Town of West Boylston, MA

Open Space and Recreation Plan

2025



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Section 1:

Plan Summary



1. Plan Summary

This 2025 Open Space and Recreation Plan update (OSRP) compiles environmental and recreational information specific to West Boylston that may be used for open space and recreation planning and implementation efforts for the next ten years. Once approved by the state, this OSRP update will qualify the Town of West Boylston for multiple funding opportunities through the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS) within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).

The intent of this OSRP is to document the status of all local open space and recreation resources as well as associated community needs. As such, this information should be leveraged throughout all development, repair and maintenance, and acquisition projects initiated by the Town moving forward. Specifically, open space and recreational areas should be considered throughout all planning efforts that may impact the quality of or access to these areas, such as transportation planning. Sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, and other pedestrian accommodations are a critical component to open space and recreation planning in the Town of West Boylston, which is unique in that it borders a major city and contains the Wachusett Reservoir and the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), which are both major statewide recreational resources. The Town, including its Transportation Committee and its Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC), have made tremendous strides towards improving pedestrian accommodations for residents and visitors since the Town's 2018 OSRP update process concluded. To learn more about ongoing transportation planning efforts in town, please refer to the transportation infrastructure discussion in the *Growth and Development Patterns* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this plan.

Since the 2018 OSRP update, the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC), the Parks Commission (the Commission), and various other town departments, boards, committees, and other stakeholders have made significant progress on open space and recreational endeavors in West Boylston. These accomplishments include the renovation of Mixter Fields, the renovation of Pride Park, and the installation of a welcome sign, blazing, and a parking area at the Blueberry Hill Conservation Area. A priority highlighted by the OSIC and the Parks Commission throughout this OSRP is updating substandard recreational and athletic facilities in town, including increasing the accessibility of these areas in accordance with the 2023 West Boylston Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP). Other priorities highlighted in this OSRP include protecting and acquiring properties of interest in collaboration with the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT), supplementing existing parks

and athletic areas with new facilities, and improving pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations throughout town.

The OSIC and the Parks Commission continue to collaborate with various entities to improve open space and recreational resources in West Boylston. This collaboration includes coordination related to protection and acquisition opportunities for properties of significant environmental or recreational interest. The presence in town of both local and statewide drinking water resources enhances the importance of these efforts. Since adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA), the Town has a designated funding pool that can support these efforts. Overall, the OSIC advocates for protection of existing open spaces because "once it is developed, it doesn't come back."

In order to protect the maximum amount of land feasible, the OSIC encourages the use of various tax incentives to private landowners, such as the MA Chapter Lands Program. As detailed throughout this plan, the Chapter Land Program offers private landowners a significant reduction on property taxes in exchange for the landowners' maintaining of the parcels' integrity as forested open space, agricultural, or recreational resources. To increase the usage of this program and other incentives, such as permanent deed restriction, the OSIC will continue to promote information to residents.

The benefits of open and recreational spaces, whether privately or publicly owned, are numerous. They contribute to quality of life and community character, provide a center for community activities, protect and enhance nearby property values, attract businesses, and do not burden the Town with excessive expenses. Open space protects the Town's water supplies and provides natural areas for stormwater infiltration, wildlife corridors, improved air quality and reduced localized flooding. Recreation facilities provide venues for family and community sharing and personal growth and development. Today, West Boylston is at a crossroads: feeling the cumulative pressures of urban development and business expansion, population increases, aging infrastructure, aging citizens, fewer school-aged citizens, and budget shortfalls. Providing recreational opportunities for the whole community is a fundamental part of the character of West Boylston that should be protected and expanded. Given the small amount of town-owned land, there is a dire need to preserve open space threatened by development.

The West Boylston Water District's (WBWD) Source Water Protection Plan states:

"Residential and commercial developments, with all of their associated land uses, are the biggest threats to a drinking water supply. Their contamination is slow and insidious, often overlooked until a crisis is thrust upon the community, usually requiring a lot of funding to remediate. Residents value the areas of their town that are rural. Rural landscape provides many benefits including wildlife habitat, aquifer/surface water recharge, farmland, and aesthetic beauty. It is critically important that town officials discuss alternatives to development with landowners to preserve open space."[1]

To protect open space, it is essential to bring forth today's concerns regarding development, land exchanges, and community needs. Once developed, open space is essentially lost forever. The Parks Commission and the OSIC have a responsibility to increase awareness among residents and public officials about the benefits of improved and increased open space and recreation opportunities in West Boylston. The process of increasing this awareness includes completing an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update for the Town.

[1] The West Boylston Water District Source Water Protection Plan, March 2011

Section 2:

Introduction



2. Introduction

2a. Statement of Purpose

The West Boylston Parks Commission (the Commission) is tasked with improving public parks as well as establishing rules for their use and governance. Subject to appropriation, they shall have the power to conduct park and recreation programs at places other than such public parks. Overall, the Commission ensures the availability of safe and well-maintained recreation facilities throughout town.

The West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) is an advisory committee to the West Boylston Board of Selectmen (BOS) whose mission is to:

"Maintain a balanced approach to provide safe open space and recreational opportunities for active and passive activities, to provide a safe and adequate water supply, to enhance the Town character, and to support opportunities for agriculture and wildlife to flourish in a fiscally responsible manner."

The OSIC believes open space planning represents more than setting aside lands for aesthetic beauty and/or recreational use. Open space, as described in this plan, also improves public health outcomes through protecting safe water sources and offering recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Once this OSRP update is approved by the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS), the Town will qualify for a variety of open space and recreation project funding programs for improving open spaces.

<u>Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) Vision</u>

Although West Boylston is no longer a rural farming community, the desire to live in a semi-rural and close-knit community, as well as the desire to live near the Wachusett Reservoir, is a reason why many people choose to live in town. However, West Boylston's location abutting the City of Worcester has created significant development pressures. The Town has undergone significant transformation from a rural community of small farms into a growing suburban bedroom community composed of small businesses and light industries. In recent years, the pace of residential, commercial, and industrial development has quickened dramatically, threatening the Town's public health, safety, character, rural landscape, and overall quality of life. Town officials frequently state their desire for an increase in business and development to provide economic opportunity, to provide additional revenue, and to lower property taxes. Although there are exceptions, the general rule is that the larger a municipality's population, the higher the taxes.[2]

[2] The Trust for Public Land (TPL), 1999

Residential development requires town services (water, sewer, road maintenance, education, police, fire, emergency services, and trash disposal) and studies have shown that urban and suburban residential growth rarely pays its own way. This begins a cycle in which development leads to a loss of open space, more infrastructure, increased municipal financial burdens, and increased taxes, as shown in the image below. West Boylston is on the edge of beginning to enter this cycle, and the Town's development strategy needs to be reassessed in the next update of the Town-wide Master Plan.



Cycle of Development and Increasing Municipal Services & Taxes[3]

A long-term community vision, as part of a Master Plan update, would help guide the Town's strategic decisions. Each decision made by any Board or Commission in town should align with the Town's Master Plan so that the Town can reach its overall goals.

The OSIC would like to see the Town move away from arguments that pit growth against preservation. Open space needs to be recognized as enriching and not impeding growth and development. This 2025 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update, including its Ten -Year Action Plan, outlines steps to preserve the charm of West Boylston while prioritizing public health and safety and responding to development pressures in a fiscally-sound manner.

West Boylston is facing a critical crossroads. The Town needs to determine how to respond to development pressure while protecting watersheds that maintain clean and ample drinking water for our community. The OSIC intends to promote a future that balances public health, safety, fiscal stability, and a managed development program. The OSIC believes that the majority of residents want to preserve these aspects of life in West Boylston, as well as retain and expand the Town's unique community character.

[3] West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC), 2018

Definitions

To differentiate between open space and lands used for recreational facilities, this plan utilizes the following definitions. This by no means is intended to prioritize one aspect over the other within this report.

When the term “open space” is used in this document, it refers to undeveloped land, both publicly and privately owned, in a predominantly natural state or that has been altered for natural resource-based uses (farming, orchards, forestry, hunting and fishing, walking-type parks, and trails). This includes, but is not limited to, agricultural lands, fields, wooded areas, forests, wetlands, and water bodies.

Examples of publicly owned open space in town are the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) land, the Mass Central Rail Trail, Water District land, and undeveloped county/state land associated with the House of Corrections. Examples of privately owned open space in town are farms, forested lands, and other protected private areas.

The term “recreational open space” or “recreation” refers to land used for active recreational purposes, such as Woodland Park, athletic fields, or golf courses. Land used for active recreation does not technically qualify as open space because, for example, these parcels often have portions covered with paved surfaces such as tennis courts, basketball courts, and parking lots. Athletic fields require regular fertilizer applications and are usually installed with fencing and outbuildings. Since this plan deals with both open space and recreational areas, it includes strategies for obtaining the benefits of developing new and maintaining existing recreational facilities without losing scarce valued open space environmental assets. Grants and partnerships between federal, state, and local agencies are often based on recommendations the applicant community makes in its OSRP. Hence, the OSIC recognizes and embraces opportunities for healthy outdoor activities, including hiking along forest trails, competitive soccer or football games, biking along roadways, and nature observation.

2b. Planning Process and Public Participation

In the Spring of 2023, the Town of West Boylston’s Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) sought assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to update the 2018 West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Once funding was secured through the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Planning Assistance Grant Program, CMRPC began attending the OSIC’s regularly scheduled meetings in March 2024. In total, CMRPC attended twelve

OSIC meetings to facilitate the OSRP Update process. To review a summary of each meeting, please refer to the *Appendix*.

In general, the OSRP update process began with reviewing the OSRP's sections and requirements, and then swiftly moved into a public engagement period. The OSIC and CMRPC prepared a survey and corresponding promotional flyer, which was shared online through the town website, social media, and E-mail blasts, and was posted at various locations throughout town, including the Town Hall, Library, and Senior Center. Finally, CMRPC staff and an OSIC representative tabled at the West Boylston Public Schools' Last Day of School Event in June 2024 to promote the survey and offer other engagement activities, including both a mapping activity and a voting activity.



CMRPC Staff at the West Boylston Last Day of School Event

Throughout the fall and winter of 2024-2025, CMRPC assisted the OSIC with updating its 2018 OSRP's Seven-Year Action Plan based on public engagement results. Additionally, CMRPC staff and the OSIC collaboratively updated various sections of this plan, including the *Scenic Resources and Unique Environments* and the *Environmental Challenges* sub-

sections of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis section,* as well as the *Community Vision* and *Analysis of Needs* sections.

Enhanced Outreach to Environmental Justice (EJ) Populations

The Town of West Boylston and its Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) and Parks Commission (the Commission) recognize the importance of providing enhanced outreach opportunities to designated Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods and other vulnerable populations. Providing enhanced outreach to EJ and other priority populations throughout open space and recreation planning processes increases the chance of collecting feedback from these populations that have historically been excluded. As discussed in the *Population Characteristics* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this plan, there are no designated EJ populations in West Boylston. However, just over the Town's border with the City of Worcester are several EJ census block groups which meet the minority criteria. It is worth noting that Woodland Park in West Boylston is close to these areas and may be used by people who live in those areas of Worcester.

Despite West Boylston not having any officially designated EJ neighborhoods, there are still vulnerable populations within town that were considered throughout this OSRP update process. For example, the public survey was open for responses from the middle of April through the middle of July; paper copies of the survey were available at the Town Hall (and at town meetings), Beaman Memorial Public Library, and West Boylston Senior Center and were accompanied by flyers which included the link to the online survey. Both youth and older adults are recognized by the OSIC as priority populations; as such, promoting the survey via the Council on Aging and School Department was a priority. In addition to those in person locations, the survey was conducted at the School Department's Last Day of School event and was shared through the School Department's Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Finally, the survey was shared via the town website and associated Facebook page.

Section 3:

Community Setting



3. Community Setting

3A. Regional Context

West Boylston is a small residential suburb of Worcester, Massachusetts, the second largest city in New England. The Town is located in central Massachusetts, north of Worcester, west of Boylston, south of Sterling, and east of Holden. The center of West Boylston is 8 miles north of Worcester, 50 miles west of Boston, 38 miles southwest of Lowell, and 60 miles northeast of Springfield. West Boylston has approximately 300 businesses, including retail, service, and light manufacturing companies. Many businesses and industries are located along Route 12 and within the Hartwell Street Industrial Area. Like the four other towns (Boylston, Holden, Princeton, Sterling) within the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed, housing in town is mostly single-family with some subdivisions in traditional residential areas. Within town, most retail businesses are located in the strip of commercial developments or in shopping plazas. The Town is accessed by Routes 12, 140, and 110 as well as Interstate 190. A railway track also traverses the Town and is utilized daily for the transport of freight.

Most of the Town is in the Wachusett Reservoir's watershed, and twenty percent (20%) of the Wachusett Reservoir is located in West Boylston. The Reservoir is recognized as a Massachusetts Outstanding Water Resource, offers beautiful scenery for both residents and visitors, and presents a fishing challenge to many sport enthusiasts. Limited passive recreation around the Reservoir is popular among residents and visitors. While natural areas abound around the Reservoir, utilization is limited somewhat due to protections necessary for water quality. The Town of West Boylston is mostly situated within the Nashua River Major Watershed Basin, with the southernmost portions of Town crossing into the Blackstone River Major Watershed Basin. Beyond the Wachusett Reservoir itself, West Boylston shares various resources with its neighbors, including the recreational trails that circle the Reservoir and the Mass Central Rail Trail, a 104-mile shared-use path spanning from Northampton to Boston.[4] The Quabbin Aqueduct, which carries water from the Quabbin Reservoir to the Wachusett Reservoir, also discharges into the Wachusett Reservoir in West Boylston.

West Boylston is located within the region served by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. CMRPC is the designated regional planning agency (RPA) for the southern two-thirds of the Central Massachusetts region, which includes the City of Worcester and the 39 surrounding communities in Worcester County. For a visual on the Town's regional context, please refer to the Regional Context Map (Map #1).

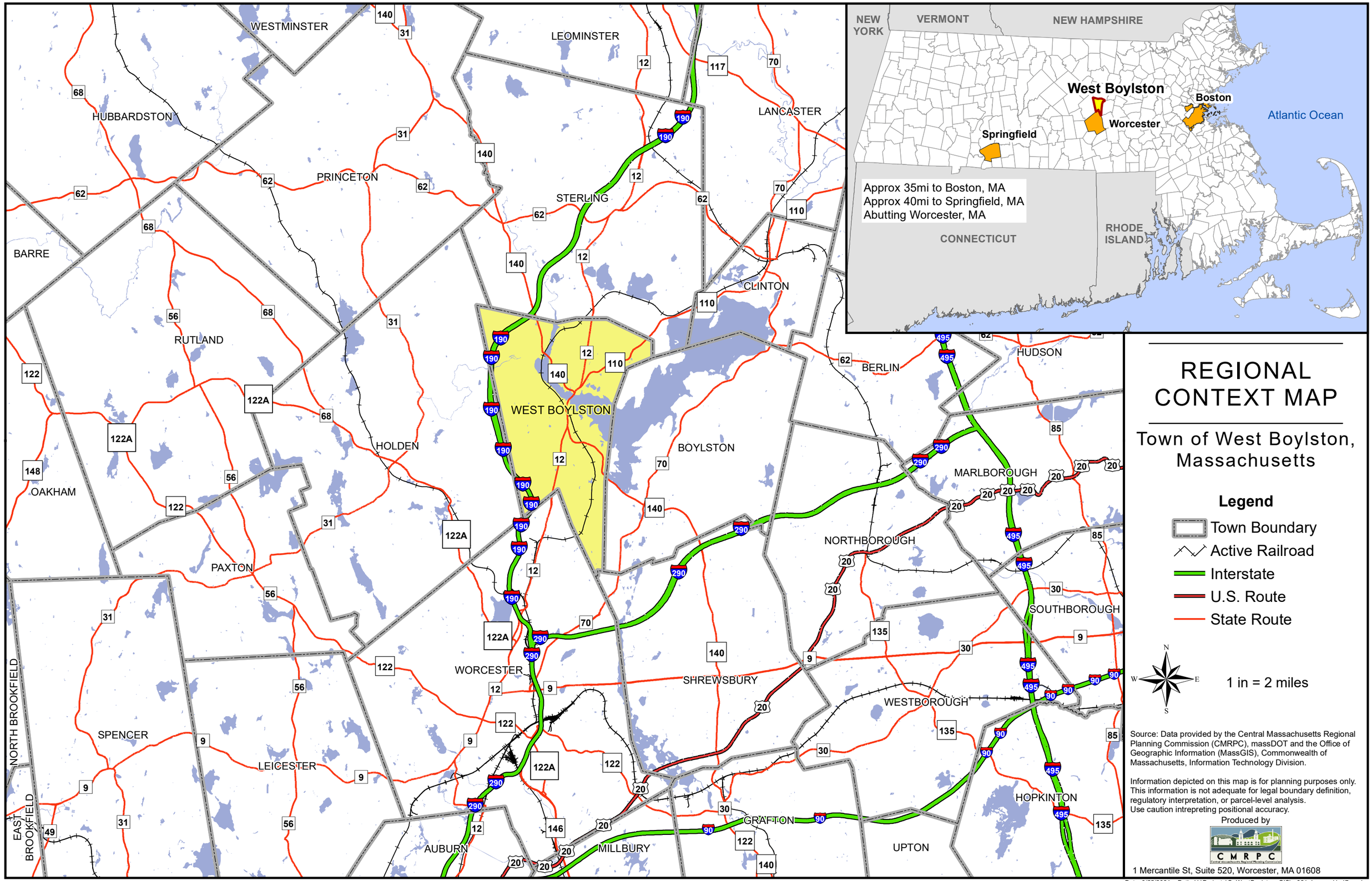
[4] The Mass Central Rail Trail, the Norwottuck Network

In addition to the Open Space and Recreation planning process, the Town of West Boylston has worked with CMRPC on a number of planning efforts, including regional planning efforts. In 2019, the Town completed the MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) process with assistance from CMRPC and achieved MVP designation.[5] This designation allows the Town to pursue funding for projects that may advance the climate resiliency goals established during the MVP planning process. The Town is also currently considering funding options to update its 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) as well as its 2010 Master Plan.[6] In 2018, West Boylston also developed a Housing Production Plan (HPP) with a private consultant.[7] In terms of regional planning efforts, West Boylston was considered in the development of CMRPC's Regional Infrastructure Plan, *Bridge to Resiliency*, CMRPC's Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan, as well as CMRPC's *Greater Worcester Priority Climate Action Plan* (GWPCAP).[8] West Boylston is also being considered and involved throughout the development of CMRPC's Regional Plan, *IMAGINE 2050*. Additionally, West Boylston was considered in the development of the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CMMPO) 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *2050 Connections*.[9]

In terms of regional resources, it is worth mentioning that West Boylston has a public safety and public works mutual aid agreement with its surrounding communities through its Regional Emergency Planning Committee (the South Wachusett REPC). West Boylston has opted in to fire protection mutual aid agreements through MEMA, according to the 2018 West Boylston Hazard Mitigation Plan.[10] Similarly, it is also worth mentioning that although the Town of West Boylston has its own Housing Authority, it is affiliated with the North Central Massachusetts Housing Authorities coalition. The West Boylston Housing Authority is made up of four elected members who coordinate with the coalition as well as members of housing authorities in the towns of Leominster, Lunenburg, Sterling, and Holden. As such, the Town shares housing authority properties with these four towns.[11] Finally, in July 2024, West Boylston joined Rutland Regional Animal Control alongside the towns of Barre, Paxton, Princeton, and New Braintree.[12]

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[5] West Boylston Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Summary of Findings Report, 2019
[6] West Boylston Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), 2018; West Boylston Master Plan, 2005
[7] West Boylston Housing Production Plan (HPP), 2018
[8] CMRPC Regional Infrastructure Plan, 2023; CMRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2023; CMRPC Priority Climate Action Plan, 2024
[9] CMMPO 2050 Connections, 2024
[10] The MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
[11] West Boylston Housing Authority; North Central MA Housing Authorities
[12] The Town of West Boylston MA, 2024



REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

Town of West Boylston, Massachusetts

Legend

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

N W E S

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.

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 intrepreting positional accuracy.

Produced by

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Date: 3/25/2024 Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\m321_Locus_11x17.mxd

3B. History of the Community

West Boylston was once populated by Native Americans, specifically the Agawam and Nipmuc tribes.[13] The land was rich in open fields, hills and valleys, and many streams and springs made it an ideal location along a Native American trail to Mt. Wachusett. Near the Town's rivers are indications of Native American settlement and corn patches. European settlers arrived in West Boylston around 1720 as part of the Lancaster Population grant.

Incorporation

As more families came to settle in the community, they became unwilling to travel to the Congregational Church in Boylston for church services and town meetings. A group of families constructed a church three miles west of Boylston on the site of the present Common in West Boylston. The group desired to become their own town, and in 1796 they received precinct status from the state legislature. It was not until 1808 that West Boylston became a town thanks to the determined efforts of businessmen and politician Ezra Beaman. At its incorporation in 1808, the Town took parts of territory from Boylston, Sterling, Shrewsbury, and Holden. The Town's location - at the site where the Quinapoxet River joined the Stillwater River and formed the southern branch of the Nashua River – was an important factor in its development. The Town's original inhabitants were farmers, but with an abundant water supply, a few businesses were started along the waterways. A grist mill, sawmill, and blacksmith shop soon appeared, which evolved into larger and more varied industries. Since the first mills were wooden, fire was a constant danger and as a result many of rebuilt buildings were made of stone or brick. Robert Bailey Thomas, the founder of the Old Farmer's Almanac, lived on a farm in West Boylston. Thomas calculated the cycles of the moon and compiled essays and historical facts for inclusion in the yearly almanacs. He served as the town clerk of West Boylston in 1808 and as a state legislator in 1820.[14] West Boylston was also the home to Reed Pipe Organs, some of which are still in use today.[15] By the mid 1800's, the Worcester and Nashua Railroad came through town, and in 1880 the Central Massachusetts Railroad and the Boston to Northampton came through the Oakdale section of town. The advent of the railroads allowed large quantities of farm products to be shipped to Boston daily; crops including corn, rye, wheat, oats, milk, and cider contributed to the prosperity of West Boylston. Manufacturing continued to grow with cotton, wool, and wire products being made, as well as scythes, boots, and baskets. One well-known manufacturer from this time was Erastus Bigelow, and Bigelow Mills was where the first power loom for weaving carpets was invented.

[13] Native Lands Digital
[14] American Antiquarian Society
[15] Handbook of New England, Porter E. Sargent, 1917

Wachusett Reservoir

By 1890, the Town had approximately 3,000 residents with five churches, ten schools, and several meeting halls. At that time, Boston was seeking to increase its water supply, and the Metropolitan Water Board was created under the provisions of Chapter 488 of the Acts of the year 1895. The Board selected West Boylston and its surrounding communities as the best place to construct a reservoir, and soon the State began taking land, which included the Town Center along the river. Over 1,500 residents were displaced from the Town Center; eight schools, three churches, most of the farms in town, and all of the mills in town were also displaced and/or inundated. The construction of the Wachusett Reservoir cost $11 million and required over 750 laborers, many of whom were immigrants from Italy. Following completion of the Wachusett Dam in Clinton, the valley was flooded in 1905, thus forming the Wachusett Reservoir. The Reservoir encompasses over one square mile out of the nearly 14 square miles of the town. The lovely Old Stone Church stands as the last reminder of the Town that once existed in the valley.

Farming

West Boylston has high quality fertile soils – some of the best in the Commonwealth – and as such, agriculture, including dairy farming, and timber harvesting flourished. Agriculture in town was productive despite the hills and rocks that characterized the landscape. Prior to World War II, there were many small family dairy, fruit tree, and vegetable farms in town. After World War II, there was a steady loss of these farms to subdivisions and commercial development. The farms and related open space were especially significant for the Town's water supply protection, as they provided underground recharge and safeguarded surface waters.

Current Conditions

Today, West Boylston is mostly a residential "bedroom" town. Absent the Wachusett Reservoir, the Town may have faced the fate of many mill towns: abandoned mills and high unemployment. Although the Reservoir was a disaster for the Town at the time of formation, today it is a picturesque landmark which provides passive recreational opportunities and scenic beauty. Please see the *Scenic Resources and Unique Environments* sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* section of this plan for additional historic information and for a list of properties in town which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.[16]

[16] Edgar Whitcomb, West Boylston Historical Commission, 1996; Worcester Area League of Women Voters, 1977; The Banner, 1987; Ron Borjeson, West Boylston Historical Commission, 2002

3C. Population Characteristics

Population

To plan for West Boylston's open space and recreation needs, the size, density, age, and other demographics of the Town's population must be considered. From 1940 to 2020, the Town's population more than quadrupled, growing from 1,822 to 7,877 residents. However, it is important to note that the Worcester County Jail and House of Corrections is in West Boylston. The Worcester County Jail and House of Correction may host up to 1,300 inmates each year, but it hosts just under 800 residents as of 2025. When the number of inmates is discounted, West Boylston's total population more than tripled during the period from 1940 to 2020.[17]

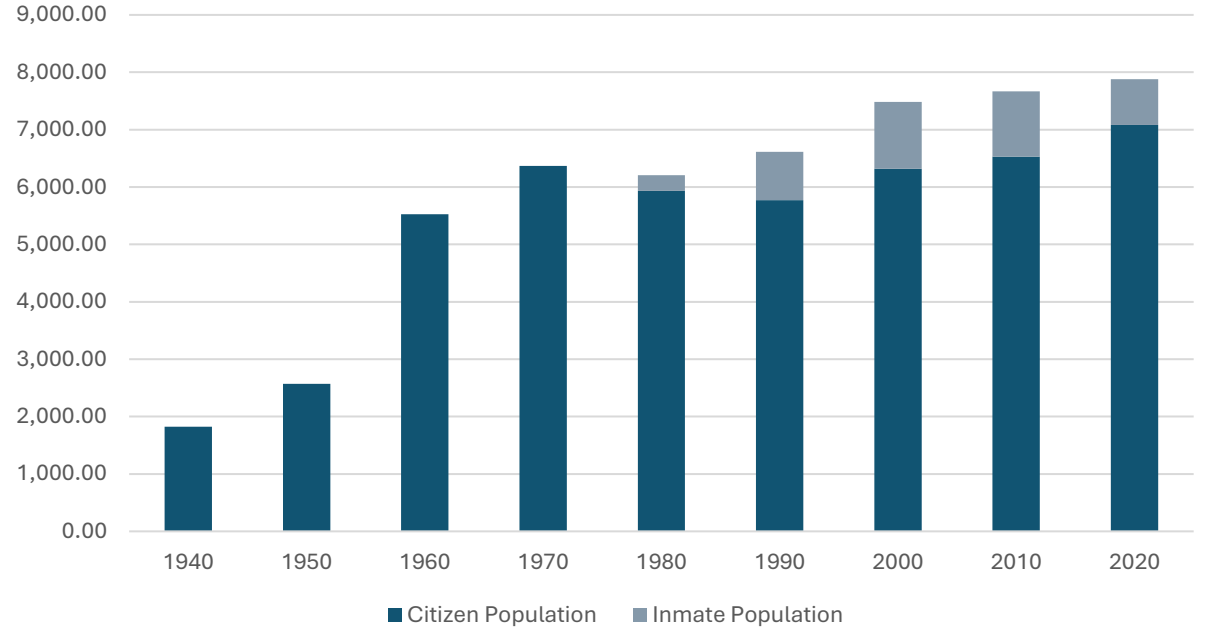
As shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #1), the greatest period of growth in town occurred in the 1950s, when the population grew 115%. Since that time, the population has still grown overall, albeit at a slower rate than in the 1950's. In the 1960s, the population grew 15.3%. It decreased by 2.6% in the 1970's and decreased again by 7% in 1990 with a total citizen population of 5,770 in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, the citizen population increased by 7.1%, and in 2010, the citizen population grew by 3% to 6,531. Between 2010 and 2020, the citizen population increased by approximately 8.4%, while the inmate population decreased by over 30%.

Exhibit 1A: West Boylston's Population Change (table)

Year	Citizen Population	Inmate Population	Total Population	% Change in Citizen Population	% Total Change
1940	1,822	--	1,822	--	--
1950	2,570	--	2,570	41.10%	41.10%
1960	5,526	--	5,526	115.00%	115.00%
1970	6,369	--	6,369	15.30%	15.30%
1980	5,936	268	6,204	-2.60%	-2.60%
1990	5,770	841	6,611	-7.00%	6.60%
2000	6,320	1,161	7,481	7.10%	13.20%
2010	6,531	1,138	7,669	3.00%	2.50%
2020	7,081	796	7,877	8.42%	2.71%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census; West Boylston Housing Production Plan; Worcester County Sherrif's Office					

[17] The United Stated Census Bureau; Worcester County Sheriff Department, 2024

Exhibit 1B: West Boylston's Population Change (graph)



Please note that this OSRP is associated with the citizen population and not the institutionalized population. Thus, the focus of the population evaluation shown below is for the citizen population, not including the inmate population. Unless otherwise noted, all numbers refer to the citizen population.

Estimates from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) indicate that West Boylston may have recently experienced a slight decline in its population from 2020 to 2023, with an estimated total population of 7,790 (including the institutionalized population) for 2023. Given the current number of inmates at the Worcester County Jail, this estimation indicates that West Boylston's citizen population is around 7,000 residents. According to the 2020 Census, Worcester County's population is 862,111 and the State of Massachusetts' population is 7,029,917.[18]

Population Projections

The Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO), CMRPC's Transportation Planning organization, regularly publishes population projections for transportation planning purposes. As part of the 2024 CMMPO Long Range Transportation Plan, town-level projections were developed based upon past growth trends, land use and infrastructure capacity, planned future projects, and stakeholder input. Population

[18] United States Census Bureau

estimates for West Boylston indicate that by the year 2050, the Town's total population will be approximately 8,927. This represents an increase of 13.33% from the 2020 population, which is similar to the percent growth estimated for Shrewsbury, as shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #2). The two towns both have limited developable lands, with Shrewsbury being largely built out and West Boylston having a large extent of land owned by DCR. It is worth noting that not only do these projections account for both residents and inmates, but that these updated population projections seem high to the OSIC and other local residents. Similarly high projections were made in the 2005 West Boylston Master Plan: while the Master Plan suggested that the Town's population would be 8,412 by 2010, the actual census count was 7,669 in 2010. Upon analyzing the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) updated population projections, the CMMPO felt they did not necessarily reflect an accurate growth scenario for the Central Massachusetts Region. Therefore, the CMMPO developed a set of regionally customized projections with regional control totals based on past growth rates to complement statewide projections.

The following exhibit (Exhibit #2) includes the CMMPO's and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's (MRPC's) population projections for West Boylston and its neighboring municipalities out to the year 2050. The 2025 OSIC notes that these projections are high and that previous projections which have been made have shown higher growth rates than the actual historic population trends in town. To learn more about the methodology behind the CMMPO's projections, please reference the 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan's Technical Appendix: https://cmrpc.org/transportation/core-plans/lrtp/.

Exhibit 2: CMMPO Population Projections

Town	**2020**	**2030**	**2040**	**2050**
West Boylston	7,877*	8,253	8,561	8,927
Boylston	4,849	4,762	4,911	5,093
Holden	19,905	18,829	19,397	19,938
Shrewsbury	38,325	40,895	42,499	43,924
Sterling	7,985	7,678	7,302	6,556
Worcester	206,518	209,992	218,777	227,587
Source: CMMPO 2024 Long Range Transportation Plan **Includes inmate population*				

As reported in the 2020 US Census, West Boylston has a smaller population than many of its neighbors, including the City of Worcester and the Towns of Shrewsbury, Holden, and Sterling. The only neighboring municipality with a smaller population than West Boylston is Boylston, which has a 2020 Census population of 4,849 people.

Population Density

The Town of West Boylston has an area of 13.8 square miles. It has a population density of 513.12 people per square mile based on the 2020 Census and a population density of 564.5 people per square mile based on 2023 ACS estimates. Discounting the land in town that is under the Wachusett Reservoir where people cannot live, the Town is only about 12.82 square miles in area; based off of its area discounting the Reservoir, the Town has a population density of 553.2 people per square mile based on the 2020 Census and a population density of 607.64 people per square mile based on the 2023 ACS estimates. The Town's population density is higher than the population densities of Boylston and Sterling but is lower than the population densities of Shrewsbury and the City of Worcester (Exhibit #3).

Exhibit 3: Regional Population Density

Geographic Area	**Population**	**Square Miles**	**Persons Per Square Mile**
Boylston	4,849	19.70**	246.14
Sterling	7,985	32.00	249.53
Holden	19,905	36.00	552.92
West Boylston	7,081*	13.80***	513.12
Shrewsbury	38,325	22.00	1,742.05
Worcester	206,518	38.00	5,434.68
Worcester County	862,111	1,579	545.96
Massachusetts	7,029,917	10,554	666.09
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census **Citizen population (does not include inmates)* ***Includes Wachusett Reservoir; discounting the Reservoir, Boylston has an area of 16.03mi^2 and has a population density of 302.50 people per mi^2* ****Includes Wachusett Reservoir; discounting the Reservoir, West Boylston has an area of 12.82mi^2 and has a population density of 553.20 people per mi^2*			

The number of housing units in West Boylston has grown over the past five decades, as is shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #4).

Exhibit 4: West Boylston's Housing Units

Year	# of Housing Units	% Change
1980	2,048	8.10%
1990	2,214	7.50%
2000	2,413	8.25%
2010	2,616	7.76%
2020	3,052	16.67%
Source: 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates		

During the 1980s, the number of housing units in town grew by 8.1% and continued to increase at a rate between 7% and 8% between the 1980s and 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, however, the number of housing units in West Boylston increased by nearly 17%. The number of people per housing unit in town has decreased from 3.03 people per unit in 1980 to 2.56 people per unit in 2000 and 2010 and 2.31 people per unit in 2020.[19]

Population by Age Group

Age group distribution in West Boylston has changed considerably since 1960. In 1960, the 15 and younger age group comprised 35.8% of the Town's population; this age group decreased to 15.8% of the population in 1990, and increased again to 18% of the population in 2000. Since that time, this age group has hovered around 13% to 14% of the population. The 65 or older age group in town comprised only 7.1% of the population in 1960 and has recently seen a steady increase from 14.7% of the population in 2000 to 18% of the population in 2010 and to 23% of the population in 2020, as is shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #5).[20]

Exhibit 5: West Boylston's Population by Age Group

Age	% Pop. in 1960	% Pop. in 1970	% Pop. in 1980	% Pop. in 1990	% Pop. in 2000	% Pop. in 2010	% Pop. in 2020*
<15	36%	29%	19%	16%	18%	14%	13%
15-24	9%	16%	18%	14%	12%	6%	11%
25-44	30%	22%	27%	34%	33%	26%	26%
45-64	18%	25%	25%	21%	23%	35%	27%
>64	7%	9%	12%	16%	15%	18%	23%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses							

[19] United States Census Bureau
[20] Ibid.

**Includes inmate population*

In 2020, 27% of the population in town was in the 45-64 age group. This is a noticeable decrease from 2010, when 35% of residents were in this age group. People aged 25-44 made up 26% of the Town's population in both 2010 and 2020. Together, these two large groups, whose ages range from 25 to 64, made up over half the town's population in 2020. The median age of West Boylston residents in 2020 was 45.6 years.[21] The elderly population (who are older than age 64) in town is expected to continue to grow significantly as the large baby boomer generation (those born after World War II) ages. The population of residents aged 65 and older increased by 371.4% from 391 residents in 1960 to 1,843 residents in 2020. In addition to the existing population aging, the influx of new seniors living in town occurred due to the Hillside Village and Angell Brook developments, which contain 249 units of new over-55 housing, being permitted and constructed between 2002 and 2010. It is worth noting that West Boylston also offers affordable housing at Afra Terrace and Orchard Knoll, the latter of which specifically offers accommodations for older adults and people with disabilities. Also, the Briarwood Continuing Care Facility is located half in the City of Worcester and half in West Boylston; Briarwood's address is within Worcester, but the Knollwood nursing home affiliated with Briarwood is completely located in West Boylston.

Growth or decline in the populations of the various age groups has implications for schools and classroom sizes, recreation facilities, municipal services, housing, and economic development needs in town. Younger and school aged residents have a need for more active recreation facilities such as soccer and baseball fields. The population under the age of 25 in West Boylston has increased since 2010. According to the West Boylston Public Schools at the time of this 2025 OSRP update, there are 465 students enrolled in pre-k through the fifth grade, 214 students enrolled in the Middle School, and 239 students enrolled in the High School. The actual population counts for the High School exceed the population projections included in the schools' 2024-25 Enrollment Projection Report, which is included in this plan's appendix. Overuse of existing recreational facilities in town is already an issue, as these schools don't have their own fields and everyone from youth to adults uses the town fields. None of the town fields are synthetic, so if overuse damages the grass, the healing time is long.

For middle-aged residents, active recreation areas for league sports as well as passive recreation facilities and special provisions like wheelchair accessibility may be needed.

[21] United States Census Bureau

The Town's increasing older adult population may create pressures for the provision of open space and passive recreation facilities over more active sports field facilities.

Population Distribution

West Boylston's population is unevenly distributed. According to the West Boylston Town Clerk, Precinct 1, which is in the southern part of town, contains 3,166 people, while Precinct 2, which is in the northern part of town, contains 3,985 people. Precinct 1 is about 4.4 square miles in area and has a population density of 892.5 people per square mile; Precinct 2 is about 9.5 square miles in area and has a population density of 415.8 people per square mile. This difference in population density between the two precincts is largely due to the large amount of DCR-owned land in Precinct 2 as compared to Precinct 1.[22]

Income

The median household (housing unit) income in West Boylston is estimated to have increased by 67.94% since 2000. The Town's estimated median household income is approximately 17% higher than Worcester County's estimated median household income for 2020 and 7% higher than Massachusetts' estimated median household income for 2020. Median household income estimates for West Boylston, its neighboring towns, Worcester County, and the state from the 2000, 2010, and 2020 U.S Census and are shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #6).[23]

Exhibit 6: Regional Median Household (Housing Unit) Income

Geographic Location	**Median Household Income – 2000**	**Median Household Income – 2010**	**Median Household Income - 2020**
West Boylston	$53,777	$79,906	$90,313
Boylston	$67,703	$88,214	$106,100
Sterling	$67,188	$102,115	$122,810
Holden	$64,297	$88,405	$111,960
Worcester	$35,623	$45,036	$51,647
Shrewsbury	$64,237	$85,697	$108,870
Worcester County	$47,874	$64,152	$77,155
Massachusetts	$50,502	$64,509	$84,385
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and 2010 and 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates			

[22] The West Boylston Town Clerk; the West Boylston Housing Production Plan (HPP), 2018
[23] United States Census Bureau

Employment

According to the MA Department of Economic Research, the Town of West Boylston has a civilian labor force of 3,768 people as of April 2025. Of these people, 3,590 are employed and 178 are unemployed, contributing to an unemployment rate in town of 4.7%. The Town's unemployment rate is slightly lower than the County's unemployment rate of 4.8% and is slightly higher than the State's unemployment rate of 4.6%. The unemployment rate in West Boylston has declined since the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic and has remained between 3% and 5% since 2022.[24]

According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), the educational, health services, and social assistance industry is the top employment industry in West Boylston. This industry is followed by the retail trade industry and the manufacturing industry, as is shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #7).

Exhibit 7: West Boylston's Resident's Employment Types

Occupation Type/Employment Industry	**Percent (%) of Residents Employed per Industry**
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	28.09%
Retail Trade	11.40%
Manufacturing	11.34%
Professional, Scientific, Management and Administrative, Waste Management	10.40%
Construction	9.25%
Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, Renting and Leasing	6.99%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	6.07%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6.04%
Other	10.42%
Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	

[24] MA Department of Economic Research

According to 2024 data from the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research (DER), the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction is by far the largest employer in town, as is shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #8).

Exhibit 8: West Boylston's Employment Industry

Company Name	**Estimated Number of Employees**
County Jail	500 - 999
Bunzl Distribution	100 - 249
Curtis Industries LLC	100 - 249
FedEx Ship Center	100 - 249
Wachusett Country Club	100 - 249
Waste Management	100 - 249
West Boylston Nursing Home Inc.	100 - 249
Source: MA Department of Economic Research Note: Exhibit does not include major employers with fewer than 100 employees	

<u>Environmental Justice</u>

Since 2002, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) has been implementing an Environmental Justice Policy to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. This policy was instituted recognizing that communities across the Commonwealth, particularly those densely populated urban neighborhoods in and around the state's older industrial areas, are facing many environmental challenges associated with Massachusetts' industrial legacy. Residents in these predominantly low-income and minority communities lack open space and recreational resources and often live side-by-side with numerous existing large and small sources of pollution and old abandoned and contaminated sites which can pose risks to public health and the environment.

Critical to advancing Environmental Justice (EJ) in the Commonwealth is the equitable distribution of environmental assets such as parks, open space, and recreation. Toward this end, and where applicable, municipalities shall identify and prioritize open space sites in their Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRPs) that are socially, recreationally, and ecologically important to EJ populations within the community. As such, please refer to the Environmental Equity discussion in the *Environmental Challenges* sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* section of this OSRP for a continued discussion of environmental equity considerations in West Boylston.

Massachusetts Environmental Justice population census block groups are determined by the following criteria:

- Households (housing unit) that earn 65% or less of the statewide household median income;
- 40% or more of the residents are minority;
- 25% or more of the residents identify as speaking English less than “very well”;
- 25% or more of the residents are minority and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.

Environmental Justice populations for West Boylston have been mapped in the Environmental Justice Map (Map #2). As the map indicates, there are no Environmental Justice population census block groups in West Boylston. However, there are Environmental Justice population census block groups in the northern portion of Worcester, which is adjacent to the southern border of West Boylston and is near Woodland Park. These census block groups in Worcester have been designated as EJ because they meet the minority criteria.

Although there are no Environmental Justice population census block groups in West Boylston, there are still vulnerable populations in town whose needs must be considered in this planning process. According to the United States Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census, over 23% of residents in town are age 65 or older. Additionally, although the majority of residents in West Boylston are white and speak English, it is especially critical to consider non-white residents and residents with limited English proficiency (LEP) throughout all planning processes in town to ensure equitable involvement and outcomes. For these reasons, the OSIC made an effort to reach these populations throughout the public engagement efforts for this OSRP update process. Through this involvement, the OSIC determined that areas with a high elderly population could benefit from expanded bus services. Additional bus service between West Boylston and Worcester would have the added benefit of providing EJ populations in Worcester with access to Woodland Park, the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), and the Wachusett Reservoir. Expanded bus options include extending the bus line back to the intersection of Central Street and Prospect or looping it out to the MCRT around the Thomas Basin of the Wachusett Reservoir (specifically at the Thomas Street/Beaman Street intersection).

Race Distribution

In addition to other population characteristics, it is critical to consider the racial distribution of a municipality's population throughout the open space and recreation planning process. The racial distribution of a municipality's population, combined with other population characteristic data, informs analyses of environmental equity in town. An analysis of environmental equity includes analyzing the distribution of open space and recreational resources in a municipality with special consideration being given to historically marginalized populations. As shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #9), the majority of West Boylston residents are white.

Exhibit 9: West Boylston's Racial Demographics

Race	**Number of Residents**
American Indian and Alaskan Native	9
Asian	149
Black or African American	293
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1
White	6,824
Other	181
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census	

Languages Spoken

According to five-year estimates from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), the majority of people living in West Boylston speak only English. However, 780 people in West Boylston speak a language other than English at home. Specifically, 380 people speak Spanish at home, 246 speak other Indo-European languages at home, and 61 people speak Asian and Pacific Island languages at home. It is important to note that 583 people living in West Boylston are Hispanic or Latino, of any racial group. Please refer to the following exhibit (Exhibit #10) for detailed information about the other languages spoken at home by households in West Boylston, according to the 2022 ACS Five-Year Estimates.

Exhibit 10: Languages Spoken in West Boylston

Language Spoken at Home	**Number of Housing Units**
Spanish	88
French, Haitian, or Cajun	6
German or other West Germanic languages	33
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	25
Other Indo-European languages	102
Korean	11
Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)	8
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	8
Arabic	44
Other and unspecified languages	27
Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	

People with Disabilities

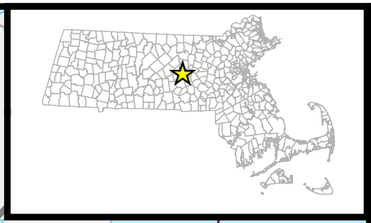
Finally, it is critical to consider the population with disabilities in municipalities throughout the open space and recreation planning process. The characteristics of the population with disabilities in town informs municipalities regarding the types of accessibility accommodations they may need to prioritize as they improve their open space and recreational resources and strive towards universal access. As shown in the exhibit below (Exhibit #11), high numbers of West Boylston's residents have ambulatory difficulties, hearing difficulties, cognitive difficulties, and independent living difficulties.

Exhibit 11: Disability Characteristics in West Boylston

Disability	**Percent of Residents**
Hearing Difficulty	4.7%
Vision Difficulty	2.0%
Cognitive Difficulty	4.2%
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.9%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.9%
Independent Living Difficulty	3.7%
Source: 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 2 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Environmental Justice 2020 Populations

EJ Criteria

- Minority
- Income
- Minority and Income
- Minority, Income and English isolation

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantile Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

0 0.65 1.3 Miles

Date: 3/25/2024 Document Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\Subprojects\m321_osrp\osrp321_02_EJ_11x17.mxd

3D. Growth and Development Patterns

Patterns and Trends

As described in the *History of the Community* section of this plan, the Town of West Boylston was incorporated following local efforts to establish a community center for Boylston residents who lived west of its town center. West Boylston's Town Center was then flooded at the turn of the twentieth century when the Wachusett Reservoir was created. Following the flooding of the Reservoir, West Boylston established itself as a productive farming community. Following World War II, farms were lost to the subdivisions and commercial development that remain prominent in town today. Since the adoption of its first zoning map in 1975, West Boylston's growth has been influenced by zoning regulations in similar ways to many other communities across the state and country, and the Town has been mainly a residential community. By 2016, about 40% of Town's land was owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), as DCR has increased land acquisition efforts in town for water supply protection purposes.[25]

Infrastructure

A municipality's transportation, water, and sewer infrastructure are vital to maintaining quality of life. However, along with residential, commercial, and industrial development, the construction of municipal service infrastructure often leads to increases in impervious surface coverage. Impervious surfaces are made of materials that do not allow the passage of water, such as pavement. Considering impervious surface area is crucial in efforts to protect natural resources, as increased impervious surface area may lead to an increased frequency of flooding events and polluted soil and water resources. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "as impervious surfaces increase, stormwater runoff increases in quantity, speed, temperature, and pollutant load."[26] This stormwater runoff eventually reaches surface water or soil and then disperses into groundwater. According to land use data from the Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), West Boylston's impervious surface coverage is roughly 805.68 acres, or 9.08% of the Town's entire land area; this coverage total is slightly above the CMRPC Region's average impervious surface coverage of 7.28%, and this difference may be attributed to the fact that West Boylston is a slightly smaller than the average town in the Region in terms of total land area. It is important for the OSIC to consider trends in and the impacts of impervious surface coverage as the Town continues to develop, as the protection of

[25] The West Boylston Zoning Bylaws; the MA Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS)
[26] United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

natural resources will become even more crucial as extreme weather events are projected to become more frequent due to climate change.

Transportation

The Town's transportation infrastructure plays an important role in its development. As recommended by the 2005 West Boylston Master Plan, the Town Administrator created and appointed a Transportation Committee to assess and focus attention to transportation issues in town. The mission of the Transportation Committee is to advise town boards on transportation issues of importance, to study transportation needs, and to implement targeted transportation improvements in town. The Committee was intended to work towards implementing transportation goals found in the Route 12 Master Plan and the West Boylston Master Plan and to offer suggestions to improve or add to these goals. The Planning Board initiated and drafted a Complete Streets Policy for the Town that was adopted by the Board of Selectmen in May 2016. Complete Streets is an approach to local transportation planning that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to support safe and convenient access for users of all ages and abilities. Consideration is given in Complete Streets efforts to different modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, public transportation, in addition to automobiles.

The Transportation Committee, with assistance from CMRPC, coordinated the preparation of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan for the Town, which was accepted in August 2017. Prior to the development of this Prioritization Plan, the Town and CMRPC conducted public surveys in 2013 and 2016 to ask residents about their priorities for transportation improvements. Results from these surveys indicated that long-range planning is needed to better incorporate the bicycle pathway systems and walking trails that were shown as a priority to respondents in the public survey with the Town's overall transportation network. The Town's Complete Streets Policy and Prioritization Plan may be continually used to inform future implementation projects. The Town received just under $200,000 in state funding in 2018 to implement the Crescent Street Sidewalk Project, one of the priorities identified in its Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.[27] This project included the construction of nearly 2,000 feet of new sidewalk to increase access to the Goodale Park

Streets community, West Boylston is eligible for up to $500,000 in state funding for Complete Streets implementation during each four-fiscal-year period.

Throughout the public engagement period for this 2025 OSRP update process, West Boylston residents again voiced their concerns and priorities related to transportation infrastructure; they especially prioritized pedestrian accommodations in feedback

[27] The MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Complete Streets Program

received during this engagement. This feedback may be used to inform future transportation planning efforts in town. These efforts are included in Goal 4 of this OSRP's Action Plan: plan and develop greenways and walkable connections in town with consideration to appropriate regional connections.

Transportation: Roadways

Route 12 serves as a vital transportation artery in West Boylston and acts as a major highway for the region. Route 12 also draws heavy traffic volumes, as it serves as the primary area for local commercial activity. Local commercial activity is especially prevalent along the southernmost part of the route in town which feeds into Worcester at Interstate Route 190 (I-190). The I-190 interchange being available as a travel option has resulted in a reduced demand for Route 12, as I-190 has evolved into the preferred link from Worcester to areas north of the city. In 2007, West Boylston changed the zoning of 348 acres of land north of the I-190 interchange to allow commercial/limited industrial uses and with hopes to encourage clean industry or retail and expand the Town's tax base; the DCR owns about 65% of the land in this area, or nearly 240 acres. Additionally, roughly 70 acres of land in this area receive preferential tax treatment, as they are enrolled in the MA Chapter 61 forestlands program.

Other major roads that exist in West Boylston are Routes 140 and 110, both of which converge with Route 12 near the Reservoir. These minor highways receive traffic from less-traveled roads and residential streets. Most major roads in West Boylston run north-south. It is worth noting that in 1996, the Town of West Boylston upgraded/reconstructed Shrewsbury Street and installed sewers shortly thereafter; it was hoped that this reconstruction would reduce the number of trucks using Maple Street, which is zoned for single family residential use, but that change has not been realized.

Transportation: Sidewalks

As previously noted, sidewalk conditions have emerged as a major concern throughout various local planning processes (including for the West Boylston Master Plan, the Route 12 Master Plan, and the West Boylston Complete Streets Prioritization Plan). These concerns were echoed throughout the public engagement period for this OSRP update; generally, the Town's residents want existing sidewalks repaired and maintained and new sidewalks, crosswalks, and/or pathways created. As a result of the Complete Streets planning process and the 2018 OSRP update process, the Town developed a map depicting sidewalk conditions to prioritize future projects. This map was updated by the OSIC during the 2025 OSRP update process in cooperation with the Transportation Committee and is included in this plan as Map #3. In general, this map focuses on the

geographic center of West Boylston and highlights that Goodale Street, Newton Street, Route 12, and the intersection of Maple and Worcester Streets all need new sidewalks. As second priorities, the map highlights that Thomas Street, Beaman Street, and portions of Malden, Crescent, and Sterling Streets also need new sidewalks. This map also highlights that sidewalks are in poor condition around Pine Arden and Townsend Drives and that sidewalks are in great condition around the intersection of Routes 12, 140, and 110. Although not delineated on this map, sidewalk improvements in Oakdale are also a priority for the Town.

In addition to the 2018 Crescent Street Sidewalk Project, funded by the MassDOT Complete Streets Program, the Town also completed a project to construct new sidewalks and rehabilitate existing ones in 2016. This project included approximately 8,500 feet of sidewalks and cost just short of $900,000. The sidewalks from the West Boylston Middle/High School driveway stretching across to the Major Ewards School were constructed and/or rehabilitated by this project. Other sidewalks targeted by this project include those along Central and Worcester Streets, near the intersection of Routes 12 and 140, and along Franklin Street in front of Town Hall.[28] These areas are highlighted as being in good condition on the Sidewalk Conditions Map (Map #3).

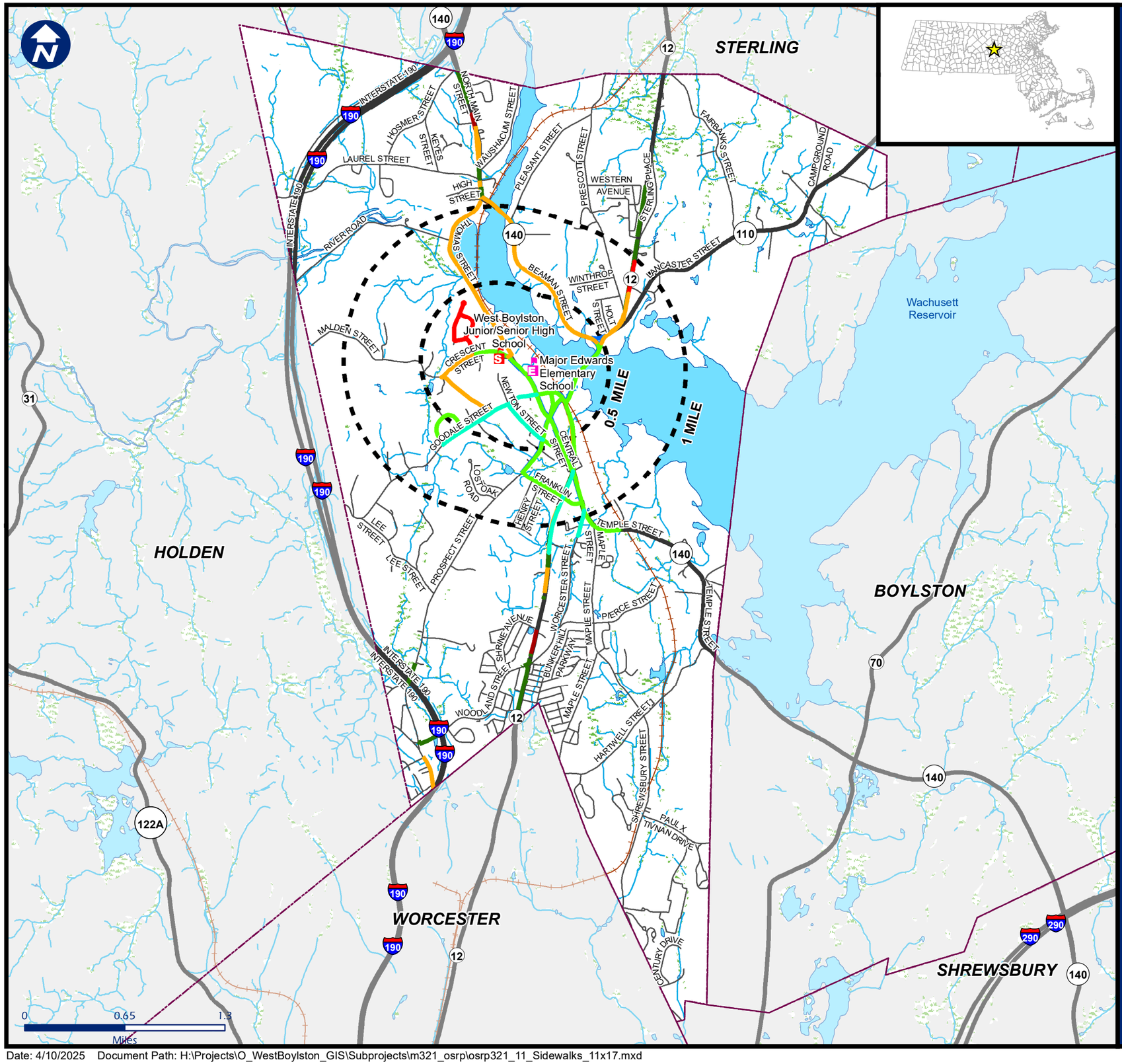
To improve areas where sidewalks are in poor condition or where there are currently no sidewalks, the Town may consider pursuing additional funding from the MassDOT Complete Streets Program. As previously mentioned, since West Boylston adopted a Complete Streets Policy (Complete Streets Program Tier 1) and developed a Prioritization Plan (Tier 2), the Town is eligible for up to $500,000 in Complete Streets construction funding (Tier 3) each four-fiscal year period. It is worth noting that the Program also offers municipalities up to $38,000 in technical assistance to develop a Prioritization Plan, but a municipality may only obtain this technical assistance funding once;[29] As the Town has already completed a Prioritization Plan, it is not eligible for this technical assistance funding. The Town can pursue updating its Prioritization Plan and can seek approval of this update from MassDOT. Since West Boylston last received Complete Streets construction funding in 2018, the Town is eligible to receive up to $500,000 from this construction funding program in Fiscal Year 2026. It is also worth noting that only projects included in the MassDOT-approved local Complete Streets Prioritization Plans may be eligible for this construction funding.

[28] The Worcester Telegram, 2016
[29] The MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Complete Streets Program

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 3

SIDEWALKS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- 1 Mile Buffer from Schools

Proposed New Sidewalk Needs (Town Data)

- 1st Priority
- 2nd Priority

Sidewalk Condition (Town Data)

- Good Condition
- Poor Condition

Sidewalk Conditions (CMRPC, 2021)

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantine Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

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Several other programs provide technical and funding assistance for active transportation routes. The Safe Routes to School Program is a federally funded program that works to improve the safety of walking, biking, and rolling around public schools through educational opportunities and other forms of assistance. Once designated as a partner, schools may receive assistance in evaluating, designing, and implementing pedestrian improvements near their buildings. At the time of this 2025 OSRP update, West Boylston's public schools are not Safe Routes to Schools partners. The Shared Streets and Spaces Program offers up to $250,000 to any Massachusetts municipality for transportation improvement projects within public ways that support public health, safe mobility, and strengthened commerce. Competitive projects must also be cost- and time-efficient. Finally, the Chapter 90 Program provides municipalities with an annual funding source for any transportation project that addresses locally identified priorities. Specifically, every municipality is allocated a portion of the Chapter 90 funds each year.[30]

Transportation: Cycling Routes

Recreational cycling is common in West Boylston due to the beautiful cycling routes around the Wachusett Reservoir and the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), which is the only designated state cycling trail in town. In fact, local groups such as the Seven Hills Wheelmen (http://www.sevenhillswheelmen.org/) organize rides through West Boylston on both weeknights and weekends. However, the safety of cyclists is a major concern among town staff, volunteers, and residents. Although sidewalks and bike lanes were recently improved near the intersection of Routes 110 and 140, cycling accommodations are lacking throughout town. In some areas, cycling lanes are less than one foot wide and do not provide safe passage width; this is especially dangerous on more curvy roads with poor pavement conditions. In particular, the Oakdale neighborhood, which is where the local MCRT parking area and access point is located, and the "S" curve on Route 140 both need improved cycling accommodations. The aforementioned "S" curve is perhaps the most dangerous area for cyclists in town, as the guardrail and lack of a shoulder pushes cyclists into the already narrow travel-way. In addition, the railroad bridge at the west end of the Beaman Street causeway over the Stillwater River in Oakdale is perhaps the second most dangerous area for cyclists in town, as it is very narrow and pushes cyclists into traffic. Overall, the heavy cycling traffic in West Boylston affects both transportation planning and open space planning, so it is important to consider cycling traffic and cyclist safety throughout these planning processes.

Transportation: Bus Routes

[30] The MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Grant Central

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) offers fixed route service within West Boylston, as WRTA Route #30 provides access to areas of town along Route 12 as far north as the Walmart. West Boylston also receives ADA paratransit services within three quarters of a mile around WRTA fixed routes, including Route 12. Paratransit operates during the same days and hours as the fixed route system. This service is open to people with disabilities that can show that their disability prevents them from using the fixed route service some or all of the time through an in-house application process at the WRTA Hub.

West Boylston also receives non-ADA paratransit service, which is available to residents of West Boylston who are age 60 and above and people with disabilities regardless of age. The application process for this service is less rigorous than the ADA paratransit application process, and this service is generally extended to all people with disabilities. It is offered on weekdays, generally from 9am- 3pm. Service is offered within West Boylston and to Worcester, Holden and Boylston.[31]



WRTA Bus Stop in West Boylston

Together, paratransit and fixed route services are an important element of the transportation infrastructure in West Boylston. With the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) fixed route buses now offering bike racks, these fixed routes have the potential to connect cyclists to the Wachusett Greenways section of the Mass Central Rail Trail. However, this connection would require WRTA Route #30 to be extended around the Thomas Basin to reach Oakdale. The Town could work with the WRTA to expand the bus route. This is not an easy process, but it is one that is worth focusing on. Notably, the old

[31] The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA)

Leominster to Worcester trolley line serviced this area of town for several decades but eventually made way for the Route 12 roadway corridor.[32]

The OSIC made an effort to reach vulnerable populations throughout the OSRP public participation process as it relates to transportation in town. The parts of town with high elderly populations, including the densely developed southern portion of town (especially including the Angell Brook and Hillside Village developments), could benefit from expanded bus services. Expanded bus service between West Boylston and Worcester would have the added benefit of providing Environmental Justice populations in Worcester with access to the Mass Central Rail Trail and Wachusett Reservoir. Expanded bus options include extending WRTA Route #30 back to the intersection of Central Street and Prospect or looping it out to the Mass Central Rail Trail around the Thomas Basin of the Wachusett Reservoir at the Thomas Street/Beaman Street intersection. The loop to the Mass Central Rail Trail would bring the Route closer to the approved 40B project at 92 North Main Street and would provide people living in these units with a public transportation option.

Water Supply

Ample high-quality water being available is essential for the growth and development of any community. Water connects us all, and clean water is crucial for a high quality of life. The West Boylston Water District (WBWD), an independent governmental body, is the primary supplier of water to the Town. The District services 99% of the Town's water users; only 1% of water users in town get their water from private wells. All of the District's water is derived from groundwater sources. The WBWD water supply protection land is shown in the Open Space Map (Map #10).

Each year, the WBWD is permitted to withdraw an average of 560,000 gallons of water per day. It is important to note that the District does not utilize any water from the Wachusett Reservoir. Instead, the Wachusett Reservoir is overseen by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), which provides water for Boston and surrounding communities. When it was completed in 1905, the Wachusett Reservoir was the largest public water supply reservoir in the world.

The WBWD obtains its water from three wellfields. The Lee Street wellfield has one active well that has been performing well since 1966; three inactive wells at this wellfield were closed in 1986 due to high levels of iron and are still abandoned as of 2025. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and MassDEP currently list iron as a secondary contaminant because of aesthetic concerns including unacceptable taste and

[32] West Boylston Beaman Memorial Public Library, 2017

staining of fixtures.[33] The Pleasant Valley and Oakdale wellfields each contain one well: a second well may possibly be developed in the future in the Pleasant Valley area.

Residential water consumption is estimated by Tata & Howard Inc., the WBWD's engineering consultants, to be 60% of total water use in town. All water connections in town are metered; this offers an incentive for customers to conserve water, as billing is directly related to consumption under a metering system. To reduce water usage, the District placed a moratorium on the installation of new in-ground irrigation systems in March 2001, but enforcement of this moratorium was difficult and there is currently no moratorium in place as of 2025. The District continues to investigate potential locations for new town water sources.

According to the West Boylston Water District Superintendent, the District's water meets Federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards. Sodium, nitrate and nitrite, organic pollutants, solvents, toxic metals, and arsenic in the District's water are well below safe contaminant levels required by the state and federal governments.[34] The District has also installed emergency chlorination at their existing water supply sources due to the presence of total coliform bacteria being detected in routine sampling rounds within the distribution system. The construction of the emergency chlorination systems was funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan program administered by MassDEP. However, the 2025 OSIC notes that although the Town used to be well-known for clean tasting water, many people complain about the taste of the Town's water with it now being treated with chlorine. Additionally, it is worth noting that elevated levels of manganese, another naturally occurring element, have been recorded in both the Oakdale and Pleasant Valley wells; to sequester this, the WBWD put the Oakdale filter plant online, controls the use of the Pleasant Valley Well, and tests water monthly. To learn more about water quality in town, please refer to the West Boylston Water District website's water quality webpage: https://www.westboylstonwater.org/water-quality/.

West Boylston's Town Meeting passed an Aquifer and Watershed Protection District Zoning Bylaw in 1986. This Bylaw was amended in 1994 when the state and federal drinking water regulations were made more stringent. Within this Aquifer and Watershed Protection District, lots must have 50,000 square feet, must have 150 feet of frontage, and can only have 15% impervious coverage (including half of the abutting roadway); in other areas of town (single and general residence) the respective minimums are 40,000 square feet, 120 feet of frontage, and no limit to impervious coverage. The Aquifer and Watershed Protection Zoning District is an overlay superimposed on the existing zoning districts and

[33] The MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP); West Boylston Water District (WBWD)
[34] Michael Coveney, Superintendent, West Boylston Water District

only applies to future uses. Certain activities which are considered potential threats to the water supply are prohibited within the district; such activities include operation of landfills and open dumps, storage of hazardous waste, and storage of liquid hazardous materials and petroleum products except under rigidly controlled circumstances. Certain other activities are allowed only with a special permit in this overlay district.[35]

Sewers

West Boylston did not have sewers until 2001, when a special Town Meeting voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to borrow $11,668,000 to construct sewers. The creation of the Town's sewer system was designed to help the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) comply with EPA's July 11, 1993 Consent Order to protect the water quality of the Wachusett Reservoir.[36] A Sewer Facilities Plan for the Town was completed and identified the areas that needed to be sewered as well as the septic systems that needed to be replaced. This Sewer Facilities Plan set out a program for phased sewer construction and design to serve the areas of greatest need first.

The West Boylston Sewer System is managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW). This system covers approximately 85% of all residential properties in town, compared to the 60% of residential properties it covered in 2018. This system also covers all of the industrial and commercial business properties in town. Properties within the Sewer District are required to connect to the sewer system. The Mandatory Sewer Connection Regulation from the Board of Health was adopted in September of 2002.[37]

The construction of the Town's sewer system has eliminated much of the local environmental contamination caused by failing septic systems. The Town's sewage is transferred to the sewage treatment plant in Millbury; this has decreased ground water recharge to the local wells and could have a negative impact on the Town's available water supply. Since the sewer system has also increased development in town, the water being returned to the aquifer is significantly reduced. The available water in the aquifer must be monitored closely to assure the needed flow occurs without negative impacts to current users.

The need for planned open space and recreation in the densely developed sewered areas of town has become more important, as infill lots that previously could not meet Title 5 requirements have received additional pressure to reduce minimum lot area and minimum

[35] West Boylston Zoning Bylaws
[36] Paul Guida, former Town Administrator, August 2001
[37] West Boylston Board of Health

frontage requirements and become developable due to sewer availability. If sewers are extended into outlying open areas that are not currently included in the area to be sewered, this will also cause additional development and loss of open space. To prevent this from happening, the Board of Sewer Commissioners in town has adopted two policies that prohibit the extension of sewers into non-sewered areas. It should also be noted that MA DCR has put policies in place to comply with Executive Order 385, the State's directive ordering its agencies not to take any action that will increase sprawl; For instance, the DCR has limited the number of sewer stubs on undeveloped land.[38]

West Boylston's proximity to Worcester, I-190, I-290 and Route 495 as well as its sewer system are factors that encourage growth in the Town. The Boston area's economy has triggered tremendous growth along Route 495, and this growth is pushing westward toward West Boylston. Although MA DCR owns over 40% of the Town in order to protect the Reservoir, its purchases in West Boylston have slowed and its acquisition program is more focused on land that includes or is near streams and wetlands, such as two of the properties purchased since the 2018 OSRP update on Fairbanks and Worcester Streets.

Long-Term Development Patterns

Residential Development

The Town of West Boylston offers the advantages of small-town life with the convenience of highway access to Worcester, the Metro-West, Boston, and Leominster and Fitchburg. The presence of the Wachusett Reservoir provides vistas of natural beauty and preserved open space but also poses unique challenges to land development for residential growth in town.

As is stated in its Master Plan (2005), Economic Development Plan (2011), and Housing Production Plan (2018), West Boylston desires to provide diverse housing options while preserving itself as a community with rural character. According to the 2018 West Boylston HPP, dwelling units are considered unaffordable to low- and moderate-income people if their monthly payments (mortgage, property tax, insurance, rent, utility, and other payments) exceed 30% of their monthly gross income. The majority of dwellings in West Boylston are houses owned by people with mortgages on quarter acre lots or smaller. Overall, 20.7% of renters, 18.3% of owners with a mortgage, and 10.6% of owners without a mortgage in West Boylston are housing cost-burdened.[39] According to estimates from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), the median value of owner-occupied housing units in West Boylston is $399,200. In terms of by month, the median monthly costs of

[38] Jonathan Gulliver, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), 2002
[39] West Boylston Housing Production Plan (HPP), 2018

homes with a mortgage in town is $2,325 and the median monthly cost of homes without a mortgage in town is $953, while the median gross monthly rent in town is $1,278.[40]

Notably, since the 2018 West Boylston OSRP update, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has passed the Affordable Homes Act (Chapter 150 of the Acts of 2024). This act allows for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) under 900 square feet to be built by-right in single-family zoning districts. Although this act offers an innovative housing supply option, it may have implications on already limited sewer flows in West Boylston.

The MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) maintains a list of deed restricted affordable housing units in each municipality in the State known as the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). While the Town of West Boylston has a higher share of MGL Chapter 40B dwelling units than its neighboring communities, only the City of Worcester achieves the 10% minimum threshold set by the EOHLC among the Town and its neighboring communities. According to the SHI, only 7.5% of dwellings in West Boylston are subsidized by the state.[41]

The following exhibits (exhibits #12 and #13) display the number of housing permits issued by the Town between Fiscal Years 2008 and 2024. Please note that due to there being limited local capacity during these fiscal years, the data for fiscal years 2017 through 2024 does not include the specific number of permits for multi-family or affordable units, and the data for Fiscal Year 2017 does not include the number of permits for commercial units.

Exhibit 12: Building Permits, FY 2008 - 2016

Fiscal Year	New Single-Family Units	New Multi-Family Units	New Affordable Housing Units	New Commercial Buildings
7/1/07 - 6/30/08	7	22	1	1
7/1/08 - 6/30/09	2	7	2	2
7/1/09 - 6/30/10	30	0	0	3
7/1/10 - 6/30/11	13	0	0	0
7/1/11 - 6/30/12	8	0	0	2
7/1/12 - 6/30/13	12	0	0	1

[40] United States Census Bureau

[41] The MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, 2023

7/1/13 - 6/30/14	26	0	0	1
7/1/14 - 6/30/15	11	0	0	1
7/1/15 - 6/30/16	8	0	0	3
Total	**117**	**29**	**3**	**14**
Source: West Boylston Building Department				

Exhibit 13: Buildings Permits, FY 2018 - 2024

Fiscal Year	New Residential Units	New Commercial Buildings
7/1/16 – 6/30/17	8	X
7/1/17 - 6/30/18	24	1
7/1/18 - 6/30/19	4	5
7/1/19 - 6/30/20	12	1
7/1/20 - 6/30/21	5	1
7/1/21 - 6/30/22	8	2
7/1/22 - 6/30/23	3	2
7/1/23 - 6/30/24	1	0
Total	**65**	**12**
Source: West Boylston Building Department		

According to the West Boylston Building Department, between fiscal years 2008 and 2016 there were 117 new single family building permits, 29 new multi-family building permits, three new affordable housing building permits, and 14 new commercial building permits issued in town, and between 2018 and 2024, there were 57 new residential unit building permits and 12 new commercial building permits issued in town. Although the above tables are missing data for the number of commercial building permits issued for Fiscal Year 2017, the Town's Building Department staff reported that there were eight building permits issued for new residential units during this fiscal year. Overall, this local data highlights potential inaccuracies in parallel Census data. Specifically, as shown in Exhibit #4 (West Boylston Housing Units), Census data indicates that between 2010 and 2020, the number of housing units in West Boylston increased by 436 units, or by nearly 17%. On the other hand, according to the local Building Department, around 170 building permits were issued for residential housing units between 2010 and 2020. For these reasons, it's important to take federal data with a grain of salt throughout local planning efforts, such as this OSRP update, and defer to local data and expertise as much as is possible.

Zoning

The Town's first set of zoning bylaws specified that single family residential (SR) lots in town had to be a minimum of 10,000 square feet while lots for multi-family dwelling units had to be a minimum of 7,500 square feet per unit. The required minimum sizes for residential lots increased gradually until 1984, when the Town increased the required single family residential lot size from 30,000 to 40,000 square feet and the required multi-family residential lot size from 15,000 to 20,000 square feet per unit. Two years later, the town passed aquifer protection district zoning in order to protect the recharge areas of the Town's wells; the Aquifer Protection District overlay zone requires lot sizes to be 50,000 square feet in order to protect potable water sources and the watershed generally. More recently at the May 2024 Town Meeting, the Town implemented an MBTA Residence District in accordance with the MBTA Communities Law, MGL Chapter 40A, Section 3A. This District establishes a 15 units per acre density limit, multi-family housing (4+ units) allowed by site plan review, a minimum of 10% affordable units required, and permitted land uses, dimensional requirements, and parking requirements reflective of the Single Residence Zone.

As of 2025, West Boylston has seven main zoning districts and six overlay districts distributed across town, as is shown on the Zoning Map (Map #4):

1. Single Residence (SR)
2. General Residence (GR)
3. MBTA Residence District (MR)
4. Business (B)
5. Commercial/Limited Industrial (CLI)
6. Industrial (IND)
7. Conservation
8. Continuing Care Retirement Community Overlay District
9. Flood Plain Overlay District
10. Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District
11. Multi-Story District
12. Wireless Communications Services Overlay District
13. Medical Marijuana Overlay District

Most of the Business Zone land in town is a strip bordering both sides of the southern section of Route 12. The other areas in town zoned for business are smaller and very scattered; these areas are located in Oakdale at the intersection of Laurel Street and Route 140 (North Main Street), at the intersection of Prospect and Woodland Streets, at the intersection of Route 110/Prescott Street/Route 12, along the very northern part of Route

12, at the intersection of Hartwell and Shrewsbury Streets, and at the intersection of Route 12 with Prospect/Goodale Streets up to Central Street.

Most of the Industrial Zone land is located in the southeastern part of town off of Hartwell, Shrewsbury, and East Mountain Streets. Nearby, a relatively small amount of land located by the county/state jail is zoned for conservation. This Conservation Zone land is almost completely surrounded by the Industrial Zone land. The Commercial / Limited Industrial Zone is located north of I-190 and abuts Holden and Sterling; this district was voted to be added to the Zoning Map at the October 2007 Town Meeting.

West Boylston residents have maintained the ability to build on pre-existing lots due to zoning "grandfathering" provisions and state mandates. Additionally, under Massachusetts's Subsidized Housing law, Chapter 774, the Town's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) granted a Comprehensive Permit in 1990 that allowed single family homes with septic systems to be built on lots as small as 8,737 square feet at Lancaster Commons, which is about half a mile from the Wachusett Reservoir. With about half the single-family homes at Lancaster Commons located on lots of less than half an acre, septic problems occurred. Because failing septic systems were thought to be polluting the Reservoir's tributaries, the state agreed in 1996 to pay about two-thirds the cost of sewering the more densely populated sections of West Boylston. Approximately 50-60% of the Town's area was sewered in a project which began in 1996 and was completed in 2005. The availability of sewers in town has promoted development because land that could not accommodate septic systems could not be developed; since sewers have become available, this development limitation has been lost. In October 2005, Town Meeting voted to change the Zoning Map to expand the Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) District to the east of Angell Brook. In 2005, the Planning Board revised the subdivision regulations to reduce impervious areas, increase open space, and to encourage "Low Impact Development" (LID) methods. The Incentive Zoning Bylaw passed in May 2006 allowed density bonuses if some portion of the units in a development are subsidized units, but this bylaw does not require a portion of all housing in town to be subsidized. At the October 2006 Town Meeting, the Town passed a Residential Cluster Development (RCD) Bylaw to provide an alternative residential subdivision design concept for the Town and encourage an increase in the supply of desirable housing in town which coincides with maintaining and creating additional open spaces within the community.

Since 2008, MA DCR has acquired nearly 200 acres of land in West Boylston, mostly near the Wachusett Reservoir, its tributaries, or wetland areas. In total, as of 2025, the DCR owns 3,010 acres of land in town, not including the over 650 acres of land under water; if land under water is included, then this total becomes 3,675.22 acres, which indicates that

DCR owns over 40% of the land in town. If land under water is not included, the DCR owns approximately 34% of the area in town. Land under water is often not included with DCR land area calculations because the land under water is not used to calculate the payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) and is coded differently in town assessor data.



Wachusett Reservoir

Recent Development Projects

Since the 2018 OSRP update, 65 new residential units and at least 12 new commercial units (as the FY17 new commercial units data is not available) have been permitted to be constructed in West Boylston. This includes nine new houses that have been built on Westland Circle. Westland Circle has been extended west to accommodate these nine new houses, each of which are situated on lots that range from about one to more than two acres. This recent residential development is surrounded by MA DCR Wachusett Reservoir Watershed land, private land under Watershed Preservation Restrictions (WPRs), and Woodland Park.

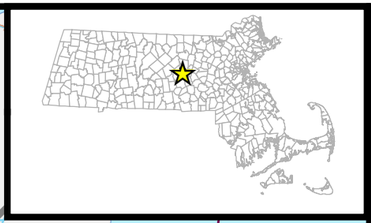
Most development-related activity in West Boylston revolves around the Industrial Zone in the southeastern portion of town. Throughout the years, various businesses have moved in and out of existing buildings in this area. At the end of 2024, a realty group purchased

properties west of the industrial district, along Route 12 near the City of Worcester border; this realty group has proposed to develop this site as a mixed-use development with businesses and multi-family residences. The site is proposed to include 80 housing units, 25% of which will be designated as affordable. Eight spaces at this site are proposed to be available for small businesses or other professional services. [42]

[42] Town of West Boylston, 2024

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 4 ZONING DISTRICTS & OVERLAYS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Overlay Districts

- Flood Plain Overlay District
- Aquifer and Watershed Protection District
- Multi-Story District
- Continuing Care Retirement Community Overlay District
- (1) Medical Marijuana Overlay
- Wireless Communications Services District

Zoning Districts

- Single Residence (SR)
- General Residence (GR)
- MBTA Residence District (MR)
- Business (B)
- Commercial/Limited Industrial (CLI)
- Industrial (IND)
- Conservation

(1) Medical Marijuana Overlay applies to the following Zoning Districts boundaries > Business (B), Commercial/Limited Industrial (CLI) and Industrial (IND).

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantile Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

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Section 4:

Environmental Inventory & Analysis



4. Environmental Inventory and Analysis

4A. Geology, Soils and Topography

The terrain of West Boylston ranges from rolling hills to steep slopes, with some areas of exposed bedrock and three large flat swamps: the headwaters of Wauschacum Brook are along Route 12 in the north end of town, the headwaters of Malden and Gates Brooks are off of Prospect Street, and the headwaters of Muddy Brook are in the industrial area on the southern end of town. Elevations in West Boylston range from 386 feet above sea level at the shore of the Reservoir to 870 feet above sea level at Malden Hill. About 15% of town has slopes at a grade greater than 15%, and these steep slopes are located primarily in the west of town, near Malden Hill, or at the edge of the Reservoir. The vegetative cover in town is primarily hardwood and mixed hardwood/softwood forest. Due to the soil types and hilly nature of West Boylston, erosion potential in town is low-to-moderate on the average-grade slopes and moderate-to-high on the slopes with a grade greater than 15%.

Most areas of West Boylston have slow percolation rates because the land consists of glacial till (hardpan), with up to 100 feet of this till soil covering the bedrock. The remainder of town is covered by fluvial or lacustrine stratified drift (sand/silt/gravel) soil, especially along Malden Brook and the southern areas surrounding the Reservoir. The stratified drift soil in town ranges in depth from five feet to 130 feet. These deposits are very permeable and therefore are susceptible to function as a contamination transport pathway.

The Soils and Geologic Features Map (Map #5) includes the locations of the “Prime Farmland Soils” in town as defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Prime Farmland Soils include land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for economically producing sustained high yields of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. This map also provides information on the dominant drainage class in town; notably and as is shown on the map, most of the Town’s soil is classified as well-drained, placing the majority of the Town’s prime farmland on well-drained soil. Most of the farmland of statewide importance in town is situated on excessively drained soils such as the soils near the Reservoir.

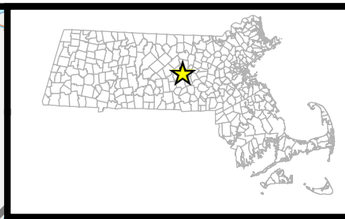
The general classes of soils found in West Boylston are Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor (in the north of town) and Paxton-Woodbridge-Canton (in the south of town). There are over twenty specific soil types in town, with the following five types dominating: Chatfield-Hollis-Rock outcrop, Hinckley sandy loam, Paxton fine sandy loam, Canton fine sandy loam, and Merrimac fine sandy loam. Based on the SCS soil survey, all these soil types are

severely limited for subsurface sanitary disposal. See the Soil and Geologic Features Map (Map #5) for more information on these soil types.

- Chatfield-Hollis-Rock outcrop is a well-drained soil with moderate to rapid permeability and many stones. Bedrock under this soil is generally encountered between ten and forty inches from the surface and may restrict septic system installation.
- Hinckley series consist of excessively drained soils which have been formed by glaciofluvial materials and have great depths.
- Merrimac and Canton series consist of very deep, well-drained soils on glacial outwash plains, eskers, and stream terraces. These soils' permeability is rapid, which makes them poor filters for septic system leach fields. Seepage of effluent through the substratum of these soils may cause groundwater contamination. Merrimac is the predominant soil type along Gates Brook.
- Paxton series consists of very deep, strongly sloped, well-drained soils with many stones. This soil's permeability is slow to very slow. The limitations of this soil's absorption systems are slow permeability and seasonally high groundwater tables.

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 5 SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES



**Many of the locations in this datalayer are based on information provided by the RP, PRP or their LSP. Locations in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.

See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.

* Point locations representing AUL sites in this datalayer have not been field-verified and should be considered approximate. Locations were derived through review and interpretation of paper maps and textual information contained in Mass DEP BWSC site files, which are maintained in the respective MassDEP's Regional Offices.

Please be advised that this datalayer is incomplete. The MassDEP has been unable to locate some AUL sites due to inadequate source material. AUL Sites that are not yet reported are not mapped. Please see MassGIS Data: MassDEP Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) for full dislaimer.

RTN# 2-0013961

0 0.65 1.3 Miles

Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- MassDEP Tier 21E Sites** (3/2024)
- AUL Location* (3/2024)

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Prime Farmland Soils (11/2021)

- All Areas are Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Drainage Class (11/2021)

- Excessively drained
- Somewhat excessively drained
- Well drained
- Moderately well drained
- Poorly drained
- Very poorly drained

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
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Worcester, MA 01608

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

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4B. Landscape Character

The Wachusett Reservoir and its surroundings are West Boylston's most distinctive features. The Wachusett Dam in Clinton is a shared resource among the Town and its neighboring communities, including Boylston, Clinton, and Sterling, which were all flooded to create the Reservoir. The diversity of landform, with rolling hills and forested upland, add beauty, character, and uniqueness to West Boylston. The Town is amply endowed with streams and open space, but few farms remain, since most have been subdivided or sold to the DCR for watershed protection purposes. Many of the streams in town feed into the Reservoir and serve as corridors for wildlife migration; the Quinapoxet River, Malden Brook, and Muddy Brook are a few of West Boylston's most notable waterways.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) identifies land around the Reservoir and its tributaries as core habitat and critical natural landscape. Specifically, core habitat identifies key areas which, if preserved, ensure the persistence of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems across the State. Critical natural landscapes refer to areas that are adjacent to core habitat and are minimally impacted by development.[43]

In terms of particularly scenic areas within West Boylston, the Town has long cherished the Old Stone Church located on the shore of the Reservoir off of Route 12. This church serves as a reminder of West Boylston's past, as it is the only remaining building of the Town's original Town Center, which was flooded to create the Reservoir. Today, the Church is listed on the National Register of Scenic Places and is visited by residents and tourists who admire its scenic vantage point of the Reservoir. Another particularly scenic and visited area in town is the Mass Central Rail Trai (MCRT). The MCRT is a shared-use path that connects Boston to Northampton and runs through West Boylston.



The Old Stone Church in West Boylston

[43] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap

4C. Water Resources

West Boylston is gifted with many water resources which provide many benefits, from supplying drinking water to hosting and supporting unique wildlife habitat. This sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* section describes these features, their context, and other important considerations. Notably, among the water resources discussed in this sub-section are the Stillwater and Quinapoxet Rivers, which meet at the Thomas Basin area of the Wachusett Reservoir and are the main tributaries to the Reservoir; the Reservoir is the most distinct water resource in West Boylston.



The Wachusett Reservoir in West Boylston

Watersheds

As shown on the Watershed Map (Map #6), the majority of West Boylston is within the Nashua River Watershed, except for the southern section of town which is within the Blackstone River Watershed. The Nashua River flows from the Wachusett Reservoir, which is an Outstanding Resource Water and a surface water supply. The Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) and the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative are both impactful watershed-based organizations that facilitate various efforts to protect these major rivers, their buffers, their native wildlife, and all the ecosystem services they provide. These organizations also offer various forms of technical assistance to the communities

within their respective watersheds; to learn more, please visit https://www.nashuariverwatershed.org/ and https://www.blackstonecollaborative.org/.

Surface Water Resources

- The Wachusett Reservoir is eight miles long, is 6.5 square miles in area, and has 37 miles of shoreline. It covers the central region of West Boylston and parts of Boylston, Sterling, and Clinton. It is part of the water supply for Metropolitan Boston and helps supply water for 2.5 million people in 61 cities and towns. Its 2 main tributaries, the Stillwater River and Quinapoxet River, enter the Reservoir at the Thomas Basin in West Boylston. In addition, water is piped to the Reservoir from the Quabbin Reservoir, another part of the Metropolitan Boston Water Supply System, and enters the Quinapoxet River in West Boylston before it reaches the Thomas Basin.
- The Stillwater River flows north to south through the northwest area of West Boylston and enters the Wachusett Reservoir in the north-central region of West Boylston at the Stillwater Basin.
- The Quinapoxet River flows west to east into the Wachusett Reservoir at the Thomas Basin in the northwest corner of West Boylston.
- Waushacum Brook flows south from West Waushacum Pond in Sterling to merge with the Stillwater River, which enters the Wachusett Reservoir through the Stillwater Basin.
- Malden Brook flows north into the Thomas Basin in the western-central area of West Boylston.
- Muddy Brook flows north to south near the town landfill and discharges into the Reservoir's South Bay.
- Gates Brook flows south to north through the central business area and densely developed residential area of West Boylston. It discharges into the Reservoir east of Route 12 and north of Route 140.
- Angell Brook is located in the southeastern part of West Boylston and flows south into Worcester to Poor Farm Brook and then to City Farm Pond in Shrewsbury. It is the only stream in West Boylston which is not tributary to the Wachusett Reservoir.
- West Boylston Brook is located in the center of town and flows northeast to the Reservoir.
- Three Lily Ponds are located in the east central region of West Boylston, north of the Reservoir at the base of French Hill. The ponds are an estimated two acres in area. They are typically isolated and only discharge into the Reservoir under extreme flooding.

- Carroll's Pond is located on Prospect Street, very close to the center of town, and it flows into West Boylston Brook. This one-acre pond was a farm pond and remains the site of much wildlife activity.
- Edward's Pond is located at the base of Malden Hill, in the northwest corner of West Boylston on Malden Street. This pond is less than an acre in size, but there is a small animal path near it that local walkers utilize.

Drinking Water Sources, Flood Hazard Areas, & Wetlands

The Water Resources Map (Map #7) depicts drinking water resources, such as wells, wellhead protection zones, and water supply protection zones, that exist around the surface water sources listed above. As shown on this map, there are four community groundwater wells that supply the West Boylston Water District (WBWD) with potable water: one is at the Oakdale wellfield, one is at the Lee Street wellfield, and two are at the Pleasant Valley wellfield. There is also one transient non-community water supply well serving the 1000 Goodale Street facility in town which is owned by the College of the Holy Cross. Please note that the Watershed Map (Map #6) depicts aquifers. There are three areas with high-yield aquifers in town, and they are situated around the Thomas Basin in Oakdale, around the WBWD land off of Lee Street, and south of Route 140 off of Temple Street and southeast of Pine Hill.

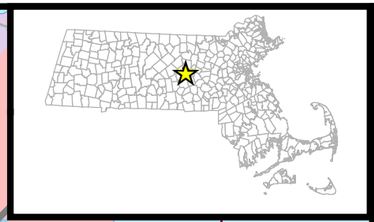
The Water Resources Map (Map #7) depicts the flood hazard areas that are delineated from maps compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); physical versions of these maps are located at the DPW office in West Boylston. Areas in town that flood regularly are limited to locations near the larger streams listed above and around the Wachusett Reservoir.

The Watershed Map (Map #6) and the Water Resources Map (Map #7) both that the extensive and ecologically significant network of freshwater wetlands in West Boylston shaped largely by the presence of the Wachusett Reservoir and its tributary rivers and streams. Wetlands are a defining feature of the town's landscape and play a critical role in drinking water protection, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem function. The predominant wetland types in West Boylston are freshwater emergent wetlands and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. Freshwater forested/shrub wetlands in West Boylston fall within the Palustrine system which includes nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergent, and emergent mosses or lichens, and are characterized by wood vegetation. In West Boylston, the forested/shrub wetlands include a mix of broad-leaved deciduous and needle-leaved evergreen species, and some seasonally flood. Freshwater emergent wetlands in West Boylston also fall within the Palustrine system, but are characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes. These

wetlands are dominated by species that normally remain standing until the beginning of the next growing season and are seasonally flooded. In West Boylston, wetlands are primarily located in the northeast, southeast, and northwest portions of town. Wetlands in town are recognized as DEP-approved Wellhead Protection Areas and are mostly zoned as single residence areas, with some of them being zoned as general residence areas. The bylaws for both of these zoning districts prevent potentially hazardous activities from occurring in these wetland areas.

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 6 WATER RESOURCES MAP 1



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

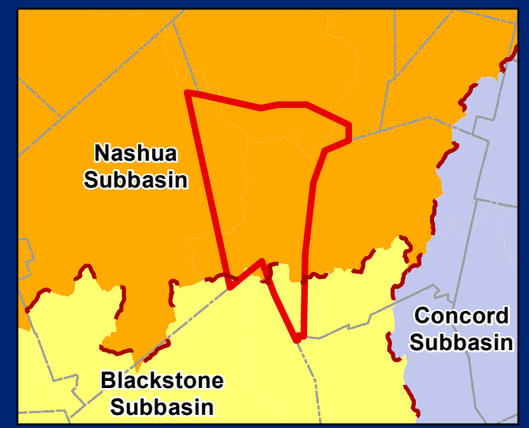
Aquifers

- High Yield (> 300 gpm)
- Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)

- NRCS HUC Subbasin Boundary
- NRCS HUC Watershed Boundary

NRCS HUC Subwatersheds

- Quinsigamond River
- Upper Blackstone River-Singletary Brook
- Quinapoxet River
- Stillwater River
- Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River



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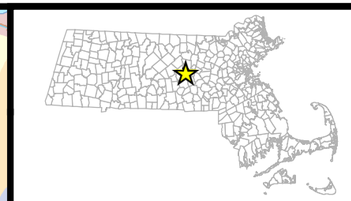
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Source: Data provided by the Town of West Boylston, CMRPC and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 7 WATER RESOURCES MAP 2



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Public Water Supplies (Jan. 2024)

- Community Groundwater Well
- Proposed Well
- Transient Non-Community
- DEP Approved Zone I (Jan. 2024)
- Approved Wellhead Protection Areas- Zone II (Jan. 2024)
- WsPA Primary
- WsPA Secondary
- 100-year Flood Area (FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, DFIRM)
- WsPA Primary
- WsPA Secondary
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone A (May 2023)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone B (May 2023)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone C (May 2023)

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.

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

0 0.65 1.3 Miles

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4D. Vegetation

The vegetation of West Boylston is determined by land use, climate, topography, aspect, soils, and geology. Notably, the Wachusett Country Club is one of the most picturesque and manicured golf courses in the State and provides wonderful panoramic views of the Reservoir. Public lands in West Boylston, such as parks, ball fields, cemeteries, and lawns, are well-maintained, but there remains a desire for more landscaping within commercial and industrial areas of town. Planting vegetation in both commercial and industrial areas in town would not only beautify these areas of town; this vegetation would also contribute various ecosystem services, such as cleaner air, soil, and water, wildlife habitat, and stormwater mitigation. Vegetation also serves as an anchor to topsoil in town and helps control erosion in the face of increased development.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ecoregions data layer from MassGIS, the Town of West Boylston is within the Northeast Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion and just borders the Worcester Plateau Ecoregion to the west. According to *Grow Native Massachusetts*, an environmental conservation organization, the Northeast Coastal Plains are "part of a larger region that extends downward from the inland area" near the Gulf of Maine. These inland hills and plains are slightly higher in elevation than the neighboring coastal areas and are dominated by second-growth forests. Specifically, these post-agricultural forests include stands of oak and pine trees growing on nutrient-poor, acidic soils and also include some areas serving as floodplain forests.[44]

Common & Unique Species

Various sources document vegetation that exists within Central Massachusetts and around the Wachusett Reservoir. The Massachusetts Audubon Society, also known as Mass Audubon, maintains lists of native vegetation to Massachusetts, including wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs. Similarly, iNaturalist provides a running list of species that exist in Central Massachusetts and around the Wachusett Reservoir as is reported by local nature observers. Common vegetative species one may encounter in West Boylston include: Pink Lady's Slipper, Striped Wintergreen, Mountain Laurel, Goldenrod, New England Aster, Joe Pye Weed, American Hazelnut, chokeberries, Winterberry Holly, redbud, and dogwoods.[45]

[44] The MA Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS); Grow Native Massachusetts, 2025
[45] MassAudubon; iNaturalist

The MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) is responsible for the conservation and protection of hundreds of species in the Commonwealth as well as their habitats. The NHESP maintains a list of MA Endangered Species Act (MESA) species as well as a "rare species viewer" which filters this list by municipality. According to the NHESP, there are five rare vascular plants which have been observed in West Boylston.

Exhibit 14: Rare Vascular Plants in West Boylston

Common Name	**MESA Status**	**Most Recent Observation**
Adder's Tongue Fern	Threatened	1932
Dwarf Bulrush	Threatened	2016
Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe	Special Concern	1899
Houghton's Flatsedge	Endangered	2008
Wild Lupine	Special Concern	2022
Source: MassWildlife NHESP Rare Species Viewer		

According to Section 10.60 of Chapter 321 of the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, the MESA status categories are defined as follows:

- **Endangered:** "…any species of plant or animal in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range and species of plants or animals in danger of extirpation as documented by biological research and inventory."
- **Threatened:** "…any species of plant or animal likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range and any species declining or rare as determined by biological research and inventory and likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future."
- **Special Concern:** "…any species of plant or animal which has been documented by biological research and inventory to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or that occurs in such small numbers or with such a restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that it could easily become threatened within Massachusetts."[46]

Several of these rare plants were more common when Town was less developed. Out of the five rare vegetative species which have been observed in West Boylston, several of them may be considered wetland vegetation that support special habitat areas. Adder's Tongue Fern may be found in boggy meadows, acidic fens, or otherwise bordering marshes, wetlands, or moist fields and woodlands. Both Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe and

[46] The MA Endangered Species Act (MESA)

Dwarf Bulrush may be found within or bordering peatlands, swamps, or freshwater ponds; Dwarf Mistletoe in particular usually grows on spruce trees.[47]

Vernal pools are an example of a critical wetland habitat type which is important to consider throughout planning efforts, protection efforts, and development project processes. Vernal pools are seasonal depressional wetlands, or temporary pools of water, that provide distinctive habitat. The NHESP continually certifies vernal pools and updates the MassGIS Certified Vernal Pools data layer accordingly. According to the NHESP, there is one certified vernal pool in West Boylston; it is located directly south of the Central Massachusetts Driving School and directly east of the Wachusett Country Club.[48]

Forest Land

According to 2016 land cover data from MassGIS, the land in West Boylston is 54.6% forested, and 65.2% of this forested land in town is deciduous forest. When including palustrine forested wetlands as forest, the Town's land is nearly 60% forested. Most of the undeveloped land in West Boylston is covered in transitional hardwood and pine forest, except for areas adjacent to the Reservoir, which are heavily covered in Red Pine stands. Most uninterrupted forested land in town surrounds the Reservoir and is owned and managed by MA DCR; MA DCR staff have been thinning these forests and, as a result, an undergrowth of small shrubs is present in these forested lands. Areas around the Reservoir are accessible and are used for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and other non-motorized forms of recreation due to the presence of numerous fire roads.

Traditionally, timber harvesting has played an important role of New England's economy. Many years ago, this was true of West Boylston as well, and timber harvesting still goes on in the Town. Most of this harvesting is done on DCR-owned lands, but some of this harvesting is done on smaller properties with less significance.

Agricultural Land

Most of the last remaining farms in West Boylston, with their open fields, were bought by the MA DCR. From 2000 to 2010, the DCR bought the 102-acre Giobellina Farm on Fairbanks Street, which was formerly under the Chapter 61A agricultural tax exemption program. The DCR has also acquired approximately 85 acres of the Antinarella Farm, including 25 acres of open fields, on Prospect Street. Much of the Smith Farm on Prescott Street, which was also under Chapter 61A, has also been acquired by the DCR, but some haying is still done there. Since 2010, 20 acres of the Mazzolini farm on Lancaster Street

[47] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
[48] The MA Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS); the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)

that had not been in operation for years was sold to the DCR, and only the farmhouse is currently not owned by the DCR.[49] Notably, as of 2025, there are 326 acres of farmland under the MA Chapter 61 Program for Agriculture and 80 acres of farmland under an agricultural preservation restriction (APR) in West Boylston.[50]

Public Shade Trees

Trees and other forms of vegetation provide important resources for West Boylston. Open space planning should help protect the volume and diversity of vegetation in town for a multitude of reasons. Public shade trees are critical environmental resources, as they provide shade to residents during extreme heat events while also lessening energy demand and providing habitat for wildlife. The MA General Law (MGL) Shade Tree Act (Chapter 87, Section 3) defines all trees within the public way as public shade trees. These public shade trees include street trees, cemetery trees, trees in parks, and other publicly owned and managed trees.

Public shade trees are located throughout West Boylston on all town properties. Planting locations for these trees include Goodale Park, Woodland Park, Mt. Vernon Cemetery, the Mixter Fields, the Town Common, and Town Hall. The Department of Public Works (DPW), which acts as Tree Warden in town, monitors street trees and trims dead branches as is necessary. In accordance with MGL, the Town holds public hearings before the removal of any public shade tree. The Town has been active with the Worcester Tree Initiative and the Asian Long-Horned Beetle reforestation program of the DCR. While many parking lot trees are not public shade trees, the Planning Board requires parking lots with more than 30 cars to have at least one shade tree near every 10 parking spaces.

<u>Urban and Community Forestry Program</u>

The MA DCR's Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry has developed an Urban and Community Forestry Program in an effort to provide guidance to communities on how to manage their forests. If a community reaches the following six goals, they may be eligible to receive a Massachusetts Sustainable Community Forestry Award:

1. Professionally trained forest staff;
2. Development of a local tree ordinance and/or evidence of enforcement of MGL Chapter 87 on Public Shade Trees;
3. Establishment of a "tree committee" or similar advocacy group;
4. Tree City USA status;

[49] West Boylston 2009 OSRP
[50] The MA Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP); the MA Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS)

5. Overall good interagency coordination.[51]

Although the Town of West Boylston does not currently have a "tree committee" or similar advocacy group and does not hold Tree City USA status, the Town otherwise meets these goals. In the future, the Town may consider reaching these final two goals in order to be eligible for a MA Sustainable Community Forestry Award.

[51] MA OSRP Planner's Workbook, 2008; MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

4E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Rare Species & Important Habitat Areas

As described in the previous section, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) is responsible for the conservation and protection of hundreds of species and habitats in the Commonwealth. The NHESP maintains a list of Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) species as well as a "rare species viewer" which filters this list by municipality. According to the NHESP, there are five rare animal species which have been observed in West Boylston. Notably, since the 2018 OSRP update was completed, both the Eastern Hog-Nosed Snake and the Eastern Meadowlark have been newly listed as rare, and these species have both historically been observed in West Boylston. To review the definitions of each MESA status category according to Section 10.60 of Chapter 321 of the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, please refer to the previous section (the *Vegetation* sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory & Analysis* section of this plan).

Exhibit 15: Rare Animal Species in West Boylston

Common Name	**MESA Status**	**Most Recent Observation**
Bald Eagle (Bird)	Threatened	2014
Eastern Hog-Nosed Snake (Reptile)	Special Concern	2009
Eastern Meadowlark (Bird)	Special Concern	2022
Eastern Whip-Poor-Will (Bird)	Special Concern	2013
Wood Turtle (Reptile)	Special Concern	2019
Source: MassWildlife NHESP Rare Species Viewer		

The currently known rare vertebrate animal species which have been observed in West Boylston are associated with the Town's rivers, the Wachusett Reservoir, and the wetlands around the rivers and the Reservoir. Wood Turtles spend time in streams and winter in river (or stream) banks. These turtles spend time in upland forests for much of their lives, including while foraging for food; they also spend time in riverside forests.



The Wood Turtle[52]

Although the NHESP *Rare Species Viewer* lists that the last sighting of bald eagles in West Boylston occurred in 2014, members of the 2025 OSIC recall seeing bald eagles more recently. In fact, the Wachusett Reservoir and surrounding undeveloped land continue to provide habitat for wintering Bald Eagles. A pair of eagles has been nesting on an island in the Reservoir, making West Boylston part of their habitat. This discrepancy between local and state data highlights the importance of reporting sightings of rare species to the NHESP; to learn more about how to report these sightings, please visit https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-rare-species-vernal-pool-observations. Notably, Common Loons also nest in the Wachusett Reservoir, making the whole reservoir part of their habitat as well.

The Orange Sallow Moth (Rhodoecia aurantiago) is listed as a statewide species of Special Concern and has been observed recently in Clinton, Boylston, and Shrewsbury. Although it is not indicated to be present in West Boylston according to the NHESP Rare Species Viewer as of June 2025, the 2018 West Boylston OSRP noted that the Orange Sallow Moth has been known to exist just over the town line in Sterling and that its habitat has spread into the open oak forest in West Boylston. The Orange Sallow Moth inhabits dry and open oak woodland on rocky uplands (such as ridges, hilltops, and steep slopes) as well as the edges of old fields, power line cuts, and other openings within such habitat. In 2023, the Orange Sallow Moth was spotted at the Muddy Brook Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Hardwick, and this is the most recent observation of this species in Massachusetts. This species being observed recently in the state demonstrates the effectiveness of MassWildlife's habitat restoration work and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) generally.[53]

[52] Cool Green Science Blog, 2023
[53] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)

As previously mentioned in the *Vegetation* sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory & Analysis* section of this plan, West Boylston has one NHESP certified vernal pool; this vernal pool is located south of the Central Massachusetts Driving School and east of the Wachusett Country Club. The Town of West Boylston also has many potential vernal pools which are identifiable from aerial photographs but need on-the-ground verification. Swamps in town also provide habitat for vernal pool species. The certification of these potential vernal pools would provide additional protection to these wetlands and the species that use them. There are several clusters of potential vernal pools in town which provide extra habitat value for the species that use them, as each pool is somewhat different and provides alternate habitats in different years and seasons. Any lands with clusters of potential vernal pools which are already protected are good sites for biodiversity and are good cores to build larger conservation properties off of.

Large, linked areas of conservation land provide the best opportunities to maintain populations of rare and endangered species, as these areas may serve as corridors for wildlife migration. Specifically, wildlife corridors are generally considered to be these large, uninterrupted and protected wildlands where native species may naturally migrate without being disturbed. The Wachusett Reservoir and its surrounding protected lands are an exemplary wildlife corridor which supports both terrestrial and aquatic species. Protecting land in town which connects to public and private protected open space in other municipalities is a way to rejuvenate important large wildlife corridors which protect biodiversity in the Region. Even with so much of West Boylston being protected by MA DCR in order to protect watershed land, there are fragments of land in town that, if connected to other biodiverse and/or protected land, would provide better habitat.

Wildlife

Strong points of West Boylston's environment include diverse and varied wildlife habitats. These habitats include upland forested areas, many different types of wetlands, early successional brushy fields, active agricultural fields, and suburban backyards. Hunting is a popular activity that brings revenue to the local community; it helps maintain a healthy wild game population by preventing overpopulation, reducing the spread of zoonotic disease, and reducing crop and property damage, and it also reduces livestock and pet predation. The wildlife species found in West Boylston are common to all of Central Massachusetts. Occasionally, uncommon animals are seen in West Boylston, such as moose, turkey vultures, American Bald Eagles, black bears, and bobcats; these animals' populations are expanding, and they have been regularly sighted in town.[54]

[54] Carolyn Padden, Chair, West Boylston Conservation Commission, 2009

A complete listing of wildlife species present in West Boylston, including mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles and amphibians, is too extensive to be noted in this plan. There are many excellent field guides on the animals of Central Massachusetts which are available for reference. An overabundance of gulls and geese in the region has caused water quality problems in the Reservoir; MA DCR has a program to reduce these species' populations and limit the public's feeding of these birds. The areas in town that remain in their natural condition provide habitat for rare and other special species, including the Common Loon, spotted turtle, dwarf mistletoe, and Adder's Tongue fern.

Private Lands

Most of the wildlife habitat on private land in West Boylston consists of suburban backyards and farmland. Raccoons, whitetail deer, cottontail rabbits, grey squirrels, red foxes, eastern coyotes, and various species of songbirds are found in diverse environments on these lands. The abundant wildlife species on these lands can adapt to changing, human-dominated habitat. This adaptability to humans can present problems at times; crop damage, livestock predation, property damage, and health and safety concerns result from the interaction of people and wildlife. Health and safety concerns relating to wildlife in town include the potential for car accidents involving deer and the transmission of diseases, such as rabies, from raccoons.

Public Lands

The majority of the land owned and managed by the MA DCR in West Boylston is forested. Wildlife species such as whitetail deer, Ruffed Grouse, Grey Foxes, coyotes, turkeys, and fishers benefit from forest habitat management conducted by this state agency. The Wachusett Reservoir is home to an increasing resident Canada Goose population. The Reservoir's large open water expanse coupled with protected shorelines and small islands create good waterfowl habitat. Other waterfowls such as loons, cormorants, dabbling and diving ducks, and gulls are seen in many areas around the Reservoir.

Fisheries

The Town of West Boylston has diverse and abundant aquatic habitats consisting of cold- and warm-water streams and small ponds. These habitats are home to many fish species, both native as well as introduced and stocked. Many angling opportunities are available on DCR lands in town; Angling is prohibited in the area within 100 feet of the shaft where water from Quabbin Reservoir flows into the Quinapoxet River.[55] Fishing from bridges in town is also prohibited.

[55] Brian Bjorklund, Wildlife Specialist, USGS

Warm Water

There are a few small warm water ponds in West Boylston. These ponds are home to fish species such as bass, pickerel, perch, sunfishes, bullhead, minnows, dace, and shiners. Water depth, water chemistry, and aquatic vegetation vary from pond to pond in town; These differences result in differences in the quality of fish species composition in different ponds in town and the number of different fish species in different ponds in town. Some shallow smaller ponds in town are subject to oxygen depletion during winter months and breeding stress in spring/summer which result in some fish mortality. Generally, the Town's ponds have good fish production capability.

Cold Water

There are many small brooks in West Boylston which are home to wild trout, salmon, and native char. Eastern Brook Trout is the prime species in many brooks in town.

Wachusett Reservoir and its Tributaries

This 6.5 square mile Reservoir is an exceptional fish habitat. The Reservoir's 37-mile shoreline is mostly open to fishing. Dates for shoreline fishing on MA DCR property in town are set annually by the DCR depending on ice conditions, and typically run from the first Saturday in April (unless there is ice cover) through November 30th. Shoreline ice fishing on MA DCR property in town is prohibited, and fishing along the rivers in town is permitted year-round. The Reservoir has abundant warm-water and cold-water species of fish. The warm water catch in the Reservoir is dominated by Smallmouth Bass and Yellow Perch, with good numbers of White Perch, Rock Bass, Bluegills, Pumpkinseeds, and bullheads also being harvested from warm water. Analysis of creel census data conducted at the Reservoir reveals that there is a limited harvest period for Lake Trout, Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout from the Reservoir. Landlocked Salmon fishing at the Reservoir is popular during spring and fall.

Thousands of salmon spawn each fall up the Stillwater River. Unlike Atlantic Salmon, which are protected by law, the Stillwater Salmon offer a unique fishing opportunity in Massachusetts.[56] Abundant numbers of prey species such as Rainbow Smelt contribute to the size and condition of trout and salmon in the Reservoir. Many state record fish have been caught at the Wachusett Reservoir.

The MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) stocks trout in the Quinapoxet and Stillwater Rivers, as well as in other brooks such as Gates Brook. Species stocked include Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout, and Brown Trout. MassWildlife has documented salmonid

[56] Brian Bjorklund, Wildlife Specialist, USGS

species in Gates Brook almost up to Pierce Street. There is an old foundation/dam structure that is creating an impediment to further travel of salmonid species up Gates Brook. Opportunities to create passable conditions for these species at this structure's location should be evaluated by the Town.

Pollution in some of the Town's waters such as Gates Brook has caused deformities in some Brook Trout. There are concerns in town that pollution from stormwater runoff and street drainage is adversely affecting fish in town. Additionally, the removal of trees, shrubs, and underbrush along the Town's brooks has caused changes in the water temperature and oxygenation of the brooks and therefore has led to fish population decline. The Town has worked with MassWildlife to selectively restore some of the natural habitats for fish in town.[57]

Natural Heritage BioMap 2

In 2012, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG), through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program, developed "BioMap2". The Natural Heritage BioMap 2 is a suite of online, interactive, and publicly accessible tools which have been created to increase the accessibility of protection efforts for the Commonwealth's diversity of flora and fauna, especially in the context of the changing climate. As shown in the Habitat Map (Map #8), the Natural Heritage BioMap 2 identifies two complementary spatial layers: core habitat and critical natural landscape.

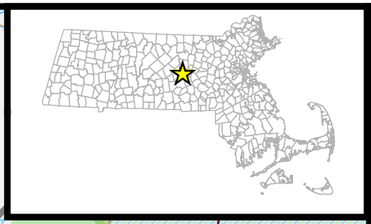
- **Core Habitats** are key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare species, as well as a wide diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. Protection of core habitats will contribute to the conservation of specific elements of biodiversity.
- **Critical Natural Landscapes** are large, natural landscape blocks that are minimally impacted by development. If protected, these areas will provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances in a rapidly changing world. Areas delineated as critical natural landscape also include buffering upland around wetland, coastal, and aquatic core habitats, as these buffer areas help ensure the long-term integrity of these types of core habitats.[58]

[57] Carolyn Padden, Chair, West Boylston Conservation Commission, 2009
[58] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap

The most important areas in West Boylston which protect known biodiversity are the areas shown on Habitat Map (Map #8). Any work intended in these areas needs to include management of the rare species and their habitats. Notably, these areas include the site of the southernmost population of self-sustaining Landlocked Salmon.

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 8 HABITAT FEATURES



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (Mar 2024)
- NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (NOT equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools) (July 2013)
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare (Aug 2021)

NHESP/ TNC BioMap Regional Components

- Regional Rare Species
- Regional Connectivity

NHESP/TNC BioMap Elements

- Core Habitat
- Critical Natural Landscape

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantine Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

4F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

The Town of West Boylston is located on the high ground surrounding the Wachusett Reservoir south of Mount Wachusett. There are many spectacular views of the mountain and the valley below which serve as a principal asset of the region. Before 1890, the site of West Boylston's village center (often referenced as the "Lower Common") housed factories, farms, churches, and homes. However, today this area is the site of a great reservoir held back by the Wachusett Dam in Clinton. Two rivers, the Quinapoxet and the Stillwater, meet at the historic village center of Oakdale in town; from here, these rivers flow into the Thomas Basin and enter the Wachusett Reservoir. The land owned by the DCR remains tightly regulated open space. Shoreline fishing is allowed at the Reservoir, but boating and swimming at the Reservoir are prohibited. Limited use of the land surrounding the Reservoir is permitted but not encouraged.

This section of the 2025 West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update describes the scenic resources and unique environments in town according to the Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) and respondents of the public survey for the Plan. Please view the location of these resources on the Scenic & Unique Features Map (Map #9); **the numbers corresponding with each feature in this section may also be used to identify the location of each feature on the associated map.** Additionally, please reference the appendix to view February 2025 search results from the Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) for West Boylston.



The Old Stone Church in West Boylston

1. Old Stone Church

The Old Stone Church, located along Route 12, and its surroundings is one of the most photographed scenes of the region. The Church has remained a monument to the scores of buildings removed in the 1890s by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts when the Reservoir was built. The Church is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Near the Old Stone Church at the intersection of Beaman, Fletcher, and Sterling Streets is a site locally known as "the Triangle". The Triangle (#1a on the map) offers a similar view of the Reservoir as the Church, has public picnic tables, and regularly hosts food trucks.

2. Wachusett Country Club & Other Vista Locations

The Wachusett Country Club celebrated its 90th birthday in 2018! It opened in 1927 when its 18-hole, public golf course was first designed by the famous golf course designer Donald Ross. The views from its lush green fairways are a major asset to the Town. From its high spot along Prospect Street, residents get truly spectacular, panoramic views looking down on the blue waters of the Reservoir, as well as views of Mount Wachusett.[59]

There are several other high-elevation sites in town with beautiful views. One can see as far east as Marlborough from the top of the hill near Pleasant Street (#2a on the map). At 870 feet in elevation, Malden Hill (#2b on the map) is the highest spot in town and commands views of not only the Reservoir, but also of Mount Wachusett and the Thomas Basin It is worth noting, however, that the peak of Malden Hill is not easily accessible and getting there may require bushwhacking. Similarly, the view of the Old Stone Church as it overlooks the Reservoir from High Plains Cemetery (#2c on the map) is beautiful but has become marred by many powerlines and overgrown trees. North of the Reservoir and behind the MA DCR's property at 180 Beaman Street, there are scenic trails nearby the Town's water tower (#2d on the map). In addition, although it is at a rather low elevation, the trail through DCR land from Afra Drive to Pierce Street (#2e on the map) is considered a scenic environmental and recreational asset, as it passes by wetlands, Muddy Brook, and some cliffs.

3. Mass Central Rail Trail

The Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) is located on the abandoned line of the former Mass Central Railroad, which once ran an east-west route between Boston and Northampton. The Oakdale section of the MCRT opened in 1997 and runs from Thomas Basin to the Holden town line along an easement on land owned by the Town.

[59] Paul Dunn & B.J. Dunn, Donald Ross Golf Courses Everyone Can Play, Taylor Trade Publishing, 2017, pp. 152 – 153

The West Boylston section of the MCRT was built by and is maintained by Wachusett Greenways in partnership with MA DCR and the Town. Wachusett Greenways is an all-volunteer non-profit group which focuses on the MCRT in the towns of Oakham, Rutland, Holden, West Boylston, and Sterling. In Holden, the Trail runs west through the Springdale Mill River Walk. The MCRT also runs over two bridges that were installed in the early 2000s; one of these bridges traverses River Road along DCR owned land in Holden just past the West Boylston town line, and the other traverses the River Walk. Along the Oakdale section of the MCRT one can see ruins of the old Whiting Mill as well as the Quabbin Aqueduct outfall and dam. The Oakdale section is the most popular section of the MCRT. To support the Trail's usage the DCR built a new parking lot for the Trail in cooperation with the Town in 2006. This parking lot was also built to meet an order to the West Boylston Water District requiring the District to comply with EPA rules to keep parking areas at least 400 feet from the Town's Oakdale Well.



The Mass Central Rail Trail[60]

The West Boylston DPW assists with the maintenance of the portion of the MCRT within town. Wachusett Greenways provides trail clearing and maintenance, planned outdoor activities, and direct development of 32 miles of the proposed MCRT through the five towns it focuses on. Wachusett Greenways also continues to work on the MCRT connection from Oakdale at Thomas Street near Route 140 to Sterling and is currently

[60] Mass Central Rail Trail, the Norwottuck Network

constructing one mile of the Trail along the old Pleasant Street. The old Pleasant Street connects from the Beaman Street causeway to the West Boylston/Sterling town line at Prospect Street / Bean Road. A key gap in the MCRT remains from the Oakdale MCRT parking lot, then across Route 140, then parallel with Route 140 where an 800-foot bridge is needed to be built over an active railroad to cross the Stillwater River, and then to the old Pleasant Street; constructing the MCRT along this current key gap will need the full partnership of Wachusett Greenways, the Town of West Boylston, the MA DCR Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP), MassTrails, and MassDOT. Support for this construction effort from CMRPC and other organizations could also prove useful.

4. Goodale Park

Goodale Park is the Town's first and most historic park. In 1911, former Selectman Aaron Goodale IV left 3.5 acres of his land at the corner of Goodale and Crescent Streets to the Town, creating Goodale Park.[61] That same year the "summer house" or "shelter house" off Goodale Street was added to the Park.[62] Back then, the former Goodale Street School was located across Crescent Street from the Park; also at this time, today's Major Edwards Elementary School and West Boylston Middle/High School did not yet exist, so much of the area abutting Goodale Park was natural and undeveloped. Active recreational components of the Park present before 1935 included one baseball field as well as two tennis courts which were sometimes even used for volleyball and basketball.[63]

In 1931, Goodale Park was expanded after the Park's uphill neighbor, Major Victor Edwards, donated 5.5 acres of his abutting land to the Park; this donated land extended the Park to the current location of the Middle/High School. Probably attracted by the high elevation at the top of Goodale Park, which gave spectacular views of the Wachusett Reservoir, Major Edwards built his beautiful home, "Eastover," overlooking the Park at 18 Malden Street in 1911. A co-founder of Morgan Construction Company and a holder of over 100 patents, Edwards gave much to the Town, including service on its Park Commission. In 1931, Major Edwards also donated 3.5 acres of land on Crescent Street (across from Goodale Park), enabling the construction of the Major Victor Edwards High School, which opened in 1936.[64] This building remains part of the Major Edwards Elementary School even after it was expanded in the 1960s.

[61] Hamilton, Helen Maxwell, "the History of West Boylston," 2000, p. 177
[62] Town Annual Reports, Park Commission, 1922, 1923
[63] Town Annual Reports, Park Commission, 1916, 1917, 1928, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935
[64] Hamilton, pp. 147 – 149, 179 – 180; Richard J. Giarusso, "Edwards made major contribution to town"; The Banner, October 8, 1992, p. 7.

A large grove of trees once existed in the upper portion of today's Goodale Park, just below Major Edwards' home. Around 1922, these chestnut trees started dying of chestnut blight, so they were replaced with evergreen trees. This first evergreen grove lasted until the Hurricane of 1938, which blew down many of the grove's trees. The Metropolitan District Commission (now the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority), who owned this upper portion of land, planted red pine trees at this location following the Hurricane. In 1947, the MDC sold this Pine Grove (for a token sum) to the Town.[65]

In 2002, the Parks Commission wanted to remove this Grove that had stood for 80 years to install a new practice field. Many residents, however, campaigned against removing the Pine Grove. Led by the former president of West Boylston's Historical Society, Edgar Whitcomb, approximately 1,000 residents signed a petition opposing the Parks Commission's proposal and successfully stopped it. However, after a severe ice storm in 2008 downed many of the pines, the Parks Commission decided not to replace them and, without a formal public hearing, opted instead to remove the remaining trees. Town Meeting in 2016 approved the creation of a practice field in this area to relieve the overuse problems occurring at other high school fields. This new practice field is also partially located where the Park's swimming pool once stood.



Goodale Park in West Boylston

The swimming pool at Goodale Park opened in 1954 with much celebration. Given to the town by the MDC, it was located at the High School end of the Pine Grove (see the photo above). It was a hub of summer recreational activity, offering swimming lessons for children, time for adults-only swims, and a scenic picnic area nearby in the Pine Grove for

[65] May 10, 2002, former West Boylston Historical Society President, Edgar Whitcomb

families to gather. High repair costs due to lack of maintenance and dwindling attendance led to the pool's closure in 2008; the pool was finally demolished in 2014.[66]

Goodale Park is a unique park in West Boylston, not only because it is the Town's first park but also because of the very important role it has played in the Town's history. During World War I, it was used as a drill field by the Massachusetts State Guard. Over the years, many town events and celebrations have been held at the Park, including the Town's Centennial and Bicentennial celebrations in 1908 and 2008. Fourth of July celebrations, which used to last three days and which draw people from miles away, are held here.[67] During the summer, band concerts and other cultural events continue to be held here.

Although most of Goodale Park is today covered with active recreational facilities used by the High School and sports leagues, the upper portion of the Park where the Pine Grove once was offers spectacular views of the Wachusett Reservoir. The increasing use of chain link fences, retaining walls, and large scoreboards have, however, significantly lessened the Park's natural beauty. Future use of this steep upper portion of the Park should protect and improve the passive recreational opportunities and should leave natural buffers between the Park's many active sports facilities and the abutting residential properties.

Today, Goodale Park is the Town of West Boylston's most significant park and recreational facility. It provides athletic fields and open space for the adjacent West Boylston Middle/High School and Major Edwards Elementary School as well as for community leagues and recreation programs. Intensive amount of use and age has caused the existing fields at the Park to decline. In 2016, using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, the Town hired BETA Inc. to guide the Town through a master planning process for the Park which started with assessing the Park's limited area and compiling desired uses requested from user groups.[68] All uses of the Park were evaluated during this planning process to determine how the Park can best meet the Town's needs and how the amount of facilities included at the Park could be maximized. BETA prepared different options for improvements to Goodale Park. Each option was presented to the Town's Parks Facilities Committee for review and discussion. Based on input from the Committee, BETA prepared a recommended Master Plan for Goodale Park, including a phasing plan, that was accepted by the Parks Commission.

Cost estimates for the Goodale Park Master Plan were calculated after geotechnical information was collected which evaluated earth movement costs associated with

[66] Town Annual Reports, Parks Commission 2008-2009, 2013-2014
[67] Frank A. Brown and Beverly K. Goodale for the West Boylston Historical Society, "Images of America: West Boylston Arcadia Publishing, 2005, p. 81
[68] West Boylston, Goodale Park Master Plan, 2016

implementing the Plan. The facilities layout in the Plan was not adjusted to optimize earth movement costs, and the cost of implementing the Plan was estimated to be more than $20 million.

Exhibit 16: Goodale Park Master Plan (2016) Preliminary Cost Estimates

Timing	**Facilities**	**Cost (millions)**
Phase 1 (3 Years)	Synthetic Track & Field Stadium	$11.1
Phase 2 (6 Years)	Little League Fields & Concession/Rest Rooms & Multi-Use Field	$3.9
Phase 3 (8 Years)	High School Baseball Field	$3.1
Phase 4 (11 Years)	Pool & Exercise Trail Stations	$5.7
	Total	**$23.8**
Source: Goodale Park Master Plan, 2016		

As of 2025, it is assumed that this cost estimation needs to be updated and would likely be much higher. Since the development of the Goodale Park Master Plan, the Town has not implemented any of its recommended improvements due to fiscal constraints. Moving forward, the Parks Commission may still implement aspects of the Master Plan to respond to the immediate needs of the community while taking into consideration the fiscal constraints being placed on townspeople. The proposed improvements included in the Master Plan would need to be presented before multiple Town Meetings for support from the voters before anything could be implemented. However, it is worth noting that the West Boylston School Department is currently evaluating the feasibility of constructing a new Middle/High School and has submitted a statement of interest for this project to the Massachusetts School Buildings Association (MSBA). If the Town of West Boylston were to build a new Middle/High School, this project would likely include new athletic facilities and would therefore address Goodale Park's improvement needs.



EXERCISE TRAIL
- 5 Exercise Stations

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
- Rain Gardens (typ.)
- Pervious Pavements
- Stormwater Collection

TRACK & FIELD
- New 8 Lane Track with High, Long, Triple Jumps & Pole Vault
- Synthetic Field can be striped to any sport played on it
- Grandstands - approximately 750 people with possible Restrooms, Concessions, & Storage below
- Natural berm for seating
- Handicapped Access from Parking to Upper Levels
- Scoreboard, Flagpoles at Overlook

SUMMER HOUSE
- New Driveway
- Added Parking Along Drive
- Turnaround
- Rehabilitated Walls

BUFFERING
- New & Existing Plantings
- Approximate 25'-60' Wide Buffer

POOL TERRACE
- New 3600 SF Pool (matches previous Goodale Pool size)
- Splash Pads (Toddler & Family)
- Beach Volleyball
- Poolhouse with Showers, Changing, Restrooms, Concessions, 1st Aid, etc.

EXISTING COURTS
- New Lighting (LED Directional)

LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS
- 2 Renovated Fields
- Central Concession Stand
- Dugouts
- Bleachers
- Storage Structure
- Scoreboards

MULTI-USE FIELD
- Centrally Located Open Space
- Soccer, Practice, etc.
- Civic Space can be used along with Stage

STAGE
- Roofed Stage with back access from pool terrace
- Built into Slope

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL
- Completely Renovated Field
- Practice Mounds
- Bleachers
- Enclosed Dugouts
- Scoreboard
- Batting Cage

Scale: 1" = 50'

MASTER PLAN

March 16, 2015

BETA Group, Inc.
Engineers • Planners • Landscape Architects
Lincoln, RI - Norwood, MA - Hartford, CT

5. Town Common

The West Boylston Town Common is well-maintained and is planted with a variety of flowers and shrubs. It is surrounded by many old homes, two churches, the Beaman Memorial Library, two fraternal buildings, and a cemetery. The three main sections of the Town Common provide enjoyable settings for many community activities to occur. A gazebo on the Commons hosts a variety of summer concerts and picnicking. Other activities on the Commons include winter ice skating, church festivals, scouting events, and yard and craft sales. Additionally, the Town Common also hosts the Town' electronic sign which displays relevant notices. Many of the older historical buildings around the Commons remain, and a selection of them were moved up from the valley before the Wachusett Reservoir was created.

North of the Town Common is the Bigelow Tavern Historic District, where the old Bigelow Tavern serves as the headquarters for the West Boylston Historical Society. In 1992, the Bigelow Tavern Historic District, which includes properties at 60, 64, and 65 Worcester Street, was established. The properties in this district include the Bigelow Tavern, the distillery across the street, and the Seth White General Store. This general store once served as a place where town meetings were held. Today, the Bigelow Tavern Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2006, the West Boylston Historical Commission was able to procure the historic circa 1780 Jacob Winn Barn from MA DCR when the DCR was planning on demolishing the building. After the Historical Commission purchased it, the Barn was then moved to the site of the West Boylston Historical Society at 65 Worcester Street from its original site at 77 Lancaster Street.



Bigelow Tavern in West Boylston[69]

[69] Image from Wikipedia

6. Village of Oakdale & Other Historic Locations

Some people believe that the Village of Oakdale is the best-preserved part of town and demonstrates what the Town looked like before the Reservoir flooded the town's center in 1905. It has several homes that remain virtually unchanged from the time it was a busy mill town, over 100 years ago. These homes are now part of the Oakdale Historic District, which was established by the West Boylston Historical Commission in 1996. The District now includes properties in Oakdale along North Main Street, May Street, Green Street, High Street, and Waushacum Street.

The Oakdale area of town looks essentially as it did during the last century. The Town's oldest surviving church building is the Oakdale Methodist Church which was built in 1858. Two of the Town's remaining schoolhouses from the 19th century are located in Oakdale. Today, Oakdale remains West Boylston's only surviving mill village; however, the southern section of the village, including the site of the mill and its related housing, no longer exists due to their sites being under the Wachusett Reservoir.

Notably, two other historic schoolhouses existed in West Boylston outside of the Oakdale area, and one remains standing today at the intersection of Pierce and Maple Streets. The fourth schoolhouse previously stood where the existing municipal offices are located. Other properties included on the National Registry of Historic Places in West Boylston include: the Quinapoxet River Bridge (listed in 1990, #6a on the map), the Old Stone Church (listed in 1973, #1 on the map), Mount Vernon Cemetery and Holbrook Chapel on the east Town Common (listed in 2008, #16b on the map), the Bigelow Tavern Historic District (listed in 1992, #6c on the map), and the Beaman Memorial Library (listed in 2016, #6d on the map).

7. Lily Ponds

On DCR land east of where Lancaster Street joins Route 12 is one of West Boylston's best kept secrets: three beautiful lily ponds. Hidden from public view, these ponds once served as the center of recreation activity in town. In 1876, West Boylston celebrated the nation's centennial at the Lily Ponds. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Town's bathing beach was located at these ponds. As late as 1937, the Park Commission's Annual Report referenced the close relationship between these ponds and the Commission, stating: "The maintenance of Lily Pond bathing beach, being a recreational activity, was supervised by the Park Commission. An attendant, or lifeguard, was appointed for duty during certain hours daily from the middle of June until Labor Day. A new float was built and the beach improved through the addition of sand…".[70] It is worth noting that today, the Lily Ponds are almost completely owned and managed by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), with one private landowner owning the northern portion of the Lily Pond closest to Route 110. As such, the Parks Commission does not currently have any authority over these lily ponds. Although people do not often travel to the Lily Ponds today, they are an important scenic and historic resource and may be accessed through DCR land. Overall, DCR lands and waters are undoubtedly some of West Boylston's most scenic resources, but there are other areas that deserve recognition as scenic as well.

8. Scenic Roads

Although the Town of West Boylston does not have any official locally designated scenic roads, the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) acknowledges a few roads in town that may be considered especially scenic. In addition to "the Triangle" near the Old Stone Church (#1a on the map), River Road in the northwest corner of town (#8a on the map) may be considered scenic; This road runs parallel to the Oakdale portion of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT), and the majority of the length of the road is closed off and is used as a trail. Also, a notable scenic road in town is Thomas Street, where the MCRT parking lot is located (#8b on the map); This road is especially scenic during peak foliage seasons. Finally, Fairbanks Street in the northeast corner of Town (#8c on the map) offers scenic views of protected farmland.

[70] Town of West Boylston, Annual Town Report, Years 1922, 1923, 1930; Report of the Park Commission

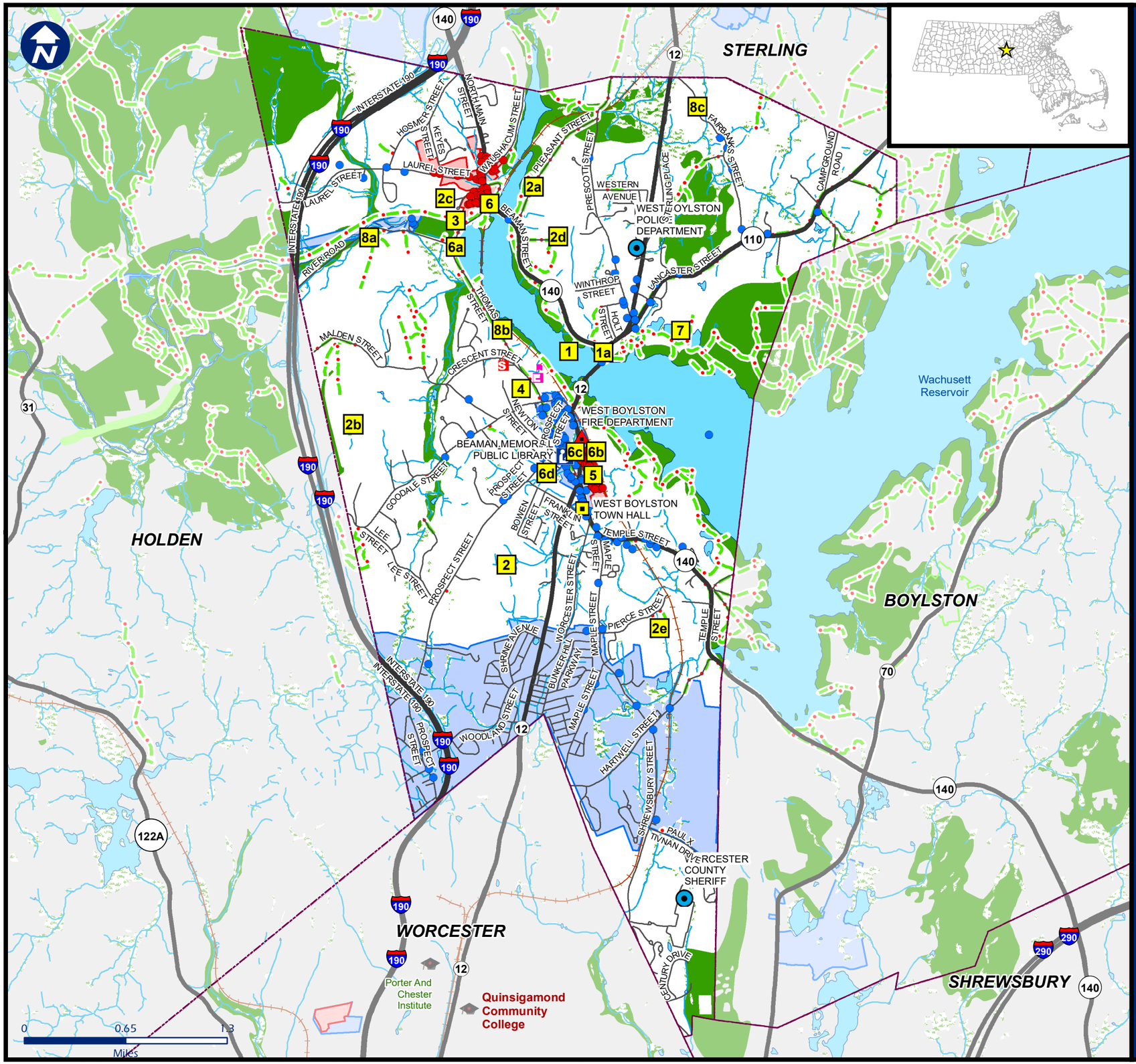
Unique Environments & Natural Heritage BioMap

In the context of *Scenic Resources and Unique Environments*, it is worth mentioning the important natural communities in West Boylston that have been documented by the state. First and foremost, almost the entire Town of West Boylston is considered an *Outstanding Water Resource* since the Wachusett Reservoir is a public water supply. Specifically, all but the two southern corners of town are identified as *Outstanding Water Resources* by MassGIS. Similarly, the entirety of the Wachusett Reservoir and its various tributaries are highlighted on MassGIS and BioMap as both core habitats and critical natural landscapes. In fact, 20% of the Town is considered core habitat and nearly 30% of the Town is considered critical natural landscape. According to BioMap, only 10% of the core habitat in town is protected and only 17% of the critical natural landscape in town is protected. However, this is likely because most of this habitat is within the Reservoir itself and therefore is not protectable. The core habitat and critical natural landscape land surrounding the Reservoir is not within the Town's jurisdiction to protect, as it is owned by MA DCR. Nonetheless, increased protection in town of both core habitat and the buffering critical natural landscape will be crucial, as it will directly correlate with the protection of rare species, their habitats, and the corridors they use to safely migrate.[71]

[71] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap; Town Reports

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 9 SCENIC RESOURCES & UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Trails
- Scenic Roads
- NHESP/TNC BioMap - Core Habitat
- Town Hall (07/2017)
- College or University (3/2024)
- Public Library (8/2017)
- Police (5/2022)
- Fire Dept. (9/2022)

Schools (PK-12)(10/2023)

- Public Elementary
- Public Secondary

MHC Historic Inventory (1/2024)

- Nat'l Register of Historic Places
- Inventoried Property
- Nat'l Registerof Historic Places
- Preservation Restriction
- Local Historic District
- Inventoried Area

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantine Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

Date: 2/25/2025 Document Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\Subprojects\m321_osrp\osrp321_05_UniqueFeatures_11x17.mxd

4G. Environmental Challenges

Fiscal Constraints

By far the greatest challenge to protecting and enhancing open space and recreation is the perception that it is too expensive or that someone else is doing it. This is particularly the case in West Boylston due to the fact that MA DCR owns 40% of the Town. State and federal governments have long recognized the need to preserve certain open spaces to provide significant public good. However, decisions regarding open space preservation are increasingly being made at the local level. Local government officials and land trusts are developing fiscal capacities and experience in land management and stewardship which can supplement the services provided by state and federal governments.[72] Local governments operate within an increasingly tight fiscal environment and are heavily dependent the property taxes for operating revenue; therefore, the fiscal and economic implications of open space preservation decisions are of paramount consideration.

Open space supports natural ecosystems that provide direct benefits to society, though it is difficult to estimate the monetary value of such benefits. Population growth and real estate development do not necessarily provide net fiscal benefits to local governments, as providing and maintaining infrastructure and other services to accommodate new residential development usually cost more than the development generates in property taxes and other revenues.[73] Fiscal impact analyses have been conducted that compare the net effects on municipal budgets from open space and other land uses in different communities. The Northeastern Office of the American Farmland Trust studied six rural towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York and found that, on average, residential development required $1.13 in municipal services for every $1 of revenue received in property taxes in these communities.[74] Farm, forest and open space land, in contrast, required only $0.29 in services per dollar of revenue on average across these six rural towns (see Exhibit #17). Similar cost-benefit studies which compare the fiscal impacts of different types of land use in different communities across the region have been conducted by the Commonwealth Research Group and have reached similar conclusions.

[72] Greater Yellowstone Coalition. 1993. The fiscal and economic impacts of local conservation and community development measures: a review of the literature, and Fausold, C. J. and R. J. Lilleholm. 1996. The economic value of open space. Working Paper from the Lincoln Land Trust, Land Lines Vol. 8, No. 5.
[73] Ladd, H. 1992. Effects of Population Growth on Local Spending and Taxes. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy working paper, Cambridge, MA. 53 pages.
[74] Freedgood, J., and R.C. Wagner. 1992. Cost of Community Services Studies: Snapshots of Net Fiscal Impacts of Different Land Uses in Towns. Northeastern Office, American Farmland Trust.

Exhibit 17: Fiscal Cost Associated with Different Land Uses

Land Use Type	Revenue Incoming (for this much tax paid)	Cost to Town (uses this much in town services)
Residential	$1.00	$1.13
Commercial	$1.00	$0.43
Open Space	$1.00	$0.29
Source: Northeastern Office of the American Farmland Trust		

Although the OSIC does not have the resources to analyze data on the fiscal impacts of different land uses in West Boylston at this time, general findings from the studies described above show that:

- Residential development typically incurs a net fiscal cost to communities,
- Commercial development typically generates a net fiscal surplus, but attracts more residential development, and
- Open space, forests, and farmlands typically generate a net fiscal surplus to communities; they are therefore fiscally better for communities than residential development and are equal to or better for communities than non-residential development.

Many other studies have confirmed that significant increases in land value are associated with proximity to open space lands.[75] This increase in property value is not included in the above cost computations. It should also be noted here that although MA DCR does not pay taxes, they do pay the Town through Payment In-lieu-of Taxes (PILOT). In 2024, the Town of West Boylston received $683,582 through PILOT from DCR; for more information about the PILOT, please visit: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/watershed-payments-in-lieu-of-taxes-pilot.[76]

[75] Lacy, J. 1990. An Examination of Market Appreciation for Clustered Housing with Permanent Open Space. Center for Rural Massachusetts, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA. 14 pages.
[76] MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP)

Infrastructure

Railways

The CSX/PANAM Worcester Main Line passes through West Boylston vertically and traverses approximately along Route 140.[77] The Town has requested but has been denied access to data regarding what chemicals and/or nuclear materials are being transported on this railroad. Since the Railroad travels over the Wachusett Reservoir at Thomas Basin, there is some concern regarding the potential for spills from railcars and subsequent contamination of the Reservoir. The Railroad responded to the Town that the release of information relating to what chemicals and/or nuclear materials it carries is a security risk.

Sewer

Residents of West Boylston use private septic systems or public sewers, with most housing units using public sewers.[78] A 2001 West Boylston special Town Meeting voted to authorize the construction of the West Boylston Sewer System, which covers approximately 85% of all residential properties in town. This sewer project was implemented to reduce the pollution of small backyard streams from failing septic systems. When residents voted for the sewer project, they were told that connections would not be mandatory if their septic system met Title 5 regulations. As a result of a low hookup rate, however, the Sewer Commissioners in town encouraged the Board of Health to require connections for all lots within the sewer service area so that there would be adequate revenue to operate the sewer system.[79]

Sewer service access pipes (stubs) were provided without landowners being consulted, so the assumptions that were made relative to the development potential of lots were not always correct. Landowners who had intended to keep existing open land as unsewered and undeveloped have been faced with a situation that was forced upon them and had no opportunity for input into decisions regarding sewer service stubs. Lots that now have sewer service stubs have increased in value and are therefore taxed more; the owners of these lots, some of whom had intended to simply hold onto open lots, have been forced to sell these lots to developers due to these higher taxes. There should be an option which landowners can pursue to keep these lots reasonably valued; this option could be the Town providing tax abatements to landowners if a commitment, such as through a deed restriction, is documented to keep lots as open space.

[77] The MA Office of Geographic Information Systems; Railroads by Type of Service & Active Service
[78] CMRPC Bridge to Resiliency, 2023, Page 25
[79] Elise Wellington, Secretary, 2009 West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update

Sewer: New Development & Open Space Implications

Small "grandfathered" lots may now be developed in sewered areas of town. This infill development may lead to environmental problems. One type of problem this development can cause is an increase in impervious area which in turn causes increased runoff and an increased potential of flooding and pollution; as an example, flooding complaints increased in the Bunker Hill Parkway / Trenton Lane in town area following construction on "grandfathered" lots. When old plans for this area were found during the relocation of the town offices in 2014, the sites where a new home was built and rear yards had been filled in were found to be marked as 'drainage areas' to have the function of holding runoff. Notably, in Fiscal Year 2024 the Town of West Boylston received grant funding from the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to increase flood resiliency within the Wachusett Reservoir watershed. This $105,000 in grant funding will be used to inventory culverts and areas susceptible to flooding, erosion, and poor water quality in town and then develop a nature-based solutions implementation plan which considers public feedback, costs, and overall efficacy.[80] Another environmental problem often caused by new development in sewered areas of town is the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides degrading water quality. Overall, the high density of development and its related heavy traffic in the sewered southerly section of town reduces the availability of open space in town and increases the potential for pollution and contamination of both land and water in town.[81] As mentioned in the *Growth and Development Patters* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this plan, one residential subdivision that has seen construction since the 2018 OSRP update process is Westland Circle; this subdivision has nine new units which have been constructed since 2018.

Other Infrastructure

In terms of other major infrastructure updates, it is worth noting that the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA), the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the MA Department of Fish and Game (DFG) completed the removal of the Quinapoxet River Dam in 2025. As mentioned in the *Community Vision* section of this plan, the removal of this dam will provide a myriad of long-term resiliency benefits in town, including the restoration of vital migratory patterns for native fish species.

[80] The Town of West Boylston; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program
[81] Carolyn Padden, Chair, West Boylston Conservation Commission, 2009

Water District

Providing safe, affordable, and reliable potable water in town is a serious challenge. The West Boylston Water District has talked with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) about the possibility of receiving water from the Wachusett Reservoir in the future, but this currently appears to be cost-prohibitive. In addition, since most of this water from the Reservoir would eventually be discharged into the Town's sewers, much of this water would be transferred out of the Nashua Watershed to the sewage treatment plant in Millbury; this transfer would probably need state approval under the Interbasin Transfer Act. There was concern that withdrawal up to the old safe yield from the existing wells in town would result in a water supply deficit of 0.10 million gallons per day (mgd) under a maximum day demand (MDD) in 2020; as of June 2025, the West Boylston Water District reported that it is not having any issues with the safe yields of its wells. The Interbasin Transfer Act and its repercussions were brought to the Town's attention early in the sewer system planning process and again when the mandatory sewer connection requirement from the Board of Health was made. Sewer use in town in 2007 transported an average of 481,000 gallons of water per day from the ground in West Boylston to the sewage treatment plant in Millbury; The reduced volume of recharge to the Town's wells which this transfer has caused may be a significant concern. This transfer was estimated to increase to 587,000 gallons per day in 2020.[82]

As previously mentioned in the *Growth and Development Patterns* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this plan, the West Boylston Water District wells have experienced elevated levels of iron, manganese, and bacteria at times. To eliminate bacteria, the District treats its water with chlorine per MassDEP's standards. The taste of the water is now an issue for some residents. For more information about the District's water quality, please refer to the District's website: https://www.westboylstonwater.org/water-quality/.

Impervious Surfaces, Storm Water, and Water Quality

Impervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces are materials, such as pavement or roofing, which do not allow the passage of water. Considering impervious surfaces is crucial to the protection of natural resources, as a higher percentage of impervious surfaces in town may lead to increased pollution and flooding in town. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "as impervious surfaces increase, stormwater runoff increases in quantity, speed, temperature, and pollutant load." This stormwater runoff eventually reaches surface water

[82] Tata & Howard, Inc., "Open Space Plan – Water Supply, T&H No. 1360," December 6, 2001

or soil and then disperses into groundwater. Thus, balancing developmental needs for impervious surfaces with open space and resiliency needs in town is essential to the protection of human-health and the environment; the Town should consider permeable alternatives to impervious surfaces as part of new development projects when they are feasible and cost-effective.

Erosion, Sedimentation, and Chronic Flooding

There are only a few areas in West Boylston that are impacted by erosion: these areas include areas adjacent to Gates Brook and parallel to Worcester Street in the southern part of town, areas at the flatlands along Route 12 just south of the Sterling Town Line, and areas along DCR trails. However, as flooding increases in frequency and intensity due to climate change, erosion may increase in these areas and spread to other parts of town. Overall, flooding leads to erosion which in turn leads to sedimentation which increases the threats of surface- and ground-water pollution.

MA DCR has been proactive in acquiring land in particularly sensitive areas of town and thus has increased the amount of open space in town. However, because these lands are in particularly sensitive watershed protection areas, the DCR has not allowed some desirable recreational uses (swimming, boating, off-road biking, and overnight camping) on its land. Although active recreational use is not permitted on most of the DCR-owned land in town, there has been a problem of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) using DCR-owned land near Lee Street. By carving trails through this protected land, ATV users have ridden down the stream bed, causing erosion and harming fish. This area of DCR land includes sections of Malden Brook, which flows into the Reservoir. ATVs have also been a problem on privately-owned open space, including Stone's Throw Farm (formerly Malden Brook Farm). To address the situations described above, the 2025 West Boylston OSRP update's Ten - Year Action Plan includes goals, objectives, and actions that support efforts of non-municipal landowners to protect their land while communicating with the Town to ensure fair access and utilization.

According to the 2018 Town of West Boylston Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) update, flooding is the most prevalent and concerning natural hazard in town identified by local officials. Flooding is generally caused by severe rainstorms, thunderstorms, nor'easters, and hurricanes. There are several types of flooding, including flooding from stormwater inundation (worsened by poor drainage infrastructure), riverine flooding, and storm surges which can lead to dam failure. As previously suggested, flood-prone areas in West Boylston are closely associated with the courses of Gates Brook and Scarletts Brook. Specifically, there are over 200 parcels in West Boylston that are within the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) designated 100-year flood zones, with roughly

one-third of them containing structures. FEMA's 100-year flood zones refer to areas that have a 1% annual chance of flooding. In addition to FEMA-identified flood zones, the 2018 West Boylston HMP update contains a list of isolated locations that experience minor flooding due to poor drainage infrastructure or problem culverts; please reference pages 11 through 12 of the HMP update to view this list (https://cmrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/West-Boylston-MA-Final.pdf).

Water Quality

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) monitors the contamination of water bodies throughout Massachusetts. The purpose of this monitoring is to develop a "pollution budget" that can be used to help restore the health of impaired water bodies in the Commonwealth. Monitoring identifies the source(s) of excess nutrients from point source (direct) and non-point source (indirect) discharges into water bodies, determines the maximum amount of nutrients that can be received by each water body, and develops a strategy to reduce these nutrient discharges and stop degradation of water quality. Please refer to the exhibit below (Exhibit #18) for the list of MassDEP-identified impaired water bodies and waterways in West Boylston:

Exhibit 18: Impaired Water Bodies and Waterways in West Boylston

Name	**Size (acre/length in mi)**	**Stressor**
Poor Farm Brook	3.60	Dewatering, aquatic plants, E. Coli, temperature
Gates Brook	3.40	Chloride, E. Coli, fecal coliform
Malden Brook	1.90	Temperature
Muddy Brook	0.80	Benthic macroinvertebrates
Quinapoxet River	7.90	Dewatering, temperature
Scarletts Brook	0.50	Chloride
Washacum Brook	1.80	Dissolved oxygen
Source: MassDEP List of Impaired Water Bodies [83]		

In addition to these MassDEP identified impaired water bodies and waterways, the West Boylston OSIC identified the Stillwater River as an impaired waterway that should be considered for future remediation efforts in town during the 2025 OSRP update process.

Additionally, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) samples waterways around the Wachusett Reservoir. The following table (Exhibit #19) exhibits the MA DCR DWSP's Wachusett Reservoir Sampling

[83] The MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)

Locations. It is worth noting that the DWSP also samples Wachusett Reservoir tributaries and groundwater wells. Twenty primary (downstream) and secondary (upstream) tributary sampling locations were sampled in 2023 in order to collect information regarding flow, nutrients, turbidity, and bacteria. As described in the 2023 Water Quality Report for the Wachusett Reservoir, "groundwater resources are important to the management of Wachusett Reservoir and tributaries due to base flow contributions to the tributaries and direct inflow to the reservoir."

Exhibit 19: MA DCR DWSP Wachusett Reservoir Sampling Locations

Station: Description	**Approx. Depth (in meters)**	**Frequency: Plankton/profile**	**Frequency: Nutrients**
Cosgrove Intake: Adjacent to Cosgrove Intake, samples collected from the building catwalk	18	Weekly	N/A
Basin North: Mid reservoir near Cunningham Ledge	30	Weekly	Quarterly
Basin South: Mid reservoir near Scar Hill Bluffs	27	Occasionally	Quarterly
Thomas Basin: Thomas Basin at approximate intersection of Quabbin interflow/Quinapoxet River and Stillwater River	10	Occasionally	Quarterly
Source: Source: 2023 Wachusett Reservoir Water Quality Report, DCR, DWSP, MWRA			

Overall, results of the Wachusett Reservoir monitoring programs have followed expected trends. However, some notable deviations have been recorded, including decreased Secchi depth (water clarity) and increased concentrations of silica and phosphorous. These deviations are likely related to above average watershed runoff and storm events. For more information about the results of the 2023 Wachusett Reservoir sampling programs, please refer to the 2023 Wachusett Reservoir Water Quality Report: https://www.mass.gov/doc/2023-wachusett-water-quality-report/download.

Finally, a growing concern related to water quality among municipalities throughout Central Massachusetts and beyond is the threat of PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. PFAS are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been used in consumer goods since the 1940s and are typically associated with non-stick coatings, waterproofing, and stain-proofing. While there are thousands of different PFAS, the main commonality between them and concern relating to them is that they take a long time to break down and can become built-up in humans and the environment. Today, PFAS can be

found in water, including drinking water, as well as soil, food, and even the air. While research is ongoing to understand the health outcomes of prolonged exposure to PFAS, research so far suggests that the outcomes are adverse and may potentially lead to reproductive issues, developmental issues, and weakened immune systems among other impacts. In April 2024, the EPA released PFAS drinking water standards which, based on current and historic sampling patterns, the MA Water Resource Authority (MWRA) claims to already meet. The testing of the six PFAS compounds included in the EPA standards are already included in the Massachusetts standards.

Dog Feces

The Parks Commission and Wachusett Greenways have documented problems with users leaving their dogs' feces on public lands.

Wachusett Greenways designated the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) as a carry in-carry out facility at the trail in town's dedication in 1997 in collaboration with MA DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) and the Town of West Boylston. Dogs are required to be leashed along the Trail in town and pet waste is required to be removed from the Trail in town. Dogs are also not allowed off the Rail Trail on DCR watershed land. Wachusett Greenways regularly patrols the MCRT from the parking lot in Oakdale to the I-190 overpass and removes dog feces. Wachusett Greenways also provides and maintains two portable restrooms at the parking lot at Thomas Street. Volunteers remove bags of dog feces from the tanks of these portable restrooms because they clog the cleaning equipment used to service them. Pet waste is a health hazard with a negative impact on this shared-use path which is accessible to all. Even with all of the measures mentioned above in place, the problem of pet waste along the MCRT remains.

The dog feces problem is even worse at fenced athletic areas in town. The installation of fencing around Goodale Park athletic fields in 2016 has led to the fields' use by dog owners letting their pets go off-leash. A problem is that these owners are not picking up their animals' feces and children are unexpectedly playing / landing in it. Dogs must be leashed in town, and owners are required by town bylaw to pick up their dogs' feces, but some dog walkers do not abide by these rules.[84] More consistent enforcement of these regulations is needed by town police and zoning enforcement officers.

Pollutant-Impacted Areas: Hazardous Waste, Brownfields, and Landfills

The Shell Tank Farm site on Shrewsbury Street, which was primarily used during World War II to store gasoline, is currently in the remediation process due to thousands of gallons of

[84] Mike Peckar, West Boylston Implementation Committee, 2025

petroleum being released into the ground at this site in the late 1970's. A groundwater treatment system has been put in place at this site and below ground storage tanks at this site have been removed. The remediation of this site is nearing completion, with the remaining items at the site being monitored with test wells to check for low level contamination. The small concentration of petroleum that remains at this site is being treated through phytoremediation, which involves planting fast growing hybrid poplar trees that draw up pollutants with groundwater and retain these pollutants in the wood. The Shell Tank Farm site has been the first hazardous waste site for which phytoremediation has been used for remediation in Central Massachusetts.[85] This site was proposed to be developed into commercial uses, with a portion of the property proposed to be used for Little League fields for the town, at a Planning Board meeting when the Site Plan Review approval for the remediation process was discussed in 2016. However, during the 2025 OSRP update process, the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) noted that another type of facility will be built here rather than a baseball facility.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) maintains a list of brownfield sites, or contaminated sites, in the Commonwealth. Both the Shell Tank Farm site and a former Texaco gas station are included in this list, which was last updated in 2018. The former Texaco station is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and is used today as a regional emergency response facility.[86] Additionally, *Community Action Works*, formally known as the *Toxics Action Center*, published a Town-by-Town Profile Report in April 2010 regarding toxics in Massachusetts. According to this report, the Town of West Boylston has two large quantity hazardous waste generators and one capped landfill. [87] Although the exact locations of these sites were not included in this report, it is important to consider the implications these sites may have on open space and recreation in town. During the 2025 OSRP update process, the West Boylston OSIC confirmed that the landfill is located at Temple Street / Route 140 at the Boylston town line. The Town facilitates leachate testing at this site on an annual basis, and there is now a solar field atop the closed landfill.

The Soils & Geologic Features Map (Map #5) also shows the locations of MassDEP Tier-Classified Sites (21E) and Activity and Use Limitation Sites. The MassDEP 21E sites are locations where MassDEP has been notified of or has discovered a "reportable" release of oil or hazardous material to the environment. Tier Classified sites are required to have a certain level of monitoring and clean up oversight. The MassDEP Tier Classified Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites data layer is a statewide point dataset containing the

[85] Shell Oil, Shrewsbury Street West Boylston, Site Remediation Plan, 2001
[86] The MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
[87] Community Action Works, 2010

approximate location of oil and/or hazardous material disposal sites that have been (1) reported and (2) tier classified under MGL Chapter 21E and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) is one type of acceptable response at some 21E sites, and AUL allows certain uses compatible with certain levels of cleanup. West Boylston has 90 sites recorded by MassDEP as having an oil or hazardous material release; 17 of these sites have a hazardous chemical release type and four of these sites have an oil and hazardous chemical release type. Additionally, five of these sites, three more than were recorded in 2018, have Activity and Use Limitations (AUL). [88] During the 2025 OSRP update process, the West Boylston OSIC noted that these documented spills likely include a hazardous materials spill that happened north of Hartwell Street next to Muddy Brook, which is near the Wachusett Reservoir and is a notable environmental resource area. Specifically, contaminated soil from multiple railcars spilled into this area, and the railway company had to clean up the area.

Environmental Equity

The consideration of environmental equity includes analyzing the distribution of open space and recreation resources in geographic areas and identifying any gaps between where these resources are located and where local vulnerable populations live. Local vulnerable populations include state-designated (EJ) populations but also include comparatively low-income populations, populations of people with limited-English proficiency, populations of people from racial and/or ethnic minorities, and populations of people with disabilities. Various factors in addition to open space and recreational resources, including clean air, clean soil, and clean water, contribute to environmental equity. As shown in the Open Space Map (Map #10), open space and recreational resources are well distributed throughout the Town of West Boylston. Moving forwards, the Town will continue to prioritize open space and recreational improvements in developed areas of town near EJ designated census tracts in the City of Worcester. Notably, West Boylston's Woodland Park is within walking distance of the Worcester city line, and the improvement of this park would benefit all people who live in the surrounding area, including people who live in Worcester.

MA DCR properties in town are gated to prevent vehicular access that could damage water resources, but there are multiple gates to these properties which have been constructed to allow universal access. Most of these universal access gates to DCR properties are along Route 140 and Route 12, and they lead to rough trails that require a sturdy vehicle to access. DCR staff recently renovated a universal access fishing platform at the Quinapoxet

[88] The MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)

River just downstream of where water is transferred to the River from the Quabbin Reservoir as well as an accessible pathway from River Road to this platform.

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority's Route #30 buses which travel to West Boylston from Worcester have bicycle racks, although Route #30 terminates at Walmart south of the center of town. Requests have been made to extend Route #30 to Oakdale, where people could disembark right at the Mass Central Rail Trail and head either west to Holden or north to Sterling.

Overall, a large amount of the total protected open space in West Boylston abuts the Wachusett Reservoir. However, additional open space parcels are distributed throughout the Town. As previously noted, Goodale Park is the Town's most significant park and recreation facility. The Town is actively working to fund projects aimed at improving the open space and recreation opportunities offered at Goodale Park. In addition to funding future improvements at Goodale Park, the Town of West Boylston could look to plan for and build small playgrounds and fields that are not located in close proximity to an existing park; this would ensure that open space and recreation opportunities are located equitably throughout the Town.

Invasive Species, Pests, & Forestry Issues

Invasive Plants

As global climate change continues to affect weather patterns and events, communities throughout Central Massachusetts are struggling to manage invasive species. Specifically, invasive terrestrial and aquatic vegetation are proliferating all throughout the Region and are causing tree damage and mortality, infrastructural damages, and associated negative impacts on human health, safety, and the environment. Although invasives management is a crucial aspect of maintaining biodiversity, municipalities' fiscal and personnel capacity limitations hinder their ability to effectively manage invasives within their boundaries.

In West Boylston, notable invasive terrestrial plants include Japanese Knotweed and Oriental Bittersweet. Japanese Knotweed is a perennial that thrives along roadsides and riverbanks. Knotweed is also allelopathic, meaning it releases chemicals that deter the growth of nearby plants. Knotweed has a shrubby appearance and can grow from six to fifteen feet, forming dense thickets that pose a threat to riparian vegetation and roadside infrastructure. Knotweed can survive through and thrive in various extreme weather events, from extreme drought and heat to flooding. Oriental Bittersweet is a deciduous vine that also thrives along roadsides and rivers; it can reach heights of forty to sixty feet and often grows up and smothers trees and obstructs roadside infrastructure. Oriental Bittersweet is hardy; its seeds germinate easily and overtake American Bittersweet.

Various aquatic invasive plants also impact communities throughout south central Massachusetts. As previously noted, the only water body in West Boylston that is classified by MassDEP as "impaired" and has a known presence of aquatic invasives is Poor Farm Brook in the southeastern corner of Town. According to MassDEP, Poor Farm Brook contains invasive macrophytes, which can be either emergent, submerged, or floating. Common examples of invasive macrophytes in the Region include Water Chestnut, Eurasian Milfoil, and Hydrilla. Although native macrophytes may support local ecosystems, the proliferation of invasive macrophytes can impact habitat structure, nutrient dynamics, and fishability and can lead to the overall loss of native aquatic vegetation and fish.[89]

Aquatic invasive species also threaten drinking water supplies throughout the Region and the State. For these reasons, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Division of Drinking Water Supply Protection (DWSP) monitors and manages aquatic invasives within the Wachusett Reservoir on an annual basis. Since 2002, the DWSP and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) have instituted an Invasive Macrophyte Control Program. According to the 2023 Water Quality Report for the Wachusett Reservoir, various invasive species are present in the Reservoir, as shown in the exhibit below (table #20).

Exhibit 20: Aquatic Invasive Species in or near the Wachusett Reservoir

Common Name	**Known to be present in Wachusett Reservoir**	**Known to be present in local area**
Fanwort	x	x
Brazilian Elodea		x
Asian Waterwort	x	
Mudmat	x	
Hydrilla		x
Variable Leaved Water-Milfoil (VLM)	x	x
Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM)	x	x
Brittle Naiad		x
Yellow-Floating Heart		x
Common Reed	x	x
Curly-Leaf Pondweed		x
Water Chestnut		x
Inflated Bladderwort		x
Water Lettuce		x

[89] United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); MA Aquatic Invasives Plan, 2002

Source: 2023 Wachusett Reservoir Water Quality Report, DCR, DWSP, MWRA[90]

Highlights of the findings from the 2023 Invasive Macrophyte Control Program include a continued low density of Fanwort and Eurasian Water Milfoil, the continued removal of Variable Leaved Water-Milfoil, and the removal of approximately 22,280 gallons of biomass from the Quinapoxet Basin alone. For more information about the 2023 Invasive Macrophyte Control Program, please review the 2023 Wachusett Reservoir Water Quality Report: https://www.mass.gov/doc/2023-wachusett-water-quality-report/download.

Pests

Similar to both terrestrial and aquatic invasive vegetation species, invasive pests wreak havoc on communities throughout the Central Massachusetts Region. The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) is an invasive wood-boring insect that attacks hardwood trees, including maple, birch, and elm. A large infestation of ALB was discovered in Worcester, MA in August 2008; the Worcester area has removed more than 35,000 host trees to try to halt the infestation, but as of 2025, the area is still an ALB Regulated Area as designated by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).[91] A small infestation with just six ALB host trees was found in Boston in 2010. The spread of ALB causes negative impacts to the maple sugaring, tree nursery, tourism, and forest product industries of Massachusetts and seriously threatens the state's forest, park, and street trees. Currently, the ALB is found in Worcester and surrounding towns, including West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury, Holden, and Auburn. All of West Boylston is included in the regulated area to suppress and control the ALB; this means that all tree removal, trimming of host trees, and composting performed in the quarantined zones of town must follow state regulations.[92]

Nearly every municipality in Massachusetts has been infested by Beech Leaf Disease and the Emerald Ash Borer. Beech Leaf Disease is a relatively newly described disease, especially in Massachusetts. Originally identified in Ohio in 2012, the disease was first identified in Massachusetts in June of 2020 and is associated with a foliar nematode species which damages American Beech, European Beech, and Oriental Beech trees' leaves.[93] The Emerald Ash Borer was introduced to the United States in the 1990s and was first identified in Massachusetts in 2012. Emerald Ash Borers are small, invasive beetles that infest under the bark of all species of ash trees and go unnoticed for three to five years. Today, Massachusetts is a part of the national EAB quarantined zone, which limits

[90] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP)
[91] The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Invasive Pest Dashboard
[92] MA Introduced Pests Outreach Project
[93] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Bureau of Forest Fire Control & Forestry

the movement of all hardwood firewood as well as greenwood products, nursery stock, and any other plant material from ash species.[94]

Finally, although neither has been recorded on the MDAR Invasive Pest Dashboard as being present in West Boylston, both the Spotted Lanternfly and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid are growing threats to the Region. The Spotted Lanternfly has affected many municipalities in Central Massachusetts, including Shrewsbury and Worcester, by feeding on the sap of trees and other woody plants.[95] Although this has not been recorded on the MDAR Invasive Pest Dashboard, the West Boylston OSIC noted that the Spotted Lanternfly has been sighted in the Town of Boylston. Additionally, the West Boylston OSIC noted in January 2025 that Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has affected hemlock trees in West Boylston. In the Central MA Region, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid mainly feeds on Eastern Hemlocks and Carolina Hemlocks.[96]

Forestry Issues

According to 2016 land cover data from the Massachusetts Bureau of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS), the Town of West Boylston is 54.6% forested. This 54.6% of land in town includes both evergreen and deciduous forests but not forested wetlands; including forested wetlands, West Boylston is 59.3% forested. Between 1971 and 2016, 671.5 acres of land were developed in West Boylston, and as of 2016, the Town is 11.05% developed open space. According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap Town Reports, West Boylston has 374 acres of core forest habitat and nearly 3,300 acres of protected open space.

Invasive species and pests are a severe threat to forests and woodlands, both protected and unprotected. Invasive species such as Oriental Bittersweet can strangle trees, leading to tree mortality, while pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer can eat away at trees from the inside until tree fatality occurs. The overall lack of municipal capacity within the Region to effectively manage invasives and pests can lead to deteriorated street trees, woodlands, and forests. This same capacity issue occurs in regards to regular tree maintenance, such as trimming or cutting, which occurs as part of the effort to protect roadways, sidewalks, homes, power lines, and more in the event of natural disasters occurring. Local departments of public works, highway departments, and tree wardens throughout the Region should consider increasing communications, sharing knowledge, and sharing resources to improve local tree maintenance. In terms of woodlands and forest management, municipalities (including West Boylston) must promote the importance of

[94] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Bureau of Forest Fire Control & Forestry
[95] The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)
[96] UMass Amherst Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment

tree and invasives maintenance as a measure which protects forest ecosystem services and resiliency benefits. It is worth noting that the MA DCR manages the trees and woodlands around the Wachusett Reservoir, and within all their lands, very well.

Section 5:

Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest



5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Overview

Public recreation and open spaces support community life and promote a unique and identifiable community character. Open space can also be an oasis for quiet reflection and can greatly enhance people's connection to the natural world. In addition, open space benefits the local economy by protecting and enhancing the property values of nearby land as well as by attracting businesses, new residents, and public and private investment. Research suggests that the proximity to recreation and open spaces is the most important factor in choosing where to locate a small business and quality of life ranks as the third most important factor in choosing the location of a large business.[97] Additionally, conservation land provides natural rainwater storage and corridors for wildlife. Even small pockets of green space may serve important functions for migratory birds and butterflies. Open space reduces runoff and diminishes the frequency and severity of flooding, and wooded open space helps to cool the air and improves air quality.

This plan aims to comprehensively discuss and consider the issues and goals of organizations within West Boylston related to the protection, acquisition, and enhancement of open space and recreation facilities. The definition of "protected" within this OSRP refers to parcels of land that have some limitations to the development of structures on them through public, non-profit, or private mechanisms and are managed primarily for preservation or recreation purposes. These protected parcels include municipally owned conservation and recreation properties, MA DCR properties owned in fee or with deeded restriction for water supply protection, properties owned by the Greater Worcester Land Trust, and properties under the MA Chapter 61 Program for which the Town needs to be notified before any development on them occurs.

Community Preservation Act

On April 4, 2007, the citizens of West Boylston adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which provides state matching funds for money collected by the town. Town Meeting approved an article to adopt the CPA, and a ballot ratification was passed to collect a CPA property tax surcharge of 2% (with exemptions for the first $100,000, low-income households, and low- or moderate-income elderly households as well as reductions for properties with abatements or other exemptions).

[97] National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

Shortly after the adoption of the CPA in town, the West Boylston Town Administrator established the Town's Community Preservation Committee (CPC), whose duties are to draft and present recommendations at town meetings for allocating and spending the CPA surcharge funds. Massachusetts law stipulates that at least 10% of CPA funds must be spent on each of three purposes: open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The remaining 70% of CPA funds can be spent on parks, recreation, and/or any of the three previously noted purposes.

The adoption of the CPA by the Town has provided concrete benefits relating to recreation and open space needs in town. All town committees and citizen organizations that have an interest in open space or recreation must work together to ensure that CPA spending proposals brought to Town Meeting which address open space and recreation needs are publicly approved. According to the CPC, the following table (Exhibit #21) displays open space and recreation projects that have been funded by West Boylston CPA funds to date. It is also worth noting that at the time of this plan's writing, the May 2025 West Boylston Town Meeting has just voted to approve the allocation of $150,000 of CPA funding for designing renovations at Woodland Park as well as $25,000 of CPA funding to construct an equipment shed and a scoreboard at Mixter Field.

Exhibit 21: Community Preservation Fund Projects related to Open Space and Recreation

Project Name	Description	Amount	Approval Date
Goodale Park Design Services	Architectural and engineering services	$25,000	10/20/2008
Preservation of Goodale Park	Renovation of tennis and basketball courts	$618,000	5/17/2010
Lee Street Land Purchase	Purchase of land on Lee Street	$70,000	10/18/2010
Goodale Park Master Plan	A grant for the creation of a Master Plan for Goodale Park and the surrounding town-owned land	$50,000	10/21/2013
Woodland Park Fencing/Safety Netting	A grant for the purchase of fencing and safety netting at the High School baseball field, girls' softball field, and Woodland Park	$26,740	5/19/2014
Baseball Field Fencing	A grant for fencing at the high school baseball field and Little League Field "A"	$29,654	10/19/2015
Goodale Park Expansion	A grant for a practice field at Goodale Park at the old Town Pool area	$52,817	5/16/2016
Goodale Park Well	A grant for an artesian irrigation well for the Goodale Park fields	$17,500	5/16/2016
Blueberry Hill Purchase	Purchase of 12.5 acres on Goodale Street	$172,500	10/17/2016
Goodale Park Fencing	Baseball field fencing	$10,324	10/17/2016
Blueberry Hill Parking Area	Creation of a parking area	$18,000	10/21/2019

Mixter Field Softball Field Renovations	Renovation of the softball field	$652,000	10/17/2020
Pride Park Playground Renovations	ADA compliant playground renovations	$250,000	5/17/2021
Pride Park Playground Renovations	ADA compliant playground renovations	$318,000	5/15/2023

The acquisition of land is slowed by the need to complete "due diligence" investigations and survey work before acquisition proposals can go before Town Meeting for approval. These preparations cost a few thousand dollars, and a process is needed to ensure that there are funds to complete this work in a thorough and swift manner. This process being thorough and swift ensures that property owners are not negatively impacted by the Town's long timeframe for buying their properties. Although accessing grant funding often takes an extended period of time, the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) offers grant funding for land acquisition. Specifically, the Land Conservation Assistance Grant (LCAG) offers funding for property appraisals, the development of grant applications for land acquisition, and other services associated with land protection, such as securing a conservation restriction (CR). Other notable grant programs through the MA DCS that offer funding for the acquisition and protection of land are the Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).[98]

In 2009, the Wachusett Working Landscapes Partnership provided communities in the Region with geographic information and assistance for managing growth. The Wachusett Greenprint Map identifies resources that the Town wanted to preserve as well as places that are suitable for development. This map indicates developed areas, roads, recreational trails, and major water bodies. Portions of this map in red or orange indicate important natural resources that are not permanently protected and which have absolute (red) or partial (orange) development constraints. The areas with partial constraints often are the most important to protect from future development pressures. White areas on the map show lands that lack these development constraints and which may be more suitable for development. Although this map may be somewhat outdated as of 2025, the Town should continue to prioritize the protection and acquisition of the areas shown in red and orange on this map as is possible. West Boylston's portion of the Wachusett Greenprint Map is

[98] The MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS)

included in an attachment to this report and can also be found online at https://www.commonwaters.org/images/stories/pdfs/WestBoylston.pdf.[99]

Private Parcels

There are many private landowners in West Boylston who support the protection of open spaces and the development of additional recreational facilities in town. This 2025 OSRP can be used as a vehicle to educate these philanthropists that there are options available to them. These options include sales, donations, deeded development restrictions, cooperative agreements, and Chapter 61 Land restrictions.

The West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) and Parks Commission encourage landowners to contact the OSIC to discuss placing a portion of their land into a permanently-deeded restricted use, such as a watershed protection restriction (WPR), a conservation restriction (CR), or an agricultural preservation restriction (APR). This action will likely provide a tax reduction for the landowner, reduce future real estate taxes for the landowner, provide open space or recreational use for the Town on a portion of the property, and prohibit building development on the property. These restrictions can generally be worded as is desired by the landowner to include special considerations. The OSIC is tasked with preparing pamphlets and flyers to educate interested landowners, as is outlined in the 2025 OSRP Action Plan.

The OSIC reviews properties and receives suggestions from town boards and the public to consider specific properties for protection or for future active recreation use. The OSIC maintains a list of private properties of interest for protection and acquisition. This list includes details on the desired use of these properties based upon their potential for protection, acquisition, and implementation of development restrictions on them.. The desired uses for these lands include retaining them as undeveloped open spaces and using them as supplemental recreational or athletic facilities. It is worth nothing that the OSIC specifically prioritizes maintaining the protection of any properties that are currently under the MA Chapter 61 Program.

[99] Common Waters

Sometimes landowners can leverage tax savings and other funding to allow partial property donations to the Town, as was done in 2016 for the Blueberry Hill property. Any land acquisition by the Town would need to be approved at Town Meeting, though cooperation with DCR has allowed properties to be protected as open space without cost to the Town. The intended funding sources for the areas near town water supplies include grants and CPA monies designated for open space protection; therefore, cost estimates for each parcel are not included in the above table. Notably, the acquisition of the Kent property on Lee Street in 2010 was funded through the CPA.

The properties listed in the preceding table are those suggested by and to the OSIC as having value to the town. Since the passing of George Bernardin (a long-time philanthropist who spent countless hours assisting the Town with legal and open space-related issues) in 2017, the Town has lacked experience in approaching landowners to discuss the financial savings and local benefits of permanently limiting development on their properties. As detailed in Goal 1 of this 2025 OSRP update's Ten -Year Action Plan (protect, preserve, and enhance open space parcels), the OSIC needs to establish a protocol for contacting landowners to discuss selling or donating land to the Town and needs to advertise this opportunity.

Chapter Lands

The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns 84.05% of the open space land in West Boylston. However, there is still a significant amount of privately-owned land in town that gains its owners tax benefits through the Massachusetts Chapter Lands Program. The MA Chapter Lands Program (Chapter 61) offers landowners an opportunity to reduce their property taxes in exchange for maintaining their land as valuable open space and recreation land. Specifically, Chapter 61 is for forested lands, Chapter 61A for agricultural and horticultural lands, and Chapter 61B is for recreational lands.[100] Private lands that are within these special taxation programs are actively managed by their owners; however, once Chapter Lands are sold or the owner chooses not to participate, there is no longer a commitment to their management. If a Chapter Land in town is put up for sale, the Town has the first right to purchase the property or assign its right to a non-profit; this right is called the Right of First Refusal (ROFR). For these reasons, the Town should continue to maintain a list of active Chapter Lands and ensure that notice is given immediately to the Conservation and Recreation Commissions as well as the OSIC if a

[100] MassWoods, UMass Amherst

Notice of Sale for a Chater Land is delivered to the Select Board. A communication system to allow for rapid response by the Town in the case of Chapter Land sales should be developed, as is detailed in Goal One of this plan's action plan. Working with local non-profits may help make more Chapter Land acquisitions possible, especially with there being limited municipal staff time and funds in town.

Stone's Throw Farm (formerly Malden Brook Farm) is one of the only large, privately-owned lots of land in town. It is located along Prospect Street and Lee Street and contains nearly 200 acres of land. In 2000, Malden Brook Farm was recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) as a "Century Massachusetts Family Farm" since it had been under the same family ownership for over 100 years. Its barn was built with wood from houses that were torn down when the DCR needed room to make the Reservoir. Today, Stone's Throw Farm continues to harvest and sell produce to local establishments. The farm is currently under Chapter 61A, which allows the farm's owners to pay reduced local property taxes and therefore for this part of the State's ever-depleting agricultural heritage to remain preserved. In exchange for these benefits to the landowners, the Town has been given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded to this farm's owners if the Farm is ever sold as well as an option to purchase the Farm should it be sold for any purpose other than continuing to serve as a farm. Near Stone's Throw Farm on Prospect Street is the Wachusett Country Club, which provides spectacular views of the Wachusett Reservoir. This 18-hole golf course is a locally cherished recreational resource, and it is presently under Chapter 61B. Other properties enrolled in the MA Chapter 61 Program are detailed in the tables below (Exhibits #22-#25).

Exhibit 22: Open Space by Chapter Land Status

Chapter Land Type	**Acreage**	**Lot Size (%)**
Chapter 61	238.72	29.73%
Chapter 61A	325.51	40.54%
Chapter 61B	238.68	29.73%
Total	**802.91**	**100.00%**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data		

Exhibit 23: Chapter 61

Location	**Acreage**	**Lot Size (%)**
Raymond S Huntington Highway, Parcel - 106_1	52.42	21.96%
Raymond S Huntington Highway, Parcel - 106_6	14.42	6.04%

Hosmer Street, Parcel - 107_15_1	16.00	6.70%
Keyes Street, Parcel - 108_5	14.80	6.20%
Fairbanks Street, Parcel - 115_10	43.83	18.36%
Fairbanks Street, Parcel - 115_2	27.00	11.31%
Laurel Street, Parcel - 119_43	2.80	1.17%
Laurel Street, Parcel - 119_44	20.00	8.38%
Raymond S Huntington Highway, Parcel - 120_13	1.85	0.77%
Raymond S Huntington Highway, Parcel - 120_14	1.49	0.62%
Lancaster Street, Parcel - 130_4	15.00	6.28%
Malden Street, Parcel - 136_5	14.62	6.12%
Phelps Place, Parcel - 147_2	14.49	6.07%
Total	**238.72**	**100.00%**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data		

Exhibit 24: Chapter 61A

Location	**Acreage**	**Lot Size (%)**
Lancaster Street, Parcel – 114_1	18.08	5.55%
Fairbanks Street, Parcel - 115_7	36.25	11.14%
Fairbanks Street, Parcel – 115_7_1	19.25	5.91%
Lancaster Street, Parcel - 126_27	8.22	2.53%
Parcel – 126_28	5.00	1.54%
Parcel – 127_15	1.12	0.34%
Lancaster Street, Parcel – 127_26	17.00	5.22%
Lancaster Street, Parcel – 131_80	28.00	8.60%

Lancaster Street, Parcel – 131_82	16.00	4.92%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 148_19	26.09	8.02%
Lee Street, Parcel – 156_6	24.49	7.52%
Lee Street, Parcel – 157_1	4.40	1.35%
Prospect Street, Parcel - 164_11	17.00	5.22%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 164_12	70.22	21.57%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 164_12_2	1.63	0.50%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 164_39	28.33	8.70%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 164_8	4.43	1.36%
Total	**325.51**	**100.00%**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data		

Exhibit 25: Chapter 61B

Location	**Acreage**	**Lot Size (%)**
Laurel Street, Parcel – 119_49	17.00	7.12%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 154_5	46.70	19.57%
Prospect Street, Parcel – 154_8	134.91	56.52
Shrewsbury Street, Parcel – 179_1	4.29	1.80%
Shrewsbury Street, Parcel – 179_2	35.78	14.99%
Total	**238.68**	**100.00%**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data		

Permanently Protected Lands

MA DCR has purchased Watershed Preservation Restrictions (WPRs) on a few parcels within West Boylston. A WPR is a deeded sale of the development rights on a parcel of property.[101] MA DCR typically pays approximately 80% of the full purchase property value

[101] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

for these rights. WPRs allow current owners to retain ownership of open space properties but protect open space by restricting development on these properties. Typically, the development limitations on WPRs are that buildings or roadways cannot be constructed on them and that potentially pollution-generating activities at them are also restricted. The list of parcels that MA DCR has purchased WPRs on is included in the exhibit (Exhibit #26) below.

Exhibit 26: DCR Watershed Preservation Restrictions

Location	**Acreage**
Laurel Street	13.83
Phelps Place	16.80
Prospect Street	24.78
Prospect Street	27.66
Malden & Lee Streets	37.38
Total	**120.45**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data	

Conservation restrictions (CRs) are legally binding agreements that ensure permanent protection of land for conservation purposes while allowing limited uses compatible with this conservation. As per MA General Law (MGL) Chapter 184, Sections 31-33, landowners need approval "in the public interest" from the MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to establish CRs on their lands. Conservation restrictions may be granted by public or private landowners to governmental units and conservation-oriented non-profits. In West Boylston, four properties have CRs as of 2025, as is shown in the table below (Exhibit #27).[102]

Exhibit 27: Conservation Restrictions in West Boylston

Property Name	**Acreage**
Angell Brook	10.99
Blueberry Hill	12.55
Hillside Village	8.66
Kent (Malden Brook)	5.47
Total	**37.47**
Source: MassGIS and West Boylston Assessor Data	

Similar to CRs, the MA Department of Agriculture (MDAR) offers Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs). This type of restriction offers farmland owners the difference between

[102] The MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)

the “agricultural value” and “fair market value” of their land in return for restricting the use of their property to farming activities or any other activities that won’t negatively impact the farming viability of the property.[103] The only remaining agricultural land in West Boylston under an APR as of 2025 is the 80-acre Stone’s Throw Farm on Prospect Street. In total, there are 259.94 acres of land in West Boylston that are permanently protected by WPRs, CRs, and APRs, and these lands cover nearly 3% of the Town’s total land area.

Other opportunities to protect open spaces and maintain a rural character in town are through the enforcement of local zoning and general bylaws. The Planning Board in town has enacted a Residential Cluster Development Bylaw which allows developers to present an open space (or cluster) plan as well as a conventional plan of development for all residential projects. Cluster plans must contain more than five acres and must permit reduced lot areas for developments if significant open space in the same property as these developments is permanently protected. In addition, the Conservation Commission in town has attempted to establish a local wetlands protection bylaw that would provide stronger protection than state wetland regulations in an effort to protect isolated wetlands and vernal pools as well as provide protective buffer zones; Town Meeting voted down their proposal in the spring of 2016, but the Town should continue to consider establishing a local wetlands protection bylaw. The Town should also continue to explore opportunities to formally protect open space and natural resources through enforcement of its general and zoning bylaws.

Public Land and Non-Profit Parcels

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Much of the land that is protected within West Boylston is owned by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) due to the DCR’s very active acquisition program which has resulted from the implementation of legislation enacted along with the Watershed Protection Act in 1992. This legislation requires approximately $8 million to be budgeted for the acquisition of impacted parcels to offset development limitations to property owners.

From 1992 through 2002, MA DCR purchased 1,244 acres of land in West Boylston; since 2008, MA DCR has acquired eleven properties in town totaling 195.3 acres in area (Exhibit #28).

[103] The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Exhibit 28: DCR Acquisitions in West Boylston

Parcel ID	Acres	Acq. FY	Street
120_3	3.1	-	Laurel Street
131_78	7.03	-	Lancaster Street
147_18_1	3.14	1995	Acorn Path
152_75	0.3185	2000	Worcester Street
174_59	1.56	1996	Woodland Street
106_3	4.7	-	Raymond S Huntington
101_2	4.85	-	Fairbanks Street
101_3	0.116	-	Fairbanks Street
101_5	1.36	1997	Fairbanks Street
102_5	10.38	-	Prescott Street
102_6	6.26	-	Sterling Street
102_7	9.85	1994	Sterling Street Rear
103_3	0.24	-	North Main & Hosmer
104_1	62.52	1999	Raymond S Huntington
104_2	0.8442	1999	Raymond S Huntington
104_3	10.39	1998	Laurel Street Rear
105_1	16	1998	Laurel Street Rear
105_2	17.05	1998	Laurel Street Rear
105_4	4.36	1998	Laurel Street Rear
105_5	12.88	1998	Laurel Street Rear
106_2	4.12	1996	Laurel Street Rear
106_4	30.33	1996	Laurel Street Rear
107_1	1.63	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_10	1.43	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_11	1.42	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_12	1.44	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_2	0.981	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_20	1.42	1998	Raymond S Huntington
107_21	31.06	1998	Raymond S Huntington
107_22	21.42	1996	Raymond S Huntington
107_3	1.14	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_4	1.06	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_5	1.22	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_6	1.63	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_7	1.16	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_8	1.1	1996	Hampshire Drive
107_9	1.94	1996	Hampshire Drive
109_4	29.21	-	Waushacum Street
109_5	52.07	-	Beaman & Prescott & Plea
109_6	57.24	-	Waushacum Street

110_1	12.99	-	Prescott Street
110_10	14.34	1999	Sterling Street
110_3	47.39	-	Prescott Street
111_15	36.5	2016	Dcr Fairbanks Street
111_25	25.21	2019	Fairbanks Street Rear
111_3	2.01	1998	Fairbanks Street
113_7	70.02	-	Lancaster Street
114_15	11.25	1995	Campground Road
114_3	6.62	1996	Lancaster Street
114_33	1.08	1996	Lancaster Street
114_34	0.798	1996	Lancaster Street
114_35	0.836	1996	Lancaster Street
114_36	0.849	1996	Lancaster Street
114_38	0.8598	1996	Lancaster Street
114_8	0.743	1996	Campground Road
115_3	25.11	1999	Fairbanks Street
115_4	60.34	1999	Fairbanks Street
115_5	12.99	1999	Fairbanks Street
116_20	12	1999	Western Avenue
116_81	13.85	1999	Sterling Place
117_4	76.64	1900	Prescott & Waushacum
117_6	2.33	2013	North Main Street
117_8	49.12	1993	Prescott Street
118_1	0.333	1911	North Main Street
118_23	7.82	1911	Laurel Street
118_26	13.29	1994	Laurel Street
118_72	2.64	-	North Main Street
118_81	0.76	-	North Main Street
119_16	1.27	1994	Rivington Drive
119_17	0.956	1994	Rivington Drive
119_18	1.19	1994	Rivington Drive
119_19	1.18	1994	Rivington Drive
119_20	0.85	1994	Rivington Drive
119_21	0.797	1994	Rivington Drive
119_22	0.89	1994	Rivington Drive
119_23	0.97	1994	Rivington Drive
119_31	2.97	1994	Laurel Street
119_37_2	20.42	1976	Laurel Street Rear
119_50	2.03	1996	Laurel Street
119_56	2.96	1996	Hampshire Drive
119_57	1.25	1996	Hampshire Drive
119_58	1.36	1996	Hampshire Drive
119_59	1.48	1996	Hampshire Drive

119_60	1.94	1996	Hampshire Drive
120_10_2	1.83	1996	Laurel Street Rear
120_11	3.23	1996	Laurel Street Rear
120_12	12.01	1996	Laurel Street Rear
120_8	5.23	1996	Raymond S Huntington
121_2	2.66	-	Laurel Street Rear
122_3	5.53	-	Laurel & River
123_4	8.67	-	Thomas Street
123_5_1	0.36	-	Foster Street Rear
123_6	32.57	-	Thomas Street
123_7	3.06	-	Beaman Street
124_1	20	-	Beaman
125_107	1.33	1998	Sterling Place
125_107_1	2.92	1996	Heritage Lane
125_107_2	0.923	1996	Heritage Lane
125_107_3	1.58	1996	Heritage Lane
125_107_4	1.4563	1998	Heritage Lane
126_26	30.85	2014	Lancaster Street
127_12	1.27	1996	Lancaster Street
127_13	1.58	1996	Lancaster Street
127_14	1.49	1996	Lancaster Street
127_16	1.96	1996	Lancaster Street
127_17	41.38	1988	Lancaster Street
127_19	0.711	1996	Lancaster Street
127_20	1.54	1996	Lancaster Street
127_21	3.54	1996	Lancaster Street
127_22	16.53	-	Lancaster Street Rear
127_27	9.56	2007	Lancaster Street
127_28	22.43	2011	Lancaster Street
128_1	0.1	-	Lancaster Street Rear
130_2	1.72	1907	Lancaster Street
130_9	16.21	1995	Lancaster Commons
131_40_1	49.53	1995	Prescott Street Rear
132_1	60.53	-	Beaman Street
133_13	191	-	Thomas Street
133_2	7.7	1995	Crescent Street Rear
135_1	0.983	1997	Malden Street
135_2	12.15	1997	Malden Street
135_3	0.05	-	Malden Street
135_4	1.11	1997	Malden Street
135_5	5.95	1997	Malden Street
135_6	7.96	1997	Malden Street
135_7	3.3	-	River Road Rear

136_13	2.36	1997	Malden Street
136_14	1.33	1997	Malden Street
136_15	0.986	1997	Malden Street
136_16	2.88	1997	Malden Street
136_17	2.96	1997	Malden Street
136_18	4.12	1997	Malden Street
136_19	3.53	1997	Malden Street
136_20	3.11	1997	Malden Street
136_21	2.87	1997	Malden Street
136_22	2.02	1997	Malden Street
136_23	1	1997	Malden Street
136_24	7.63	1997	Malden Street
136_25	9.23	1997	Malden Street
136_26	8.14	1997	Malden Street
136_27	15.64	1997	Malden Street
136_28	4.1	1997	Malden Street
136_29	2.12	1997	Malden Street
136_30	2.16	1997	Malden Street
136_31	1.58	1997	Malden Street
136_32	1.39	1997	Malden Street
136_33	10.24	1997	Malden Street
136_4	11.17	1997	Malden Street
136_7	3.21	1997	Malden Street
136_8	7.71	1997	Malden Street
137_3	71.7	1996	Malden Street
137_42	15.76	-	Crescent Street
137_9	18.02	-	Crescent Street
138_4	87.82	-	Beaman Street
139_6	0.466	1996	Sterling Street
144_34	6.1	2001	Malden Street
144_35	30.49	1994	Malden Street Rear
144_60	3.18	2017	Garside Drive
146_8	74.99	1997	Goodale Street Rear
146_8_2	21.42	1997	Goodale Street
147_18_2	4.09	1995	Acorn Path
147_18_3	0.534	1995	Acorn Path
147_26	24	1995	Goodale Street
148_70	7.77	1996	West Boylston Street
149_4	11.62	-	Temple Street Rear
151_1	20.94	1994	Temple Street
152_29	2.65	-	Worcester Street Rear
152_45	31.54	1992	Temple Street Rear
154_1	43.18	1993	Prospect Street

158_30_1	3.88	1997	Worcester Street
159_30	7.2	1994	Pierce Street Rear
159_31	14.34	1994	Pierce Street
159_32	18.39	1994	Pierce Street
160_12	3.5	2009	Temple Street
160_16	550.26	-	Temple Street
160_17	0.5831	1996	Temple Street
160_5_2	1.48	1999	Pierce Street
160_5_3	1.21	1999	Pierce Street
160_5_4	1.62	1999	Pierce Street
160_5_5	2.45	1999	Pierce Street
161_1	27.24	-	Temple Street
162_58	44.91	1994	Pierce Street Rear
163_1	0.4885	-	Woodland Street
164_1_2	0.08	1999	Prospect Street
164_16	63.27	1996	Prospect Street
166_36	4.4	-	Parker Street
168_209	0.07	-	Worcester Street
168_220	0.19	-	Bowles & Buckingham
168_225	0.23	-	Buckingham & Lebanon
168_232	0.2383	-	Lombard Avenue
168_237	0.67	-	Lombard Avenue
168_243	0.29	-	Chapman Avenue
168_244	0.19	-	Chapman Avenue
168_82	0.29	-	Allard Ave And Bowles Ave
170_3	3.25	1995	Hartwell Street
170_4	15.44	1995	Hartwell Street Rear
170_5	62.57	2014	Hartwell Street
172_19	7.85	1999	Shrewsbury Street Rear
175_3	0.0191	1997	Glenwood Avenue
Total	**2990.05**	**acres**	

MA DCR-owned property is protected in a manner similar to "Article 97" lands; this means that it is difficult to change the ownership or use of DCR land in town. To make such a change, a petition must be submitted to the DCR for approval. After they approve of a change, the DCR Commissioners must then submit a request to the State Legislature and obtain a two-thirds majority vote to formally approve the change.

Although MA DCR does not pay taxes on the land that it owns, it is required under Chapter 59, Section 5G, of Massachusetts General Law (MGL) to make Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes

(PILOT) to the Town. The DCR's protected open space land is valued as if it is developable property, though much of this land is considered to be rear land and only some of it is considered to be prime lots. The developable property valuation for this land is then multiplied by the highest tax rate in town (which is currently the commercial / industrial / residential tax rate) to determine the PILOT amount. West Boylston now receives an average PILOT of $185.76 per acre (including water areas) from the DCR for permanently protected open space, or $226.72 per acre of land; the justification for these low numbers is that the majority of MA DCR's protected open space land in town is wetland and backland. Since the Town has the same tax rate for both commercial and residential property, it has not received as much in PILOT payments from MA DCR as it could have if it had adopted a tiered tax rate. The PILOT payment to West Boylston was $683,582 in 2024;[104] this payment reflects the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's policy that land under water has no value.

MA DCR has developed a Public Access Plan for its lands which has been updated in 2011 and 2023. The Plan describes DCR's policy of "limited public access" for its lands in West Boylston. Passive recreational uses, such as hiking, picnicking, shore fishing, and cross-country skiing, are allowed in all DCR-owned lands in West Boylston except for in the approximately 10-acre restricted access area within 100 feet of the Quabbin Aqueduct discharge point on the Quinapoxet River. Animals such as dogs and horses, however, are not allowed access to DCR land (except for when they are service animals); some residents resent this prohibition. Direct contact with the Wachusett Reservoir, including boating, is prohibited. However, canoes, kayaks, and other non-gas-powered small boats are allowed on West Waushacum Pond, the Quag, and Muddy Pond. Swimming in the Reservoir or its tributaries is not allowed. Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles are not permitted on DCR lands. The Public Access Plan has allowed increased public access along a small portion of the Town's western border with Holden, and hunting is allowed in this area. Mountain biking is not allowed on DCR land in West Boylston, but bicycles are allowed on the Mass Central Rail Trail and two loop trails in Holden which connect to the Trail. In the area noted as the Tributary Headwaters Zone (which is located outside of West Boylston, mainly in Holden and Sterling beyond I-190) for the Reservoir, canoeing is allowed on the Quinapoxet River upstream of the River Road Dam.[105]

MA DCR employs rangers to help enforce its regulations. These rangers have the authority to issue fines for violations of DCR policies. Many residents feel that the Town should negotiate with the DCR to establish reasonable and minimally polluting use by the Town of

[104] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Watershed Management
[105] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) DWSP

its lands for purposes such as athletic fields. If DCR were to completely prohibit public access to its lands, as Worcester has done on its watershed lands in Holden, West Boylston would be severely impacted. At public hearings on the original DCR Public Access Plan and the updates to it, the Town did not offer any input. In the future, the Town should provide input on any future updates to this plan, as is detailed in the 2025 OSRP Action Plan.

In the past, the Parks Commission had a lease from MA DCR to use their property located in the Oakdale section of town. This property contained a softball field as well as practice fields on the opposite side of Thomas Street. Although this lease had expired in 1992, the Parks Commission continued to maintain these properties and schedule activities at them until 2005. In 2005, the DCR was pressured by the EPA to limit all activity within 400 feet of the Reservoir; since no official contact from the Parks Commission had occurred for years at this time, use of this property by the Parks Commission was prohibited and has been prohibited ever since.

Town-Owned Open Space

Municipal lands under active use (schools, town halls, highway department facilities, police/fire facilities, etc.) are not generally considered permanently protected. A public disposition process, however, can theoretically ensure some level of protection for them, and they cannot be sold without due process. The currently existing open space and recreation areas owned by the Town include properties managed by the OSIC, the Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, and the West Boylston Water District as well as other properties such as schools with playgrounds and athletic facilities, cemeteries, and other places where people enjoy the outdoors, such as municipal solar fields. These areas are displayed in the following exhibit (Exhibit #29). For clarification regarding the levels of protection indicated in this table, please refer to the MA Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS) definitions for protection in perpetuity, limited protection, and no protection from https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-protected-and-recreational-openspace#attributes-.

Overall, there is very little municipally owned open space in town; there are only 202.63 acres of this municipal open space (which is 4.63% of all open space and recreation land in town). There is significant competition for the use of town-owned land for municipal service buildings and athletic fields. No forum/committee has been established in town to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of development proposals for town-owned land. Rather, there has been a first come-first serve development approvals process. Formal protection of the existing municipally owned open spaces is a high priority of this Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

In 2016, Town Meeting unanimously approved the purchase of 12.51 acres of land called Blueberry Hill which is adjacent to Stone's Throw Farm, the last remaining farm in West Boylston. Located south of the intersection of Goodale and Lee Streets (353 Goodale Street), Blueberry Hill is a wooded hilltop on the West Boylston and Holden line which provides opportunities for passive recreation, including camping, hiking, snowshoeing, and dog walking according to the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT). This property is adjacent to 100-plus acres protected as working farmland, has views of pastures to the south, and forms a corridor with the MA DCR lands to the north.

Most of the property that is owned by the Town is specifically managed by either the Parks Commission or the West Boylston Water District. West Boylston Public Schools owns the land that is under the buildings, an area for future expansion of the high school, and some of the parking necessary for these buildings. There are also parcels of publicly owned land managed by the West Boylston Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) and the West Boylston Housing Authority, and these parcels have some opportunities for walking and nature observation. One large tract of open space owned by the Town is the Town's former landfill, which has been closed and properly capped. Located on the southern part of Route 140, a solar array has been constructed atop this capped landfill.

House of Correction and Municipal Light Plant

The Worcester County Jail and House of Correction owns about 210 acres in town, or a little over two percent of the Town's land area. MA DCR and/or the House of Correction owns nearly 44% of the Town's area. The Town and the West Boylston Municipal Lighting Plant (WBMLP) have obtained approximately 70 acres of land that was once part of the House of Correction's large tract of land along Shrewsbury Street for municipal use. The WBMLP has transferred control of approximately 36 acres of this land to the Select Board; the WBMLP had considered relocating to this site but decided to remain at Crescent and Prospect Streets. The area was then developed as a solar array to generate power for the Town. In 2008, the Worcester County Sheriff announced he was in negotiations to allow the Town to use jail property for recreational purposes, and in 2016, the OSIC began investigating options to use a portion of this solar farm as a fenced-in dog park facility. As of 2025, neither of these projects have moved forward; however, the WBMLP solar farms on both Shrewsbury Street / Tivnan Drive and Temple Street may be used by walkers and nature observers.

Greater Worcester Land Trust

In March 2000, the West Boylston Land Trust was formed to save open space from development and to protect natural resources. It was granted 501c3 status by the Internal

Revenue Service (IRS), so gifts of land or conservation restrictions to the Trust were tax deductible. The Trust received its first donation of land in 2001, a one-acre parcel of woods with an intermittent stream located southwest of 117 Goodale Street; this parcel was named the Pine Glen. In 2009, the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT) and the West Boylston Land Trust merged their conservation holdings and membership, and the West Boylston Land Trust dissolved. In 2012, the GWLT installed signage at Pine Glen; to this day, the GWLT owns and stewards the Pine Glen property. The GWLT also now owns a 13.51-acre parcel southwest of the Pine Glen on Goodale Street. This property, referred to as the Goodale Street Conservation Area, is directly behind the Wachusett Country Club and is a corridor for wildlife migration.

A 5.4-acre lot adjacent to the town well on Lee Street was acquired by the Town with coordination provided by the GWLT in 2010; the GWLT holds a conservation restriction (CR) on this property. Named the Kent Property, this property allows public access, but there are limits at it on activities that could negatively impact the nearby town well. The GWLT also assisted the Town with the gap acquisition of Blueberry Hill; the October 2016 Town Meeting voted to acquire this property and reimburse GWLT for their efforts. In addition, the GWLT has assisted the Town in protecting an adjacent 13 acres of land to Blueberry Hill owned by Dennis Minnich.

Exhibit 29: Town-Owned Open Space and Recreation Areas

Site Name	Acres	Manager	Current Use	Public Access	ADA Access	Level of Protection	Zoning	Condition	Recreation Potential	Grant Utilized
Blueberry Hill	12.55	OSIC, GWLT	Conservation land / open space, walking trails	Yes	Limited	In perpetuity (Article 97 & CR)	SR	Good	ADA improv., benches	EEA DCS Conservation Partnership (for CR), CPA (for land)
Goodale Park	22.18	Parks Com.	Basketball, tennis, track, athletic fields (football)	Yes	Limited	Limited	SR	"A Field" and courts in fair condition, "B Field" and track in poor condition	ADA improv., new track & football field, upgrade lighting & sign; other elements of MP, as possible	CPA
Goodale Park – Softball Fields	1.76	Parks Com.	Softball	Yes	Limited	Limited	VCD	Good	ADA improv., fence, shed	Aquifer Land Acquisition
Pride Park (Major Edwards School)	8.23	Parks Com, School Dept.	Public school playground with slides, monkey bars, climbing structures, and more	Yes	Yes	Limited	VCD	Great	Second phase of Pride Park Improve. Project (for kids aged <5)	CPA
Kent (Malden Brook)	5.47	OSIC, GWLT	Conservation land / open space	Yes	Limited	In perpetuity (Article 97 & CR)	SR	Good	Parking area	EEA DCS Conservation Partnership (for CR), CPA (for land)
Mixter Fields	1.51	Parks Com.	Multi-use athletic field: softball, baseball, soccer	Yes	Limited	Limited	SR	Great	N/A	ARPA
Mount Vernon Cemetery	16.59	Cemetery Dept.	Historic cemetery, walking trails	Yes	Yes	Limited	VCD	Good	N/A	N/A

Municipal Solar Field – Temple Street	14.67	WB MLP	Solar field with some undeveloped open space	Limited	Limited	Limited	SR	Good	N/A	N/A
Municipal Solar Field – Tivnan Drive	11.51	WB MLP	Solar field with some undeveloped open space	Limited	Limited	Limited	Ind.	Good	N/A	N/A
Orchard Knoll	25.69	WB HA	Public housing with some undeveloped open space	Limited	Limited	Limited	SR	Good	ADA improv.	CPA
WB High School	9.83	Parks Com., School Dept.	Public school with indoor recreation facilities & overflow parking for Goodale Park	Yes	Limited	Limited	SR	Good	ADA improv.	N/A
WB Town Common	2.94	WB DPW	Open space with gazebo & benches; public event space	Yes	Limited	In perpetuity (Article 97)	VCD / SR	Good	ADA improv., sidewalks, parking	N/A
WBWD Lands	51.69	WBWD	Local water supply land	Limited - None	Limited	In perpetuity (Article 97)	SR	Good	N/A	Aquifer Land Acquisition
Woodland Park	5.77	Parks Com.	Soccer, baseball, pickleball	Yes	Limited	Limited	SR	Fair	ADA improv., drainage improv., upgrade courts (include pickleball), lighting, extra parking, deck hockey	CPA
Total Acreage:	**202.63**									

Exhibit 30: Open Space & Recreation Land in West Boylston by Ownership Type

Owner	**Acreage**
State	**3,256.52**
Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR), Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP)*	3,010.42
Department of Fish & Game	4.70
Worcester County Jail & House of Correction	241.40
Municipal	**202.63**
Conservation Land	18.01
Recreation Land	31.22
West Boylston Water District Land (including MCRT parking area)	63.93
Other (Mount Vernon Cemetery, two solar fields, one housing authority property, two schools, and the Town Common)	89.47
Land Trust	**14.57**
Goodale Street Conservation Area	13.51
Pine Glen	1.06
Private	**1,312.90**
Under Watershed Protection Restriction (WPR)	120.45
Under Conservation Restriction (CR)	37.47
Under Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)	79.65
Oakdale & St. Luke's Cemetery	15.28
Wachusett Country Club	182.05
Woodhaven Campground	52.72
Chapter 61 (forestry)	238.72
Chapter 61A (agriculture & horticulture)	325.51
Chapter 61B (recreation)	238.68
Total	**4,786.82**
Source: MassGIS, West Boylston Assessor Data, & the 2025 West Boylston OSIC *Does not include land under water (664.80 acres)	

Parks and Recreation Facilities and Usage

The West Boylston Parks Commission ("the Commission") is made up of five members, and the Commission's mission is to manage all of the park facilities in the Town of West Boylston, to improve these facilities, and to make rules for their use and governance. The Commission was created on March 27th, 1893 under Article 15 when the Town voted to accept Massachusetts General Law Chapter 45, Section 2, which allows towns to elect a Board of Parks Commissioners. The Commission's members became appointed instead of elected in 1995 and, in 1988, the membership of the Commission increased from three to five members. Each member of the Commission serves for a three-year term. Subject to appropriation, the Commission has the power to conduct park programs and recreation program activities at places other than the public parks under its management. The West Boylston Department of Public Works (DPW) performs the majority of maintenance and construction activities for park facilities in town. In 2006, the Board of Selectmen in town created the Parks and Recreation Facility Review Committee to assist the Commission with the assessment and planning of parks facilities. In 2010, the Commission hired a part-time Recreation Director to coordinate recreation programs for town residents. As of 2025, the Parks Facilities Committee has been disbanded and there are no paid recreation staff in town. The Town should work to establish and fund a Parks and Recreation Director position in town.



Pride Park playground

One unique challenge for the Commission is that, unlike in most other towns where school departments control and maintain outdoor facilities for their students and sports teams, public parks facilities managed by the Commission provide the only space for West Boylston Public Schools to conduct their outdoor practices, games, recess activities, and gym classes. This requires that the Commission work closely with West Boylston Public Schools to ensure that the public parks facilities in town meet the needs of West Boylston public school students and teams in addition to the resident and organized recreational users who frequently use these parks. Many improvements to the parks facilities in town have been completed through cooperative efforts with the Boy Scouts as part of Eagle Scout Projects. These improvements have included:

- Recent improvements to the benches in the East Common around the gazebo;
- The installation of picnic tables in the Summer House;
- The construction of a handicapped fishing platform and an access path along the Quinapoxet River;
- Access stairway and erosion protection improvements along the Mass Central Rail Trail to the Quinapoxet River;
- The construction of a nature trail beside and behind Major Edward Elementary School;
- The painting of the snack shack and the refurbishing of the bleachers at the all-purpose field; and
- Clean up and the placement of an informational kiosk at the Old Stone Church.

A major source of funds to maintain, improve and design and implement the layouts of parks facilities in town is the West Boylston Community Preservation Committee (CPC). The CPC has been an important funding source for several projects, including the Goodale Basketball/Tennis Court Project, the Goodale/Woodland Park fence improvements, the construction of the Goodale practice field, and the Goodale Park Master Plan.

The following information regarding the Town of West Boylston's parks and recreational facilities has been compiled from information supplied by the Commission. This information is current as of March 2025 and includes reviews of existing park facility use request permit forms and on-site inspections of park facilities that weather and conditions permitted.

In 2016, the Parks and Recreation Facility Review Committee developed a long-term Master plan concept for Goodale Park. Although the cost estimation associated with this project is likely very outdated at this point, the Parks Commission feels that the Goodale Park Master Plan’s implementation may still be able to be implemented in phases based

on current priorities and realistic financing. Overall, the Master Plan may still be used as a guide for decision-making and the management of the Park's facilities. Open space and natural contouring should continue to be priorities of any projects that occur at Goodale Park.

Many of the parks and recreation facilities in town are aging and are in need of major repairs and/or complete renovation. The Commission continues to review all current park facilities in West Boylston to determine what improvements and additional facilities will be needed in the future. The Commission believes that the demand for available field space justifies requests for additional fields. Although parks in town may appear underutilized at times, improved management has occurred and there still are high demands for use of these parks that require additional field space.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Pool

The former town pool was opened in the summer of 1953 and was closed due to safety concerns in 2005. It consisted of a 25-meter, six-lane main pool and a ten-meter intermediate pool. The pool and ancillary structures were demolished in 2013, and the area was re-graded to be used as additional field space (see the Playing Fields section below). The Commission is open to working with other boards and groups within town to explore the possibility of building a new pool in West Boylston at some future date. The OSIC also has interest in installing a water facility such as a spray park or splash pad at Woodland Park or Goodale Park.

Playing Fields

- *Goodale Park Game Field (used mainly for soccer, football, track, and school recess):* The Game (a.k.a. all-purpose) Field is a 120-yard field across from Major Edwards Elementary School. The main use of this field is for football and soccer games, but it also provides an area for school recess and other community events. The field is encompassed by a five-lane asphalt track and also houses a discus pad and a long jump pit. There is lighting and an underground, timed watering system at the field. The current track which is around this field is not adequate to host high school level track meets because it does not meet the minimum competition standards of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

The Commission is looking into options for bringing the track and grandstand area into compliance with local building codes, ADA regulations, and MIAA standards for competition.

- *Goodale Park Townsend Field and Goodale B Field (used mainly for youth baseball, softball, and soccer):* Townsend Field (a.k.a. Goodale A Field), which is located in Goodale Park at the northeast corner of the intersection of Goodale and Crescent Streets, and Goodale B Field, which is located between Goodale A and the game field, are adjacent non-regulation sized Little League baseball diamonds and fields used by public schools in town and recreational soccer, baseball and softball groups. They have an underground timed watering system without lights. The Commission will evaluate options for the future renovation of this space.
- *Goodale Park Girls Softball Field*: The Girls Softball Field, which is located across Crescent Street from the Goodale A Field and adjacent to Pride Park, is a softball diamond and field with a perimeter fence. It is used by the West Boylston Middle/High School, youth and women's softball, and youth soccer. It has an underground timed watering system without lights.
- *Goodale Park High School Baseball Field:* The High School Baseball Field is a non-regulation sized baseball field south of the Middle/High School, and it is used for age 13+ baseball games for the School and recreational groups. It has an underground timed watering system without lights. In 2015-16, a new fence was installed in the center and right field area and along the first base line which fully encloses the field. The high school football team uses the space beyond the outfield fence for practices. The Commission will evaluate options for the future renovation of this field.

In 2018, the Parks Commission completed construction of an additional practice field near the former pool complex above the High School Baseball Field. It was approved at May 2016 Town Meeting and is intended to be used primarily for football practices while also providing additional space for other games, practices, and recreation programs throughout the year. The Parks Commission is also exploring the development of another full-sized practice/game field on town-owned land.

- *Woodland Field (used mainly for soccer, recreation, and baseball):* Woodland field is located south of Woodland Street at Shrine Avenue. The field is a full-sized soccer field and is used by school and recreational soccer groups and youth baseball. It has an underground timed watering system without lights. The field is inadequately drained and will require some renovation to improve its playability during times following inclement weather. Extra parking, lighting, and ADA improvements will also be considered for this space. The Commission will evaluate options for the future renovation of this field.
- *Mixter Field (used mainly for youth softball, baseball, and soccer):* Mixter Field is a youth softball-sized diamond with a large outfield area which is located off Prescott

Street and is used by youth baseball, softball, and soccer. It has no lights but does have an underground timed watering system.

Basketball Courts

- *Goodale Park Courts:* These two full-sized courts were reconstructed in 2011. Two of these courts have a combined total of four temporary pickleball courts. Lights are available for the courts.
- *Woodland Park Court:* There is not a full-sized basketball court at Woodland Park, but there is a single basketball hoop near a paved area at the park.



Basketball courts at Goodale Park[106]

Tennis Courts

- *Goodale Park*: These three full courts with lights were reconstructed in 2011.
- *Woodland Park:* These two full courts without lights are in poor condition and have limitations to competition. They need to be upgraded, need to have drainage improvements, and should include pickleball accommodations. They are currently closed as of Spring 2025 due to a dangerous sinkhole. The Commission will evaluate options for the future renovation of these courts.

Trails

- *Mass Central Rail Trail:* Wachusett Greenways is working on constructing the central 30 miles of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) between Sterling and Barre in

[106] Yelp

collaboration with eight towns (including West Boylston), MA DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP), and MassTrails. In 1997, Wachusett Greenways dedicated the first 1.5-mile section of the MCRT owned by and in West Boylston from Thomas Street to the Holden town line under I-190. Wachusett Greenways is currently constructing a one-mile section of the MCRT along old Pleasant Street. The OSIC hopes to support Wachusett Greenways and other organizations to fill a key gap in the MCRT from the parking lot at Thomas Street to old Pleasant Street.

- *Walking trails:* Every day, townspeople and visitors alike utilize the sidewalks and streets surrounding the schools in town, the Thomas Basin, and the Central and Newton Street area. These areas provide exercise trail loops of varying lengths and difficulties.

Playgrounds

Pride Park is a playground located between the Major Edwards Elementary School and the Girls Softball Field at Goodale Park. It is intended for use by children under the age of 12 and their families, and it also provides recess space during the school day for the students at Major Edwards Elementary School.

Commons

- *Center Common* is at the Town Center and contains a flagpole and veteran's memorial monuments.
- *West Common* is located west of Route 12/140 at the Town Center and has an underground watering system.
- *East Common* is located at the Town Center off Worcester Street and east of Route 12/140. It has a bandstand/gazebo and memorial benches.

Seasonal Facilities

- *Snack Shacks:* There are three snack shacks located in the Goodale Park area which are used during the summer months. One snack shack is located at Townsend Field (Goodale A Field) and is operated by the Little League in town. The second snack shack is located at the Girls' Softball Field. The third snack shack is located at the game field and track area and is operated during high school football and soccer games as well as youth soccer and youth football events.
- *Summer House:* Located on the western edge of the Goodale basketball and tennis courts, the Summer House is a covered area with several picnic tables overlooking Goodale Park which is used during the warmer months. The House was constructed over 50 years ago, and its roof was re-shingled in 2013.

- *Outdoor Concert Stage*: Located at the southwest corner of the game field at Goodale Park, the Concert Stage is elevated above the field level and has a concrete floor with metal staging. This venue is used during the summer months for concerts and other events.
- *Outdoor Hockey Rinks:* Located on the East and West Common, these two temporary outdoor rinks are constructed by the DPW and filled with water to provide recreational skating areas during the winter months.

Facility Use

Coordinating the usage of the fields and other parks facilities in town is challenging because there are often too many requests for too few facilities. An estimated 1,250 games and practices are conducted on parks facilities by approximately 1,000 permitted users annually, not including recreation programs. The parks facility use process is managed by the Parks Commission using a field use request form requiring approval from the Commission and sign-offs from the Chief of Police and DPW Director. A schedule of regular and one-time users of the parks and recreational facilities in town is kept by the Commission and is posted seasonally on the town website. This schedule coordinates parks facility usage and publicly shares parks facility availability for West Boylston residents and recreational groups as well as permitted users from outside of town.

The following is a summary of the normal annual parks facility usage by school and recreational groups in town.

<u>West Boylston Public Schools</u>

The West Boylston Middle/High School and the Major Edwards Elementary School are major users of the nearby facilities at Goodale Park, Woodland Park, and Pride Park. These schools are given priority usage of these facilities by the Commission since West Boylston Public Schools has no outdoor sports and recreational facilities of their own. The schools' use of these facilities mainly occurs during the school day for gym classes and recess and after school for sports practices and games. During the 180-day school year, use of these facilities by the schools usually ends around 5:00-6:00pm, and this allows other in-town recreational users of the facilities to conduct regular practices and games.

During the summer and fall, Junior Varsity and Varsity Football and/or Girl's Middle School, Junior Varsity, and Varsity Soccer use the following fields: the Goodale A and B Fields, the Goodale Game Field, the Woodland Field, and the Football Practice Field. There are approximately 125 players as well as 300 games and practices per summer school sports season in town. During the spring, Junior Varsity and Varsity Softball, Junior Varsity and Varsity Baseball, and Boys' and Girls' Varsity Tennis utilize the following fields: the

Goodale A and B Fields, the Girls' Softball Field, the High School Baseball Field, and the Goodale Tennis Courts. There are approximately 125 players as well as 300 games and practices per spring school sports season in town.

Youth Soccer

Youth soccer season runs from August through October for boys and girls aged 5-18 and is overseen by the West Boylston Youth Soccer Association (WBYSA). Youth soccer uses parks facilities in town mainly in the fall. Youth soccer also uses the park facilities less frequently in the spring and summer for occasional soccer clinics, practices, and events.

Mixter Field and Woodland Field are used for soccer. There are 200 players as well as 200 games and practices per fall youth soccer season. During the spring, Woodland Field is used by about 40 players with 25 practices occurring per spring youth soccer season.

Youth Baseball

Youth baseball season lasts from April through July for boys aged 4-12 and is overseen by the West Boylston Little League (WBLL). Youth baseball uses parks facilities in town mainly in the spring and early summer. Youth baseball also uses the Town's park facilities less frequently in the late summer and fall for occasional baseball clinics, practices, and events. The use of these fields by youth baseball in town is as follows:

- Spring: Goodale A and B Fields, Mixter Field, and Woodland Field; 150 players, 250 practices and games per season
- Summer/Fall: Goodale A and B Fields; 40 players, 25 practices per season

Women's Adult and Girls Youth Softball

Youth and adult softball seasons run from April through August for girls aged 5-12 and adult women. Youth softball is overseen by West Boylston Youth Softball (WBYSB) and adult softball is overseen by West Boylston Woman's Softball (WBWS). Youth softball uses parks facilities in town in the spring and early summer.

Youth softball use of parks facilities in town in the spring/summer is as follows:

- Spring/Summer: The Girls' Softball Field and Mixter Field; 150 players, 150 games and practices per season

Women's softball uses the park facilities in town on Wednesday evenings from June through August for games only.

Women's softball use of parks facilities in town in the summer is as follows:

- Summer: Goodale A and B Fields, the Girls' Softball Field, and Mixter Field; 100-120 players, 50 games per season

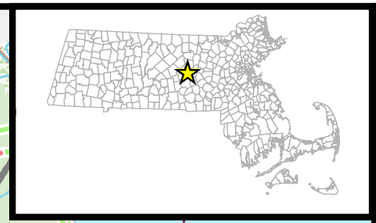
AAU and Senior Babe Ruth Baseball

The AAU baseball and senior Babe Ruth baseball seasons run from April through July for boys aged 12-18. AAU baseball in town is run by the Central Mass Spartans Club and senior Babe Ruth baseball in town is run by West Boylston Senior Babe Ruth Baseball (WBSBR). Use of parks facilities in town by these groups is mainly for baseball games on the High School Baseball Field, and this use is as follows:

- Spring/Summer: High School Baseball Field; 60 players, 25 games per season

Town of West Boylston 2024 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 8 OPEN SPACE INVENTORY



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Conservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
- Town Owned Land (FY2023)
- Undeveloped Land (FY2023)
- Off Road Trails
- Roads / Trails
- Pleasant Street (Off Road Trail All But 30 Days a Year)

Chapter Lands (FY2023)

- Chapter 61
- Chapter 61A
- Chapter 61B

Open Space Ownership

- Federal
- State (Fish & Game)
- State (DCR))
- State/County (Other)
- Municaipal - Conservation
- Municipal - Recreation
- Municipal - Water Supply Protection
- Municipal
- Private
- Non-Profit

Level of Protection

Perpetuity* Limited None

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantine Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

0 0.65 1.3 Miles

Section 6:

Community Vision



6. Community Vision

Community Conditions

The West Boylston OSIC believes that a balanced approach to open space and recreation is needed to provide safe opportunities in town for all types of recreation, to provide a safe and adequate water supply for the Town, to enhance the Town's character, and to support opportunities for agriculture and wildlife to flourish in town in a fiscally-responsible manner. Preservation of open space and recreation facilities benefits the Town's citizens by providing opportunities for passive and active recreation and by helping them keep being vibrant, active, and engaged in the community. Open space also combats air pollution, attenuates noise, prevents erosion, and provides protection from storm damage and flooding. Furthermore, protecting open space is one of the most effective ways of helping protect human health and safety.

Strategically located open space protects the Town's surface and ground water resources by allowing naturally occurring systems to provide water quality treatment and enhanced recharge; maintaining these naturally occurring systems is significantly less expensive than constructing and operating a local water treatment plant. Open space also provides a significant buffer of protection for the Town's water supply in the event of an accidental or intentional release of a contaminant.

The Town's character is closely associated with the amount, location, and condition of the open space within its boundaries. Open space provides the backdrop for the Town's historic villages and residential clusters that are threatened by suburban style sprawl. Open spaces and athletic competitions in town are memorable to visitors; visitors returning to town and sharing knowledge of these open spaces and athletic competitions with others who may in turn visit town provides opportunities for existing and new small businesses in town.

Agricultural activity supports rural characteristics that are desired by new and longtime residents of town alike and contributes both scenic beauty and economic benefits. The rising demand for locally grown food in and nearby town, including in Worcester, is a significant opportunity for West Boylston. Fields, forests, and wildlife habitats are becoming fragmented across the state. Diversity and variety of wildlife habitat are strong points of the current environment in West Boylston. Wildlife habitat in town includes upland forested areas, many different types of wetland areas, early successional brushy fields, and active agricultural fields. All of these places provide high quality habitat for wildlife; West Boylston residents benefit from the enjoyment of viewing wildlife and

through opportunities for financial gain from visitors who similarly would like to enjoy viewing them.

Description of Process

In the Spring of 2023, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) sought funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Planning Assistance Grant Program on behalf of the Town of West Boylston to update the Town's 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Once awarded funding, the Town contracted with CMRPC to assist the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) with the development of the OSRP update. In March 2024, CMRPC began attending the OSIC's regular meetings to facilitate discussions about the OSRP update.

The West Boylston OSIC consists of the following members:

1. Vincent Vignaly, Planning Board
2. James Pedone, Parks Commission
3. Brenda Bowman, Resident
4. Raymond DeSanti, Resident
5. Michael Peckar, Wachusett Greenways and the Greater Worcester Land Trust
6. William Chase, Conservation Commission
7. Ginny Rose Pellegrini, Resident

Staff from CMRPC attended a total of twelve West Boylston OSIC meetings to facilitate the OSRP update planning process, as is described in the *Public Participation and Planning Process* sub-section of the *Introduction* to this plan. These twelve meetings occurred on March 4th, 2024, April 11th, 2024, May 9th, 2024, June 27th, 2024, August 1st, 2024, August 29th, 2024, September 26th, 2024, November 7th, 2024, December 19th, 2024, February 27th, 2025, March 27th, 2025, and April 16th, 2025. At these meetings, the OSIC and CMRPC staff planned engagement efforts, updated the 2018 OSRP's Action Plan, and discussed various other sections of the OSRP update.

The first few meetings between CMRPC and the OSIC involved planning engagement efforts, including the public survey for this plan update and activities relating to this plan update for the June 2024 West Boylston Last Day of School event. The following meetings involved reviewing feedback from these engagement efforts and updating the Town's OSRP Ten -Year Action Plan. Final meetings included reviewing and updating other major sections of this plan update, including portions of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* and the *Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest* sections and the Open Space Map (Map #10).

Following the OSIC's review of the draft OSRP update, the Town posted the draft OSRP update on its website for a public comment period. On May 29th, 2025, the Town held a public presentation on the Plan at which CMRPC staff presented. CMRPC submitted the draft plan to the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) for review and conditional approval in June 2025. Once conditional approval for the Plan update was received, comments from DCS were addressed by the OSIC and CMRPC and then CMRPC submitted the plan for final approval.

Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

West Boylston has a wealth of open space, but much of the Town's open space surrounding the Wachusett Reservoir is owned and managed by the DCR and has restrictions on its recreational use. Most of the Town's unrestricted recreational areas are in constant demand and are currently overused. If projected population growth in town occurs, the burden on these areas will increase. The Town requires a plan that addresses the need for increased open and recreational spaces and specifically for recreational areas with activities that are safe, enriching, and accessible to older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents.

Although MA DCR owns 41.42% of the land in West Boylston and there has been concern about the loss of property taxes this has meant for the Town, most of West Boylston's residents appreciate having this open space. However, the Town's residents would also generally like to see increased access rights to the DCR's vast land holdings and increased annual payments in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT) for these lands. The DCR Watershed Management PILOT amount is calculated by multiplying the Department of Revenue (DOR) valuation of DCR Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) land by the local commercial tax rate. In 2024, the Town of West Boylston received $683,582 through PILOT from DCR; for more information about PILOT, please visit: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/watershed-payments-in-lieu-of-taxes-pilot.[107]

To address the various needs and priorities of residents expressed during this planning process, this 2025 OSRP update has set goals to improve recreational opportunities for all and to preserve the Town's environment, small-town character, and water supply. Specifically, the goals of the 2025 West Boylston OSRP update are to:

1. Protect, preserve, and enhance open space parcels;
2. Maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas;
3. Protect and enhance natural resources; and

[107] The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Watershed Management

4. Plan and develop greenways and walkable connections.

Overall, the Town of West Boylston and its Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) prioritize providing accessible, safe, and affordable recreational opportunities for all, including recreational trails and other shared-use paths, while preserving undeveloped, open spaces and protecting natural resources.

Section 7:

Analysis of Needs



7. Analysis of Needs

Analysis of Needs at a Glance

The Town of West Boylston should:

- Increase coordination and collaboration with private open space landowners,
- Increase the permanent protection of municipally owned open spaces, especially spaces with significant natural resources, while also pursuing the acquisition of undeveloped open spaces,
- Improve and increase opportunities and accommodations for active transportation, including recreational walking, hiking, and biking,
- Increase opportunities for water-based recreation, including through the installation of a splash pad,
- Provide additional athletic fields for both youth and older adults,
- Increase the accessibility of existing parks and other outdoor recreation areas, and
- Maintain working relationships between the Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, the Planning Board, the Department of Public Works, the Greater Worcester Land Trust, Wachusett Greenways, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other organizations.

Summary of Resource Protection Needs

The majority of the publicly accessible, protected open space in the Town of West Boylston is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR). Specifically, according to the MA Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS) and West Boylston Assessor's data, out of the 4,798.86 acres of open space land in town, MA DCR owns 3,010.42 acres, or nearly 63% of all open space land, not including land under water. Including land under water, MA DCR owns 3,675.22 acres, or nearly 80% of all open space, in West Boylston. Various private landowners have secured conservation restrictions (CRs), agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs), or watershed protection restrictions (WPRs) on their land in town. Overall, there are 1,312.9 acres of privately-owned open space in town which make up over 27% of all open space in town. Of this privately-owned open space, 259.94 acres (over 5% of all open space in town) is formally protected. There are also 202.63 acres of municipally owned open space in town which make up over 4% of all open space in town. Notably, the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT) owns two conservation areas in town, Pine Glen and the Goodale Street Conservation Area; in addition, there are two town-owned conservation areas which the GWLT holds the conservation restriction for, Blueberry Hill and the Kent Property.

In West Boylston, private landowners own 100% of the unprotected open space in town. These unprotected open spaces include the 182.05-acre Wachusett Country Club and the 52.72-acre Woodhaven Campground. One of the goals of this 2025 OSRP update is to protect, preserve, and enhance open space parcels, and one of the corresponding objectives to this goal is "support efforts of non-municipal landowners to retain and protect open space and communicate with these landowners to increase access to, the usage of, and fair compensation for use of their properties". Although landowners have the ultimate authority to determine which, if any, protection measures may be appropriate and worthwhile for their properties, the Town of West Boylston and the Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) will work to promote open space and recreation land protection opportunities for landowners.

In terms of open spaces with limited protection, nearly 50% of all municipal open space in West Boylston is not protected in perpetuity. These areas include Goodale Park, Woodland Park, and the athletic fields and outdoor recreational area near the Senior Center. In the future, the Town may consider securing permanent protection for these sites.

Municipally owned and protected areas in West Boylston include the West Boylston Water District's lands, the Blueberry Hill Conservation Area, and the Malden Brook Conservation Area. In relation to the goal from this 2025 OSRP update to protect, preserve, and enhance open space parcels, one of the corresponding objectives is to acquire and/or protect additional town-owned open space. As the Town considers opportunities to protect its existing open space, it will also consider opportunities to acquire additional open space. Areas the Town may consider for future acquisitions include the undeveloped land highlighted in the Open Space Map (Map #10) included in this plan.

As shown in the Open Space Map (Map #10), undeveloped parcels are distributed evenly throughout Town. In the future, the Town may consider prioritizing the acquisition of undeveloped parcels within more developed areas of Town to increase environmental equity and access to environmental and recreational resources. Funding opportunities the Town may consider for acquisition efforts include local Community Preservation funds, the Division of Conservation Services (DCS) Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant Program, the DCS Land Conservation Assistance Program, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

In addition to protecting, preserving, and enhancing open space, another goal of this OSRP update's Ten-Year Action Plan is to protect and enhance natural resources. Specifically, objectives under this goal include protecting and preserving waterbodies and waterways as well as special flora and fauna and special habitat areas. One tool Massachusetts'

municipalities may leverage to identify special resource areas is the Natural Heritage BioMap. The Natural Heritage BioMap was developed under a partnership between the Nature Conservancy and the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife). This online, publicly accessible, interactive tool maps and describes identified core habitats, critical natural landscapes, and other local and regional components. Core habitats refer to areas that are "critical for the long-term persistence of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and resilient ecosystems". Critical natural landscapes refer to "large landscape blocks that are minimally impacted by development as well as buffers to core habitats."[108]

The Natural Heritage BioMap identified core habitat and critical natural landscapes in West Boylston are mainly situated around the Wachusett Reservoir and along Malden Brook, as shown in the Habitat Features Map (Map #8) in the *Fisheries and Wildlife* sub-section of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* section of this plan. According to the Town of West Boylston's BioMap Town Report, only 9.8% of the Town's core habitat and 17.2% of the Town's critical natural landscape is protected. Similar to undeveloped areas and other parcels of interest, these unprotected resource areas may be prioritized by the Town for future protection efforts.

Overall, the protection and acquisition of land as a means of resource protection, including pursing grant applications for funds to acquire and preserve land, requires a significant amount of time and local capacity. For these reasons, the Town of West Boylston should consider conservation partnerships and regional efforts whenever possible.

Summary of Community's Needs

According to the results of the 2025 West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) public survey, the majority of respondents believe that residents of West Boylston are not adequately served by town-owned open space or recreation areas. As previously mentioned, most of West Boylston's open spaces are owned and managed by MA DCR. While these areas offer abundant walking and hiking opportunities, they are mostly only able to be accessed by automobile. According to the public survey results, over 50% of respondents are dissatisfied with the Town's sidewalks. Additionally, nearly 90% of respondents indicated that having open spaces accessible by walking is important and roughly 50% indicated that having open spaces accessible by biking or driving is important. Notably, only 23% of respondents indicated that having open spaces accessible by public transit is important, perhaps due to the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's (WRTA)

[108] The MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) BioMap

limited service area in West Boylston. It is worth noting that the Town's roadway network is utilized by multiple cyclist groups and provides some reasonably good opportunities for road cycling with connections to the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). The Town also contains various hiking and wilderness trails. Moving forward, it is crucial that the Town considers sidewalks and alternate transportation options which can provide more equitable access to open space resources in town throughout all town open space planning efforts.

According to the 2025 OSRP update's public survey results, only 16% of respondents are satisfied with existing outdoor recreation facilities, and 42% of respondents reported feeling neutral about existing outdoor recreation facilities. Similarly, less than 7% of respondents are satisfied with existing indoor recreation programs and nearly 55% of respondents reported feeling neutral about these programs. Between public survey results, feedback received at the June 2024 Last Day of School community event, and the knowledge of the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC), various ideas for specific recreational improvements, including improvements to existing athletic fields and other recreational facilities, were proposed. It is important to consider the needs of different groups of people in analyzing this feedback.

Youth

According to the United States Census Bureau as shown in the Population by Age Group Exhibit (Exhibit #5) in the *Population Characteristics* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this OSRP, 13% of the Town of West Boylston's residents are age 15 or younger and 27% of the Town's residents are between the ages of 15 and 24. With many residents of West Boylston under the age of 24, it is important to advocate for the needs of young children, youth, and young adults in town open space planning efforts.

Throughout this 2025 OSRP update process, the needs of West Boylston's youth were considered. Although the vast majority of the public survey respondents were over the age of 24, the survey was promoted to the West Boylston School Department. Additionally, CMRPC staff tabled at the West Boylston June 2024 Last Day of School Event, where most of the people who engaged with the tabling activities were youth. In addition to promoting the survey, CMRPC staff offered two activities at the table. The first activity involved prioritizing the goals included in the 2018 OSRP update using "West Boylston Bucks". The majority of young people invested the bucks they were given towards the "protect and enhance natural resources" goal, while many of the young people invested their bucks in the "protect and preserve open space parcels" goal. The other tabling activity involved asking participants to place colored-coded stickers on a map of West Boylston where they would like to see specific types of recreational improvements. Many youth participants

were excited about the idea of a splash pad or other public swimming opportunities being located in town, including near the public schools. It is worth noting that since West Boylston residents cannot swim in the Wachusett Reservoir, the only public swimming options available nearby are the public pool in Clinton, MA, and local swimming holes, such as Spectacle Pond in Lancaster, MA and Asnacomet or "Comet" Pond in Hubbardston, MA. Many participants at the tabling event were also enthusiastic about walking/hiking trails, including the idea of increased access to the trails in the area of the Wachusett Reservoir. Finally, many of the youth participants remarked they have been enjoying the recently renovated Pride Park and would like to see similar improvements to active recreation facilities elsewhere in town.

Although most public survey respondents were over the age of 24 and between the ages of 45 and 64, nearly 50% of respondents indicated they have children under 18 living with them. These respondents represented their children, grandchildren, or other youth relatives throughout the survey. For example, the majority of respondents indicated that acquiring land for new public athletic fields, especially to support existing youth programs, is their priority for town recreational expenditures. West Boylston has many athletic facilities, but they are all in high demand around the same times. For example, although Mixter Field was redeveloped specifically for softball, it is used for many athletic activities. In terms of unmet recreational needs related to youth, 62% of survey respondents indicated that the need for a large park with many facilities for youth is unmet, 58% of respondents indicated that the need for a public pool for youth is unmet, and 56% of respondents indicated that the need for an accessible spray or splash park for youth is unmet. When respondents were asked what their favorite open space or recreational facility is in town, Pride Park, which is adjacent to Goodale Park, Major Edwards School, and the Middle High School, was the second most mentioned facility; the majority of respondents indicated that the Mass Central Rail Trail is their favorite open space/recreational facility in town.

It is also notable that although the implementation of the entire 2016 Goodale Park Master Plan is not feasible due to financial limitations, the Town and the Parks Commission will continue to consider options for implementing specific aspects of that plan, such as updating the track. Lastly, when asked why they visit West Boylston's open space and recreational facilities, 53% of survey respondents stated that they participate in or watch formal youth sports; these survey results highlight the importance of working towards improving and building new athletic facilities in town.

Older Adults

As previously mentioned, the majority of the respondents to this plan update's public survey were adults, with 34.43% of respondents being between the ages of 25 and 44, 39.89% of respondents being between the ages of 45 and 64, and 24.04% of respondents being 65 and older. These results reflect West Boylston's population, as 26% of the Town's population is between the ages of 25 and 44, 27% of the Town's population is between the ages of 45 and 64, and 23% of the Town's population are 65 and over. Paper copies of the survey were available at the West Boylston Senior Center, which was recently constructed on Prescott Road and was completed in June 2019. The West Boylston Senior Center also serves as a Community Center and offers outdoor bocce as well as access to the nearby Mixter Field. Mixter Field is a town-owned multi-use field that primarily serves as a softball field. The location of the Town's Senior/Community Center next to outdoor recreational facilities is an example of the Town's commitment to offering active recreational and social opportunities to people of all ages. Additional open space and recreation needs of West Boylston's older adults were catalogued throughout this OSRP update process.

When asked why they visit West Boylston's open space and recreational facilities, 65% of survey respondents said they never participate in or watch formal adult sport leagues. The West Boylston Council on Aging offers various programs to older adults, including exercise classes, billiards, Wii bowling, art classes, and other social activities. The Senior Center also has a Facebook page which is regularly updated. In the future, the Council on Aging may consider offering additional programs that specifically involve active recreation opportunities for older adults and the Town may explore options for installing an additional pickleball court in town that older adults can use.

In terms of overall priorities for town open space expenditures, survey respondents indicated that improving passive recreation opportunities on existing public land is their top priority. Other popular town open space expenditure priorities among survey respondents include acquiring undeveloped land for new passive recreation opportunities and improving wildlife habitat and corridors for wildlife migration. It is worth noting that many older adult residents of West Boylston enjoy the state-owned land in more rural communities to the west of town, such as the Rutland State Forest.

As was previously mentioned, many survey respondents indicated that improving existing athletic fields is their top priority in terms of town recreation expenditures. Other popular town recreation expenditure priorities among survey respondents include expanding sidewalk and trail connections, creating a swimming facility, and acquiring land for new public athletic fields. In terms of the allocation of existing town funding, most survey respondents indicated that they would support allocating funding towards the

maintenance of existing facilities, improving and expanding sidewalks, and acquiring open space to protect water supplies.

People with Disabilities

According to five-year estimates from the 2022 American Community Survey, 14.3% of West Boylston's residents have a disability. According to this same source, 13.4% of people in Worcester County have a disability. As shown in the Disabilities Characteristics Exhibit (Exhibit #11) in the *Population Characteristics* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this plan, the majority of the people with disabilities in West Boylston (6.9% of the Town's total population) have ambulatory difficulties, which means they have difficulty walking; this is crucial to consider as the Town strives to improve existing and acquire new open space and recreational areas. 4.7% of people in West Boylston have hearing difficulties and 3.7% of people in town have independent living difficulties; this is somewhat reflective of the demographics of survey respondents. 3.74% of survey respondents indicated that they have, or someone in their household has, difficulty with seeing, even if wearing glasses. 3.21% of survey respondents indicated that they have, or someone in their household has, difficulty with walking or climbing the stairs, and 2.15% of survey respondents indicated that they have, or someone in their household has, difficulty with hearing, even if using hearing aids.

Considering the needs of people with disabilities is a shared priority among West Boylston's municipal staff, boards, and committees. In 2023, the Town completed an Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) for all municipally owned public areas, including the schools and outdoor recreation areas. This planning process also involved the designation of the Town Administrator as the ADA Coordinator and the adoption of a Grievance Procedure and Public Notice of Non-Discriminatory Employment Practices. The ADA SETP serves as a roadmap towards improving the accessibility of facilities and areas in town that may be leveraged throughout all future open space and recreational improvements and planning processes. Specifically, facility audits included within the ADA SETP outline barriers to accessibility and potential accessibility improvements for sites such as the Senior Center and Mixter Field, the Major Edwards Elementary School, the Middle/High School, the Town Common, and Goodale Park.

When asked what the Town's biggest unmet recreational need is, the second most frequent response from survey respondents was recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. As outlined in the ADA SETP, accessibility improvements can be made to various facilities and areas in town to increase overall ease of access; these improvements include constructing and renovating entrances and walkways so that they are firm, wide,

and level as well as offering handicap accessible parking, restroom facilities, and seating. The recent renovation of Pride Park, situated next to the Major Edwards School, included the installation of accommodations to provide universal access. In the future and in tandem with offering accessible accommodations at facilities, the Town should consider ways to actively involve people with disabilities, including people with ambulatory, hearing, or seeing difficulties, in more recreational activities and programs. To do so, the School Department, Parks Commission, and other relevant departments, boards, and committees should assess programs and opportunities offered to residents and whether they are welcoming and inclusive to people with disabilities.

Other Vulnerable Populations

The West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) recognizes that, in addition to the needs of youth, older adults, and people with disabilities, it is also important to consider the needs of other vulnerable and underrepresented groups throughout open space and recreation planning processes. Other underrepresented groups may include low-income individuals and families, racial and ethnic minorities, and people who speak English as a second language or who have limited English-speaking proficiency. As noted in the *Population Characteristics* sub-section of the *Community Setting* section of this OSRP update, there are no MA-designated Environmental Justice (EJ) population in West Boylston. Additionally, the majority of town residents are white, speak English, and have relatively high household incomes compared to the City of Worcester and the State. Considering ways to increase access to open space resources and recreational opportunities for minority, low-income, and limited English-speaking proficiency populations in open space and recreational planning efforts is critical to ensuring environmental equity.

The MA EEA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program maintains the Guides for Equitable and Actionable Resilience (GEAR), a publicly available, online tools that allows users to assess local, regional, and statewide vulnerabilities according to various sources, including the United States Census Bureau. According to GEAR, approximately 3.3% of residents of West Boylston's census tract #7291 (northern and eastern West Boylston) have limited English proficiency (LEP), while nearly 2% of residents in census tract #7292 (southwestern West Boylston) have limited English proficiency (LEP). Also, according to GEAR, 5% of residents of census tract #7292 and 7% of residents of census tract #7921 are Hispanic or Latino. While West Boylston's median household income is higher than the national and statewide median household incomes, there are still low-income households in town. Specifically, both of West Boylston's two census tracts have a higher proportion of low-income households than 23% of all U.S. census tracts. Accommodations that the

Town may consider in order to increase access to resources and opportunities for minority, low-income, and limited English-speaking proficiency populations include translated signage or other materials, prioritizing the improvement or protection of resources near minority, low-income, and or limited English-speaking proficiency neighborhoods, and ensuring that recreational programs are as affordable, welcoming, and inclusive as is possible.

The Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) in 2023. This critical plan examines outdoor recreation assets and needs through a regional and state lens. The purpose of the SCORP is to guide future recreational investments towards both regional and state needs while supporting and striving towards four main goals:

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

This 2025 West Boylston OSRP update supports all four of the above goals, and each of these goals are integrated into this document and its action plan to varying degrees. Increasing open space and recreational access to underserved populations is a shared priority among municipal staff and residents in West Boylston. As the Town works to achieve all four of the goals outlined in this OSRP update, the Town will always consider the needs and priorities of people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. In part because the MA DCR owns and manages most of the Town's open spaces for water supply protection, the Town has ample trails but has no public swimming spaces. This OSRP's Ten -Year Action Plan includes objectives relating to maintaining, improving, and expanding the Mass Central Rail Trail; it also includes objectives relating to investigating water recreation opportunities in town while increasing the promotion of places to swim near the Town, such as the public pool in the nearby Town of Clinton. Finally, this OSRP recognizes parks as important areas where youth may recreate, socialize, and learn. The Town has noticed these benefits to youth occurring at the recently renovated Pride Park and hopes to renovate other existing parks, such as Woodland Park, in the near future. Renovating Woodland Park is referenced in the OSRP's Action Plan along with other actions related to the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of recreational areas in town.

Also referenced in part of this OSRP's Action Plan is installing a water facility such as a spray park or splash pad at Woodland Park.

Management Needs and Potential Change of Use

As a result of the 2002 West Boylston OSRP update process, the Town established an Open Space Advisory Committee. Prior to the establishment of this permanent Committee, the Town-Wide Planning Committee appointed an Open Space Preservation and Environmental Protection Task Force subcommittee in February of 2000. The Open Space Advisory Committee's name changed to the Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) in 2009, and its primary responsibility is to implement the goals, objectives, and actions laid out in the Town's most recent OSRP update. The OSIC's overall mission is "to maintain a balanced approach to provide safe open space and recreational opportunities for active and passive activities, to provide a safe and adequate water supply, to enhance the Town character, and to support opportunities for agriculture and wildlife to flourish in a fiscally-responsible manner."

In an effort to facilitate its responsibility and strive towards its mission, the OSIC is comprised of various representatives. The members of the OSIC are appointed by the Town Administrator and include representatives from the Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, and the Planning Board as well as and four town residents. Since the approval of the 2018 West Boylston OSRP update by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Division of Conservation Services (DCS), the OSIC has worked with various other town departments, boards, and committees to implement actions included in the Town's 2018 OSRP Seven-Year Action Plan. Some of these accomplishments that relate specifically to recreational resources include the renovation of Mixter Field to supplement other high-use athletic fields, the renovation of Pride Park to become ADA accessible, the installation of a welcome sign, blazing, and a parking area at the Blueberry Hill Conservation Area, the continued development and implementation of rules and regulations for all park facilities, and the incorporation of recreational facilities into the 2023 West Boylston Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP). In terms of recent actions that relate to natural resources and open spaces, the Town has continued to protect environmentally sensitive areas through zoning controls, restrictions on development, and the acquisition of development rights. In addition and related to climate resiliency, the Town has also installed an electric vehicle charging station at Goodale Park.

An additional project that has been implemented in town to address 2018 West Boylston OSRP update's Seven -Year Action Plan goals and objectives is the implementation of the

2018 West Boylston Complete Streets Prioritization Plan through sidewalk improvements along Route 12/Worcester Street, Crescent Street, and North Main Street. Another notable project related to open space resources which has been implemented in town since 2018 is the removal of the Quinapoxet Dam. The MWRA, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the MA Department of Fish and Game (DFG) have removed the Quinapoxet River Dam. This dam removal will provide a myriad of resiliency benefits, including allowing the vital passage of Brook Trout and Landlocked Salmon across the dam's former site as part of their migrations. This dam removal project will also soon result in the installation of an ADA compliant path and fishing platform to replace the existing fishing platform.[109]

Overall, the West Boylston OSIC has been successful in facilitating its responsibility and fulfilling its mission. However, its continued success is contingent on maintaining working relationships between itself and the Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, the Planning Board, the Department of Public Works, the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT), Wachusett Greenways, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR), and other organizations. In particular, the Conservation Commission, the Parks Commission, and the GWLT are primary partners in many of the projects involving the OSIC. Specifically, the mission of the Conservation Commission is to administer the MA Wetlands Protection Act (MA General Law 131, Section 40) and the mission of the Parks Commission is to manage and improve public parks. The GWLT is the land trust which serves West Boylston and several nearby communities, and its primary mission is to protect critical open space parcels in the Greater Worcester Region. The GWLT and the Town are in conservation partnerships together, as the GWLT holds conservation restrictions for the Blueberry Hill Conservation Area and the Kent Property, which are both town-owned lands. These partnerships are examples of working relationships between the OSIC and another organization which shares common goals which provide benefits to the Town. The Town and GWLT also work together to manage the Pine Glen property, which is owned by the GWLT; the Town occasionally assists with roadside trimming at this property, and overall management of the property is conducted by the GWLT, including by GWLT volunteers. However, funding capacity remains a barrier to the achievement of all open space and recreational goals in town, including both the maintenance and improvement of recreational facilities and the protection and purchase of open spaces. As such, the Town looks forward to the opportunity to pursue funding from MA EEA upon the approval of this OSRP update, including funding from the Parkland

[109] The MA Water Resource Authority (MWRA)

Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program, the Land Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Section 8:

Goals & Objectives



8. Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives were developed by the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) and were informed by the 2018 West Boylston OSRP Action Plan and feedback from the public throughout the 2025 OSRP update process.

Goal 1: Protect, preserve, & enhance open space parcels

Objective 1.1: Maintain and conduct sound management of existing and new town-owned open space. Educate town officials, volunteers, and citizens about the opportunities provided by and benefits of open space.

Objective 1.2: Acquire and/or protect additional town-owned open space.

Objective 1.3: Support efforts for non-municipal (private and state) landowners to retain and protect open space and communicate with these landowners to increase access to, the usage of, and fair compensation for the use of their properties.

Objective 1.4: Encourage use of open space for agriculture, where appropriate.

Goal 2: Maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas

Objective 2.1: Maintain and improve existing town-owned passive and active recreational areas, including by addressing ADA requirements.

Objective 2.2: Increase and expand available recreation areas in town, including indoor recreational spaces.

Objective 2.3: Conduct sound management of recreational areas and educate town officials and residents about the opportunities provided by and benefits of recreational areas.

Goal 3: Protect and enhance natural resources

Objective 3.1: Protect and preserve water bodies and waterways.

Objective 3.2: Protect special flora and fauna and their habitat.

Goal 4: Plan and develop greenways and walkable connections in the Town with consideration to appropriate regional connections

Objective 4.1: Launch efforts locally and regionally to develop greenway connections to and safe pedestrian access for open spaces and recreation areas. Map paths, trails, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure as is possible.

Objective 4.2: Incorporate historic preservation planning into open space, recreation, and trail planning efforts.

Section 9:
Ten-Year Action Plan



Goal 1: Protect, Preserve, & Enhance Open Space Parcels				
Objective 1.1: Maintain and conduct sound management of existing and new town-owned open space. Educate town officials, volunteers, and citizens about the opportunities provided by and benefits of open space.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 1.1.1: Provide oversight and maintenance of the Town's open spaces.	High	DPW, Con. Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.2: Encourage assistance from community organizations, such as local scouts, the Garden Club, and the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT), to maintain and enhance Town-owned open space.	High	TA, Parks Com., Con. Com., DPW	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.3: Preserve small town character through development controls and the maintenance of minimum area zoning requirements. Keep undeveloped areas within developed sections of town as open space, especially in the densely developed southern area of town.	Medium	PB, SB	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.4: Educate town officials, citizens, and students about the availability and locations of open space in town through use of the town website and an interactive map; create brochures and other educational materials about these topics to include in town reports and electric bills.	Medium	OSIC, Con. Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.5: Include all applicable boards and commissions in discussions regarding open space land use decisions as well as forest management.	High	PB, SB, Con. Com., TA, OSIC	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.6: When relevant, educate local officials and volunteers about open space tax benefits and the impacts of open space on the Town's tax base.	Medium	TA, SB, PB, Con. Com., OSIC, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.1.7: Pursue the implementation of West Boylston's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) as part of all open space projects in town.	High	Parks Com., TA	Time, Municipal ADA Grant, Land Conservation Assistance Grant	Ongoing
Objective 1.2: Acquire and/or protect additional town-owned open space.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 1.2.1: Maintain a prioritized inventory of land available to be acquired by the Town and maintained as open space.	High	OSIC, Con. Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.2.2: Acquire desirable parcels (such as land adjacent to existing conservation land, such as Blueberry Hill Conservation Area) or pursue conservation restrictions to keep parcels in undeveloped conditions; work with the GWLT to acquire parcels and/or development rights, as is possible.	High	GWLT, SB, Con. Com., OSIC, DCR, TA, CPC	Time & resources, CPA, LAND Grant, Land Conservation Assistance Grant, Conservation Restrictions, Watershed Protection Restrictions	Ongoing
Action 1.2.3: Establish a protocol for contacting landowners to discuss selling or donating land to the Town or GWLT, and advertise this opportunity for land sale or donation.	High	OSIC, TA	Time & resources	Year 1

Action 1.2.4: Develop a plan and education materials to help ensure the preservation of the Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B Programs and promote the use of these programs in town.	High	OSIC, TA, Ag. Com., BOA, Con. Com.	Time & resources	Year 1
Action 1.2.5: Implement a Chapter 61 Program plan in town and disburse educational materials on this program; contact landowners who could potentially benefit from Chapter 61 and assist them in filing for Chapter Lands status.	High	TA, BOA, OSIC, Ag. Com.	Time & resources	Years 2-10
Action 1.2.6: Research mechanisms to minimize tax valuation similar to those within the Chapter Lands program for lots where the owner commits and documents a deed restriction noting the limitation that the land will not be developed and will remain as open space.	Medium	OSIC, BOA, GWLT, TA, CPC	Time & resources	Year 2
Action 1.2.7: Protect areas of undeveloped open spaces in town to the maximum extent.	High	OSIC, Con. Com, Assessors, SB	Time & resources, Conservation Restrictions	Ongoing
Action 1.2.8: Commit to expand the current amount of town-owned open space land.	High	SB, PB	Time & resources, LAND Grant Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund	Ongoing
Action 1.1.9: Review and update (if necessary) the Town's Right of First Refusal policy for open space lands.	Medium	SB, TA, GWLT, CPC	Time & resources	Year 1
Objective 1.3: Support efforts for non-municipal (private and state) landowners to retain and protect open space and communicate with these landowners to increase access to, the usage of, and fair compensation for the use of their properties.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 1.3.1: Partner with MA DCR and the state legislature to ensure local access to DCR-owned parcels.	Medium	SB, OSIC, TA, residents, town officials, legislative delegation	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.3.2: Obtain increased concessions from the House of Corrections in return for community services used.	Medium	SB, TA	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.3.3: Advocate at the state level to increase PILOT from DCR Water Supply Protection property in town.	Medium	SB, TA	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 1.3.4: Review and submit comments on draft DCR program plans when they are being updated. Document and publicize town needs and wishes regarding future uses of DCR land in town and former county-owned land to ensure that parts of these lands remain open and accessible for recreational use. Incorporate comments and input on DCR land management and public access plans.	High	SB, Parks Com., OSIC, TA	Time & resources	Ongoing
Objective 1.4: Encourage use of open space for agriculture, where appropriate.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**

Action 1.4.1: Implement internship programs in cooperation with colleges to help increase usage and/or yields of products for sale from private and/or DCR lands.	Low	Ag. Com.	Time & resources	Years 5-10
Action 1.4.2: Review and update the Town's Right to Farm bylaw, if needed.	Low	Ag. Com., SB, BOH, OSIC	Time & resources	Year 1
Action 1.4.3: Coordinate with USDA, MA DCR, and nearby colleges to encourage the utilization of land for agricultural uses.	Medium	Ag. Com.	Time & resources, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions	Ongoing

Goal 2: Maintain, Enhance, and Expand the Town's Recreational Areas				
Objective 2.1: Maintain and improve existing town-owned passive and active recreational areas, including by addressing ADA requirements.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 2.1.1: Establish and publish a maintenance and operations protocol for all town parks and establish funding for maintenance of town parks. Assess the benefits of utilizing the Parks Commission to advise and monitor long range planning for recreation areas in town.	High	Parks Com., DPW, SB, TA	Time & resources	Year 1
Action 2.1.2: Edit the Town's Zoning Bylaws to expand the existing residential screening bylaw to require a buffer zone / a protected vegetated setback that provides visual and auditory screening between athletic fields and abutting residential land.	Low	PB	Time & resources, CMRPC, Citizen Planner Training Collaborative	Year 1
Action 2.1.3: Implement rules/regulations and fees for use of park facilities and revise these rules and regulations as is needed.	High	Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 2.1.4: Design renovations for and renovate Woodland Park.	High	Parks Com., SB	CPA, PARC Grant	Years 2-7
Action 2.1.5: Evaluate and annually review opportunities to renovate Goodale Park based on community needs and financial constraints. Ensure that implementation of the Goodale Park Master Plan (including phasing, costs, and prioritization of facilities) is based on current priorities and realistic financing and that the Master Plan is a guide to be used for decision-making.	High	Parks Com., CPC, Fin. Com., OSIC, SB, CPC	Land Conservation Assistance Grant, CPA	Ongoing
Action 2.1.6: Pursue the implementation of West Boylston's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) through all recreation projects in town, including projects at the Town Common and bandstand.	High	Parks Com., TA	Time, Municipal ADA Grant, Land Conservation Assistance Grant	Ongoing
Action 2.1.7: Continue to provide sanitary facilities at high usage recreation sites (Goodale Park, Woodland Park, Pride Park, Mixter Field, Reservoir Triangle, and the Town Common) and improve parking accommodations at these sites as is possible.	High	SB, TA, DPW, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 2.1.8: Secure funding to establish a new town pool facility or pool alternative. Install a water feature / facility, such as a splash pad or spray park, at Woodland Park or Goodale Park.	High	SB, TA, DPW, Parks Com.	CPA, PARC Grant, MVP Action Grant	Years 2-7
Action 2.1.9: Establish and fund a Parks and Recreation Director position in town.	High	TA, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Years 1-2
Objective 2.2: Increase and expand available recreation areas in Town, including indoor recreational spaces.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 2.2.1: Maintain and update an inventory (in GIS and spreadsheet forms) of available open spaces in town which should be considered for hosting town recreation facilities.	High	Parks Com., OSIC, CMRPC, DPW	Time & resources, CMRPC LPA or DLTA	Ongoing
Action 2.2.2: Increase opportunities for recreation on town-owned land, especially for youth and older adults (including at Woodland Park and in the northern part of town).	High	Parks Com., COA, CPC	MA Self-Help Funding, CPA, PARC Grant	Ongoing

Action 2.2.3: Investigate alternatives to a town pool for swimming opportunities for residents and increase outreach regarding free, open, and public swimming spaces, such as the pool in Clinton.	Medium	Parks Com.	Time & resources, private partnerships, MVP Action Grant	Ongoing
Action 2.2.4: Establish a list of possible picnic areas and develop these picnic areas.	Low	Parks Com., OSIC, CPC	Time, CPA	Ongoing
Action 2.2.5: Communicate with MA DCR and the House of Corrections regarding opportunities on their properties (including opportunities related to boating, basketball courts, and/or pollinator gardens); attend public meetings to express community needs.	High	SB, TA, residents	Time	Ongoing
Action 2.2.6: Coordinate with landowners willing to allow town use of their properties for recreation. Approach owners of available indoor recreational facilities (such as batting cages, pickleball courts, and other facilities) for use of their facilities. Investigate the possibility of constructing an indoor gym and recreation facility on land currently owned by the Town.	Medium	Parks Com., SB, OSIC	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 2.2.7: Provide additional athletic fields to supplement high-use fields, incorporating parking accommodations, as possible	High	Parks Com.	PARC Grant, Land Conservation Assistance Grant	Ongoing
Action 2.2.8: Evaluate options for establishing a running track in town where high school track meets can be held according to MIAA requirements in town.	High	Parks Com., SB	PARC Grant, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Land Conservation Assistance Grant	Year 2
Action 2.2.9: Assess interest in formation of community gardens, such as at one of the public schools.	Low	Parks Com., Ag. Com., School Committee	Time, Regional Environmental Council advise	Ongoing
Action 2.2.10: Ensure utilization of a portion of Mixter Field for the provision of additional passive recreational facilities for youth and older adults; consider adding swings at Mixter Field.	Medium	Parks Com., SB, OSIC, COA, CPC	CPA, PARC Grant	Ongoing
Objective 2.3: Conduct sound management of recreational areas and educate town officials and residents about the opportunities provided by and benefits of recreational areas.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 2.3.1: Improve coordination among local boards and officials and include all applicable boards and commissions in discussions regarding decisions regarding and opportunities for recreational areas.	High	TA, SB, PB, Con. Com., OSIC, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
2.3.2: Ensure that public input is encouraged and enabled whenever a change is proposed for any town recreational area.	High	TA, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing
2.3.3: Notify permit holders as soon as is possible when pesticide application at recreational areas occurs.	High	DPW	Time & resources	Ongoing
2.3.4: Coordinate activities between different park users using a parks usage schedule and update this schedule online as is possible.	High	TA, Parks Com., Town Clerk	Time & resources	Ongoing

2.3.5: Implement and enforce land use regulations professionally and consistently.	High	Parks Com., Building Inspector, PB, Con. Com., ZBA	Time & resources	Ongoing
2.3.6: Identify a process to more expeditiously utilize CPA funds to complete "due diligence" work before requesting purchase of lands or development restrictions on lands at Town Meeting.	High	TA, OSIC	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 2.3.7: Integrate recreational areas into open space maps, pamphlets, and informational packets for distribution to the public, including a welcome brochure for new residents.	High	Parks Com., OSIC, CMRPC	Time & resources, CMRPC DLTA	Year 1

Goal 3: Protect and enhance natural resources				
Objective 3.1: Protect and preserve water bodies and waterways.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 3.1.1: Collaborate with the West Boylston Water District on land protection and future land purchases to assure an adequate supply of water for the Town, with a focus on the Town's existing wellhead areas and potential new water sources.	High	OSIC, WBWD, Con. Com.	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.1.2: Support local efforts to and cooperate with relevant entities like MA DCR to enhance water resources, for example through volunteer invasives management.	High	Con. Com., SB, OSIC, DPW, local land trusts	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.1.3: Review new development and redevelopment projects to assess if these developments lie in FEMA Flood Hazard Zones. Ensure stormwater bylaw compliance and no increase in runoff flows, which stresses streams and causes bank erosion, at these developments.	High	DPW, PB, ZBA, Building Com., Con. Com.	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.1.4: Protect privately owned wetlands by encouraging the certification of vernal pools; utilize volunteers such as scouts or students in these certification efforts. Consider options for purchasing parcels with wetlands and vernal pools for water supply protection as is possible.	Medium	Con. Com., Schools, non-profits, educational organizations, GWLT	Time, REC	Ongoing
Action 3.1.5: Support the preservation of fisheries in the Wachusett Reservoir and its tributaries.	Medium	Con. Com., OSIC	Time, MVP Action Grant	Ongoing
Action 3.1.6: Assess the feasibility of expanding and expand wildlife greenway corridors along streams and wetlands in town, including along the Gates Brook Salmon Run area. Leverage the recent corridor analysis conducted with MVP Action Grant funding for this effort.	High	Con. Com., OSIC	Time & resources, MVP Action Grant	Ongoing
Action 3.1.7: Draft and implement a plan to control invasive species in and along waterbodies and waterways that involves volunteers and promotes education. Leverage local land trust efforts, such as efforts from the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), as case studies.	High	OSIC, residents, local land trusts (SVT, GWLT)	Time	Years 1 - 3
Action 3.1.8: Enforce violations where dumping of trash and yard wastes occur, particularly near streams and wetlands.	High	PD, Con. Com., DPW	Time & resources	Ongoing
Objective 3.2: Protect special flora and fauna and their habitat.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 3.2.1: Continue enforcement of existing zoning in town designed to protect the environment, including aquifer protection zoning, minimum lot sizes, and residential cluster development.	High	PB, ZBA, Building Inspector	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.2.2: Support actions that protect important habitat for rare species, such as BioMap2 Core Habitat, and/or other environmentally sensitive areas through town bylaws, zoning, restrictions on development, and acquisition of	High	Con. Com., OSIC, SB, PB, local land trusts, CPC	Time, NHESP BioMap, CPA	Ongoing

development rights. Leverage DCR acquisitions as part of these efforts as is appropriate.				
Action 3.2.3: Evaluate existing methods in town of educating people and enforcing rules regarding walking dogs throughout town, and update these methods as is needed.	High	OSIC, DPW, Wachusett Greenways	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 3.2.4: Support programs that protect and educate townspeople and town staff about biodiversity.	Medium	School Dept., OSIC	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.2.5: Coordinate work with town departments and state agencies to protect significant natural features in town.	High	Con. Com., SB, WBWD, DPW, OSIC	Time	Ongoing
Action 3.2.6: Integrate special native flora and fauna, and their habitat, into the development of the plan to control invasive species in and along waterbodies and waterways (as is mentioned in action 3.1.7); this plan must consider how invasives hinder the quality of native species' habitat and open space.	High	OSIC, residents, local land trusts (SVT, GWLT)	Time	Years 1 - 3

Goal 4: Plan and Develop Greenways and Walkable Connections in the Town with Consideration to Appropriate Regional Connections				
Objective 4.1: Launch efforts locally and regionally to develop greenway connections to and safe pedestrian access for open spaces and recreation areas. Map paths, trails, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure as is possible.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**
Action 4.1.1: Update the West Boylston Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.	High	OSIC, T Com., DPW, PB, SB, TA	Complete Streets	Years 1- 3
Action 4.1.2: Update the West Boylston Sidewalk Plan.	High	OSIC, T Com., WBMLP, DPW, PB, SB, TA	CMRPC DLTA	Year 1
Action 4.1.3: Prioritize the repair, maintenance, and expansion of existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in town. Partner with Wachusett Greenways and MA DCR to extend the Mass Central Rail Trail east from Thomas Street to Pleasant Street, then to Prescott Street, and then to tie into Bean Road in Sterling.	High	Wachusett Greenways, DCR, OSIC, DPW	Time & resources, MassTrails Grant Program, Shared Streets & Spaces Program, Complete Streets Program, MGL Chapter 90	Ongoing
Action 4.1.4: Develop north-south and east-west trail links to abutting towns with consideration of wildlife corridors and connections.	High	Town-wide Planning Committee, OSIC, Wachusett Greenways, neighboring communities	Time & resources, MassTrails Grant Program	Ongoing
Action 4.1.5: Evaluate and acquire (by purchase and/or gift) easements and corridor parcels to link open space parcels in town via natural corridors for hiking and the movement of wildlife.	Medium	GWLT, OSIC, Wachusett Greenways, neighboring communities, CPC	CPA funds & gifts	Ongoing
Action 4.1.6: Support Wachusett Greenways' efforts to maintain and expand the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) and cooperate with Wachusett Greenways to improve the trailhead parking at the MCRT. Support the addition of interpretive trails along the Rail Trail to historic sites and extension of the trail to Sterling.	High	TA, DPW, Wachusett Greenways, OSIC	Time & resources, local scouts	Ongoing
Action 4.1.7: Ensure active representation of Wachusett Greenways and local land trusts, such as the Greater Worcester Land Trust, in planning and implementation efforts relating to this goal.	High	OSIC, GWLT, Wachusett Greenways	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 4.1.8: Advocate to the WRTA to extend WRTA Route #30 to the MCRT.	High	T Com.	Time	Ongoing
Action 4.1.9: Assess and implement opportunities to increase usage of recreational trails and sidewalks in town by people with disabilities and older adults.	High	Parks Com., DPW	Time, CMRPC Trail Access Toolkit	Ongoing
Objective 4.2: Incorporate historic preservation planning into open space, recreation, and trail planning efforts.				
Action	**Priority**	**Responsible Entities**	**Resources**	**Timeline**

Action 4.2.1: Investigate the use of grants (such as from MA DCR's Heritage Landscape Inventory Program) to preserve and expand access to historic sites, including those along Mass Central Rail Trail (including through interpretive trail signage).	Medium	OSIC, Historic Preservation, Parks Com., scouts	Time & resources	Ongoing
Action 4.2.2: Coordinate open space preservation activities with historic preservation activities.	Medium	OSIC, Historic Preservation, Parks Com.	Time & resources	Ongoing

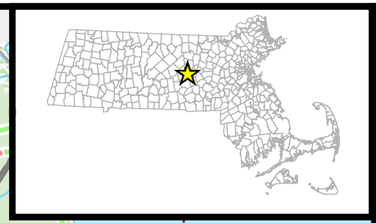
Abbreviations:

- OSIC = Open Space Implementation Committee
- Parks Com. = Parks Commission
- Con. Com. = Conservation Commission
- CPC = Community Preservation Committee
- TA = Town Administrator
- WBMLP = West Boylston Municipal Light Plant
- DPW = Department of Public Works
- WBWD = West Boylston Water District
- Building Com. = Building Commission
- SB = Select Board
- BOH = Board of Health
- T Com. = Transportation Committee
- Ag. Com. = Agricultural Commission
- Fin. Com. = Finance Committee
- COA = Council on Aging
- DCR = MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
- GWLT = Greater Worcester Land Trust
- SVT = Sudbury Valley Trustees
- CMRPC = Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
- PB = Planning Board
- ZBA = Zoning Board of Appeals
- PD = Police Department

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 11

ACTION PLAN



1 Goal 1: Protect, preserve, & enhance open space parcels

2 Goal 2: Maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas

3 Goal 3: Protect and enhance natural resources

4 Goal 4: Plan and develop greenways and walkable connections in the Town with consideration to appropriate regional connections

Legend

- Town Boundary
- WRTA_Bus_Stops
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools
- Off Road Trails
- Roads / Trails
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service

Open Space Ownership

- Federal
- State/County
- Municaipal - Conservation
- Municipal - Recreation
- Municipal - Water Supply Protection
- Municipal
- Private
- Non-Profit

Level of Protection

- Perpetuity*
- Limited
- None

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.

Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantile Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

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Date: 3/3/2025 Document Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\Subprojects\m321_osrp\osrp321_10_ActionPlan_11x17.mxd

Section 10:

Public Comments









TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON SELECT BOARD
140 Worcester Street,
West Boylston, MA 01583
Phone (774) 261-4012
selectboard@westboylston-ma.gov ω www.westboylston-ma.gov

February 2026

Melissa Cryan
MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA),
Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
100 Cambridge St. Ste. 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

Dear Ms. Cryan,

I am writing on behalf of the West Boylston Select Board to express our formal support for West Boylston's 2025 OSRP Update. The members of the West Boylston Select Board have reviewed the Plan and firmly believe that it reflects the needs and priorities of residents.

The West Boylston Select Board appreciates and commends the town's Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) for its efforts in completing this planning process. It is clear that the OSIC thoughtfully engaged the public and collaborated with various local boards, committees, departments, and other local, regional, and state entities. The OSRP Update not only inventories natural and recreational resources, but details specific actions for their improvement. Specifically, the OSRP Update includes a Ten-Year Action Plan that may serve as a roadmap for relevant stakeholders towards increased, improved, and protected resources. The goals included in this OSRP and its Action Plan reflect a shared vision to prioritize increasing and maintaining access to high quality open space and recreation opportunities for all residents.

The Board looks forward to collaborating with the OSIC and various other local, regional, and state entities to pursue the goals laid out in this Plan over the next ten years. Please consider this letter a demonstration of support for the 2025 West Boylston OSRP Update from the West Boylston Select Board.

Thank you,

Kristina Pedone, Chair

Vanessa Kuzmanovski, Vice Chair

David Ashwell, Clerk

Barur R. Rajeshkumar

James Morrissey

THE PLANNING BOARD OF WEST BOYLSTON
140 WORCESTER STREET
WEST BOYLSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01583

January 28, 2026

Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environment
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: 2025 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update for the Town of West Boylston

Dear Ms. Cryan:

It is hereby certified that the Planning Board voted to support the update of the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan that was dated December 2025, and prepared by our Open Space Implementation Committee, with the assistance of CMRPC.

The Planning Board appreciates the efforts of this committee and all its members to pull together a wide array of issues and provide guidance for the town to implement a feasible open space protection and parks and recreation system.

There is extensive background information included that can be used for other town plans currently being worked on. This document will guide the town well for the next 10 years.

The community surveys and Public Forum provided adequate opportunities for the Board members and all townspeople to provide input and feedback to create a plan for which the town can be proud to implement.

Thank you for your consideration of our updated plan and we ask for your support to implement the action items contained herein.

Very Truly,

Marc Frieden, Chair
West Boylston Planning Board

Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantile Street, Worcester MA, 01608
(508) 756-7717

January 15, 2026

Melissa Cryan
MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA),
Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
100 Cambridge St. Ste. 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Town of West Boylston 2025 – 2035 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

I am writing on behalf of the Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to express our enthusiastic support for the Town of West Boylston's 2025 – 2035 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update. This comprehensive and forward-looking OSRP reflects West Boylston's commitment to protecting its natural assets, enhancing recreational opportunities, and promoting equitable access to open space for all residents.

This OSRP is the result of a thoughtful planning process that involved a review of the 2018 OSRP, other Town plans, data collection, an analysis of demographics, existing conditions, and regulatory systems, and robust community engagement opportunities. Led by the Open Space and Implementation Committee (OSIC), the Town's transparent and participatory approach ensured that this updated OSRP reflects the priorities and needs of West Boylston's residents and various stakeholders. And tabling at West Boylston's Public Schools' Last Day of School event provided a unique opportunity to engage with and hear from the youth in town. Overall, by aligning with the Town's Master Plan and other strategic documents, West Boylston's updated OSRP provides a unified roadmap for balancing growth with conservation and recreation over the next decade.

CMRPC is particularly encouraged by the plan's goals to protect, preserve, and enhance West Boylston's open space parcels, maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas, protect and enhance its natural resources, and plan and develop greenways and walkable connections throughout the community. We commend the Town of West Boylston, the OSIC, and the many partners involved for their thoughtful stewardship and leadership in advancing this vital community resource. Please consider this letter as a formal demonstration of CMRPC's support of the Town of West Boylston's 2025 - 2035 OSRP Update and the associated planning process.

Respectfully,

Trish Settles
Deputy Director
Regional Collaboration and Community Planning

1/29/26

Section 11:

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Appendix



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

Maura T. Healey
GOVERNOR

Kimberley Driscoll
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Rebecca L. Tepper
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1081
http://www.mass.gov/eea

February 27, 2026

Dani Marini-King
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
1 Mercantile St #520
Worcester, MA 01608

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Marini-King:

Thank you for submitting the Open Space and Recreation Plan for West Boylston to this office for review and compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. I'm pleased to write that the plan has received final approval and the town is eligible to apply for DCS grants through October 2035. Please contact me at melissa.cryan@mass.gov if you have any questions or concerns.

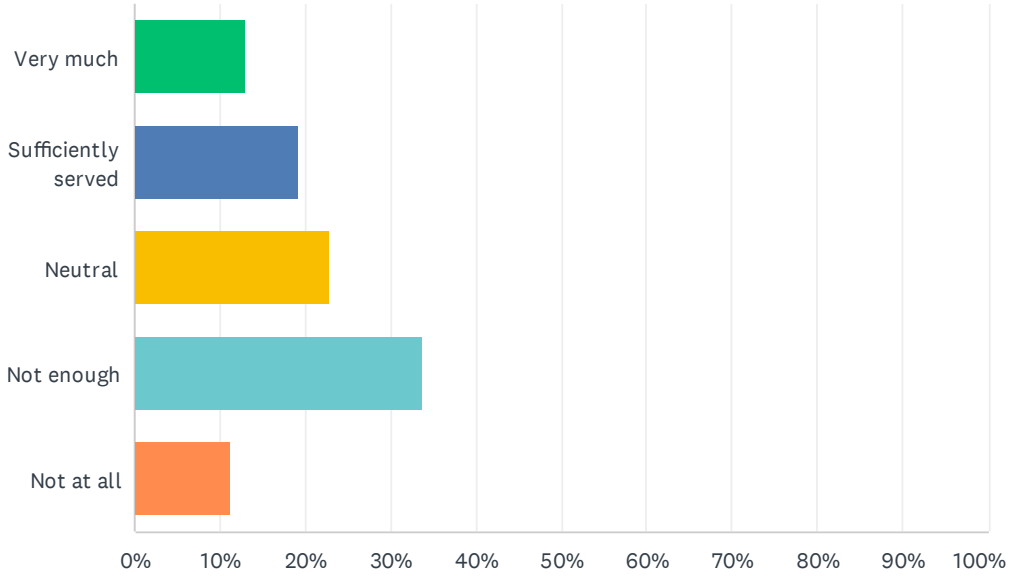
Sincerely,

Melissa Cryan

Melissa Cryan
Grant Programs Supervisor

Q1 Is the Town adequately served by current Open Space?

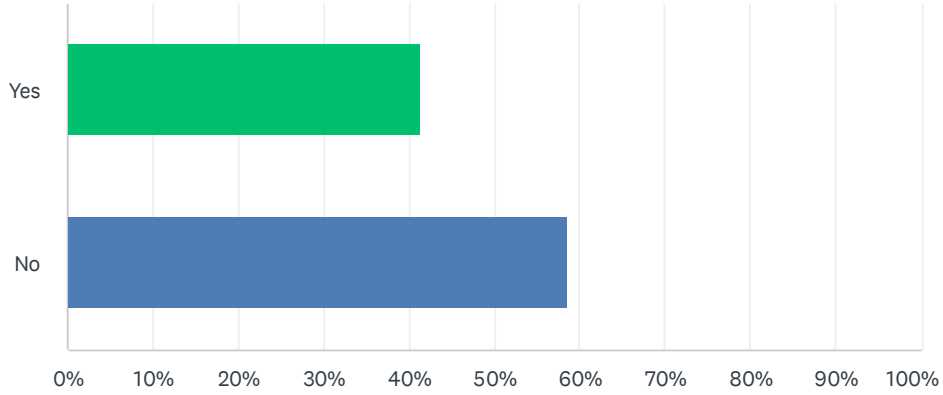
Answered: 193 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very much	12.95%	25
Sufficiently served	19.17%	37
Neutral	22.80%	44
Not enough	33.68%	65
Not at all	11.40%	22
TOTAL		193

Q2 Is there adequate Town-owned Open Space in West Boylston?

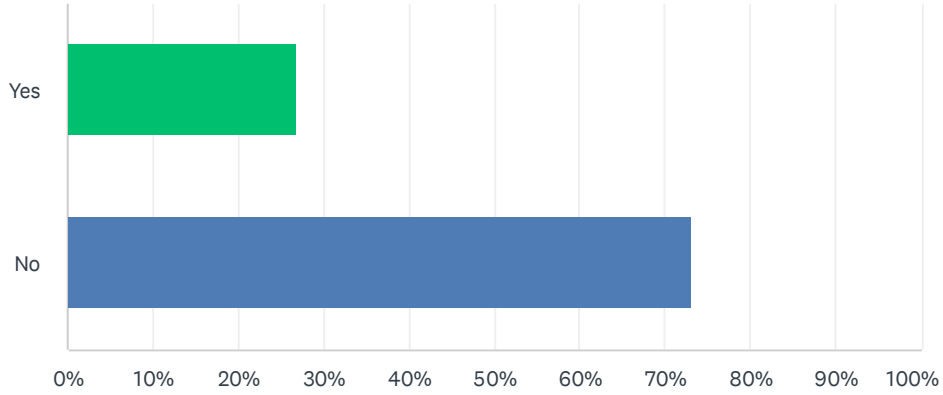
Answered: 193 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.45%	80
No	58.55%	113
TOTAL		193

Q3 Is the Town adequately served by its current recreational facilities?

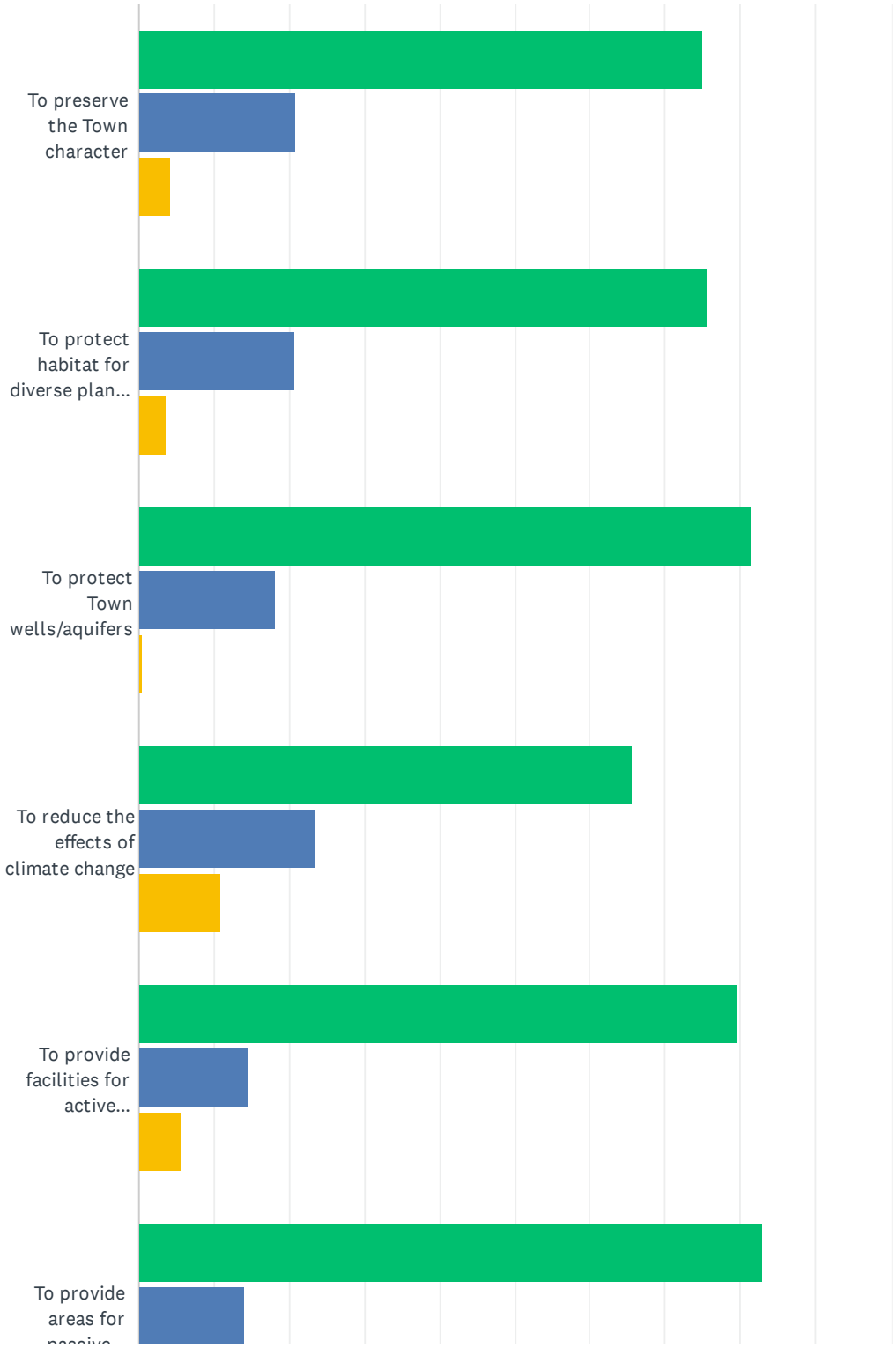
Answered: 193 Skipped: 0

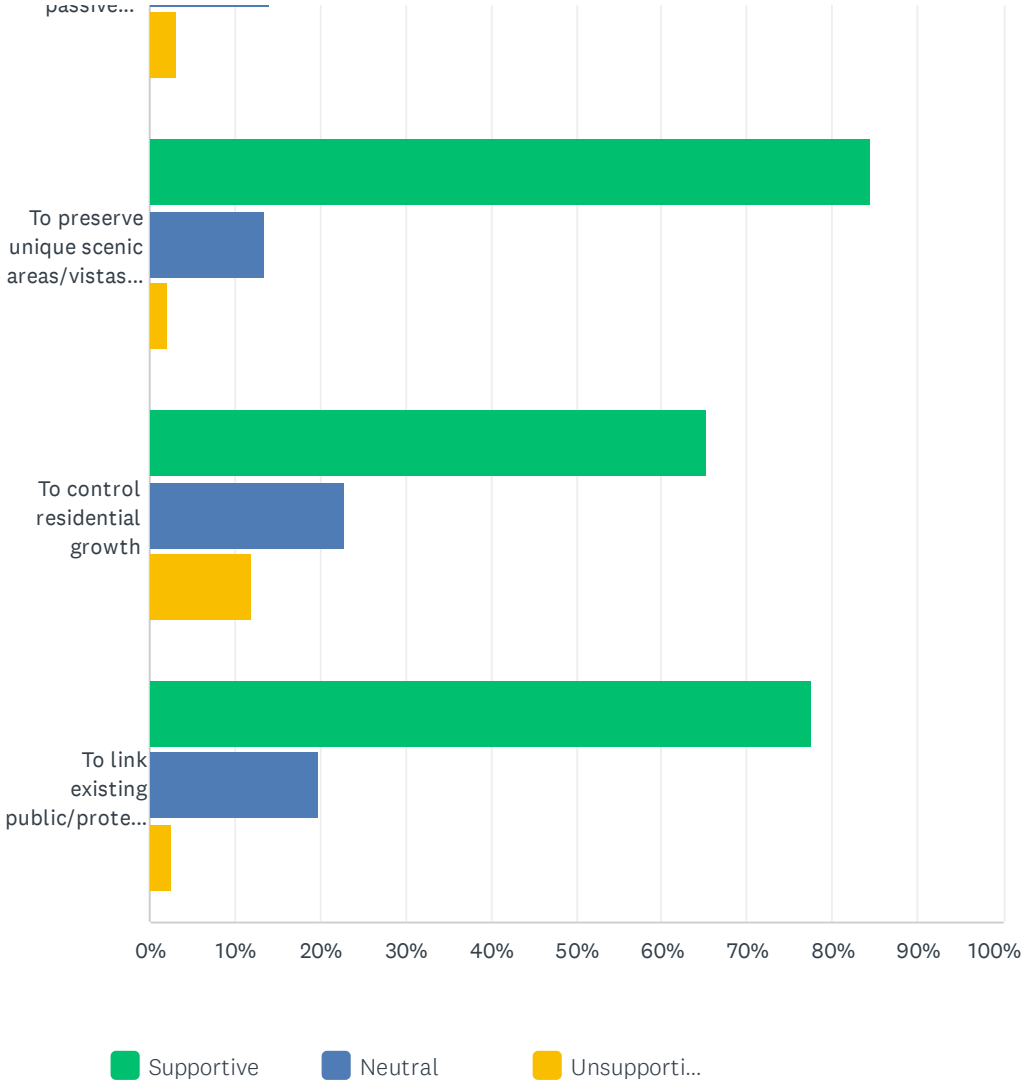


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	26.94%	52
No	73.06%	141
TOTAL		193

Q4 How strongly do you support West Boylston protecting, acquiring, and/or improving Town-owned land for the following reasons:Please mark one answer per row. You may mark as many with the same level of support as you would like.

Answered: 193 Skipped: 0

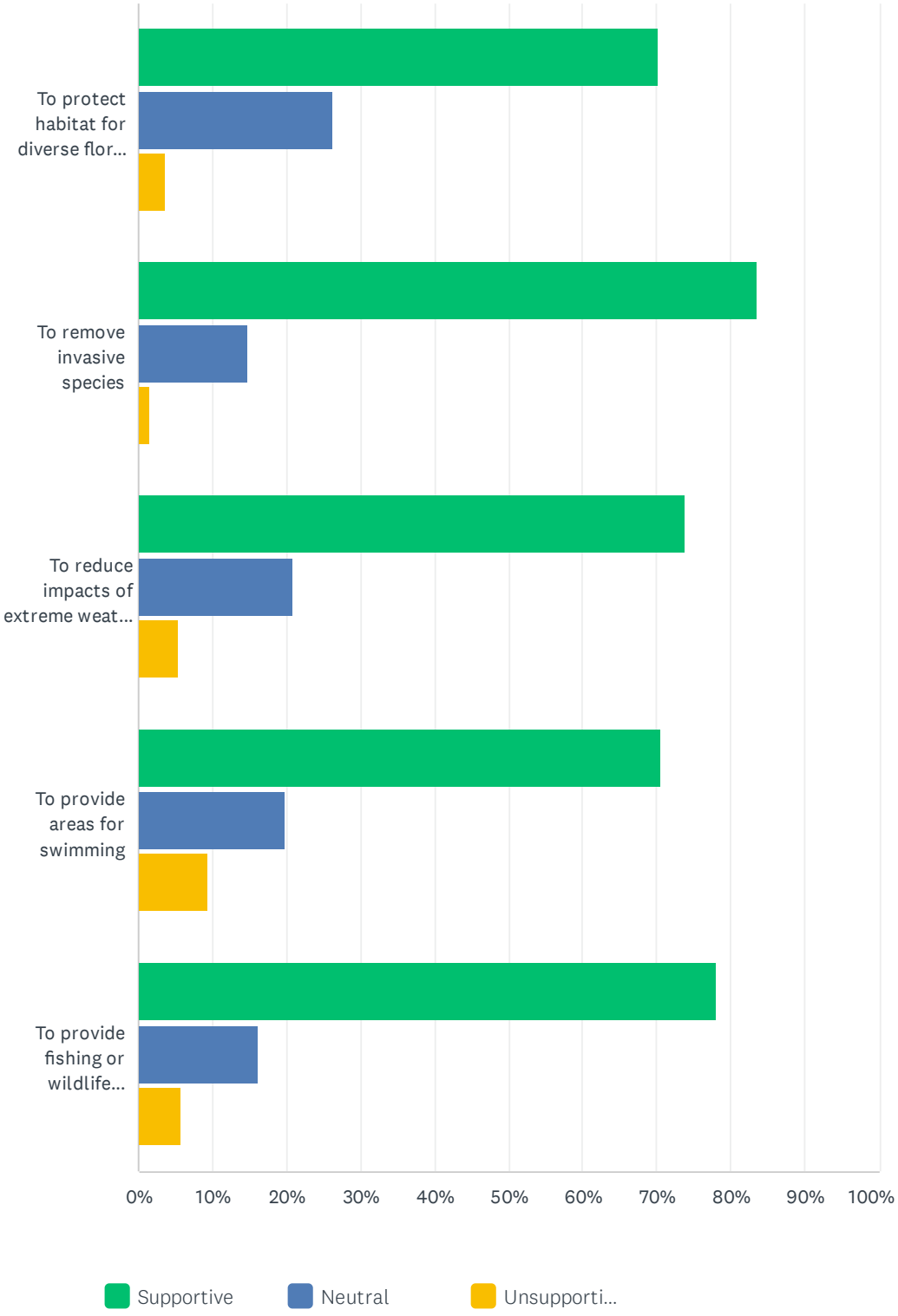



passive...
To preserve unique scenic areas/vistas...
To control residential growth
To link existing public/prote...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Supportive
Neutral
Unsupporti...

	SUPPORTIVE	NEUTRAL	UNSUPPORTIVE	TOTAL
To preserve the Town character	75.00% 144	20.83% 40	4.17% 8	192
To protect habitat for diverse plants and animals	75.65% 146	20.73% 40	3.63% 7	193
To protect Town wells/aquifers	81.35% 157	18.13% 35	0.52% 1	193
To reduce the effects of climate change	65.63% 126	23.44% 45	10.94% 21	192
To provide facilities for active recreation (sports fields, playgrounds, etc.)	79.79% 154	14.51% 28	5.70% 11	193
To provide areas for passive recreation (walking, hiking, mountain biking, etc.)	82.90% 160	13.99% 27	3.11% 6	193
To preserve unique scenic areas/vistas/historic sites	84.46% 163	13.47% 26	2.07% 4	193
To control residential growth	65.28% 126	22.80% 44	11.92% 23	193
To link existing public/protected lands or trails	77.60% 149	19.79% 38	2.60% 5	192

Q5 How strongly do you support efforts to protect, acquire, and/or improve water resources for the following reasons?Please mark only one answer per row. You may mark as many with the same level of support as you would like.

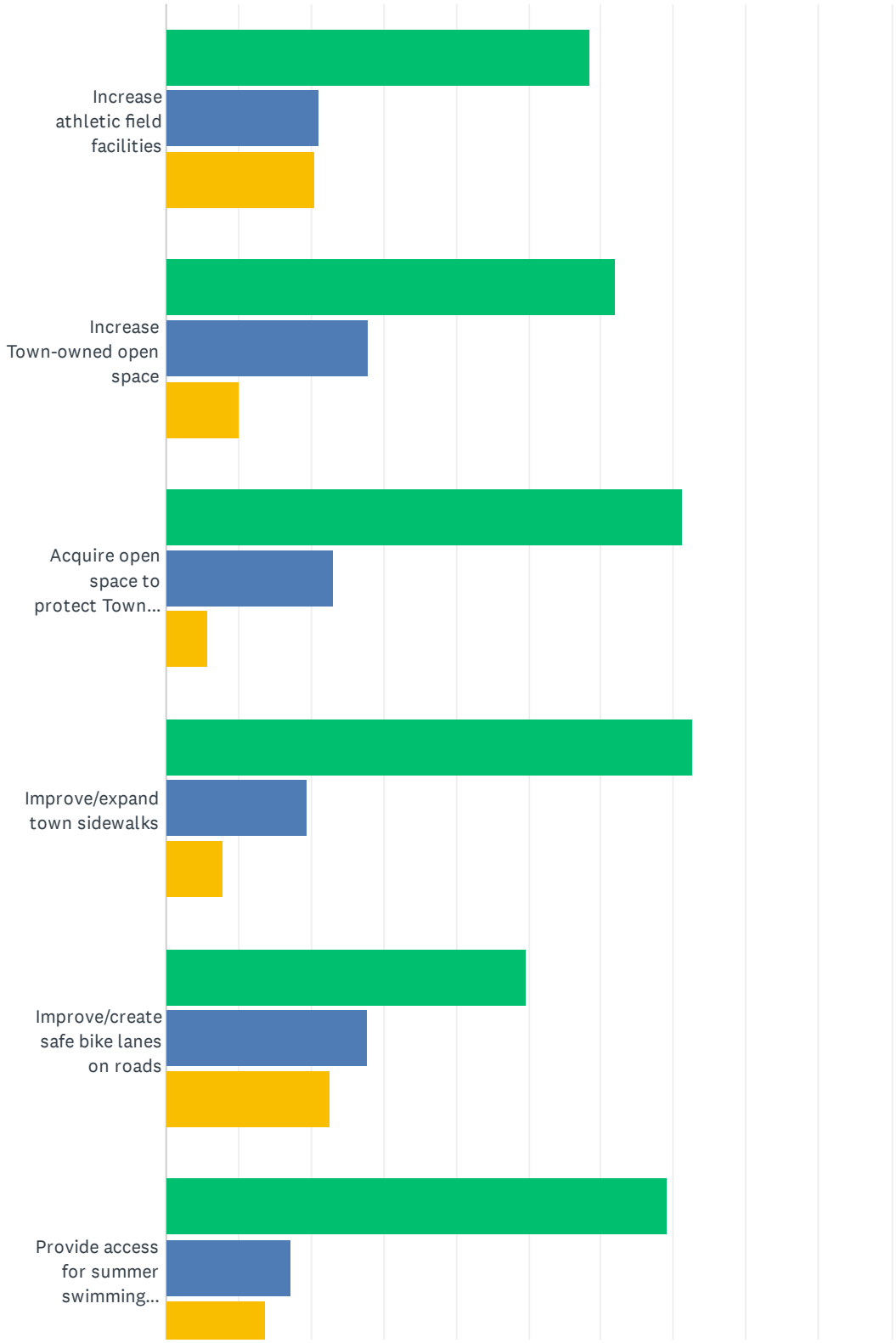
Answered: 191 Skipped: 2

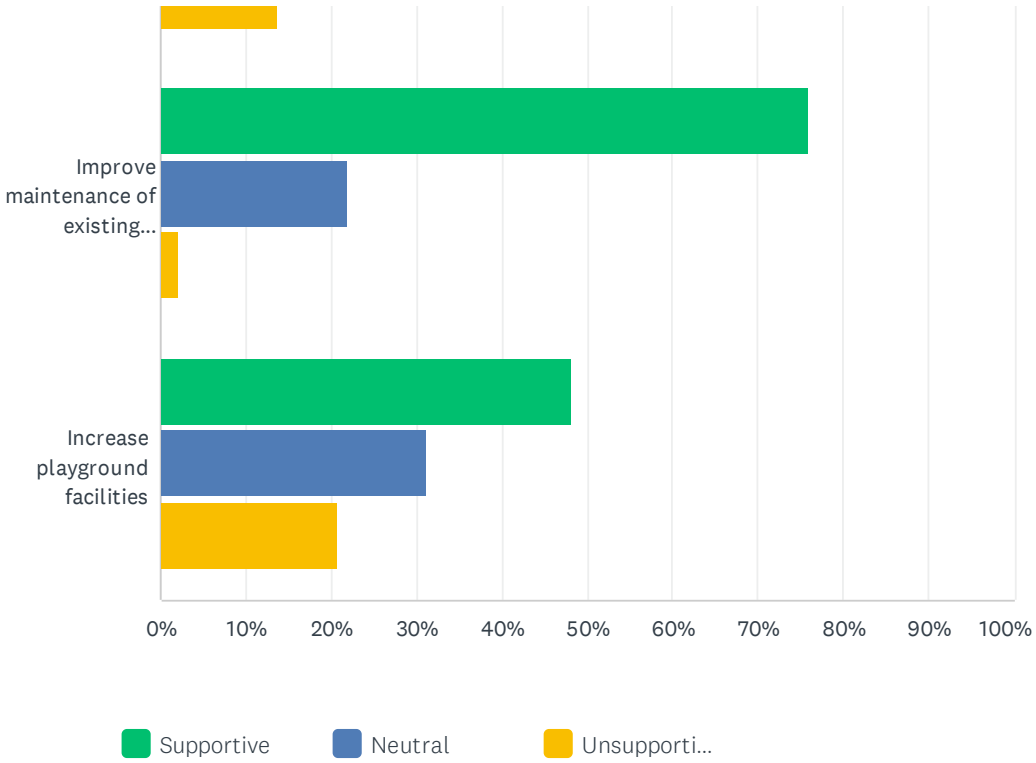

To protect habitat for diverse flor...
To remove invasive species
To reduce impacts of extreme weat...
To provide areas for swimming
To provide fishing or wildlife...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Supportive
Neutral
Unsupporti...

	SUPPORTIVE	NEUTRAL	UNSUPPORTIVE	TOTAL
To protect habitat for diverse flora and fauna	70.16% 134	26.18% 50	3.66% 7	191
To remove invasive species	83.68% 159	14.74% 28	1.58% 3	190
To reduce impacts of extreme weather events	73.82% 141	20.94% 40	5.24% 10	191
To provide areas for swimming	70.68% 135	19.90% 38	9.42% 18	191
To provide fishing or wildlife viewing options	78.01% 149	16.23% 31	5.76% 11	191

Q6 Please indicate your support for allocating Town funding for the following objectives. Please mark only one answer per row. You may mark as many with the same level of support as you would like.

Answered: 192 Skipped: 1

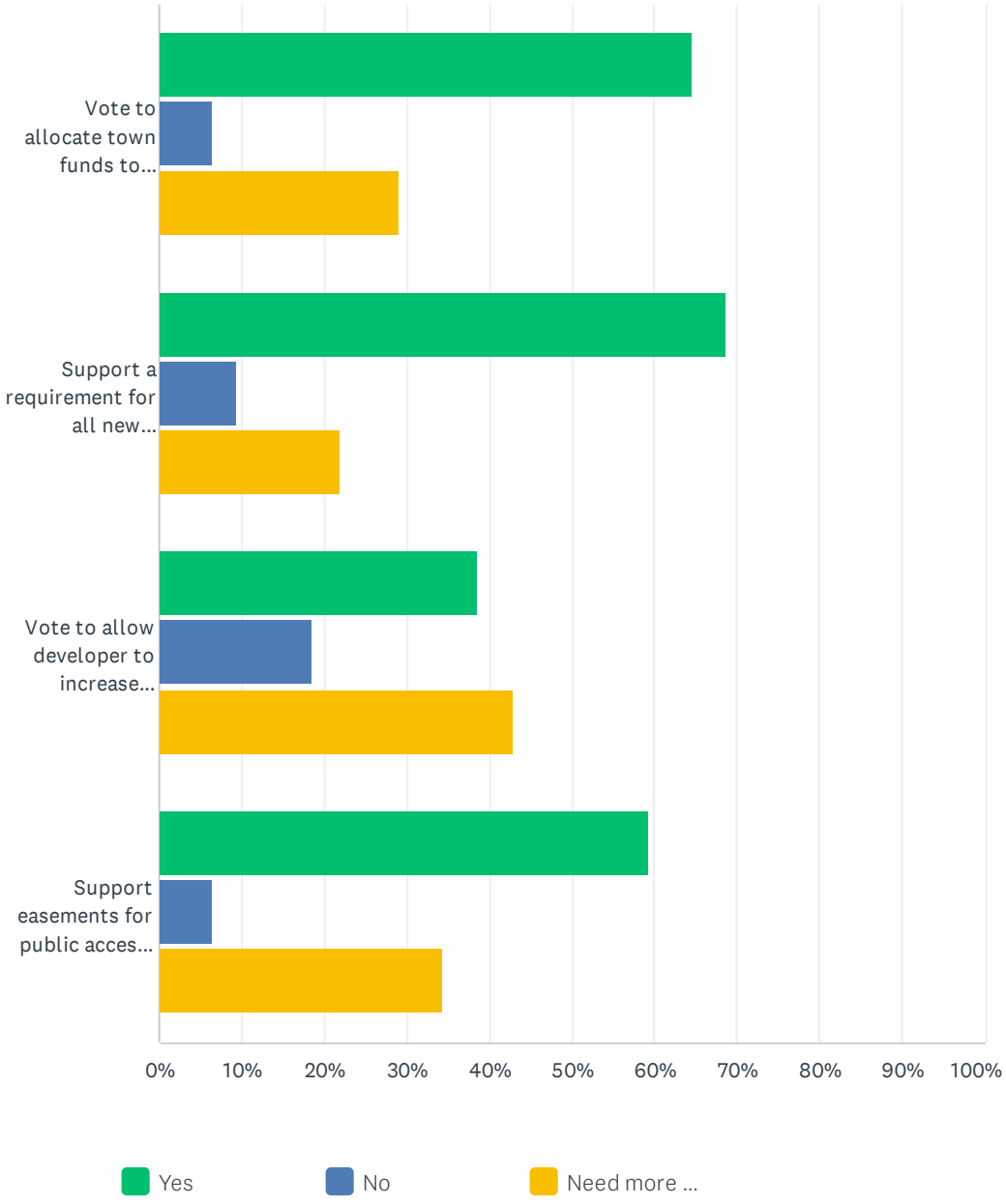




	SUPPORTIVE	NEUTRAL	UNSUPPORTIVE	TOTAL
Increase athletic field facilities	58.42% 111	21.05% 40	20.53% 39	190
Increase Town-owned open space	62.11% 118	27.89% 53	10.00% 19	190
Acquire open space to protect Town water supplies	71.20% 136	23.04% 44	5.76% 11	191
Improve/expand town sidewalks	72.63% 138	19.47% 37	7.89% 15	190
Improve/create safe bike lanes on roads	49.74% 95	27.75% 53	22.51% 43	191
Provide access for summer swimming facilities	69.11% 132	17.28% 33	13.61% 26	191
Improve maintenance of existing facilities	75.92% 145	21.99% 42	2.09% 4	191
Increase playground facilities	48.15% 91	31.22% 59	20.63% 39	189

Q7 In order to preserve open spaces in West Boylston, would you be willing to...Please mark only one answer per row.

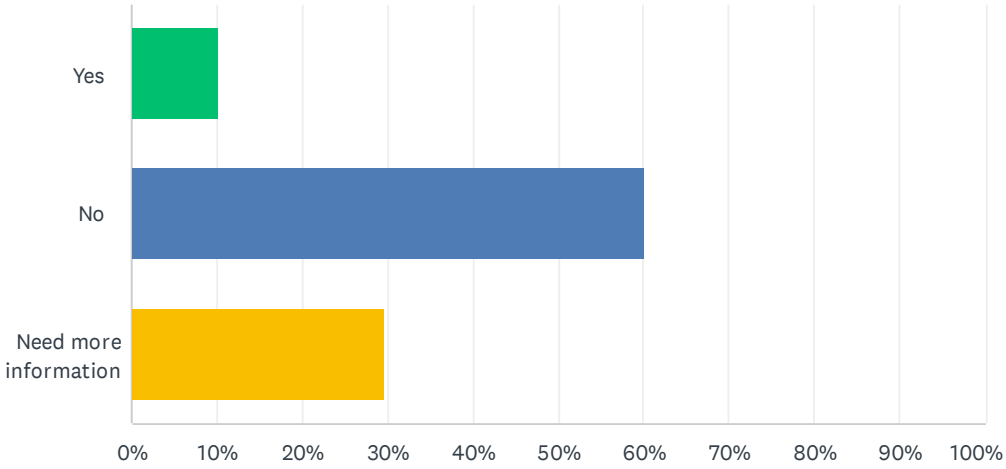
Answered: 191 Skipped: 2



	YES	NO	NEED MORE INFORMATION	TOTAL
Vote to allocate town funds to acquire or protect open space?	64.55% 122	6.35% 12	29.10% 55	189
Support a requirement for all new residential developments to include conservation/open space areas?	68.59% 131	9.42% 18	21.99% 42	191
Vote to allow developer to increase density on one portion of a site while protecting areas of open space or environmentally sensitive areas?	38.62% 73	18.52% 35	42.86% 81	189
Support easements for public access or development restrictions to protect existing open spaces or create connection to open spaces	59.26% 112	6.35% 12	34.39% 65	189

Q8 Are you interested in volunteering with a Town Board or assisting with a Town project that promotes the preservation of open space and/or recreation?Please mark only one answer.

Answered: 186 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	10.22%	19
No	60.22%	112
Need more information	29.57%	55
TOTAL		186

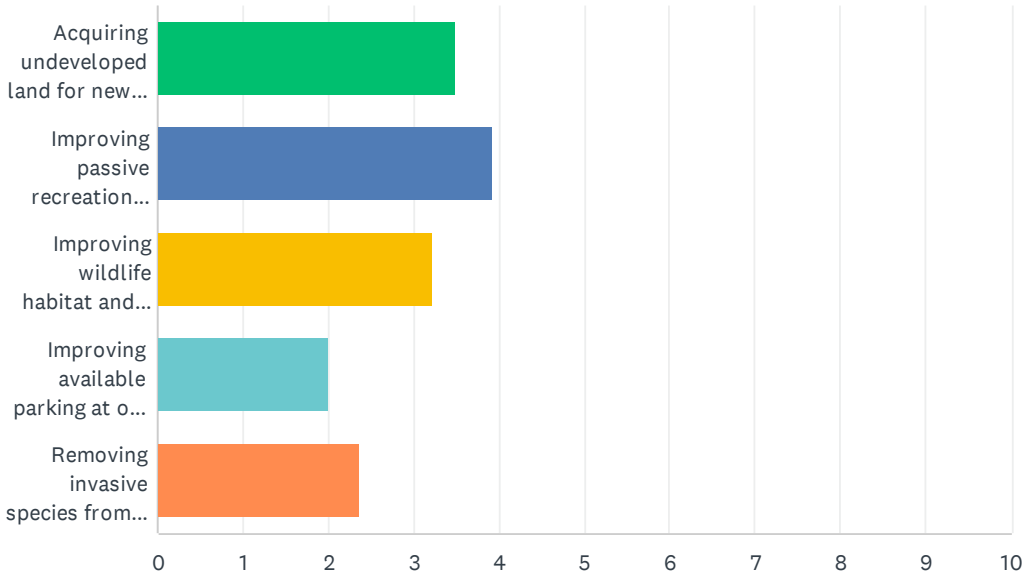
Q9 If you answered "yes" or "need more information" to the previous question (question #8), please provide your name and email address below:

Answered: 45 Skipped: 148

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	93.33%	42
Company	0.00%	0
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	0.00%	0
State/Province	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	97.78%	44
Phone Number	0.00%	0

Q10 What should West Boylston's priorities be for open space expenditures?Please rank how important each of the following are from most important (1) to least important (5). You may only use each ranking once. If filling out this survey online, please use the arrows to rank the different options. If filling out this survey on paper, please write the numbers 1 through 5 next to the options.

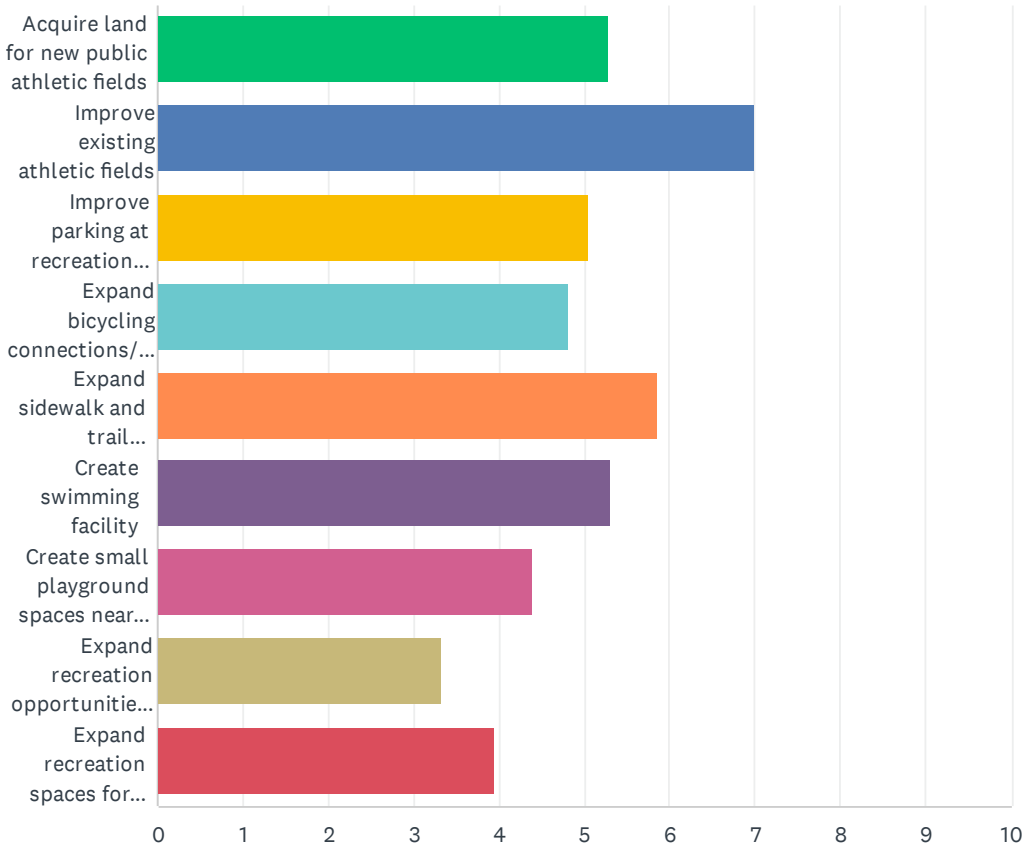
Answered: 184 Skipped: 9



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Acquiring undeveloped land for new passive recreation use (e.g. trails)	34.78% 64	21.20% 39	15.22% 28	15.76% 29	13.04% 24	184	3.49
Improving passive recreation opportunities (e.g. trails) on existing public land	32.07% 59	40.22% 74	18.48% 34	5.98% 11	3.26% 6	184	3.92
Improving wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors	18.48% 34	19.57% 36	38.04% 70	14.13% 26	9.78% 18	184	3.23
Improving available parking at open space destinations	3.80% 7	5.43% 10	19.57% 36	29.89% 55	41.30% 76	184	2.01
Removing invasive species from existing Town lands	10.87% 20	13.59% 25	8.70% 16	34.24% 63	32.61% 60	184	2.36

Q11 What should West Boylston's priorities be for recreation expenditures? Please rank how important each of the following are from most important (1) to least important (9). You may only use each ranking once. If filling out this survey online, please use the arrows to rank the different options. If filling out this survey on paper, please write the numbers 1 through 9 next to the options.

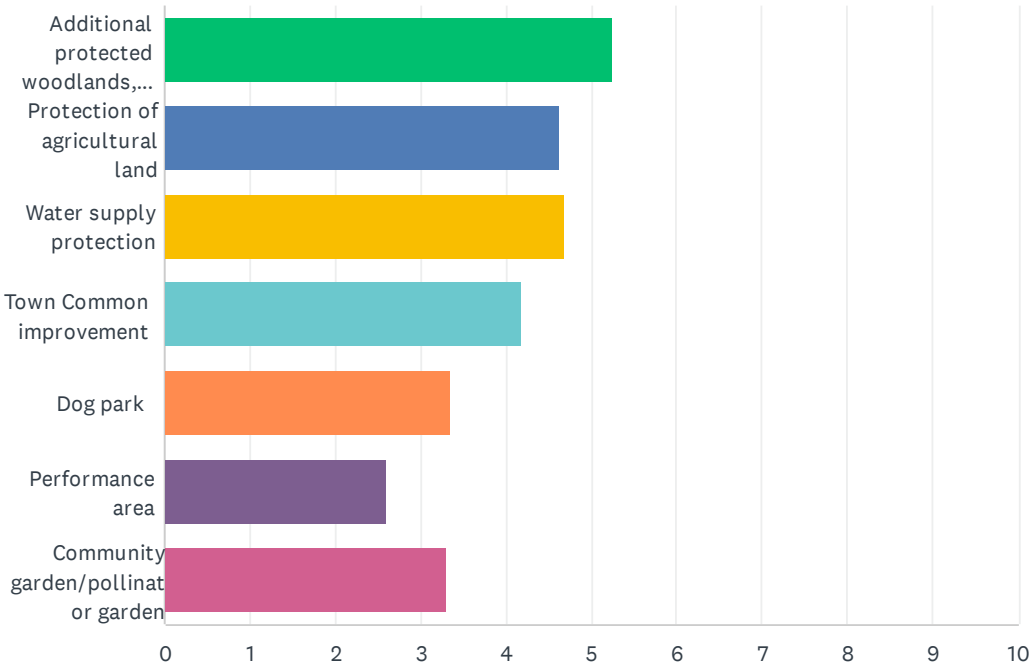
Answered: 181 Skipped: 12



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL	SCOR
Acquire land for new public athletic fields	17.13% 31	15.47% 28	12.15% 22	8.84% 16	4.97% 9	7.73% 14	7.18% 13	8.84% 16	17.68% 32	181	5.
Improve existing athletic fields	30.39% 55	25.97% 47	9.94% 18	9.94% 18	9.39% 17	4.97% 9	3.87% 7	5.52% 10	0.00% 0	181	7.
Improve parking at recreation sites	3.87% 7	10.50% 19	19.34% 35	12.71% 23	15.47% 28	11.05% 20	9.39% 17	8.29% 15	9.39% 17	181	5.
Expand bicycling connections/lanes	3.31% 6	11.60% 21	16.57% 30	12.15% 22	8.29% 15	13.26% 24	14.36% 26	12.15% 22	8.29% 15	181	4.
Expand sidewalk and trail connections	16.02% 29	10.50% 19	12.71% 23	15.47% 28	18.23% 33	11.60% 21	10.50% 19	3.31% 6	1.66% 3	181	5.
Create swimming facility	19.34% 35	9.94% 18	8.84% 16	12.15% 22	9.39% 17	9.94% 18	8.29% 15	8.84% 16	13.26% 24	181	5.
Create small playground spaces near neighborhoods	3.31% 6	6.63% 12	9.94% 18	11.05% 20	11.60% 21	16.57% 30	19.34% 35	16.57% 30	4.97% 9	181	4.
Expand recreation opportunities for elder residents	2.76% 5	3.87% 7	4.42% 8	6.63% 12	12.15% 22	10.50% 19	11.05% 20	20.99% 38	27.62% 50	181	3.
Expand recreation spaces for under 18	3.87% 7	5.52% 10	6.08% 11	11.05% 20	10.50% 19	14.36% 26	16.02% 29	15.47% 28	17.13% 31	181	3.

Q12 What do you consider to be the biggest unmet open space needs in West Boylston?Please rank the following from most needed (1) to least needed (7). You may only use each ranking once. If filling out this survey online, please use the arrows to rank the different options. If filling out this survey on paper, please write the numbers 1 through 7 next to the options.

Answered: 176 Skipped: 17



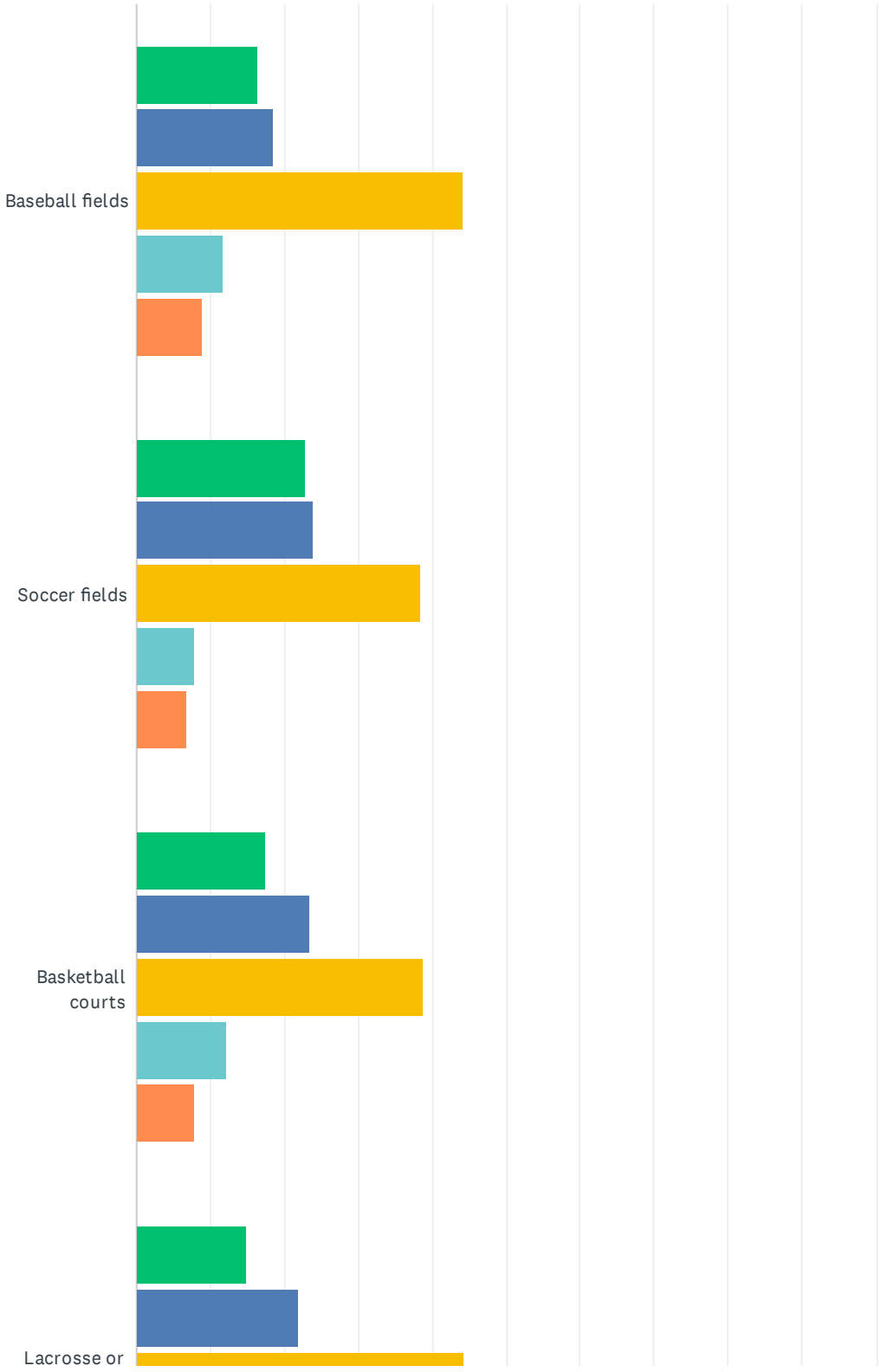
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
Additional protected woodlands, meadows, or stream corridors to protect wildlife	37.50% 66	18.18% 32	13.07% 23	11.93% 21	5.11% 9	10.80% 19	3.41% 6	176	5.25
Protection of agricultural land	5.68% 10	31.25% 55	23.30% 41	13.07% 23	16.48% 29	7.39% 13	2.84% 5	176	4.63
Water supply protection	18.75% 33	18.75% 33	25.57% 45	11.93% 21	9.09% 16	6.82% 12	9.09% 16	176	4.69
Town Common improvement	14.77% 26	9.09% 16	11.93% 21	28.41% 50	18.75% 33	12.50% 22	4.55% 8	176	4.17
Dog park	14.77% 26	7.39% 13	5.68% 10	9.66% 17	22.73% 40	12.50% 22	27.27% 48	176	3.35
Performance area	2.84% 5	6.25% 11	6.25% 11	10.23% 18	11.36% 20	32.95% 58	30.11% 53	176	2.60
Community garden/pollinator garden	5.68% 10	9.09% 16	14.20% 25	14.77% 26	16.48% 29	17.05% 30	22.73% 40	176	3.31

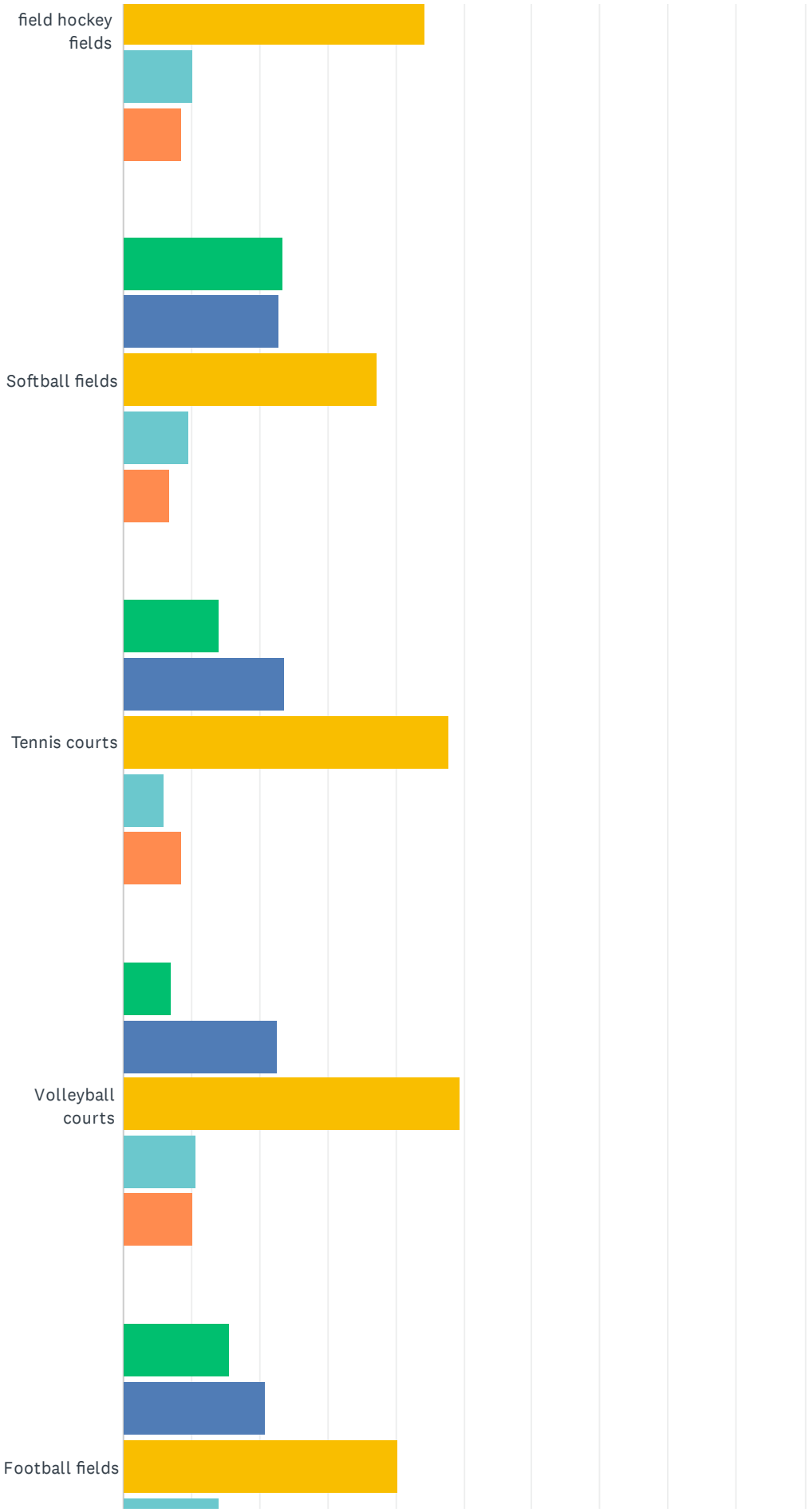
Q13 Are there any other unmet open space needs in West Boylston that were not mentioned?

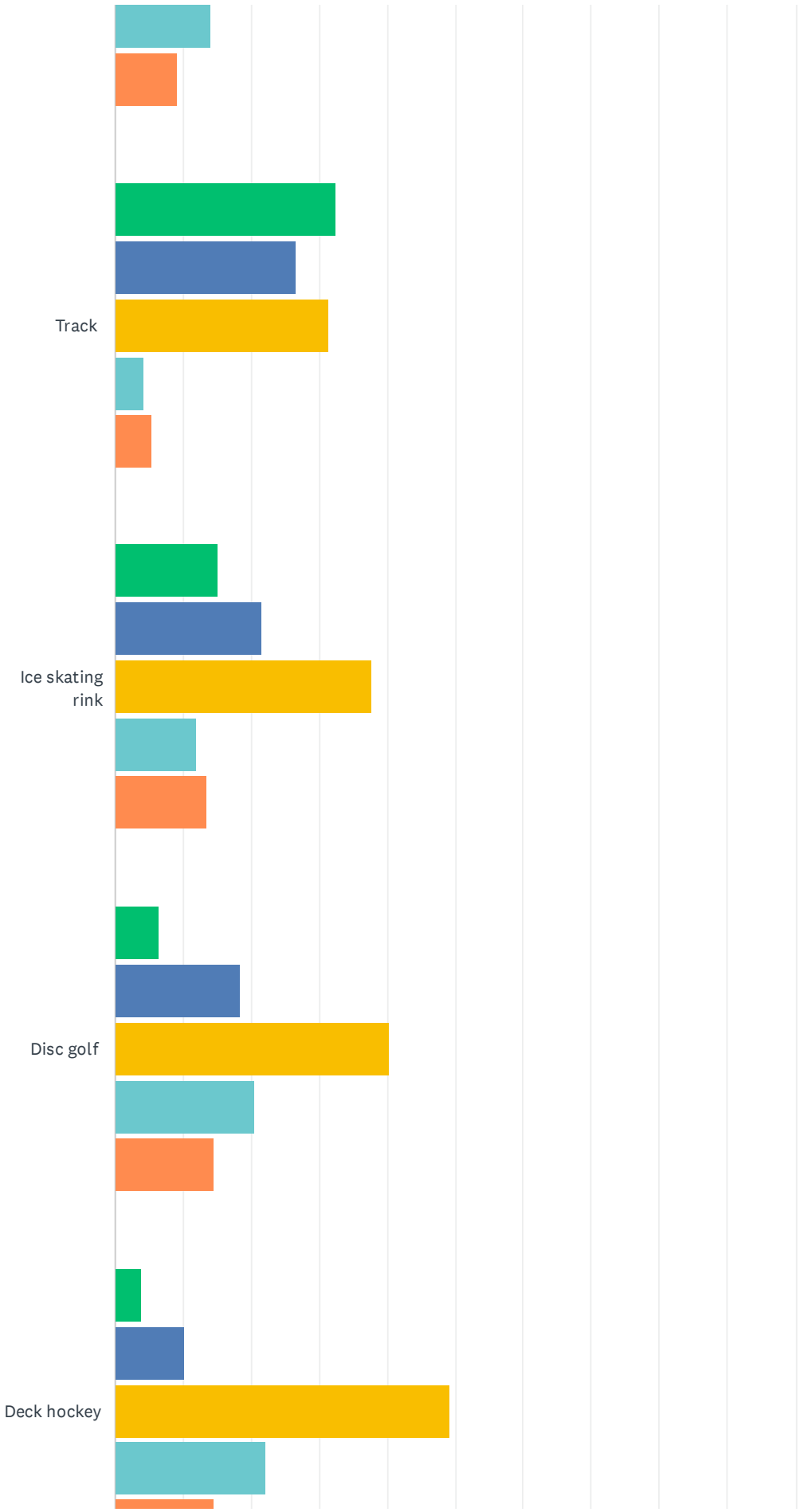
Answered: 30 Skipped: 163

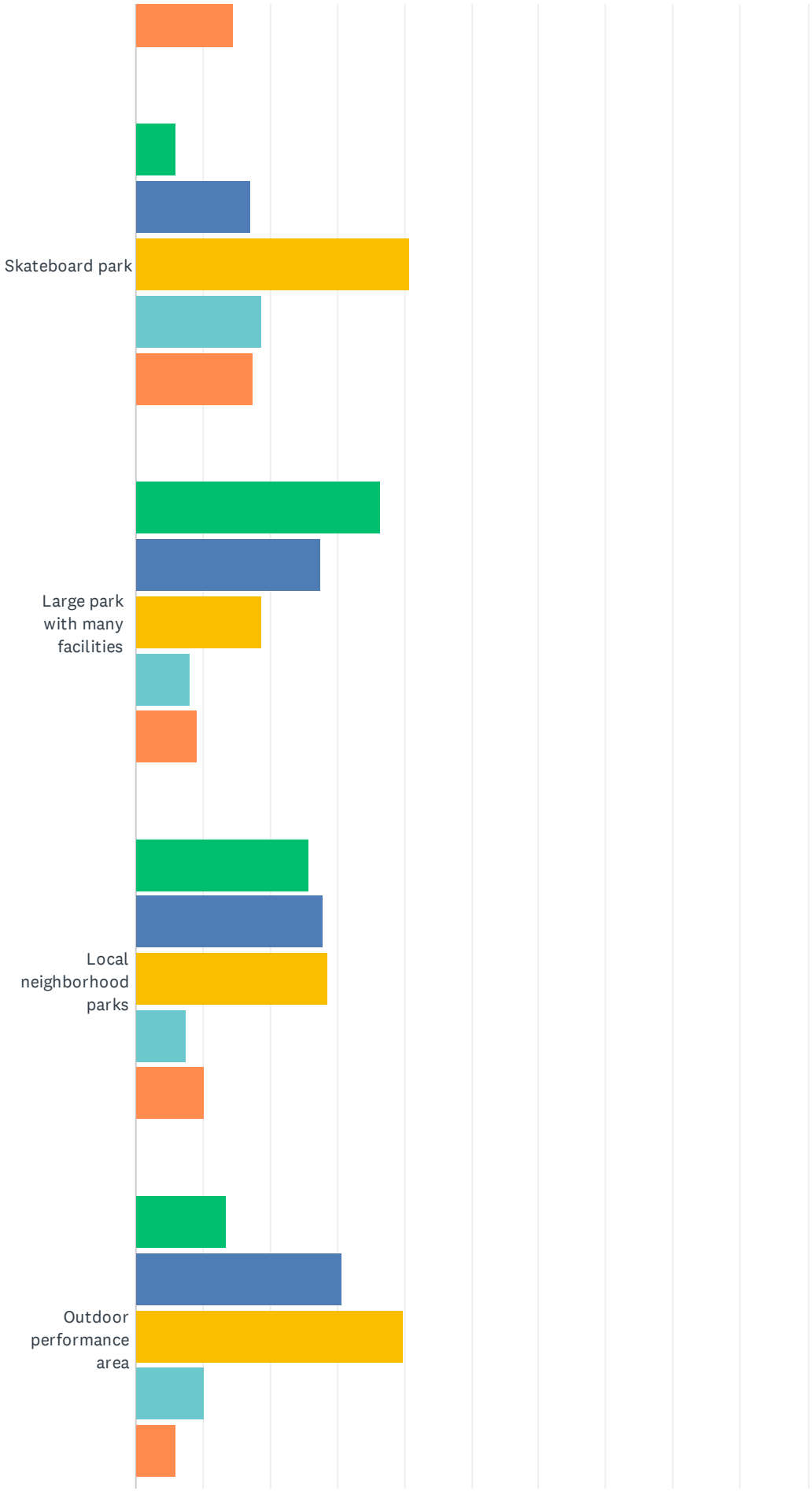
Q14 What do you consider the biggest unmet recreation needs in West Boylston? Please mark only one answer per row. You may mark as many with the same level of support as you would like.

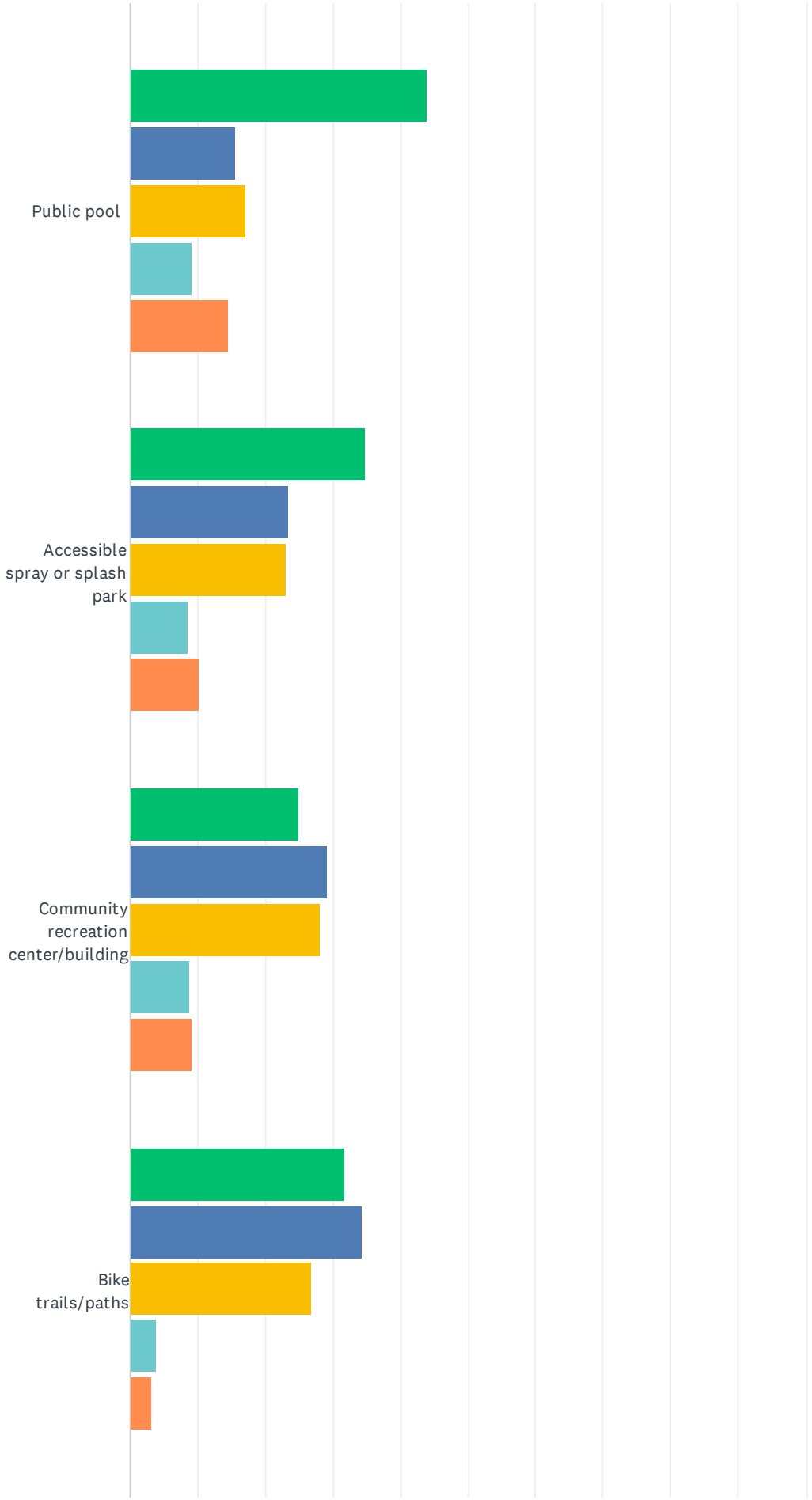
Answered: 189 Skipped: 4

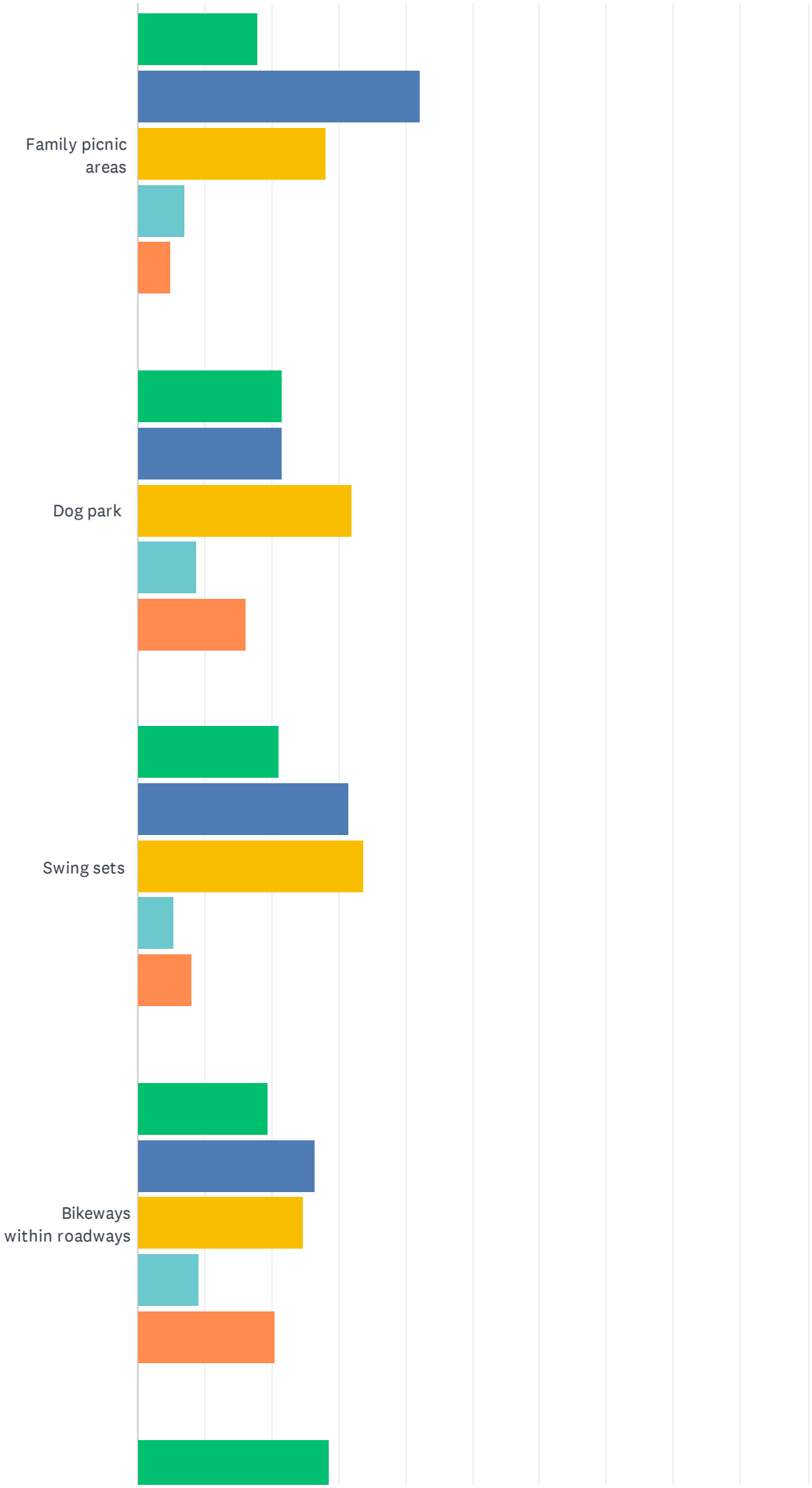


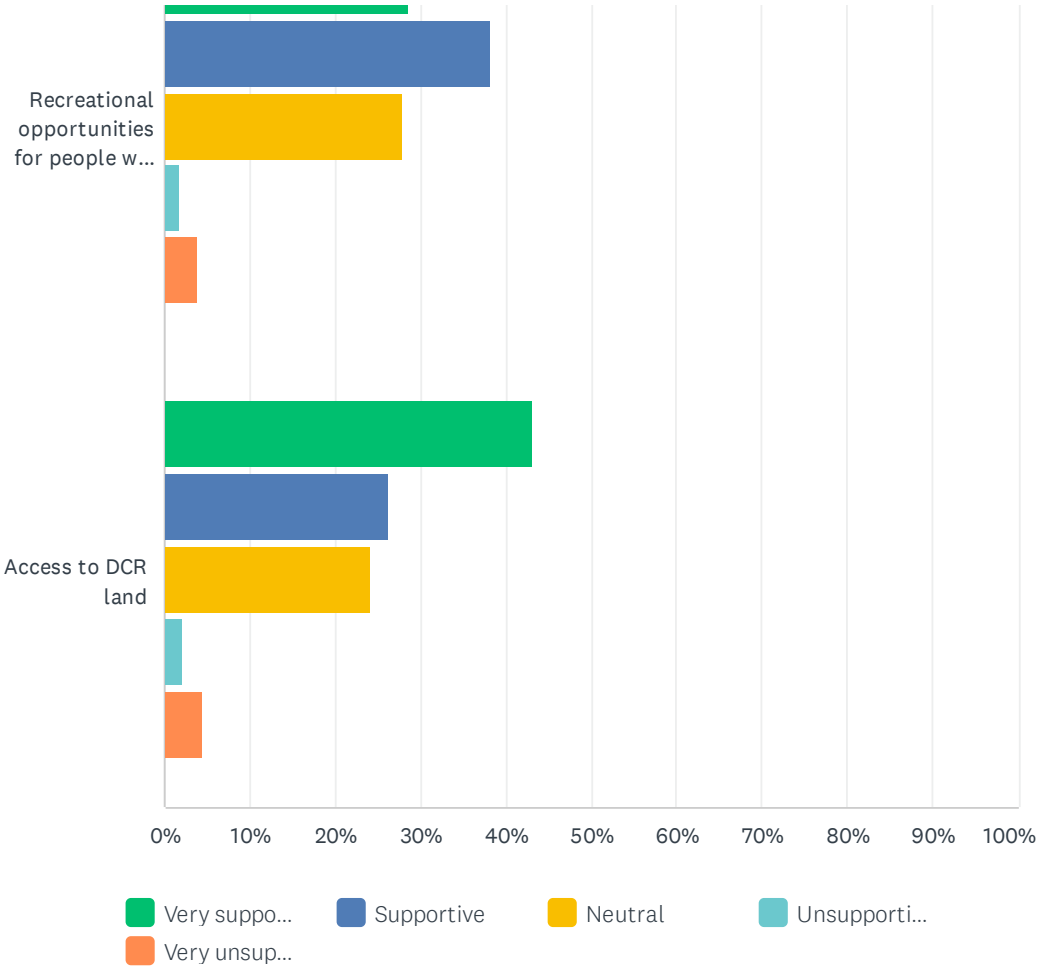

field hockey fields
Softball fields
Tennis courts
Volleyball courts
Football fields


Track
Ice skating rink
Disc golf
Deck hockey


Skateboard park
Large park with many facilities
Local neighborhood parks
Outdoor performance area


Public pool
Accessible spray or splash park
Community recreation center/building
Bike trails/paths


Family picnic areas
Dog park
Swing sets
Bikeways within roadways


Recreational opportunities for people w...
Access to DCR land
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Very suppo...
Supportive
Neutral
Unsupporti...
Very unsup...

	VERY SUPPORTIVE	SUPPORTIVE	NEUTRAL	UNSUPPORTIVE	VERY UNSUPPORTIVE	TOTAL
Baseball fields	16.49% 31	18.62% 35	44.15% 83	11.70% 22	9.04% 17	188
Soccer fields	22.87% 43	23.94% 45	38.30% 72	7.98% 15	6.91% 13	188
Basketball courts	17.55% 33	23.40% 44	38.83% 73	12.23% 23	7.98% 15	188
Lacrosse or field hockey fields	14.97% 28	21.93% 41	44.39% 83	10.16% 19	8.56% 16	187
Softball fields	23.40% 44	22.87% 43	37.23% 70	9.57% 18	6.91% 13	188
Tennis courts	13.98% 26	23.66% 44	47.85% 89	5.91% 11	8.60% 16	186
Volleyball courts	6.99% 13	22.58% 42	49.46% 92	10.75% 20	10.22% 19	186
Football fields	15.59% 29	20.97% 39	40.32% 75	13.98% 26	9.14% 17	186
Track	32.45% 61	26.60% 50	31.38% 59	4.26% 8	5.32% 10	188
Ice skating rink	15.14% 28	21.62% 40	37.84% 70	11.89% 22	13.51% 25	185
Disc golf	6.45% 12	18.28% 34	40.32% 75	20.43% 38	14.52% 27	186
Deck hockey	3.78% 7	10.27% 19	49.19% 91	22.16% 41	14.59% 27	185
Skateboard park	6.04% 11	17.03% 31	40.66% 74	18.68% 34	17.58% 32	182
Large park with many facilities	36.56% 68	27.42% 51	18.82% 35	8.06% 15	9.14% 17	186
Local neighborhood parks	25.81% 48	27.96% 52	28.49% 53	7.53% 14	10.22% 19	186
Outdoor performance area	13.44% 25	30.65% 57	39.78% 74	10.22% 19	5.91% 11	186
Public pool	43.85% 82	15.51% 29	17.11% 32	9.09% 17	14.44% 27	187
Accessible spray or splash park	34.76% 65	23.53% 44	22.99% 43	8.56% 16	10.16% 19	187
Community recreation center/building	24.86% 46	29.19% 54	28.11% 52	8.65% 16	9.19% 17	185
Bike trails/paths	31.72% 59	34.41% 64	26.88% 50	3.76% 7	3.23% 6	186
Family picnic areas	17.84% 33	42.16% 78	28.11% 52	7.03% 13	4.86% 9	185
Dog park	21.62% 40	21.62% 40	31.89% 59	8.65% 16	16.22% 30	185
Swing sets	21.20% 39	31.52% 58	33.70% 62	5.43% 10	8.15% 15	184

Bikeways within roadways	19.35% 36	26.34% 49	24.73% 46	9.14% 17	20.43% 38	186
Recreational opportunities for people with disabilities	28.49% 53	38.17% 71	27.96% 52	1.61% 3	3.76% 7	186
Access to DCR land	43.17% 79	26.23% 48	24.04% 44	2.19% 4	4.37% 8	183

Q15 Are there any unmet recreation needs in West Boylston that were not mentioned?

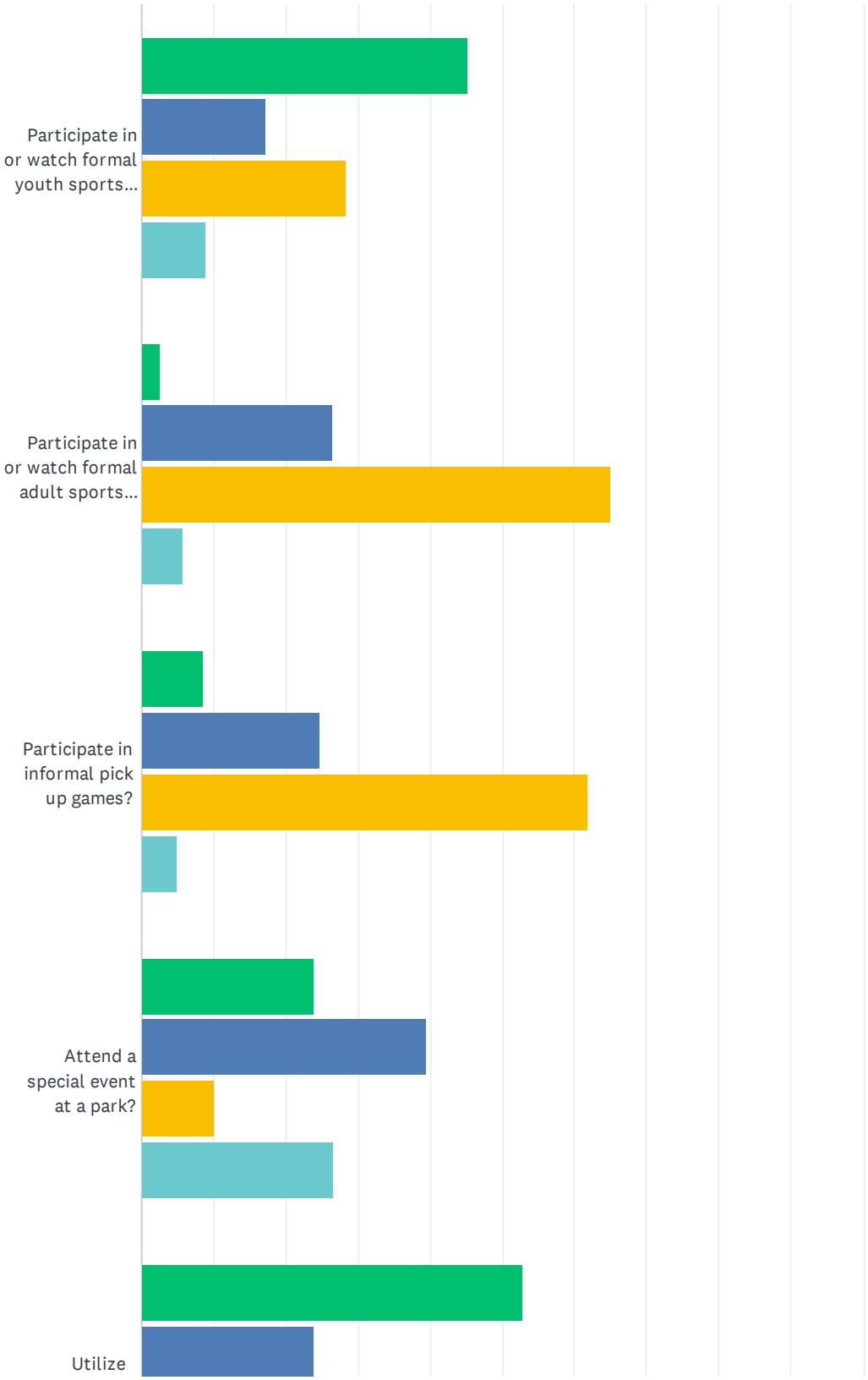
Answered: 46 Skipped: 147

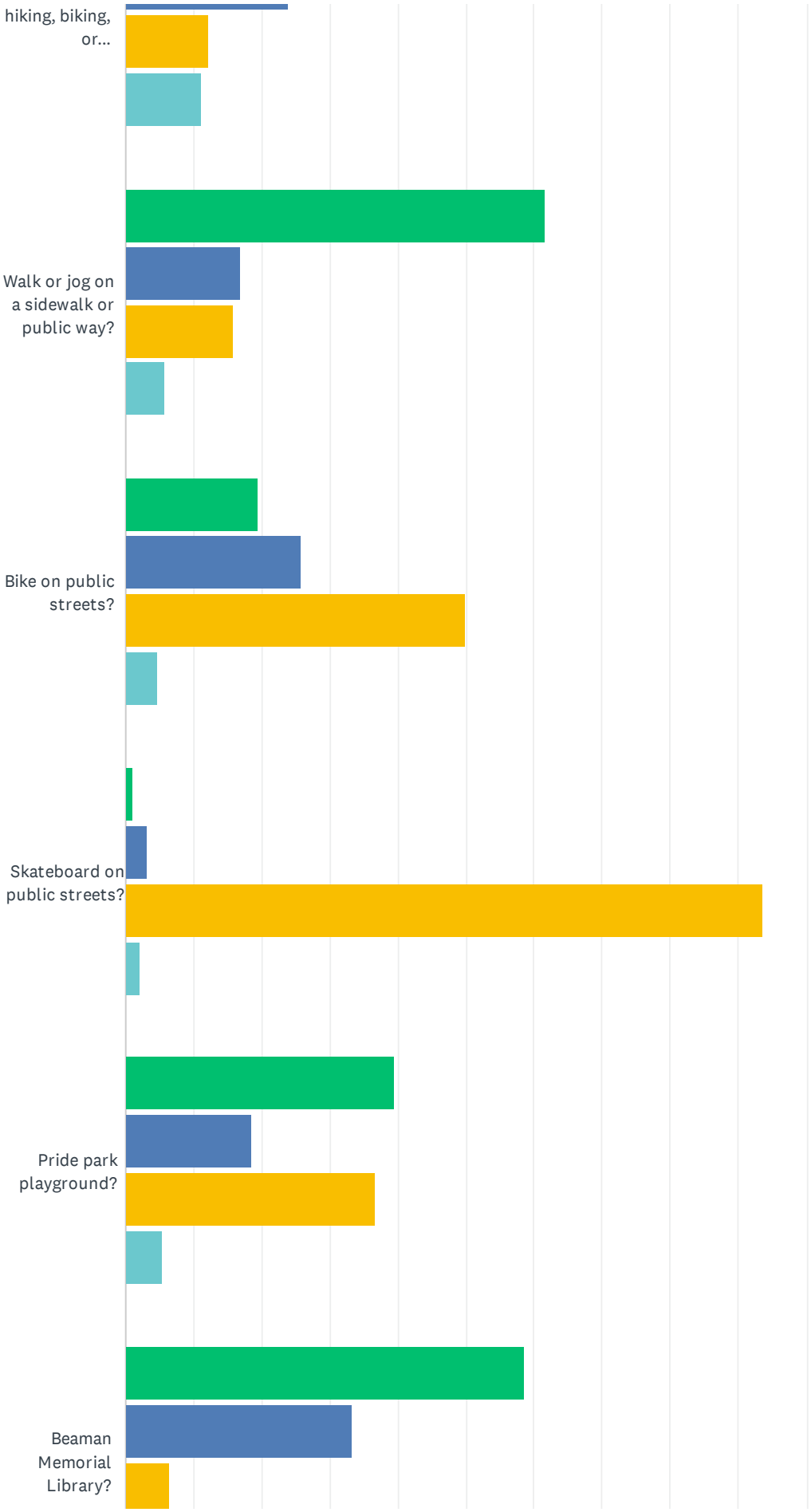
Q16 What is your favorite open space or recreational facility in West Boylston? Do you have any suggestions for how these open spaces or recreational facilities can be improved?

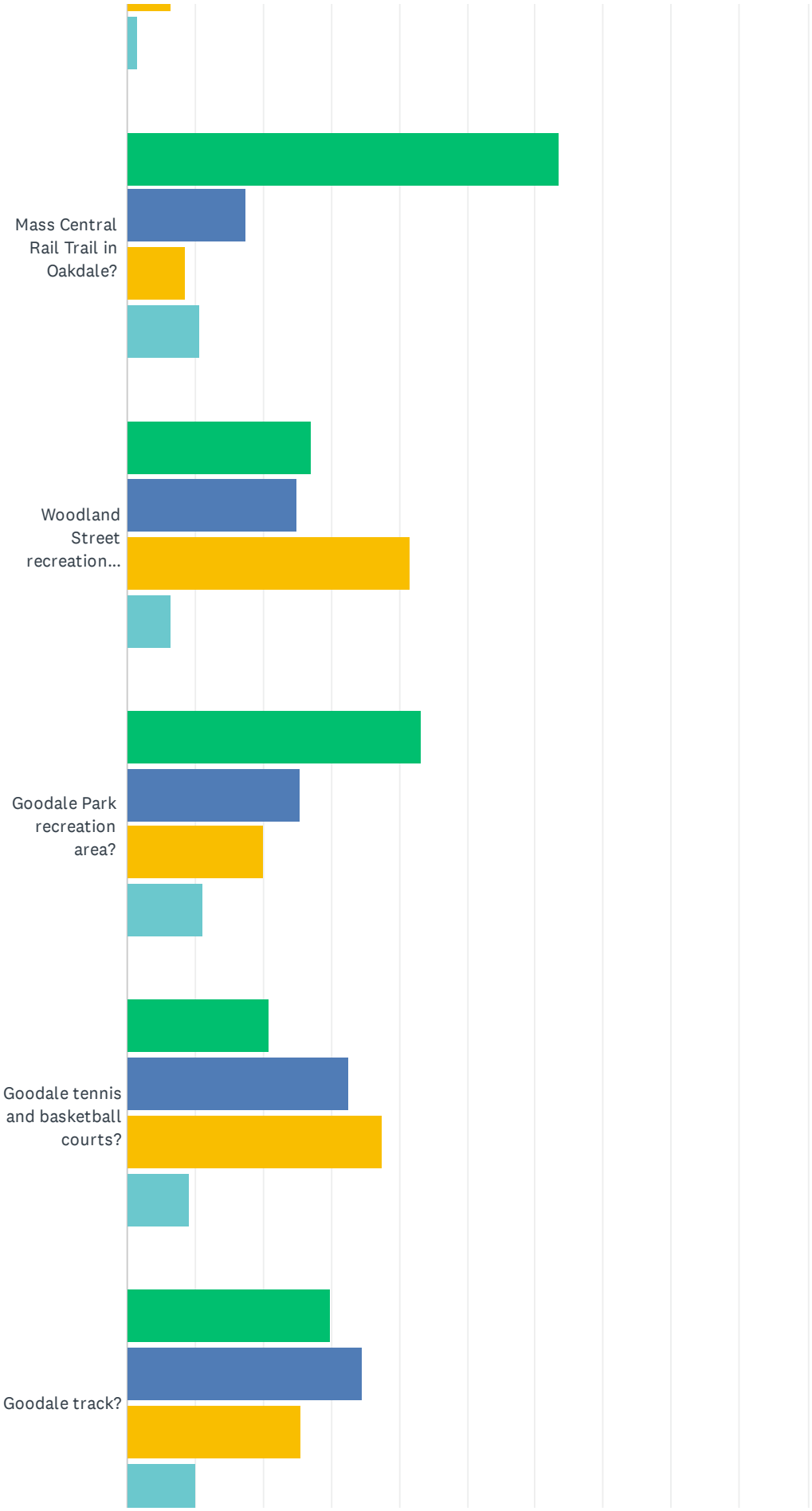
Answered: 102 Skipped: 91

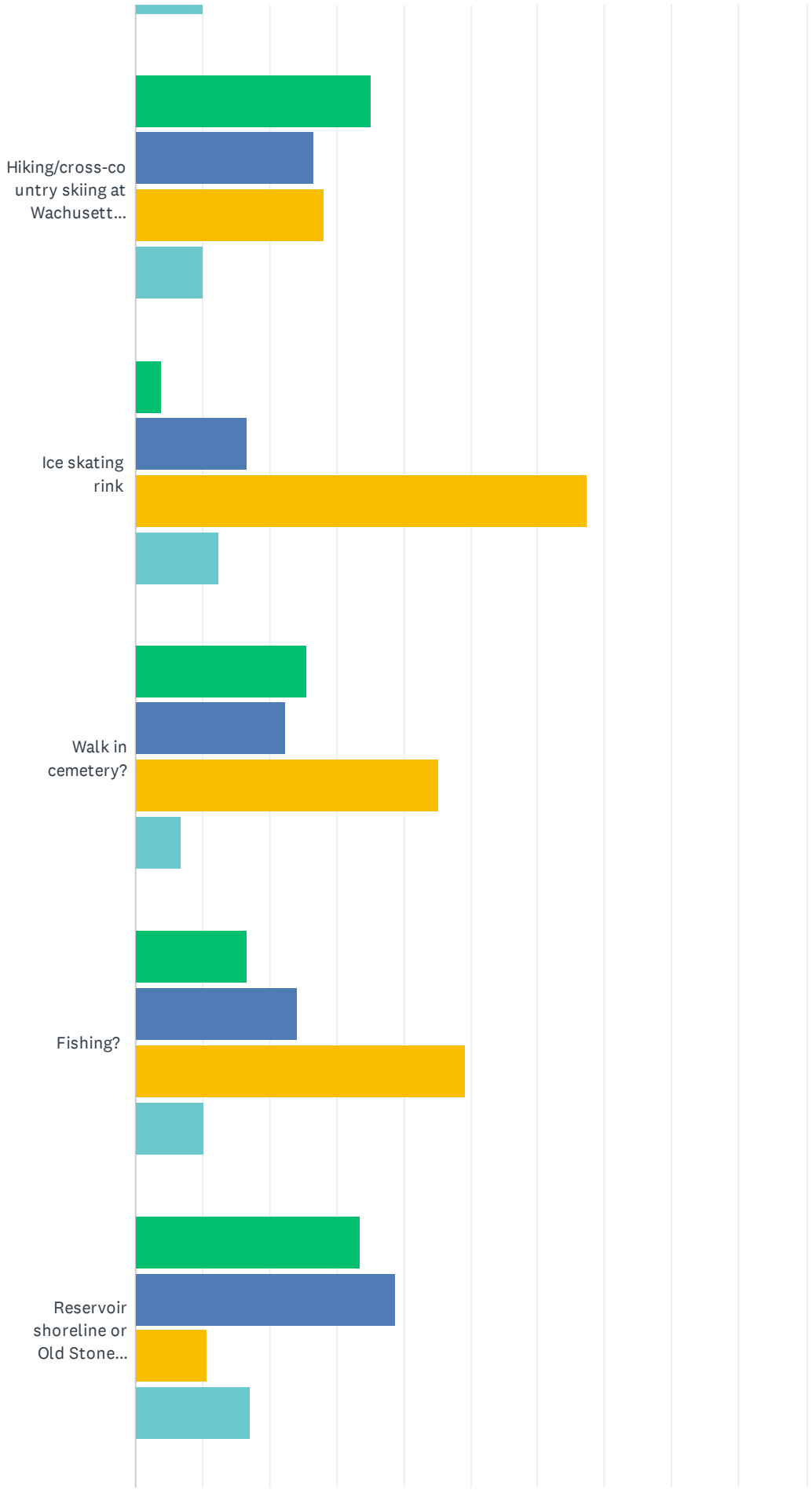
Q17 How often do you visit West Boylston's existing parks, other open spaces, or amenities to...Please mark only one answer per row.

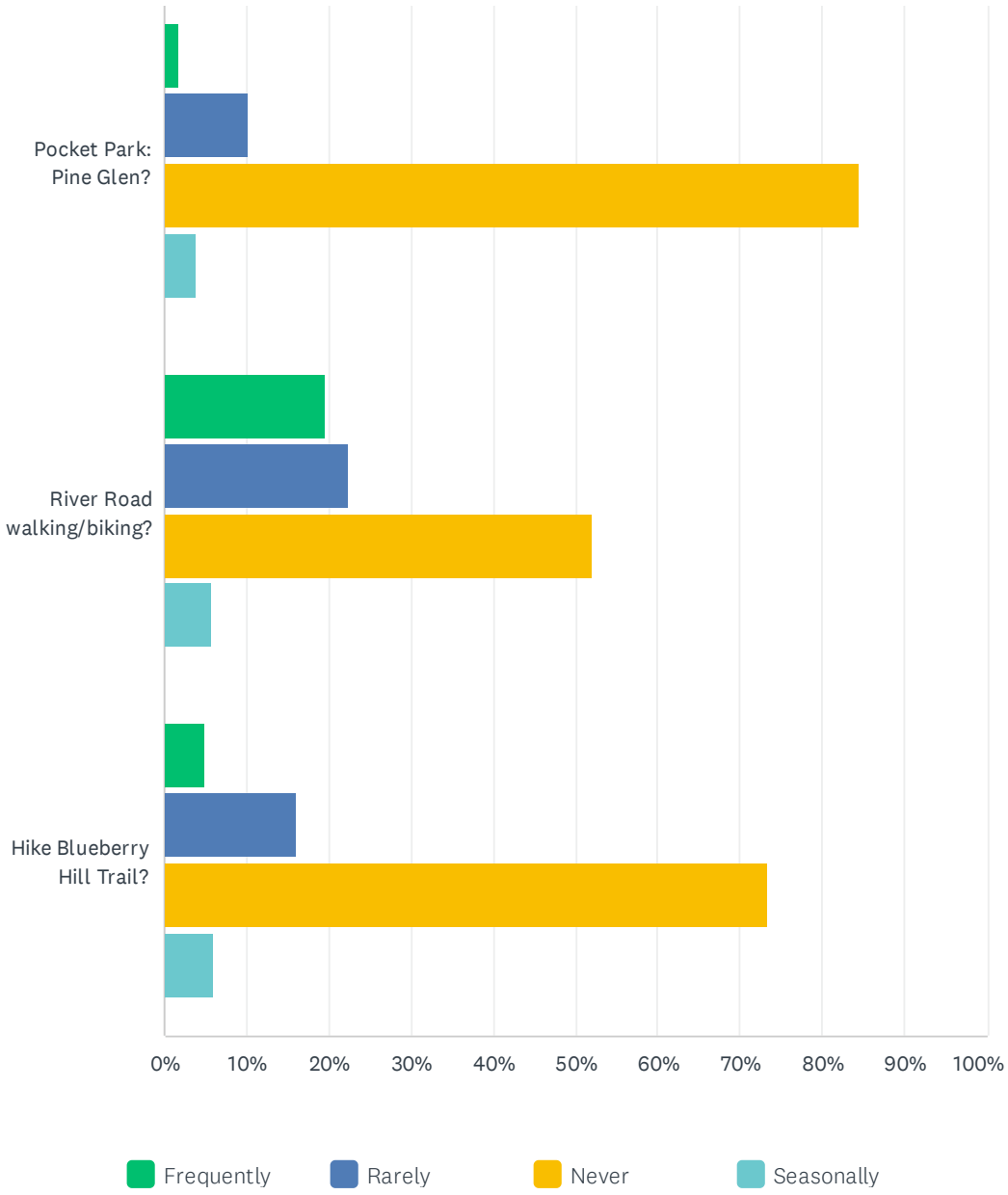
Answered: 190 Skipped: 3




hiking, biking, or...
Walk or jog on a sidewalk or public way?
Bike on public streets?
Skateboard on public streets?
Pride park playground?
Beaman Memorial Library?


Mass Central Rail Trail in Oakdale?
Woodland Street recreation...
Goodale Park recreation area?
Goodale tennis and basketball courts?
Goodale track?

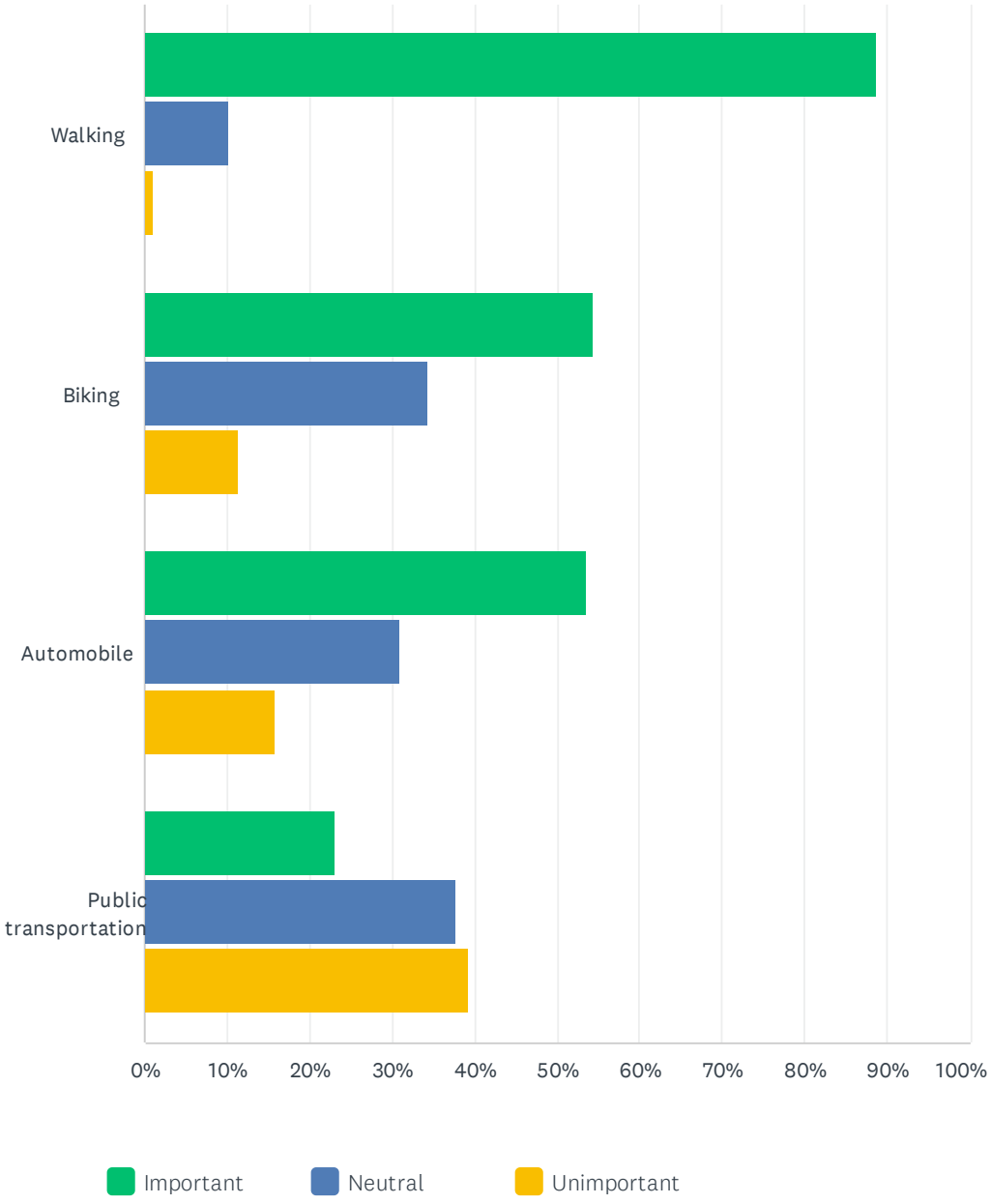

Hiking/cross-country skiing at Wachusett...
Ice skating rink
Walk in cemetery?
Fishing?
Reservoir shoreline or Old Stone...


Pocket Park: Pine Glen?
River Road walking/biking?
Hike Blueberry Hill Trail?
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Frequently
Rarely
Never
Seasonally

	FREQUENTLY	RARELY	NEVER	SEASONALLY	TOTAL
Participate in or watch formal youth sports leagues?	45.26% 86	17.37% 33	28.42% 54	8.95% 17	190
Participate in or watch formal adult sports leagues?	2.65% 5	26.46% 50	65.08% 123	5.82% 11	189
Participate in informal pick up games?	8.60% 16	24.73% 46	61.83% 115	4.84% 9	186
Attend a special event at a park?	23.94% 45	39.36% 74	10.11% 19	26.60% 50	188
Utilize hiking, biking, or cross-country ski trails?	52.91% 100	23.81% 45	12.17% 23	11.11% 21	189
Walk or jog on a sidewalk or public way?	61.58% 117	16.84% 32	15.79% 30	5.79% 11	190
Bike on public streets?	19.47% 37	25.79% 49	50.00% 95	4.74% 9	190
Skateboard on public streets?	1.05% 2	3.16% 6	93.68% 178	2.11% 4	190
Pride park playground?	39.36% 74	18.62% 35	36.70% 69	5.32% 10	188
Beaman Memorial Library?	58.73% 111	33.33% 63	6.35% 12	1.59% 3	189
Mass Central Rail Trail in Oakdale?	63.49% 120	17.46% 33	8.47% 16	10.58% 20	189
Woodland Street recreation area?	27.13% 51	25.00% 47	41.49% 78	6.38% 12	188
Goodale Park recreation area?	43.39% 82	25.40% 48	20.11% 38	11.11% 21	189
Goodale tennis and basketball courts?	20.86% 39	32.62% 61	37.43% 70	9.09% 17	187
Goodale track?	29.79% 56	34.57% 65	25.53% 48	10.11% 19	188
Hiking/cross-country skiing at Wachusett Reservoir?	35.11% 66	26.60% 50	28.19% 53	10.11% 19	188
Ice skating rink	3.74% 7	16.58% 31	67.38% 126	12.30% 23	187
Walk in cemetery?	25.53% 48	22.34% 42	45.21% 85	6.91% 13	188
Fishing?	16.58% 31	24.06% 45	49.20% 92	10.16% 19	187
Reservoir shoreline or Old Stone Church?	33.51% 63	38.83% 73	10.64% 20	17.02% 32	188
Pocket Park: Pine Glen?	1.61% 3	10.22% 19	84.41% 157	3.76% 7	186
River Road walking/biking?	19.68% 37	22.34% 42	52.13% 98	5.85% 11	188
Hike Blueberry Hill Trail?	4.81% 9	16.04% 30	73.26% 137	5.88% 11	187

Q18 How important is it to you to have open space and recreational destinations in West Boylston accessible by:

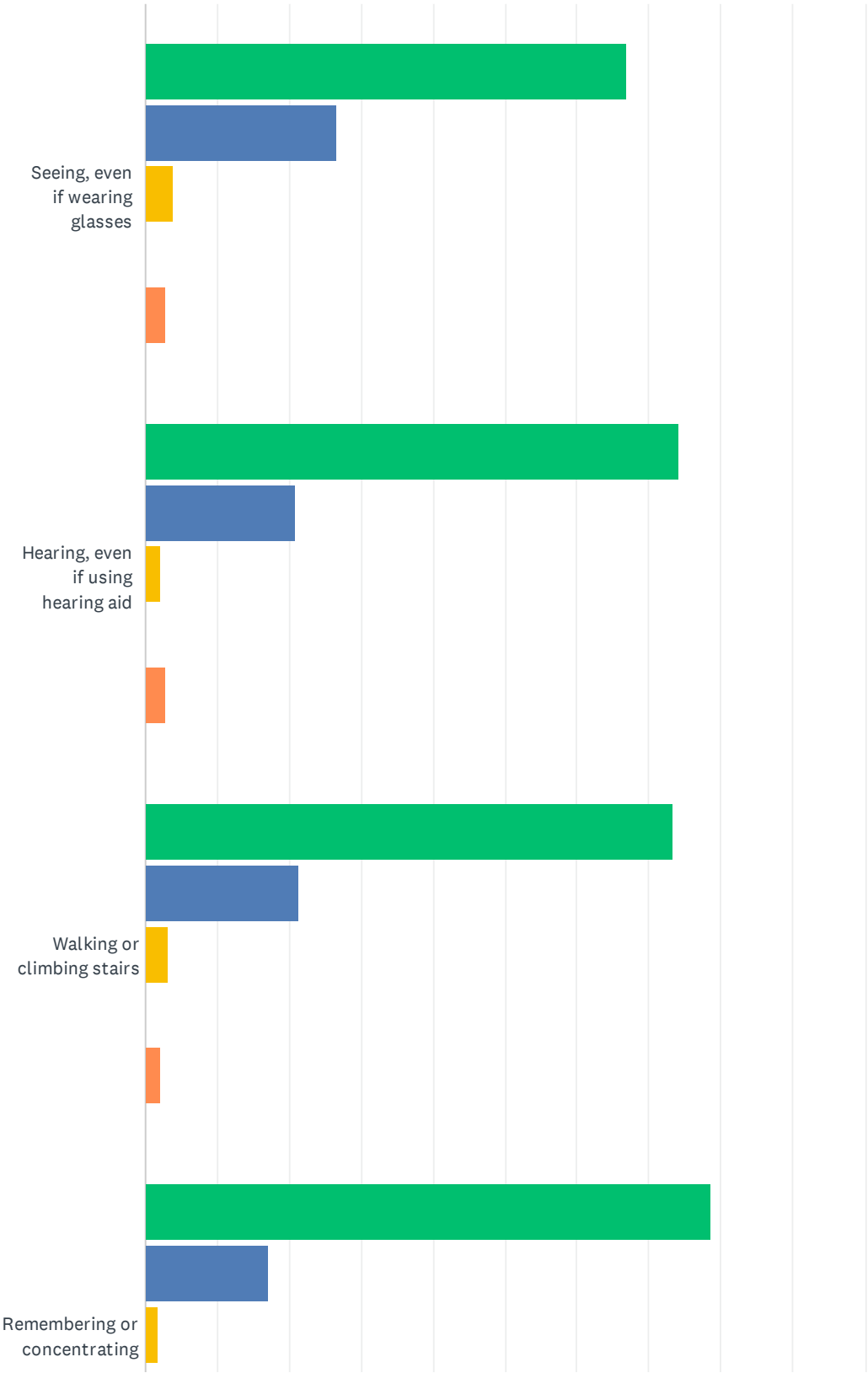
Answered: 187 Skipped: 6

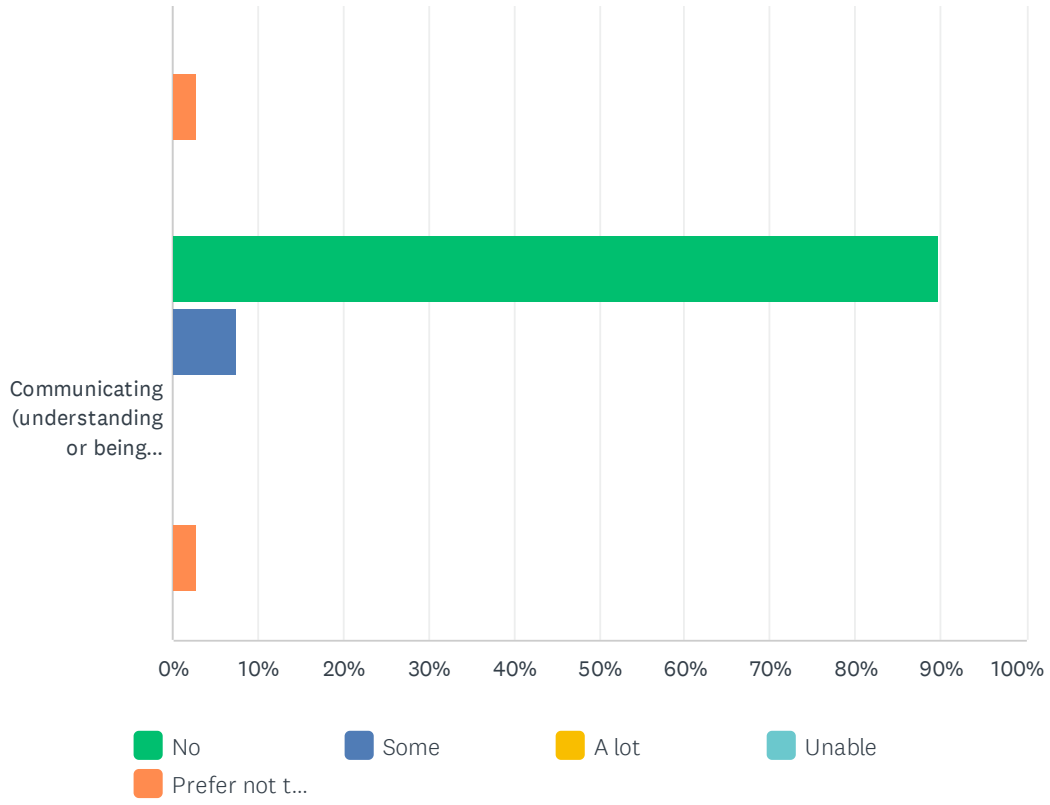


	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL
Walking	88.71% 165	10.22% 19	1.08% 2	186
Biking	54.30% 101	34.41% 64	11.29% 21	186
Automobile	53.51% 99	30.81% 57	15.68% 29	185
Public transportation	23.12% 43	37.63% 70	39.25% 73	186

Q19 Do you, or anyone in your household, have difficulty with:Please mark only one answer per row.

Answered: 187 Skipped: 6

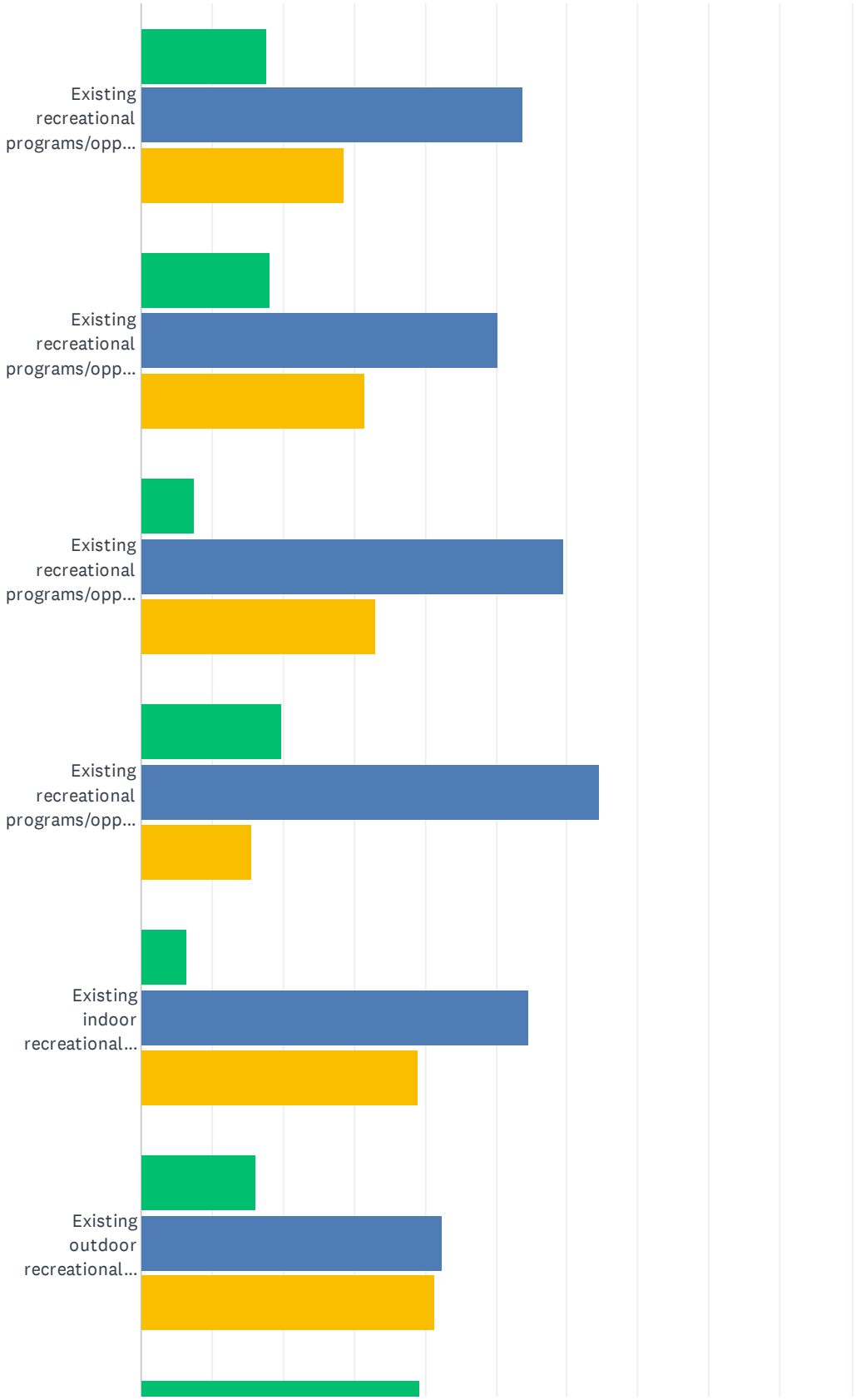


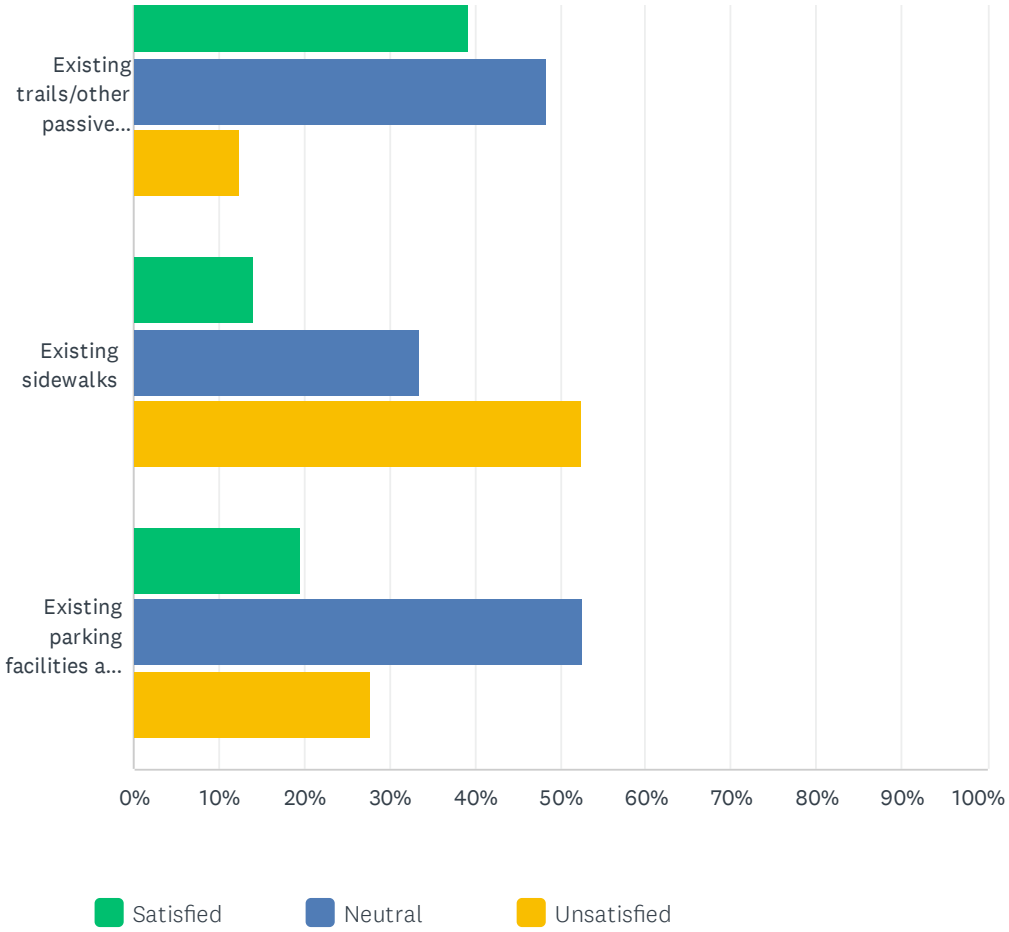


	NO	SOME	A LOT	UNABLE	PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	TOTAL
Seeing, even if wearing glasses	66.84% 125	26.74% 50	3.74% 7	0.00% 0	2.67% 5	187
Hearing, even if using hearing aid	74.19% 138	20.97% 39	2.15% 4	0.00% 0	2.69% 5	186
Walking or climbing stairs	73.26% 137	21.39% 40	3.21% 6	0.00% 0	2.14% 4	187
Remembering or concentrating	78.61% 147	17.11% 32	1.60% 3	0.00% 0	2.67% 5	187
Communicating (understanding or being understood by others)	89.84% 168	7.49% 14	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.67% 5	187

Q20 How satisfied are you with:Please mark only one answer per row.

Answered: 187 Skipped: 6





	SATISFIED	NEUTRAL	UNSATISFIED	TOTAL
Existing recreational programs/opportunities for adults	17.74% 33	53.76% 100	28.49% 53	186
Existing recreational programs/opportunities for children	18.18% 34	50.27% 94	31.55% 59	187
Existing recreational programs/opportunities for teens	7.57% 14	59.46% 110	32.97% 61	185
Existing recreational programs/opportunities for older/aging adults	19.89% 37	64.52% 120	15.59% 29	186
Existing indoor recreational programs	6.49% 12	54.59% 101	38.92% 72	185
Existing outdoor recreational facilities	16.13% 30	42.47% 79	41.40% 77	186
Existing trails/other passive recreation opportunities	39.25% 73	48.39% 90	12.37% 23	186
Existing sidewalks	14.05% 26	33.51% 62	52.43% 97	185
Existing parking facilities at West Boylston's open spaces	19.57% 36	52.72% 97	27.72% 51	184

Q21 Do you regularly travel to any nearby communities for open space and/or recreational opportunities? Please list each community and the activity you travel there for.

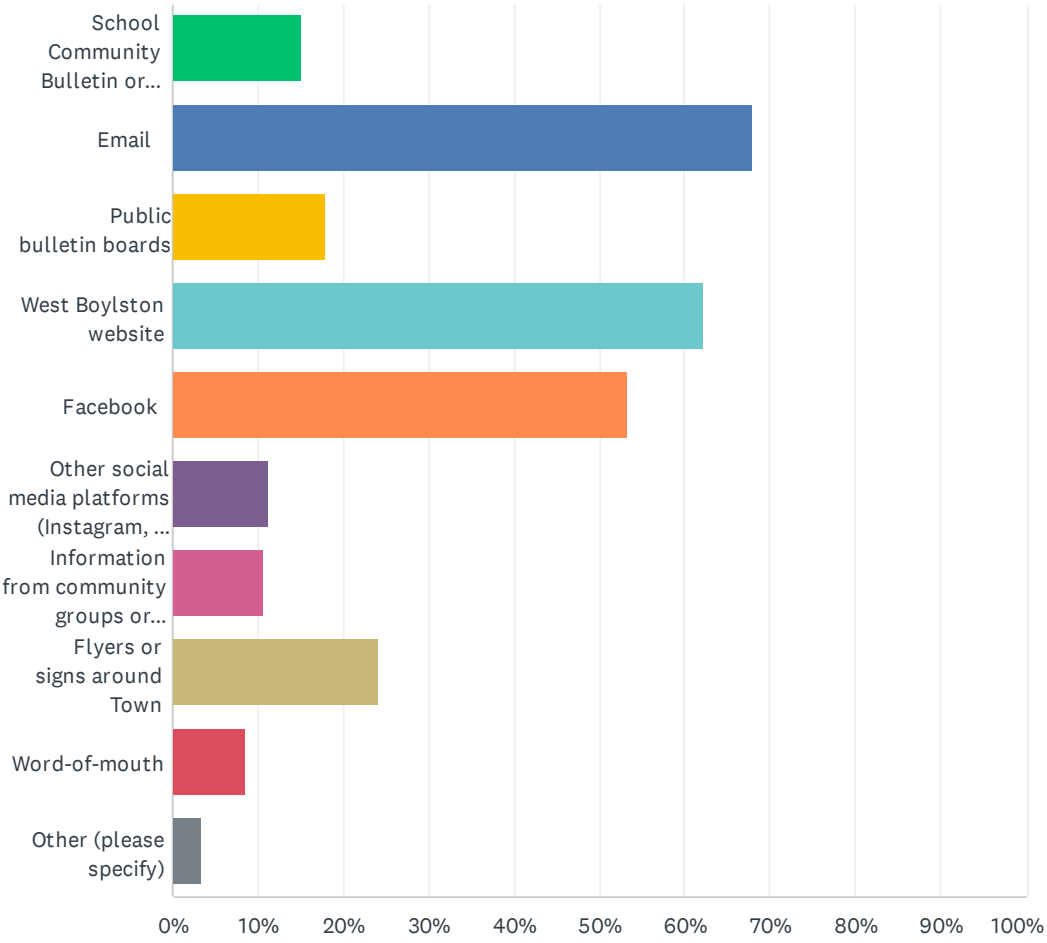
Answered: 82 Skipped: 111

Q22 Are there any additional comments, suggestions, or questions that you would like to provide?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 147

Q23 How would you prefer to get information about open spaces and/or recreational opportunities and events in West Boylston?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
School Community Bulletin or Listserve	15.17%	27
Email	67.98%	121
Public bulletin boards	17.98%	32
West Boylston website	62.36%	111
Facebook	53.37%	95
Other social media platforms (Instagram, X - formally Twitter, etc.)	11.24%	20
Information from community groups or athletic leagues	10.67%	19
Flyers or signs around Town	24.16%	43
Word-of-mouth	8.43%	15
Other (please specify)	3.37%	6
Total Respondents: 178		

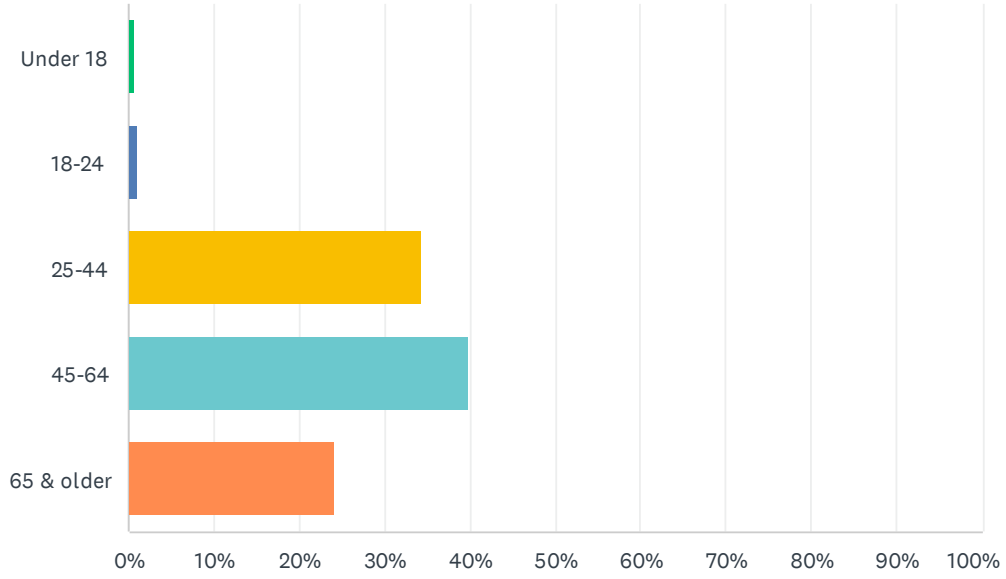
Q24 If you would like to receive information about the West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update via email, please leave your name and email address below:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 141

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	96.15%	50
Company	0.00%	0
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	0.00%	0
State/Province	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	100.00%	52
Phone Number	0.00%	0

Q25 What is your age?Please mark only one age group.

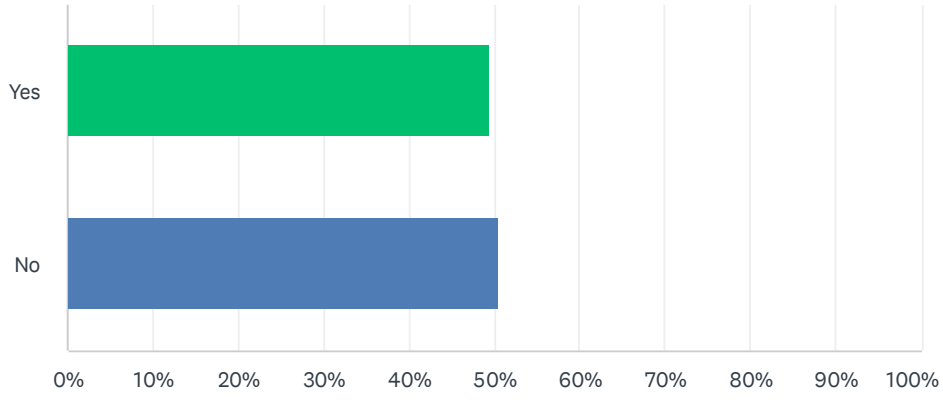
Answered: 183 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.55%	1
18-24	1.09%	2
25-44	34.43%	63
45-64	39.89%	73
65 & older	24.04%	44
TOTAL		183

Q26 Do you have children under the age of 18 living with you?Please mark only one answer.

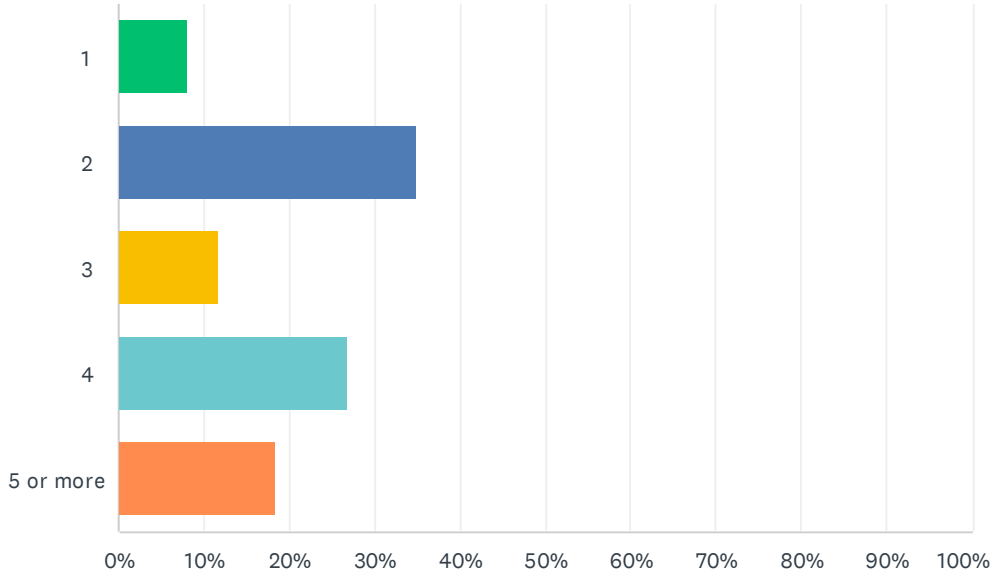
Answered: 186 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	49.46%	92
No	50.54%	94
TOTAL		186

Q27 What is your household size?Please mark only one answer.

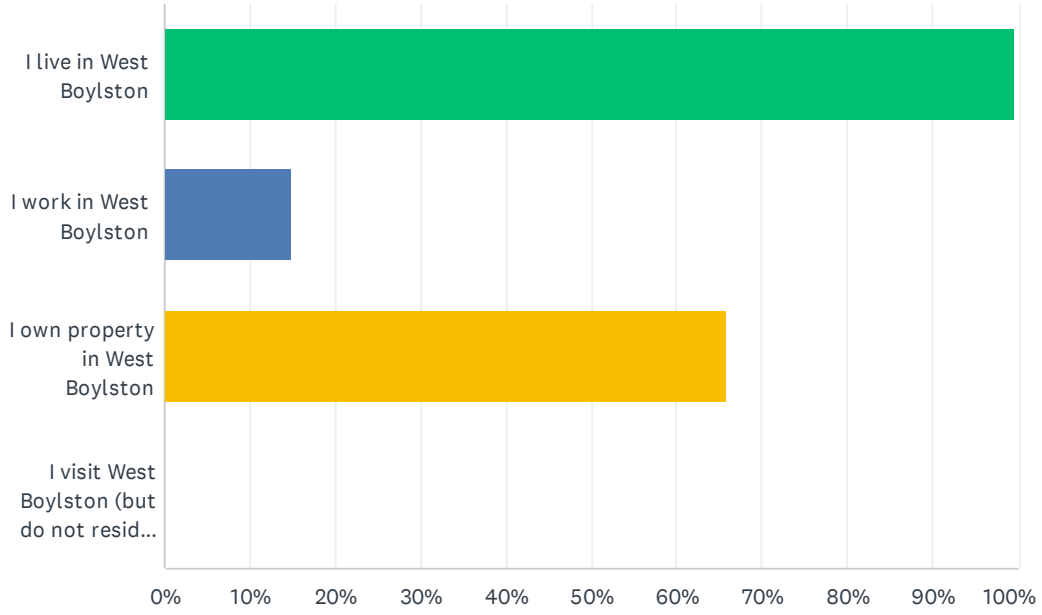
Answered: 186 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	8.06%	15
2	34.95%	65
3	11.83%	22
4	26.88%	50
5 or more	18.28%	34
TOTAL		186

Q28 Please check all that apply:

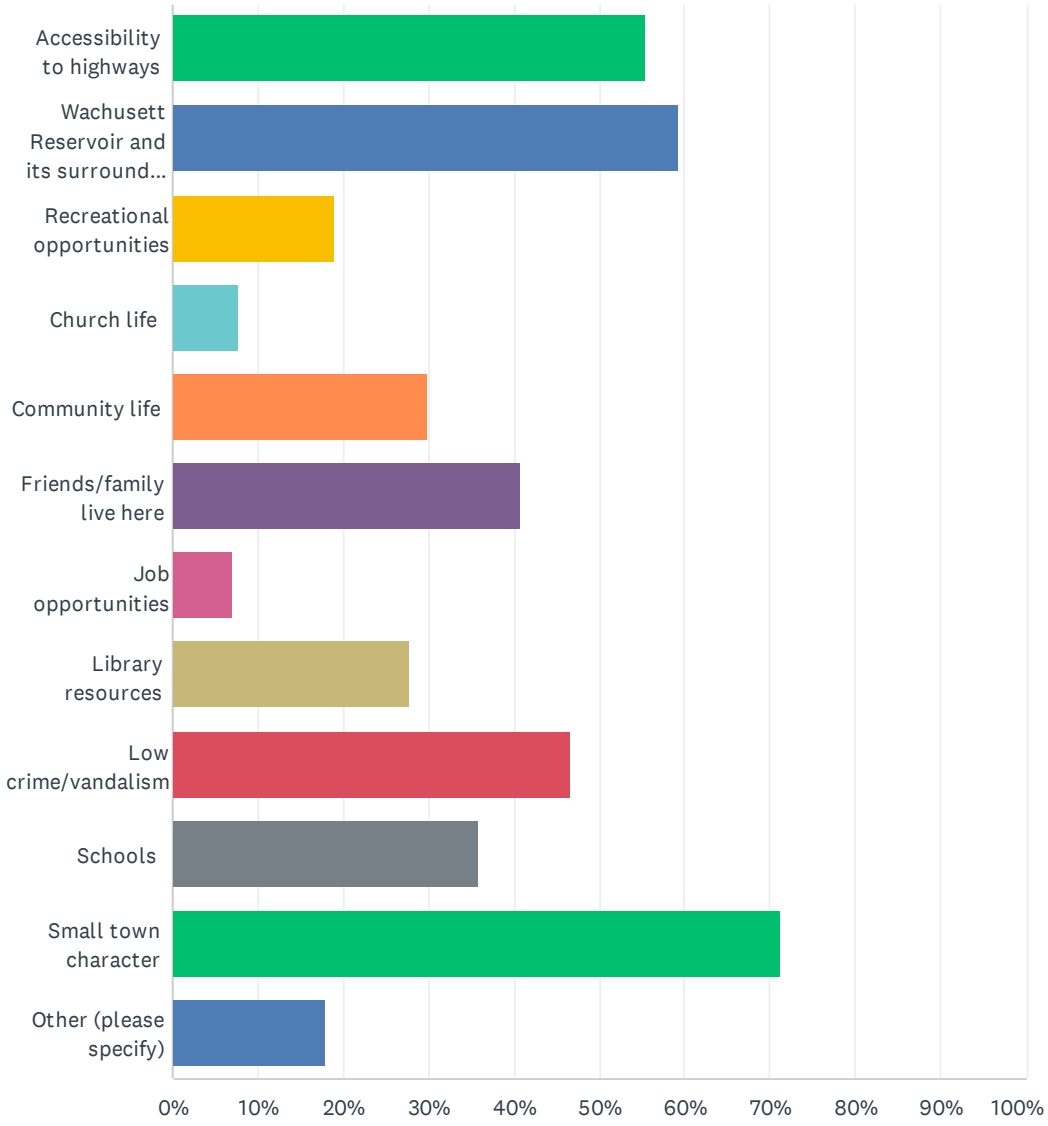
Answered: 188 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in West Boylston	99.47%	187
I work in West Boylston	14.89%	28
I own property in West Boylston	65.96%	124
I visit West Boylston (but do not reside in West Boylston)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 188		

Q29 If you live in West Boylston, please check all the reasons you chose to live here:

Answered: 184 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accessibility to highways	55.43%	102
Wachusett Reservoir and its surrounding open spaces	59.24%	109
Recreational opportunities	19.02%	35
Church life	7.61%	14
Community life	29.89%	55
Friends/family live here	40.76%	75
Job opportunities	7.07%	13
Library resources	27.72%	51
Low crime/vandalism	46.74%	86
Schools	35.87%	66
Small town character	71.20%	131
Other (please specify)	17.93%	33
Total Respondents: 184		

Draft West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Public Comment Period



Blueberry Hill Conservation Area



The Town of West Boylston, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), has updated its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Please consider reviewing the draft OSRP update & providing comments.

To review the Draft OSRP Update, please scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, view the paper copies of the draft plan at the Town Hall and Beaman Memorial Library, or visit this link: https://bit.ly/WestBoylstonOSRP

Also, feel free to attend the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) meeting on May 29th, 2025 at 6pm at Town Hall (140 Worcester Street) to see a presentation on the draft OSRP & provide comments.

Please submit any comments to Will Talbot from CMRPC at wtalbot@cmrpc.org or via the comment boxes at the Town Hall & the Beaman Memorial Library by the end of the day on June 5th, 2025. Thank you!

2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan
2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan Appendices & Support Letters
2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan Maps
Blueberry Hill aka Huckleberry Hill , West Boylston Hiking Map
Creation
Report to May 2009 Town Meeting
Support Letters and Appendices
Contact the Open Space Implementation Committee

Contact Info

Phone:
(774) 261-4088 (Town Administrator's Office)

Address:
140 Worcester Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
United States
See map: Google Maps

Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan Public comment Period

POSTED ON: MAY 27, 2025 - 10:23AM

Attachment	Size
west_boylston_osrp_public_comment_period_digital_graphic.pdf	746.49 KB

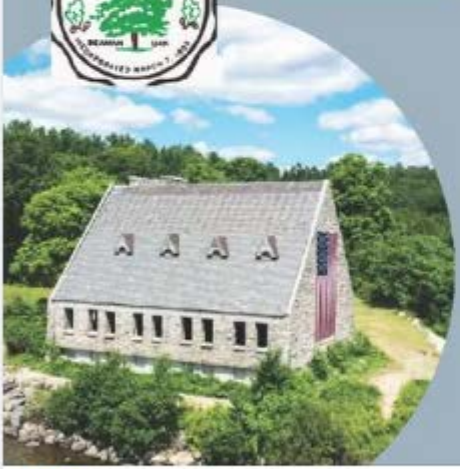
West Boylston MA
20h ·

https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/open-space-implementation...

Draft West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Public Comment Period



Blueberry Hill Conservation Area



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2 1 share

Like Share

West Boylston MA limited who can comment on this post.

Draft West Boylston Open Space and Recreation Plan

Public Comment Period

POSTED ON: MAY 27, 2025 - 10:30AM

The Town of West Boylston, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), has updated its Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), Please consider reviewing the draft OSRP update and providing Comments. See attached flyer for more details.

Attachment	Size
west_boylston_osrp_public_comment_period_digital_graphic.pdf	746.49 KB

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Town of West Boylston

Open Space and Recreation Plan 2025

Thursday, May 29th, 2025

AGENDA

Welcome and Purpose

Presentation of OSRP Highlights

Presentation of Community Outreach Results

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Next Steps and Closing Remarks

OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

- Brenda Bowman, Resident
- Ginny Rose Pellegrini, Resident
- James Pedone, Resident, Parks Commission
- Mike Peckar, Resident, Wachusett Greenways and the Greater Worcester Land Trust
- Raymond DeSanti, Resident
- Vincent Vignaly, Resident, Planning Board
- William Chase, Resident

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) Staff Who Have Assisted the Open Space Implementation Committee:

Will Talbot, Assistant Resiliency Planner
Dani Marini-King, Manager of Environmental Planning
Trish Settles, Deputy Executive Director, Regional Collaboration and Community Planning
Greer Jarvis, Assistant Resiliency Planner (former)

PLANNING PROCESS

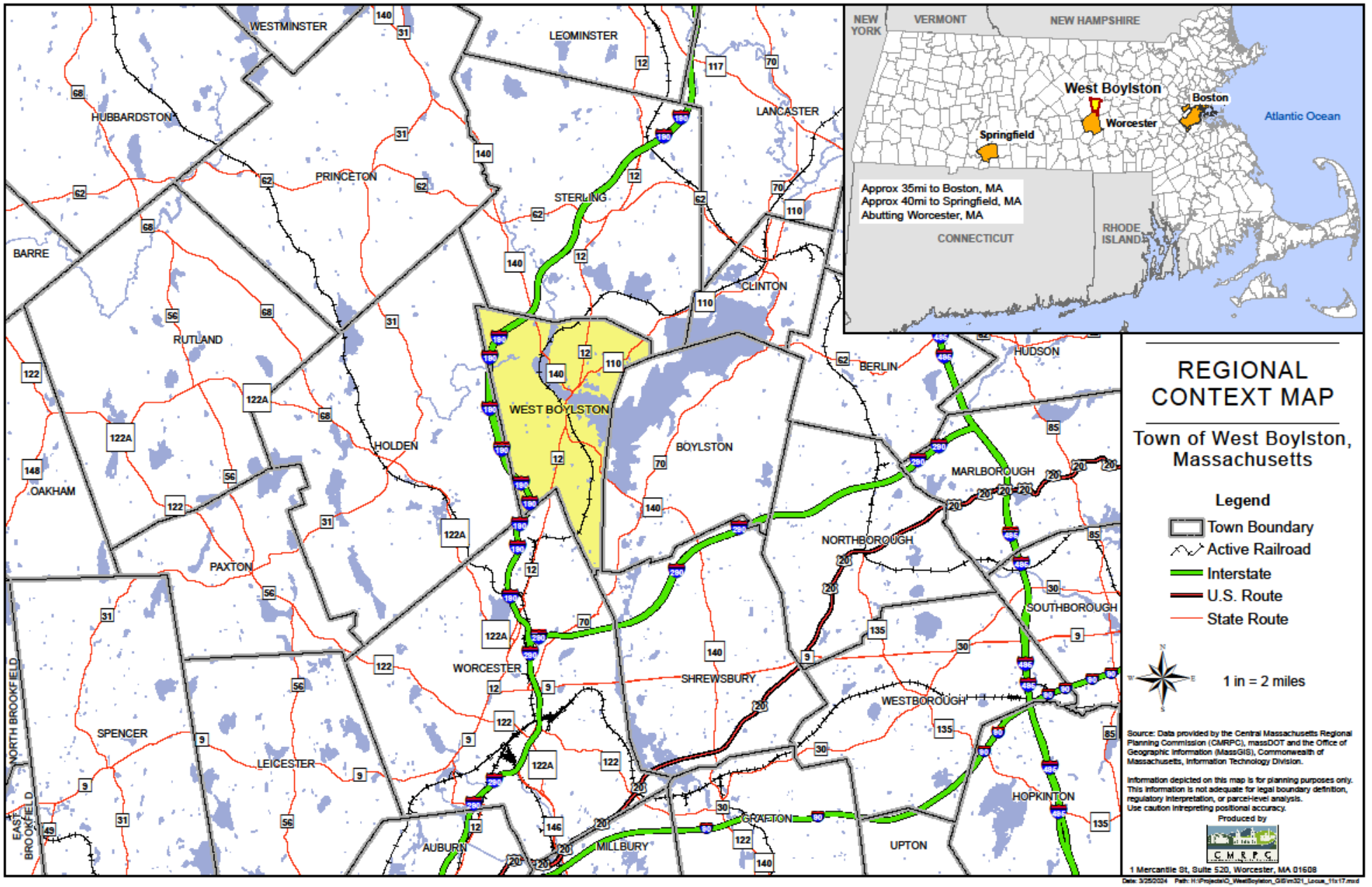
- **Community Organization**
  - Collaboration with CMRPC
  - Meetings of the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee
- **Data Collection**
  - Community profile: demographic, housing, other data from US Census
  - Environmental issues and concerns
  - Water quality
  - Inventory of open spaces
- **Community Input**
  - Community Survey
  - Public Outreach Event (West Boylston Last Day of School Event, June 2024)
- **Document Preparation and Review**
  - Presentation to the Open Space Implentation Committee (tonight)
  - Public Comment Period (ongoing through June 5th)
- **Submit Plan to the State's Division of Conservation Services (DCS)**
- **Review and Acceptance by DCS for Conditional Approval and then Final Approval**

PURPOSE OF AN OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

- Open space is important to the economic future of the Town.
- The Open Space and Recreation Plan assists the Town in obtaining the benefits of development while protecting environmental assets and helps prevent the overwhelming of available town resources.
- Communities with approved OSRPs are eligible to apply for:
  - Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grants
  - Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grants
  - Other state grant programs
- The last Open Space and Recreation Plan for West Boylston was updated in 2018

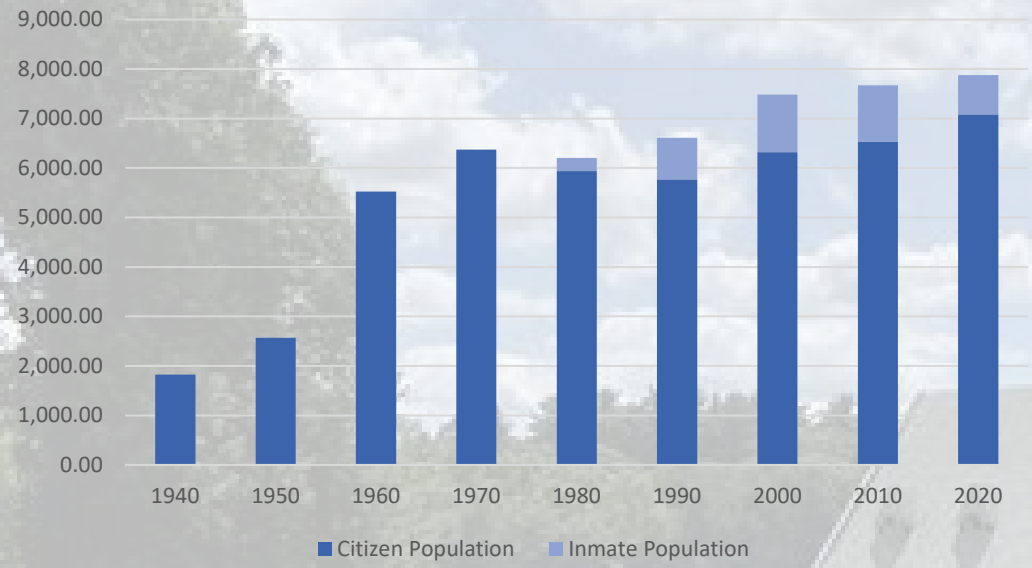
PLAN HIGHLIGHTS




WESTMINSTER
LEOMINSTER
HUBBARDSTON
LANCASTER
PRINCETON
STERLING
BARRE
CLINTON
RUTLAND
HUDSON
BERLIN
WEST BOYLSTON
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
OAKHAM
MARLBOROUGH
NORTHBOROUGH
PAXTON
SOUTHBOROUGH
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
WESTBOROUGH
NORTH BROOKFIELD
SPENCER
LEICESTER
EAST BROOKFIELD
AUBURN
MILLBURY
GRAFTON
UPTON
HOPKINTON
NEW YORK
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
West Boylston
Boston
Worcester
Springfield
Atlantic Ocean
Approx 35mi to Boston, MA
Approx 40mi to Springfield, MA
Abutting Worcester, MA
CONNECTICUT
RHODE ISLAND
REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP
Town of West 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.
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 intrepreting positional accuracy.
Produced by
CMRPC
1 Mercantile St, Suite 520, Worcester, MA 01608

POPULATION AND AGE

West Boylston's Population Change



West Boylston's Population by Age Group

Age	% Pop. in 1960	% Pop. in 1970	% Pop. in 1980	% Pop. in 1990	% Pop. in 2000	% Pop. in 2010	% Pop. in 2020*
<15	36%	29%	19%	16%	18%	14%	13%
15-24	9%	16%	18%	14%	12%	6%	11%
25-44	30%	22%	27%	34%	33%	26%	26%
45-64	18%	25%	25%	21%	23%	35%	27%
>64	7%	9%	12%	16%	15%	18%	23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

***Includes inmate population**

RACE, LANGUAGE, DISABILITY

West Boylston's Racial Demographics

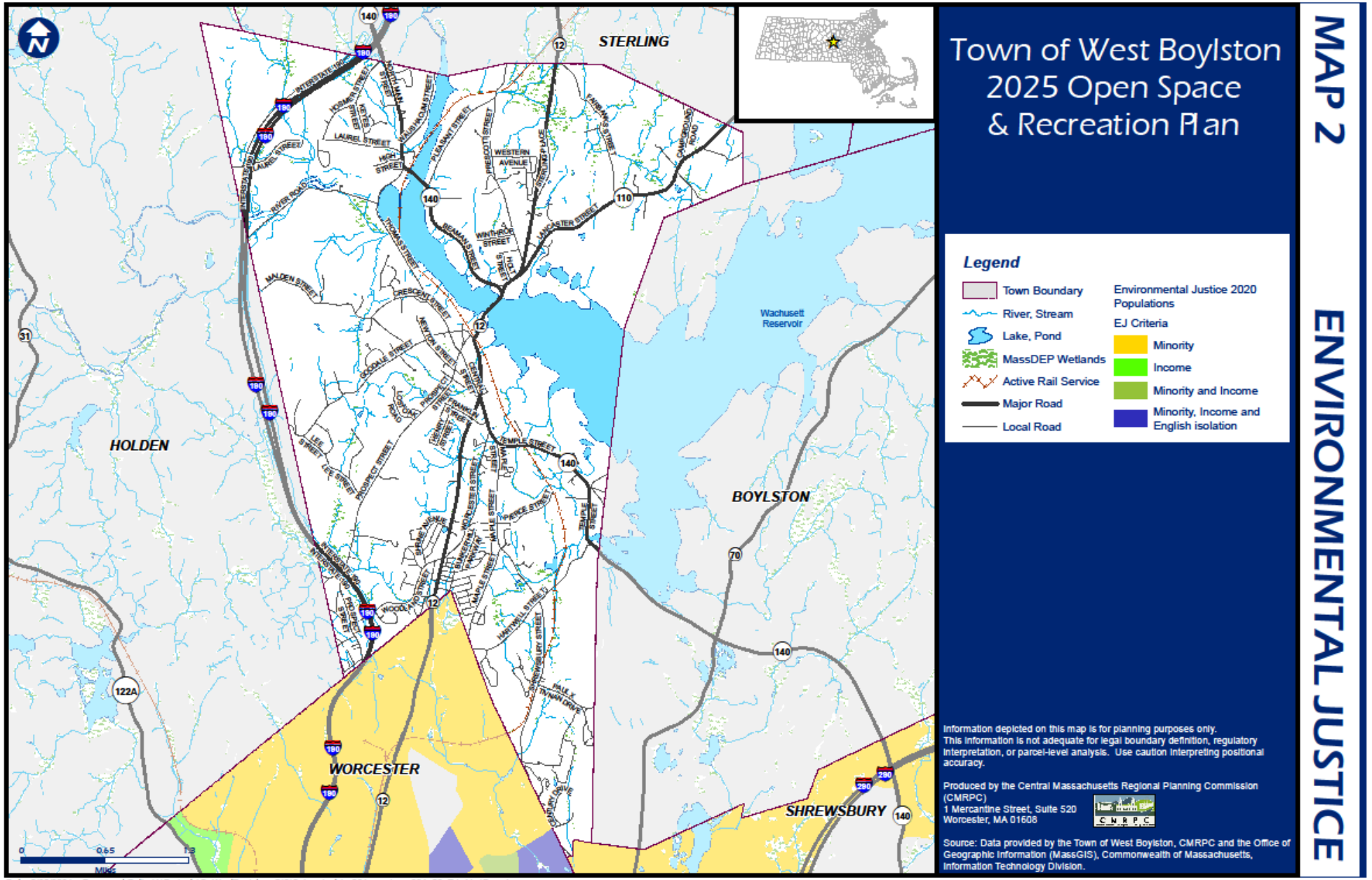
Race	Number of Residents
American Indian and Alaskan Native	9
Asian	149
Black or African American	293
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1
White	6,824
Other	181
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census	

Languages Spoken in West Boylston

Language Spoken at Home	Number of Housing Units
Spanish	88
French, Haitian, or Cajun	6
German or other West Germanic languages	33
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	25
Other Indo-European languages	102
Korean	11
Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)	8
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	8
Arabic	44
Other and unspecified languages	27
Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	

Disability Characteristics in West Boylston

Disability	Percent of Residents
Hearing Difficulty	4.7%
Vision Difficulty	2.0%
Cognitive Difficulty	4.2%
Ambulatory Difficulty	6.9%
Self-Care Difficulty	2.9%
Independent Living Difficulty	3.7%
Source: 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	


Town of West Boylston
2025 Open Space
& Recreation Plan
MAP 2
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Legend
Town Boundary
River, Stream
Lake, Pond
MassDEP Wetlands
Active Rail Service
Major Road
Local Road
Environmental Justice 2020 Populations
EJ Criteria
Minority
Income
Minority and Income
Minority, Income and English isolation
STERLING
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
Wachusett Reservoir
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Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
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Source: Data provided by the Town of West Boylston, CMRPC and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.
Date: 3/25/2024 Document Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\Subprojects\m321_osrp\osrp321_02_EJ_11x17.mxd

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Regional Median Household (Housing Unit) Income

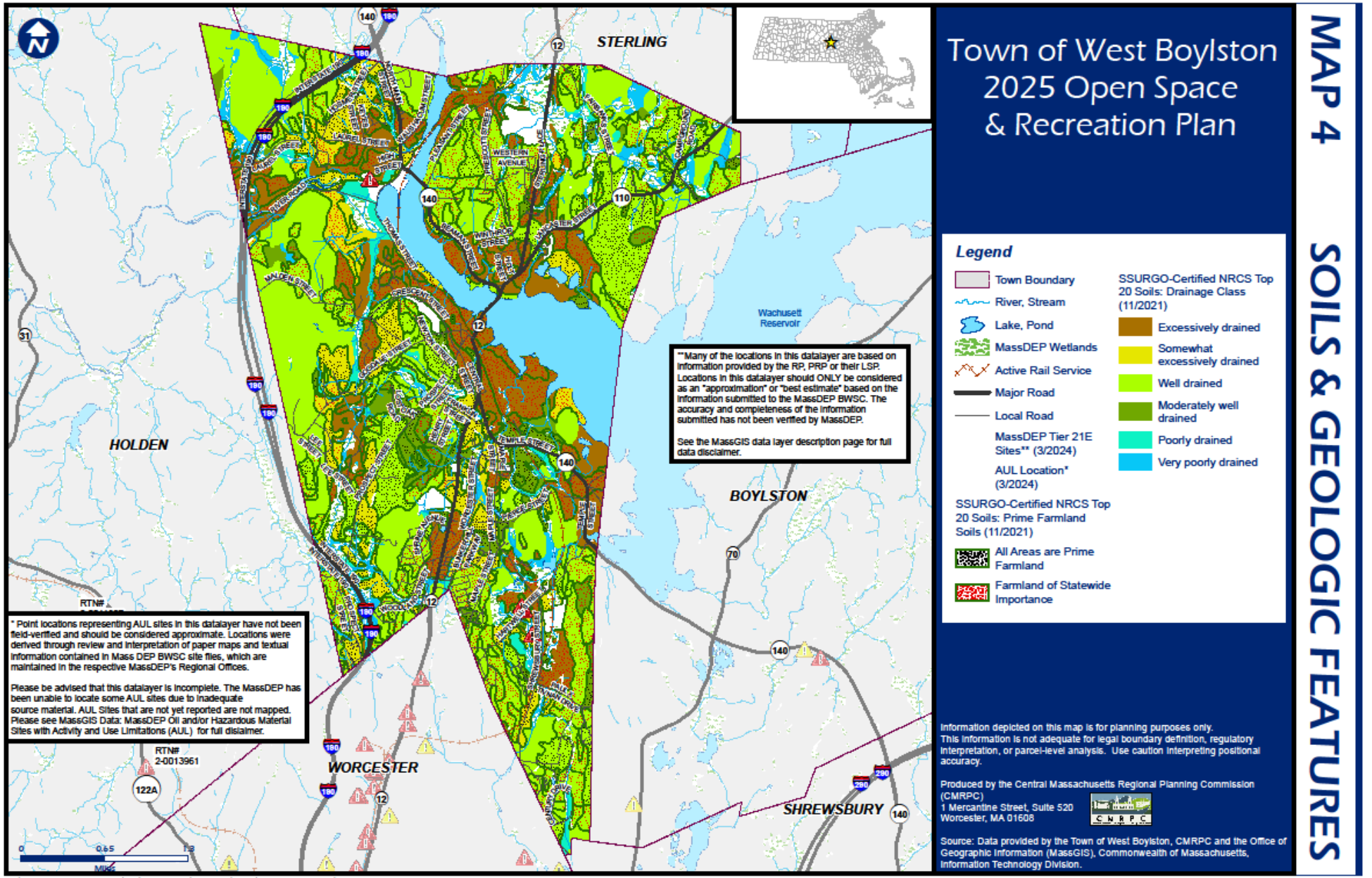
Geographic Location	Median Household Income – 2000	Median Household Income – 2010	Median Household Income - 2020
West Boylston	$53,777	$79,906	$90,313
Boylston	$67,703	$88,214	$106,100
Sterling	$67,188	$102,115	$122,810
Holden	$64,297	$88,405	$111,960
Worcester	$35,623	$45,036	$51,647
Shrewsbury	$64,237	$85,697	$108,870
Worcester County	$47,874	$64,152	$77,155
Massachusetts	$50,502	$64,509	$84,385
Source: US Census Bureau			

West Boylston's Resident's Employment Types

Occupation Type/Employment Industry	Percent (%) of Residents Employed per Industry
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	28.09%
Retail Trade	11.40%
Manufacturing	11.34%
Professional, Scientific, Management and Administrative, Waste Management	10.40%
Construction	9.25%
Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, Renting and Leasing	6.99%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	6.07%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6.04%
Other	10.42%
Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates	

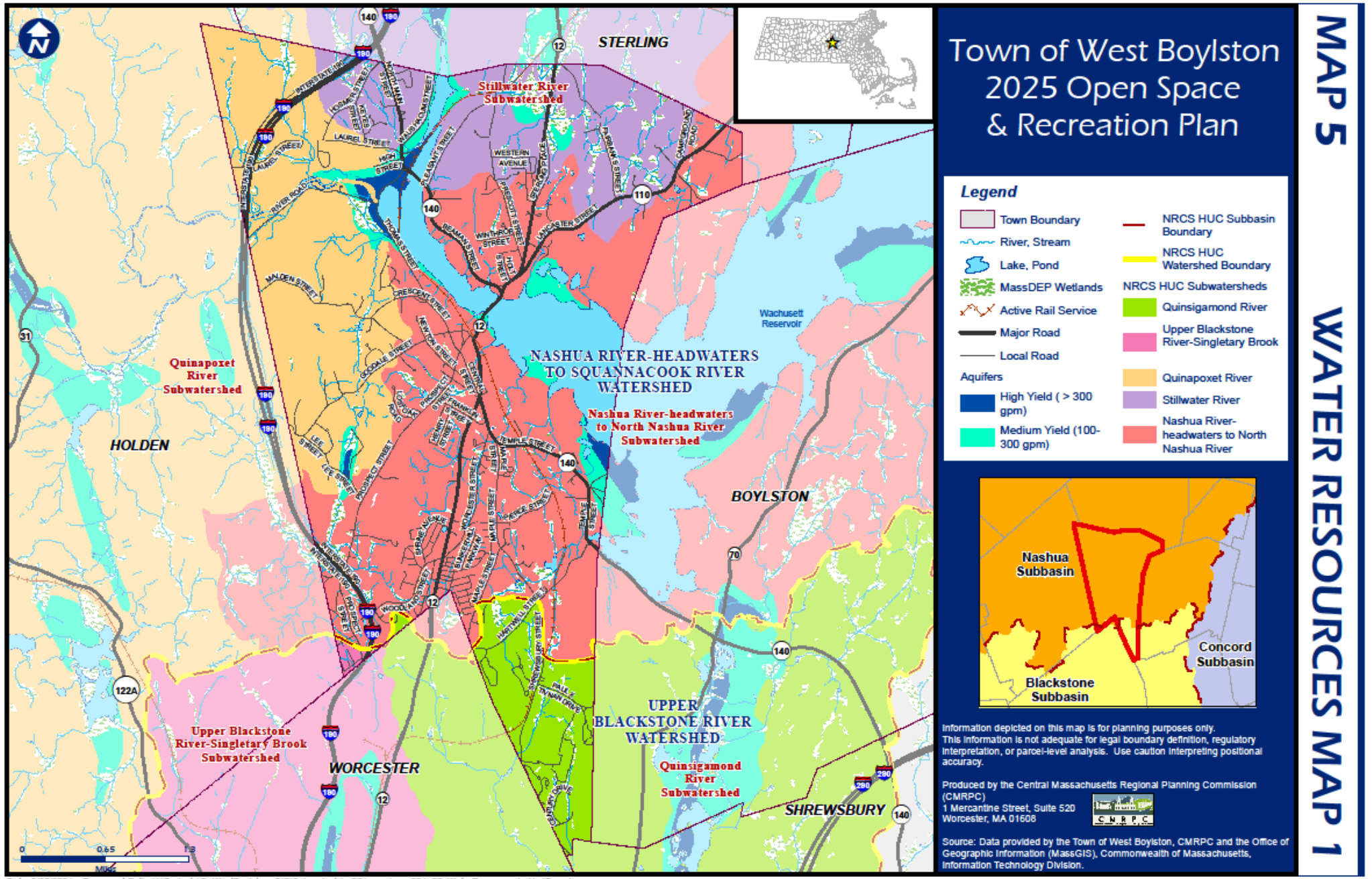
GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY

- The terrain of West Boylston ranges from rolling hills to steep slopes.
- Elevations in town range from:
  - 386 feet above sea level at the shore of the Reservoir to
  - 870 feet above sea level at Malden Hill.
- Soil classes in town include:
  - Paxton-Woodbridge-Canton and
  - Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor.
- About 15% of town has slopes at a grade greater than 15%, and these steep slopes are located primarily in the west of town, near Malden Hill, or at the edge of the Reservoir.
  - This leads to some construction challenges.


Town of West Boylston
2025 Open Space
& Recreation Plan
MAP 4
SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES
STERLING
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
Wachusett Reservoir
Legend
Town Boundary
River, Stream
Lake, Pond
MassDEP Wetlands
Active Rail Service
Major Road
Local Road
MassDEP Tier 21E Sites** (3/2024)
AUL Location* (3/2024)
SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Prime Farmland Soils (11/2021)
All Areas are Prime Farmland
Farmland of Statewide Importance
SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Drainage Class (11/2021)
Excessively drained
Somewhat excessively drained
Well drained
Moderately well drained
Poorly drained
Very poorly drained
**Many of the locations in this datalayer are based on information provided by the RP, PRP or their LSP. Locations in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.
See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.
* Point locations representing AUL sites in this datalayer have not been field-verified and should be considered approximate. Locations were derived through review and interpretation of paper maps and textual information contained in Mass DEP BWSC site files, which are maintained in the respective MassDEP's Regional Offices.
Please be advised that this datalayer is incomplete. The MassDEP has been unable to locate some AUL sites due to inadequate source material. AUL Sites that are not yet reported are not mapped. Please see MassGIS Data: MassDEP Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) for full disclaimer.
RTN# 2-0013961
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Date: 3/25/2024 Document Path: H:\Projects\O_WestBoylston_GIS\Subprojects\m321_osrp\osrp321_04_Soils_11x17.mxd

WATER RESOURCES

- Areas in West Boylston are in the Blackstone River Watershed and the Nashua River Watershed.
- Surface waters in town include:
  - The Wachusett Reservoir,
  - The Stillwater River,
  - The Quinapoxet River, and
  - Several brooks and ponds.
- The Town has public water and sewer systems
  - 99% of the Town's water users are served by the West Boylston Water District (WBWD), and the Town's sewer system covers 85% of all residential properties in town.


Town of West Boylston
2025 Open Space
& Recreation Plan
MAP 5
WATER RESOURCES MAP 1
Legend
Town Boundary
River, Stream
Lake, Pond
MassDEP Wetlands
Active Rail Service
Major Road
Local Road
Aquifers
High Yield (> 300 gpm)
Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)
NRCS HUC Subbasin Boundary
NRCS HUC Watershed Boundary
NRCS HUC Subwatersheds
Quinsigamond River
Upper Blackstone River-Singletary Brook
Quinapoxet River
Stillwater River
Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River
Nashua Subbasin
Concord Subbasin
Blackstone Subbasin
STERLING
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
Wachusett Reservoir
Stillwater River Subwatershed
Quinapoxet River Subwatershed
NASHUA RIVER-HEADWATERS TO SQUANNACOOK RIVER WATERSHED
Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River Subwatershed
UPPER BLACKSTONE RIVER WATERSHED
Upper Blackstone River-Singletary Brook Subwatershed
Quinsigamond River Subwatershed
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VEGETATION, WILDLIFE, AND VERNAL POOLS

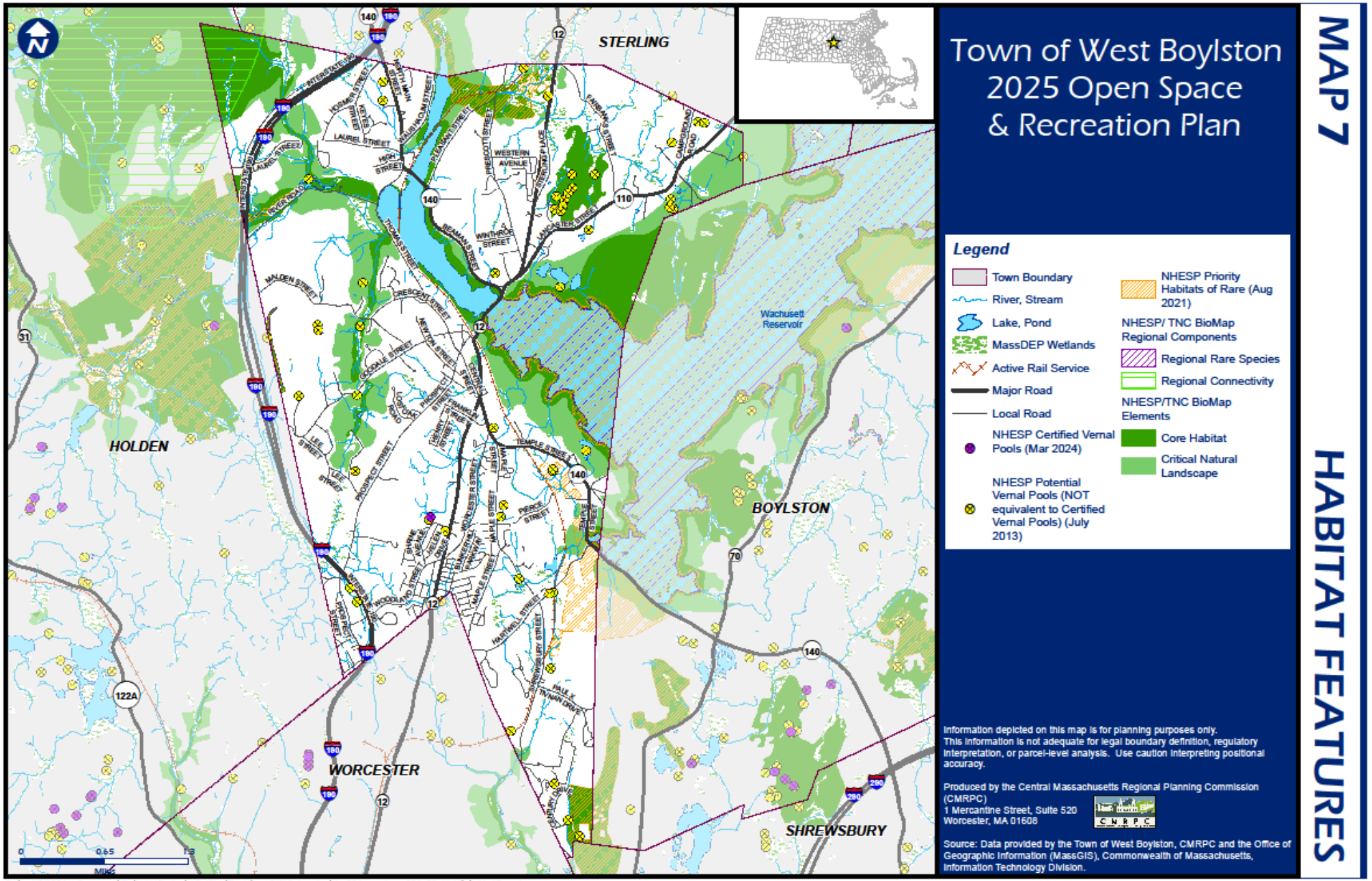
- Vegetation
  - Northeast Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion
    - Post-agricultural forests in this ecoregion include stands of oak and pine trees growing on nutrient-poor, acidic soils
    - There are some areas serving as floodplain forests in this ecoregion.
- Wildlife
  - The wildlife species found in West Boylston are common to Central Massachusetts. Occasionally, uncommon animals are seen in West Boylston, such as moose, turkey vultures, American Bald Eagles, black bears, and bobcats; these animals' populations are expanding.
- Vernal Pools
  - One certified vernal pool
  - Many potential vernal pools

Rare Vascular Plants in West Boylston

Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Adder's Tongue Fern	Threatened	1932
Dwarf Bulrush	Threatened	2016
Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe	Special Concern	1899
Houghton's Flatsedge	Endangered	2008
Wild Lupine	Special Concern	2022
Source: MassWildlife NHESP Rare Species Viewer		

Rare Animal Species in West Boylston

Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Bald Eagle (Bird)	Threatened	2014
Eastern Hog-Nosed Snake (Reptile)	Special Concern	2009
Eastern Meadowlark (Bird)	Special Concern	2022
Eastern Whip-Poor-Will (Bird)	Special Concern	2013
Wood Turtle (Reptile)	Special Concern	2019
Source: MassWildlife NHESP Rare Species Viewer		


Town of West Boylston
2025 Open Space
& Recreation Plan
MAP 7
HABITAT FEATURES
Legend
Town Boundary
River, Stream
Lake, Pond
MassDEP Wetlands
Active Rail Service
Major Road
Local Road
NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (Mar 2024)
NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (NOT equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools) (July 2013)
NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare (Aug 2021)
NHESP/ TNC BioMap Regional Components
Regional Rare Species
Regional Connectivity
NHESP/TNC BioMap Elements
Core Habitat
Critical Natural Landscape
STERLING
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
Wachusett Reservoir
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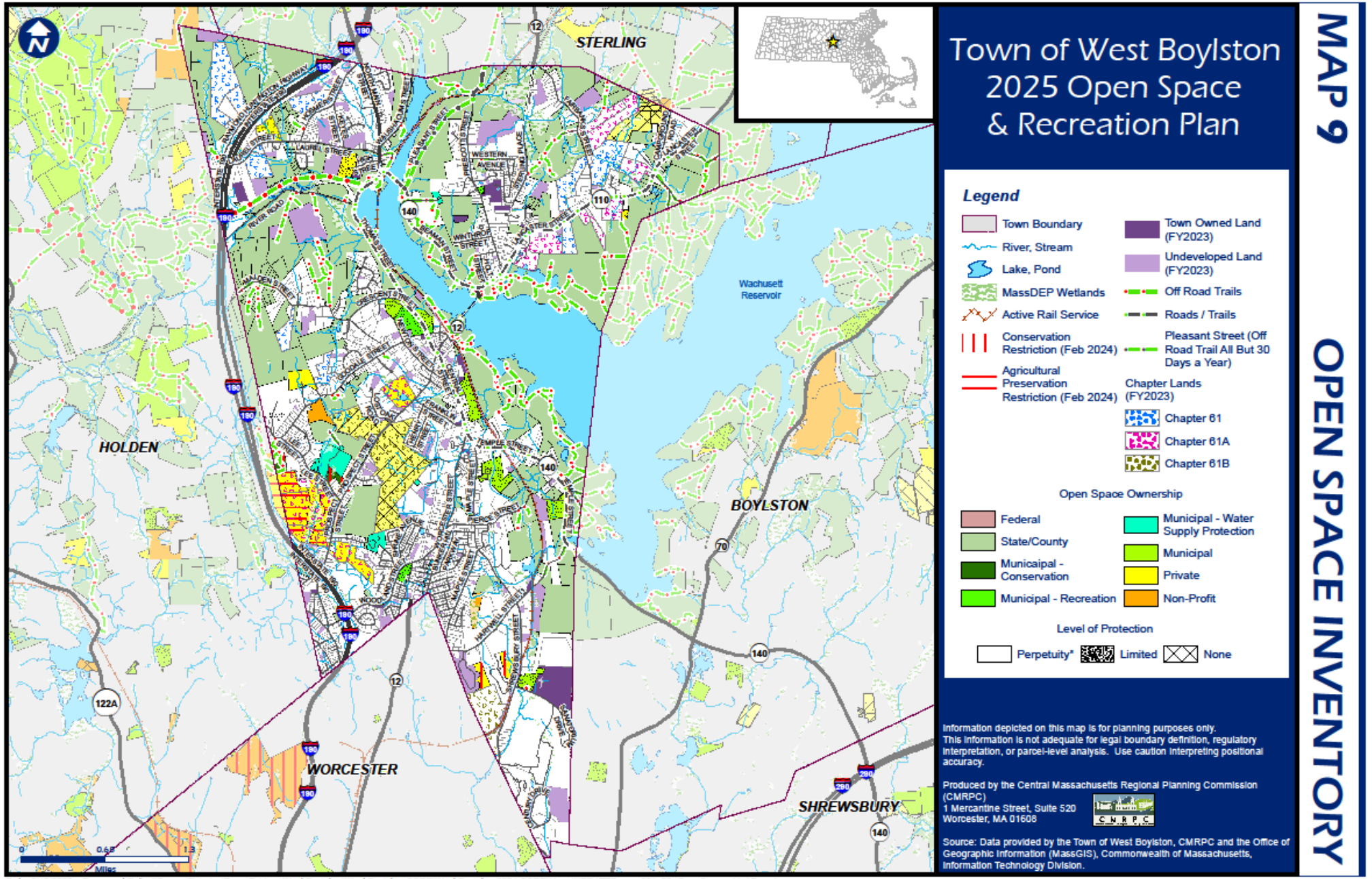
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION LANDS

Open Space by Chapter Land Status		
Chapter Land Type	Assessor Lot Size	Assessor Lot Size %
Chapter 61	238.72	2.32%
Chapter 61A	325.51	3.16%
Chapter 61B	238.68	2.32%
Not Chapter Lands	9,495.11	92.20%
Grand Total	10,298.02	100.00%

Open Space by Ownership		
Owner Type	GIS Acres	GIS Acres %
Land Trust	14.58	0.34%
Municipal	158.12	3.68%
Private	467.20	10.88%
Private Non-Profit	4.81	0.11%
State	3,648.15	84.98%
Grand Total	4,292.86	100.00%

Open Space by Level of Protection		
Level of Protection	GIS Acres	GIS Acres %
Limited	95.57	2.63%
None	234.77	6.47%
Perpetuity	3,297.71	90.89%
Grand Total	3,628.06	100.00%

Open Space by APR/CR Status		
Level of Protection	GIS Acres	GIS Acres %
APR	79.65	2.20%
CR	37.66	1.04%
Not APR or CR	3,510.74	96.77%
Grand Total	3,628.06	100.00%


STERLING
HOLDEN
BOYLSTON
WORCESTER
SHREWSBURY
Wachusett Reservoir
Town of West Boylston
2025 Open Space
& Recreation Plan
MAP 9
OPEN SPACE INVENTORY
Legend
Town Boundary
River, Stream
Lake, Pond
MassDEP Wetlands
Active Rail Service
Conservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
Agricultural Preservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
Town Owned Land (FY2023)
Undeveloped Land (FY2023)
Off Road Trails
Roads / Trails
Pleasant Street (Off Road Trail All But 30 Days a Year)
Chapter Lands (FY2023)
Chapter 61
Chapter 61A
Chapter 61B
Open Space Ownership
Federal
State/County
Municaipal - Conservation
Municipal - Recreation
Municipal - Water Supply Protection
Municipal
Private
Non-Profit
Level of Protection
Perpetuity*
Limited
None
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Date: 3/13/2025 Document Path: \\Cmrpc-file\cdap\Town Folders\West Boylston\West Boylston OSRP\West Boylston 2024 OSRP\Maps\UPDATED_osrp321_08_OpenSpace_11x17.mxd

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



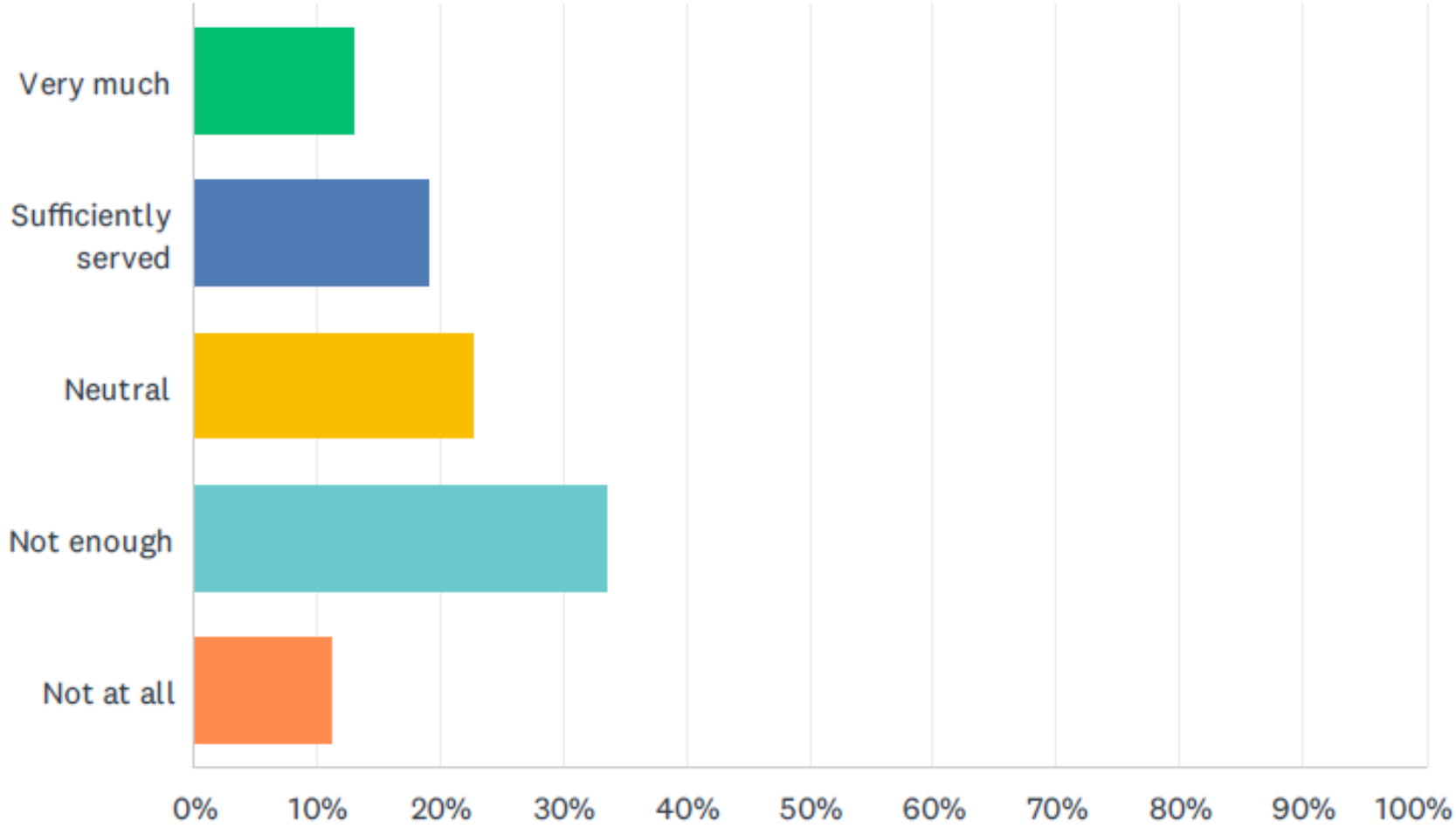
COMMUNITY SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- The survey was available to take online via Survey Monkey.
  - Paper copies of the survey were available at the Town Hall, Beaman Memorial Public Library, and West Boylston Senior Center.
- The survey was open in late spring / early summer 2024.
- The survey was advertised online via the Town Website, Town Facebook pages, and E-mail blasts.
- A **total of 193 responses** were received.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

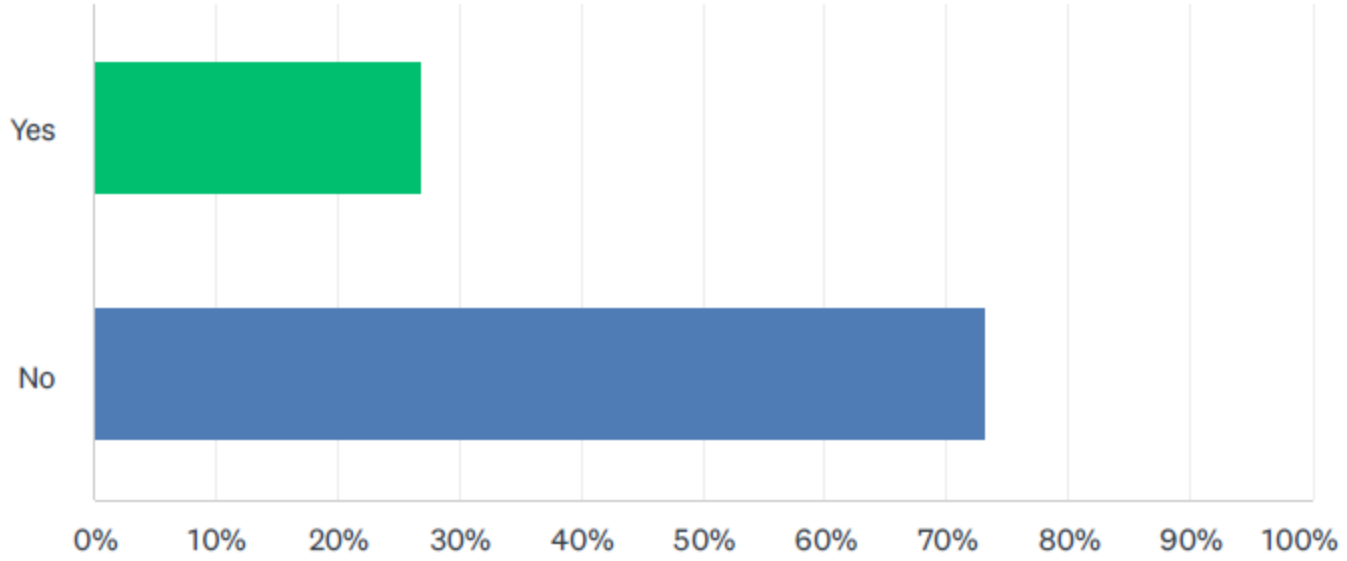
Q1 Is the Town adequately served by current Open Space?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 0



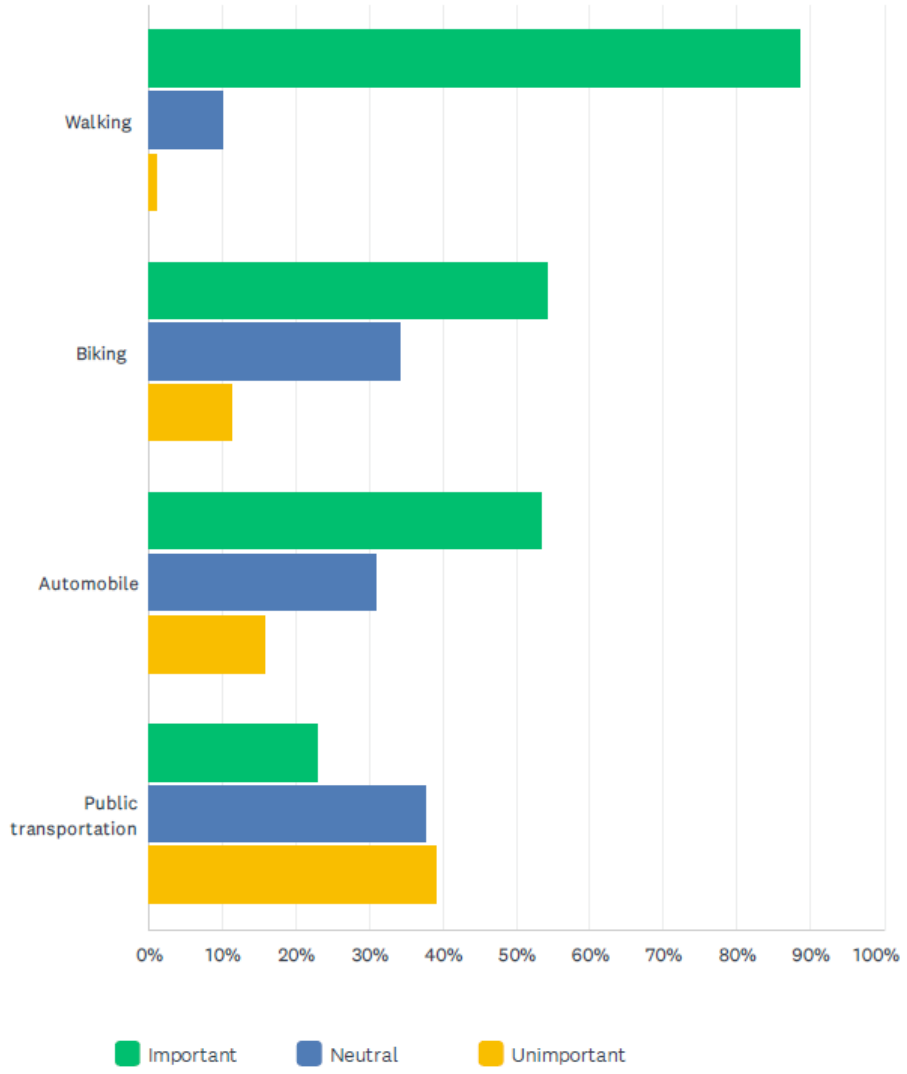
Q3 Is the Town adequately served by its current recreational facilities?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 0



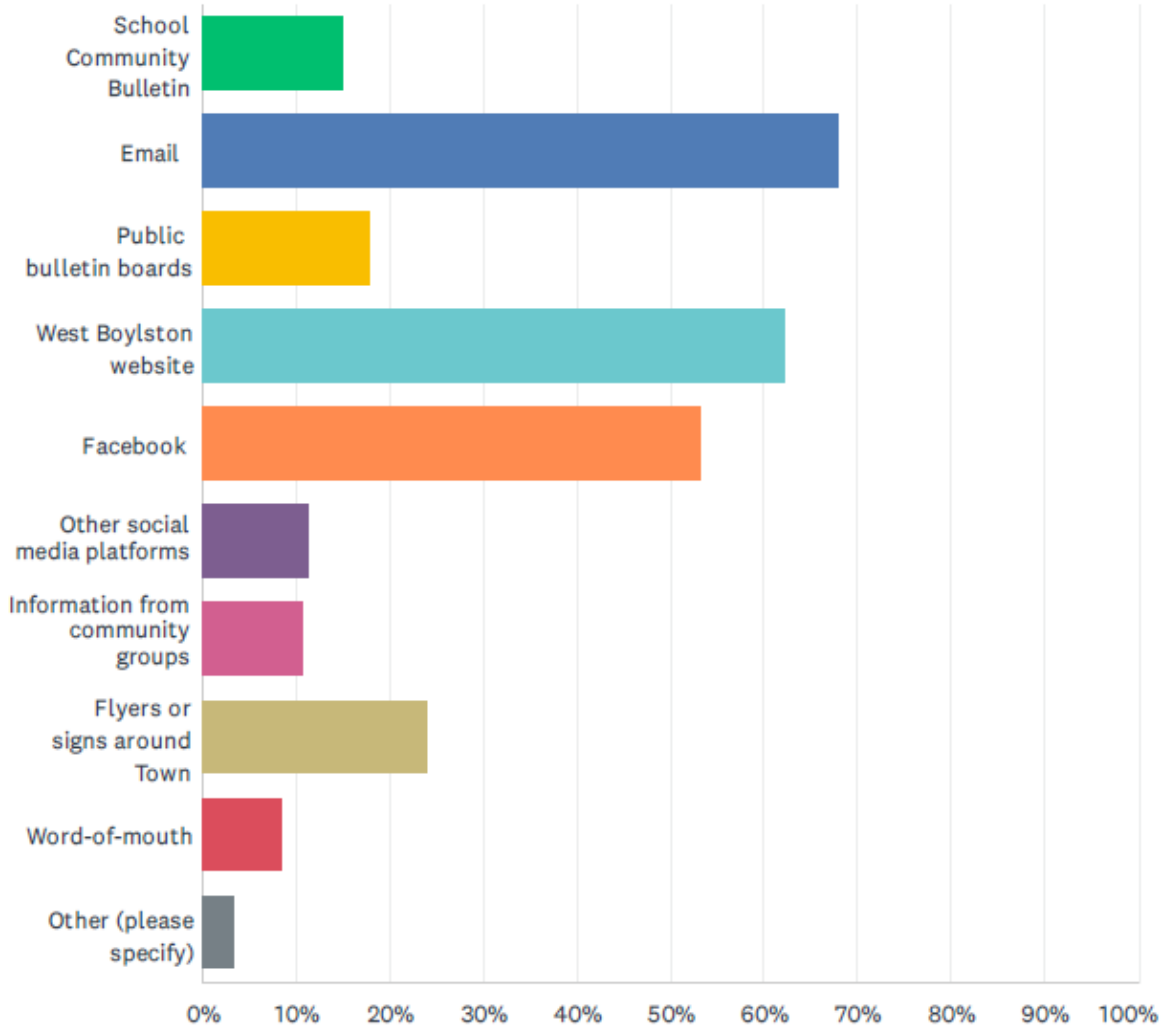
Q18 How important is it to you to have open space and recreational destinations in West Boylston accessible by:

Answered: 187 Skipped: 6

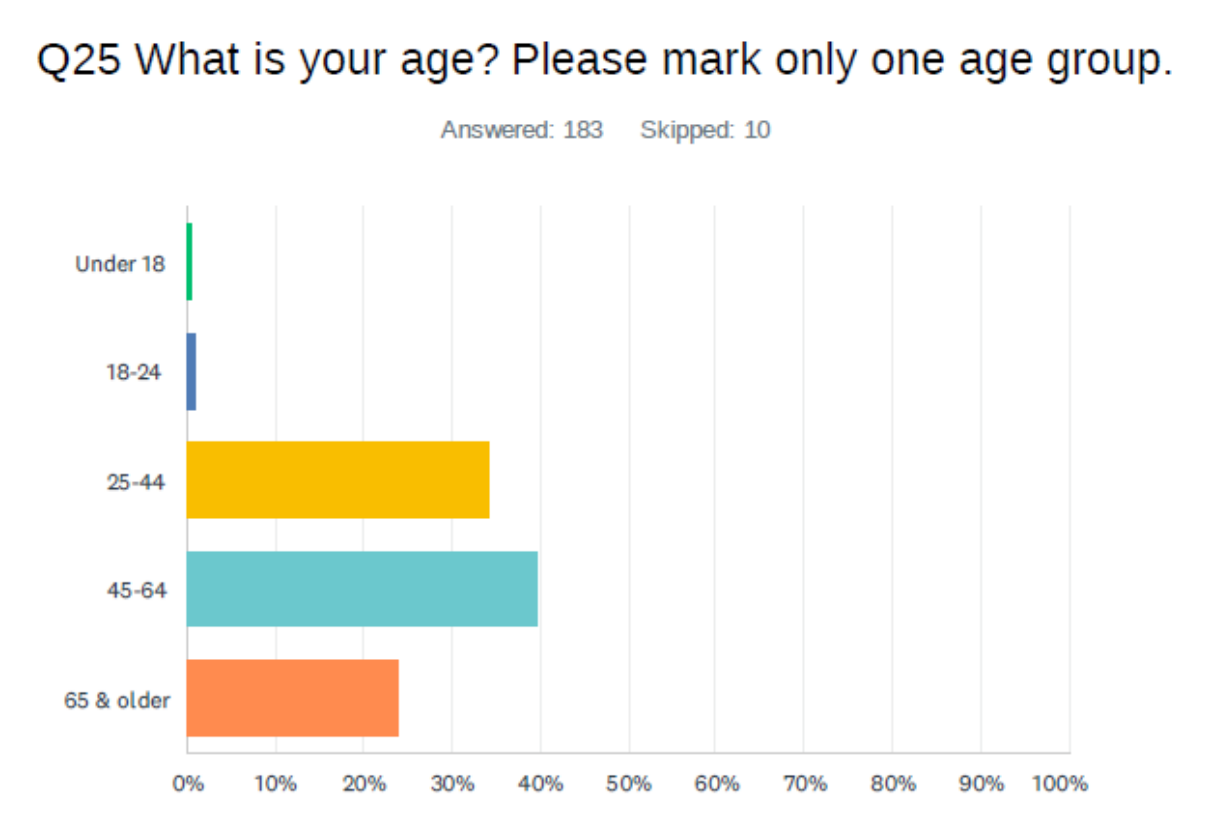


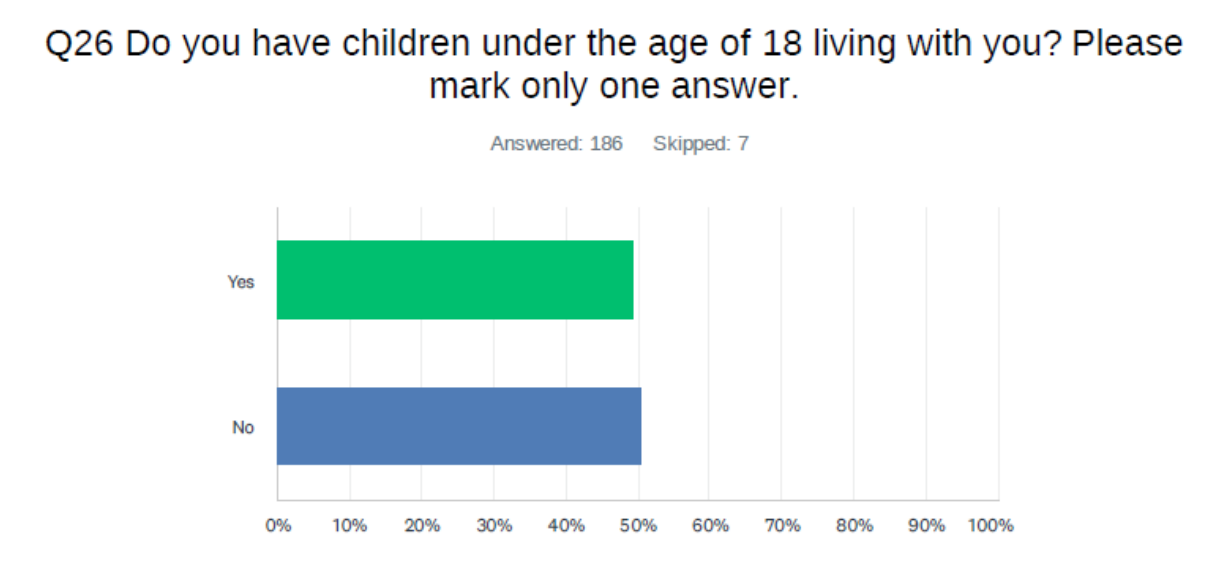
Q23 How would you prefer to get information about open spaces and/or recreational opportunities and events in West Boylston?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 15



DEMOGRAPHICS





PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENT

- CMRPC staff and an OSIC representative tabled at the West Boylston Public Schools' Last Day of School Event in June 2024 to promote the survey and offer other engagement activities.
- The top goals from the "West Boylston Bucks" engagement activity were:
  - "Protect and enhance natural resources" and
  - "Protect and preserve open space parcels."
- Recreational spaces that the event's attendees wanted to see or see more of in town included a splash pad / increased public swimming opportunities, walking/hiking trails, and playgrounds.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS



WEST BOYLSTON 2025 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Protect, preserve, & enhance open space parcels

Objective 1.1: Maintain and conduct sound management of existing and new town-owned open space. Educate town officials, volunteers, and citizens about the opportunities provided by and benefits of open space.

Objective 1.2: Acquire and/or protect additional town-owned open space.

Objective 1.3: Support efforts for non-municipal (private and state) landowners to retain and protect open space and communicate with these landowners to increase access to, the usage of, and fair compensation for the use of their properties.

Objective 1.4: Encourage use of open space for agriculture, where appropriate.

WEST BOYLSTON 2025 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN GOALS

Goal 2: Maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas

Objective 2.1: Maintain and improve existing town-owned passive and active recreational areas, including by addressing ADA requirements.

Objective 2.2: Increase and expand available recreation areas in town, including indoor recreational spaces.

Objective 2.3: Conduct sound management of recreational areas and educate town officials and residents about the opportunities provided by and benefits of recreational areas.

WEST BOYLSTON 2025 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN GOALS

Goal 3: Protect and enhance natural resources

Objective 3.1: Protect and preserve water bodies and waterways.

Objective 3.2: Protect special flora and fauna and their habitat.

Goal 4: Plan and develop greenways and walkable connections in the Town with consideration to appropriate regional connections

Objective 4.1: Launch efforts locally and regionally to develop greenway connections to and safe pedestrian access for open spaces and recreation areas. Map paths, trails, and bike and pedestrian infrastructure as is possible.

Objective 4.2: Incorporate historic preservation planning into open space, recreation, and trail planning efforts.

WEST BOYLSTON 2025 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN: SELECT HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

- Pursue the implementation of West Boylston's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) as part of all open space projects in town – (Goal 1, Objective 1.1).
- Maintain a prioritized inventory of land available to be acquired by the Town and maintained as open space - (Goal 1, Objective 1.2).
- Design renovations for and renovate Woodland Park – (Goal 2, Objective 2.1).
- Provide additional athletic fields to supplement high-use fields and incorporate parking accommodations as is possible (Goal 2, Objective 2.2).
- Integrate recreational areas into open space maps, pamphlets, and informational packets for distribution to the public, including a welcome brochure for new residents – (Goal 2, Objective 2.3).

WEST BOYLSTON 2025 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN: SELECT HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

- Draft and implement a plan to control invasive species in and along waterbodies and waterways that involves volunteers and promotes education. Leverage local land trust efforts, such as efforts from the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), as case studies – (Goal 3, Objective 3.1).
- Support Wachusett Greenways' efforts to maintain and expand the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) and cooperate with Wachusett Greenways to improve the trailhead parking at the MCRT. Support the addition of interpretive trails along the Rail Trail to historic sites and extension of the trail to Sterling – (Goal 4, Objective 4.1).
- Assess and implement opportunities to increase usage of recreational trails and sidewalks in town by people with disabilities and older adults – (Goal 4, Objective 4.1).

NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

West Boylston's draft Open Space and Recreation Plan is available for review at https://bit.ly/WestBoylstonOSRP, on the town website, and at the Town Hall and the Beaman Memorial Library - The public comment period for the draft plan goes through June 5th; please send all comments to wtalbot@cmrpc.org.

To learn more about Massachusetts Land and Recreation Grants and Loans, including the PARC and LAND grant programs, you can visit:

https://www.mass.gov/land-and-recreation-grants-loans

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

Feel free to reach out to wtalbot@cmrpc.org with any questions.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

MACRIS

MACRIS Search Results

Search Date: 2/20/2025

Search Criteria: Town(s): West Boylston;

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.A	Oakdale Village Historic District		West Boylston		NRDIS;
WBY.B	West Boylston Center		West Boylston		
WBY.C	Quabbin Aqueduct		West Boylston		
WBY.D	Southeast West Boylston		West Boylston		
WBY.E	Bigelow Tavern Historic District		West Boylston		NRDIS;
WBY.F	Water Supply of Metropolitan Boston		West Boylston		NRTRA;
WBY.G	Quabbin Aqueduct Outlet Works		West Boylston		
WBY.H	Mount Vernon Cemetery		West Boylston		NRIND;
WBY.902	Beaman Street Arch	Beaman St	West Boylston	1903	
WBY.57	Old Stone Church	Beaman St	West Boylston	1891	NRIND;
WBY.56	West Boylston First Congregational Church	26 Central St	West Boylston	1902	
WBY.104	Goodael, Col. - Dinsmore, Silas House	34 Central St	West Boylston	C 1850	
WBY.105	Sawyer, W. O. House	40 Central St	West Boylston	C 1865	
WBY.106	Sawyer, W. O. Carriage House	44 Central St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.107	Sawyer, William H. Carriage and Harness Shop	46 Central St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.108	Hines, Alona House	52 Central St	West Boylston	C 1860	
WBY.109	Merrill, Charles S. House	53 Central St	West Boylston	C 1915	
WBY.110	Warner, Clifton C. House	55 Central St	West Boylston	C 1925	
WBY.111	Warner, Clifton C. House	57 Central St	West Boylston	C 1925	
WBY.112	Hurd, Hubbard G. House	58 Central St	West Boylston	C 1902	
WBY.113		62 Central St	West Boylston	C 1902	
WBY.114	Thomas, Robert B. House	89 Central St	West Boylston	R 1820	
WBY.115	Snow, N. House	91-93 Central St	West Boylston	C 1860	
WBY.116	Anderson, John Emerson House	101 Central St	West Boylston	R 1880	
WBY.117	Smith, John House	103 Central St	West Boylston	R 1835	
WBY.118	Morse, Charles Barn	104 Central St	West Boylston	R 1850	
WBY.119	Newton, S. D. House	107 Central St	West Boylston	C 1821	
WBY.120	Pierce, Henry House	111 Central St	West Boylston	R 1875	
WBY.121		112 Central St	West Boylston	C 1927	
WBY.122	Boynton House	116 Central St	West Boylston	C 1860	
WBY.123	Harrington, B. House	119 Central St	West Boylston	R 1860	
WBY.910	Beaman Cemetery Stone Wall	Church St	West Boylston	C 1790	NRIND;
WBY.61	Holbrook Memorial Chapel	Church St	West Boylston	1891	NRIND;
WBY.908	Holbrook Memorial Chapel Stone Walls	Church St	West Boylston	1891	NRIND;
WBY.801	Mount Vernon Cemetery	Church St	West Boylston	1757	NRIND;
WBY.934	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Anderson, J. E. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1896	NRIND;
WBY.939	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman Monument	Church St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRIND;
WBY.952	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman, Dinah Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1774	NRIND;

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.953	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman, Ephraim Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1790	NRIND;
WBY.955	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman, Jabez Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1757	NRIND;
WBY.956	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman, Jonathan Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1771	NRIND;
WBY.954	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Beaman, Maj. Ezra Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1811	NRIND;
WBY.942	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Bigelow, Capt. J. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1800	NRIND;
WBY.928	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Bullard, Abbie N. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1876	NRIND;
WBY.927	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Bullard, Samuel Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1916	NRIND;
WBY.922	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Cross, Rev. J. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1906	NRIND;
WBY.943	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Davis, Abigail B. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1807	NRIND;
WBY.944	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Davis, Abigail B. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1810	NRIND;
WBY.924	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Edwards Boulder	Church St	West Boylston	1931	NRIND;
WBY.945	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Flagg, Samuel L. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1828	NRIND;
WBY.925	Mount Vernon Cemetery - G.A.R. Civil War Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1895	NRIND;
WBY.946	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Glazier, Lydia Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1798	NRIND;
WBY.947	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Goodale, Aaron Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1817	NRIND;
WBY.948	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Goodale, Elizabeth Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1799	NRIND;
WBY.921	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Goodale, Leon A. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1941	NRIND;
WBY.949	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Goodale, Sarah Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1810	NRIND;
WBY.917	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Harris Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1892	NRIND;
WBY.926	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Hennessey Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1922	NRIND;
WBY.931	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Holbrook, Eli W. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1888	NRIND;
WBY.950	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Holt, Anna Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1808	NRIND;
WBY.957	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Johnson, Zoath Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1765	NRIND;
WBY.936	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Murdock, Lt. Albert Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1865	NRIND;
WBY.933	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Nash, Rev. W. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1829	NRIND;
WBY.937	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Newton, Betsey B. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1892	NRIND;
WBY.916	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Prescott Obelisk	Church St	West Boylston	1884	NRIND;
WBY.923	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Reed Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1915	NRIND;
WBY.938	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Reed, Maj. Joseph Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1867	NRIND;
WBY.914	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Scarlett Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1935	NRIND;
WBY.941	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Surabian, Lt. Simon Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1945	NRIND;
WBY.935	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Tilton, Aaron Obelisk	Church St	West Boylston	1876	NRIND;
WBY.915	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Tyson Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1922	NRIND;
WBY.918	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Veterans Memorial Boulder	Church St	West Boylston	1966	NRIND;
WBY.913	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Walker - Herman Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1898	NRIND;
WBY.940	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Walker Children's Marker	Church St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRIND;
WBY.929	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Warren Monument	Church St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRIND;
WBY.930	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Warren, E. L. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1895	NRIND;

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.919	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Whitcomb, Lorenz Boulder	Church St	West Boylston	2002	NRIND;
WBY.951	Mount Vernon Cemetery - White, Sally M. Marker	Church St	West Boylston	1798	NRIND;
WBY.920	Mount Vernon Cemetery - White, William Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1933	NRIND;
WBY.932	Mount Vernon Cemetery - Worcester, S. Monument	Church St	West Boylston	1824	NRIND;
WBY.909	Mount Vernon Cemetery Exterior Boundary Stone Wall	Church St	West Boylston	1935	NRIND;
WBY.911	Mount Vernon Cemetery Fence	Church St	West Boylston	2002	NRIND;
WBY.912	Mount Vernon Cemetery Flag Pole	Church St	West Boylston	1984	NRIND;
WBY.167	Mount Vernon Cemetery Maintenance Building	Church St	West Boylston	1971	NRIND;
WBY.16	Reed, John House	6 Church St	West Boylston	C 1831	
WBY.62	West Boylston First Baptist Church	12 Church St	West Boylston	1902	
WBY.124	Old Stone Church Parsonage	18 Church St	West Boylston	1890	
WBY.63	Smith, B. House	20 Church St	West Boylston	R 1835	
WBY.64	Lovell, Amos Jr. House	24 Church St	West Boylston	R 1835	
WBY.125	Brigham, Edmund F. House	36 Church St	West Boylston	C 1790	
WBY.126	Municipal Lighting Department Building	2 Crescent St	West Boylston	1936	
WBY.127	Adams, David H. House	19 Crescent St	West Boylston	R 1875	
WBY.128	Stiles, W. House	26 Crescent St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.129	Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church Rectory	29 Crescent St	West Boylston	C 1880	
WBY.87		14 Fairbanks St	West Boylston	1928	
WBY.51	Fairbank, William House	98 Fairbanks St	West Boylston	C 1780	
WBY.52	Fairbank, Seth House	130 Fairbanks St	West Boylston	C 1777	
WBY.88	Taylor, A. - Goodnowe, H. H. House	147 Fairbanks St	West Boylston	C 1850	
WBY.41	Goodale Street School	40 Goodale St	West Boylston	1903	
WBY.59		152 Goodale St	West Boylston	R 1820	
WBY.35	Bigelow, Stephen - Bigelow, Joseph House	193 Goodale St	West Boylston	1799	
WBY.98	Morton, Harrison E. House	6 Green St	West Boylston	R 1885	NRDIS;
WBY.154		10 Green St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.901	Hartwell Street Railroad Bridge	Hartwell St	West Boylston	1908	
WBY.155		12 High St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.156		16 High St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.139	Crocker, Ansel F. House	23 High St	West Boylston	R 1875	NRDIS;
WBY.40	Hosmer, Capt. Daniel House	51 Hosmer St	West Boylston	1775	
WBY.68	Girard, Tony House	16 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1920	
WBY.47	Morse, Joel House	19 Lancaster St	West Boylston	1804	
WBY.69	Harthan, Capt. - Bond, Louis House	56 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1850	
WBY.48	Winn, Jacob House	77 Lancaster St	West Boylston	R 1755	
WBY.70		109 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1910	
WBY.71	Carima House	218 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1922	

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.49	Moore, Israel - Paine, Ebenezer House	243 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1755	
WBY.50	Wilder, Josiah House	330 Lancaster St	West Boylston	C 1730	
WBY.148	Oakdale Methodist Church Parsonage	6 Laurel St	West Boylston	1890	NRDIS;
WBY.149	Morrow, William House	10 Laurel St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.157		12 Laurel St	West Boylston	R 1980	NRDIS;
WBY.158		20 Laurel St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.150	West Boylston District #7 Schoolhouse	32 Laurel St	West Boylston	C 1852	NRDIS;
WBY.151	White, J. D. House	38 Laurel St	West Boylston	R 1860	NRDIS;
WBY.152		62 Laurel St	West Boylston	C 1870	NRDIS;
WBY.153	Pratt, J. R. House	68 Laurel St	West Boylston	R 1860	NRDIS;
WBY.39	May, Ezra House	109 Laurel St	West Boylston	C 1797	
WBY.38	Allen, Daniel House	136 Laurel St	West Boylston	C 1790	
WBY.36	Mason, Samuel House	194 Laurel St	West Boylston	1761	
WBY.60	Goodale House	66 Malden St	West Boylston	R 1840	
WBY.18	Hine, E. - Hall, J. D. House	9 Maple St	West Boylston	R 1865	
WBY.72		20 Maple St	West Boylston	C 1910	
WBY.21	Holt, Jonas House	86 Maple St	West Boylston	1780	
WBY.7	South Schoolhouse	149 Maple St	West Boylston	1787	
WBY.6	Child, David House	178 Maple St	West Boylston	R 1740	
WBY.5	Child, Zachariah House	224 Maple St	West Boylston	1801	
WBY.4	Pierce - Knight House	262 Maple St	West Boylston	C 1750	
WBY.99	Boyd, Andrew House	8 May St	West Boylston	R 1885	NRDIS;
WBY.159		10 May St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.100	Newton, W. House	14 May St	West Boylston	R 1855	NRDIS;
WBY.101	Anderson, John House	18 May St	West Boylston	R 1845	NRDIS;
WBY.102	Chamberlain, Joshua House	20 May St	West Boylston	C 1890	NRDIS;
WBY.103	Chamberlain, Joshua House	24 May St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.34	West Boylston Odd Fellows Temple	7 Newton St	West Boylston	R 1885	
WBY.58	Beaman Memorial Public Library	8 Newton St	West Boylston	1912	NRIND;
WBY.33	Jenks, Dr. Nicholas House	14 Newton St	West Boylston	1810	
WBY.89	Russell, Samuel S. House	11 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1875	NRDIS;
WBY.90	Whitaker, Joseph House	14 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1840	NRDIS;
WBY.91	Oakdale Methodist Church	15 North Main St	West Boylston	1859	NRDIS;
WBY.97	Oakdale District Schoolhouse	15A North Main St	West Boylston	C 1858	NRDIS;
WBY.92	Bradford, Pelham House	16 North Main St	West Boylston	C 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.93	Pine Hill Overnight Cabin	16 North Main St	West Boylston		NRDIS;
WBY.94	Harrisville District Schoolhouse #5	18 North Main St	West Boylston	1858	NRDIS;
WBY.95	Smith, G. J. House	22 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1855	NRDIS;

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.96	Whittemore, W. House	23 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.160		24 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1850	NRDIS;
WBY.147	Bosworth, Arthur L. House	33 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.146	George, Rev. Nathan D. House	41 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1865	NRDIS;
WBY.145	Conant, Hiram House	43 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1865	NRDIS;
WBY.144	Brown, John W. House	45 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1865	NRDIS;
WBY.161		47 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1875	NRDIS;
WBY.162		59 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1920	NRDIS;
WBY.163		64 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.42	Thomas, William House	67 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1800	NRDIS;
WBY.164	Reed, C. H. House	68 North Main St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.8	Pierce, Levi House	95 Pierce St	West Boylston	C 1790	
WBY.67	Wood House	1 Prescott St	West Boylston	C 1920	
WBY.66	Earle, Dr. W. House	21 Prescott St	West Boylston	C 1890	
WBY.43	Fairbank, Baruch House	63 Prescott St	West Boylston	C 1805	
WBY.44	Fairbank, Lemuel House	78 Prescott St	West Boylston	C 1790	
WBY.45	Hemingway House	223 Prescott St	West Boylston	C 1829	
WBY.31	Sawyer Hall	1 Prospect St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.30	Reed, George Warren House	9 Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1905	
WBY.32	Morse, Charles House	12 Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1835	
WBY.29	Glazier, Oliver Carpentry Shop	13 Prospect St	West Boylston	1796	
WBY.28	Glazier, Oliver House	15 Prospect St	West Boylston	1796	
WBY.25	Murdock, Dea. Artemas C. House	42 Prospect St	West Boylston	1801	
WBY.26	Murdock, David C. Cabinet Shop	46 Prospect St	West Boylston	1868	
WBY.27	Goodell, Norman H. House	47 Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1846	
WBY.24	Muzzy, Cephas House	98 Prospect St	West Boylston	1837	
WBY.23	Keyes, Thomas Granary and Cider Mill	152 Prospect St	West Boylston	1812	
WBY.22	Keyes, Thomas - Keyes, Benjamin House	158 Prospect St	West Boylston	1784	
WBY.12	Merrifield, Asaph House	405 Prospect St	West Boylston	1785	
WBY.11	Child, John House	535 Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1752	
WBY.10	Willington, Ebenezer House	559 Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1780	
WBY.9	Davis, Barnabas House	575B Prospect St	West Boylston	C 1775	
WBY.907	Quabbin Aqueduct Outlet Chamber (Shaft #1)	River Rd	West Boylston	1932	
WBY.168	Quabbin Aqueduct Outlet Service Building	River Rd	West Boylston		
WBY.905	Quinapoxet River Circular Control Dam	River Rd	West Boylston	1905	
WBY.55	Burns, William J. House	43 Scarlett St	West Boylston	1895	
WBY.3	Hinds, Benjamin House	23 Shrewsbury St	West Boylston	C 1746	
WBY.2	Hatherly, Thomas House	75 Shrewsbury St	West Boylston	R 1775	

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.1	Cobb, Salem House	111 Shrewsbury St	West Boylston	1815	
WBY.166		225 Shrewsbury St	West Boylston	C 1900	
WBY.73	Prescott, Eunice Holt House	68 Sterling St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.74	Luce, Newman B. House	95 Sterling St	West Boylston	C 1870	
WBY.46	Prouty, Joshua House	109 Sterling St	West Boylston	C 1810	
WBY.19	Bigelow, Abel House	8 Temple St	West Boylston	1779	
WBY.75	Bacon, Raymond House	12 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1925	
WBY.76	Lowe, John - Coffin, James A. House	24 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1905	
WBY.77	Rosebrook, William - Pulsifer, Walter House	27 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1903	
WBY.78	Wilcox, Leon - Orciani, Primo House	31 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1920	
WBY.79	Brinck, Roy House	33 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1903	
WBY.80	Ricci House	36 Temple St	West Boylston	R 1925	
WBY.81	Orciani House	42 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1925	
WBY.20	Bigelow, Dea. Amariah - Temple, John House	63 Temple St	West Boylston	1765	
WBY.82	Warner, Alfred House	70 Temple St	West Boylston	1927	
WBY.83		71 Temple St	West Boylston	1928	
WBY.84	Carlisle, Charles House	80 Temple St	West Boylston	R 1925	
WBY.85	Lindblad, Arvid W. House	113 Temple St	West Boylston	C 1935	
WBY.903	Quinepoxit River Bridge	Thomas St	West Boylston	1903	NRTRA; NRIND;
WBY.37	Whitney, William House	18 Tobin Ln	West Boylston	1730	
WBY.906	Wachusett Reservoir	Wachusett Reservoir	West Boylston	1897	
WBY.900	Wachusett Reservoir - Thomas Basin Bridge	Wachusett Reservoir	West Boylston	1904	
WBY.142	Lord, Joseph M. House	14 Washacum St	West Boylston	R 1865	NRDIS;
WBY.143	Staples, William H. House	16 Washacum St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.140	Sheldon, Augustus V. House	34 Washacum St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.141	Ryan, Michael S. House	17 Waushacum St	West Boylston	R 1880	NRDIS;
WBY.65	Walker, E. House	2 West Boylston St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.86	Wood, Ashley H. House	4 Wood St	West Boylston	C 1890	
WBY.130	Snow House	8 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1895	
WBY.131	Holmes, William T. House	12 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1905	
WBY.53	Glazier, Jotham House	24 Worcester St	West Boylston	1850	
WBY.132	Davis, E. House	43 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1855	
WBY.15	Maynard, Calvin - White General Store	60 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1795	NRDIS;
WBY.14	Bigelow Tavern - Temple Tavern Distillery	64 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1775	NRDIS;
WBY.13	Bigelow Tavern - Temple Tavern - Spofford Inn	65 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1760	NRDIS;
WBY.133	Smith, Dr. George S. House	95 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1825	
WBY.54	Scarlett, Andrew J. House	111 Worcester St	West Boylston	1905	
WBY.134	Pierce, Ezra B. House	114 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1840	

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	Designations
WBY.135	Goodell, Norman H. House	120 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1880	
WBY.136	Brigham, Edmund F. House	128 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1835	
WBY.137	Brigham, Edmund Davis House	139 Worcester St	West Boylston	R 1885	
WBY.17	Center Schoolhouse - Brigham's Spa	140 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1790	
WBY.138	Scarlet, Andrew J. House	148 Worcester St	West Boylston	C 1890	



Goodale Park Master Plan West Boylston, MA

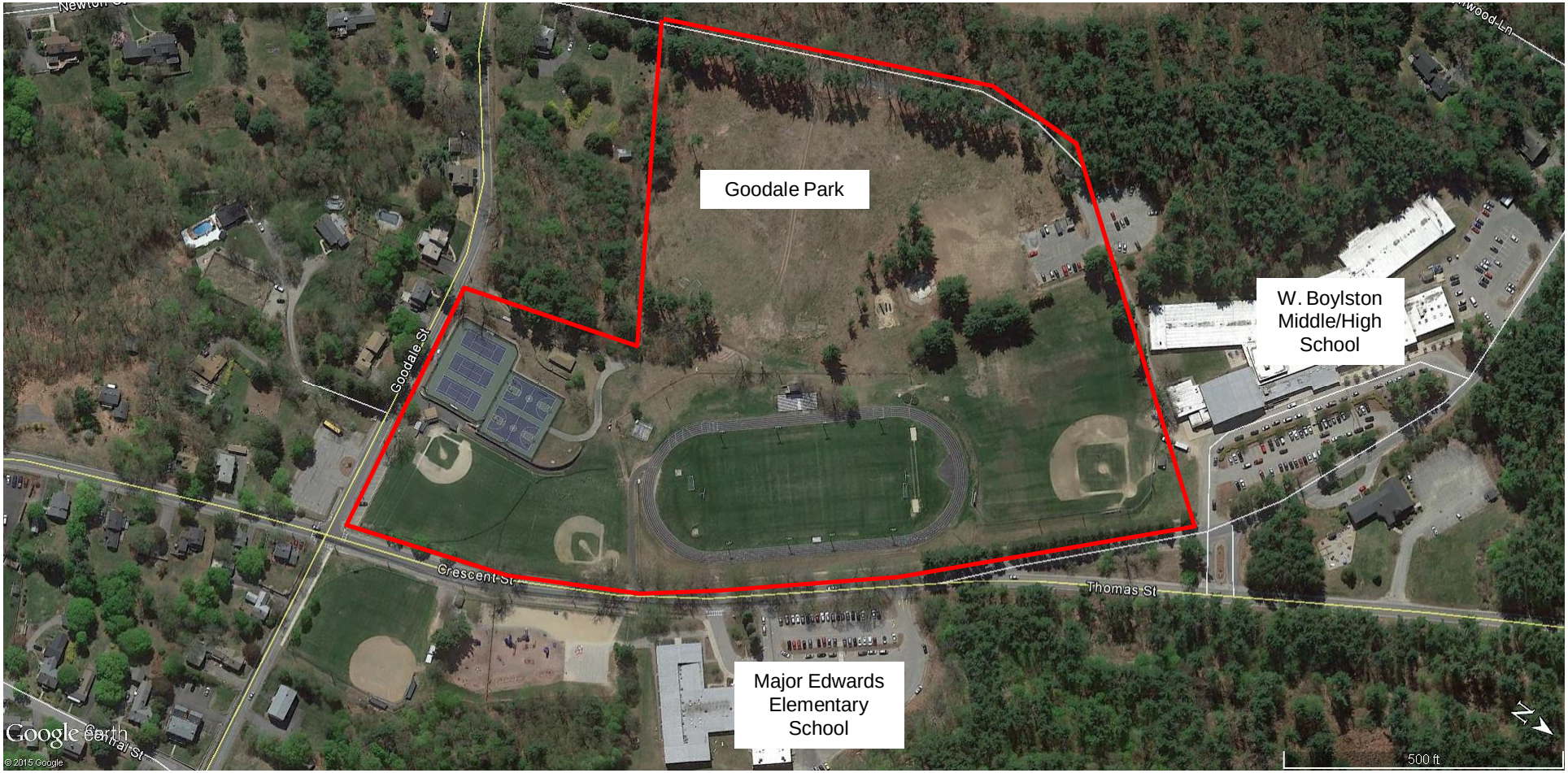
Prepared By:

BETA

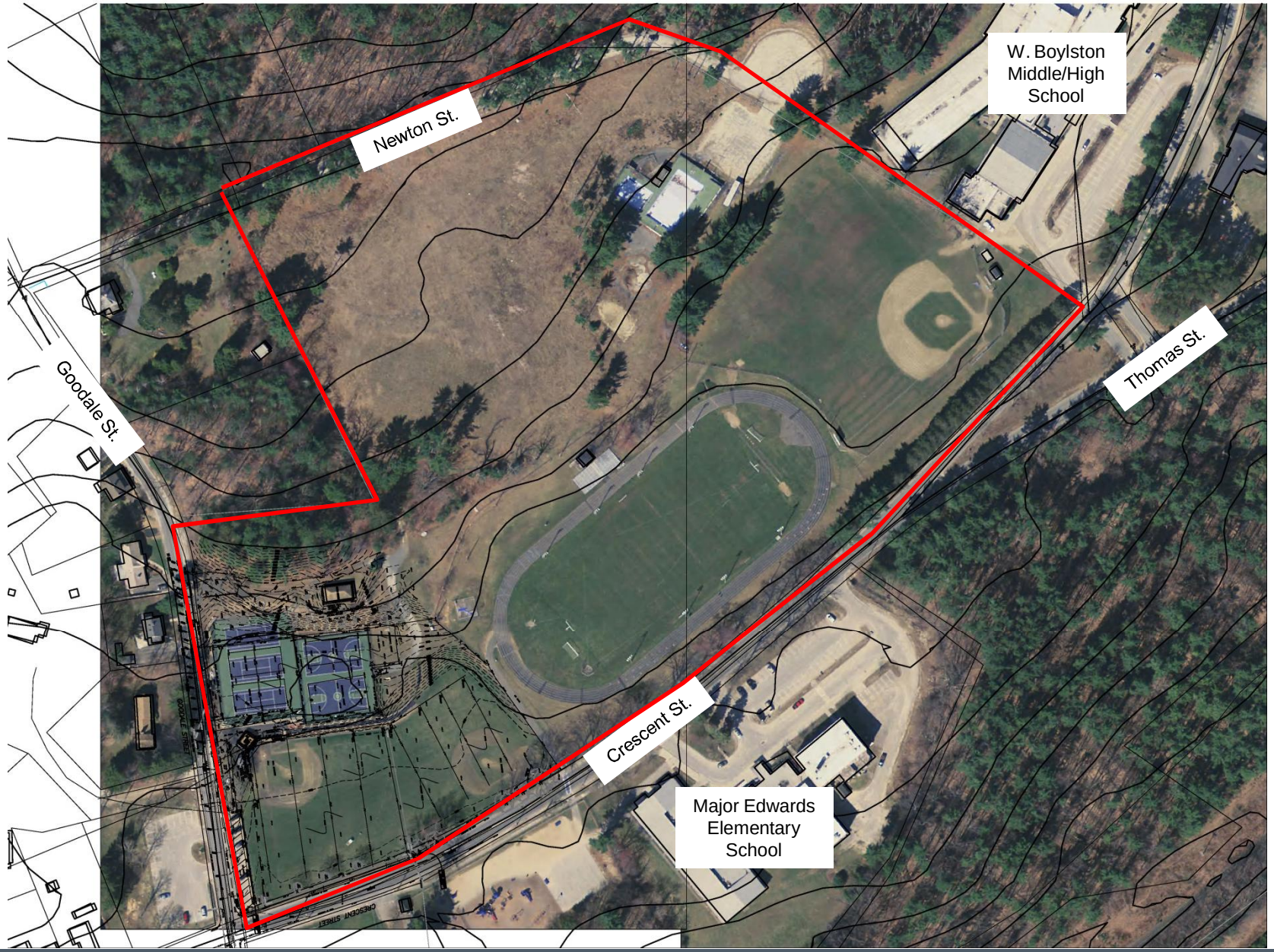
ENGINEERING SUCCESS TOGETHER

May 16,2016

Project Area - Context



Project Area – Current Uses



Goodale Park Master Plan

Current Uses

Goodale Park has been providing the citizens of West Boylston with an open space and recreation opportunities for over one hundred years. As one of the community's most significant park facility it receives year round use by residents and the adjacent schools.

The park is also used by the many community leagues, recreation programs, and for other cultural events.

The intensive amount of use and the age of the various facilities have caused the existing fields to decline.



Current Uses

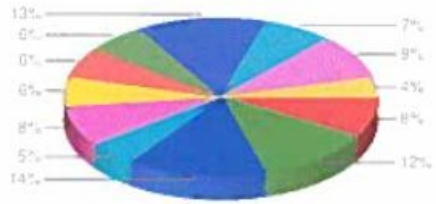
In an effort to update the Town's 2009 Open Space and Recreation plan, the Open Space Implementation Committee conducted a survey of West Boylston's residents.

Along with input from the community and the PFC this survey was used as a guide to shape the Master Plan.

5. Please indicate the recreation areas provided in Town that you have visited and enjoy.

Answered: 178 Skipped: 5

- Protected natural undeveloped lands (91)
- Pride Park/Children's play areas (134)
- Rail Trail (154)
- Road Biking (56)
- Woodland Park (92)
- Soccer field (67)
- Softball field (64)
- Baseball field (62)
- Goodale Park (144)
- Hiking/cross country skiing trails at Reservoir (81)
- Town sidewalks (103)
- Ice Skating rink (47)



Master Planning - Process

September 8, 2014 – Town Survey regarding Goodale Park wants & needs provided
October 2, 2014 – 'Goodale Park Project Master Plan Thoughts' provided by Committee, kick-off.
October 14, 2014 – Stakeholders' meeting
October 28, 2014 – Review of results from stakeholders' meeting
November 13, 2014 – Review of park users pre-meeting notes
December 2, 2014 – Park users' meeting
December 16, 2014 – Review of first master plan concepts 1-4
January 13, 2015 – Reviewed alternative master plans 1, 3, and 5 shown per Committee's request
January 29, 2015 – Review of master plans 3 and 5 shown per Committee's request
February 17, 2015 – Review of draft master plan 3 review & discussion
March 16, 2015 – Review of master plan 3 and supporting plans
June 4, 2015 – Parks Facility Committee internal meeting for process review
July 16, 2015 – Beta provided with permit requests from 2011-2014
July 28, 2015 – Review of permits research and status of soil borings and test pits
August 25, 2015 – Parks Facility Committee internal meeting for preparation of public meeting

Master Planning – Process March 16, 2015



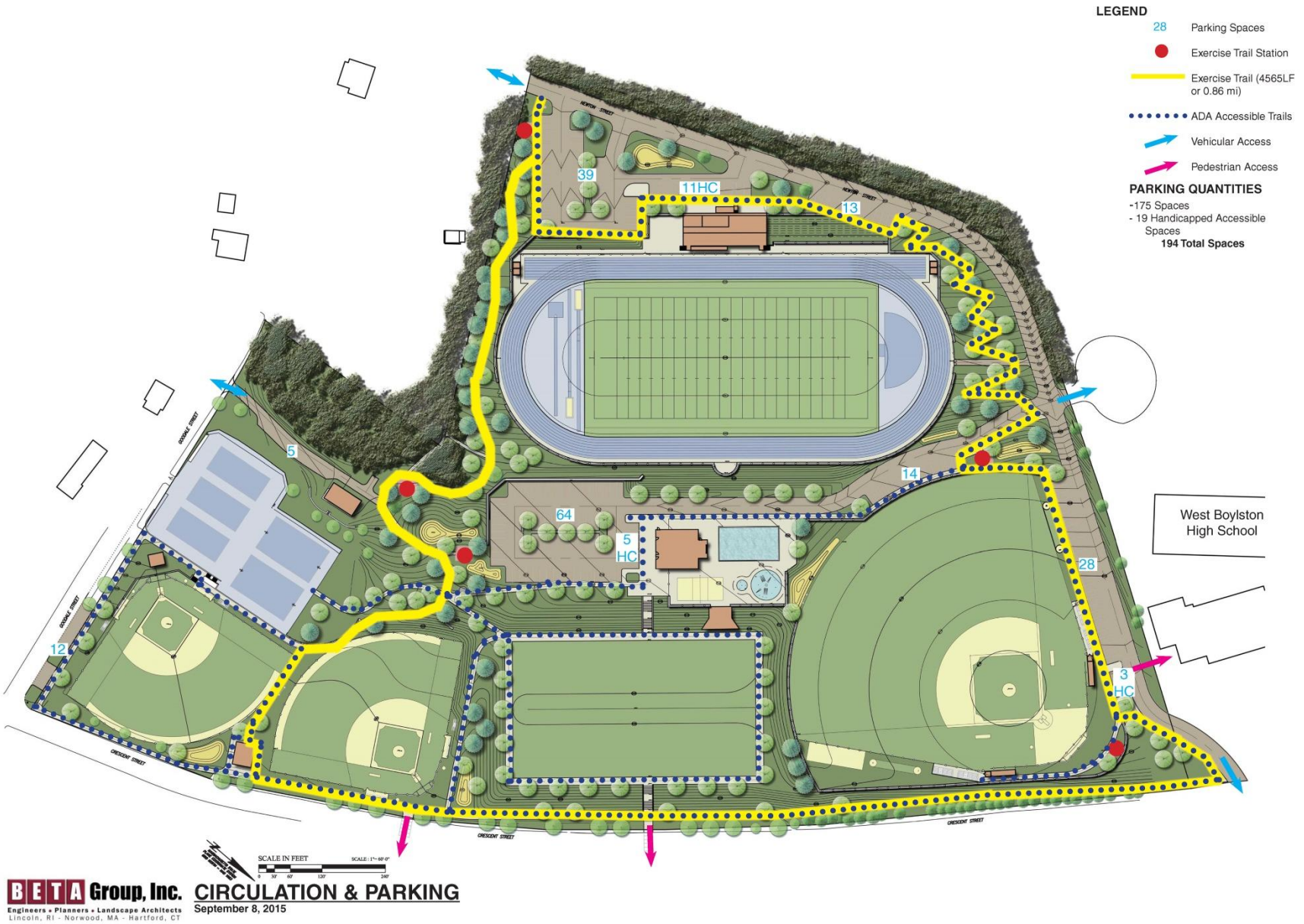
Goodale Park Master Plan

Master Planning – Process March 16, 2015



Goodale Park Master Plan

Master Planning – Process March 16, 2015



Goodale Park Master Plan



Goodale Park Master Plan





EXISTING CONDITIONS

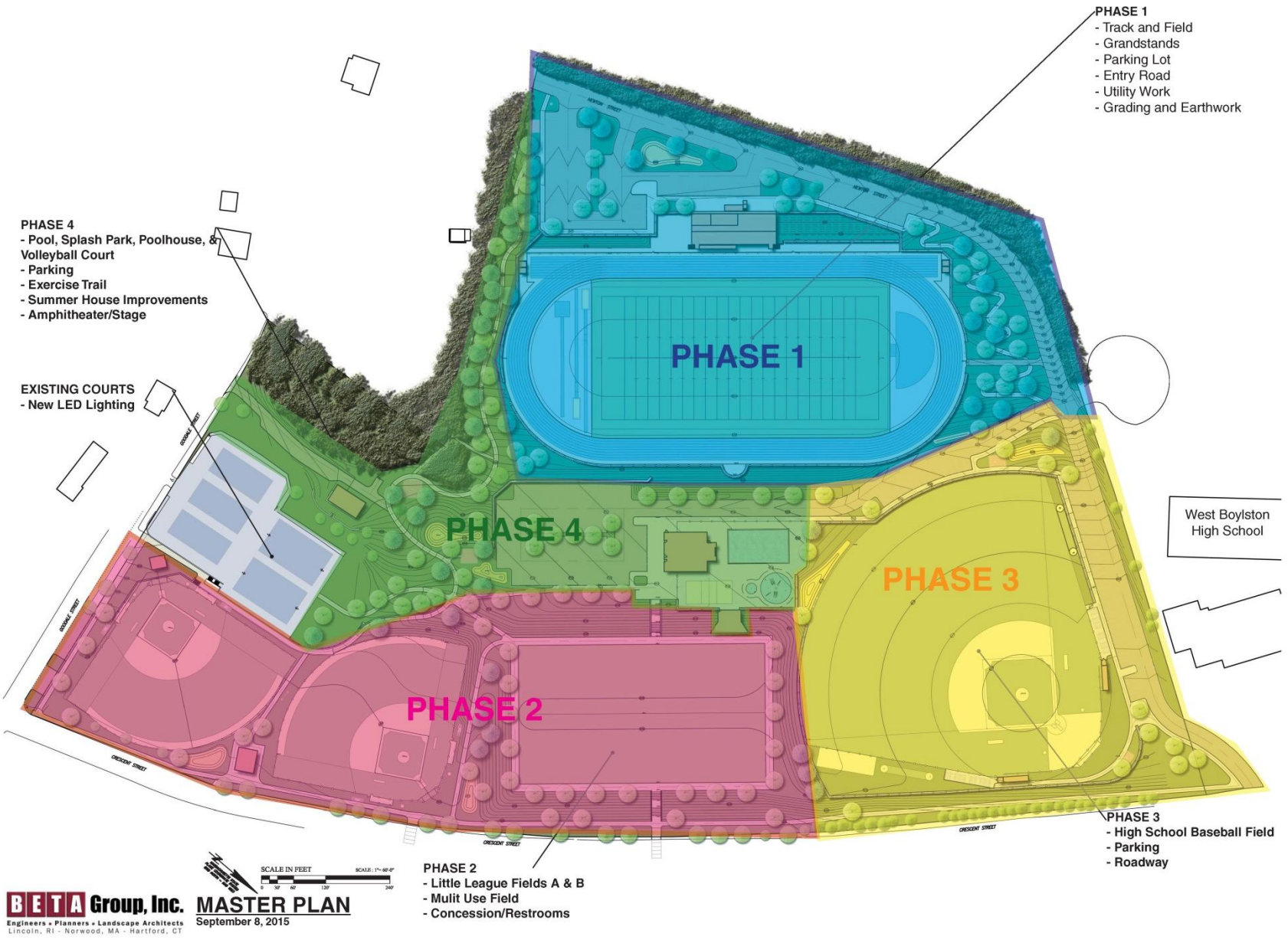
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Phasing Plan - Complete
April 4, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan

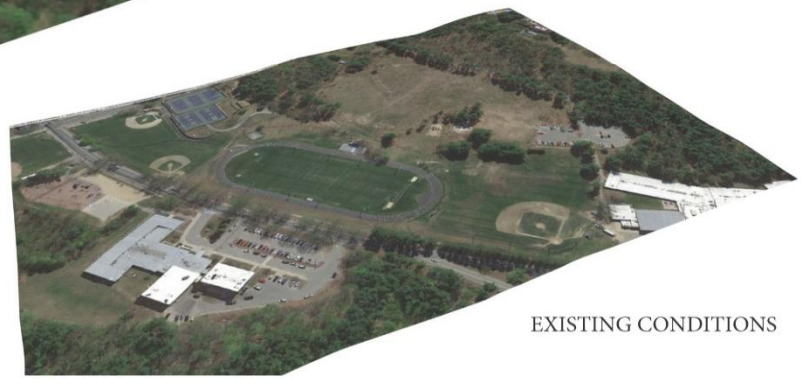


Goodale Park Master Plan



Goodale Park Master Plan





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Phasing Plan - Phase 1
April 4, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan





EXISTING CONDITIONS

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Phasing Plan - Phase 2
April 14, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan





EXISTING CONDITIONS

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Phasing Plan - Phase 3
April 14, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan





EXISTING CONDITIONS

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Phasing Plan - Phase 4 (Complete)
April 14, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan





EXISTING CONDITIONS

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Phasing Plan - Complete
April 4, 2016

Goodale Park Master Plan



Goodale Park Master Plan

Planning Process and Public Participation – Complete Summary

In the Spring of 2023, the Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) sought funding from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Planning Assistance Grant Program on behalf of the Town of West Boylston to update its 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Once awarded funding, the CMRPC contracted with the Town to assist the West Boylston Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) with the development of the OSRP Update. In March, CMRPC began attending the OSIC's regular meetings to facilitate discussions about the OSRP Update.

The West Boylston OSIC meets once a month at the Town Hall and consists of seven members:

1. Vincent Vignaly, Planning Board
2. James Pedone, Parks Commission
3. William Chase, Conservation Commission
4. Michael Peckar, Wachusett Greenways and the Greater Worcester Land Trust
5. Brenda Bowman, resident
6. Raymond DeSanti, resident
7. Ginny Rose Pellegrini, resident

At the first meeting (March 4, 2024) between CMRPC and the OSIC, CMRPC provided an overview of the OSRP Update process and its major sections and requirements. Many OSIC members participated in previous OSRP Update processes, so this overview served as a refresher. Then, CMRPC and the OSIC began discussing the community survey.

At the second meeting (April 11, 2024) between CMRPC and the OSIC, the group reviewed a draft community survey and the draft promotional flyer. The group also discussed their general survey outreach strategy, which included making printed copies of the survey available at the Town Hall, Library, and Senior Center. Finally, CMRPC and the OSIC began planning for their engagement table at the West Boylston Public Schools' Last Day of School event. At the third meeting (May 9, 2024) between CMRPC and the OSIC, the group reviewed initial survey feedback, finalized their plans for the tabling event, and began to review the list of town-owned open spaces for the *Inventory of Lands* section.

CMRPC staff members and a representative from the West Boylston OSIC attended the West Boylston Schools' Last Day of School event on June 11, 2024. The OSRP Update table included two activities for participants to demonstrate their open space and recreational priorities. One activity involved marking where people would like to see specific improvements on a large map, and another involved using "West Boylston bucks" to invest in the previously established 2018 OSRP Update goals. Overall, participants were most excited about parks, including splash parks, and trails, while protecting natural resources.

The fourth meeting (June 27, 2024) kicked off the development of the updated Seven-Year Action Plan. First, the group reviewed the feedback from the tabling activity and planned to review the complete survey results at a future meeting (as the survey was left open through the middle of July). Next, CMRPC led the OSIC through a review of each goal, objective, and action that was included in the 2018 West Boylston OSRP Update to determine what has been accomplished and what they should keep or remove from the updated Action Plan. This process continued through the fifth meeting (August 1, 2024).

At the sixth meeting (August 29, 2024), CMRPC presented the results of the community survey to the OSIC. The group also reviewed the expanded town-owned lands inventory table and draft open space map. CMRPC collected feedback from the OSIC on the inventory table and map to incorporate over the duration of the OSRP update planning process. Based on the feedback from the public outreach process, the OSIC continued to discuss the updated Action Plan through the seventh meeting (September 26, 2024).

At the eighth meeting (November 7, 2024), CMRPC and the OSIC discussed the updated *Scenic Resources and Unique Environments* and *Environmental Challenges* sub-sections of the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis* section. Specifically, the OSIC considered which local features were missing from the 2018 list of unique features and what associated details should be added. Next, the OSIC reviewed the environmental challenges that must be considered throughout all open space and recreational projects, including impervious surfaces and their impact on flooding, stormwater runoff, and water quality, as well as invasive species and pests.

At the ninth meeting between CMRPC and the OSIC (December 19, 2024), the group reviewed the draft *Community Vision* section and the draft *Analysis of Needs* section to ensure each incorporated all notable aspects of the planning process and appropriately reflected community needs and priorities. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth meetings were then held on February 27, March 27, and April 16 2025 for the purpose of reviewing the full draft OSRP Update. Upon incorporation of OSIC comments, the full draft OSRP Update was posted on the Town of West Boylston website for a public comment period. On May 29th, 2025, the Town held a public presentation on the Plan at which CMRPC staff presented.

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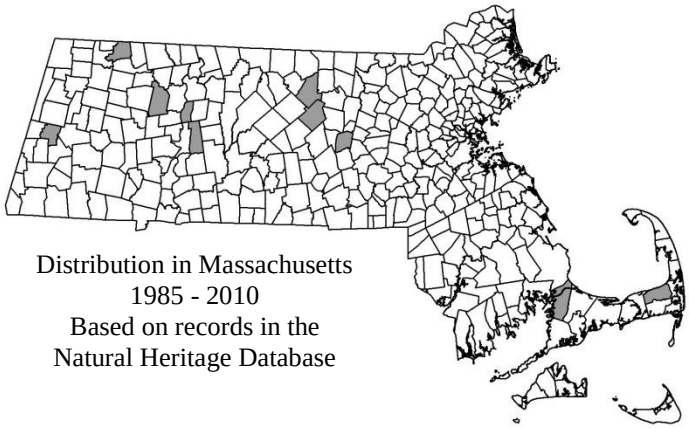
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Adder's Tongue Fern
Ophioglossum pusillum
Raf.

State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Adder's Tongue Fern is a small terrestrial fern, up to 30 cm (12 in) high, consisting of a single fleshy green stalk (stipe) bearing a simple leaf and a fertile spike. The stipe arises from fleshy, cod-like rhizomes and roots. About midway up the stipe is the pale green leaf, approximately 15 cm (6 in), narrowly oval to oblong. In var. *pseudopodium* (false foot), the widespread form, the blade gradually tapers for about 1/3 to 2/3 of its length to a narrow, 1-2 cm base that continues to run down the lower stipe. There is a finely indented network of interconnecting veins. The stipe extends well beyond the leaf blade and is terminated by a short, pale green, narrow fertile spike from 1-4 cm long and up to 5 mm wide, which consists of 2 tightly packed rows of rounded sporangia (spore cases) on the margins of the spike axis. There can be a large variation in the size, shape, and position of the blade, as well as of the fertile spike; occurrences of two fronds (leaves) per rootstalk have been observed. The plant appears anytime after early June.





Distribution in Massachusetts
1985 - 2010
Based on records in the
Natural Heritage Database

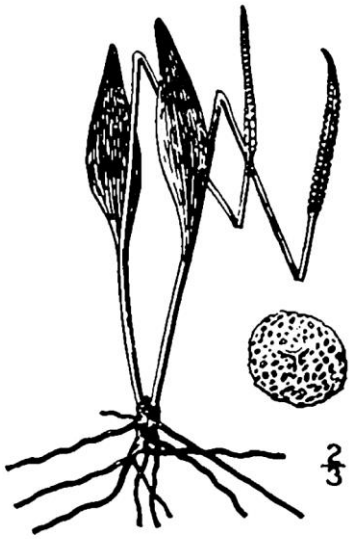


Photo: B. Legler, USDA Forest Service. Drawing: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 1: 2.

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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SIMILAR SPECIES: No other fern looks like the Adder's Tongue Fern. Its closest relatives, the Grape Ferns (*Botrychium*) have dissected or lobed leaves. Several orchids and lilies may have similarly shaped fleshy basal leaves, such that non-flowering or juvenile individuals may at first glance be mistaken for Adder's Tongue Fern. However, all have parallel-veined leaves.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: Boggy meadows, acidic fens (sphagnous areas with seeping groundwater), borders of marshes, wet fields, and moist woodland clearings provide suitable open and sunny habitat for Adder's Tongue Fern. Vegetation in these habitats is varied, composed predominantly of common grasses, bulrushes (*Scirpus*), sedges (*Carex*), and broadleaved herbs including Ragged, Small Purple Fringed, and White Fringed Orchis (*Platanthera lacera, P. psycodes,* and *P. blephariglottis*), and Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*). No common associate or indicator species particularly point to the presence of Adder's Tongue Fern.

RANGE: Adder's Tongue Fern (var. *pseudopodium*) is a very widespread, primarily northern fern occurring across North America from Prince Edward Island and southern Quebec to Washington; south to Virginia and west to Indiana, Nebraska, Arizona and Mexico.

POPULATION STATUS: Adder's Tongue Fern is listed as Threatened under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. All listed species are protected from killing, collecting, possessing, or sale and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. It was once a widespread species in Massachusetts during the century of extensive agricultural clearing. Records prior to 1978 are from over 90 locations! At present there are only 8 known occurrences. This elusive and easily overlooked species makes it difficult to determine whether individual populations are in decline or stable. Possibly, undiscovered populations may still exist in Massachusetts, but the increasing rarity of appropriate open habitat appears to be a major factor in its decline in this state as well as most of its range. It is listed as rare in 20 states, including most of New England (except Vermont) and several provinces of Canada. NatureServe ranks it as G5-Secure globally because of the widespread distribution.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: Adder's Tongue Fern appears to need the increased light from canopy opening or forest clearing. Reports from most of the current sites mention threats from succession. Invasive species are impinging on several of the populations; removal of invasive plants would leave space and less shade for the fern.

Several of the sites are mowed fields; recommendations in those cases are for single yearly mowings to take place in the spring to allow the plant to grow and produce spores. All active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) is subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and should be planned in close consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

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USDA, NRCS. 2010. The PLANTS Database (http://plants.usda.gov, 13 December 2010). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

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A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

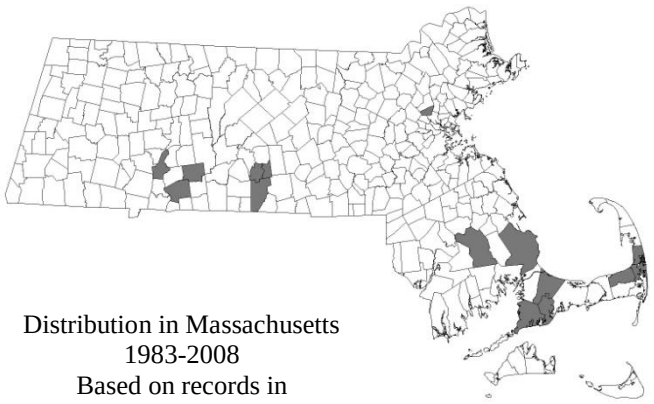
Dwarf Bulrush
Lipocarpha micrantha
(Vahl.) G. Tucker

State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

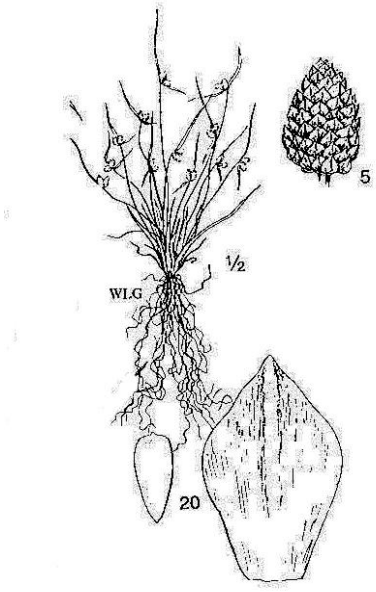
DESCRIPTION: Dwarf Bulrush (*Lipocarpha micrantha*) is a tiny, wiry annual sedge (family Cyperaceae), which inhabits sandy to peaty shores of low-nutrient ponds and lakes.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Reaching just 2 to 20 cm (<0.1–8 in.) in height, this tiny bulrush grows in small tufts, and has very slender stems, leaves, and bracts. The leaves are up to 10 cm (4 in.) in length, and just 0.5 mm wide. The terminal bract appears to be a continuation of the stem, and the inflorescence appears lateral. The stem bears 1 to 3 egg-shaped spikelets, each with numerous spirally-arranged, overlapping scales. The scales are 1 to 2 mm long, and narrowly rounded with a small awn (sharp tip). The flowers, which develop beneath the scales, have both female and male parts, and no bristles. The fruit, an achene, is cylindric, iridescent brown, and 0.5 to 0.7 mm long.

SIMILAR SPECIES: When examined at maturity, Dwarf Bulrush is not likely to be confused with other bulrushes in Massachusetts, due to its dwarf size and slender foliage.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1983-2008
Based on records in
Natural Heritage Database



Holmgren, N.H. 1998. *The Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual*. NY Botanical Garden.

HABITAT: Dwarf Bulrush inhabits sandy to peaty, gently sloping shores of acidic, low-nutrient freshwater ponds with dramatic water-level fluctuation. This annual sedge germinates in a band of shore exposed following late season water-level recession. In Massachusetts, it is found along the shores of coastal plain ponds, and of ponds outside of the coastal plain that have similar hydrology, and water chemistry.

Associated species include several species of flatsedge (*Cyperus* spp.), Autumn Fimbry (*Fimbristylis autumnalis*), Canadian St. John's-wort (*Hypericum canadense*), Golden Hedge-hyssop (*Gratiola aurea*), and several species of spike-sedge (*Eleocharis* ssp.).

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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THREATS: Threats to Dwarf Bulrush include any activities that change the natural hydrology, water quality, or soil integrity of its habitat. Examples include water table drawdown from local wells, eutrophication resulting from nutrient inputs from septic systems and lawns, and trampling and soil disturbance due to recreational use of pondshores (i.e., hiking, sunbathing, swimming, fishing, boat-launching, and raking or digging).

RANGE: The range of Dwarf Bulrush is broad, encompassing nearly all of the eastern and midwestern states, Quebec and Ontario, and a portion of the west. It is rare or extirpated throughout most of New England.

POPULATION IN MASSACHUSETTS: Dwarf Bulrush is listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act as Threatened. All listed species are legally protected from killing, collection, possession, or sale, and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. Dwarf Bulrush is currently known from Barnstable, Hampden, Middlesex, Plymouth, and Worcester Counties, and is historically known from Dukes, Essex, Hampshire, and Norfolk Counties.

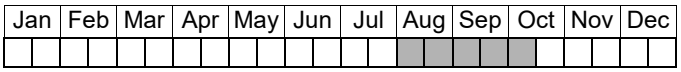
MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:
Preservation of Dwarf Bulrush requires protection of the natural hydrology, water quality, and soil integrity of its habitat. Like other pondshore plant species that inhabit late-season exposed shores, it requires pronounced water-level fluctuations, and acidic, nutrient-poor water and substrate, free from major soil disturbance.

Dwarf Bulrush populations should be monitored regularly to identify possible threats. This species is best surveyed when mature fruit are present, mid-August to late September, depending on when water levels recede.

Protection of Dwarf Bulrush may require exclusion of new wells and septic systems, prohibitions on fertilizer use, and restrictions on recreational use of the pondshores. Recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, and boat-launching should be diverted from plant population locations by providing alternative locations for these activities.

Also, habitat should be monitored for exotic plant species invasions. The nature of coastal plain ponds makes them generally inhospitable to many exotic plants, but they can become established at sites that have major soil disturbance or heavy nutrient inputs. Exotic species that could establish along the shoreline of coastal plain ponds include Common Reed (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *australis*), Gray Willow (*Salix cinerea*), and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).
All active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) is subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and should be planned in close consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

Fruiting time in Massachusetts



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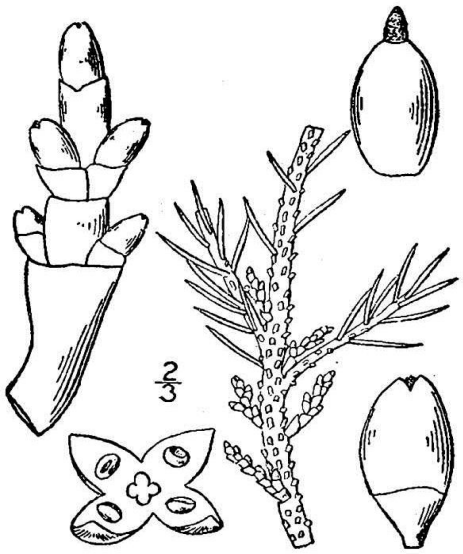
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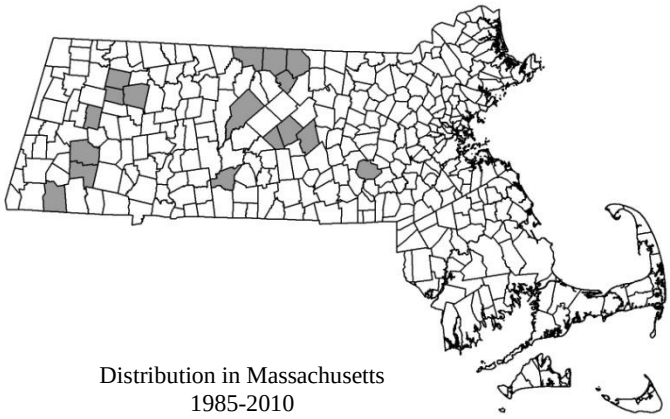
Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe
Arceuthobium pusillum
Peck

State Status: **Special Concern**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: A member of the Christmas Mistletoe family (Viscaceae), Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is a very small fleshy shrub, usually no more than 2 cm (0.8 in.) tall that parasitizes conifer trees. Its generic name reflects this parasitic habit, coming from the Greek words for juniper (*arkeuthos*) and life (*bios*). This simple or sparingly branched plant has greenish to chestnut-colored, or even purplish, stems that are circular when fresh and four-angled when dry. The opposite leaves are reduced to thin, connate, obtuse (blunt-tipped) scales with a width of only 1 mm (0.04 in.). Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe spreads beneath the bark of its host by means of a haustoria, an organ used to obtain nutrients from the host. The formation of globose clumps of swollen, infected branches or "witches' brooms" saps the trees' strength and, eventually, a tree covered with them may weaken and die. Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is a dioecious plant (a plant with unisexual flowers in which the individual plants are either male or female). Mistletoes reproduce by means of seeds expelled from explosive fruits. The sticky seeds cling to needles, eventually sliding down the needles to germinate on twigs. During the first year, the parasite penetrates the wood with a root-like structure and develops food and water transport systems. An







Distribution in Massachusetts
1985-2010
Based on records in Natural Heritage Database

Top: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 1: 638.

Bottom: Black Spruce shoot with Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe. Photo by and courtesy of Thomas J. Rawinski.

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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aerial fruiting structure arises in the early spring of the second year. The structure is green and about as long as the spruce needles. Male and female plants are located on separate branches or on separate trees. During the third year, pollen and flowers are produced. Male (pollen-producing) structures, which survive only a short time, are large and orange-yellow. Pollen is spread to the tiny flowers by wind, insects, and birds. Each flower then bears one barrel-shaped fruit. The fruit, which matures in the fall, is a hard seed covered with a sticky substance. The seed is shot out of the coat for a distance of up to 30 feet. The fruiting structure then withers and falls off, leaving only the cup-shaped base. Seeds may also be carried on the feathers of birds and the fur of mammals. Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe will only germinate on live host branches.

RANGE: Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe, one of the most widespread of the New World species of *Arceuthobium*, is found throughout most of the range of its hosts. The documented range of Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe extends from Newfoundland and Quebec to Minnesota and Saskatchewan and south to northern New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: In Massachusetts, Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe occurs in peatlands varying from kettlehole peat bogs to spruce-fir-birch headwater swamps, generally on the branches of black spruce (*Picea mariana*). Elsewhere in its range, this plant occasionally occurs on red spruce (*Picea rubens*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*). Throughout its range, it favors wetland communities dominated by conifer trees and influenced by acidic water. Specific habitats in Massachusetts include acidic conifer swamps, bog forests, and headwater swamps, including a headwater seepage swamp with both acidic and calciphilic plants. In addition to black spruce, associated species include larch (*Larix laricina*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), bog laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*) and Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*).

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS: Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is currently listed as a Species of Special Concern in Massachusetts. All listed species are protected from killing, collecting, possessing, or sale and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. There are 20 current stations (1985-2010) and 11 historical stations (unverified since 1978). The distribution of Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is determined by the presence of its hosts, frequently spruces, which themselves are limited in distribution in Massachusetts. Due to its inconspicuous size, it is likely that some occurrences have as yet gone undiscovered. Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is also considered rare in Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: Various species of *Arceuthobium* are the only flowering plants that produce the phenomenon known as "witch's broom." Also caused by other parasites, such as fungi and mites, this deformity can eventually kill the affected branches and, later, the entire tree. While Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is considered to be a serious threat by foresters, particularly in eastern Canada and the Lake states, it is not a problem in Massachusetts, where its rarity has resulted in its being placed on the state's rare species list. The vast majority of "witch's brooms" seen in Massachusetts are caused by other parasites.

The distribution of Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe is limited by that of its host species--in Massachusetts, primarily black spruce. Hence, in order to preserve a local population, it may become necessary to ensure that its host persists in the immediate vicinity. All active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) is subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and should be planned in close consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

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Tinnin, R.O., F.G. Hawksworth and D.M. Knutson. 1982. Witches' Broom Formation in Conifers Infected by *Arceuthobium* spp.: An Example of Parasitic Impact upon Community Dynamics. The American Midland Naturalist, 107(2) 351-359.

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New England School Development Council

West Boylston Public Schools
West Boylston, MA

School Year 2024-25 Enrollment Projection Report

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Enrollment Summary

NESDEC is pleased to send you this report displaying the past, present, and projected enrollments for your District. It is important to update enrollment projections every year to identify changes in enrollment patterns. Ten-year projections are designed to provide your District with yearly, up-to-date enrollment information that can be used by boards and administrators for effective planning and allocation of resources. We received the enrollment data from the District, and we assume that the method of collecting this data has been consistent from year to year.

Birth data informs Kindergarten enrollment. Each fall, NESDEC secures birth data from State sources, providing a snapshot in time as to actual and provisional births as reported by the State, and then uses this birth data to predict Kindergarten enrollments. We only use Fall birth data to assure consistency in reporting from year to year. Estimated births, which are an average of the previous five years of birth data, are based on this same snapshot. NESDEC acknowledges the variability of the provisional and the estimated birth data, and notes that the projected Kindergarten enrollments may serve as a guide to future planning.

Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-3 in the future. Projections four to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes. In light of this, NESDEC has added a “Spring Update Refresher” enrollment projection at no cost to affiliates. For more information, please refer to the Projection Methodology and Reliability section of this document.

This is the first enrollment projection for West Boylston since 2018. next fall, we can determine the accuracy of NESDEC's fall SY '25-'26 enrollment projections.

Births increased by 10 from a previous ten-year average of 56 to a projected average of 66. In most districts, Grades 1-8 are very stable in enrollments. However, there have been increases in 6 of the 8 most recent years, leading to a net increase averaging 6 students per year.

Over the next three years, Grades K-5 enrollments are projected to increase by 5 students and Grades 6-12 enrollments are projected to increase by 4 students, as students move through the grades.

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Historical Enrollment

School District: West Boylston, MA **11/25/2024**

Historical Enrollment By Grade																			
Birth Year	Births*	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12
2009	58	**2014-15**	29	56	67	67	57	84	80	77	80	82	74	52	59	67	< 10 **	904	933
2010	52	**2015-16**	28	58	55	66	64	65	85	82	77	80	68	69	61	56	0	886	914
2011	54	**2016-17**	26	58	62	55	68	67	66	82	95	84	65	60	66	61	0	889	915
2012	55	**2017-18**	33	65	61	69	60	66	67	68	76	93	67	58	63	60	< 10 **	874	907
2013	71	**2018-19**	24	68	61	60	64	59	68	71	70	72	88	66	58	61	0	866	890
2014	49	**2019-20**	32	62	67	59	65	63	60	69	76	73	68	87	72	56	0	877	909
2015	50	**2020-21**	26	40	68	60	66	64	62	66	77	72	62	68	87	70	0	862	888
2016	61	**2021-22**	37	74	44	65	61	63	63	67	67	78	51	58	67	84	0	842	879
2017	52	**2022-23**	36	66	77	52	67	66	67	62	71	70	63	48	57	62	0	828	864
2018	61	**2023-24**	39	66	67	78	58	76	71	75	62	80	60	65	47	58	< 10 **	864	903
2019	76	**2024-25**	36	74	62	69	76	54	73	64	61	51	42	48	48	39	< 10 **	763	799

*Birth data provided by Public Health Vital Records Departments in each state.

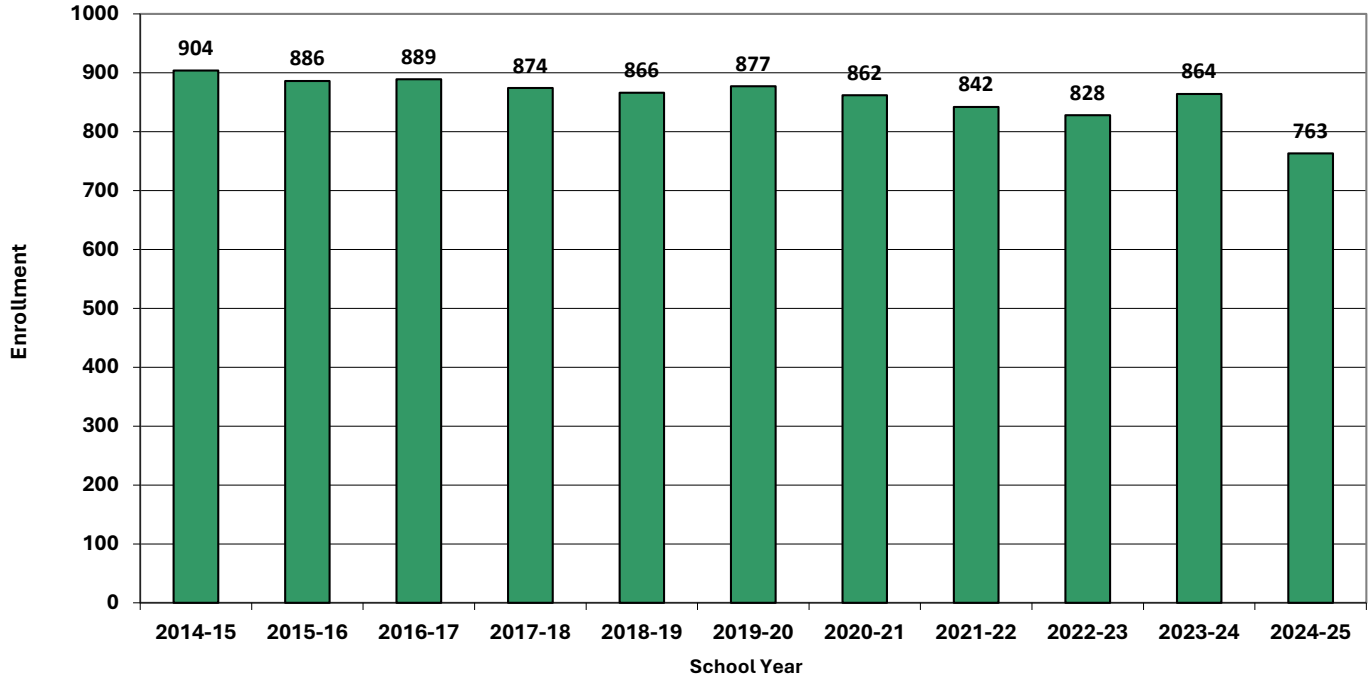
** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

Historical Enrollment in Grade Combinations									
School Year	PK-5	K-5	PK-8	K-8	5-8	6-8	7-8	6-12	9-12
2014-15	440	411	679	650	319	239	162	491	252
2015-16	421	393	660	632	324	239	157	493	254
2016-17	402	376	663	637	327	261	179	513	252
2017-18	421	388	658	625	304	237	169	485	248
2018-19	404	380	617	593	281	213	142	486	273
2019-20	408	376	626	594	278	218	149	501	283
2020-21	386	360	601	575	277	215	149	502	287
2021-22	407	370	619	582	275	212	145	472	260
2022-23	431	395	634	598	270	203	141	433	230
2023-24	455	416	672	633	288	217	142	447	230
2024-25	444	408	620	584	249	176	112	353	177

Historical Percentage Changes			
School Year	K-12	Diff.	%
2014-15	904		
2015-16	886	-18	-2.0%
2016-17	889	3	0.3%
2017-18	874	-15	-1.7%
2018-19	866	-8	-0.9%
2019-20	877	11	1.3%
2020-21	862	-15	-1.7%
2021-22	842	-20	-2.3%
2022-23	828	-14	-1.7%
2023-24	864	36	4.3%
2024-25	763	-101	-11.7%
Change		**-141**	**-15.6%**

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Grades K-12 Historical Enrollment



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Projected Enrollment

School District: **West Boylston, MA** **11/25/2024**

Enrollment Projections By Grade*																			
Birth Year	Births*		School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12
2019	76		**2024-25**	36	**74**	**62**	**69**	**76**	**54**	**73**	**64**	**61**	**51**	**42**	**48**	**48**	**39**	**< 10 ****	**763**	**799**
2020	55		**2025-26**	36	**59**	**74**	**63**	**71**	**78**	**55**	**74**	**62**	**61**	**37**	**39**	**43**	**44**	**< 10 ****	**762**	**798**
2021	64		**2026-27**	36	**68**	**59**	**75**	**65**	**73**	**80**	**56**	**72**	**62**	**45**	**34**	**35**	**40**	**< 10 ****	**766**	**802**
2022	63		**2027-28**	37	**67**	**68**	**60**	**77**	**67**	**74**	**81**	**54**	**72**	**45**	**42**	**31**	**32**	**< 10 ****	**772**	**809**
2023	73	(prov.)	**2028-29**	37	**78**	**67**	**69**	**62**	**79**	**68**	**75**	**79**	**54**	**53**	**42**	**38**	**29**	**< 10 ****	**795**	**832**
2024	66	(est.)	**2029-30**	37	**71**	**78**	**68**	**71**	**64**	**81**	**69**	**73**	**79**	**39**	**49**	**38**	**35**	**< 10 ****	**817**	**854**
2025	64	(est.)	**2030-31**	38	**69**	**71**	**79**	**70**	**73**	**65**	**82**	**67**	**73**	**58**	**36**	**44**	**35**	**< 10 ****	**824**	**862**
2026	66	(est.)	**2031-32**	38	**71**	**69**	**72**	**81**	**72**	**74**	**66**	**80**	**67**	**53**	**54**	**32**	**41**	**< 10 ****	**834**	**872**
2027	67	(est.)	**2032-33**	39	**71**	**71**	**70**	**74**	**83**	**73**	**75**	**64**	**80**	**49**	**49**	**49**	**30**	**< 10 ****	**840**	**879**
2028	67	(est.)	**2033-34**	39	**72**	**71**	**72**	**72**	**76**	**85**	**74**	**73**	**64**	**58**	**45**	**44**	**45**	**< 10 ****	**853**	**892**
2029	66	(est.)	**2034-35**	40	**71**	**72**	**72**	**74**	**74**	**78**	**86**	**72**	**73**	**47**	**54**	**41**	**41**	**< 10 ****	**857**	**897**

Note: Ungraded students (UNGR) often are high school students whose anticipated years of graduation are unknown, or students with special needs - UNGR not included in Grade Combinations for 7-12, 9-12, etc.

Based on an estimate of births Based on children already born Based on students already enrolled

*Birth data provided by Public Health Vital Records Departments in each state.

** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

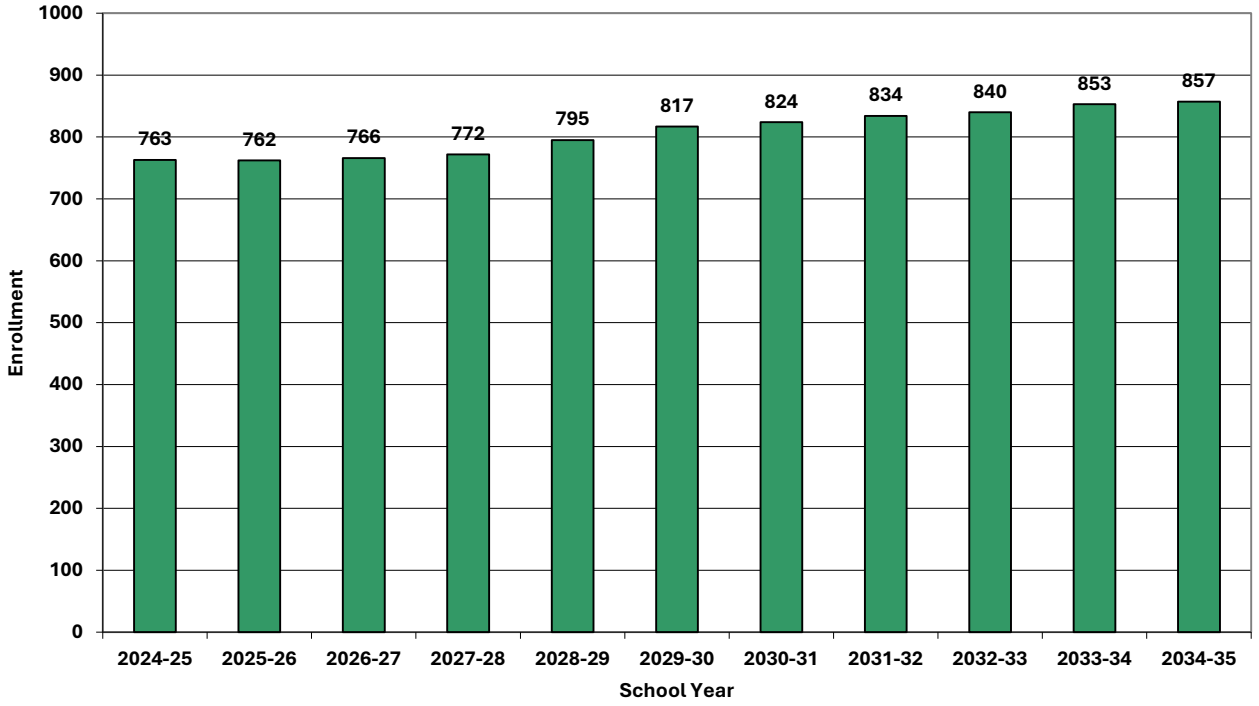
Projected Enrollment in Grade Combinations*									
School Year	PK-5	K-5	PK-8	K-8	5-8	6-8	7-8	6-12	9-12
2024-25	444	408	620	584	249	176	112	353	177
2025-26	436	400	633	597	252	197	123	360	163
2026-27	456	420	646	610	270	190	134	344	154
2027-28	450	413	657	620	281	207	126	357	150
2028-29	460	423	668	631	276	208	133	370	162
2029-30	470	433	691	654	302	221	152	382	161
2030-31	465	427	687	649	287	222	140	395	173
2031-32	477	439	690	652	287	213	147	393	180
2032-33	481	442	700	661	292	219	144	396	177
2033-34	487	448	698	659	296	211	137	403	192
2034-35	481	441	712	672	309	231	145	414	183

Projected Percentage Changes			
School Year	K-12	Diff.	%
2024-25	763		
2025-26	762	-1	-0.1%
2026-27	766	4	0.5%
2027-28	772	6	0.8%
2028-29	795	23	3.0%
2029-30	817	22	2.8%
2030-31	824	7	0.9%
2031-32	834	10	1.2%
2032-33	840	6	0.7%
2033-34	853	13	1.5%
2034-35	857	4	0.5%
Change		**94**	**12.3%**

*Projections should be updated annually to reflect changes in in/out-migration of families, real estate sales, residential construction, births, and similar factors.

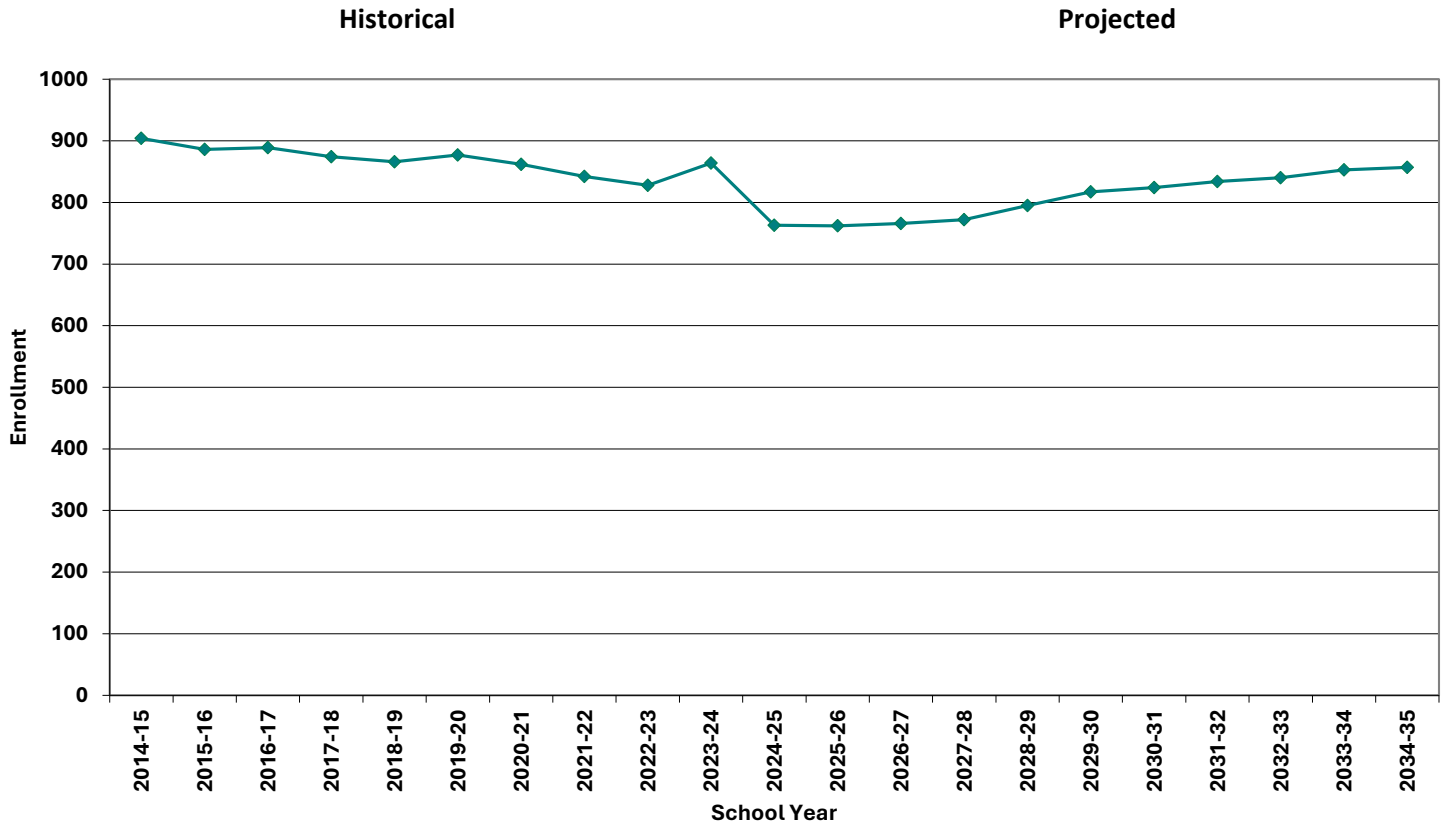
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Grades K-12 Projected Enrollment



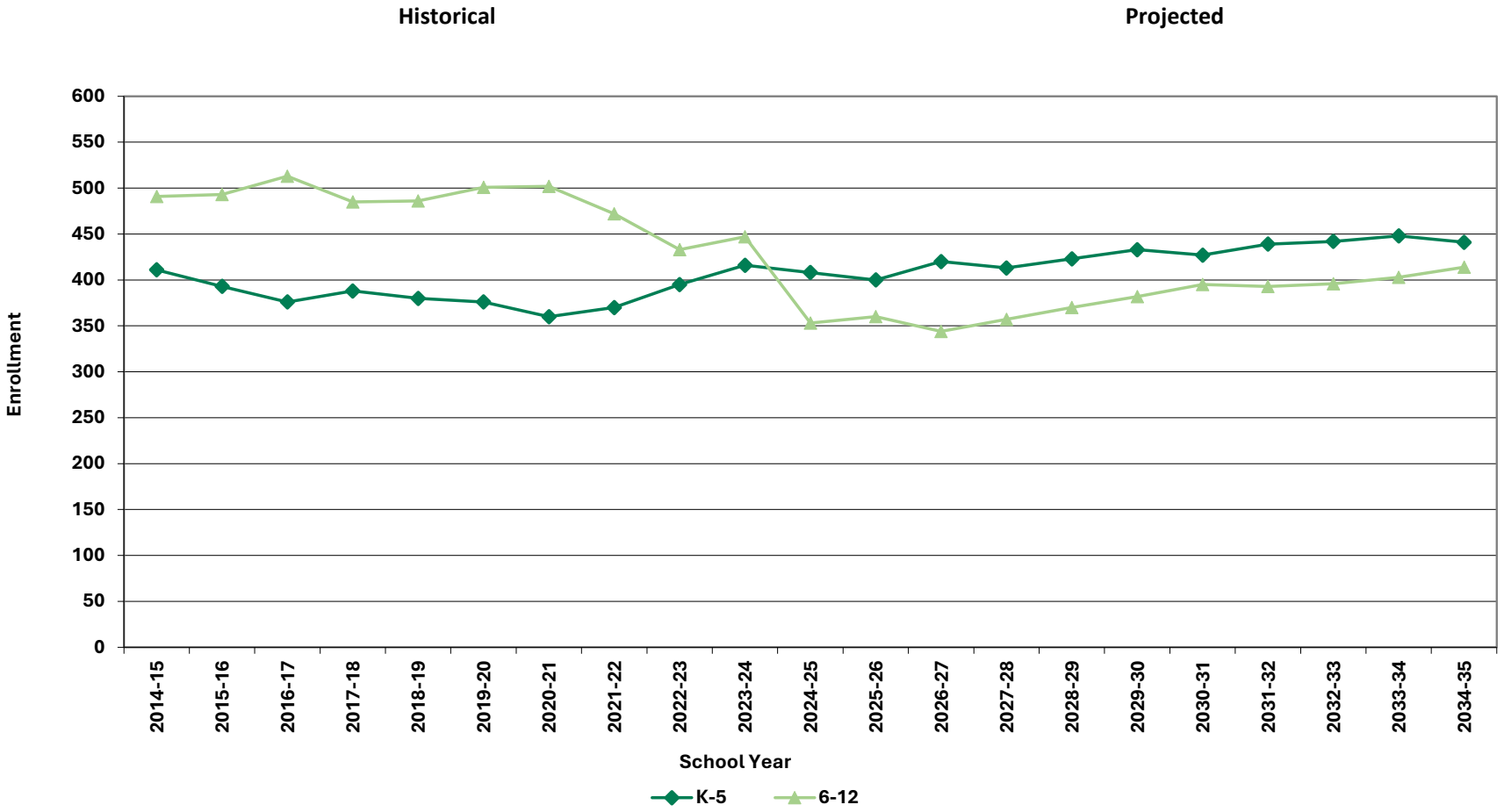
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Grades K-12 Historical & Projected Enrollment



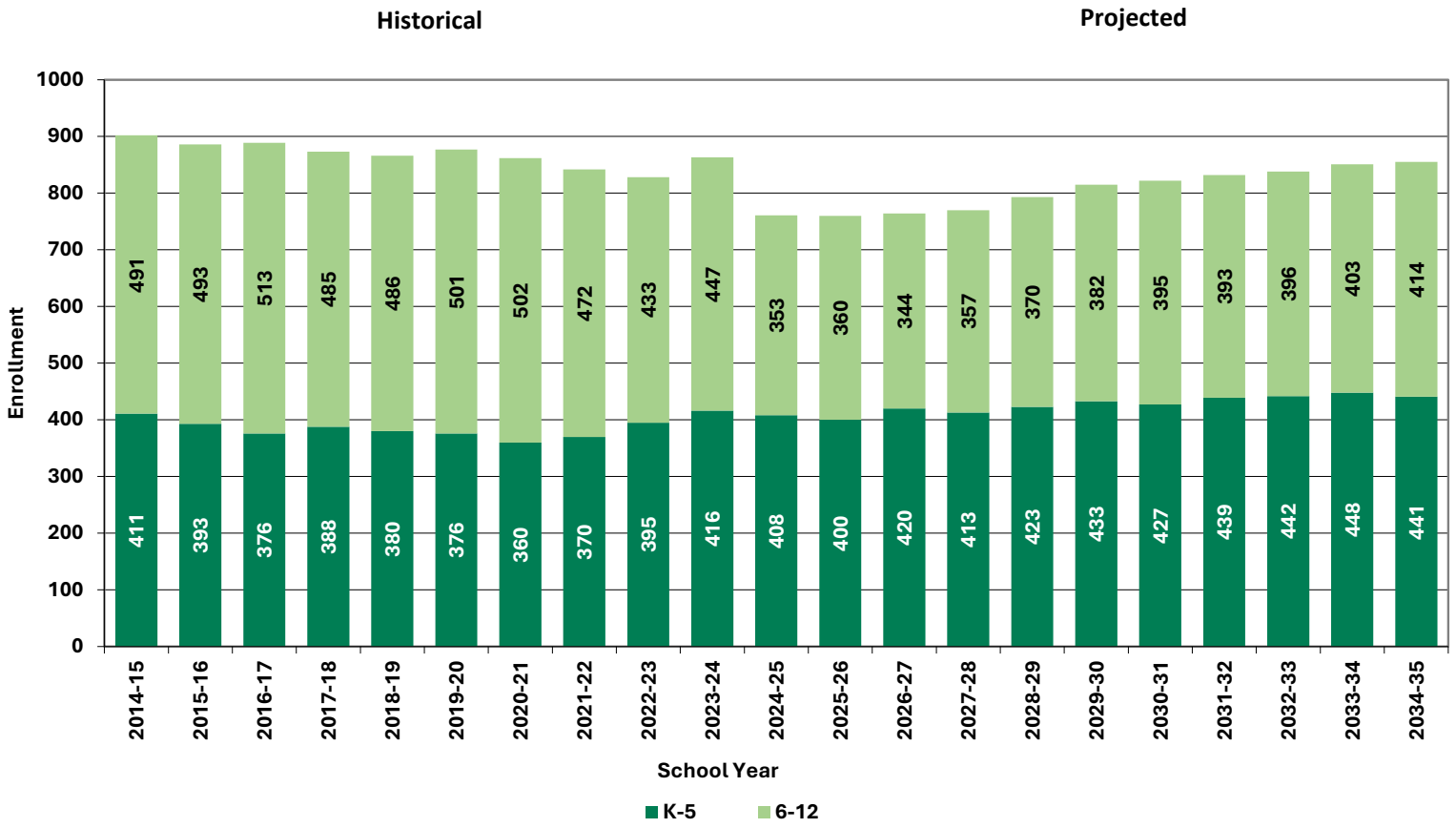
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Historical & Projected Enrollments in Grade Combinations



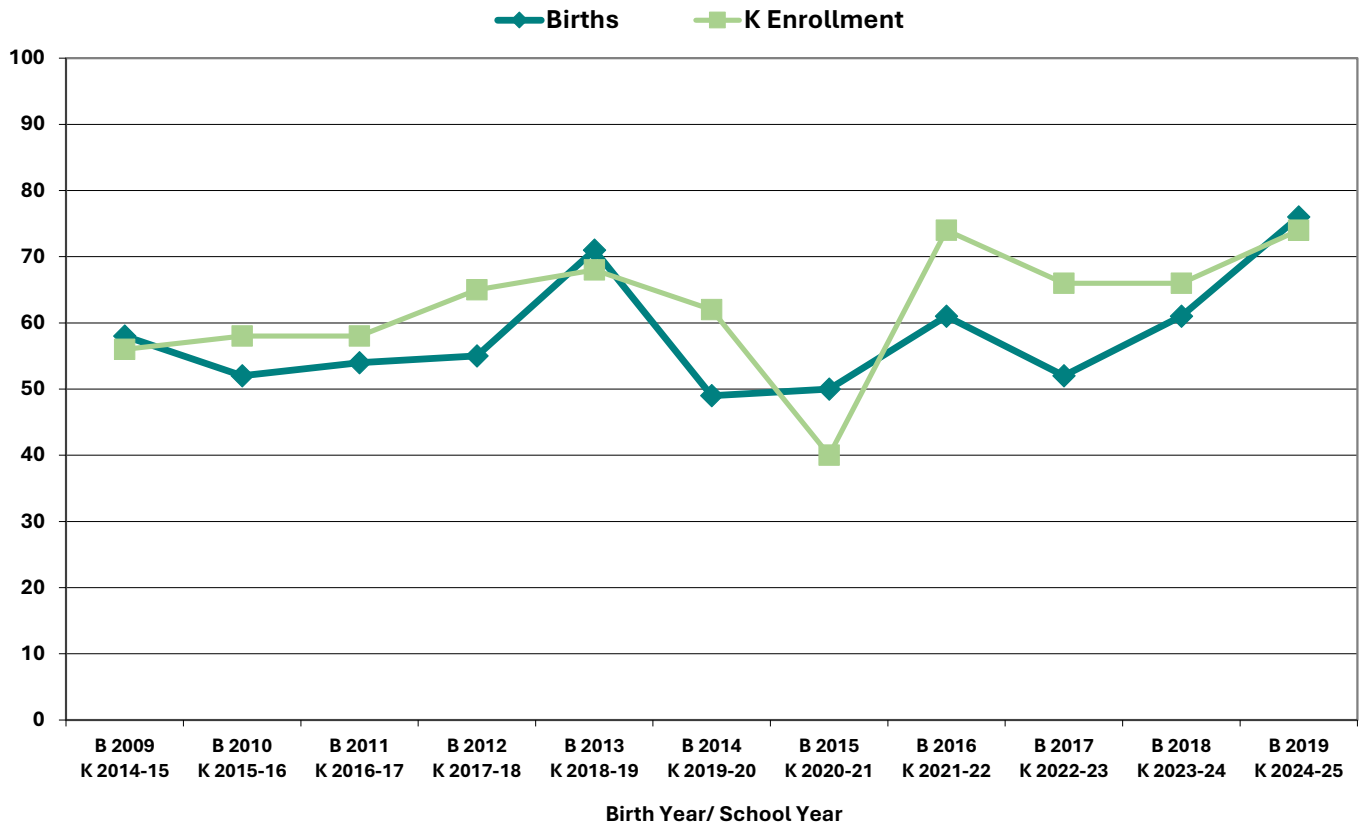
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Historical & Projected Enrollments in Grade Combinations



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Birth-to-Kindergarten Relationship



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Additional Information

School Year	9-12 CTE	K-12 Non-Public	K-12 Choice-In	K-12 Choice-Out	K-12 Out District SPED	K-12 Homeschool
2020-21	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2021-22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2022-23	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2023-24	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2024-25	0	54	126	73	< 10 **	15

* Data provided by District.

"n/a" signifies that information was not provided by District.

** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

Building Permits Issued

Year	Single-Family	Multi-Units
2020	6	0
2021	15	0
2022	4	4
2023	0	0
2024	1 to date	4 to date

*Building permit data from HUD.

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New England's PK-12 Enrollments Trends

From 2022 to 2031, the US Department of Education anticipates changes in PK-12 enrollment of -1.8% in the South, -9.7% in the West, -5.0% in the Midwest, -9.1% in the Northeast, and a total of -5.5% nationwide.

State	Fall 2022 PK - 12	Fall 2031 Projected	PK-12 Decline	% Change 2022-2031
USA	49,618,464	46,889,600	-2,728,864	-5.5%
CT	513,513	465,200	-48,313	-9.4%
ME	173,853	162,900	-10,953	-6.3%
MA	923,349	857,100	-66,249	-7.2%
NH	168,909	156,600	-12,309	-7.3%
RI	137,449	127,900	-9,549	-6.9%
VT	83,654	77,300	-6,354	-7.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by region, state, and jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 1990 through fall 2031, Table 203.20, Report Generated Dec. 2023, NESDEC 2.8.24

Although most New England Districts are seeing a decline in the number of births, NESDEC's experience indicates that the impact on enrollment varies from District to District. Almost half of New England Districts have been growing in PK-12 enrollment, and a similar number are declining (often in rural areas), with the other Districts remaining stable.

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Projection Methodology and Reliability

PROJECTION METHODOLOGY

Cohort component (survival) technique is a frequently used method of preparing enrollment forecasts. NESDEC uses this method, but modifies it in order to move away from forecasts that are wholly computer- or formula-driven. Such modification permits the incorporation of important, current district-specific demographic information into the generation of enrollment forecasts (such as in/out-migration of students, resident births, HUD-reported building permits, etc.). Percentages are calculated from the historical enrollment data to determine a reliable percentage of increase or decrease in enrollment between any two grades. For example, if 100 students enrolled in Grade 1 in 2023-24 increased to 104 students in Grade 2 in 2024-25, the percentage of survival would be 104%, or a ratio of 1.04. Ratios are calculated between each pair of grades or years in school over several recent years.

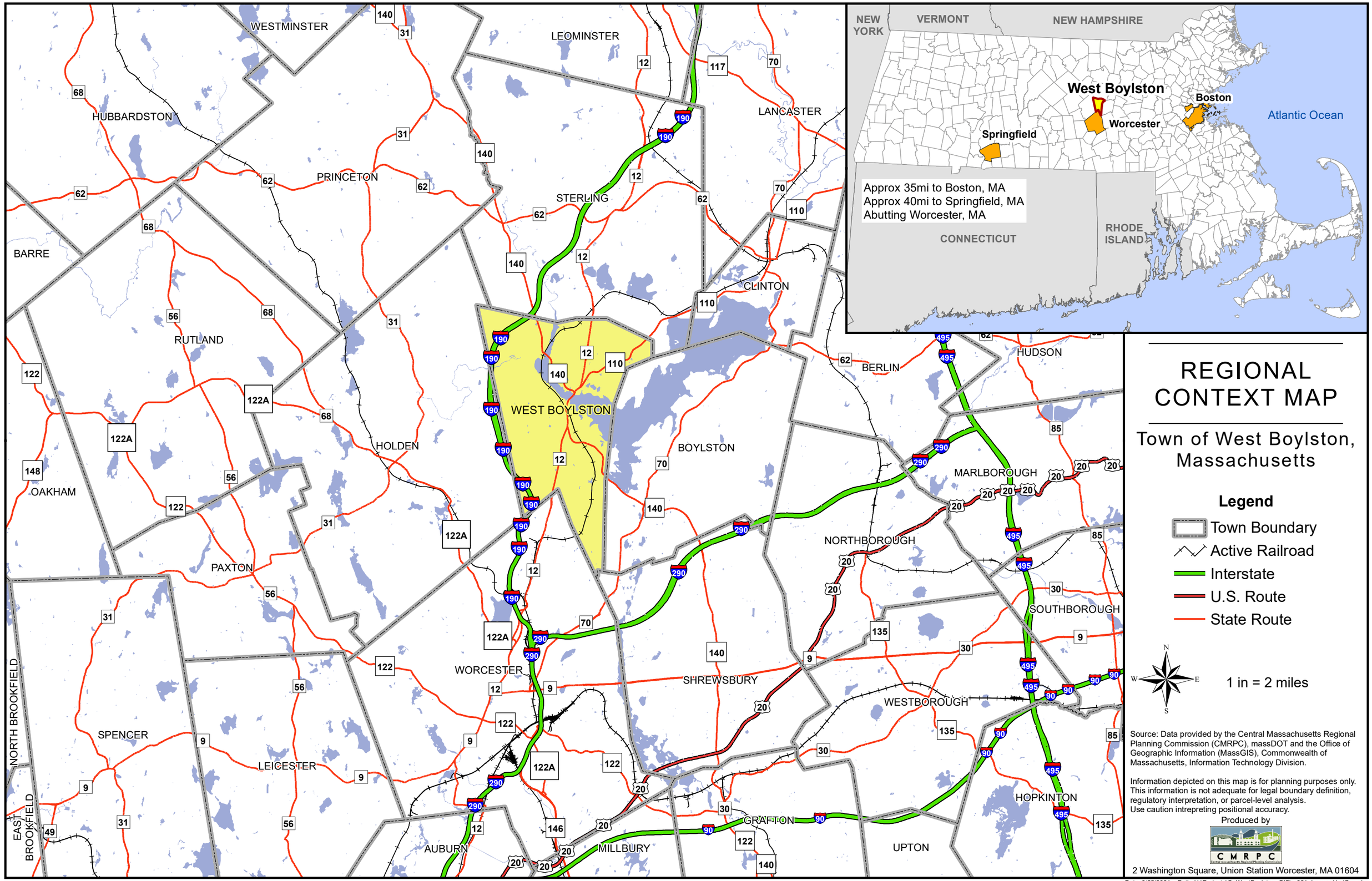
After study and analysis of the historical ratios, and based upon a reasonable set of assumptions regarding births, migration rates, retention rates, etc., ratios most indicative of future growth patterns are determined for each pair of grades. The ratios thus selected are applied to the present enrollment statistics to project into future years. The ratios are the key factors in the reliability of the projections, assuming validity of the data at the starting point.

RELIABILITY OF ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

Projections can serve as useful guides to school administrators for educational planning. Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-3 in the future and less reliable in the “out-years.” Projections four to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes, but they should be viewed as subject to change given the likelihood of potential shifts in underlying assumptions/trends, such as student migration, births as they relate to Kindergarten enrollment, and other factors.

Projections that are based upon **the children who already are in the district** (the current K-12 population only) will be the most reliable. The second level of reliability will be for those children already **born into the community but not yet old enough to be in school.** The least reliable category is the group for which an estimate must be made **to predict the number of births**, thereby adding additional uncertainty. See these three multi-colored groupings on the “Projected Enrollment" tab.

Annual updates allow for early identification of recent changes in historical trends. When the actual enrollment in a grade is significantly different (higher or lower) from the projected number, it is important (yet difficult) to determine whether this is a one-year aberration or whether a new trend may have begun. **In light of this possibility, NESDEC urges all school districts to have updated enrollment forecasts developed by NESDEC each October.** This service is available at no cost to affiliated school districts.



REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

Town of West Boylston, Massachusetts

Legend

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

N W E S

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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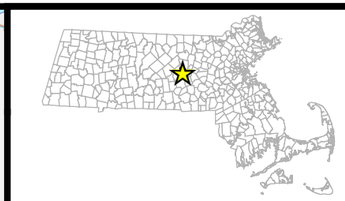
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CMRPC
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
2 Washington Square, Union Station Worcester, MA 01604

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Town of West Boylston 2024 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 2 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Environmental Justice 2020 Populations

EJ Criteria

- Minority
- Income
- Minority and Income
- Minority, Income and English isolation

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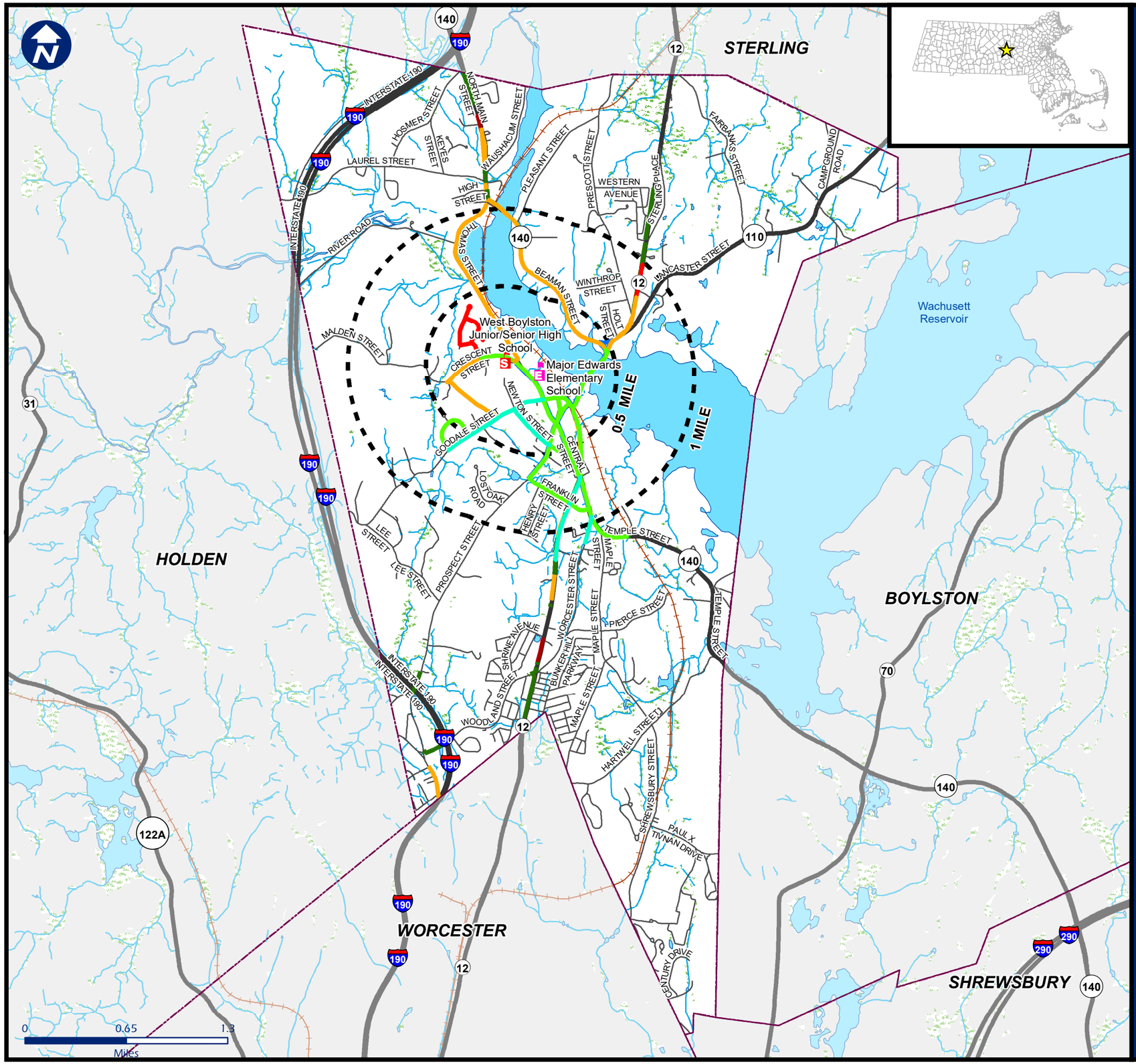
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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 3

SIDEWALKS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- 1 Mile Buffer from Schools

Proposed New Sidewalk Needs (Town Data)

- 1st Priority
- 2nd Priority

Sidewalk Condition (Town Data)

- Good Condition
- Poor Condition

Sidewalk Conditions (CMRPC, 2021)

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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.

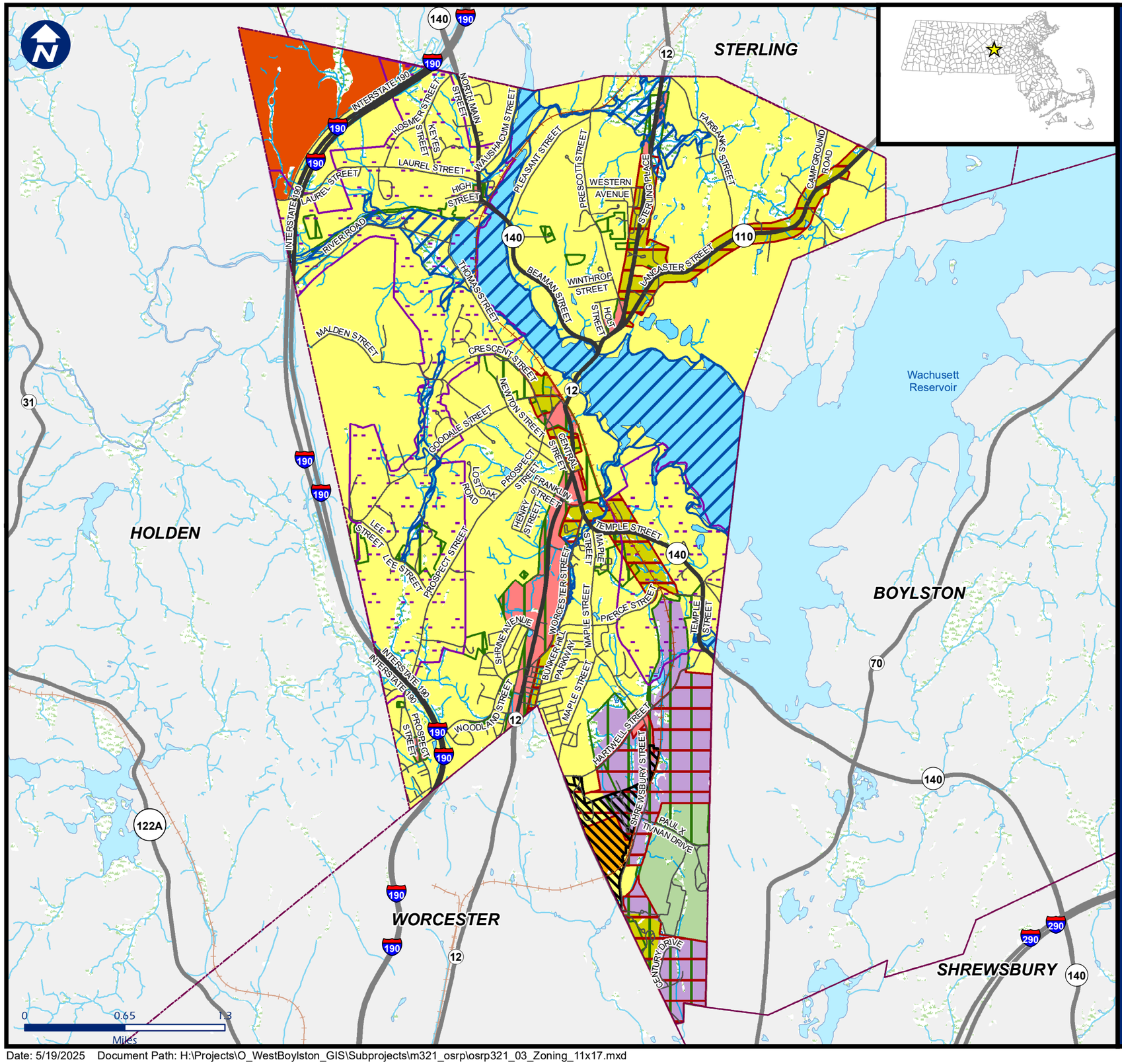
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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 4 ZONING DISTRICTS & OVERLAYS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Overlay Districts

- Flood Plain Overlay District
- Aquifer and Watershed Protection District
- Multi-Story District
- Continuing Care Retirement Community Overlay District
- (1) Medical Marijuana Overlay
- Wireless Communications Services District

Zoning Districts

- Single Residence (SR)
- General Residence (GR)
- MBTA Residence District (MR)
- Business (B)
- Commercial/Limited Industrial (CLI)
- Industrial (IND)
- Conservation

(1) Medical Marijuana Overlay applies to the following Zoning Districts boundaries > Business (B), Commercial/Limited Industrial (CLI) and Industrial (IND).

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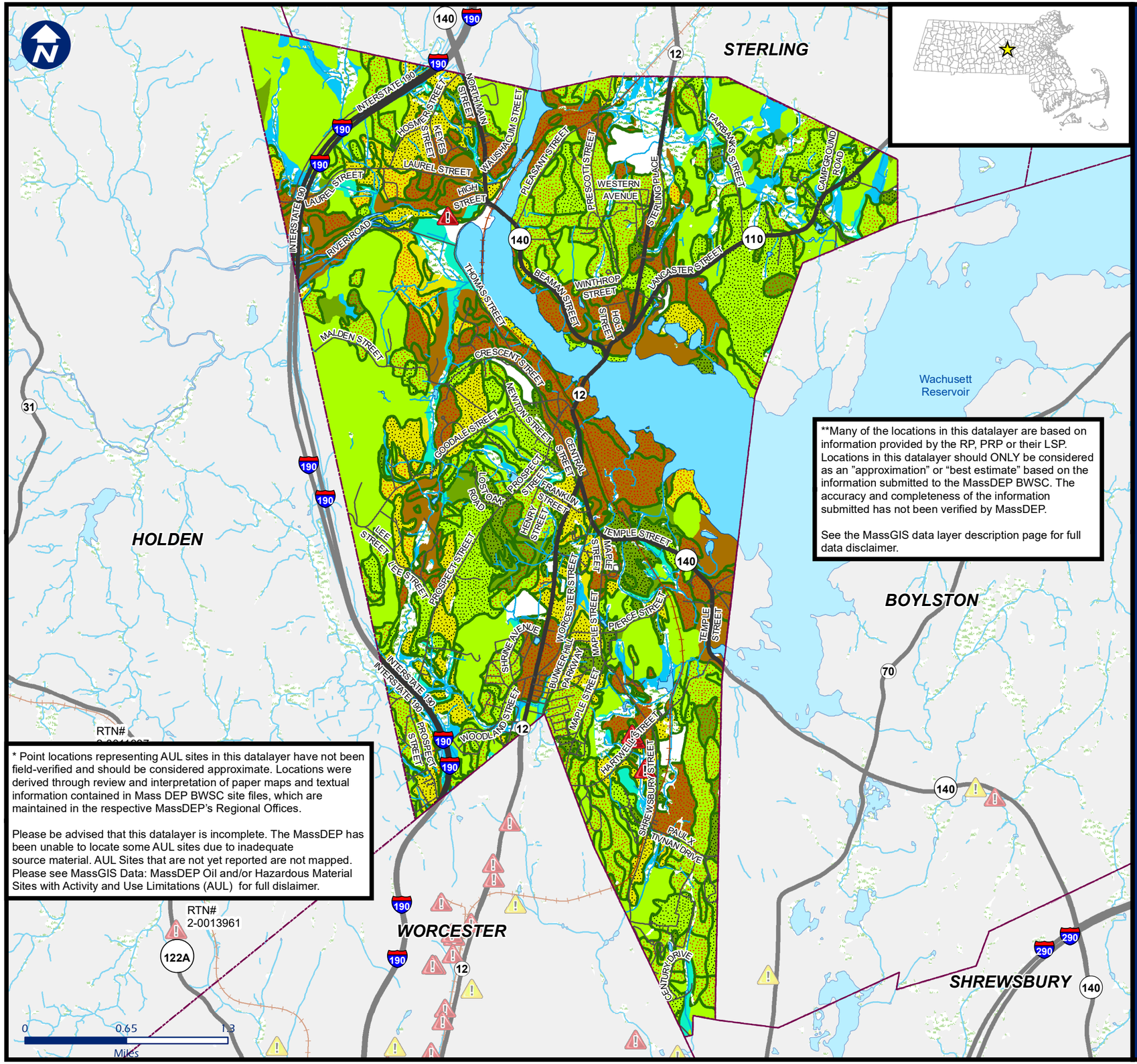
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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 5 SOILS & GEOLOGIC FEATURES



**Many of the locations in this datalayer are based on information provided by the RP, PRP or their LSP. Locations in this datalayer should ONLY be considered as an "approximation" or "best estimate" based on the information submitted to the MassDEP BWSC. The accuracy and completeness of the information submitted has not been verified by MassDEP.

See the MassGIS data layer description page for full data disclaimer.

* Point locations representing AUL sites in this datalayer have not been field-verified and should be considered approximate. Locations were derived through review and interpretation of paper maps and textual information contained in Mass DEP BWSC site files, which are maintained in the respective MassDEP's Regional Offices.

Please be advised that this datalayer is incomplete. The MassDEP has been unable to locate some AUL sites due to inadequate source material. AUL Sites that are not yet reported are not mapped. Please see MassGIS Data: MassDEP Oil and/or Hazardous Material Sites with Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) for full dislaimer.

Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- MassDEP Tier 21E Sites** (3/2024)
- AUL Location* (3/2024)

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Drainage Class (11/2021)

- Excessively drained
- Somewhat excessively drained
- Well drained
- Moderately well drained
- Poorly drained
- Very poorly drained

SSURGO-Certified NRCS Top 20 Soils: Prime Farmland Soils (11/2021)

- All Areas are Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance

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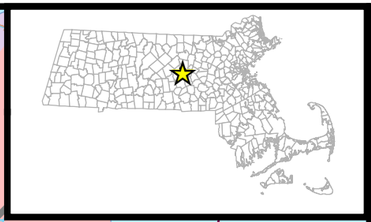
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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 6 WATER RESOURCES MAP 1



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

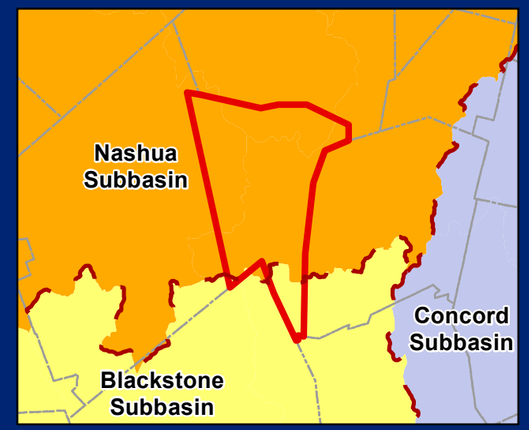
Aquifers

- High Yield (> 300 gpm)
- Medium Yield (100-300 gpm)

- NRCS HUC Subbasin Boundary
- NRCS HUC Watershed Boundary

NRCS HUC Subwatersheds

- Quinsigamond River
- Upper Blackstone River-Singletary Brook
- Quinapoxet River
- Stillwater River
- Nashua River-headwaters to North Nashua River



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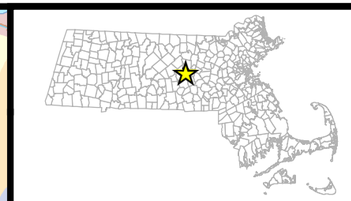
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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 7 WATER RESOURCES MAP 2



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road

Public Water Supplies (Jan. 2024)

- Community Groundwater Well
- Proposed Well
- Transient Non-Community
- DEP Approved Zone I (Jan. 2024)
- Approved Wellhead Protection Areas- Zone II (Jan. 2024)
- WsPA Primary
- WsPA Secondary
- 100-year Flood Area (FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, DFIRM)
- WsPA Primary
- WsPA Secondary
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone A (May 2023)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone B (May 2023)
- Surface Water Supply Protection Area Zone C (May 2023)

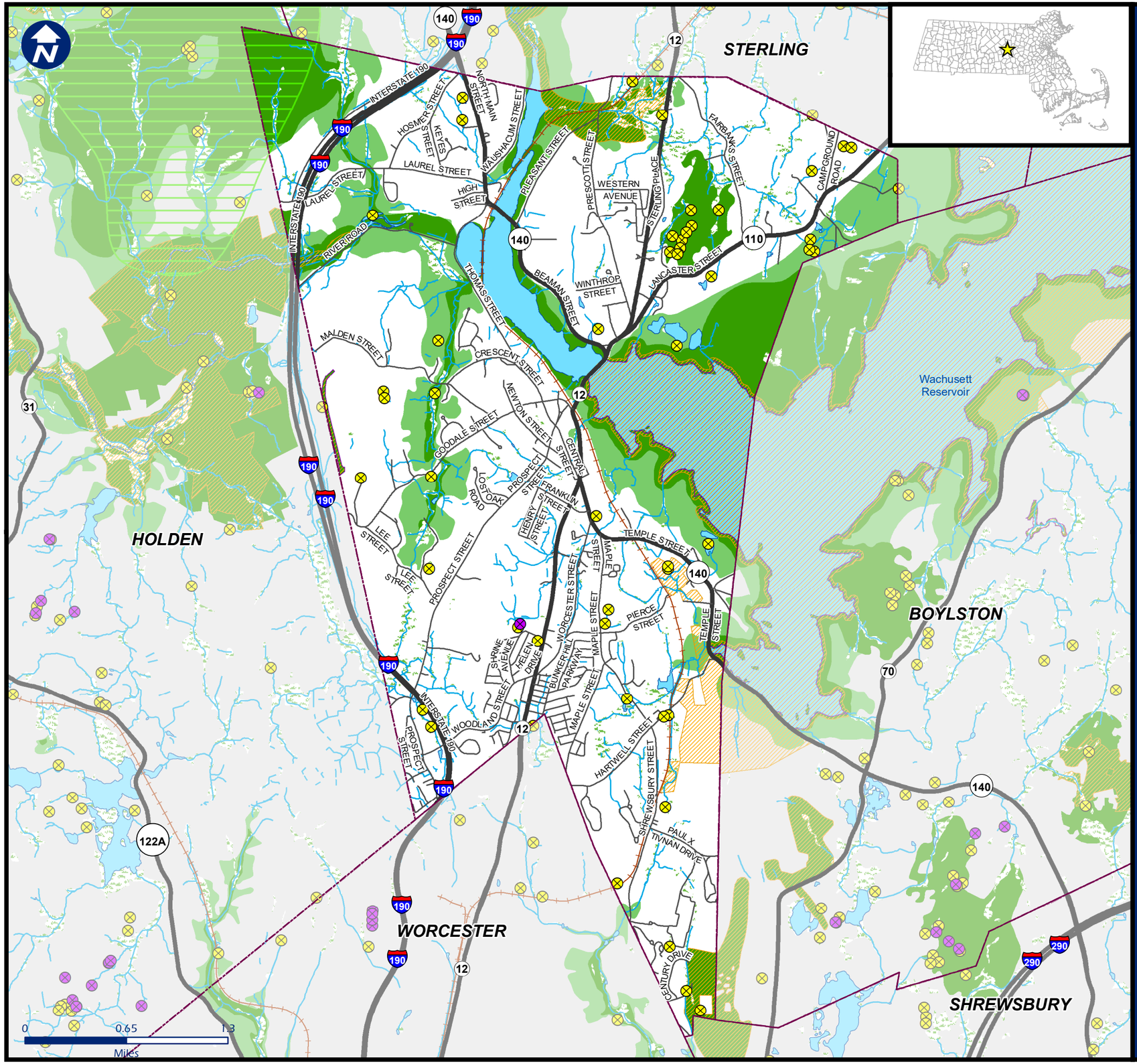
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Source: Data provided by the Town of West Boylston, CMRPC and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.

Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 8 HABITAT FEATURES



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools (Mar 2024)
- NHESP Potential Vernal Pools (NOT equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools) (July 2013)
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare (Aug 2021)

NHESP/ TNC BioMap Regional Components

- Regional Rare Species
- Regional Connectivity

NHESP/TNC BioMap Elements

- Core Habitat
- Critical Natural Landscape

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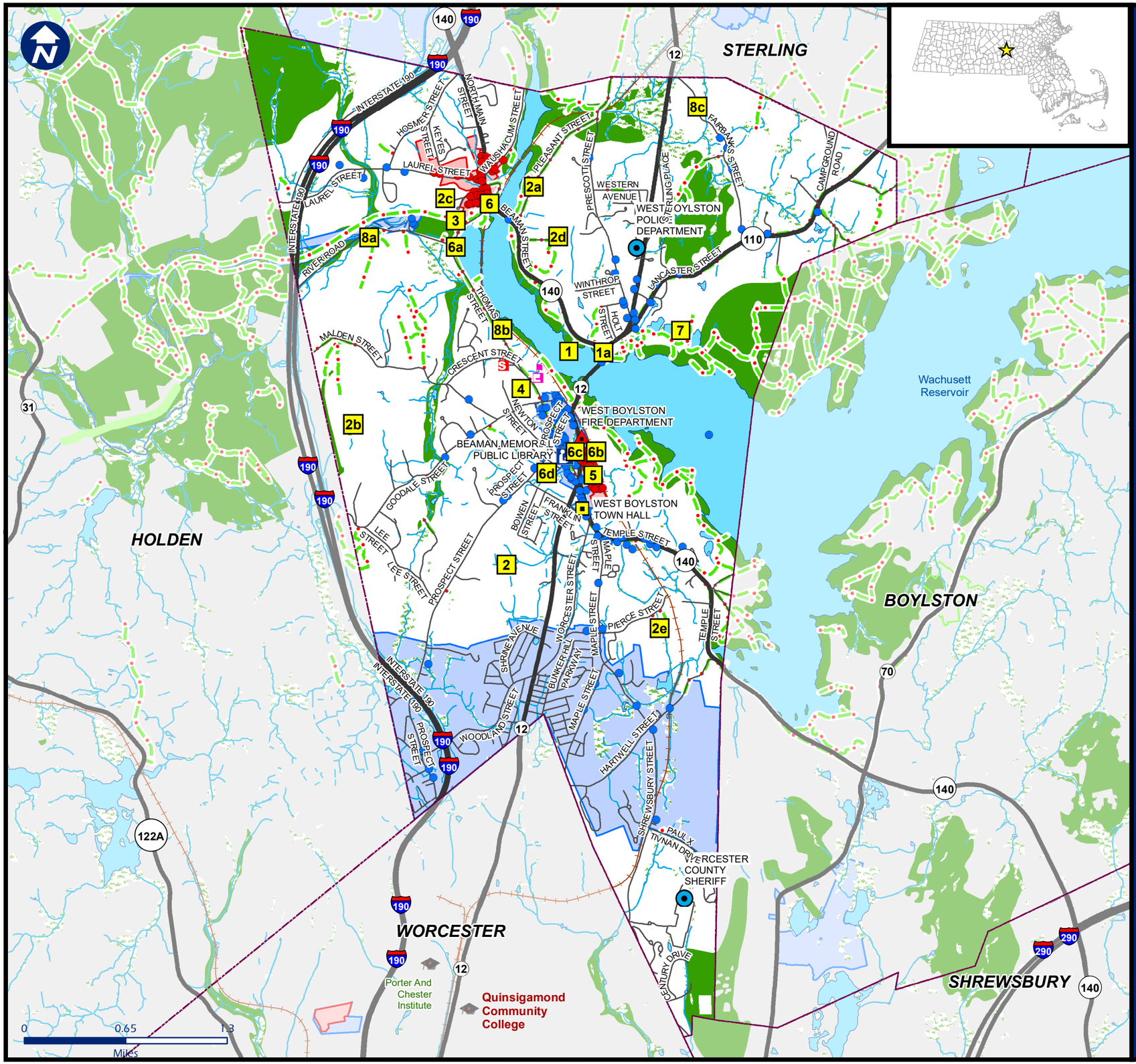
Produced by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
1 Mercantine Street, Suite 520
Worcester, MA 01608

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

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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 9 SCENIC RESOURCES & UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTS



Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Trails
- Scenic Roads
- NHESP/TNC BioMap - Core Habitat
- Town Hall (07/2017)
- College or University (3/2024)
- Public Library (8/2017)
- Police (5/2022)
- Fire Dept. (9/2022)

Schools (PK-12)(10/2023)

- Public Elementary
- Public Secondary

MHC Historic Inventory (1/2024)

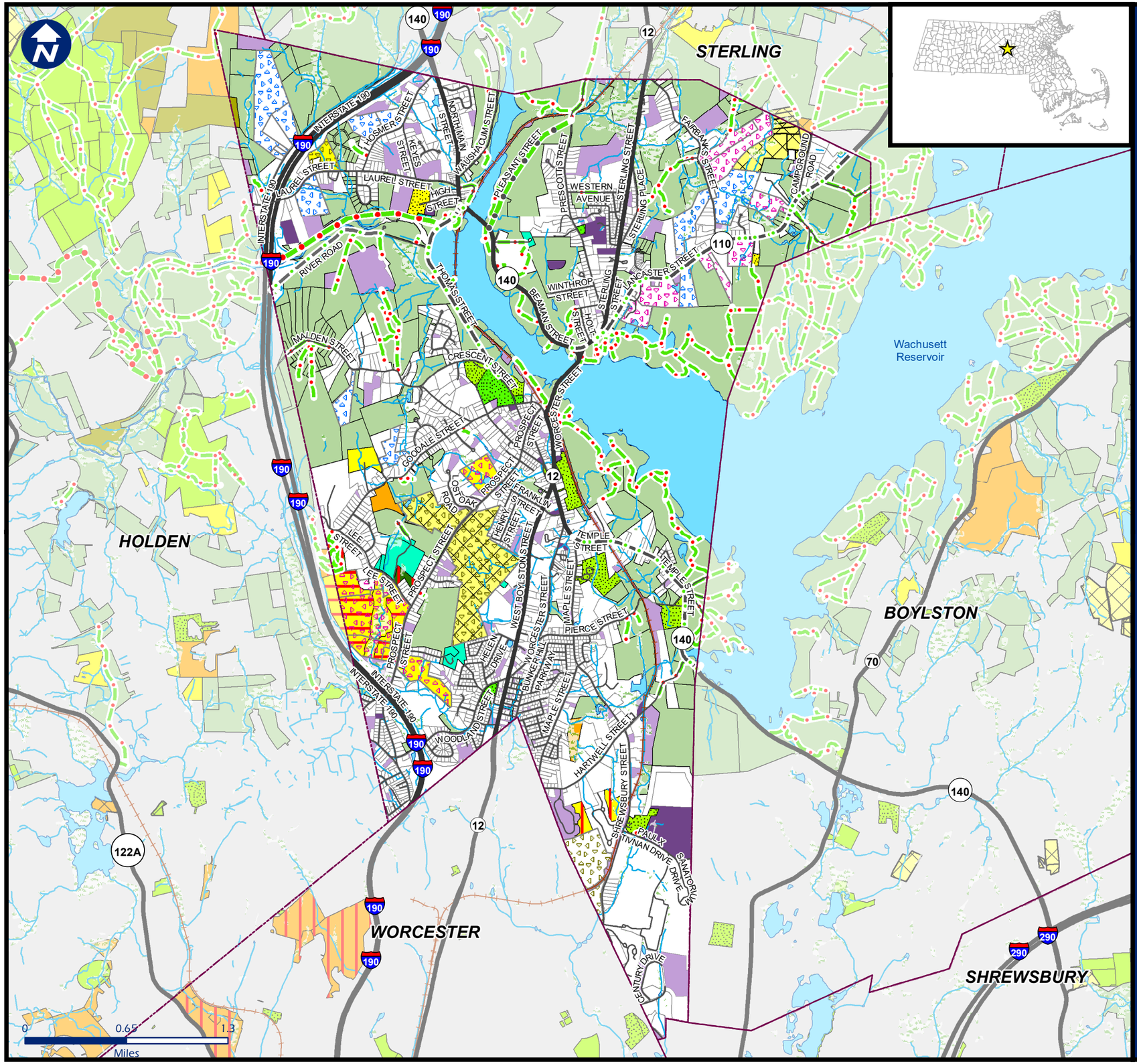
- Nat'l Register of Historic Places
- Inventoried Property
- Nat'l Registerof Historic Places
- Preservation Restriction
- Local Historic District
- Inventoried Area

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Town of West Boylston 2024 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Legend

- Town Boundary
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service
- Conservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (Feb 2024)
- Town Owned Land (FY2023)
- Undeveloped Land (FY2023)
- Off Road Trails
- Roads / Trails
- Pleasant Street (Off Road Trail All But 30 Days a Year)

Chapter Lands (FY2023)

- Chapter 61
- Chapter 61A
- Chapter 61B

Open Space Ownership

- Federal
- State (Fish & Game)
- State (DCR))
- State/County (Other)
- Municaipal - Conservation
- Municipal - Recreation
- Municipal - Water Supply Protection
- Municipal
- Private
- Non-Profit

Level of Protection

Perpetuity* Limited None

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Worcester, MA 01608

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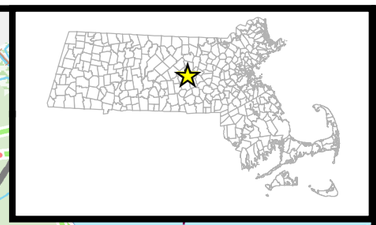
MAP 8 OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

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Town of West Boylston 2025 Open Space & Recreation Plan

MAP 11

ACTION PLAN



1 Goal 1: Protect, preserve, & enhance open space parcels

2 Goal 2: Maintain, enhance, and expand the Town's recreational areas

3 Goal 3: Protect and enhance natural resources

4 Goal 4: Plan and develop greenways and walkable connections in the Town with consideration to appropriate regional connections

Legend

- Town Boundary
- WRTA_Bus_Stops
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools
- Off Road Trails
- Roads / Trails
- River, Stream
- Lake, Pond
- MassDEP Wetlands
- Active Rail Service

Open Space Ownership

- Federal
- State/County
- Municaipal - Conservation
- Municipal - Recreation
- Municipal - Water Supply Protection
- Municipal
- Private
- Non-Profit

Level of Protection

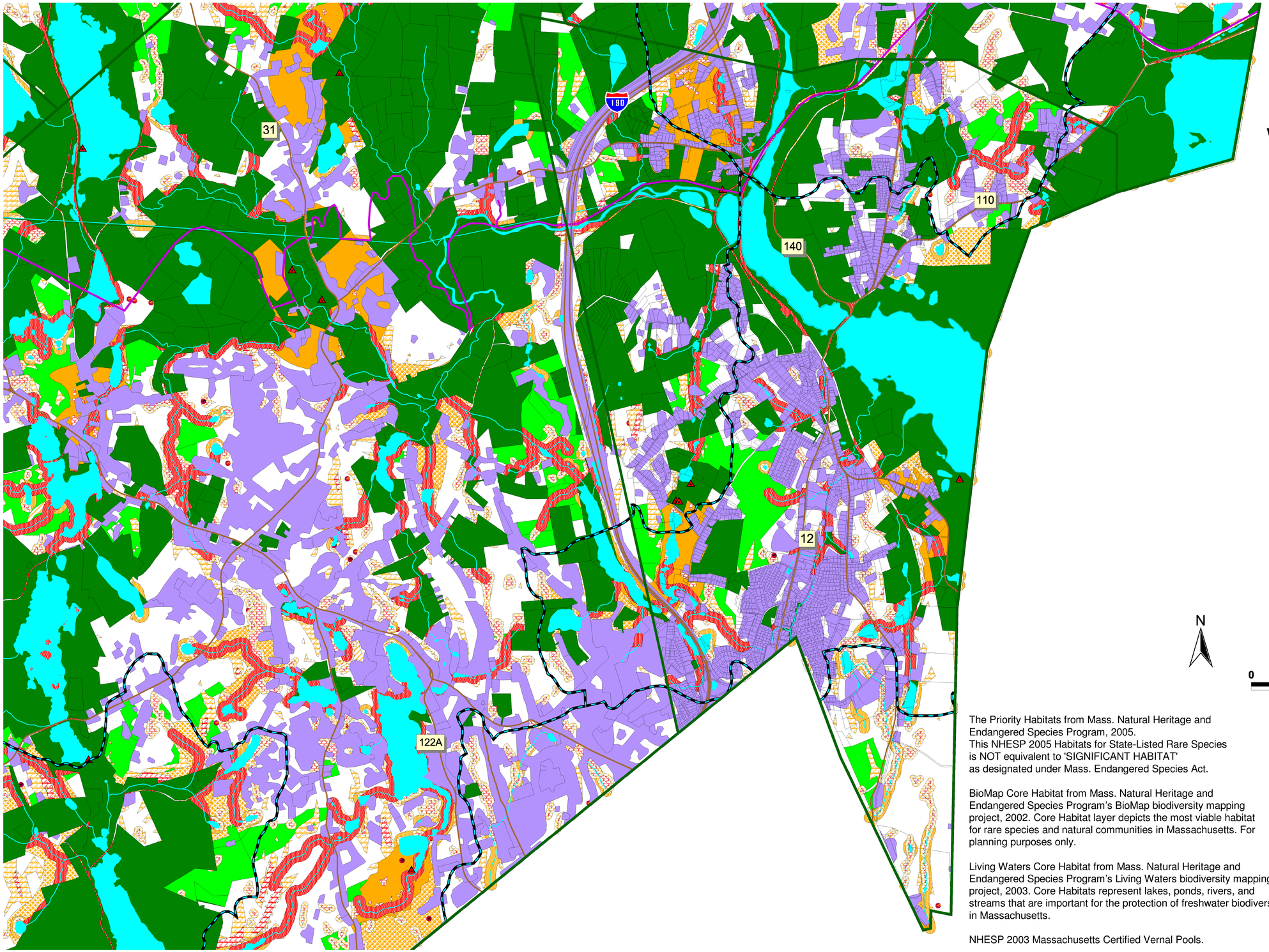
- Perpetuity*
- Limited
- None

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Worcester, MA 01608

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Wachusett Greenprint

WEST BOYLSTON

- Stillwater R Watershed
- WWLP Town Boundaries
- Nashua R Watershed
- Quinapoxet R Watershed
- Upper Blackstone R Watershed
- Major Roads
- West Boylston Parcels
- Recreational Trail
- Public Water Supply
- Stream
- Water Body/Wetland
- Protected Land
- Developed Land

Slopes > 25 Percent

- Certifed Vernal Pool
- Zone A Water Supply
- Wetland
- Interim Wellhead Protection Area
- Zone II Aquifer Protection Area
- Wetland Buffer
- Stream Buffer
- Living Waters Core Habitat
- Priority Habitat
- Biocore Habitat

Slopes15 to 25 Percent

100-Yr Flood Plain

- Potential Vernal Pool
- Chapter 61 Land

N

0 2 Miles

The Priority Habitats from Mass. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 2005.
This NHESP 2005 Habitats for State-Listed Rare Species is NOT equivalent to 'SIGNIFICANT HABITAT' as designated under Mass. Endangered Species Act.

BioMap Core Habitat from Mass. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program's BioMap biodiversity mapping project, 2002. Core Habitat layer depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities in Massachusetts. For planning purposes only.

Living Waters Core Habitat from Mass. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program's Living Waters biodiversity mapping project, 2003. Core Habitats represent lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams that are important for the protection of freshwater biodiversity in Massachusetts.

NHESP 2003 Massachusetts Certified Vernal Pools.

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Produced by the GIS Center at
Massachusetts Watershed Coalition
325 Lindell Avenue
Leominster, Massachusetts 01453

Financial support for the Wachusett Greenprint has been provided by the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.

Thanks to The Trustees of Reservations for map production assistance.

TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
140 WORCESTER STREET
WEST BOYLSTON, MA 01583

Town of West Boylston ADA Non-Discrimination Notice

The Town of West Boylston does not discriminate based on disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The Town of West Boylston does not discriminate based on disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with the ADA title I employment regulations.

Effective Communication: The Town of West Boylston will, upon request, provide auxiliary aids and services leading to effective communication for people with disabilities, including qualified sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, documents in Braille, and other ways of making communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The Town of West Boylston will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy
programs, services, and activities. For example, people with service animals are welcomed in Town offices, even where pets and other animals are prohibited.

Requests: To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures contact the ADA Coordinator (listed below) as soon as possible, preferably 14 days before
the activity or event.

Complaints: A grievance procedure is available to resolve complaints:
https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/policy_k-7_-_ada_policy_grievance_procedure.pdf

For complaints, comments or concerns, please contact:

West Boylston Town Administrator, ADA Coordinator
140 Worcester Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
ada@westboylston-ma.gov
(774) 261-4088

Upon request, this notice is available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

POLICY NO.: K-7
DATE ADOPTED: SEPTEMBER 19, 2012
AMENDED: JANUARY 18, 2023

TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN POLICY

ADA Policy and Grievance Procedure

Policy:

The Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs or benefits by the **Town of West Boylston**. The West Boylston Personnel Bylaws governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination under Article XXI Personnel Policy Section 5-Z Grievance Procedure.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination, such as name, address and phone number of complainant and location, date and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for people with disabilities upon request.

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:

West Boylston Town Administrator/ADA Coordinator
140 Worcester Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
ADA@westboylston-ma.gov
(774) 261-4088

Within 15 days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator or his/her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Coordinator or his/her designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Town of West Boylston and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

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

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Select Board will meet the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the

Select Board will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Select Board, and responses from the ADA Coordinator and the Select Board will be retained by the Town of West Boylston for at least three years.

Town of West Boylston, Massachusetts

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP)

Final, Approved by West Boylston Select Board September 6, 2023

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

As a public entity, the Town of West Boylston is subject to the ADA's Title II Requirements for State and Local Government Programs and Services and is responsible for the provision of accessible programs and facilities that are available without discrimination toward people with disabilities. A fundamental tenet of Title II of the ADA is *"the principle that individuals with disabilities must be provided an equally effective opportunity to participate in or benefit from a public entity's aids, benefits, and services."* This principle is referred to as program accessibility.

A public entity may not deny the benefits of its programs, activities, and services to individuals with disabilities because its facilities are inaccessible. A public entity's services, programs, or activities, when viewed in their entirety, must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This standard, known as "program accessibility," applies to all existing facilities of a public entity. Public entities, however, are not necessarily required to make each of their existing facilities accessible. The Town is required to ensure program accessibility for the programs it provides to the public, and most of these programs are based in a facility of some type.

The phrase "*when viewed in their entirety*" is important to recognize for municipalities when developing a plan to remove barriers to access. Since programs are offered across different platforms and at or in different facilities (or across multiple facilities), this allows for a degree of flexibility that recognizes both the opportunities to deliver services in alternative formats or in alternative locations, but also the fiscal constraints facing a town as well as the feasibility of altering existing facilities. If barrier removal is too costly, physically infeasible, or would adversely impact an existing program, the municipality can be creative in how they offer the delivery of a particular service in order to achieve access for all. This is the perspective from which this evaluation and resulting plan is approached.

1.2 Guide to Using this Document

This section provides an overview of the sections of this document and where to find various information.

Section 2 – ADA Title II Requirements Overview: This section outlines the key components the ADA mandates for Towns under Title II. It also includes a list of the various standards and, importantly, a breakdown of the limitations to the Town's obligations.

Section 3 – Administrative Requirements – Administrative requirements describe the basic elements that the Town must have in place in order to comply with the law. More specifically, these requirements provide the basic organization the Town must have in place to effectively implement accessibility policy. This section presents findings and recommendations on three basic requirements (Public Notice, Responsible Employee, and Grievance Procedure) and introduces the final requirement (Self Evaluation and Transition Plan), which follow in separate sections.

Section 4 – Self Evaluation – The Self Evaluation is the review, findings and recommendations of the programs provided by the Town. A program is inclusive of the services, resources, facilities and other attributes of anything and everything the Town does.

Section 5 – Providing Equally Effective Communication – A subset of the Self-Evaluation, this section includes aspects of communications, including website, publications, and public meetings.

Section 6 – Public Engagement & Input – The public input includes a survey conducted at the outset of the project, the review and guidance from the Disabilities Commission to develop the SETP, and a final opportunity to receive public input on the final plan.

Section 7 – Transition Plan – This is the action plan to remove barriers, and includes short, medium, and long-term objectives. It presents policy and programmatic changes, readily achievable physical barrier removal, and longer-term capital projects. The Transition Plan is the Town's checklist for implementation.

Section 8 – Appendices – The appendices include the reports on the data gathered (facility and website audits, survey results, departmental questionnaires, etc.), sample policies, and a list of resources that will be useful during implementation.

2 ADA Title II Requirements Overview

2.1 Overview

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination based on disability. Specifically, Title II requires that:

No qualified individual with a disability shall, based on disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity (28 CFR Part 35.130 (a)).

To ensure compliance with the ADA, the Town of West Boylston contracted with The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management to undertake a comprehensive assessment, including self-evaluation, of its facilities, programs, and services to determine compliance with the requirements of ADA Title II. The review provided in this assessment also recommends strategies that would result in a more practical, usable, and inclusive environment for members of the West Boylston community.

The assessment evaluated non-discrimination in policies, practices, and procedures for Town facilities, programs, and services, including those related to effective communication and employment. This report summarizes The Collins Center findings of ADA Title II compliance. The information pertinent to this assessment was obtained via a questionnaire developed by The Collins Center, meetings with Town leaders, department heads, and Boards, and comprehensive research. Findings illustrate the Town is responsive to ADA requests and requirements; however additional steps are needed to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to access facilities and participate in its programs and services as West Boylston residents without disabilities. Corrective action is needed to create or update written policies and procedures that would ensure the Town's compliance with applicable laws.

2.2 Program Accessibility

Title II of the ADA requires state and local governments to modify its policies, programs, and services when necessary to avoid discrimination:

A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability, unless the public entity can

demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity. (28 CFR Part 32.130 (b)(7))

The Town has several options to provide program access. 28 CFR 35.150, as well as the numerous advisories issued by the Department of Justice, outline the different ways in which a public entity can provide program access, including:

- Physical alteration of buildings and facilities;
- Offering services at alternate locations (including online), provided the alternative results in essentially the same level of service; and
- Where feasible, providing auxiliary aids or staff assistance in order to ensure essentially the same level of service.

When determining the type of modification, preference should always be given to the needs or method expressed by the individual requesting such modification unless this results in an undue financial burden or fundamentally alters the program or service. Practically speaking, the obligation under Title II does not mean that every building and facility has to be accessible, but ***every program and service does*.**

The ADA encourages creative solutions and affords flexibility to the Town in considering the needs of those with disabilities alongside the availability of resources to address those needs. What is critical is that the Town demonstrates a continuing (and proactive) commitment to improving access and responding to complaints and concerns in a fair and timely manner.

The Department of Justice has broadly interpreted a "program" to include virtually every service that a local government provides. This includes not only the obvious direct services, such as Police protection, garbage pickup and recreation programming, but also sidewalks, walking trails, passive parks, events on public property, and emergency management and preparedness. Additionally, it applies to all facilities in which a program is offered.

2.3 Equally Effective Communication

Title II entities are required to ensure "effective communication" with people with disabilities. This obligation applies to all members of the public with disabilities including job applicants, program participants, and people who are seeking information about the Town's programs, services, or activities. Specifically, Title II requires that:

A public entity shall take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. (28 CFR Part 35.160(a)).

The obligation to communicate effectively with people who have disabilities applies to the presentation and exchange of information in all forms including sound, print, graphics, and voice. Much of the specific language in the ADA focused on the use of auxiliary aides such as hearing aids, TTY/TDD, large print, Braille and other devices or methods. Today, however, arguably the most important application of the equally effective communication requirement can be found in the way a Town's website, eGovernment services, social media, and remote public meeting procedures provide access to individuals of all abilities. While this has created a significant challenge and expense, in particular for smaller municipalities with limited information technology staff and resources, the significant and rapid advances in digital services also

provides one of the best opportunities to effectively modify services and programs and, in many cases, avoid some of the costs associated with physical barrier removal in order to achieve access for all.

2.4 Standards for Compliance

Objective standards are not necessarily provided in all instances, making it somewhat challenging for local governments to find clear guidance on what they "must" do to comply with the law. Where there is no official guidance included in CFR or otherwise promulgated by a state, federal or local authority, the municipality should follow best practices or the best available standard. As an example, there currently is no federal standard for accessibility in the public rights-of-way, but the United States Access Board issued in 2011 the Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way (PROWAG) and although it has yet to be incorporated into the CFR, it is widely considered to be the best available guidance. Since sidewalks are a program offered by a municipality, these standards provide guidance to ensure accessibility.

Similarly, online and web services have no official standard other than the requirement for a government to provide equally effective communication, so the widely accepted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is often used as the best practice for a municipality to follow. Other programs and services are much less clear, especially considering the broad nature of the many services provided by a local government. In many local government service areas, the associations serving the professionals in these fields publish guides and primers on best practices, such as the National Recreation and Park Association (www.nrpa.org) and the Government Finance Officers Association (www.gfoa.org), and there are many additional advisories available from https://www.access-board.gov/ and https://www.ada.gov/.

A list of resources that can assist the Town in improving accessibility can be found in Appendix 8.2.

While there are myriad ways services can be made more accessible, the role of the physical facility in which a program is delivered is arguably the most important and one for which clear and objective standards are available and must be adhered to. These are noted in the next section.

2.4.1 Facility Accessibility Standards

Depending on when construction was completed, different standards may apply, and there are both federal accessibility standards, state building codes, and a specialized state accessibility code. These standards are voluminous, comprehensive, and very complex, and include numerous exemptions for historic buildings and specialized spaces. The relevant standards for Town facilities include:

- **2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** – For projects started on or before March 15, 2012, these standards apply. The 2010 Standards combine the requirements, including scope, of 28 CFR 35.151 with the 2004 ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), which in addition to further scoping guidance, include the technical specifications that must be followed. While these standards apply to all new construction after March 15, 2012, there are also detailed explanations of how and when alterations to an existing building may require bringing other elements of a facility into compliance with the revised standards regardless of the date of original construction. These can be viewed at: https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm

It should be noted that, following the latest updates to the International Building Code and Residential Building Codes published by the International Codes Council, the standards are 99% identical to the 2010 Standards, with only minor variations, with respect to accessibility.

One important aspect of the 2010 Standards was the inclusion of guidelines for many recreation facilities. As these were not addressed under the 1991 Standards, the 2010 Standards are the enforceable standards for such facilities and no safe harbor is permitted.

- **1991 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** – Published in July 26, 1991, these standards should be used for evaluating buildings where construction started on or before March 14, 2012. They may be viewed at: https://www.ada.gov/1991ADAstandards_index.htm

- **Code of Massachusetts Regulations Title 521 (521 CMR)** – 521 CMR is the specialized building code for accessibility in Massachusetts and applies to all construction in the Commonwealth. While not as comprehensive as the 2010 Standards, the specific requirements under 521 CMR are more stringent and are considered additional requirements on top of the federal guidelines. They may be viewed at: https://www.mass.gov/law-library/521-cmr

For the purpose of conducting assessments of Town facilities and to simplify the identification and removal of barrier to access, West Boylston's Transition Plan recognizes the following facts and assumptions:

1. There is an affirmative obligation to remove barriers to access under the ADA, but not under 521 CMR. For this reason, facility audits are conducted using the relevant ADA standard. New construction and remedial projects to remove barriers should not only follow the 2010 Standards but also 521 CMR under Massachusetts law.

2. Unless a facility was, beyond any doubt, constructed and remained unaltered prior to March 14, 2012, audits were conducted using the 2010 Standards. Without having a thorough review (and documentation) of all past projects, plans and costs, it is difficult to establish whether or not a facility is provided safe harbor from the 2010 Standards. It is also important to note that most of the fundamental components of the 1991 Standards were left in place for the 2010 Standards, so there is a likelihood that significant non-compliance with 2010 Standards means non-compliance with 1991 Standards. Further, efforts to mitigate a barrier to access if performed concurrent to other alterations under the 1991 Standards may trigger a requirement to comply with the 2010 Standards. Since the intent of the Town is to err on the side of increased access, it is reasonable to audit using the 2010 Standards.

2.4.2 Other Accessibility Standards

2.4.2.1 Outdoor Developed Areas

In 2013, the U.S. Access Board issued guidelines for certain outdoor recreation and developed areas. These provisions, which cover trails, picnic and camping facilities, viewing areas, and beach access routes, have no legal effect on local governments subject to the DOJ's ADA regulations, but are considered advisory and best practice to provide accessibility to all public lands. The full guidelines can be found here: https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/.

The Town should use these guidelines for developing outdoor spaces not specifically addressed in the 2010 Standards. However, caution should be used when attempting to follow these guidelines for access routes instead of accessible routes as defined in the 2010 Standards and should check with the DOJ or the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board if questions arise in altering existing facilities or undertaking new construction projects. Of course, any requirements of 521 CMR must be followed with new construction.

2.4.2.2 Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

There are no official standards for web content guidelines; instead, the general guidance to provide equally effective communication has been interpreted to mean that entities subject to Title II should follow the best practices available. For web content, the standard, and arguably universally accepted, guidelines are found in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. As these standards have evolved, and continue to evolve, it is important that a Town's Information Technology staff and other staff who post materials to websites, social media and other media, stay up to date with the latest standards and advisories.

The current standards are found in WCAG 2.0 here: https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/.

There is a draft WCAG 2.1 and 2.2 standard as well, and it is the responsibility of the Town to stay abreast of changing content guidelines as technology rapidly changes.

2.4.2.3 Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)

As with web content, there is no official standard covering all aspects of accessibility within the public rights-of-way. The U.S. Access Board proposed the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) in 2011. As of this writing, these guidelines have not been adopted by the DOJ, nor the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, although many of the construction details have been adopted in part or fully in state and local standards for design. PROWAG may be viewed here: https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/.

Although not officially adopted, these guidelines are nonetheless a best practice and should be followed on public street, sidewalk and transit projects. MassDOT has developed certain standards, and a useful guide titled Municipal Resource Guide for Walkability. This guide may be viewed here: https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/09/17/MunicipalResourcesGuideForWalkability_2018-08-24.pdf.

2.5 Limitations to West Boylston's Obligations

While the Town is committed to ensuring access for all residents and visitors, it is important to understand the Town has limited resources with which to address accessibility issues and competing priorities. Town management and elected officials are obligated to work towards improving accessibility, but the public must also recognize that it takes time, money, and Town Meeting buy-in to implement change.

The Town has a number of tools at its disposal to help weigh both the obligation to address a barrier and the manner in which it may be addressed. It is important to recognize that "perfect" is often the enemy of "good", and creative solutions can be developed that meet the needs of an individual or group even if they fall short of absolute compliance with a specific code or regulation.

2.5.1 Programs Viewed in Their Entirety

The phrase "when viewed in its entirety" noted in Section 1.1 refers to the Town's ability to take into consideration other factors when evaluating program accessibility. For example, if the Town had multiple playgrounds in different locations, they could prioritize making one fully inclusive rather than meeting the minimum standards for both; in this example, the "playground program", *when viewed in its entirety,* is accessible and results in a more inclusive playground experience for children.

28 CFR 35.150 states:

(a) General. A public entity shall operate each service, program, or activity so that the service, program, or activity, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This paragraph does not -

(1) Necessarily require a public entity to make each of its existing facilities accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities;

(2) Require a public entity to take any action that would threaten or destroy the historic significance of an historic property; or

(3) Require a public entity to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.

To read the full text of this section, please visit: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35/subpart-D/section-35.150. In particular, 28 CFR 35.150 (b) (1) Methods provides examples of ways a program access can be achieved. This should not be used as a reason not to complete readily achievable projects, but the reality is that West Boylston, like most towns, has limited resources and must balance competing needs when developing capital investment priorities. As long as the Town acts in good faith to provide program access and is diligent about documenting the reasons for not addressing existing deficiencies and the efforts made to achieve equivalent facilitation, it is working within the intent of the ADA.

2.5.2 Equivalent Facilitation

Section 103 of the 2010 Standards states:

Nothing in these requirements prevents the use of designs, products, or technologies as alternatives to those prescribed, provided they result in substantially equivalent or greater accessibility and usability.

Advisory 103 further states:

The responsibility for demonstrating equivalent facilitation in the event of a challenge rests with the covered entity. With the exception of transit facilities, which are covered by regulations issued by the Department of Transportation, there is no process for certifying that an alternative design provides equivalent facilitation.

Equivalent Facilitation is a tool that the Town may utilize to overcome barriers to accessibility where they have a substantial and compelling reason for non-compliance. The Town should recognize the exposure

to liability and consult with Town Counsel as well as state and federal authorities if any such questions arise. As with all exceptions, the decisions and supporting documentation should be maintained by the Town and the Transition Plan provides an ideal location for such information.

2.5.3 Safe Harbor

28 CFR 35.150 (b) (2) (i) allows for an element-by-element "safe harbor" exception for elements within facilities that have not been altered on or after March 15, 2012 provided they were in compliance with the 1991 Standards when constructed. Generally speaking, this applies only to those elements for which the 1991 Standards provided guidance, such as operable control mounting height of 54" versus the 2010 standard of 48". It does not apply to elements for which no standard was included in 1991, such as play areas, meaning those areas are required to be brought up to current standards (programmatically or physically). Further, once the Town alters an element for any reason other than achieving ADA compliance, such as constructing new walkways or remodeling a bathroom, it loses safe harbor protection for that space. In other words, if it was compliant with the 1991 Standards and those standards changed, it does not have to be corrected unless and until an alteration occurs.

In general, safe harbor arguments are difficult to make for minor, and easy to fix, barriers to access. The Town has an ongoing obligation to address barriers and improve facility access and should take every opportunity to correct existing deficiencies to 2010 Standards *to the maximum extent possible*.

2.5.4 Undue Financial Burden/Disproportionality & Technical Infeasibility

28 CFR s36.401 subpart D details exceptions for situations where providing access would be structurally impractical, technically infeasible or create an undue financial burden where the cost of full compliance is disproportionate to the total cost of the project. The section is very specific in making such determinations and the actual text should be consulted by the Town if considering making such an argument. There are two important considerations that must be taken into account.

First, it is the responsibility of the Town to determine, through design and analysis, and document any such decision to remain fully or partially non-compliant. The Transition Plan is an important mechanism to document such determinations. Second, the Town is obligated to ensure that alterations are performed to provide the maximum amount of accessibility possible up to the limits of disproportionality or technical infeasibility.

2.5.5 Fundamental Alteration of a Service or Program

28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7) states:

"A public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity."

The Town should use caution when making a determination not to modify a program, service or policy due to this guidance, and should do so only after consultation with Town Counsel or other authority. Such determinations should be documented in the Transition Plan. The full text of this section can be found here:

https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-28/chapter-I/part-35/subpart-B/section-35.130#p-35.130(b)(7)

2.5.6 Exceptions

Section 203 of the 2010 Standards provides a number of specific exceptions to compliance with the design requirements. An important subsection is 203.9, which provides exception (and advisories) for employee work areas.

The full text can be found here:
https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm#pgfId-1010074

While employee works are covered by these exemptions, there is still an obligation to provide accessible routes to these spaces, as well as to common use spaces such as bathrooms, break rooms and conference rooms. These common use spaces must be made accessible as well.

3 Administrative Requirements of the ADA

Title II requires the Town of West Boylston to complete the following administrative actions:

- Provide a Public Notice which will include information regarding the Town's obligations under the ADA and non-discrimination protections available to persons covered under the Act;
- Designate an employee responsible for ADA Compliance (ADA Coordinator);
- Adopt a procedure for grievances;
- Conduct a Self-Evaluation of services, policies and practices, including providing an opportunity for public input and engagement; and
- Develop a Transition Plan which will provide an actionable and realistic plan to remove barriers to access. This plan will include reasonable and realistic timelines for achieving barrier removals.

3.1 Public Notice

Title II of the ADA requires that public entities notify participants of its non-discrimination policies:

A public entity shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of this part and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the public entity, and make such information available to them in such manner as the head of the entity finds necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the Act and this part. (28 CFR Part 35.106)

3.1.1 Findings

It is not clear from questionnaire responses, interviews, and document review that the Town has a current policy and staff trained to consistently publish the ADA Non-Discrimination Notice in materials distributed by the Town to notify residents, program/service participants, and employees of its obligation to provide equal access under ADA Title II. Specific findings include:

- A document titled ADA Policy and Grievance Procedure is posted to the Town's website at https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/policyk7.pdf . This document is specific to the Town's adopted Grievance Procedure and does not contain a non-discrimination policy statement;

- The name of the ADA Coordinator is not included, nor a phone number or email address;
- The mailing address of 127 Hartwell Street noted is no longer valid; and
- Where bulletin boards or areas for posting notices were noted during the site visits, the public notice was not adequately posted in several facilities (behind other postings, or missing entirely).

3.1.2 Recommendations

The Town should update the public notice and modify internal policies to require staff to ensure it remains posted and up to date. Specifically, the Town should:

- Publish the ADA Notice in all the materials distributed by the Town; post the ADA Notice on the Town's website home page and post copies in public locations in the Town's buildings at locations where the notice has yet to be posted. It is acceptable to create a short version or post a link depending on the media platform.
- Include the ADA Notice on Town social media pages.
- Consider creating a dedicated email account for public notices, grievance procedure complaints, and other questions around accessibility issues. This can be automatically forwarded to the ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator (or other designee), and any other staff to ensure email contacts are received and addressed in a timely manner, as well as avoid having to update the public notices should the person in the ADA Coordinator role leave the position.

See Appendix 8.1.1 for a Proposed Public Notice.

3.2 Designation of Responsible Employee/ADA Coordinator

Title II requires a public entity to designate an employee to be responsible for ensuring compliance. Title II provides little specific guidance for implementing this requirement, but the primary role of the designated employee, also called the ADA Coordinator, is to make sure the Town is compliant with the requirements.

A public entity that employs 50 or more persons shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under this part, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance with this part or alleging any actions that would be prohibited by this part. The public entity shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee or employees designated pursuant to this paragraph. (28 CFR Part 35.107 (a)).

It is common to designate a building code official as the ADA Coordinator due to the need to understand and enforce accessibility building codes. However, understanding building codes represent only a part of the duties of an ADA Coordinator and a lot has changed since the ADA was first signed into law. The programmatic aspect of the ADA is equally important, and with the rapid growth of e-Government services, the role now requires an understanding of the full spectrum of local government service delivery in order to help develop practical solutions to accessibility barriers and leverage the available technology and resources.

It is often the case that the physical solution to an architectural barrier is often the most expensive and takes the longest to achieve. An effective ADA Coordinator will understand how to achieve a satisfactory resolution to ensure program access by researching best practices, attending training and communicating with impacted individuals. Building inspections professionals already are subjected to significant

professional education and recertification requirements, so it is important that Town officials not only provide the necessary resources to fulfill dual roles, but also issue clear expectations for the position.

3.2.1 Findings

The Town of West Boylston has met its minimum obligation to designate a responsible employee by appointing the Building Commissioner as the Town's ADA Coordinator. However, it should be noted that the ADA Coordinator has not been assigned an active role with the Town's Disabilities Commission and the position's role has been limited to accessibility building code oversight with minimal responsibilities for overall Title II compliance.

The Job Description for the Building Inspector includes "Serves as the Town's ADA Coordinator", but does not include specific duties and responsibilities, nor does the essential training section include knowledge or training in ADA Title II requirements.

An additional finding notes that the Municipal Light Plant has designated its own ADA Coordinator and directs complaints, inquiries, and requests for accommodation to that individual.

3.2.2 Recommendations

The Town should review the role of the ADA Coordinator and determine if the role is appropriately located with the organizational structure. It is important that this role be recognized as a facilitator for improving access across all Town operations covered by Title II, and not solely within the sphere of building code compliance.

Wherever the ADA Coordinator role resides, the Job Description should be modified as follows:

- The final sentence in Essential Duties and Responsibilities should be modified to add the underlined language: *Serves as the Town's ADA Coordinator and as Staff Liaison to the Disabilities Commission.*
- Additional language should be added to the last paragraph of Essential Training and Experience Required to Perform Essential Functions to reflect the need for a general knowledge of Title II requirements.

The Town should determine whether the MLP should maintain a separate ADA Coordinator; this may be a decision that requires Town Counsel to determine the legal status of the MLP and whether it requires its own organizational structure and SETP.

The Massachusetts Office on Disabilities offers training for ADA Coordinators, and additional details can be found at https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mod-training-events.

3.3 Adoption of a Grievance Procedure

Title II of the ADA requires a public entity to adopt an adequate grievance process.

A public entity that employs 50 or more persons shall adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by this part. (28 CFR Part 35.107 (b))

3.3.1 Findings

The Town of West Boylston currently has an *ADA Policy and Grievance Procedure*, which was written in 2012, and is posted on the Policies page of the Town website, Section K, under Personnel issues. The document required multiple clicks to reach and was not easy to find. This document can be viewed here:

https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/policyk7.pdf

There is also a separate Town of West Boylston Equal Access to Parks and Recreation Facilities and Activities Grievance Policy. This document is not located online and was provided during the audit. While similar, the documents have some conflicting information regarding the procedures a complainant must follow. Neither document contains the name, phone or email contact information for the ADA Coordinator, and the address noted on the 2012 version is incorrect.

There is no "Accessibility" section, icon or link on the landing page for the Town's main page to help people easily navigate to information on accessibility; this is a best practice.

3.3.2 Recommendations

The Town should reconcile the two policy documents into a single Grievance Procedure applicable to all departments. The New England ADA Center offers a sample template that can be viewed here:

https://www.adaactionguide.org/themes/custom/ada/docs/samples/GrievanceProceduresSamples.pdf

Either the template above, or the existing documents provide a starting point, and the final document should be a procedure that works with the Town's organizational structure. The key elements that need to be included are:

- Name and contact information (phone, address and email) of the ADA Coordinator and/or designated employee to whom a complaint should be addressed;
- How a grievance can be submitted, to include multiple options (written, by phone, in-person, email, etc…) as well as an offer to provide assistance in any format accessible to the complainant;
- Process by which a grievance will be reviewed and addressed, including progressive steps should the issue not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
- Maximum time for each step in the process; and
- Requirements for documenting the complaint, including correspondence and any actions taken, including retention requirements of at least three years, or as required under Massachusetts records retention laws.

The Grievance Procedure should be distributed to the department heads and posted online. Where applicable in online postings, the Public Notice should link to the Grievance Procedure.
The Town should also add an Accessibility icon or link on the main landing page, as well as in the footer of all subpages that link to a single page containing the Public Notice, Grievance Procedure, and link to the Disability Commission web page.

3.4 Self-Evaluation of Programs and Services & Transition Plan

The final administrative requirements under Title II require the Town to 1) conduct a *self-evaluation* of its programs, policies, and facilities, and 2) develop a *transition plan* to improve access over a reasonable period of time and within the resources available. If a Section 504 evaluation and plan was previously

done, self-evaluations are permitted to only examine those programs and services which were not previously assessed.

Since the Town did not previously have a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP), and was unable to locate a 504 plan, this administrative requirement was not met. The section below outlines the process the Town has followed to meet this requirement for the SETP.

3.4.1 Self-Evaluation Process

As an initial step, a questionnaire was distributed to all department heads that was designed to collect an inventory of programs/services provided by that department. The inventory gathered data on major "bundles" of services that share commonality in the resources they rely on, the individuals or groups they serve, and the general manner in which the service is delivered.

The survey included three questions regarding effective communication, including alternative format documents and materials format requests such as large print, braille, and TTY. Six questions were asked regarding core programs and services including location, type of program or service provided, whether the program or service is online, and whether reasonable accommodation is made for patrons with disabilities.

The data from the questionnaires is important for two primary purposes:

- To identify organization-wide barriers to access that can be addressed globally, such as whether or not staff are trained on how to respond to a request for materials in an alternative format. Town-wide training or policies can be cost-effective and relatively easy to implement.

- To identify barriers specific to providing a service or program, such as burn permits or other forms that are only available in paper and/or at in-person locations. In such instances, more tailored solutions can be identified, such as offering alternative online fillable forms, allowing phone-in of information, or offering curbside assistance.

The questionnaire was also used to aid in the evaluation of facilities within the context of the services offered. This is particularly important for facilities that found to be significantly non-compliant, but with limited public access where programmatic modifications are the most effective way to ensure accessibility, such as with the Town's DPW facility.

In addition to the questionnaire, the study team also:

- evaluated existing policy and procedure documents;
- held meetings and interviews with key staff;
- conducted thorough site visits and facilities audits;
- audited the Town's website and communications, including video of public meetings; and
- collected public input through an online survey, also available in hard copy and alternative format upon request.

Using the information collected during this evaluation, the study team developed a list of findings and worked with the Town to develop a plan to address any deficiencies and remove barriers to access. This process is discussed in the next step.

3.4.2 Transition Plan Process

The findings of the Self-Evaluation and developing a plan on how best to address them is a multi-step process:

- The findings and results of the report are presented in draft form to the Disabilities Commission and Town officials for an initial review and any errors or omissions are addressed.
- The final draft is presented to the Disabilities Commission, including summary tables of the administrative, program/policy/procedure, communications, and facilities deficiencies and barriers.
- The Disabilities Commission works with the study team and Town staff to develop a short, medium, and long-range plan based on relative ease of barrier removal, available resources, priorities and severity of the non-compliance. A recommended workflow for this step includes:
    - Address Administrative Requirement recommendations in consultation with Town Administrator and Select Board (Short-term – within 30 days)
    - Include a process for regular monitoring and updating of status of Transition Plan implementation to Disabilities Commission and Select Board.
- Develop funding and prioritization strategies. There are a number of ways to approach the prioritization strategy, including using:
    - Public Input Survey results
    - Grievance Procedure
    - Existing master plans
    - Additional public input
    - Executive authority
- Develop prioritized plan for programmatic modifications, including identifying and completing training for staff (Medium-term – within 12 months).
- Develop prioritized plan for readily achievable physical barrier removals that can be completed in-house or at minimal cost (Medium-term – within 12 months).
- Develop prioritized capital investment strategy for major projects as part of overall capital planning process and incorporate into the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- The resulting Draft Transition Plan is presented for public comment.
- A final draft was adopted by the Select Board.

4 Self-Evaluation - Program, Policy & Procedure Review Summary

4.1 Overview & General Townwide Findings

The findings and recommendations in this section apply across all Town departments.

4.1.1 Customer Service

Questionnaire responses indicated that staff across all departments take active measures to provide ADA-compliant customer service. Staff initiatives included working with customers or employees to accommodate their needs to the best of their ability; meeting customers outside or at their car to provide

a service; providing a customer-service bell at the bottom of a non-accessible interior entry way; providing assistive listening devices at the public library and some library materials in large print, audio, and braille upon request; and providing a service online or at residents' home as needed.

4.1.1.1 Recommendations

The current staff practices of accommodating individual requests should be memorialized in standard operating procedures and policies as applicable and appropriate. In general, providing the required Public Notice as recommended in Section 3.1.2 and developing an easily accessible and comprehensive accessibility web page recommended in Section 5.2.2 will meet this recommendation.

As a best practice, the Town should integrate training on the ADA and its requirements into standard staff professional development programming. The U.S. Access Board offers a variety of self-guided training programs that can be found here: https://www.access-board.gov/webinars/

4.1.2 Maintenance of Accessible Facilities

In addition to providing programmatic access, the Town is obligated to maintain all accessible facilities in working order. Exceptions are provided for temporary disruptions. The ADA Technical Assistance Manual II-3.10000 contains the following language regarding the maintenance of accessible features:

> *Maintenance of Accessible Features. Public entities must maintain in working order equipment and features of facilities that are required to provide ready access to individuals with disabilities. Isolated or temporary interruptions in access due to maintenance and repair of accessible features are not prohibited.*
>
> *Where a public entity must provide an accessible route, the route must remain accessible and not blocked by obstacles such as furniture, filing cabinets, or potted plants. An isolated instance of placement of an object on an accessible route, however, would not be a violation, if the object is promptly removed. Similarly, accessible doors must be unlocked when the public entity is open for business.*
>
> *Mechanical failures in equipment such as elevators or automatic doors will occur from time to time. The obligation to ensure that facilities are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities would be violated if repairs are not made promptly or if improper or inadequate maintenance causes repeated and persistent failures.*

While the departmental surveys did not indicate any issues with maintenance, the Public Input Survey (discussed in Section 6) indicated maintenance of sidewalks is a significant concern, which was also observed by the site visit teams at many facilities. Further, the placement of trashcans and furniture often created barriers by overlapping clear floor space, accessible routes and maneuvering space. Training for staff should include an overview of common barriers and routine inspections by the ADA Coordinator should be performed. Snow removal operations in particular should be evaluated to ensure priority removal of accumulated snow at accessible features remains a focus.

4.1.2.1 Recommendations

The following actions should be taken to ensure ongoing facility maintenance and operation ensures access for individuals with disabilities:

- Staff training on placement of furniture, trash cans and other items so as not to obstruct accessible routes, clear floor space and maneuvering clearances.

- Regular inspections and testing of assistive listening devices.
- If outsourced, contracts for maintenance on facilities and rights-of-way should be modified to specifically require accessible routes, clear floor spaces and maneuvering spaces be kept clear. For example, janitorial contractors should be instructed not to place trash cans within latch-side clearance of bathroom doors or in knee space under accessible counter. For right-of-way mowing and vegetation control, contractors should ensure limbs are kept trimmed above 80" and weeds between sidewalk slabs and at ramps be removed.
- Require ADA Coordinator to conduct periodic inspections at all facilities for compliance.
- The Town's snow removal plan/policies should be updated to ensure priority is given to ensuring accessible routes are cleared. During winter months, inspections should include a focus on snow removal from accessible routes at facilities and high-traffic pedestrian routes.

4.1.3 Emergency Preparedness, Evacuation Plans, and Emergency Shelters

As evidenced by recent U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Project Civic Access Settlement agreements, emergency preparedness shelters, and evacuation plans are critical components of a Town's responsibilities related to accessibility.

West Boylston does have a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which was updated on June 5, 2021. Upon CEMP review for ADA compliance, it was noted that the Town has addressed the "standard boilerplate" requirements for the basic plan.

There are, however, areas that should be addressed in order to plan for emergency management services to be available to disabled individuals.

4.1.3.1 Findings

CEMP currently identifies demographics of the population and shelter locations; however, there is no appendix attached to ensure the following issues have been addressed. Additionally, CEMP needs to state whether the shelters are ADA compliant and determine their current capacity.

4.1.3.2 Recommendations

West Boylston should utilize the following resources to inspect the facilities: the two *Tool B's Shelter Capacity and ADA Accessibility* as well the *Resource Guide for Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities and others with access and Functional Needs.*

The following issues with the shelters for short/long term should also be addressed:

- Identify Public Transportation to the shelters; especially for those who have physical/medical disabilities (7% of the population)
- Determine that the (Community Emergency Response Team) CERT is robust enough to manage the shelter(s); identify/develop a roster and POC for the CERT/ Identify CERT members with "additional" skill sets
- Develop listing of sheltering Veterinarian services for those who have both "pets" and service animals
- Develop listing of sheltering medical capabilities beyond the American Red Cross (ARC), and or the Fire Department.
- Develop listing or process to engage the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) to assist at the shelter(s)

- 16% of the population is non-English speaking; need a point of contact for translation services and availability as well as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and back-up EOC - These facilities need to be ADA compliant as well, as some personnel who maybe staffing certain functions/positions may have a disability. These positions need to be identified, including any accommodation necessary for workspace, electronics etc.
- The Town should consider utilizing a voluntary opt-in identification program for individuals with disabilities to provide information in advance that may assist emergency planners and responders with accommodating their needs during an emergency event. More information on this can be found at https://www.mass.gov/disability-emergency-preparedness.

4.1.4 Service Animals

It is important for the Town to have a clear policy on service animals, as their use has grown substantially in the last decade. A Town-wide policy was not provided during the evaluation, so it is recommended that one be adopted and disseminated. A sample policy can be found in Appendix 8.1.2.

4.2 Town Department Programs and Services

Department recommendations are grouped by the facility in which they are primarily located. A summary of each facility is presented to give a general overview of the facility barriers that may impact the accessibility of the specific services provided by the department and inform any recommendations for modifications. Note that the general Town-wide findings discussed in Section 4.1 also apply to each department.

4.2.1 Town Hall Departments

4.2.1.1 Town Hall Facility Summary

The full audit of Town Hall is included in Appendix 8.5.1. Overall, access to the building is the most significant barrier to Town Hall access. There is no accessible route from either Franklin Street or Worcester Street, interior site walkways in several areas and parking spaces/signage. The interior of the building has minor to moderate barriers, many of which are readily addressed, such as relocating existing elements in the restrooms, brochure holders, and payment drop boxes. Facility maintenance issues include placement of trash cans, planters and furniture within accessible routes, clear floor space/knee clearances, and maneuvering spaces. Programmatically, most issues identified were related to 1) website; 2) documents/form accessibility; and 3) access to public meetings.

4.2.1.2 Town Administrator

The questionnaire provided by the Town Administrator can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.13. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/town-administrator/pages/forms

4.2.1.3 Accounting

The questionnaire provided by the Town Accountant can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.1. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Staff is not trained to handle requests for documents in alternative format.
- Staff is not trained to use TTY/TDD.

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/accountant/pages/forms

4.2.1.4 Building Department

The questionnaire provided by the Building Department can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.2. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Parking lot drop box for after hours use is not within reach range, nor on an accessible route, for users not in a vehicle. Consider adding a second drop box where proposed ballot box will be installed.
- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/building-department/pages/forms-and-applications
- Recent new construction projects at Senior Center (Appendix 8.5.4) and Police Station (8.5.3) have minor to moderate ADA compliance issues. Recent renovations at MLP and Town Hall also missed opportunities to complete barrier removal. Inspections on public facilities should be comprehensive and fully inspect all elements, and the Building Inspector should be fully engaged in plan review for new construction, as well as renovations to ensure barrier removal is prioritized when defining project scopes.

4.2.1.5 Town Clerk

The questionnaire provided by the Town Clerk can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.3. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/forms
- Town Meeting minutes are posted as image-based PDF's and are not accessible by screen readers. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/node/1100/minutes/2021

4.2.1.6 Health Department

The questionnaire provided by the Health Department can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.8. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Some documents posted contain images that do not have alt text. These were primarily documents created by other agencies. Care should be taken to ensure accessible docs are posted, even when they are provided by third parties. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/wachdogwaste.pdf
- Pictures on webpages without alt text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/board-health/pages/beekeeping-honey

4.2.1.7 Recreation Department

The questionnaire provided by the Recreation Department can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.12. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and

acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/recreation-department

- Some event announcements noted on social media feed were image based and not accessible. Some images did not contain alt text. https://www.facebook.com/WestBoylstonRecreation/timeline/

Note that the Recreation Department programming primarily occurs at other Town Facilities. See Section 4.2.9. It should be noted that all outdoor fields, courts and site elements (parking, routes, concessions, spectator areas, and restrooms) are significantly out of compliance.

4.2.1.8 Treasurer/Tax Collector

The questionnaire provided by the Treasurer/Collector can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.14. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Payment drop box outside of exterior door above reach range. Lower or provide a second box where new ballot box is proposed.
- Questionnaire response states staff is not trained to provide documents in alternative format, nor use TTY/TDD devices.

4.2.1.9 Veterans' Services

The questionnaire provided by the Veterans' Services can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.15. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/22veteransexemptionform.pdf
- Picture on main web page lacks alt text. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/veterans-services

4.2.2 Library

The full audit of the Library is included in Appendix 8.5.7. Due to the dates of renovations and the new addition, the Town may be able to claim Safe Harbor (under the 1991 Standards) for some deficiencies in the children's wing. However, due to the nature of programming and mission of the Library and the number of comments received during the public input survey it was evaluated using 2010 Standards. The Library was also identified in the top three least accessible facilities by respondents to the public input survey.

The primary accessibility issues with the Library are exterior, and center around Parking and accessible routes to the building and between site elements. There is no access to the lawn and bench area, where outdoor programming occurs. Further, the ramp providing wheelchair access is non-compliant in multiple aspects (including slope of almost 10%) and handrails. There is no ramp from Central Street. The access to the lower-level meeting room is also non-compliant.

Inside, most accessibility issues are minor to moderate and many could likely be addressed by DPW Facilities staff, as they involve removal and reinstallation of existing elements. The most significant issues are the main floor women's restroom, which could be resolved by converting to single use (which is largely how it is currently used) and the Children's wing restrooms, which are not constructed to the smaller sizes specified for younger users in addition to other deficiencies.

The Library Director stated the HVAC units need replacement in the future and she was advised the current location (adjacent to existing ramp) is too small. Given the scope of the site improvements necessary to meet the parking, accessible route, and building entrance access barriers, the Town should consider a comprehensive scope to address all issues in a single project.

The questionnaire provided by the Library can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.9. No programmatic accessibility issues were noted for the Library that were not related to the facility.

4.2.3 Municipal Light Plant

The full audit of the Municipal Light Plant is included in Appendix 8.5.2. The Light Plant offices are not accessible to individuals using wheelchairs or with other mobility impairments. There is no ramp, and the lobby is multi-level. The configuration would make a wheelchair lift and ramp impractical. The MLP Manager stated there is a plan to install an accessible space in the loading dock area at the rear of the building, along with a chair lift, in order to provide access to the lobby and board meeting room, where public meetings are held. Based on an initial plan review, this modification will require a variance application from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.

The questionnaire provided by the Municipal Light Plant can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.10. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- New service applications must be done in person or may call to have paperwork completed by office staff (website states this adds one week to processing time). Website states new services deposits must be paid by cash or check, but there is a link for online bill pay that also allows security deposits to be paid. The "*all deposits must be paid by cash or check" statement should be changed to reflect the online option. WBMLP should add a fillable form (as they have for New Construction and Service Upgrades) that can be completed and submitted online. https://wbmlp.org/apply-for- electric-service.html
- The questionnaire responses state that staff are not trained in how to provide alternative format documents, nor use TTY/TDD.
- Other than new service application issue noted above, WBMLP is the only Town webpage that has built-in accessibility adjustments.
- Public Meetings of the WBMLP Board are held in onsite, which, as noted above, is not accessible. They do, however, have a clear notice regarding accessibility on the website and meetings are also broadcast online. Meeting agendas state individuals requiring accommodations may contact WBMLP ADA Coordinator, who is separate from the Town's ADA Coordinator. The current extension of COVID-19 Open Meeting Law exemptions ends in March 2025 and allows for full remote participation, but it is not clear how the expiration of these exemptions will affect the MLP's public meetings.

It may warrant further investigation whether WBMLP is required to separately meet the Administrative Requirements of Title II since it is a distinct entity.

4.2.4 Department of Public Works

The full audit of the DPW Facility is included in Appendix 8.5.6. The building is wholly inaccessible but is largely closed to the public. Curbside service is provided upon request.

The questionnaire provided by the Department of Public Works can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.6. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Forms included in the form library should be posted as fillable forms. All forms sampled were able to be read with a screen reader extension, although all abbreviations and acronyms be replaced with full text.
- Website should be updated to provide notice that curbside service is available if necessary at the DPW facility, but otherwise the facility is not open to the public. All services can be provided online or over the phone (with updated forms as noted above.)

4.2.5 Council on Aging/Senior Center

The full audit of the Senior Center is included in Appendix 8.5.4. The primary facilities issues at the Senior Center are related to accessible routes within the site connecting different elements. There is no accessible route to the ballfield which, while not used for programming, is technically on the site and required to be connected. There is no accessible route to Horseshoe Drive as required. The sidewalk running from the main entrance across the parking lot and the northwest corner of the building has several instances of excessive running and cross slope, and the curb ramp at the southwest corner of the building exceeds 9.7% with a landing over 4% cross slope. The interior of the facility has mostly minor issues that can easily be corrected by in-house staff.

The questionnaire provided by the Council on Aging can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.5. The following barriers to accessibility were noted:

- Staff has not been trained to accommodate requests for alternative format documents, nor in the use of TTY/TDD.
- While Senior Connection newsletter is readable with screen readers, it contains a large number of graphics that are not captioned with titles or alt text. Some advertisements posted in the newsletter are images and unable to be read with screen reader. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/senior-center/pages/senior-connection-newsletters
- The Senior Tax Work-off Program application is a scan and not accessible to screen readers. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/uploads/application_2021.pdf

4.2.6 Fire Department

The full audit of the Fire Station is included in Appendix 8.5.5. Facility lacks accessible parking and an accessible route to the right-of-way and other buildings (DPW) on the site. Customer service counter and public bathroom are non-compliant.

The questionnaire provided by the Fire Station can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.7. While the facility is non-compliant, all services that face the public are offered either online, such as burn permits, with fillable forms/submittal/payment options, or via phone. Tours are also offered for school children and members of the public.

The only recommendation is to offer smoke detector application/payment online as well, although it can be done over the phone and by mail. Regarding the public tours, Fire personnel should inquire whether any accommodations are required and attempt to the maximum extent possible to offer them on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.7 Police Department

The full audit of the Police Station is included in Appendix 8.5.3. The only issues noted were a lack of accessible route to the right-of-way, insufficient maneuvering clearance in public restroom, drop-box exceeding max height, and the water-fountain which lacks accommodation for standing persons.

The questionnaire provided by the Police Department can be viewed in Appendix 8.3.11. No barriers to programs or services were identified.

4.2.8 School Department

The full audit of Major Edwards Elementary School can be found in Appendix 8.5.9. The full audit of West Boylston Middle/High School can be found in Appendix 8.5.8.

The scope of this project did not include any programmatic assessment.

4.2.8.1 Major Edwards Elementary School

Major Edwards has significant exterior access issues, largely attributable to sidewalk and walkway network and parking lot. Due to the scope and scale of these issues and interconnectedness of grades and slopes, it is recommended that a full site survey and design be undertaken prior to addressing exterior issues. Such a design may result in a phased approach that can address the most immediate needs.

On the interior of the building, there are minor to moderate issues in all restrooms that can be addressed either partially or fully, as well as other minor to moderate issues with stair railings, protruding objects, and furniture/equipment placement. Most of these issues can be addressed by either facilities maintenance personnel or smaller contracts with outside contractors.

Major Edwards does have two significant, and potentially larger projects with the Nurse's Station and the access ramps to the cafeteria. These will require an architectural design in order to address non-compliance issues.

The full audit of Major Edwards Elementary School can be found in Appendix 8.5.9.

Not surveyed as part of this scope were the playgrounds managed by the Town but used by the School Department. A separate facility audit was conducted by KMA, LLC and provided to the Town addressing deficiencies at these playgrounds and a project is currently underway for Phase 1.

4.2.8.2 West Boylston Middle/High School

The Middle/High School has significant barriers to access throughout the exterior site. Most exterior sidewalks, walkways, site arrival points, parking areas, and routes connecting site elements were significantly out of compliance with both 2010 and 1991 Standards. Given the scope and scale of these issues, as well as the interconnectedness of grades, elevations and paths of travel, the exterior improvements should be approached comprehensively in their design. A qualified architect and civil engineering firm may be able to recommend a phased approach, but this will require a complete site survey and, at the least, preliminary conceptual design.

The interior of the building presents significant challenges as well, as the existing ramps connecting the multiple levels are all sloped in excess of maximum slopes in both 2010 and 1991 Standards. The existing structure limits the available space to modify these ramps, so an architect should be engaged to determine if this can be corrected to achieve full compliance. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5.4.

There are also numerous interior access issues that should be addressable either as standalone projects or over time as resources allow. See Appendix 8.5.8 for the full details of the site audit.

4.2.9 Outdoor Facilities

4.2.9.1 Pride Park

As noted above, a full and complete audit of Pride Park was undertaken by KMA, LLC and submitted to the Town. Design work has been completed and Phase 1 is underway for improvements to Pride Park.

4.2.9.2 Goodale Park

Goodale Park lacks accessible routes connecting the various fields, courts, concession stands, restrooms, parking and spectator viewing areas. The site has no accessible parking. Goodale shares athletic facilities with the Town's recreation programs and those of the schools. Given this adjacency, and significant sloping of the site, it is recommended that a master plan and comprehensive design be developed in order to develop a phasing plan to address the accessibility requirements.

4.2.9.3 Town Common

West Boylston's Town Common offers a large outdoor gathering space for community events. The site does not have dedicated parking, nor a complete sidewalk network serving it. Within the site, there is a bandstand and several benches. The bandstand, remodeled in 2013, lacks a compliant ramp and stairs, and is not served by an accessible route. The benches, as well as other site elements (trash cans, monument, portable toilet) are not served by an accessible route.

Given the relative flatness of the site, providing access and achieving compliance at Town Common should be relatively straightforward, and includes rebuilding ramp with compliant slope, adding handrails to the ramp and stairs, and connecting the bandstand to the other site elements. At least 5% of the benches and trash cans should be on an accessible route, and the route should connect to each street as well as the monument.

The full audit of the Town Common can be found in Appendix 8.5.10.

5 Providing Equally Effective Communications

The ADA requires that Title II entities (State and local governments) communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is as effective as communication with people without disabilities.

5.1 Communications with Hearing and Speech Impaired Individuals

The Town is required to provide and/or facilitate the use of auxiliary aids to individuals with hearing and speech impairments. The decision about what auxiliary aid is appropriate should evolve from a consultation between the ADA Coordinator (or designee) and individuals requesting an accommodation. In many cases, more than one type of auxiliary aid or service may make effective communication possible. While consultation is always strongly encouraged to achieve effective communication, all public entities are required to give primary consideration to the requests of individuals with disabilities. The Effective Communication obligation does not require the Town to take any action that would result in a fundamental alteration in its services, programs, or activities or that would impose an undue financial and administrative burden.

5.1.1 Findings

From the questionnaire responses and reviewing the provided materials, the Town does not have a standard policy regarding Effective Communication or how to accommodate a request for accommodation. Staff does a good job of addressing issues as they arise but would benefit from a standard policy and procedures. Questionnaire responses indicated a need for training and tools to equip staff to effectively communicate with hearing impaired individuals.

- The Town website, program literature, or announcements do not mention the availability of auxiliary aids, TTY, or other effective communication materials or assistance.
- Auxiliary listening devices are available at public meeting spaces upon request and signs are not posted to that effect.
- Most departments indicated staff was not aware how to request the service of a qualified interpreter.
- Most departments were not aware how to have documents converted to Braille, but also have not received this request (outside of the Library). With the widespread use and availability of screen readers and the ability to post documents electronically, the need for Braille documents has decreased significantly, but still exists.
- Departments have received requests to print in large format and have accommodated such requests from time to time.

5.1.2 Recommendations

The ADA Coordinator should develop clear procedures for staff to address requests for auxiliary aids, translation, ASL and other communications accommodations. This should be a written policy on Effective Communication and employee training so staff across all departments understand their responsibility and clarity about what services are available.

Sample of Effective Communication Statement and Request for Accommodation:

"The Town of West Boylston is committed to the full participation of people with disabilities. Any person with a disability who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in the Town's programs, services, activities, and committee meetings, should contact the office of the ADA Coordinator (Name, Address, Phone number and Email) as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event." (*if the Town needs 2 or 3 weeks or longer to ensure an interpreter, then it must be clearly stated).*

Other recommendations include:

- Post signage in meeting rooms that auxiliary listening devices are available and how they can be requested.
- Distribute the Effective Communication Notice/Policy to all department heads and publish on the Town's website home page.
- Developing a roster of ASL translators and vendors that can be engaged to provide translation. The Police Department already has access to such vendors.
- Conduct regular inspections and testing of auxiliary listening devices available at Town facilities.
- Provide training to staff on how to use TTY/TDD, and in general how to interact and communicate with individuals with hearing or speech impairments.

Section 8.2.3 contains links to services to aid in communication with hearing and speech impaired individuals.

5.2 Website Accessibility

Almost every department noted that they regularly post information or notices to one or more Town or departmental web page(s). Four of the questionnaire responses indicated an awareness of minimum standards of website accessibility requirements and referenced an effort to meet them via their website posts. Overall, responses indicated a need for uniformity and staff training regarding website posting and accessibility standards.

Websites are considered a public program/service and must meet Title II requirements as well as Web Content Standards of Accessibility. Poorly designed websites can create unnecessary barriers for people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities use assistive technology that enables them to use computers. Some assistive technology involves separate computer programs or devices such as screen readers, text enlargement software, and computer programs that enable people to control the computer with their voice. Other assistive technology is built into computer operating systems. For example, basic accessibility features in computer operating systems enable some people with low vision to see computer displays by simply adjusting color schemes, contrast settings, and font sizes. Operating systems enable people with limited manual dexterity to move the mouse pointer using keystrokes instead of a standard mouse.

Websites should comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. These standards, while not included in the ADA or under current CFR guidelines, are universally accepted as the best available and most appropriate standard for web content guidelines.

- Level A is the minimum level of conformance with the fewest requirements. A couple of examples of Level A requirements are that all non-text components such as images include an alternative text component and that captions are provided for all prerecorded audio content
- Level AA compliance must satisfy all the Level A requirements and offer additional criteria such as providing captions for all live broadcasted audio content
- Level AAA satisfies all Level A and Level AA criteria as well as offer additional requirements such as providing sign language interpretation for all prerecorded audio content

Website accessibility also extends to social media platforms that are used by a public entity to deliver information and notices to the public. Content and information created and shared via social media by a public entity is required to comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements. Level AA requirements include all minimum standards of Level A as well. It is the responsibility of the public entity to design accessible content that will be shared via a social media platform.

To assess the Town's progress in meeting these website standards, a manual accessibility audit of the Town of West Boylston website was performed to evaluate content against current WCAG requirements. This audit was not 100% comprehensive but sampled sufficient pages and features to identify areas for improvement. Manual accessibility audits have the major advantage of being the most thorough type of auditing. After completion of the audit, a report was created containing an assessment of a municipality's assets along with issues that need to be addressed. For every unique issue listed, instructions or examples

were provided to show precisely how to make the website accessible. It is important to note that accessibility is an ongoing process.

5.2.1 Findings

The Town of West Boylston's website audit illustrated that the Town has both strengths and areas of concern. A strong asset is the intuitive layout of the site. Specific areas of strength are:

- Toolbar navigation that is uniform, uncomplicated, and easy to understand
- Links accessible by keyboard, mouse, or tap of the finger
- Ease of use for first-time visitors to find documents and forms with ease
- Succinct language and appropriate comprehension level
- Mobile friendly and formats correctly on smart phone

There are also areas where the site accessibility features can be improved, specifically to comply with ADA regulations. Specifically, these areas include:

- Accompanying all images with alternative text
- Ensuring ADA-compliant contrast between background logos, images, and fonts
- Embedding text directly into the page rather than uploading as an image
- Certain documents posted to the website are images and do not contain searchable text, and inaccessible to screen readers or other accessibility tools. Examples can be found in Town Meeting Minutes and the Specimen Ballot posted by the Town Clerk's office.
- Converting printable forms into online fillable forms whenever possible; examples are Dog License Form and all forms posted by the Building Department for permit applications.
- Although 10 department heads responded that they use a Town or departmental web page, none stated that they currently provide notices to patrons on how to access a service if they are unable to do so due to a disability.

5.2.2 Recommendations

Overall, the underlining structure of the municipal website is efficient and effective; however, it can be enhanced by adding additional ADA-recommended features. The Town should consider:

- Create a separate landing page for accessibility with the Public Notice and contact information for the ADA Coordinator, link to Grievance Procedure and links to the Disability Commission.
- Making a commitment by policy or resolution of the Select Board to prioritize phasing in a completely accessible website, which would make it available to site visitors who use assistive technology such as screen readers as well as website visitors with a mix of other functional limitations.
- Offering employee training to department heads and staff who regularly post to the Town website to enable them to post in an accessible manner, including social media and accessible documents.
- Regularly posting practical information and resources regarding the Town's commitment to accessibility on the Town web site and social media sites for the public to become familiar with how to use resources.
- Convert all forms that are required to be printed and mailed to fillable forms.
- Address the formatting and contrast deficiencies identified in the audit in Appendix 8.4.

The full website accessibility audit is available in Appendix 8.4.

5.3 Public Meeting Access

Equal access to public meetings is critical to ensuring participation and representation in Town government. Like most municipalities in Massachusetts, West Boylston has a large number of boards, commissions, advisory committees, and task forces, all of which must abide by public meeting laws including regarding access, posting of agendas and minutes, and making available materials used and presented in these meetings. All of these different components of a public meeting must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

5.3.1 Findings

Public meeting access was mentioned several times during the public input process. Several deficiencies were noted during the evaluation, including:

- Agendas posted as low-quality scans: https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/agendas/boa.pdf ,
- Minutes posted as images: Board of Assessors, Council on Aging
- Videos posted to Town's public access channel did not display closed captioning: https://west-boylston.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=faa29001-e309-4af5-b808-95be93421efb
- Agendas posted did not contain information on how to request an accommodation: https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/agendas/july_26_2022_agenda_for_posting6722.pdf
- Certain documents posted for meetings were low-resolution scans: https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/news/wb_tm_warrant.pdf
- With the changes during the pandemic, virtual access to meetings increased dramatically, providing alternative ways to attend other than in-person. While many meetings remain either virtual or hybrid, many have returned to fully in-person. https://www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1421/f/agendas/wbha_monthly_meeting_notice_-_2.pdf
- Town Meeting is held in the auditorium of the Middle/High School (and outside during COVID). Both events rely on parking and accessible route on a site that has numerous instances of non-compliance, making it difficult to participate for wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments. Multiple residents stated issues participating due to accessibility issues at Town Meeting, whether at the auditorium or outside.

5.3.2 Recommendations

While the facilities issues noted in the audits for the various meeting spaces should be remedied, the Town should also look at making reasonable modifications to public meetings to allow all individuals to attend. The Town's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic also provide opportunities to continue fully remote and hybrid meeting formats that will not only increase participation but offer cost effective ways to improve accessibility. Other specific recommendations include:

- Develop a policy requiring all agendas, minutes, and materials to be posted in an accessible format.
- Require all programs offered on Town's Public Cable Access Channel provide closed captioning.

- Offer hybrid meetings for all public meetings, or at the least, those that occur in facilities that have any identified and significant barriers to access. This may require adoption of a remote policy by the Select Board.
- All agendas should include a notice regarding the availability of reasonable accommodations, including contact information and procedures to request such assistance.
- Where the only venue for a large meeting is an inaccessible site, such as the High School, utilize temporary materials, such as mats, portable ramps, additional accessible parking signs/markings, and other purpose-built solutions to improve accessibility to the maximum extent feasible. Provide notice offering guidance on how best to access the site and request assistance.

5.3.2.1 Town Meeting

Town Meeting, as the legislative body of the Town, presents unique challenges for ensuring accessibility. Like many towns in Massachusetts, Town Meeting is held in the High School Auditorium which, as noted in the audit in Appendix 8.5.8, has significant barriers to accessibility.

Given the public input (detailed in Section 6.2.2 and Appendix 8.6) and the results of the Middle/High School facility audit in Appendix 8.5.8, the Town should evaluate alternatives to make Town Meeting accessible to all residents. This may include (but not be limited to), the following:

- Providing temporary modifications to the existing high school site, such as additional parking, drop off locations, and other physical modifications to provide access;
- Moving Town Meeting to the Senior Center if it is determined sufficient space and parking is available;
- Offering a second location (such as the Senior Center) with full remote participation to complement the in-person quorum at the High School; or
- Offering full participation remote individual participation (such as via Zoom), although this presents significant technical and potential legal challenges.

6 Public Engagement & Input

6.1 Overview

ADA requires public participation to be a part of the transition plan process and implementation.

Per 28 C.F.R. § 35.150(d)(1), the Town ". . . shall provide an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the development of the transition plan by submitting comments."

Accordingly, the public was provided opportunities to provide input toward the content and development of the West Boylston ADA Transition Plan as well as review and comment on the ADA Transition Plan itself. Specific efforts were made to inform residents and local or regional disability organizations regarding the

opportunity to provide feedback including a Public Input Survey, engagement with the Town's Disabilities Commission, and an opportunity for Transition Plan public comment.

6.2 Public Input Survey

A Public Input Survey is a key component of the Town's process to develop a Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. The Survey is a valuable tool to inform the Town's planning team as they work to gather data and identify any barriers to access for individuals with disabilities at Town facilities or within the programs and services it currently offers. Specifically, gathering public feedback is valuable to develop a practical, effective, achievable, and ADA-compliant Self Evaluation and Transition Plan for the Town by helping to identify areas of primary concern for individuals with disabilities, their caregivers and families.

6.2.1 Methodology

The Town distributed surveys from October 1 – 31, 2021, to various stakeholders online via Survey Monkey. Paper copies were also available at Town facilities and upon request. The Survey, which was targeted towards community members, organizations representing individuals with disabilities, and Town staff was made available to enhance public input efforts to identify physical and programmatic barriers that may impact accessibility of Town facilities, programs, and services.

The Survey included a comprehensive range of questions regarding respondents' usage of and access to Town facilities, programs, and services. It was specifically designed to elicit public opinion regarding information important to assess how respondents state the Town is currently providing accessibility and identify areas where current barriers may exist.

Survey questions 1 – 14 were quantitative multiple choice questions allowing respondents to select one or more options from a list of answers; or to choose "other" and qualitatively describe that choice in their own words. Question 15 was a qualitative open-ended question, which asked respondents to provide feedback regarding accessibility in their own words. Three questions were demographic in nature, asking respondents to identify West Boylston resident status, age range, and perspective of their responses. The remaining 13 questions were specific to identifying the Town's accessibility strengths and areas of concern as identified by respondents. Approximately 3% of the Town's 7,877 residents responded to the survey. In total, there were 214 online survey respondents, and no one responded via paper copy. Of the 214 responses, 209 were residents and five were non-residents. For a complete list of Survey questions, and responses, please see Appendices 5.4.

6.2.2 Results

Survey responses were received by respondents ranging in age from 18 to 65; and response rates increased with age. This response trend illustrates that older residents are potentially more impacted by and aware of accessibility issues. Most respondents fell into the following age ranges: 26% identified themselves as ages 56 to 65 and 28% as over 65.

Many respondents, 66%, stated they do not have a disability themselves; 16% stated they have a disability; and 18% stated they are a caregiver for a someone with a disability. 53% of respondents reported that they, or people who they serve as caregivers, have not used a mobility aid, auxiliary aid for hearing or visual impairment, or service animal. Of those who stated they have used a mobility aid, auxiliary aid for hearing or visual impairment, or service animal, the three highest reported uses were crutch or cane at 32%, mobility scooter or walker at 18%, and wheelchair at 15%. Use of service animals were only 2%.

Respondents had an opportunity to answer both quantitative and qualitative questions intended to elicit public opinion regarding accessibility in the areas of 1) facilities, 2) program and service access, 3) pedestrian ease of use, 4) effective communication and experience with Town staff responsiveness to accessibility questions and concerns.

Encouragingly, most respondents stated that they did not have an issue accessing a Town facility, program, or service. Of those who reported an issue(s), common themes emerged regarding which facilities, programs, and services posed a barrier to accessibility. In the open-ended questions, the highest respondents' areas of concerns were stated as need to 1) improve accessibility of sidewalks, roads and/or parking; 2) update parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas to be accessible; 3) improve access to Town Meetings, Select Board and Other Commission and Committee Meetings both in-person and virtually; and 4) improve accessibility of communication tools including the website, printed materials and mobility aids for the hearing and vision impaired.

6.2.2.1 Facilities access

The majority, 86%, of respondents stated that they, or people they serve as caregivers, have not have an issue accessing a town facility due to a disability or physical limitation. Of the 14% who reported this issue, the following facilities were cited as the top three facilities posing a physical limitation: Recreational Facilities including the Town Commons, Goodale, Pride, and/or Woodland Park; Municipal Light Plant; and Town Hall. Many respondents noted the need to improve accessibility at Town parks; and that keeping them available to the public while improvements are made is important to them.

Open-ended facilities comments/concerns from respondents included,

- Lack of push buttons to open Town Hall doors
- No access at the Municipal Light Plant
- Lack of appropriate parking at the public schools
- Non-accessible playground and fields
- Inaccessible public library steps and handicap ramp at wrong angle

6.2.2.2 Program and Service access

8.46% of respondents stated they, or people they serve as caregivers, have had an issue accessing a town program or service due to disability or physical limitations. When asked the source of the difficulty, the following reasons were cited:

- Physical barrier 67%
- Difficulty accessing online materials due to format or readability 13%
- Lack of accommodations for the hearing impaired 13%

The following facilities were cited as the top three facilities posing a programmatic or service barrier due to disability or physical limitation:

- Town Administrator/Select Board Office
- Municipal Light Plant
- Beaman Public Library.

86% of respondents reported no difficulty accessing or participating in the local government activities including Town Meeting, Select Board Meeting, Other Board, Commission, Committee or Task Force Meeting, Local, State or National Elections or Other. Of the 9% who reported difficulty, the top three reported types of inaccessibility were cited as 1) Town Meeting; 2) Other Board, Commission, Committee or Task Force Meeting; and 3) Select Board Meeting.

Open-ended programs and services comments/concerns from respondents included,

- Holding Town Meeting outside, without accessible paths, and sidewalks, during Covid
- Difficulty hearing televised or remote meetings and programs
- All public meetings need to be run in a hybrid fashion so people can access them online
- Unable to attend an outdoor sporting event at the High School field, lack of handicapped parking and concerns for family members to be able to safely navigate uneven field surfaces

6.2.2.3 Pedestrian Ease of Use

There was a wide variety of answers from respondents regarding accessibility of pedestrian facilities. Pedestrian facilities were specified as sidewalks, crosswalks, push buttons at crosswalks (where present), curb ramps, and pedestrian crossings at driveways. On average, 32% of respondents stated they do not know the condition of the pedestrian facilities in Town; 29% listed pedestrian facilities as easily accessible; and 11% as usable but with some with minor difficulty.

Respondents reported several open-ended comments regarding pedestrian ease of use and the need for improvement. Comments included,

- Facilities are easily accessible, however getting to and from via sidewalks and roads are not
- Sidewalks are not maintained. Overgrowth on sidewalks is horrible, must walk in road at times
- Making sure that all residents and especially youth and seniors regardless of abilities can safely navigate walking in town including sidewalks and playgrounds
- Plow all sidewalks in town during the winter, not just ones near the schools
- More sidewalks are needed

6.2.2.4 Effective Communication

While most (92%) of respondents stated they have not made an accommodation request of the Town and stated general satisfaction with the Town's effective communication tools, areas of concerns were also identified including,

- 71% of respondents did not know who to contact to make a request for accommodation, state a grievance, or offer input related to accessibility to programs, services, or facilities.
- 40% of respondents who did make an accessibility inquiry, stated that the staff they spoke with was not responsive and the issue remained unresolved.

Respondents reported several open-ended comments regarding accessible communication including,

- Consider not just physical disability, but audio and visual disabilities as well
- Adopt universal accommodations for the hearing impaired
- Provide interpreter at every meeting because there are deaf people in Town
- Make the print bolder on surveys
- Please remember that all with disabilities are not wheelchair bound
- Consider small things that can affect "hidden" disabilities such as dyslexia and ADHD
- A paper mailing would be beneficial for upcoming town news

6.3 Disability Commission

The Disability Commission was established in October of 2021 to provide advisory services to the Town and residents, advocate for accessibility and assist in the development and implementation of the Town's

Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. The Commission will play in integral role in reviewing the audit results, and in developing the plan of action to remove barriers to access across the Town's facilities, rights-of-way and programs and services. For more information on the Commission's role in the SETP process, see Section 3.4.2

6.4 Transition Plan Public Comment

At the Select Board meeting of July 19, 2023, the Select Board was presented with the final draft of the SETP. The Select Board voted to accept public comment on the plan from July 20, 2023 through August 19, 2023. Comments were accepted by West Boylston residents who included their name and address. On July 20, 2023, the SETP was posted on the Town's webpage on the 'Town News' section of the main page and the 'Accessibility' page. The notification of public comment stated the document was also available in alternative format upon request to the Town Administrator/ADA Coordinator. In addition to posting on the Town webpage, a post was also made on the Town's Facebook account. No public feedback was submitted for consideration.

7 Transition Plan

7.1 Overview of Transition Plan

Recommendations made in the previous sections are summarized in this section as the Transition Plan. The initial timeline is presented as a recommendation based on observed inaccessibility of programs, ease of barrier removal, existing plans, available resources, and processes to implement changes. Since most of the physical modifications will require the authorization of appropriations or grants, and the Town does not have a dedicated Facilities Division, most of these recommended action items are realistically many years out. Administrative and policy/procedure actions that do not require significant approval or development processes have shorter timelines. Since the Town does not have a dedicated IT function, many technology solutions are envisioned with longer timelines.

7.1.1 Administrative Action Items

The items in this section are the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator and Select Board.

Action Item	Ref.	Timeline	Status
Update and post public notice	3.1.2	90 days	Completed 6/9/2023
Clarify and Update role of ADA Coordinator	3.2.2	60 days	Completed January 18, 2023.
Revision to ADA Coordinator Job Description	3.2.2	6 months	TA appointed as ADAC.
Revise, adopt and post new grievance procedure	3.3.2	90 days	Completed 1/18/2023
Complete Self-Evaluation	3.4.1	N/A	Draft completed 2/2023 for review.
Adopt Transition Plan (including public comment)	3.4.2	Summer 2023	
Establish an Accessibility Task Force	N/A	6 months	

7.1.2 Town-wide Action Items

The items in this section are the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator, Town Administrator and Select Board.

Action Item	Ref.	Timeline	Status
Develop employee training program and standards on ADA and accessibility awareness.	4.1.1.1	Fall 2023	
Integration of public notice into all Town and Departmental web pages, print materials, social media feeds.	4.1.1.1	December 2023	
Create standard internal policies and procedures for addressing requests for accommodation.	4.1.1.1	Fall 2023	
Create an accessibility web page with links on all subpages/sites.	4.1.1.1 & 5.2.2	6-9 months	Completed 6/9/2023
Develop program for routine inspections of facilities and testing of any specialized assistance devices.	4.1.2.1	July 2024	
Conduct an initial training event or requirement on maintenance of accessible features and set schedule for periodic training; integrate into onboarding materials for new employees.	4.1.2.1	December 2023	

Ensure maintenance of accessible features is specifically addressed in all contracts for services and construction projects as appropriate.	4.1.2.1	3 years	Allows for expiration of any multi-year contracts.
Update Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to address accessibility	4.1.3.2	December 2024	

7.1.3 Departmental Programs & Services Action Items

The items included in this section are the responsibility of the individual departments.

Action Item	Ref.	Timeline	Status
Town Administrator – update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.2	December 2023	
Town Administrator- hire a Facilities Director	N/A		Completed 6/5/2023
Accounting – Staff training in TTY/TDD & alternative format requests.	4.2.1.3	December 2023	
Accounting - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.3	December 2023	
Building Department – Address inaccessible drop box	4.2.1.4	February 2024	
Building Department - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.4	December 2023	
Building Department – mandate stringent inspections of all public projects including thorough and comprehensive inspection of accessible features.	4.2.1.4	Immediate	
Town Clerk - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.5	December 2023	
Town Clerk – Policy statement to require all minutes and agendas be posted as accessible PDF's or another accessible format.	4.2.1.5	Immediate	Policy to be considered by Select Board 6/21/2023
Health Department – Ensure website postings are accessible and provide alt text as needed.	4.2.1.6	March 2024	
Recreation Department – Update social media feeds to replace image-based program information	4.2.1.7	3-6 months	Implemented for all social media 7/1/2023 forward
Recreation Department - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.7	December 2023	
Treasurer/Collector - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.8	December 2023	
Veterans' Services - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.1.9	December 2023	
Veterans' Services - ensure web content pictures have alt text	4.2.1.9	December 2023	
Municipal Light Plant – Clarify or update policy and procedure regarding new services applications and deposit payments as noted in the evaluation.	4.2.3	1 year	

Municipal Light Plant – Clarify ADA Coordinator role between MLP and Town	4.2.3 & 3.2.2	6 months	
Municipal Light Plant – Address long-term access to public meetings of MLP Board of Directors.	4.2.3	18 months	
DPW - update of all forms to fillable forms and make recommended edits to content.	4.2.4	December 2023	
DPW – develop written policy and notice on curbside service and service requests by phone, online forms, or email. Policies and notices should also provide guidelines for any in-person meetings requiring accommodations to be conducted at an alternate accessible location (Town Hall or Senior Center)	4.2.4	6-9 months.	
COA – Revise Senior Newsletter to eliminate image-based information and create policy for advertisers to submit any ads in an accessible format.	4.2.5	6-9 months.	
COA – Provide staff training and policy/procedure on handling alternative format requests.	4.2.5	6-9 months	
COA – Revise Senior Tax Workoff form to make fully accessible.	4.2.5	3-6 months	Completed by 7/1/2023
Fire – Update form and payment method for smoke detector inspection to allow online processing.	4.2.6	6-9 months	

7.1.4 Communications, Website/Social Media & Public Meetings

All items under this section are the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator, working with the impacted departments, IT vendors, Town Administrator and Select Board.

Action Item	Ref.	Timeline	Status
The ADA Coordinator should develop an Effective Communications Notice/Policy and distribute to Departments and website for posting.	5.1.2	6 months	Select Board considering Policy 6/21/2023
Develop a roster of ASL translators, alternative format vendors (braille) and ensure it is kept up to date if needed.	5.1.2	6 months	
Develop a standard policy/procedure and training on use of TTY/TDD and communication with hearing and speech impaired individuals.	5.1.2	6 months	
Develop a schedule and procedure for testing any assistive or auxiliary listening devices.	5.1.2	6 months	
Create separate landing page for accessibility, to include public notice, grievance procedure, contact information/links for ADA Coordinator, and Disability Commission (contact and agendas).	5.2.2	6 months	Completed 6/20/2023
Schedule and provide routine training for staff responsible for website and social media posting.	5.2.2	6-9 months	

Review and address specific formatting and contrast recommendations and findings from the website accessibility audit.	8.4	1 year	
Develop a procedure and schedule for routine audits of forms and postings provided by departments.	8.4	6 months	
Select Board policy statement on posting of minutes, agendas, and materials in an accessible format.	5.3.2	3 months	Select Board considering Policy on 6/21/2023
Require all programming on public access channel post closed captioning.	5.3.2	1 year	
Evaluate the feasibility of continuing all meetings in a hybrid format to allow full participation	5.3.2	6 months	
Require all agendas for all public meetings contain statement on requesting accommodations.	5.3.2	Immediate	Implemented effective 7/1/2023
Evaluate alternatives for Town Meeting.	5.3.2.1	1-2 years	

7.1.5 Facility Improvements and Capital Projects

The following projects are based on the consultant's recommended grouping of modifications based on logical sequencing of tasks and scope of work required.

Projects are noted as "in-house" are those that would likely be candidates for in-house personnel, or direct contracting with qualified contractors with minimal design work.

Where feasibility studies or further evaluation is noted, this is intended to allow the Town to determine if a project can be completed through either a preliminary or conceptual design, or through a determination of whether it will pursue or claim an exception under the various provisions of the ADA or under a variance request to Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. This will also allow the Town to research further into scope of work and timing of past projects on a particular facility to determine if they will seek safe harbor as discussed in Section 2.5.3.

In any event, the Town will be responsible for either correcting an identified issue or making (and defending) a decision not to do so.

Action Item	**Ref.**	**Timeline**	**Status**
Fund Annual Access Improvements at a Minimum of $10,000 per Year		1 year	
Town Hall Exterior Site Improvements – Design	8.5.1	3-5 years (budget dependent)	
Town Hall Exterior Site Improvements - Construction	8.5.1	3-5 years and will be based upon projected costs from design	
Town Hall Interior Modifications & Barrier Removal (in-house)	8.5.1	1-2 years	
Library Exterior Site Improvements – Design	8.5.7	3 years (budget dependent)	
Library Exterior Site Improvements - Construction	8.5.7	Will require debt exclusion or grant	
Library Interior – Main Floor Restroom Improvements	8.5.7	3-5 years	

Library Interior – Modifications & Barrier Removal (in-house)	8.5.7	1-2 years	
Municipal Light Plant – Accessibility Improvements (in design now)	8.5.2	1-3 years	

DPW – Feasibility review for parking/curbside improvements	8.5.6	3- 6 months	
Fire Department – Parking, lobby, public restroom and entrance (public areas only) – design	8.5.5	3 years (budget dependent)	
Fire Department – Public areas Construction	8.5.5	Requires debt exclusion, grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Senior Center – Main walkway improvements & access to ballfields	8.5.4	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Senior Center – Rear walkway improvements	8.5.4	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Senior Center – Interior Modifications & Barrier Removal (in-house)	8.5.4	1-2 years	
Police Station – Sidewalk from right-of-way	8.5.3	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Police Station – Interior and exterior modifications and barrier removal (in-house)	8.5.3	1-2 years	
Major Edwards Elementary – Nurse's Station Improvements	8.5.9	1-2 years	
Major Edwards Elementary – Basement ramp feasibility study	8.5.9	3 years (budget dependent)	
Major Edwards Elementary – Interior Modifications & Barrier Removal (potential in-house)	8.5.9	3 years	
Major Edwards Elementary – Exterior Site Improvements - Design	8.5.9	3 years (budget dependent)	
Major Edwards Elementary – Exterior Site Improvements – Construction	8.5.9	Requires debt exclusion, grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Middle/High School – Exterior Design/Master Plan	8.5.8	Requires debt exclusion, grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Middle/High School – Exterior Construction (phases TBD)	8.5.8	Requires debt exclusion, grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Middle/High School – Interior Ramp feasibility analysis	8.5.8	3 years (budget dependent)	
Middle/High School – Auditorium/Stage Improvements	8.5.8	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Middle/High School – Interior Modifications & Barrier Removal (in-house)	8.5.8	3 years	
Pride Park – Phase 1	4.2.9.1	Est. Completion 11/1/2023	In process
Pride Park – Phase 2	4.2.9.1	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Goodale Park – Master plan and design	8.5.11	Requires grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	

Goodale Park – Site Improvements Construction	8.5.11	Requires debt exclusion, grant, Capital Investment Fund, or Free Cash	
Town Common – Bandstand Improvements	8.5.10	2-3 years	
Town Common – Accessible routes/connectivity	8.5.10	2-3 years	

8 Appendices

8.1 Recommended Policy and Procedure Documents

8.1.1 Public Notice (Proposed)

The Town of West Boylston does not discriminate based on disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The Town of West Boylston does not discriminate based on disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with the ADA title I employment regulations.

Effective Communication: The Town of West Boylston will, upon request, provide auxiliary aids and services leading to effective communication for people with disabilities, including qualified sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, documents in Braille, and other ways of making communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The Town of West Boylston will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy programs, services, and activities. For example, people with service animals are welcomed in Town offices, even where pets and other animals are prohibited.

Requests: To request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures contact the ADA Coordinator (listed below) as soon as possible, preferably 14 days before the activity or event.

Complaints: A grievance procedure is available to resolve complaints. <LINK TO GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE> For complaints, comments or concerns, please contact:

NAME, ADA Coordinator
140 Worcester Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
(774) 261-4030
gtignor@westboylsont-ma.gov

Upon request, this notice is available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille.

NOTE: This notice can be inclusive of the Grievance Procedure, but this is not required.

8.1.2 Service Animal Policy (Proposed)

The Town of West Boylston complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, which states, “No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States...shall, solely on the basis of a disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal assistance.” The Town of West Boylston intends to provide the broadest possible access to service animals in all public areas.

The U.S. Department of Justice has issued regulations effective March 15, 2011 (28 CFR 36.302), limiting the types of animals that qualify as “service animals” for purposes of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). According to these regulations, “Service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained, or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.".” Section 36.302(c)(9) also identifies miniature horses as service animals. Other species of animals, wild or domestic, do not qualify as “service animals”. Therapy or emotional support animals are not considered to be service animals.

The Town of West Boylston is not responsible for the care or supervision of the service animal.

Below are the policy guidelines for the Town:

- A service animal is permitted to accompany the individual with a disability to most areas within Town facilities where members of the public are normally allowed to go.
- Some areas are not safe for service animals; therefore, these areas may exclude service animals. Water treatment facilities and/or areas that require protective clothing may exclude service animals. This denial or granting of admission to an area will be made based on the nature of the machinery and/or on the nature of the work performed.
- An individual with a service animal may not be segregated from other members of the public.
- A service animal may be removed from a facility if that animal poses a direct threat to the health
- or safety of others.
- A service animal may be removed from a facility if that animal’s behavior is out of control and the handler does not take effective control or if the service animal is not housebroken.
- If a service animal is removed from a facility, the individual with a disability will be given the option of continued participation, with assistance, within the facility.
- The service animal must be clean, in good health, with current rabies vaccination.
- All service animals must be always on a leash or under control of the handler.

8.2 Resources

8.2.1 General Resources & Guides

There are several resources available to assist the Town with the implementation of their Transition Plan and to ensure it meets it obligations to its residents.

ADA Action Guide for State and Local Governments: https://www.adaactionguide.org

ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities: https://www.adachecklist.org

Outdoor Developed Areas: A Summary of Accessibility Standards for Federal Outdoor Developed Areas: https://www.access-board.gov/attachments/article/1637/outdoor- guide.pdf

US Access Board: https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and- sites/about-the-ada-standards/guide-to-the-ada-standards/animations

ADA Checklist for Polling Places: https://www.ada.gov/votingchecklist.htm

Solution for Five Common ADA Access Problems at Polling Places: https://www.ada.gov/ada_voting/voting_solutions_ta/polling_place_solutions.htm

Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities - http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm

FEMA Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/odic/fnss_guidance.pdf

Job Accommodation Network: http://www.askjan.org

Website: Understanding WCAG 2.0: A guide to understanding and implementing Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

8.2.2 Grant Funding for Accessibility Projects

Massachusetts Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program
The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) administers the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant program. This funding is aimed at supporting capital improvements to improve programmatic access and/or removing barriers encountered by people with disabilities. Project grants of up to $250,000 are available. There are also planning grants to assist communities in creating or updating a Self-Evaluation and/or Transition Plan. More information about the program can be found here:

https://www.mass.gov/municipal-americans-with-disabilities-act-grant

Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund
The Massachusetts Cultural Council and Mass Development provides cultural organizations, including Municipalities that own cultural facilities that are at least 50,000 square feet, with grant funding to support three project types: Feasibility and Technical Assistance grants; Systems Replacement Plan

Grants; and Capital grants. Feasibility and Technical Assistance grants of up to $50,000 are available for costs and expenses related to overall planning and feasibility for a project. Systems replacement plan grants of up to $7,000 are available to support the development of a capital needs assessment of a building and its mechanical system. Capital grants ranging from $250,000-$675,000 are available for acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, rehabilitation, or other capital improvements. For a municipality to be eligible to apply for this funding, it must demonstrate that 50% or more of the facility is used for arts, humanities, or interpretative science programming. All grant programs require a 1-1 match. More information about the program can be found here:

http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities.htm

Complete Streets Funding Program

A Complete Street is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes - walking, biking, transit, and vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities. MassDOT provides funding to municipalities for technical assistance to analyze their community needs and develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, and funding for construction of Complete Streets infrastructure projects. Also inherent in the development of a Complete Street is meeting the most current accessibility guidelines outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (AAB), which are upheld by Code of Massachusetts Regulations 521 (521 CMR). MassDOT has allocated $12.5 million for the first two years, 2016 and 2017. Future funding will be based on the availability of funds and the interest and success of the program. More information about the program can be found here:

http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/DoingBusinessWithUs/LocalAidPrograms/CompleteStreets.aspx

Community Transit Grant Program

MassDOT administers the Community Transit Grant Program which is the annual competitive grant program to distribute Federal Transit Administration Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities funds, and State Mobility Assistance Program funds. This grant program provides funding to assist with mobility management activities, the purchase of capital equipment, and operational costs to meet the mobility needs of seniors, defined as those 65 and older and individuals with disabilities of any age. State Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) funds are to assist in the provision of transportation services to seniors and persons with disabilities. MAP funding is exclusively used for thepurchase of eligible vehicles, and most often as a State financial match to federally funded capital vehicle purchases. More information about the program can be found here:

http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/transit/CommunityTransitGrantProgram/ProgramInformation.aspx

8.2.3 Services to Aid Communication with Hearing/Speech Impaired Individuals

MassRelay Service

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health operates the MassRelay service. This service is provided 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year and enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafening, or speech disabled to communicate with hearing people over regular phone lines. A Relay Operator will complete your call, dialing the party you wish to contact and then stay on the line to relay messages electronically via a TTY or verbally to people who can hear. Dial 711 in Massachusetts or 1-800-439-0183 from anywhere else.

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) Statewide Interpreter/CART Referral Service
The MCDHH provides statewide interpreter and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) referral services. It provides referral services for sign language, spoken English, oral, tactile and close vision interpreting for Deaf and Deaf-Blind individuals, as well as making referral to freelance CART providers for services. They also provide an After-hours Emergency Interpreter Service, an Interpreter Screening service, Interpreter and CART provider trainings, case management, and technical assistance. More information can be found here:

http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcdhh/programs/cart/

8.2.4 Training and Technical Assistance

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)
MCDHH, through the Communication Access, Training, and Technology Services Department (CATTS) provides information and training to the public on issues of deafness and hearing loss. Free In-service or educational services/presentations can be provided for any organization or business seeking to improve their effectiveness in interacting with people who are deaf and hard of hearing. They also provide technical assistance on assistive technology to public and private agencies, professional organizations, businesses, and individuals related to all aspects of technology for the deaf and hard of hearing individuals. In addition, they also create several publications with a wide range of topics related to deafness and hard of hearing. For more information visit their website at:

http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcdhh/programs/communicate-train/

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
MCAD provides discrimination prevention training to the public and for workplaces. Training sessions range from two hours to four days in length, depending on the topics covered. They also offer Equal Employment Opportunity Certifications for individuals who currently provide, or seek to provide, employment discrimination prevention training, conduct internal discrimination complaint investigations and/or respond to accommodation requests. For more information visit their website at:
https://www.mass.gov/training-and-outreach

Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)
MOD's mission is to "bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life...in a manner that fosters dignity and self-determination. They have four areas of focus: 1) Providing Training; 2) Advocacy; 3) Monitoring; and 4) Resources. MOD provides training to various entities in a variety of formats on all topics related to the state and federal civil rights laws that govern disability discrimination. Topics may include but are not limited to: ADA, Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, M.G.L. Chs. 151b and 272, Service Animals, Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services and Programs, and Architectural Access Regulations. MOD also provides architectural review/site visits, either through plan review or on-site visits to ensure compliance with the various building requirements specific to persons with disabilities. Training and Architectural Review/Site Visits can be requested at:

http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/disability-info-and-resources/education-and- training/customized-trainings.html

ADA Coordinator Certification Program
The ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program is offered by the University of Missouri and the Great

Plain ADA Center Classes are offered online and through trainings offered at various conferences the University hosts. Following the successful completion of the program, the participant will have the knowledge base essential to performing the role of an ADA Coordinator. Course and certification requirements can be found on their website:

http://www.adacoordinator.org/?page=About

National ADA Symposium

This premier, national four-day event includes more than eighty breakout sessions on every aspect of ADA. It is a project of the ADA National Network and is organized and run by the Great Plains ADA Center. For more information about the Symposium visit:

http://www.adasymposium.org/

New England ADA Center

New England ADA Center is one of 10 regional ADA Centers comprising the ADA National Network. The provide information, guidance and training on ADA tailored to meet the needs of business, government and individuals at local, regional and national levels. Their website has a clearing house of ADA training topics that are no cost web-based courses in addition to publications and best practices resources. Their website can be found at:

https://www.newenglandada.org/

8.3 Department Program & Service Questionnaire Summary

The Town's departmental core programs and services, as determined by questionnaire responses, communication with staff, and website research, are outlined in the tables below.

8.3.1 Accounting Department

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Town Budget Preparation & Oversight Financial Management Payroll Employee & Retirement Benefits Employment Paperwork
Services Provided	New Employee Benefits Enrollment Existing Employee Benefit Changes Retired Employee Benefit Services
Communications Summary	Posts to two town website pages: Accountant and Employee Benefits
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

Department	**Assessors**
Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Tax Abatements & Exemptions Chapter Land Property/Parcel Information Abutters Lists Registry of Deed Information Property Map Data Updates
Services Provided	Comprehensive customer and technical services to support the Core Program Inventory listed above
Communications Summary	TBD
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	TBD
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	TBD

8.3.2 Building Department

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Administration & Enforcement of State Building, Electrical, Plumbing & Gas Codes Enforcement of Town Zoning Bylaws
Services Provided	Building & Demolition Permits Certificates of Occupancy Electrical, Plumbing & Gas Inspections

	Complaint Responses Zoning Enforcement
Communications Summary	TBD
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	TBD
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	TBD

8.3.3 Town Clerk

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Elections & Open Meeting Law Town Meeting Certifications, Licenses & Forms Annual Town Report Vital Recordkeeping
Services Provided	Elections & Town Meetings Voter Information, Dates, Deadlines and Results Citizens' Petitions Open Meeting Law Certificates & Licenses including DBA, Residency, and Dogs Vital Records Requests
Communications Summary	Posts to town website pages regularly across Town Clerk functionality
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	DID NOT ANSWER
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	DID NOT ANSWER

8.3.4 Cemetery Department

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Cemetery & Grounds Management
Services Provided	Burial Services Selling of Graves Maintenance of Cemetery Roads and Grounds
Communications Summary	Posts regularly on Town website cemetery pages
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.3.5 Council on Aging (COA)/Senior Center

Primary Address	120 Prescott Street
Core Program Inventory	Nutritional Programs Transportation Assistance/Outreach Programs Instructional/Recreational Classes Community Education
Services Provided	Hot Meals & Meals on Wheels Senior Van SHINE Ask Attorney AARP Tax Aide Fuel Assistance SNAP Durable Medical Equipment Elder Services Health Screenings Health Classes Community Education Seminars & Events for Seniors
Communications Summary	Yes. Using Civic Plus program, information is posted under each tab heading all relating to "senior" services or activities. The monthly newsletter is also posted. Accessibility is via computer users
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.3.6 Department of Public Works (DPW)

Primary Address	35 Worcester St.
Core Program Inventory	Road Maintenance Sewer Management Solid Waste & Recycling Stormwater Management Tree Warden Parks Department
Services Provided	Drain Layer Applications Road Opening Permits Trash and Recycling Services Yard Waste Snow and Ice Removal Street Sweeping & Maintenance Sewer Connection Permits & Billing Other Public Works Services
Communications Summary	YES Permit applications/forms/regulations (drainlayer license, road opening, new driveway, sewer connection, trench permit

	etc.), trash & recycling calendar and updates, yard waste facility schedule, snow & ice reminders/winter parking ban, street sweeping schedule and updates, Report A Public Works Problem
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	We can change font size No training on braille. Braille not available
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	I have had a couple TTY/TDD calls over the years that went well.

8.3.7 Fire Department

Primary Address	39 Worcester St.
Core Program Inventory	Public Safety Fire Prevention & Rescue Emergency Medical Education & Planning
Services Provided	Comprehensive Fire Prevention & Safety Services Educational Programs Burn Permits Smoke detector inspections.
Communications Summary	Posts items of interest on the Fire Department Facebook page. These posts are events, incidents, or information about Fire department issues, such as burning permits and how to obtain them
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO The Officer would be able to offer large print, but it is not an item we are trained on
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.3.8 Health Department

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Restaurant, Retail & Workplace Inspections Food & Milk Retail Inspections Enforce State Sanitary Code Respond to Nuisance Complaints Title 5 Regulation Enforcement
Services Provided	Comprehensive customer & technical services to support Core Program Inventory listed above
Communications Summary	Did not answer

Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	Did not answer
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	Did not answer

8.3.9 Library

Primary Address	8 Newton St.
Core Program Inventory	Adult, Teen, and Children's Programs Circulation & Lending Public Access Computers Craft Programs Outdoor Programming Research Social Media & Digital
Services Provided	Print and Digital Media Lending In-Person and Contactless Pickup Public Computer Access Craft Programs Lawn games Summer Reading & Story Walks Book Groups, Pet Shows Programs/Presentations
Communications Summary	Website: beamanlibrary.org, Town website links to the library website Newsletter pdf is posted to Library website, if opened in Microsoft Edge the browser can read the text aloud Monthly e-newsletter
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	Staff are trained to search for library materials in alternative formats such as large print, braille, and audio
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	We have a TTY and offer training and refreshers to staff

8.3.10 Municipal Light Plant

Primary Address	4 Crescent St.
Core Program Inventory	Electric Light Service to Residents
Services Provided	Customer Service at Counter, Online & via Phone Bill Payment General and Technical Assistance with Electric Light Initiatives and Issue Resolution
Communications Summary	Our content passes Accessibility Testing, except for items served externally such as some elements in Google Maps and the locked PDF documents provided by your auditor
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.3.11 Police Department

Primary Address	141 Sterling St
Core Program Inventory	Community Public Safety Pistol Permitting Fingerprinting Public Records Requests Interviews Education Community & School Engagement Parking and Traffic Enforcement
Services Provided	Comprehensive Public Safety Services in-person, online and via phone
Communications Summary	Posts to a departmental web page and Facebook page. Both pages could be accessed by a standard browser that would enable the user to make the print larger. If a picture is posted, a description of the picture is included, so the user can understand what is being shown in the picture.
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	Large print YES, Braille NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	Yes. The dispatchers are trained in the use of TTY and have access to interpreters if needed

8.3.12 Recreation Department

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Comprehensive Recreation Programs, Classes, Events and Fund Raisers

	Day of Play Program Fall Celebration Event Sporting Events Zumba in the Park Social Media Safety Training
Services Provided	Comprehensive Recreational Services in-person, online and via phone
Communications Summary	Not regularly. Planning to start this September
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	UNSURE
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	UNSURE

8.3.13 Town Administrator

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Manage Town Polices, Programs & Procedures for the Select Board Budget Preparation Human Resources Labor Contracts Chief Procurement Officer Staff Appointments & Oversight
Services Provided	Comprehensive customer & technical services to support Core Program Inventory listed above
Communications Summary	TBD
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	TBD
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	TBD

8.3.14 Treasurer/Tax Collector

Primary Address	140 Worcester St
Core Program Inventory	Abatements & Exemptions Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes Sewer Betterment Employee & Retiree Health Insurance & Benefits Parking Tickets Tax Title
Services Provided	Comprehensive Tax & Benefits Services in-person, online and via phone
Communications Summary	YES The Town Clerk updates our Web page, including a word document containing outstanding checks every 6 months
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.3.15 Veterans' Agent

Primary Address	140 Worcester St.
Core Program Inventory	Assist Veterans, Family Members, and Veterans' Survivors with establishing State Benefits through the State Benefit, Chapter 115
Services Provided	Comprehensive Veterans' Benefits Services In-Person, Online and via Phone
Communications Summary	Not regularly
Staff trained to handle requests for alternative format document/materials requests including Braille or large print	NO
Staff knowledgeable on use of TTY/TDD or relay services for hearing impaired and/or interpreter services	NO

8.4 Website Audit

Conducted March, 2022

Website Auditing Process and Methodology

A website accessibility audit is performed by an accessibility professional who meticulously evaluates digital assets against the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, the main international standards organization for the Internet. The WCAG standard has been tried and tested and is under routine development by accessibility experts, making it a reliable standard. Accessibility is defined as ensuring a digital product, such as a website, is as usable as possible by everyone, including people with a range of disabilities. These recommendations also include standards for documents, video, social media, integrated apps, and navigating content on highly limited devices such as mobile phones. As of May 2021, version WCAG was released as a working draft and is scheduled to be finalized within 2022.

Manual accessibility audits have the major advantage of being the most thorough type of auditing. After completion of the audit, a report will be created containing an assessment of a municipality's assets along with issues that need to be addressed. For every unique issue listed, instructions or examples will be provided. This is so a city or town will know precisely how to make their website accessible from the audit and clients can take immediate action. Always keep in mind that accessibility is an ongoing process and not a one-off project.

The Town of West Boylston's municipal website has both many strengths and areas for improvement. A big asset is the intuitive layout of the site. The toolbar navigations are uniform, uncomplicated, and easy to understand. All links are accessible by both keyboard, mouse, or a tap of the finger. First time visitors are able to find important documents and forms with ease. The language used is succinct and written at an appropriate comprehension level. The website is mobile friendly and formats correctly on a smartphone.

The site could improve upon many of its accessibility features, specifically in compliance with American Disability Act regulations. To enhance the experience for users reliant on-screen readers or assistive technologies, all images should be accompanied by alternative text. Additionally, some photos have existing captions, but they are not robust enough to be meaningful to someone with low or impaired vision. Alternative text should be present not only on the website, but all documents and social media channels, where applicable.

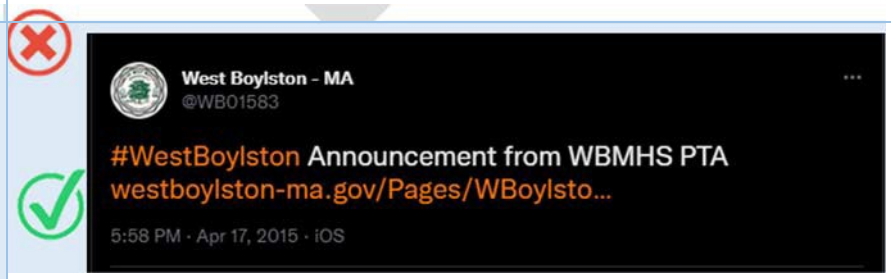
The town logo against the current homepage's background does not provide enough contrast to be considered ADA compliant. Consider changing the background image to a color that strikes a stronger distinction with a while font. Many announcements, specifically in the Town News section, are uploaded images of text. This text would not be recognized by a screen reader and should instead be embedded directly into the page. Alternatively, if the graphic needs to remain in place due to it being a creative advertisement, a copy of the contents outside of the image should be provided.

As often as possible, convert print forms into online fillable forms. When users can submit information through a website, rather than printing off and mailing in a form, it not only saves paper and postages costs, but increase involvement by eliminating the "hassle factor." Online payment will simplify the

process for fee payment, which will lead to increased revenues and time saved chasing down late payments.

Overall, the underlining structure of the municipal website is efficient and effective, however can be enhanced by adding additional ADA recommended features.

Alternative Text PDF508	PDF documents do not contain images that require alternative text	Type text that describes the image in the Alternative Text field (click Options > Properties)
Accessibility Area: Social Media		
Alternative Text		Provide media with alternative text that describes the image

	Tweet is missing alternative text Alt text: A recycling symbol surrounding a Christmas tree	
Media Captions	All videos on town YouTube page allow for embedded YouTube caption capabilities.	• Ensure video content includes synchronized captions. • Ensure audio descriptions for people with visual disabilities are included in the default soundtrack, or as a separate selectable sound track. • Add captions to photos to ensure individuals understand what is going on in the picture.
Plain Language	 Hashtags that contain more than one word should use camel case, for example, #WestBoylston	• Write in plain language, use camel case when appropriate (i.e., capitalize the first letters of compound words. This is helpful as it makes multi-word hashtags easier to read, including for those using a screen reader. • Limit use of hashtags, abbreviations and acronyms.
Acronyms	 Refrain from multiple uses of acronyms	Always spell out the first instance of the acronym and add the acronym, in parentheses after. This is especially helpful for those using screen readers, because after the name is heard and the acronym is spelled out, the user will be better able to associate the sound of the acronym with the full name.
Outside content	The municipality does not link any outside content, except on the Board of Health page.	For content the municipality has not created and thus may not be

		accessible, make audience aware of these limitations. Provide a note briefly explaining the limitation, such as that: the photo is untagged; the video will auto start; the video does not include captioning; or the audio file is not accompanied by a written transcript.
Accessibility Area: Newsletter		
	Website allows users to customize what type of alerts, news, or announcements they want to receive via email	
Accessibility Area: E-permitting		
	N/A: Site contains downloadable permitting application. Various license applications also direct users to downloadable PDF form	
Accessibility Area: Downloadable Forms		
Form Accessibility	Some PDF forms allow users to directly type content into the blank spaces, such as the Absentee Ballot. Others require the user to print the form or upload to a third-party PDF reader, such as the Dog License Application. The latter is much more difficult for low- or-vision- impaired citizens	
Accessibility Area: Public Notice and Grievance Procedure		
Title II	Website grievance procedure is not intuitive to find. Also, it lacks contact information for the ADA Coordinator	The ADA Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the government entity to comply with Title II and investigating any complaints that the entity has violated Title II. The name, office address, and telephone number of the ADA Coordinator must be provided to interested persons.
Accessibility Area: Secure Electronic Transfers (E-payments)		
Clear confidentiality language	Municipal e-pay system is “digicert Trusted secure” and also provides a link to the privacy policy where information about security and encryption is provided	To facilitate and encourage electronic commerce using payment card products, it will be necessary to assure cardholders that their payment information is safe and can only be accessed by the intended recipient.
Functioning Services	 Option to pay “Supplemental” Taxes is non-functioning	
Contact Information	 Online Payment Center, UniPay, provdies a contact phone number, email address, and hours of operations in the event residents need assistance	

Accessibility Area: Outside / Integrated Apps		
Alternate Text	 Map Layers and Descriptions are provided for GIS users	Text alternatives for any non-text content provides context for users who use braille, screen readers, assistive technologies, or need simpler language.
Accessibility Area: Mobile Version		
Layout	 Site layout is compatible with mobile device	

8.5 Facility Audits

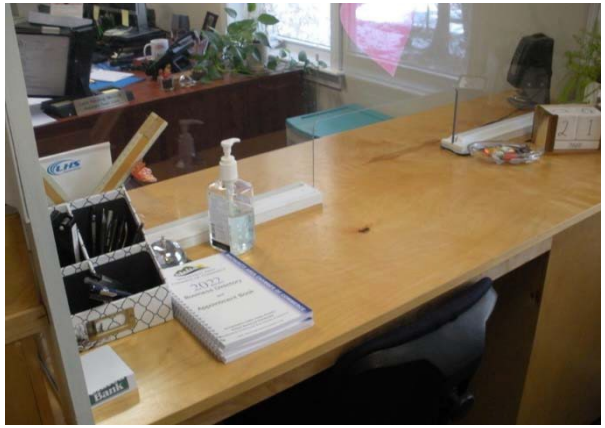
8.5.1 Town Hall

Address	140 Worcester Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	9,088 sqft.
Site (acres)	1.08 acres
Date of Original Construction	2004
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	Major renovation completed in 2014, and flooring systems replaced in 2018. Renovations to repair sprinkler/flood damage was completed in 2022.
Date of Audit	12/14/2021
Jurisdiction/Applicable Standards	2010 Standards/2004 ADAAG
Description of Use	Offices for Town administration; multiple public meeting rooms; customer service counters for several departments.
Maximum Occupancy	140
Parking Spaces	41 plus 3 non-compliant accessible spaces (2 required)
Number of Floors	2
Elevator/Lift?	Yes

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Site arrival point from Franklin St (west end) and Worcester Street (east end) both lack an accessible route to the building. Excessive cross-slopes on sidewalks (up to 5%), curb ramps and crosswalks. Running slope from Worcester Street exceeds 5% (8% was max) in some places and rise greater than 6 inches. Asphalt is deteriorated in several places. No landing is provided at top of ramp on Worcester St. At time of inspection, ice and debris buildup (several days after snow removal) made areas inaccessible. Grading at transition to asphalt not constructed to avoid accumulation of water.	206.2.1 (site arrival) 405.10 (accumulation of water) 406.4 (landing)	 	Regrade drives/sidewalks to provide compliant site arrival points from both rights of way, or evaluate feasibility of alternate site arrival point from Worcester street using ramp (with handrails) and potentially switchbacks if needed.
2	No van accessible spaces are provided.	208.2.4		Existing spaces and access aisle meets width guidelines for van access. Replace signage to designate at least 1 of 3 spaces as van accessible.

3	Accessible parking signs are mounted at 45-48” from ground level.	502.6		Reinstall existing signage.
4	Excessive cross slope on east walkway to ramp at 3.2%	403.3		Replace middle sections of concrete walkway to achieve 2% max cross slope.

5	Height of handrails at 40.5” (top) exceeds maximum of 38”	505.4		Reinstall handrail system in its entirety to achieve 35”-38” at top of gripping surface.
6	Payment drop box (operable part) at 63” exceeds 48” reach range for forward reach.	308.2.1		Relocate drop box or add second box in accessible location where operable opening is within 48” range max.

7	Wall-mounted self-serve permits and business cards at 59-67" exceed the 48" reach range maximum	30.2.1		Relocate or provide these at counter level as well.
8	Clerk's office: A separate counter meeting the height requirement is provided; however, a chair is kept in this space making it inaccessible for forward approach.	904.4		Remove chair or keep it against the far wall unless needed for a customer. This is a routine maintenance issue.

9	Drinking fountains provided are not provided for standing persons with a spout height of 33”. The fountain also presents a protruding object hazard.	307.2 & 602.7		Depending on space available and plumbing, replace with combination unit or add second fountain complying with 602.7. Alternatively, replace with bottle filling unit.
10	1st floor single user unisex bathroom (on east side) lacks grab bars. At 15.5”, 1st floor single user bathroom toilet seat height is below the minimum of 17”. At 3”, toilet paper dispenser is not within the 7-9” distance required from the front of the toilet. Sink lacks insulation on supply and drainpipes. Sink lacks knee clearance complying with Sec. 306 18” maneuvering space requirement on latch side of door is not present due to sink depth.	604.5 604.4 604.7 606.5 606.2 404.2.4		Install side and rear grab bars complying with 604.5 Replace toilet. Relocate dispenser. Replace sink and insulate pipes.

11	Men's/Women's Restrooms 1st Floor (all similar issues). At 48" extending from back wall, all 42" long side wall grab do not meet the required 54" distance. Coat hooks are provided for standing persons only. Maneuvering clearance requirement of 18" at latch side of door is not present in any stall due to deep sinks. Clearance is 14.5" Reflective edge of mirrors at 41" do not meet 40" maximum from floor Top of sink, at 35", exceeds the maximum of 34". At 34", top of grab bar exceeds 33" maximum measured at top of gripping surface.	 604.5.1 603.4 404.2.4 603.3 606.3 609.4	 	 Reposition the grab bars by moving 6" forward. Bar should be 12" max from back wall and extend 54" from back wall. Add additional coat hook between 40-48" from floor. Replace sink with shallower sink to achieve 18" clearance. Reinstall mirror. See above. See above. Lower grab bar when repositioning.

12	Stairs (209) on east side of building: Handrail on left side does not extend 12” from top of riser nosing at top of stairs.	505.10.2		Install return.
13	Selectboard Restroom (unisex, single user) Reflective edge of mirrors at 43” do not meet 40” maximum from floor Toilet paper dispenser is not within 7-9” from front of toilet.	 606.3 604.7		 Reinstall mirror. Reinstall dispenser.

14	2nd floor drinking fountain does not meet standard for standing person.	307.2 & 602.7		Width does not allow for combination unit. Consider replacing with a bottle filler instead.

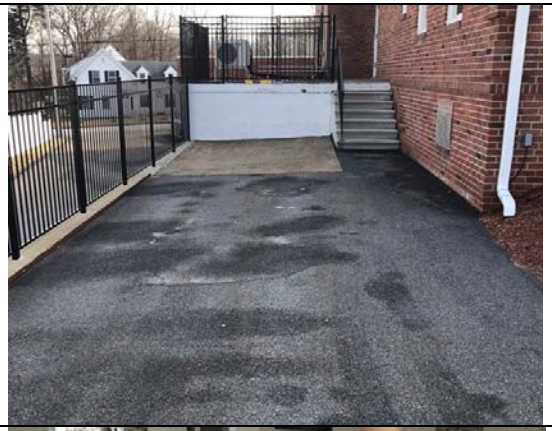
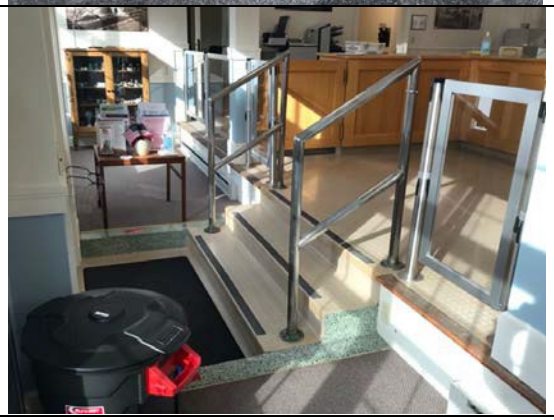
8.5.2 Municipal Light Plant

Address	2 Crescent Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	4,977 sq.ft.
Site (acres)	0.79 acres
Date of Original Construction	1935
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	See card
Date of Audit	12/14/2021
Description of Use	Offices for MLP, public board meeting room, customer service counter; rear of site includes garages for equipment/vehicles that are not open to public.
Maximum Occupancy	N/A
Parking Spaces	Space for under 25 vehicles. No accessible parking provided.
Number of Floors	1.5
Elevator/Lift?	No

<Audit complete; Report in Process>

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Building lacks accessible entrance.	206.1		The MLP has design plans for a lift and other improvements at the rear of the building necessary to provide an accessible route to the customer service counter and public meeting room. Plans provided for review were not to scale, so it is recommended that a full plan review be performed to ensure compliance and submittal of any necessary variances with the MAAB. Signage should be installed in parking area and at front entrance to advise visitors of accessible entrance.

2	Existing handrails on main entrance stairs do not comply with 505.	504.6; 505		Replace handrails.
3	Curb ramp should be striped or otherwise marked to prohibit parking in order to provide an unobstructed path of travel.	406.5		Stripe no parking area in front of curb ramp.

4	Payment drop box is not accessible due to slope. 228.1 provides an exception for drive-up only depositories, but programmatically, an accessible drop box should be provided. The location of this box is not easily accessible for drive-up use, given the direction of travel in the parking lot.	228.1		Install a second drop box at an accessible location. If payments can be made at Town Hall, provide an advisory stating such on the Town's website and on site as a means of improving access.
5	No accessible parking is provided.	208		As noted above, MLP has a plan to install accessible route and parking at rear of building. Based on available space, it does not appear there is sufficient space (14.5') to provide a fully compliant van accessible space, so a variance will likely be required. If stairs are included in the redesign, handrails should be installed that comply with 505. Cross slope of this area exceeds 2% as well, so it will likely be necessary to fully reconstruct the area.
6	Interior handrails do not extend at top and bottom and exceed (at 48") maximum height of 38".	505.4 (height) 505.10 (extension)		Replace handrails.

7	At 40”, counters exceed maximum height of 36”.	904.4		Modify one counter to provide an accessible surface complying with 904.
8	Front curb ramp has a change in level of 1+”	303		Install asphalt ramp at curb ledge.
9	Accessible restroom in rear (employee restroom): Lavatory lacks insulation on pipes Bottom of mirror at 52” exceeds minimum height from floor of 40” Towel dispenser exceeds maximum height of 48” reach range. Flush valve on wrong side of toilet.	 606.5 603.3 308 604.6 604.3		Note that this restroom is in the rear and for employees. Given the layout of the current public bathroom, should consider making these alterations and designating this restroom the accessible public restroom. Each element noted should be removed and reinstalled as noted to achieve compliance. Toilet tank would need replacement. Care should be taken by cleaning crews to keep trash cans out of clear floor spaces.

	Trash can blocks clear floor space adjacent to toilet. Toilet paper dispenser is not within 7-9” from front of toilet.	604.7		
10	Advisory only – if the work to construct an accessible entrance in the rear is completed, doorknob should be replaced with a lever on the door leading from stairs to hallway. The threshold on the exterior door should be replaced as well. Given the space confines, likely need for variances, and existing conditions, project should consider replacing both doors and adding automatic openers.		 	

8.5.3 Police Department

Address	141 Sterling Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	8,680 sqft.
Site (acres)	2.97 acres
Date of Original Construction	2017
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	N/A
Date of Audit	July 20, 2022
Description of Use	Police personnel offices; dispatch room, holding cells, interview rooms and other uses typical of a law enforcement building. Customer service counter off lobby, as well as a large conference/training room that is available for public, staff and area agency use.
Maximum Occupancy	184
Parking Spaces	
Number of Floors	2
Elevator/Lift?	No

<Audit complete; Report in Process>

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Sharps depository handle exceeds 48” reach range max	308		None recommended. Lobby is staffed when open and assistance is readily available.

2	Public restroom in lobby: Soap dispenser at 50” exceeds maximum reach range of 48” At 12”, latch side clearance of door to sink is under the minimum of 18”.	606.1 404.2.4		Lower dispenser. None possible without replacing sink. This is a low priority.
3	Mailbox/Paperwork Drop-off exceeds 48” maximum reach range at 51” high.	308/309		Cut down standpipe and reweld at least 3” lower.
4	No accessible route is provided from the right-of-way.	206.2.1		There is not a consistent and apparent route within driveway that has acceptable cross slopes. A walkway from the existing sidewalk should be constructed.

5	Drinking fountain – 211.2 requires two fountains that can serve seated and standing persons. The fountain also creates a protruding object hazard.	211.2, 602.4 & 602.7		Install a combination unit that also provides high unit meeting 602.7 with accessory skirt/apron to provide the necessary cane-detectable element below the unit.

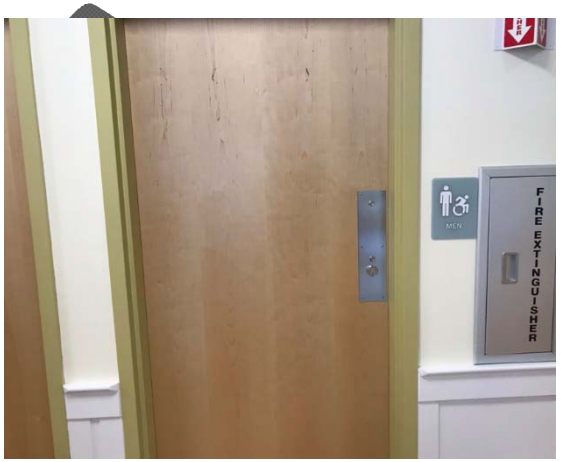
8.5.4 Council on Aging (COA)/Senior Center

Address	120 Prescott Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	10,202
Site (acres)	13.7 acres
Date of Original Construction	2019
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	N/A
Date of Audit	12/14/2021
Jurisdiction/Applicable Standards	2010 Standards/2004 ADAAG
Description of Use	Majority of building is open to public and offers senior and community programming. A small area houses administrative offices, and there is an onsite nurses station. Reading room, 1 large and several smaller multipurpose rooms, kitchen and meal space and large lobby/waiting area. Several outdoor spaces, including a baseball field used for youth sports.
Maximum Occupancy	291
Parking Spaces	75 (including 3 employee spaces); 4 van accessible spaces (3 required)
Number of Floors	1
Elevator/Lift?	No

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Site arrival point from Prescott Street: Concrete at curb ramp is over 1” above level of asphalt.	303.1		Install patch at asphalt that results in ramp of 8.3% or less; this may include some amount of beveling of existing concrete to achieve compliance.

2	Ballfield is not on an accessible route.	206.2.2		Areas of sport activity (from field boundary) must be connected to other accessible facilities. Consider also designating one diagonal parking space adjacent to field that meets slope requirements as accessible and include an access aisle.
3	Walkway connecting rear of site to right-of-way at Horseshoe Drive is deteriorated and excessively sloped (running slopes up to 14% and cross-slope over 5%). Since the right-of-way connects to the site, it must have an accessible route to the building.	206.2.1		Construct an accessible route. This will likely include ramps and/or switchbacks in order to achieve compliance.

4	Although this may be a temporary situation, the placement of the table in front of the automatic door openers at the main entrance obstructs the parallel side reach to the controls. Buttons are over 28” from table edge.	308.3.2		Do not place anything that obstructs the automatic door buttons.
5	Interior double-leaf doors are set to 7lbs of opening force, which exceeds the 5lb maximum.	404.2.9		Adjust closures to 5lbs or less on all interior door closures. These are also on automatic door openers, but still should be able to be adjusted.

6	Public area kitchenette sink lacks the clear floor space for knee and toe clearance. While an exception allows for parallel approach, given the use of this facility and the position of the sink against an angle, the Town should consider providing forward approach.	606.2		Replace cabinet under sink with a new cabinet meeting the requirements of section 306. ***This is not a requirement but a recommended alteration.***
7	Men's restroom off lobby: Door closers set to 9lbs of opening force. Inside of door lacks the 18" required clear floor space on latch side of door. Additionally, trash cans are placed in the corner creating a further obstruction. Toilet paper dispenser is not located within the required 7-9" from front of toilet.	 404.2.9 404.2.4.1 604.7		Adjust closers to 5lbs or less. Cannot be fixed without major alteration. Consider installing automatic door opener as a mitigation. Relocate dispenser.

8	Unisex restroom off rear hallway Toilet paper dispenser is not located within the required 7-9” from front of toilet. Coat hook is located at 60” outside of reach range.	604.7 603.4	 	Relocate dispenser. Add second coat hook within 48” reach range.

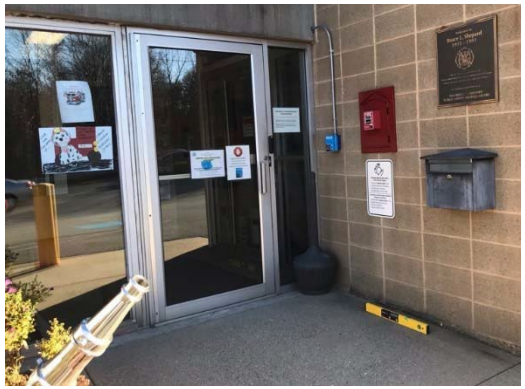
9	Curb ramp at walkway intersection at southeast corner of building has a slope 9.8% and cross slope at landing of 4%.	405.2, 405.3		Reconstruct ramp.
10	Northwest ramp at walkway has 9% running slope exceeding 6” rise;	405.2		Reconstruct as ramp, or grade back to achieve 5% max slope.

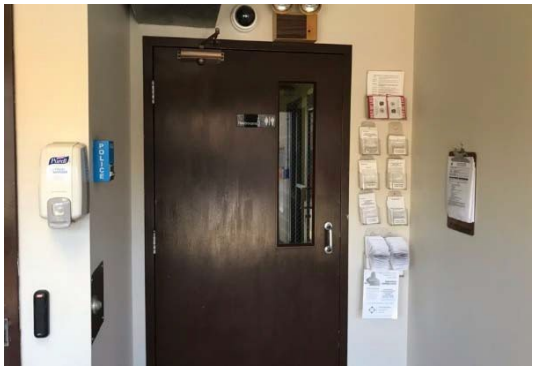
11	Walkway/curb ramp before parking lot has excessive slope and exceeds 6% running slope for a rise greater than 6”.	405.2		Reconstruct curb ramp and at least one adjacent slab to create a 5% or less running slope. This will allow it to not be considered a ramp, but a walkway.

8.5.5 Fire Department

Address	39 Worcester Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	4,290 sq.ft.
Site (acres)	3 acres
Date of Original Construction	1958
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	Last interior remodel work for which a permit was pulled was in 2007.
Date of Audit	12/14/2021
Jurisdiction/Applicable Standards	**1991 Standards**
Description of Use	Administrative offices, living quarters for on-duty staff, vehicle/apparatus bays. Small customer service lobby/counter with public restroom.
Maximum Occupancy	N/A
Parking Spaces	3 (1 marked as accessible that is non-compliant)
Number of Floors	2
Elevator/Lift?	No

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Lack of accessible route from right-of-way, parking, and any other elements on the site. Walkway connecting to DPW facility slopes in excess of 15%.	4.3.2		Regrade and construct accessible route from road.

2	No accessible parking space. Slopes exceed 5% in all directions; and lacks compliant signage.	4.6.3 4.6.4		Regrade accessible spaces. Install signage and stripe space/access aisle.
3	Entrance door landing does not meet maximum 2% level, existing at 3% Placement of ash urn obstructs maneuvering clearance.	4.13.6		Replace slab at entrance to achieve level landing. Remove ash urn.

4	Customer service counter, at 43”, exceeds the maximum height at 36”	7.2		
5	Various items (sanitizer dispenser, police call button, brochures, etc..) all are mounted above the 48” maximum reach height.	4.34.3		

6	Public Restroom is not accessible due to: Clear width of door is 28” Supply and drain pipes at lavatory are not insulated. Mirror is mounted too high at 45” No grab bars are provided Clear floor space and room width is not provided. Signage not provided on latch side of door.	 4.19.4 4.19.6 4.17.6 4.46.2/4.17.3		Relocate all movable fixtures to provide the maximum amount of barrier removal. Otherwise, this room will have to be reconstructed to gain sufficient space to make accessible under 2010 Standards.

8.5.6 Department of Public Works

Address	35 Worcester Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	4,290 sq.ft.
Site (acres)	3 (shared with Fire)
Date of Original Construction	1942
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	No interior renovations on record.
Jurisdiction/Applicable Standards	1991 Standards.
Date of Audit	12/14/2021
Description of Use	Administrative offices on second floor, shop/garage space on first; no public access to building. Most services offered online, but a doorbell is provided if curbside customer service is needed and staff will assist in parking lot if necessary. No accessible parking or public parking…staff/Town only. Per parcel boundaries, shares site with Fire Department.
Maximum Occupancy	N/A
Parking Spaces	12 marked; no accessible parking.
Number of Floors	2
Elevator/Lift?	No

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	There is no accessible parking, no accessible route from right-of-way, and no accessible parking spaces within the facility.	Section 4 in its entirety.		The extent of remedial work required would be a significant and likely of little overall benefit to program access for the Town as a whole. All public facing customer service should be provided online, at an alternate accessible location, or via curbside service (most currently are). Webpages/social media feeds for and signage at this facility should be modified to redirect customers either online or to the alternate location. If curbside service is to remain an option, a van accessible parking space and accessible route connecting the parking to the front entrance where doorbell is located should be constructed.

8.5.7 Library

Address	8 Newton Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	20,082
Site (acres)	0.42 acres
Date of Original Construction	1912
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	Addition in 1999 Interior remodeling completed in 2007 and 2017. Exterior site work (curb ramps, some sidewalk repairs) completed in last 10 years.
Jurisdiction/Applicable Standards	2010 Standards; Given that most of the noted issues would trigger other requirements as well as the use of the building, 2010 standards were relied upon to conduct this audit. Items are cited with 2010 code reference, but in most cases, the 1991 standard was the same.
Date of Audit	
Description of Use	Most of building is public use typical of libraries; administrative offices and circulation work space not open to public. Basement has a special program room, accessed for both inside and outside. 3rd floor is children's library.
Maximum Occupancy	240
Parking Spaces	20 on-street spaces, with 2 marked for accessible use (non-compliant). These spaces are general public use and not assigned specifically to the Library and are located on public rights-of-way.
Number of Floors	3
Elevator/Lift?	Yes
Notes/Comments	The main entrance is not accessible. A non-compliant ramp is provided on the west side of the building. Given the other accessibility issues (parking/lawn, site arrival to Central, main entrance handrails) and need to replace the existing HVAC (required more space than exists, adjacent to existing ramp), the Town should consider a larger and more comprehensive project to address the site and building access issues rather than a piecemeal approach.

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Accessible parking. Space abut railing, preventing deployment of wheelchair lift or access from passenger side of vehicle. Signage installed under 60" and not located at head or foot of parking space. Since parking is in the right-of-way, this is advisory only.	PROWAG R309.2 R211.4 2010 Standards – 502.6		Given the property boundaries to the northwest, the location of the library open space, and the need to address access to the lawn (as programming is conducted there), the Town should consider constructing a wide sidewalk and turnout parallel space/access aisle complying with R309.2.1. Based on R214, only a single parking space is required. Given the nature of the facility, it is highly advised that parking be addressed as part of the site even though it is in the right-of-way. Cost would be negligible for those aspects requiring work in ROW (signage, striping) and other work is required to meet obligation for site arrival point.
2	No direct accessible route to Central Street.	206.2.1		Construct accessible ramp/walkway. Given parking issue noted in #1 above, consider constructing an additional accessible space on Central Street and reworking lawn/site access and arrival points. This would allow accessible parking on both sides of road and accommodate vehicles/wheelchair lifts from both directions of travel.
3	Handrails on Central Street stairs do not extend the full depth of lower tread.	505.10.3	See picture above.	Replace handrails.

4	Crack/gaps at stairs create trip hazard (Central Street stairs)			Patch cracks.
5	Patio area lacks access. Per staff, programming occurs regularly on the lawn area, so this space should have full access.	206.2.2		Construct walkway from level of main walkway to patio area. There is a level slab west of the area pictured that would allow compliant cross slope.

6	Handrails at main entrance: Do not extend 1 tread depth beyond top and bottom tread. Do not meet the cross-section standards.	 505.10 505.7		Replace handrails.
7	Vertical level change at street and crosswalk exceeds ¼" at Central Street Crosswalk	PROWAG R302.7.2		Grind or patch asphalt as required.

8	Excessive cross slope on west curb ramp, south of accessible parking. (2.7%)	404.3		Reconstruct sidewalk section.
9	Ramp on west side providing wheelchair access entrance is not compliant: Slopes (running) up to 9.8%, exceeding 8.33% max. Landing at top slopes 3.5% Handrails do not extend onto landings. Handrails are under 34” high Handrail space between rail and wall is under 1.25” at inside corners.	 405.2 405.7 505.10.1 505.4 505.5		Reconstructing this ramp may not be possible within the space available. If a survey/design results in continued non-compliance, consider relocating ramp to main entrance as part of a larger project.

10	Men's 1st floor bathroom: Lavatory hot water supply pipes lack insulation Toilet flush lever is on wrong side Toilet paper dispenser is mounted inside the 7" minimum front of toilet.	 605.5 604.6 604.7		 Install pipe insulation Replace toilet tank Move toilet paper dispenser to 7-9" from center.
11	Women's 1st floor bathroom: Pipe insulation is missing from one lavatory Coat hook is not provided within reach range Latch-side clearance of 18" on door is obstructed by lavatory counter. Stall width is 55", under the 60" required minimum. Handle is on wrong side of toilet Soap dispenser is outside the 48" max reach range.	 605.5 603.4 404.2.4.1 604.3.1 604.6 308.2		The restroom is set up as multiple user. Staff states it is typically used as a single user, and the door has a thumb lock. Consider converting this to single-user and address the other deficiencies. This will address the stall width and allow space for the lavatory to be relocated to allow proper latch-side clearance for the door. Staff should consider making each public bathroom unisex and single user. This has the added benefit of allowing caregivers of the opposite sex easier access to assist disabled individuals.

12	Exterior entrance to public meeting space in basement (accessed from Central Street) is not accessible due to size and condition of drainage grate. Gaps exceed ½". This entrance is used for public meetings, often during non-business hours.	302.3		Repair concrete, replace grates with new ones that have openings less than ½"
13	Women's Basement Restroom One lavatory is missing pipe insulation. Towel dispenser lever is 53" AFF. Stall door lacks functional self-closing hinges Diaper changing station is too high, requiring reach of 54" to open, and surface is 43" from ground.	 605.5 308.2 604.8.1.2 902.3		 Insulate pipe. Lower dispenser to place top of lever at 48" max Install self-closing hinges Lower station to place top of handle below 48" and work surface between 28"-34". Since the grab bar interferes, it may require moving this outside the stall or eliminating it, or providing an accessible one in another bathroom (with signage advising where to find).

14	Men's Basement Restroom Diaper changing station is too high, requiring reach of 54" to open, and surface is 43" from ground. Towel dispenser lever is 53" AFF. Lavatory is missing pipe insulation.	 902.3 308.1 308.2		 Lower changing station. Relocate dispenser Insulate pipes.
15	Girls Bathroom in Children's Area (3rd Floor) Lavatory is missing pipe insulation. Toilet height does not meet standard for children's use (advisory only for audit as this standard was not in place when constructed) Diaper changing station, at 36", is above the 34" max for work surfaces. Toilet is missing side wall grab bar Coat hook at 60" above 48" reach range (36"-44" for children) Stall is 59" wide, short of the 60" minimum Toilet flush lever is on wrong side	 605.5 605.9 902.3 604.5 308.1 604.3.1 604.6		 Install pipe insulation Replace with child-sized toilet Lower station Install grab bar Install additional hook meeting child reach ranges (between 20-36" meets all ages) Widen partition (low priority) Replace tank

16	Boys Restroom in Children's Area (3rd Floor) Towel dispenser lever, at 54", is above 48" max (adult) and 40" max (ages 5-8) Coat hook is not provided for wheelchair users	 308.1 308.1		Relocate dispenser Install additional coat hook under minimum for children (depends on age…see chart 308.1)
17	Drinking Fountain is not provided for standing persons. (hi/lo unit). Also presents a protruding object barrier.	602.7/211.2		Replace unit with combination unit.

18	Handrails in stairwell in addition do not provide top extension of 12”	505.10.2		

8.5.8 West Boylston Middle/High School

Address	125 Crescent Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	93,606
Site (acres)	8.4 acres
Date of Original Construction	1958
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	1996 addition/renovation Media center/wing added in 1977
Date of Audit	3/14/2022
Description of Use	High School and Middle School classrooms; district administrative offices; multiuse athletic fields including for Town use.
Maximum Occupancy	2,086 (auditorium=508; stage=70; cafeteria=220; classrooms=675; gym=508; exercise room=508; library=70)
Parking Spaces	Northwest lot 46 spaces (+1 HC); Main drive 19 (+2 HC); Lower front 52; Student lot 53 (no HC)
Number of Floors	1
Elevator/Lift?	no

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Site arrival points from Crescent Street at southeast end lack a compliant accessible route. Excessive running slopes (up to 10%%) on southeast walkway to main entrance; crosswalk cross slope exceeds 3.5%; cross slopes on walkway exceed 3% in many places.	206.2.1 403.3		Regrade and reconstruct the ramps, crosswalk and walkway network throughout the site. As noted below, the scope of necessary exterior site improvements to comply are significant and should be designed and constructed as a comprehensive project.

				
2	Northwest crosswalk and walkway have excessive cross slope (>3%) and are deteriorated. Asphalt ramping up to concrete ramp on north end exceeds 15% on running slope and 4.5% cross slope. Cross slope on south end of cross walk before ramp exceeds 7%	403.3 (walkways) 405.2 (ramps)	 	See comment on #1. Site and walkway network require significant redesign and rework to achieve compliance.

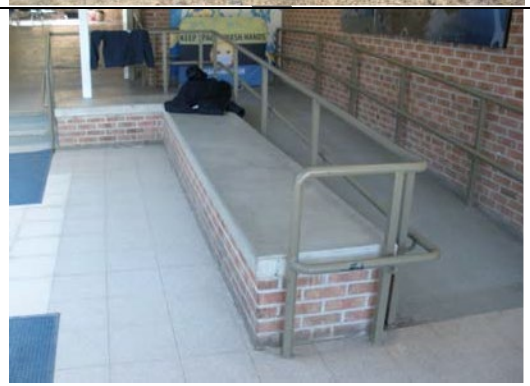
3	Walkways to rear of school on southeast corner (leading behind gym to rear entrances and upper parking lot) are deteriorated, lack turning space at changes of direction and have cross slopes exceeding 6%, running slopes exceeding 12% as it approaches student parking area.	403.3	 	See comment in #1. All walkways should be reconstructed. Several may require constructing as ramps due to site and building element grades.
4	Exterior doors on southeast side of building lack landings and are deteriorated and inaccessible.	404.2.4		Construct new landings connecting to accessible route as described in #1.

5	Picnic table area (also an area of refuge servicing emergency exits) lack an accessible egress route to sidewalk network.	206.2.2		
6	Picnic tables lack accessible seating, and the placement does not allow for maneuvering or accessible route between and amongst tables.	226.1		Replace or modify tables to provide at least 5% of total seating for wheelchair use. Reposition tables to allow for at least 36" between each unit to provide route and t-shaped turning space at all intersections.
7	Northwest Parking Lot: Accessible space is noncompliant…slopes exceeding 4-5% in all directions, including access aisle. Signage at 52" above floor Width tapers to 94", below 96" minimum. Access aisle does not provide van accessibility. 46 spaces total, requiring 2 spaces. Only one space is marked.	502		Regrade and restripe to provide parking per Section 502 and meeting the scope requirements found in 208.2. Spaces should be dispersed as possible in each lot.

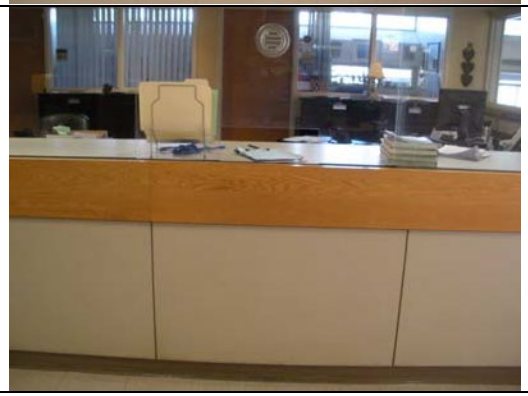
8	Walkway from northwest lot to main entrance: Cross slopes exceeding 7.5% Abrupt changes in level exceeding 1” due to sidewalk settling and heaving.	403.3		See #1. Regrade and reconstruct sidewalks.
9	Picnic tables and benches lack accessible seating and accessible route amongst and between them.	226.1		Modify, replace or add new accessible tables to achieve minimum 5% accessible seating and 36” spacing.
10	Front drive parking area: 19 spaces + 2 marked Asphalt is deteriorated. Signs at 52-54” high; no van accessible space signed. Slopes exceed 3-5%	502		

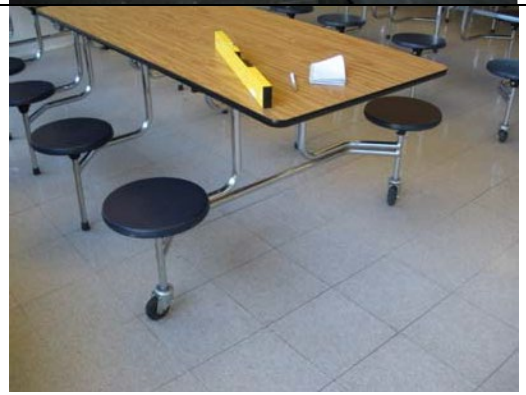
11	Designated accessible drop-off/pick-up area: Running slope on ramp approach exceeds 11% and rises over 8” with a cross slopes on adjacent walkways of 5-7%. Surface has severe deterioration.	405		
12	Main entrance: Lacks curb ramp at crosswalk Cross and running slopes in front of and leading to main entrance exceed 5% in several areas. Entrance doors lack a 60” level maneuvering space.	403.3 404.2.4		See comment for #1. As the primary entrance and path of travel from the accessible parking area and drive, a ramp is required.
13	Main walkway from gym/fields to main entrance – excessive running slope at 8.2% for a total rise of over 40”. Max permitted for walkway is 5%; 8.33% is permitted for a ramp but then would require edge protection and railing and max rise cannot exceed 30” without landing.	403.3		See comment above.

14	Stairs to lower parking area from entrance drive –do not extend 12”	505.10.2		
15	Student parking lot: 53 spaces, 1 non-compliant HC space. No access aisle or signage. No accessible route connecting parking lot to any other site elements.	502		Regrade and restripe to provide parking per Section 502 and meeting the scope requirements found in 208.2. Spaces should be dispersed as possible in each lot.
16	No accessible routes connecting any of the school’s athletic fields or outdoor elements. Bleachers at football/multi-use field are not accessible and have no route to access them. There is a paved route from Crescent Street, but running slopes exceed 11%, cross slopes exceed 3% and the pathway is deteriorated.	206.2		See comment in #1. While there are exceptions for area of sport play, all viewing areas, tables, concession stands, and restrooms are required to be connected to parking areas, the public rights-of-way and accessible building entrances.

			 	
17	Interior ramps at main lobby: Slopes ranging from 8-9.6% exceeding the 8.33% maximum. 47” turning space at change in direction. Security gates obstruct handrails. Handrails at 33” high. Min is 34”	 405.2 405.7.4 505.3 505.4		Ramps should be reconstructed, or it should be demonstrated that it would be technically infeasible to achieve compliance due to available space and existing interior grades. Handrails should be replaced if ramp is reconstructed. If not, evaluate feasibility of modifying existing.

	Signage/banner placed in ramp obstructs turning space.			
18	Ramp leading from front entrance ramps to main hall/library/auditorium has slopes ranging from 8.4% to 9.3%, exceeding the 8.33% maximum.	405.2		An architect or engineer would need to determine whether reconstruction of this ramp is technically and financially feasible.

19	Upper and lower ramps in hallway to Art wing have running slopes ranging from 9-10%.	405.2		An architect or engineer would need to determine whether reconstruction of this ramp is technically and financially feasible.
20	Ramp to Northwest wing has a running slope of 10.3%. Handrails do not extend to the landing at the bottom of ramp.	405.2 505.10.1		An architect or engineer would need to determine whether reconstruction of this ramp is technically and financially feasible. Handrails should be extended 12” from start of landing at bottom.
21	Main office counter: Height at 41”, above maximum height of 36”	904.4		Counter should be modified to lower to 36” maximum for a minimum length of 36” for parallel approach. It is recommended to modify for forward approach with knee/toe clearance complying with 904.4.2.

22	Auditorium: Aisle ramps taper from 11.1% (top) to 2% (bottom). No accessible seating (wheelchair spaces or companion seating) is provided in the auditorium.	405.2 221.2		It may be possible to remove one or more rows of the rear seating to provide a wheelchair accessible seating area. An architect should evaluate the feasibility of this alternative. This should be done in conjunction with stage improvements noted below. For additional guidance specific to auditoriums, see 28 CFR 35.151 (g)4.
23	Auditorium stage does not provide wheelchair access. There is not a ramp or lift to access the stage from inside the auditorium, and the side door from the hallway leads to a section of the stage that is too narrow to provide wheelchair passage.	206.2.2		Stage should be reconstructed to provide to allow, at a minimum, sufficient width to allow use of a wheelchair from the hall door. A feasibility study should be undertaken to evaluate the potential for full stage reconstruction to provide access to stage and auditorium from the side door, utilizing a lift if necessary and potentially reconfiguring seating at lower level. Note that wheelchair seating should be dispersed in the rear of the auditorium as well as the front.
24	Cafeteria: 8 rectangular tables with 12 seats, 10 round with 8 seats = 176 seats total. Only rectangular tables have accessible seating (1 per end) but due to placement, only 8 accessible seats are available. 1 additional is required.	226.1 308.3		Minor relocation of tables to free up one additional end unit. Relocate existing dispensers.

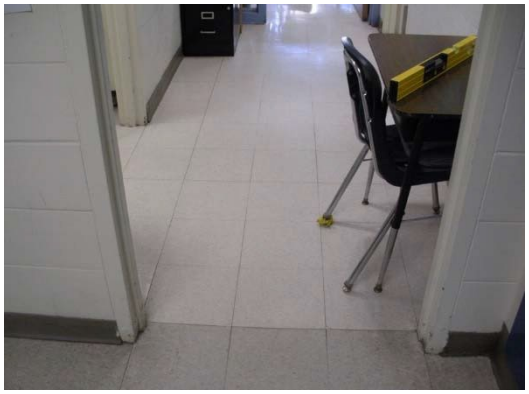
	Napkin/paper towel dispensers at 50-52” exceed 48” max reach range.			
25	Counseling Office – placement of file cabinet obstructs required 18” latch side clearance.	404.2.4.1		Relocate file cabinet.
26	Health Office - placement of table obstructs required 18” latch side clearance.	404.2.4.1		Relocate table.

27	Health Office Restroom: Lavatory pipes lack insulation Trashcan placement obstructs clear floor space next to toilet. At 16”, latch-side clearance to door from lavatory does not meet 18” minimum. Side grab bar at 6” off wall and extending 48” from rear wall, short of required 54”. Table placed in front of toilet obstructs required dept (at 53”). Coat hooks provided at top of door on hanging rack outside of maximum reach range.	 606.5 604.3 404.2.4.1 604.5.1 604.3 308.3		 Insulate pipes. Remove trashcan. Replace lavatory with a shallower unit. This is a low priority given deficiency. Reinstall existing grab bar. Remove toilet. Train staff. Add second hook at or below 48”.

28	Boys' restroom off main wing (south): Toilet paper dispenser mounted to far from toilet in accessible stall. Door requires 7lbs of pressure to open, exceeding 5lb maximum. Self-closing hinges are inoperable on accessible stall. Toilet height is 20" at top of seat. Grab bars do not extend 54" from rear wall.	 604.7 404.2.9 604.8.1.2 604.9.3 604.5.1		 Relocate dispenser to within 7-9 inches from front of toilet. Adjust closer to 5lbs or less Replace hinges Install new toilet at or below 17"

29	Girls' restroom off main wing (south): Toilet paper dispenser mounted too close to toilet in accessible stall. Door requires 7lbs of pressure to open, exceeding 5lb maximum. Self-closing hinges are inoperable on accessible stall. Toilet height is 20" at top of seat. Grab bars do not extend 54" from rear wall.	 604.7 404.2.9 604.8.1.2 604.4 604.5.1	 	Relocate dispenser to 7-9" Adjust closer to 5lbs or less Replace hinges Replace toilet with unit 17-19" above floor. Relocate existing grab bars.

29	Faculty Men's Restroom: Hot water supply line is not insulated. Flush valve on wrong side of toilet. Table is installed in front of toilet.	 606.5 604.6 604.3		Insulate pipes Remove and reinstall vacuum flush valve to other side. If table is necessary for an accommodation request for a student or staff member, this should be documented and an alternate location should be identified with signage that directs a user to a fully accessible location.

30	Furniture obstructing clear floor space, accessible routes, and maneuvering spaces at doors. Desk placement (room 102) (noted in other spaces as well) obstructs accessible route to faculty restroom & Faculty Women's restroom (drawer unit); classrooms (multiple)		  	Ensure maintenance personnel and staff are mindful of placement of furniture, trash cans and other moveable obstacles.

31	Classroom sinks (multiple) are not positioned for a forward approach with the required knee and toe clearance.	212; 606.2	  	Replace sink/cabinetry to provide for forward approach and the required knee and toe clearance. Where multiple sinks serve a single room, only 5% must comply.
32	H/S Wing; North side girls' restroom:			

	Grab bar in accessible stall does not extend 54” from rear wall. Stall width is only 58” wide, less than the required 60”.	604.5.1 604.3.1		Reinstall existing grab bar. Available space and
33	H/S Wing – Faculty women’s restroom: Missing rear grab bar. Hot water supply is missing insulation. Flush valve on wrong side of toilet. Toilet height is 15 1/2” from floor, under minimum height of 17” Bottom of mirror is at 43.5”, above the 40” max height.	 604.5.2 606.5 604.6 604.4 603.3		 Install grab bar. Insulate pipes. Remove and reinstall vacuum breaker/flush valve.
34	H/S Wing – Faculty men’s restroom: Missing rear grab bar. Hot water supply is missing insulation. Toilet height is 15 1/2” from floor, under minimum height of 17” Bottom of mirror is at 43.5”, above the 40” max height.	 604.5 606.5 604.4 603.3		 Install grab bar. Insulate pipes Replace toilet. Reinstall mirror to 40” max.

35	HS Wing – Boy's restroom: Missing signage Self-closing hinges on accessible stall inoperable	 216.2 604.8.1.2	 	 Install new sign. Replace hinges
36	HS Side, 300 Block - Emergency egress has excessive slope on walkway; walkway has cracks and is deteriorated.	403.3		See comment in #1.

37	HS Side, 400 Block Gender neutral accessible restroom: Furniture blocks clear floor space to toilet. Missing insulation on drain and supply pipes. Latch-side clearance on door is 8”, less than the 18” required. Grab bar extends 48” from rear wall, less than the 54” required.	 606.5 404.2.4.1 604.5.1		Remove furniture. Train staff. Insulate pipes. Install a shallower sink to provide the maximum accessibility; unlikely to achieve full compliance. Remove and reinstall existing grab bar.
38	Media Center – Work counters lack knee and toe clearance; since these are the only work tables with outlets for student laptops, etc, they are required to be accessible.	902.2		Either modify these counters to provide knee and toe clearance for 5% of units, or provide permanent outlets to other seating that is accessible.

39	Protruding objects – fire extinguishers (multiple in building) extend 5-5 1/2" in hallways, exceeding the maximum protrusion of 4".	307.2		Install units that are recessed; alternatively, provide cane detectable element below any protrusion that cannot be relocated.
40	No accessible parking onsite. See comments addressing each separate lot above.	208.1		Based on number of parking spaces in each lot, northwest lot requires 2 spaces (1 van accessible); Main lot requires 3 spaces (1 van accessible) and student lot requires 3 spaces (1 van accessible). Grading and accessible routes are problematic, so consultation with a civil engineer and architect is advised.

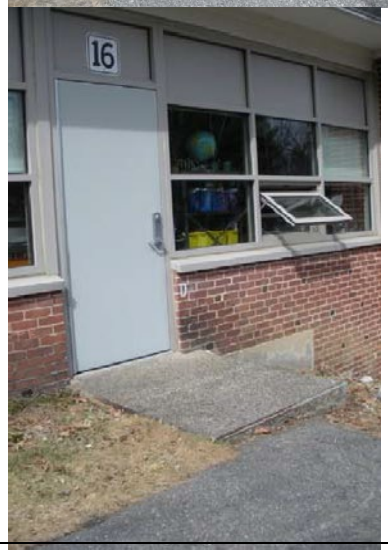
8.5.9 Major Edwards Elementary School

Address	70 Crescent Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	49,752
Site (acres)	8.2 acres (including Pride Park)
Date of Original Construction	1930
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	Addition in 1996.
Date of Audit	3/14/2022
Description of Use	Classroom and administrative uses typical of elementary school; Site includes a 6-12Y and 2-5Y playground, which are open to public during non-school hours. 2-5Y (toddler) play area is available during school hours and separated by gate/fence.
Maximum Occupancy	1,370 (gym=450; cafeteria=200; 1st floor classrooms=530; 2nd floor classrooms=90; basement classrooms=30; library=70)
Parking Spaces	45 in main lot (+5 NC accessible spaces); 12 marked spaces in rear/side.
Number of Floors	3
Elevator/Lift?	Yes; elevator serving classroom wing and lift in auditorium/gym.

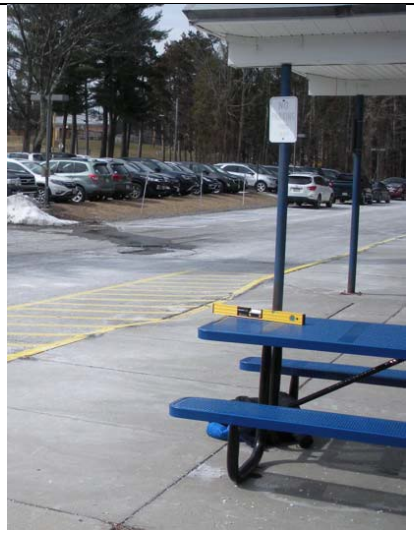
#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Ramps at crosswalk have significant slopes, with one section exceeding 22%, (max allowed 8.33%), are deteriorated, and have multiple and abrupt changes in level.	406, 405.2		Reconstruct curb ramps.

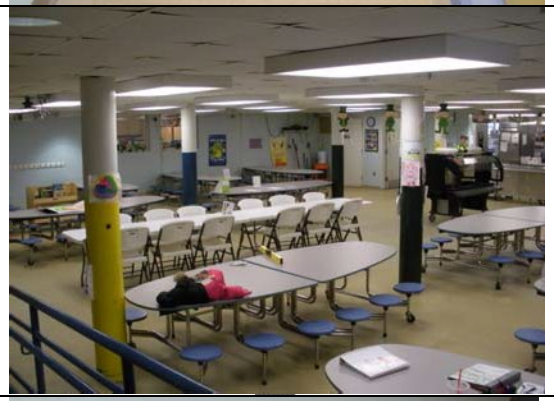
2	Main walkway leading from street has multiple cracks exceeding 1", abrupt level changes and cross slopes at 2.2-2.9% that exceed the 2% maximum. This section also has an 18" drop-off with no edge protection or railings.	403.3		Reconstruct walkway; considering the scope of the deficiencies on all walkways, curb ramps and accessible routes to parking and building entrances, it is very unlikely that any of these repairs can be completed without impacting the slopes and design of the overall walkway system. It is recommended that a full site grade survey be completed and a qualified architectural/engineering consultant be engaged to design a comprehensive scope of work.
3	Walkway leading to play areas and rear of building has multiple depressions creating cross slope issues, as well as cracking and settling.	403		Reconstruct walkway. See comment in #2 above.
4	Curb ramp is severely deteriorated, lacks a level landing at the top and restricts the adjacent sidewalk cross slope and accessibility.	406.4		Reconstruct ramp as a parallel ramp allowing level passage from drive to walkway.

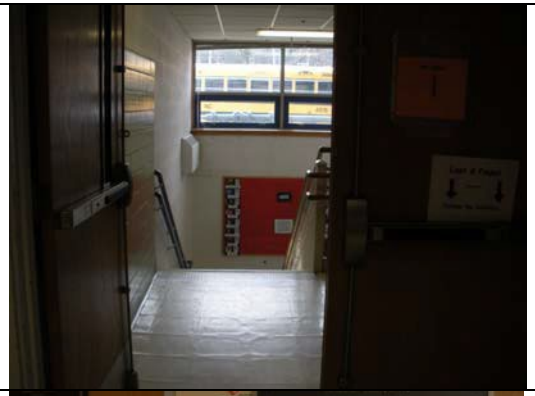
5	Double doors (#1) lack 10” smooth surface on push side of door.	404.2.7		Replace doors; may consider installing automatic opener.
6	Walkway to playgrounds has excessive running slope (>10% at gate area), cross slopes greater than 2% and numerous areas of heave/settling, cracks and deterioration.	403.3		Regrade and reconstruct walkway in coordination with Pride Park Playground project.

7	Walkway leading to rear of classrooms has excessive cross slopes, areas of settling and deterioration. None of the classroom exit doors have the required level landing (at 4-5%), and door ramps lack maneuvering space The last door lacks connectivity to walkway.	403.3, 404.2	 	See comment in #2 above.

8	Designated accessible parking spaces: No spaces meet the required 2% max slope in all directions. Signage is too low at 50-54” above ground. Spaces 3, 4 and 5 (from south to north) lack an accessible route to the entrance. Asphalt is cracking and deteriorated. No van accessible space provided and no spaces have striped access aisles.	 502.4 502.6 502.4 502.4 208.2.4		See comment in #2 above.
9	Main entrance ramp has excessive running slope at 9.1%	405.2		See comment in #2 above.

10	Fire lane signage protrudes over 5” and is less than 80” above finished floor, creating a protruding object hazard.	307.2		Raise signs
11	Sidewalk at bus drop-off area lacks a ramp and has cross slopes exceeding 4-5% (2% max). Edge is deteriorated as well. No access aisle for drop off area.	403.3		See comment in #2 above.
12	Stairs to cafeteria – handrails lack return on open side, and wall side return does not level off at floor level.	505.10.3		Reconstruct handrails.

13	Ramp to cafeteria exceeds 10% running slope (from front stairs) and 9% (to rear of building)	405.2		
14	Cafeteria tables are designed to have an accessible space at each end, but most are placed in such a way (against the support posts) to make either space usable.	226.1		Rearrange tables.
15	Drinking fountain does meet the spout height for standing persons. Also presents a protruding object barrier (as does towel dispenser).	602.7		Install combination unit.

16	Stairwell leading to basement does not extend 12” past top tread on wall side.	505.10.2		
17	Defibrillator cabinet extends 9” from wall, creating a protruding object hazard.	307.2		
18	Gymnasium/stage: stage is served by a wheelchair lift that is blocked by storage and inaccessible. The platform was significantly out of level and did not align with landing by over 1”.	410.2		Have a qualified service technician evaluate lift operation and alignment and adjust as necessary. Facilities personnel should also regularly inspect the lift for operation and to ensure it is kept clear of obstructions.

19	Boys 1st floor restroom (south wing): At 35", rim of lavatory exceeds the 34" maximum Grab bar height do not meet standards for children at 34" and do not extend 54" from rear wall (at 48") Coat hooks at 52" exceed reach range maximum for adults or children. Self-closing hinges in accessible stall inoperable.	 606.3 604.9 308.1 604.8.1.2		 Replace lavatory. Reinstall existing grab bars. Add second coat hook.
20	1st floor faculty restroom: Bottom of mirror, at 52", exceeds the maximum height of 40" from floor. Grab bar does not extend 54" from rear wall.	 603.3 604.5.1		

21	Girls 1st Floor restroom: Furniture placed in restroom obstruct clear floor space. Soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser, at 52”, exceed 48” max for adults.	 308.1		This may be programmatically necessary for age of children and nature of disability to provide for companion seating and use of stall. If not, remove obstructing furniture. Relocate dispensers to meet appropriate reach ranges for age group using table 308.1 for guidance.
22	Staff 1st floor restroom: Trash can, furnishings obstruct clear floor space around toilet. Water supply lines on lavatory lack insulation. Coat hook is outside 48” reach range maximum. At 55”, mirror is above the 40” maximum height from floor. Grab bar on side wall does not extend 54” from rear wall.	 606.5 308.1 603.3 604.5.1		 Remove furniture Install insulation on pipes Add second coat hook at or below 48”

23	Boys second and third floor restrooms (identical): Accessible stall does not have self-closing hinges. Side grab bar does not extend 54" from rear wall (at 48") At 35", lavatory exceeds 34" max height. (2nd floor)	 604.8.1.2 604.5.1 606.3		 Install self-closing hinges. Reposition existing grab bar. Replace lavatory
24	Girls' second and third floor restrooms: Side grab bar does not extend 54" from rear wall (at 48"). Door requires 15lbs of force to open. (third floor only)	 604.5.1 404.2.9		Reposition existing grab bar. Adjust door closer to 5lbs or less.

25	Nurses Station: Toilet room is significantly below minimum width and length. Doorway width for toilet room is under 28”, less than the required minimum of 32” Sink does not have the required knee and toe clearance, nor the required maneuvering or clear floor space for forward approach. Space limitations prevent any configuration that allows maneuvering space for toilet room door. No grab bars are installed.	604		

8.5.10 Town Commons

Address	Intersection of Worcester/Church/Central
Building Area (sq.ft.)	
Site (acres)	
Date of Original Construction	Unknown; bandstand constructed circa 2003
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	Bandstand alterations 6/20/2012
Date of Audit	7/1/2022
Description of Use	Public park/open space; events and other public passive recreation.
Maximum Occupancy	N/A
Parking Spaces	Some on-street, but no dedicated parking.
Number of Floors	N/A
Elevator/Lift?	N/A

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Portable restroom not located on an accessible route	213.1		Relocate adjacent to level roadway, or add surface mat to make ground level, firm and stable.

2	There is no accessible route to the benches, field space, trash cans or bandstand. Generally, there is no accessible route on the site at all.	206.2.2		Construct an accessible walkway from all public streets and sidewalks; walkwayshould connect bandstand and at least 5% of benches and trash cans, as well as the monument. If a portable restroom is routinely provided, the walkway should also be designed for a permanent location to place an accessible unit on the route.
3	Bandstand: Ramp to bandstand has a running slope of 10.5%. Landing is 45” x 48” at top and no landing is provided at bottom. Handrails are non-compliant Stairs – treads are not uniform and have excessive height at 8”. No handrails are provided with a 20” drop.	 405.2 405.7 405.8 504.2; 505		Reconstruct ramp in compliance with Section 405. Install handrails complying with Section 505.

8.5.11 Goodale Park

Address	50 Goodale Street
Building Area (sq.ft.)	N/A
Site (acres)	12.0 acres
Date of Original Construction	Unknown
Dates/Description of Renovations/Alterations	No building permits listed.
Date of Audit	
Description of Use	Athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, outbuilding, concession stand, bleachers.
Maximum Occupancy	N/A
Parking Spaces	41 marked, including 5 noncompliant designated accessible spaces.

#	Barrier to Access	Reference	Photo	Corrective Action
1	Accessible parking non-compliant. 2 spaces marked with paint, no signage. Slope exceeds 2% 2 spaces signed; 1 missing access aisle. Lot across street, 1 space with 5% slopes, exceeding 2% max. No signage is installed.	208, 502		Regrade, repave and restripe lot; install compliant signage. Since grade may prevent dispersal of spaces, evaluate if there is one area that can provide all accessible parking.

2	No elements on the site have an accessible route connecting them. This includes the basketball courts, tennis courts, accessible portable toilet, bleachers (all), baseball field, tennis court, picnic tables, trash cans and concession stand. The visitor side spectator area of the baseball field does have an area suitable for wheelchairs, but does not have a compliant accessible route, and no edge protection or railing.	206	  	The complete lack of any accessible routes on this site will require a comprehensive master plan and design effort. It will be difficult to attempt to construct piecemeal improvements without the risk of having to remove them at a later date.

3	The sidewalk on the right-of way is deteriorated and lacks the width to provide any site connectivity between the tennis/basketball courts and the parking/restrooms or other site elements.	206		Reconstruction of this sidewalk would allow some site interconnectivity to tennis courts and basketball courts. Since the sidewalk is on the right-of-way and not the site, the excessive slope may be permissible in order to afford some access to the courts. This would not relieve the Town of the obligation to connect all site elements via an accessible route.

8.6 Public Input Survey Results

Note that the survey results are provided by a third party, and the graphs and tables are images and not accessible. The text is accessible. For details on the survey data, please see Section 6.2.2 for narrative detailing the results in an accessible form.

Town of West Boylston Accessibility Survey

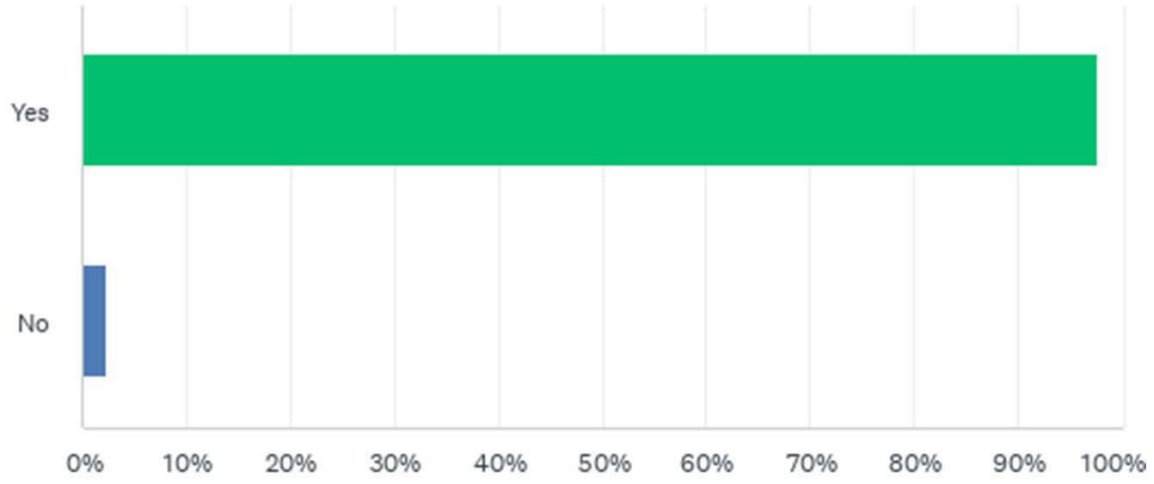
Administered October 1-31, 2021

Administered online via SurveyMonkey with paper copies available at Town facilities.

Complete Responses: 214 online, 0 paper.

Q1: Are you a resident of the Town of West Boylston?

Answered: 214 Skipped: 0



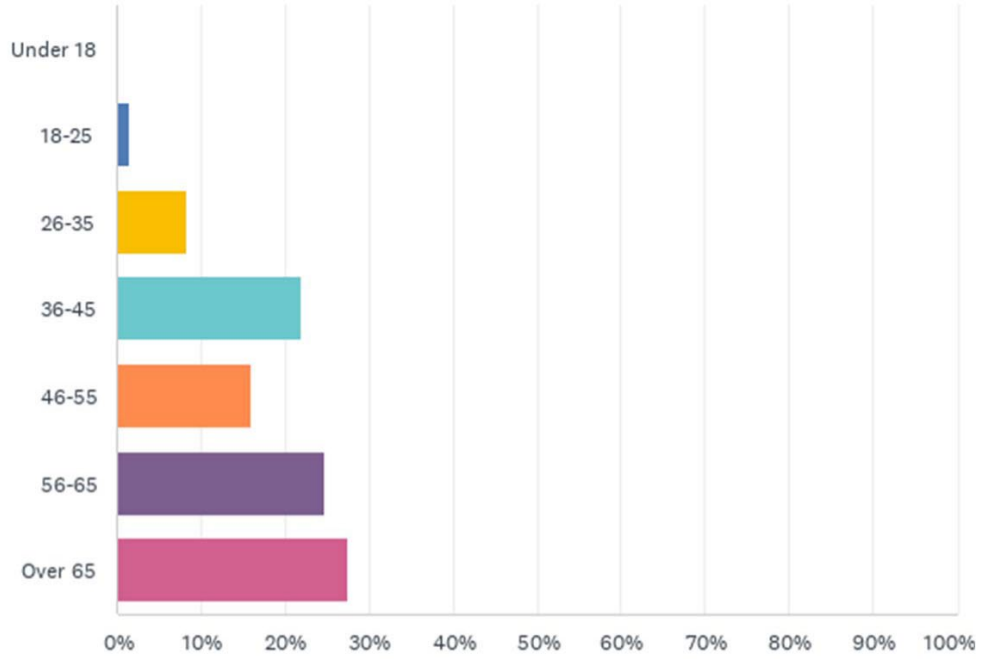
Q1: Are you a resident of the Town of West Boylston?

Answered: 214 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	97.66%	209
No	2.34%	5
TOTAL		214

Q2: What is your current age?

Answered: 214 Skipped: 0



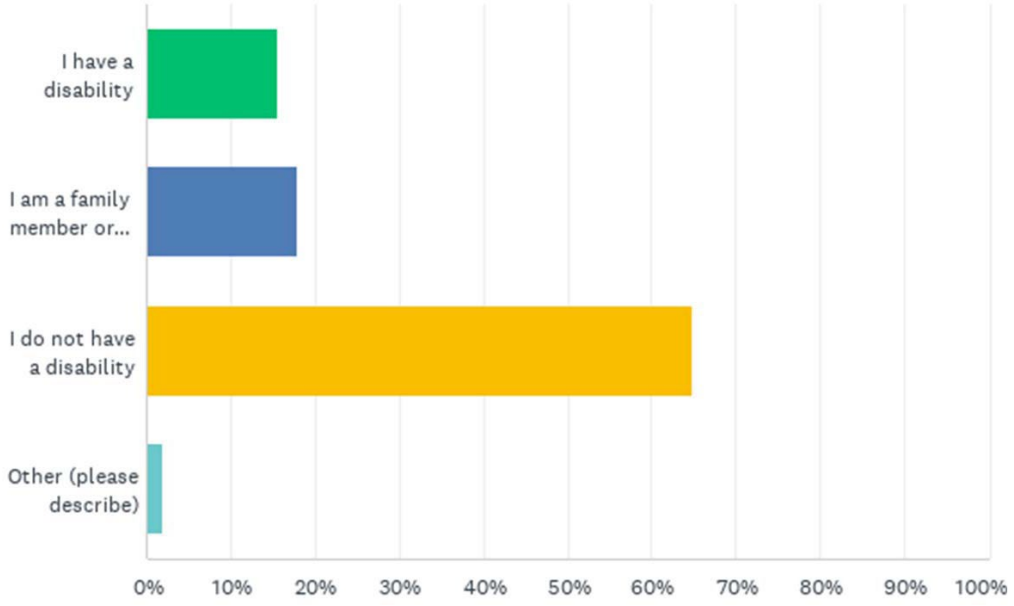
Q2: What is your current age?

Answered: 214 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-25	1.40%	3
26-35	8.41%	18
36-45	21.96%	47
46-55	15.89%	34
56-65	24.77%	53
Over 65	27.57%	59
TOTAL		214

Q3: Which of the following best describes you and/or the perspective of your responses?

Answered: 213 Skipped: 1



Q3: Which of the following best describes you and/or the perspective of your responses?

Answered: 213 Skipped: 1

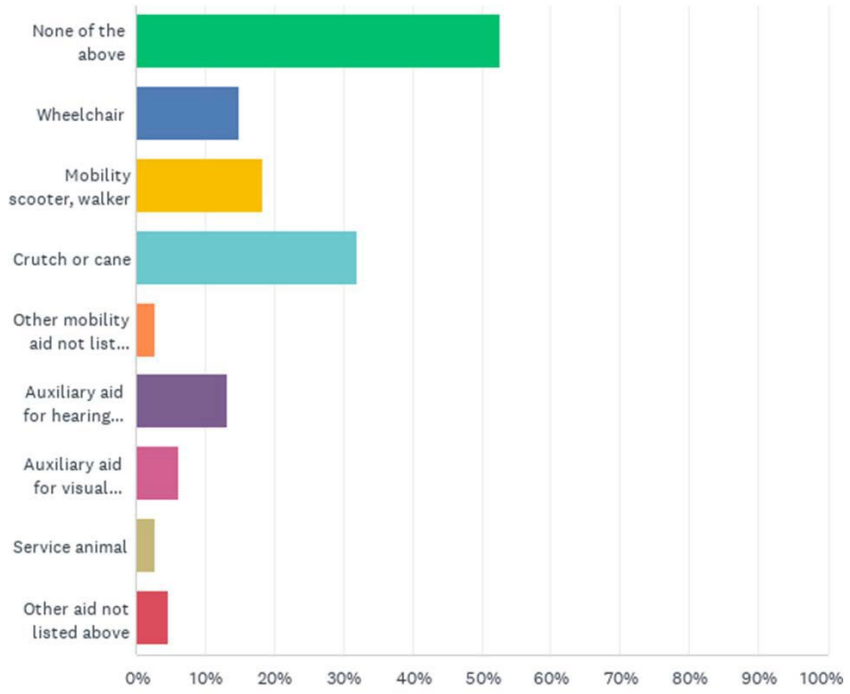
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I have a disability	15.49%	33
I am a family member or caregiver for a person with a disability	17.84%	38
I do not have a disability	64.79%	138
Other (please describe)	1.88%	4
TOTAL		213

Other:

- Caregiver for 89 year old mom and 90 year old father in law. 60 year old brother in law with disabilities lives with us too
- I both have a disability and am the caretaker for someone with a disability
- Retired person in 70's
- I nor any family members have disabilities

Q4: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever used any of the following (select all that apply):

Answered: 213 Skipped: 1



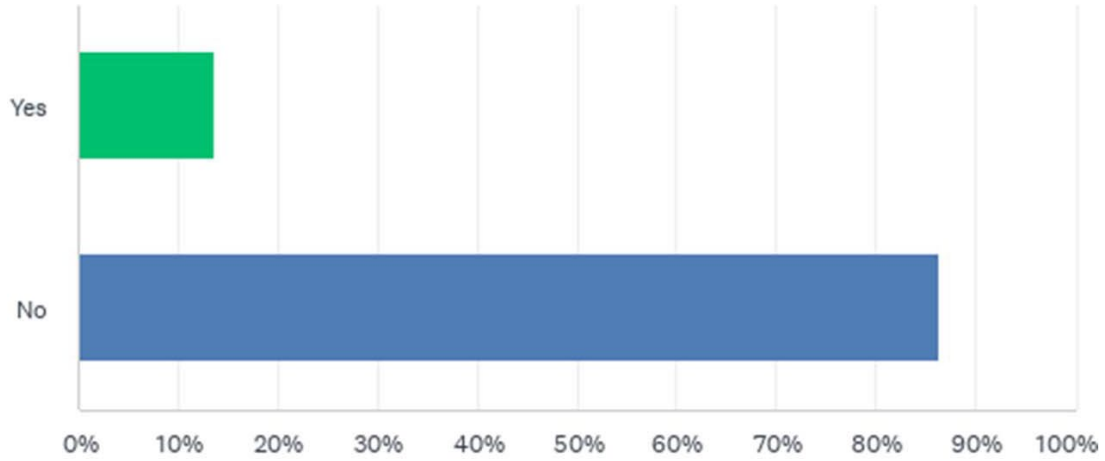
Q4: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever used any of the following (select all that apply):

Answered: 213 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	52.58%	112
Wheelchair	15.02%	32
Mobility scooter, walker	18.31%	39
Crutch or cane	31.92%	68
Other mobility aid not listed above	2.82%	6
Auxiliary aid for hearing impairment	13.15%	28
Auxiliary aid for visual impairment	6.10%	13
Service animal	2.82%	6
Other aid not listed above	4.69%	10
Total Respondents: 213		

Q5: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever had an issue accessing a Town facility due to a disability or physical limitation?

Answered: 212 Skipped: 2



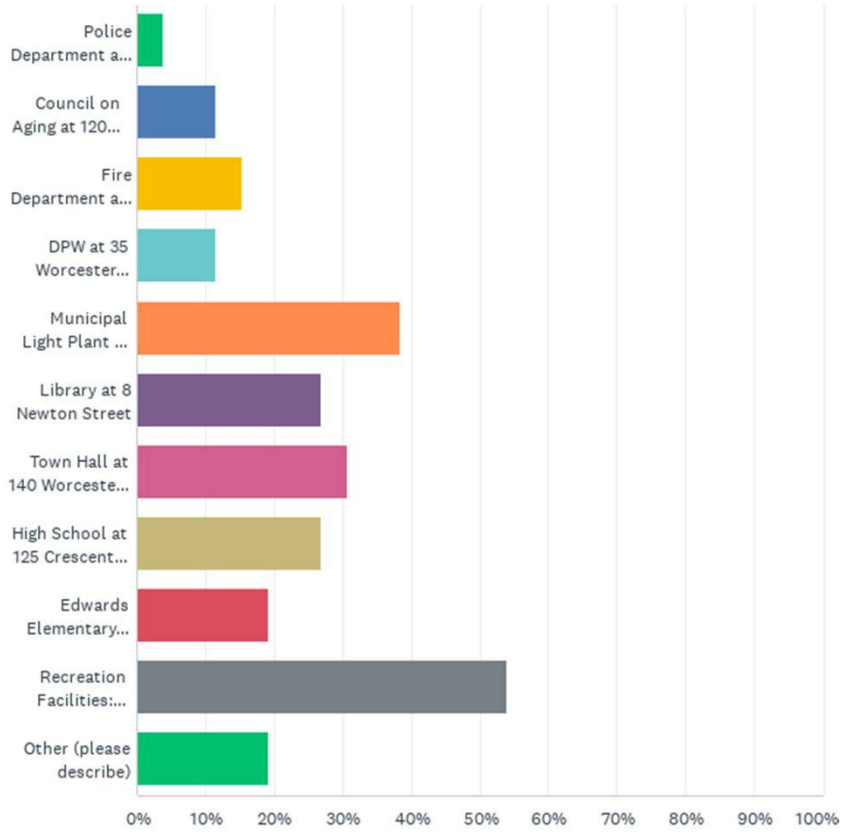
Q5: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever had an issue accessing a Town facility due to a disability or physical limitation?

Answered: 212 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.68%	29
No	86.32%	183
TOTAL		212

Q6: Please select the facility or facilities where an accessibility issue has occurred (select all that apply):

Answered: 26 Skipped: 188



Q6: Please select the facility or facilities where an accessibility issue has occurred (select all that apply):

Answered: 26 Skipped: 188

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Police Department at 141 Sterling Street	3.85%	1
Council on Aging at 120 Prescott Street	11.54%	3
Fire Department at 39 Worcester STreet	15.38%	4
DPW at 35 Worcester Street	11.54%	3
Municipal Light Plant at 4 Crescent Street	38.46%	10
Library at 8 Newton Street	26.92%	7
Town Hall at 140 Worcester Street	30.77%	8
High School at 125 Crescent Street	26.92%	7
Edwards Elementary School at 70 Crescent Street	19.23%	5
Recreation Facilities: Town Commons, Goodale Park, Pride Park and/or Woodland Park	53.85%	14
Other (please describe)	19.23%	5
Total Respondents: 26		

Q6: Please select the facility or facilities where an accessibility issue has occurred (select all that apply):

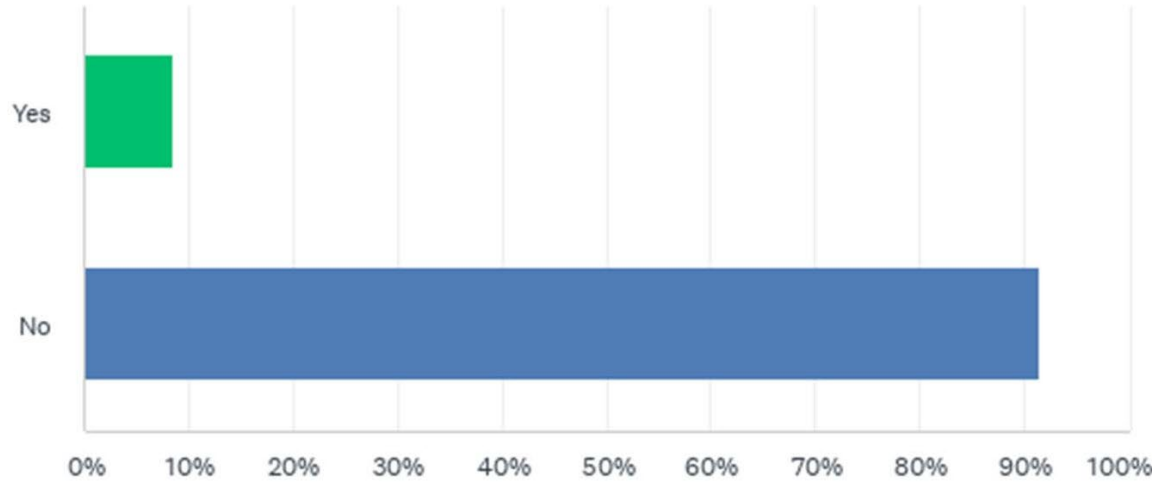
Answered: 26 Skipped: 188

Other:

- High School field for Town Meeting
- Previous Senior Center
- I have severe chemical sensitivities and cannot enter any building that uses air fresheners or harsh cleaners. Most places have be inaccessible to me, so I have stopped trying. The Police station was safe for me for a short visit, which was a happy surprise. With the talk of a new playground, I fear it will have rubber ground cover and this will make the playground inaccessible to me and my child.
- Orchard Knoll Housing
- Town meeting at field- no path, sidewalks not stable, field not accessible. meetings need to have option for people that can't attend in person even beyond covid

Q7: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever had an issue accessing a Town program or service due to a disability or physical limitation?

Answered: 201 Skipped: 13



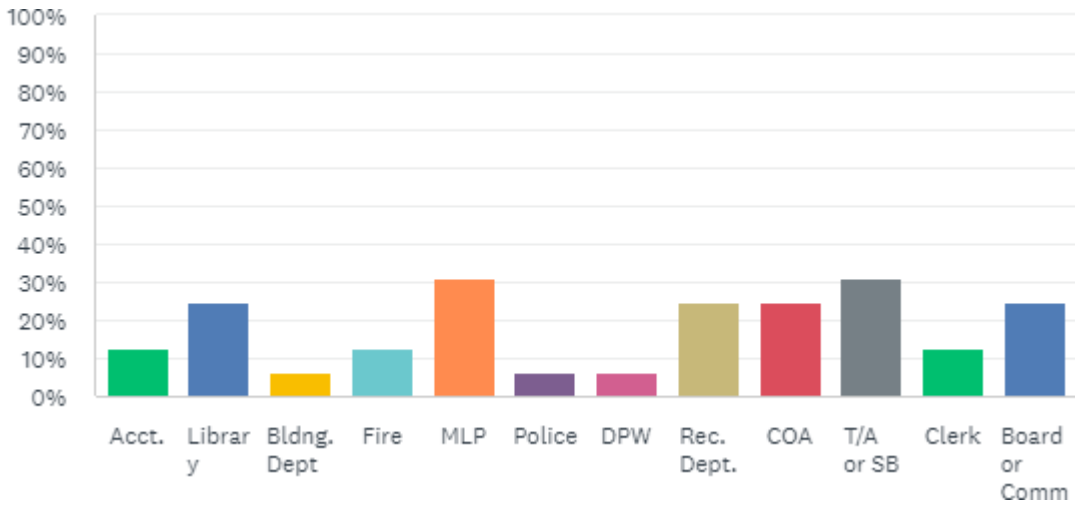
Q7: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever had an issue accessing a Town program or service due to a disability or physical limitation?

Answered: 201 Skipped: 13

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.46%	17
No	91.54%	184
TOTAL		201

Q8: Please specify which department(s) offered the program or service:

Answered: 16 Skipped: 198



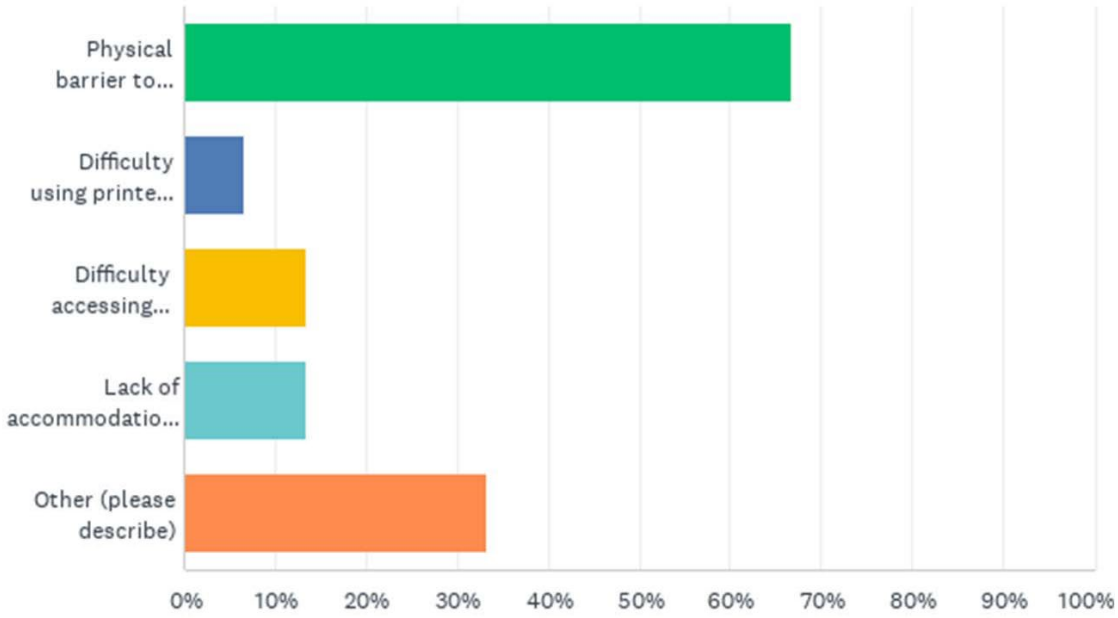
Q8: Please specify which department(s) offered the program or service:

Answered: 16 Skipped: 198

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Town Accountant	12.50%	2
Animal Control	0.00%	0
Assessor's Office	0.00%	0
Beaman Memorial Library	25.00%	4
Building Department	6.25%	1
Cemetery Department	0.00%	0
Fire Department	12.50%	2
Health Department	0.00%	0
Municipal Light Plant	31.25%	5
Police Department	6.25%	1
Pubilc Works	6.25%	1
Recreation Department	25.00%	4
Senior Center	25.00%	4
Town Administrator or Board of Selectmen	31.25%	5
Town Clerk	12.50%	2
Treasurer/ Collector	0.00%	0
Veterans' Services	0.00%	0
WBPA - Public Access TV	0.00%	0
Water District	0.00%	0
Town board, commission or other unit (please specify)	25.00%	4
Total Respondents: 16		

Q9: Which best describes the reason you were unable to access the program(s) or service(s)?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 199



Q9: Which best describes the reason you were unable to access the program(s) or service(s)?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 199

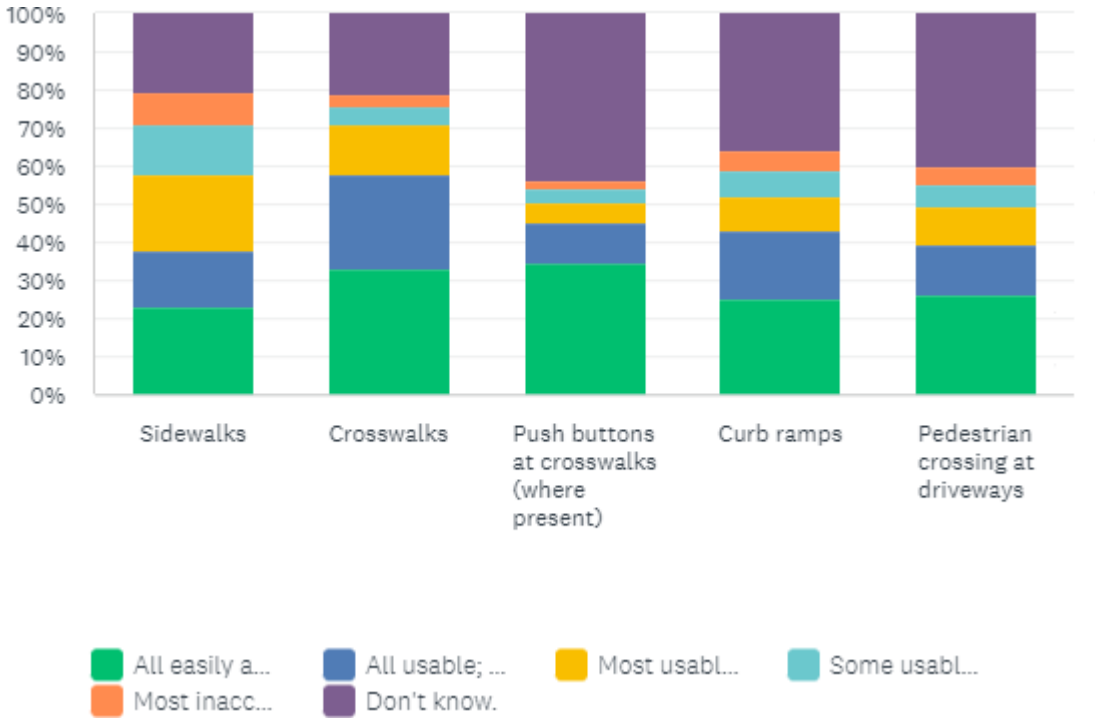
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Physical barrier to access, such as a lack of wheelchair access, counter height, or lack of accessible parking	66.67%	10
Difficulty using printed materials or forms	6.67%	1
Difficulty accessing online materials or services due to format, readability or other technical issue	13.33%	2
Lack of accommodations for the hearing impaired	13.33%	2
Other (please describe)	33.33%	5
Total Respondents: 15		

Other:

- Absent signs
- I am unable to go to the senior center for the town meeting as the building is so new, I fear the offgassing of building materials will make me sick. I understand there is nothing but time that will solve this problem, but it is still an accessibility barrier.
- No buttons to open doors at town hall, no access at lighting plant, no appropriate parking at high school and elementary school, playground not accessible, fields not accessible. Basketball and tennis courts don't have adequate parking and table and trash are in the space always, ramp at library isn't correct angle, programs at library on own aren't accessible due to step.
- Town administrator rolled eyes at request for accommodation
- refusal to accommodate online meeting request during COVID-19

Q10: How would you describe the ease of usage for the following pedestrian facilities in the Town:

Answered: 185 Skipped: 29



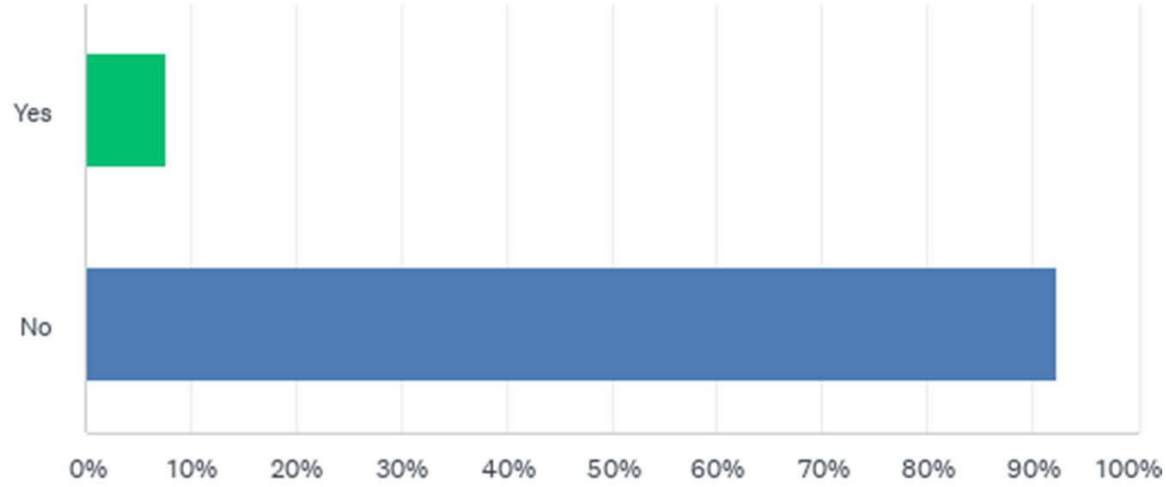
Q10: How would you describe the ease of usage for the following pedestrian facilities in the Town:

Answered: 185 Skipped: 29

	ALL ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE.	ALL ARE USABLE BUT SOME WITH MINOR DIFFICULTY.	MOST ARE USABLE BUT SOME ARE TOO DIFFICULT.	SOME ARE USABLE BUT MANY ARE TOO DIFFICULT.	MOST ARE INACCESSIBLE/ TOO DIFFICULT TO USE.	DON'T KNOW.	TOTAL
Sidewalks	23.37% 43	14.67% 27	20.11% 37	13.04% 24	8.15% 15	20.65% 38	184
Crosswalks	32.97% 60	24.73% 45	13.19% 24	4.95% 9	3.30% 6	20.88% 38	182
Push buttons at crosswalks (where present)	34.81% 63	10.50% 19	4.97% 9	3.87% 7	2.21% 4	43.65% 79	181
Curb ramps	25.27% 46	18.13% 33	8.79% 16	6.59% 12	5.49% 10	35.71% 65	182
Pedestrian crossing at driveways	26.37% 48	13.19% 24	9.89% 18	6.04% 11	4.40% 8	40.11% 73	182

Q11: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever made a request to the Town for an accommodation related to a disability?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 30



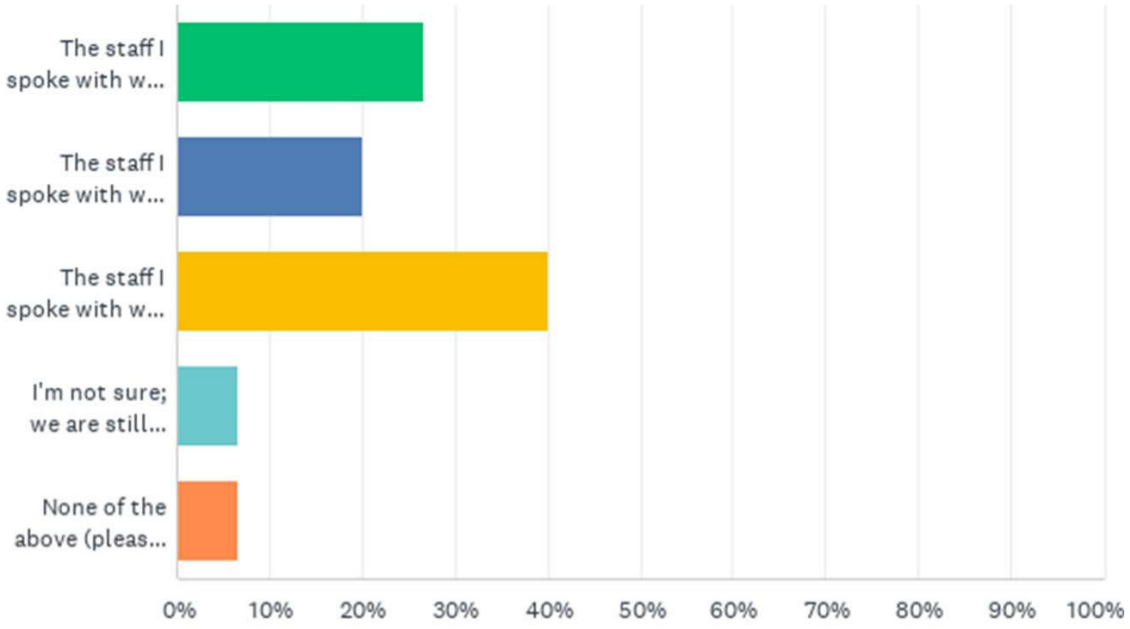
Q11: Have you or an individual for which you are the caregiver ever made a request to the Town for an accommodation related to a disability?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 30

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	7.61%	14
No	92.39%	170
TOTAL		184

Q12: How would you describe your experience?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 199



Q12: How would you describe your experience?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 199

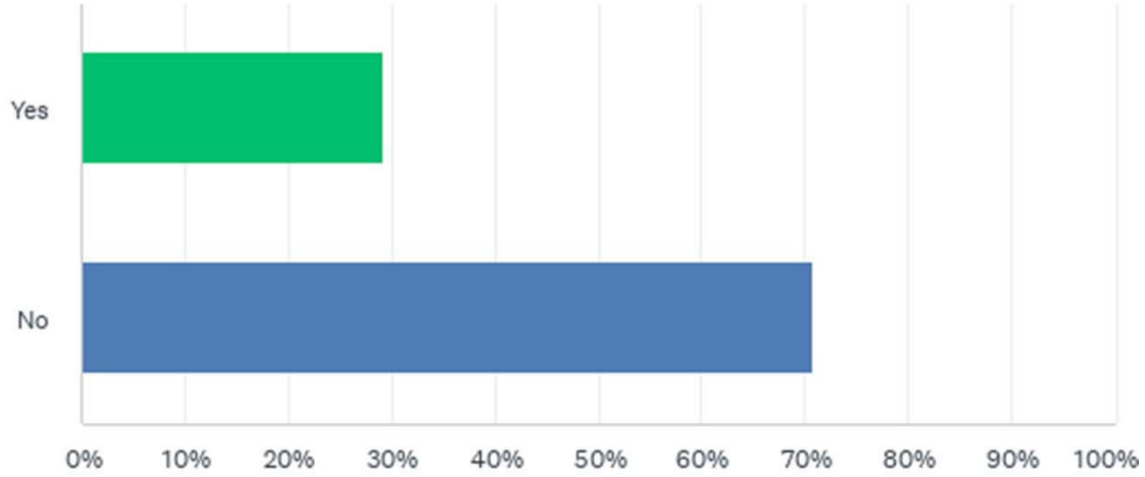
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The staff I spoke with was responsive and resolved my issue.	26.67%	4
The staff I spoke with was responsive, but unable to resolve my issue.	20.00%	3
The staff I spoke with was not responsive and my issue remained unresolved.	40.00%	6
I'm not sure; we are still working through it.	6.67%	1
None of the above (please describe):	6.67%	1
TOTAL		15

Other:

- Town administrator and boards are not willing to work on any solutions and are not inclusive in the least

Q13: Do you know who at the Town a member of the public can contact to make a request for an accommodation, state a grievance or more generally offer input related to accessibility to programs, services or facilities?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 43



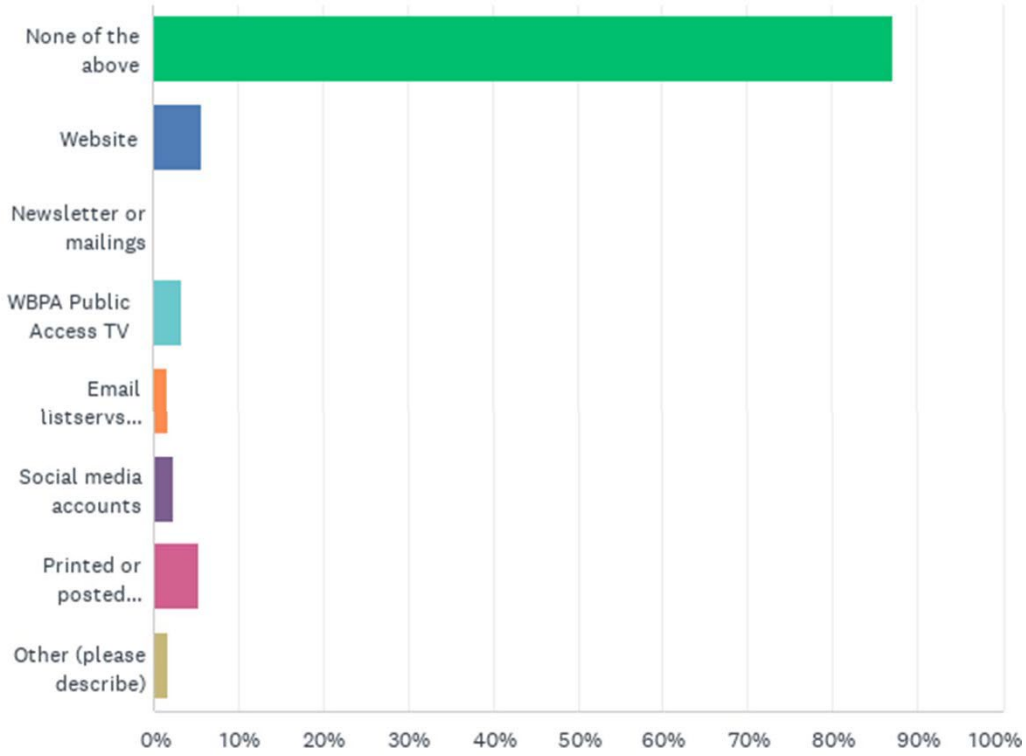
Q13: Do you know who at the Town a member of the public can contact to make a request for an accommodation, state a grievance or more generally offer input related to accessibility to programs, services or facilities?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 43

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.24%	50
No	70.76%	121
TOTAL		171

Q14: Have you or an individual for which you are a caregiver had difficulty accessing any of the following Town communication and information services due to a disability?

Answered: 172 Skipped: 42



Q14: Have you or an individual for which you are a caregiver had difficulty accessing any of the following Town communication and information services due to a disability?

Answered: 172 Skipped: 42

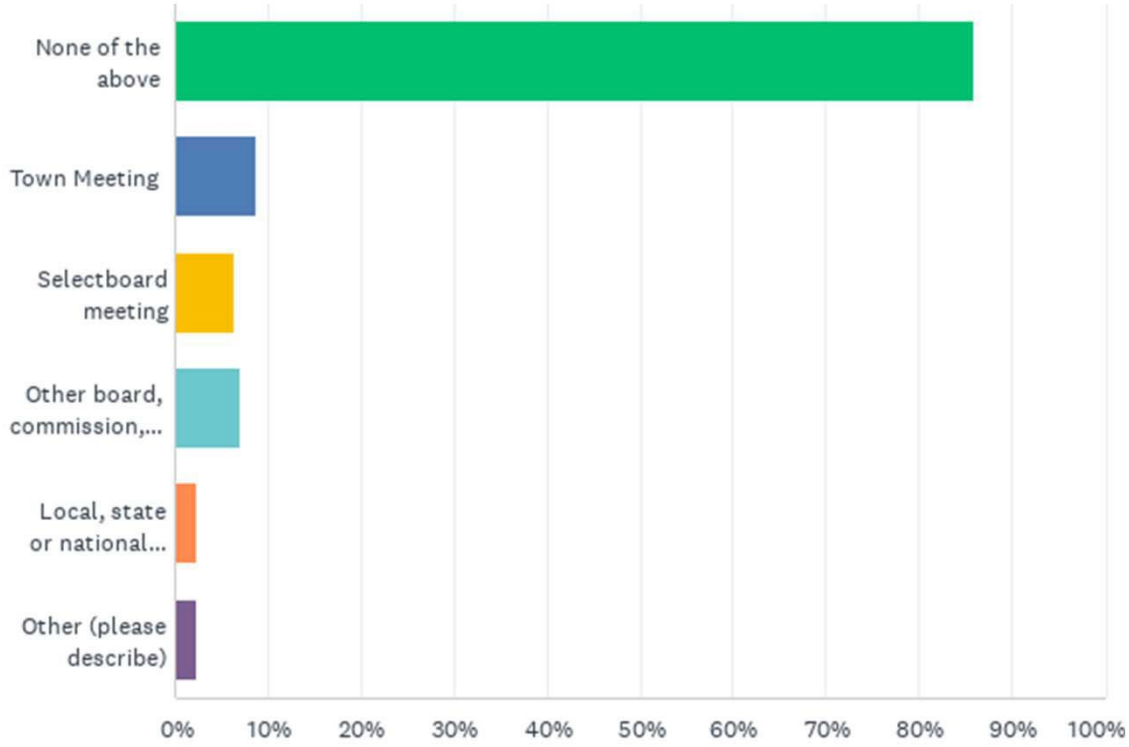
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	87.21%	150
Website	5.81%	10
Newsletter or mailings	0.00%	0
WBPA Public Access TV	3.49%	6
Email listservs (email blasts)	1.74%	3
Social media accounts	2.33%	4
Printed or posted materials at a Town office	5.23%	9
Other (please describe)	1.74%	3
Total Respondents: 172		

Other:

- All Town meetings
- lack of computer access for family member
- Difficult to hear televised or remote meetings/programs

Q15: Have you or an individual for which you are a caregiver had difficulty accessing or participating in any of the following local government activities, including accessing the materials for meetings due to a disability?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 43



Q15: Have you or an individual for which you are a caregiver had difficulty accessing or participating in any of the following local government activities, including accessing the materials for meetings due to a disability?

Answered: 171 Skipped: 43

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	85.96%	147
Town Meeting	8.77%	15
Selectboard meeting	6.43%	11
Other board, commission, committee or task force meetings	7.02%	12
Local, state or national elections	2.34%	4
Other (please describe)	2.34%	4
Total Respondents: 171		

Other:

- Unable to attend HS outdoor sports at the football field
- Handicap parking is limited at schools and good dale park
- Family member cannot safely navigate uneven surface(field)
- Zoom meetings

Q15: Is there any other information you would like the Town to consider in evaluating accessibility to Town facilities, programs or services?

Responses of "no" or "none" omitted

'Senior' activities at the library are usually during the workday, would possibly participate in evenings after 7pm. I work weekdays
The town administrator refuses to adopt universal accommodations for the hearing impaired. There should be an interpreter at every meeting because there are deaf people in town. We cannot easily participate. Nancy is rude when asked to provide this accommodation. The schools do it with no push back. Why can't the town administrator do the same?
Single-person genderless accessible bathrooms (at least 2) should be on every floor of every public building
Thank you for doing this!
It is not reasonable to try to give 100% access to 100% of the population. The town is doing a great job in response to needs of the disabled. HOWEVER, I think that closing Pride Park to everyone until accommodations are made for the needs of one child was a stupid decision based on political correctness rather than good old common sense. In the words of Mr. Spock "the needs of the many exceed the needs of the few".
Facilities are easily accessibly however getting to and from via sidewalks and roads are not.
Please also consider cognitive disabilities and mental health needs
Handicapped parking is impossible some people have distance problems and can't walk far!
a playground that is not currently accessible to those with limitations but with plans for future improvements should NOT be closed to everyone in the interim.
The town does a wonderful job keeping us informed of changes. The senior center has reached out multiple times and is very involved in the community

Q15: Cont'd

We are in good shape
Make everything accessible to all.
It would be great to see Pride Park updated sooner than expected.
While I or persons I'm responsible for do not have a disability. I fully support making the town more accessible to residents and visitors.
Parking and sidewalks
Access to the playground at pride park needs to be more inclusive
Sidewalks are not maintained. Overgrowth on sidewalks in town is horrible, have to walk in road at times.
I think the town does a great job. Unfortunately, a couple of people have put a stop to the elementary students' use of Pride Park. My children couldn't use some of the equipment just because they didn't have the physical ability to use it. It doesn't mean no one can use it.
Although I do not have a disability the town should be accessible to all
Accessibility is more than these questions. 'Accessibility to Town facilities, programs or services' leads the reader to think this is about all services access-one of which has been a major ongoing issue to many in town is access to the yard waste area. It is absolutely a concern for many especially given the amount of properties in the town that do not back up to woods for disposal of leaves etc. it seems to be an ignored issue. Most home owners have to work in order to afford to live in town which means the yard waste area should be open on full Saturdays. It is impossible for anyone who works all week to clean up their yard by 11:30 am and get to the facility-on the very few Saturdays that the area is open. If it rains that rare Saturday, well then the homeowner is out of luck. Having been a taxpayer for over 20 years, this issue has such an effect on property value, aesthetics and taxpayer satisfaction. It's such a low cost issue to have the area open on Saturday's until 3, every other week but yet high impact effect on the quality of real estate. The next hire to the public works department should include the expectation that they are expected to work 8-3 on a Saturday in order to minimize staffing issues. This is a huge roadblock in this town.
This survey makes me nervous as a taxpayer.

Q15: Cont'd

Check all sidewalks for walkability.
Studies have shown that 1/3 of our population have chemical sensitivities, although I am on the worse end of the spectrum, many many of our town residents suffer, many whom I have met in person. I hope you will consider making all town building fragrance free. That means no air fresheners, but it also means having the town employees not wear perfume or use laundry detergent with fragrance. Cleaning with hypoclorous acid, which kills covid, would be another great way to keep building accessible and improve indoor air quality for everyone.
All public meetings need to be run in a hybrid fashion so people can access them online, and the town needs to explore a means of securely conducting an online/hybrid town meeting to improve participation rates.
Town facilities should be accessible to all. There are currently some facilities (including the playground at Major Edwards) that are not. That is problematic (and illegal).
Making sure that all residents and especially youth and seniors regardless of abilities are able to safely navigate walking in town including sidewalks and playgrounds
I think the town needs to consider if all public parks, meeting locations, and buildings are accessible for anyone with disability. I have answered the survey as a asked, as a person currently without a disability. I would not consider this survey a true gage of how accessible the town makes public spaces. There should be better and many more sidewalks put in, especially on double yellow roads like Woodland. Crosswalks should be repainted and highly visible, more crosswalks should be installed on double yellow roads and near parks like Woodland! Parks and public spaces should be accessible to anyone using an assistive device for ambulation (cane, crutches, walker, scooter, wheelchair)
The sidewalks in this town are either non-existent or overflowing with growth and debris. The mowing is a joke - and they leave the crap behind. The streets are unsafe to walk along.
We need more crosswalks in this town. There are no crosswalks on maple street between route 140 and the worcester line. The same for wotcester street. Even the school bus will not stop for a pedestrian.
Yes please make the survey stop if I say I have no disabilities in never work with anyone with disabilities

Q15: Cont'd

Programs or facilities or playgrounds should not be shut down until it is in compliance for disabilities. There could be another solution until it is compliant, so that the majority can still participate. Not very logical to shut it down for everyone, just because a few cannot participate. With Covid and everything being shut down for so long, too many individuals already have depression and anxiety. To stop everything, especially for children, until compliant makes absolutely no sense. Have a table set up with projects that could be done by someone with a disability until changes are made. Something that someone with a disability could do.
Sound systems, microphones and related uses.
More side walks are needed. As an example, sections of well traveled North Main St. do not have side walks forcing pedestrains to walk in the street.
This survey is flawed. If I'm not impacted as an individual or caregiver my responses should not be lumped in with those who need accessibility.
Although it may not be part of a "Town" location or service, the Orchard Knoll Housing is not very accomodating to individuals with disabilities and specifically when it comes to providing adequate and convenient parking for persons with disabilities.
Make the print bolder on these surveys.
Allow towns people to join town meetings via zoom in the event they are unable to physically go
Plow all sidewalks in town during the winter, not just ones near the schools.
Not really as while I am handicapped, I find a way on my own to get access to everything.
Please remember that all with disabilities are not wheel chair bound
Please take care of those who need it. The town should not believe the "bare minimum" is sufficient. It is heartbreaking to hear some talk about kids in this way. Our kids have ONE playground and the town should make it spectacular for our kids.

Q15: Cont'd

It is not evident that the leadership in this town truly understand why accessibility is important and understand that civil rights are human rights for all humans disabled or not. They do not show willingness to work with residents to solve issues, instead they work had to push back and stop things from happening. Their motivations aren't to make the town better for its residents, rather it is to avoid a suit. Until the town leadership works with its residents these issues will never improve. The lack of participation and partnership is truly disheartening. What people don't understand is that the disabled population is the largest minority group of which none of us are immune. We have laws that exist and it shouldn't be a battle to get leaders in this town to follow them.
Not just physical disability, but audio and visual disabilities as well.
All children and persons of all abilities should be able to safely access public grounds and buildings. No possible reason for otherwise to occur or for there too be any question regarding ensuring this accessibility to all.
This is a benefit to ALL members of the West Boylston community and long overdue.
Town meeting at the HS baseball field is a challenge for accessibility but hopefully that will change when the meeting can be safely held in the auditorium.
Considering small things that can affect "hidden" disabilities such as dyslexia and ADHD, these effect adults as well as children
It would be nice if the town would include contact information for individual persons, administrators, offices in newsletters & how any or all can provide assistance & services to residents with a wide variety of disabilities and or access to help. Perhaps, give some general examples of who/where to call.
while I have not had an issue with accessibility, the town should work to keep all facilities in compliance with ADA and to continue to be accommodating and welcoming to all members of our community.
For some, a paper mailing would be beneficial for upcoming town news- perhaps a town newsletter similar to the one the Senior Center provides
I would like to see the town playground be accessible to all town children
Take this program seriously. I hear many with no financial limit to the changes many are looking for.
disability housing
The front lawn of the library, where the annual Book Sale is held, is currently inaccessible to a resident or guest who uses a wheelchair.