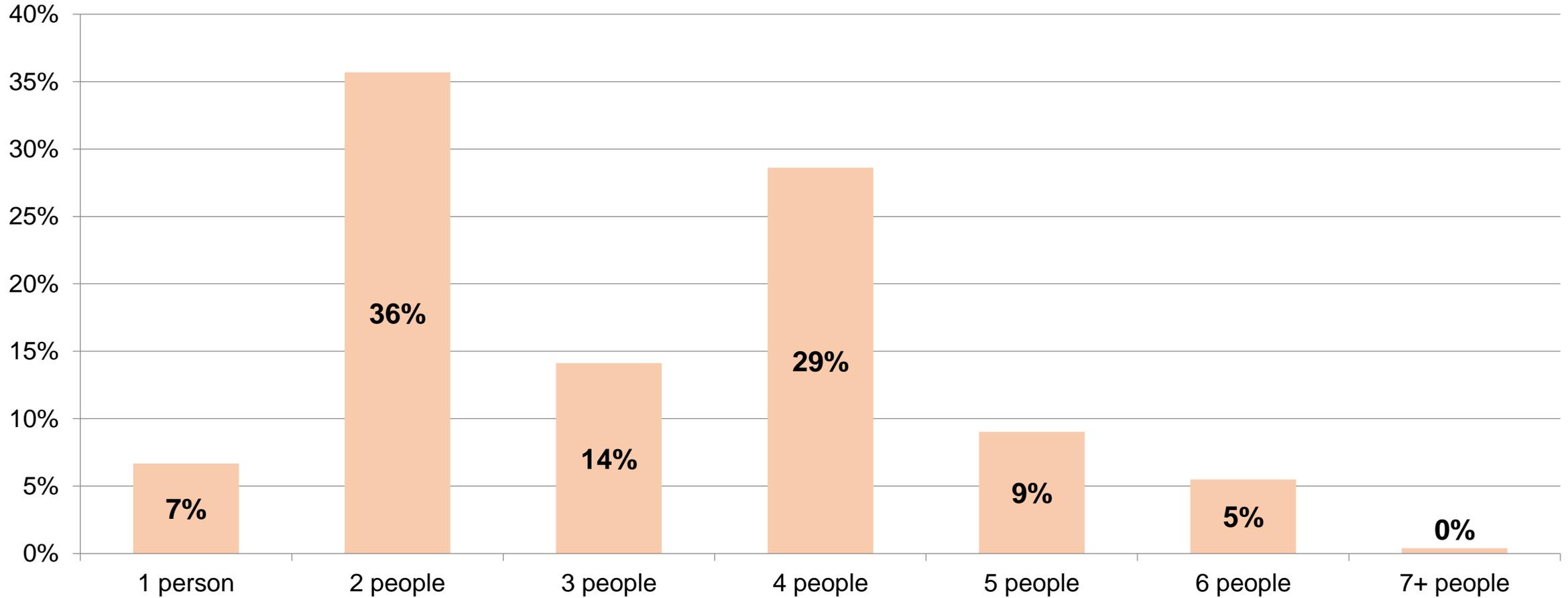
# How would you describe the town of Boylston?



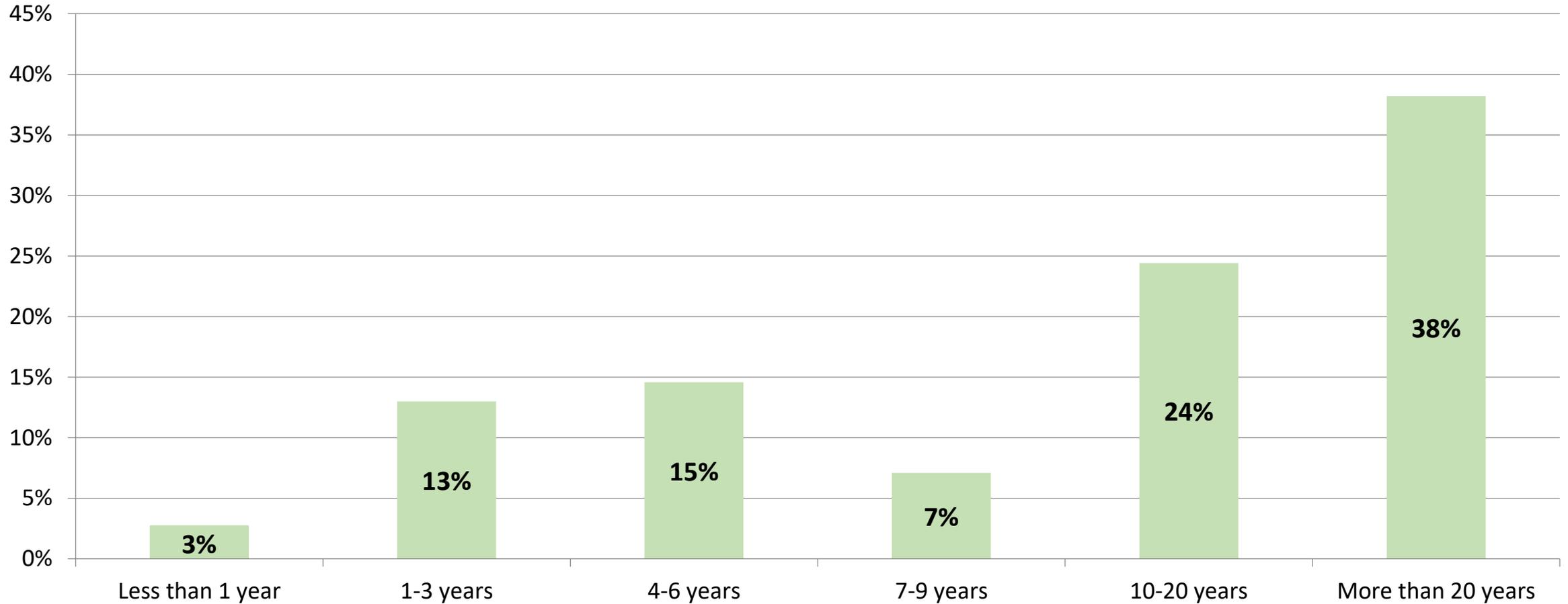
# Age of Survey Respondents



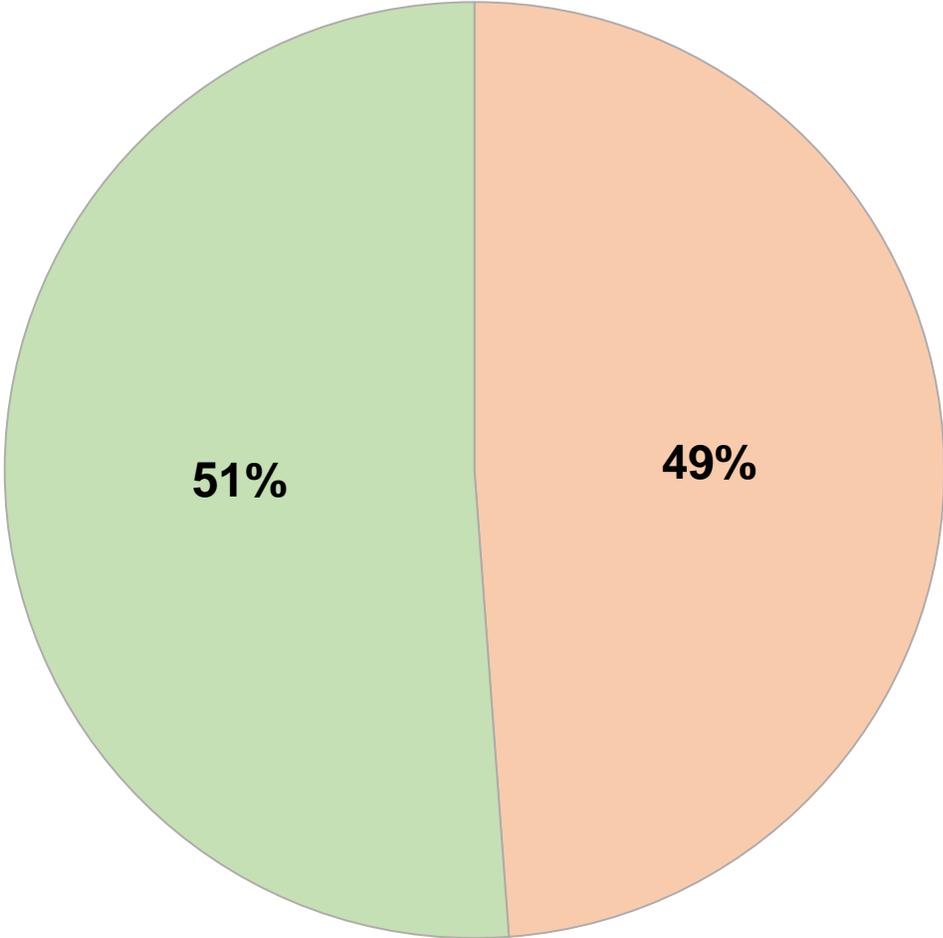
## How many people live in your household?



## How long have you lived in Boylston?



Do you have children under the age of 18 living with you?



Yes No

# APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PROMOTION

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The Item

## Opinions sought on Boylston open space

Posted Jan 6, 2020 at 12:46 AM

BOYLSTON - Got an opinion about open space and recreation in Boylston?

This is your chance.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) has created a survey to figure out the public's wishes for future use of open space, and the preservation and future acquisition of open space land in town. This survey is available online on the town's home page(<https://www.boylston-ma.gov>), or in hard copy at the library, post office and town clerk's office. Deadline to complete it is Jan. 10.

Boylston's Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee was formed in the summer to study and update the town's previous Open Space and Recreation Plan from 2010. The committee first met in September and is working with the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission to promote the survey and update the Open Space plan.

"The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance to the town and town officials on use of open space in town," said committee chairman Seth Ridinger. "The other important purpose of this plan is to be eligible for thousands of dollars in state grants. Without a state approved Open Space Plan, Boylston would not be eligible for these grants."

Some of these grants include the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity and the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Grants, as well as other potential grants from the state Department of Agricultural Resources, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Conservation Services, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Revenue, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works, Mass. Highway Department and SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users).

# e for your issues. r voice matters.

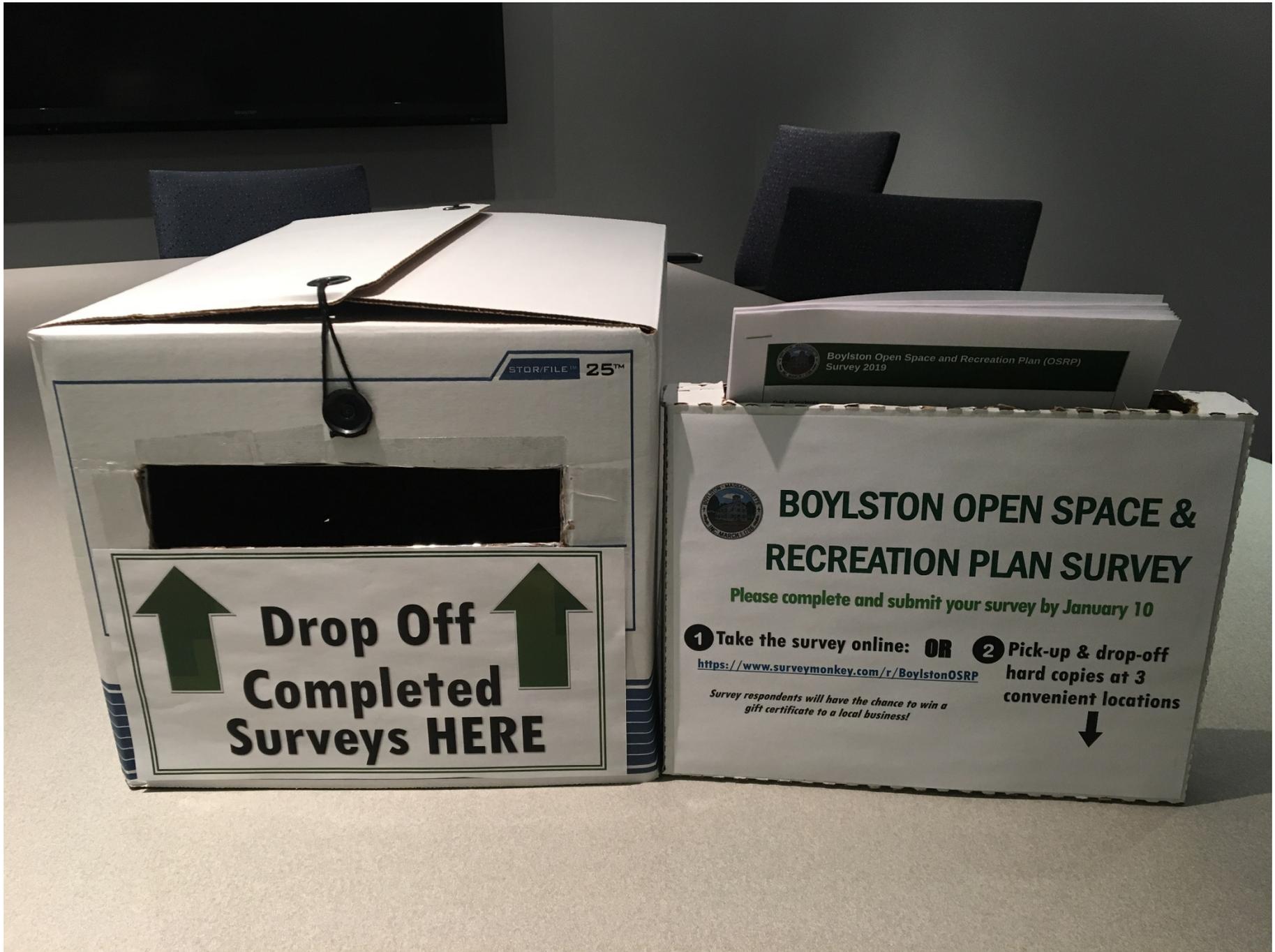
## Register to vote

*Not sure if you're registered*

“Most grants are not available without an updated Open Space plan,” Ridinger said. “Funding through these grants is also a wonderful tool that can be used by the town’s Parks and Recreation Committee to fund many of their ongoing projects.”

“Finally, as the town begins to consider the process of creating a master plan, this report, based on ample evidence gathered from the survey, will serve as a fundamental component to help shape the portion of the master plan dealing with open space, its use, preservation, and acquisition,” Ridinger added. “The town of Boylston is changing fast and it is imperative that the town determine quickly its wishes for its open space and the overall character of the town.”

In addition to Ridinger, the committee includes: Gerry Quam, vice chairman; Elaine Jones, clerk; Helen Dexter and Crystal Byron.



STOR/FILE™ 25™



**Drop Off  
Completed  
Surveys HERE**



# **BOYLSTON OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN SURVEY**

**Please complete and submit your survey by January 10**

- 1 Take the survey online: OR**
- 2 Pick-up & drop-off hard copies at 3 convenient locations**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BoylstonOSRP>

*Survey respondents will have the chance to win a gift certificate to a local business!*



Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Survey 2019



**INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING  
TO BOYLSTON'S OPEN SPACE  
& RECREATION PLAN?**

**BOYLSTON RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND:**

# **OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN PUBLIC FORUM**

**MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2020**

**6:30 - 8:30 PM**

**BOYLSTON TOWN HALL**

An updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) will allow Boylston to maintain and enhance open space and recreation areas that define the character of our community!

**Winners of the photo contest will be selected  
at the Public Forum!**

- To participate, submit photos of your favorite open space and recreation areas in town to: [boylstonopenspace@gmail.com](mailto:boylstonopenspace@gmail.com)
- Visit the Town of Boylston website for more details!



# APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP AGENDA & MINUTES

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**Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee  
Notice of Meeting (Focus Group) and Agenda**

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Boylston Open Space Committee . The Meeting will take place:

**Thursday, June 4 at 6:00 pm, "virtual meeting" via Zoom**

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings.

The meeting will be live streamed from the Zoom Application.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83664128672>

- I. Call meeting to order
- II. Introductions
- III. Overview of methodology
- IV. Review goals and action plan
  - Answer questions
- V. Other business
- VI. Adjourn

Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee  
Focus Group Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, June 4, 2020

Present: Seth Ridinger, Gerry Quam, Elaine Jones, Helen Dexter and Crystal Byron, **OSRP committee**; Joe McGrath, **Conservation Committee**; Bill Manter, **Planning board**; Jessica Rubinow, **Resident Advisory Board, Guardians Lacrosse, Boylston Soccer**; Suzanne Hermalyn, **Resident Advisory Board**; Robert Thibeault, **Board of Health**; Tom Martiska, **Board of Assessors**; Emily Glaubitz, **Assistant Planner CMRPC**

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm.

Seth began the discussion by explaining the definition of open space and that the town needs a state approved Open Space and Recreation Plan to apply for grants. He explained the process the committee had used to acquire resident input into the creation of the goals, objectives and action plan. A survey was available on line and at locations in town over two months asking residents to give feedback on the town's open space and recreation. There were 290 respondents and many people wrote extensive comments. The public forum scheduled for March had to be postponed. With the restrictions necessary due to Covid 19, holding a public forum was no longer feasible. The committee decided a focus group composed of representatives from the various town boards and committees would be a great way to gather further input on our proposed goals and objectives.

Participants had been sent the document before the meeting. During the review of goals, Emily shared a copy of the objectives and actions on her screen as each goal was discussed. Input received from the participants was recorded to be included in the final draft. The goals are listed below with participants' comments.

**Goal 1. Be proactive about continuing to enhance and preserve Boylston's town character and small New England town feel.** Gerry commented that the establishment of a standing Open Space Advisory committee would monitor the progress of the plan. The plan would be less likely to be filed away and forgotten.

**Goal 2. Preserve and Protect Boylston's open spaces, including waterbodies, woodlands, farms and parks.** There was some discussion of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a funding source. Joe McGrath provided more details of the CPA, and agreed it was worth exploring.

Bill Manter explained the process of preventing large developments by which the town votes on a bond issue to purchase the land. For example, there are presently 40 undeveloped acres that could be developed into 90 housing units or the town could prevent it from being developed by purchasing the land with a 20 year bond.

Joe McGrath made several recommendations. He suggested lengthening the time period listed for creating criteria for open space acquisition. He recommended adding a process for accepting donations of land. There is the potential for the developer of the former YMCA property to donate a portion to the town. He also suggested a change to the wording of objective 2c. to “ Permanently protect town owned property “ . He explained that several years ago, BOS had auctioned off 5 pieces of town owned property to developers without talking to Conservation Committee or Parks and Rec . He recommended the Open Space Committee and Conservation committee should be notified and included in the discussion of any sale of town-owned property.

Sue Hermalyn asked “what is the revenue positive sale price of a home”. She thought any discussion of acquiring open space needed to be accompanied by an understanding of what is revenue positive or revenue negative.

Bill Manter explained Boylston’s development is limited by the number of buildable lots without poor soil and I wetlands. Robert Thibeault explained how building is also limited by the guidelines of septic systems. He also noted that improved technology of future septic systems may permit more development than presently allowed.

**Goal 3. Maintain, add and enhance recreational facilities and programs as needed.**

Jessica Rubinow explained the needs of the soccer and lacrosse programs. There has been a huge expansion of the soccer program (80 children to 150). Guardian Youth Lacrosse program has 130 children. Tahanto Lacrosse players had to practice in Berlin this year as there were no available fields. We don’t know who is responsible for the fields. Who is in charge, what is the cost? Why is the football field at 140 and 70 not used in the off season? Why do some sports have ownership of fields? There needs to be better communication and an Organizational chart, with ownership, costs, maintenance and an official Field Use policy.

**Goal 4. Regulate and guide development to be consistent with town character and to protect open space and natural resources.** Jessica suggested the boards and commissions of the annual task force should report to the Selectmen. Bill explained Planning Board tries to recommend that developers put in low impact developments. Joe thanked committee members for their work and said a member of the Conservation Committee would be willing to serve on the Open Space Advisory Committee. Jessica encouraged the Open Space Advisory Committee to be active and to continue to collaborate with the Resident Advisory Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Jones, Clerk