

DRAFT FOR REVIEW

**Town of Walpole
Open Space and Recreation Plan**

September 2020

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) prepared this plan on behalf of the Town of Walpole in close coordination with Walpole staff and leadership.

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Cover Image: Adams Farm photo by MAPC

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Bird Pond
Image: MAPC

Section 1: Plan Summary

The 2020 Town of Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) has been prepared to guide Town Staff, committees, boards, and commissions working to support open space, conservation, and recreation in the Walpole. The plan provides an update to the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared by the Town in 2011. A Core Group comprised of town staff and leadership guided the development of this plan. The process to develop the plan and the writing of the plan was facilitated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). MAPC is the regional planning agency serving the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. During this process, MAPC facilitated two public forums, coordinated Core Group meetings, met with staff from the Town of Walpole, and completed a community survey. All of these activities have been used to understand the goals and objectives of the community in regard to open space and recreation and each source of input has contributed to the content of this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Town of Walpole enjoys a great variety of open space, conservation and recreation resources. The resources include scenic ponds, town forest, fields and playgrounds, and trail connections, such as the regional Bay Circuit Trail. One of the most important challenges highlighted by the community survey is not the lack of resources, but the lack of knowledge about the resources available. Survey respondents reported that not knowing about resource locations or access to trails or other facilities were the biggest impediments to using Walpole's open space amenities. An inventory of all resources is included in this Open Space and Recreation Plan. The inventory serves both as a way to share knowledge about the

resources and as a foundation for the Seven-Year Action Plan of the OSRP. The Seven-Year Action Plan provides detailed steps for achieving the goals outlined below. Once approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the OSRP will open funding opportunities for the town related to open space and recreation. Throughout this process the Walpole community has confirmed the importance of open space and recreation to the town. The Community Survey received 376 responses and reaffirmed community values around open space. 77% of respondents strongly agree that preserving Walpole's open space and natural areas is important to them. The importance of conservation was underlined by 74% of respondents strongly agreeing that Walpole needs to proactively preserve what open space is left. Indicating some room for improvement, 65% of respondents strongly agree that Walpole's existing open space and recreational amenities contribute positively to overall quality of life. Defining where some of that improvement may occur, 65% of the respondents strongly agree that Walpole needs to proactively plan for the recreational needs of its residents.

A Vision Statement regarding Walpole's open space and recreation resources has been prepared through this process. That Vision Statement is as follows:

Vision Statement

Walpole's vision for Open Space and Recreation is a Town with a green open space network with walking and bike trails that connect a series of recreational fields and other community amenities, as well as provide access to natural areas and the town's abundant ponds.

The vision includes an abundance of clean

drinking water from our Town wells and other groundwater sources.

The vision includes an abundance of playing fields for youth and adults where overuse does not exist.

The vision includes clean water resources (rivers, ponds, streams, wetlands, and aquifers) for today and the future; where our ponds are clear and free of nuisance aquatic vegetation and available for fishing, boating, skating and other passive recreational uses.

This vision includes walking trails and canoe launches along the Neponset River; trails for dog walking and bridge watching; and habitat for wildlife.

This vision includes a Walpole with a mixture of the new and the old; where our most significant natural, historic, and cultural resources are saved for future generations.

The Town of Walpole has articulated goals that define the Open Space and Recreation Plan. These goals are detailed with objectives and each objective is associated with actions that can be undertaken to advance the goals and objective. The OSRP goals begin with an overarching General Goal and then have been categorized as Conservation Goals or Recreation Goals including:

General Goal

“To preserve and enhance the overall quality of the natural and cultural environment within the Town of Walpole while providing a well maintained system of parks, recreation facilities and conservation lands, trails, town forest, ponds and other lands subject to land restrictions that meet the diverse needs of the community and contribute to making Walpole a healthier community.”

Conservation Goals

- Goal 1: Protect and improve the quality of Walpole’s surface and ground water.
- Goal 2: Protect and encourage preservation of the Town’s natural and cultural resources.
- Goal 3: Maintain and manage existing Town open space land.

Recreation Goals

- Goal 4: Continue to expand recreational facilities to provide a wide variety of active recreation opportunities to encourage a healthy and active community.
- Goal 5: Maintain and manage existing recreation facilities.

Section 2: Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The Town of Walpole is a spirited community with a small town feel and community-oriented values. Walpole like many New England communities has changed over time adapting as changes in industrial and commercial needs, transportation needs, and residential needs evolved. However, parts of Walpole have changed little. The new and the old, the contemporary and the historic, are parts of Walpole's charm and form the context for this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Walpole's resources are diverse and so are its needs. Walpole has always sought to balance the need to acquire and preserve its natural resources with its needs to be fiscally responsible. The 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan seeks to maintain this balance and respond to the needs of the Town by preserving its historic, cultural, and natural treasures, by maintaining open space areas already owned, by protecting groundwater for drinking water, and by thinking ahead to provide opportunities for residents to enjoy both open space areas and recreational facilities in the future.

Why was this plan written?

The 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan was undertaken to update and renew the Town's previous 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan. While many aspects of the previous plan remain relevant and valid, this current plan updated the progress made against actions previously identified, updated the plan with current data and analysis, and reassessed the community's priorities. Another important aspect of this plan is to produce a document that will be formally approved by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Division

of Conservation Services (DCS). The previous 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan did not complete this process leaving additional grant resources unavailable to the town. This current plan will be used to complete that process of review and validation with DCS.

What is open space?

Open space is undeveloped land that is either left in its natural state or improved for use for recreation or agriculture. This land is often accessible to the public and usually without buildings or structures. Open space is typically divided into two categories – conservation lands and recreation resources.

Conservation land is usually left in its natural state and it often, but not always, open to the public. Conservation lands may include animal and plant habitats, water resources and aquifer protection, and other natural, historical or cultural features.

Recreation resources support activity. Active recreation land supports activities for team sports, tennis, swimming, golf, or other competitive sports taking place in or on developed facilities. Passive recreation is defined as any activity that can be performed outdoors with a minimum disturbance to an area's natural resources. Examples of passive recreation include hiking, picnicking, canoeing, ice-skating, cross country skiing, and informal sports on an open field. Conservation land may offer passive recreation opportunities. This Open Space and Recreation Plan defines an inventory of both active and passive recreation areas, as well as other types of open spaces that serve conservation purposes or that protect other historic or cultural features. An inventory of the Walpole open space resources is documented in Section 5.

Planning Process and Community Participation

The Town of Walpole supported the development of this plan through the guidance and supervision of a Core Group comprised of town staff and leadership. The overall process and Core Group meetings were managed and coordinated by Landis Hershey, the Town's Conservation Agent. During the process, the Core Group met regularly with MAPC staff to review and contribute to elements of the plan and to assist with community engagement. All meetings were publicly posted. The Core Group consisted of the following members (in alphabetical order by last name):

- Brendan Croak, Recreation Director
- Drew Hand, Superintendent of Highway, DPW
- Landis Hershey, Conservation Agent
- Sara Khatib, Planning Board
- Jim Johnson, Town Administrator
- Glenn Maffei, Board of Sewer and Water Commissioners and Trails Committee
- Kerri McManama, Director Council on Aging
- Justin Monta, Superintendent Parks and Cemeteries, Tree Warden
- Gary Riggott, Trails Committee
- Patrick Shields, Assistant Town Administrator
- Jack Wiley, Chair Conservation Commission and Adams Farm Committee
- Michael Yanovitch, Building Inspector



Memorial Pond
Image: MAPC

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) facilitated the process. MAPC provided project management, technical analysis, and community engagement assistance to advance the planning process and prepare the plan document. The preparation of the plan was made possible by grants from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and MAPC Technical Assistance. An Open Space and Recreation Survey was developed and posted on the Town of Walpole website and was available for over a month. The survey was well circulated and received 376 responses from community participants.

Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and other state agencies have been implementing an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy since 2002 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 because the Commonwealth realized that low to moderate income residents in densely populated older industrial areas often lack open space and recreation resources and may live near old, abandoned, and/or contaminated sites that can pose risks to public health and the environment.

Environmental justice is an integral consideration in all EEA programs, to the extent applicable and allowable by law. The Environmental Justice Executive Order No. 552 requires Secretariats to take action in promoting environmental justice. The Executive Order requires new environmental justice

strategies that promote positive impacts in EJ communities. For example, EOEEA has now amended the LAND grant program regulations to incorporate environmental justice in the award scoring system. Similarly, the Riverways and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust will work with EOEEA to develop systems for incorporating environmental justice as a criterion for awarding grants. The EOEEA also has determined to target its resources to more effectively create, restore, and maintain open spaces located in neighborhoods where EJ populations reside.

Environmental Justice Populations in Massachusetts are determined by the following criteria:

- Households earn 65% or less of the statewide household median income; or
- 25% or more of the residents are minority; or
- 25% or more of the residents are foreign-born; or
- 25% or more of the residents are lacking English language proficiency

By these criteria, 137 municipalities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts include an Environmental Justice Population, as identified through analysis by MassGIS. The Town of Walpole is not one of these communities and does not include an Environmental Justice Population. The most recent analysis completed by MassGIS (Bureau of Geographic Information), using data from the 2010 Census and ACS 2010 5-year Estimates, identifies no block groups within Walpole that meet one or more of the environmental justice criteria, including foreign-born, minority population, and income. A map of the Environmental Justice block groups in Walpole and further discussion of EJ populations in neighboring municipalities is included in Section 3: Community Setting.



Walpole Center Pool
Image: MAPC

Section 3: Community Setting

Regional Context

The Town of Walpole is located in Boston metropolitan area, southwest of Boston, in Norfolk County. The town is about 19 miles south of Boston and 26 miles north of Providence, Rhode Island. The Town of Walpole shares municipal boundaries with the towns of Dover, Westwood, Norwood, Sharon, Foxborough, Norfolk, and Medfield. Walpole is among the largest of these communities by size of population.

Interstate 95 and U.S. Route 1, both of which are located near the eastern boundary of the town, provide regional access to the town. State Routes 1A and 27 provide more direct local access to the town. State Route 1A bisects the town roughly from north to south. State Route 27 bisects the town roughly from east to west. The two state routes meet at the center of the municipality in the Town Center. The Franklin Commuter Rail Line passes through Walpole to provide regional rail access with a station in Town Center and Plimptonville, a station north of Town Center. Both stations are also part of the Foxboro Commuter Rail Line Pilot. A CSX line that runs perpendicular to the commuter rail line provides regional freight access.

Walpole's Town Center is a regional hub of economic activity that offers amenities and services to the town and surrounding communities. The Town Center is also the center of municipal facilities and services with the Town Hall, Senior Center, Public Safety, and Library. Walpole also has significant commercial and industrial development along Route 1 that serves the residents of the town and surrounding communities. These commercial and industrial establishments are

also home to a significant number of jobs that are clustered along the Route 1 corridor. In addition to these major centers of activity, the Town has a pattern of dispersed village centers including East Walpole, South Walpole, and Plimptonville that all contribute to the character, services, and amenities of the town.

Aside from these features, the remainder of the town is a mix of a variety of residential neighborhoods and areas that retain a rural character. The residential neighborhoods are densest near Town Center and East Walpole. The northern part of the town remains the most rural in character due to the Town-owned Adams Farm property and the land associated with the Norfolk County Agricultural High School.

Walpole is host to a major regional resource in the Norfolk County Agricultural High School. It enrolls over 500 students from the 28 towns in Norfolk County and is situated on 365 acres in Walpole. Walpole is also host to a state correctional facility, the Massachusetts Correctional Institution Cedar Junction. It is a maximum-security reception and diagnostic center with a medium-security component and large open space parcel.

Regional Planning Context

Walpole is one of the 101 cities and towns located within the greater Boston metropolitan region. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency, serves the region. Each municipality in the region belongs to one of eight subregions. Walpole is a member of the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC). Council membership consists of community representatives, gubernatorial appointees, and city and state agencies

that collaborate around issues of regional importance. MAPC's professional planners provide technical assistance to member communities through the development of comprehensive plans and recommendations in areas of land use, transportation, economic development, public health, environment, and more.

MAPC is currently leading a regional planning process called MetroCommon 2050 that is an update to the regional plan. The current plan, MetroFuture, was adopted in 2008 and is used by MAPC and municipalities to coordinate local planning efforts. Once completed and adopted the new regional plan will be used for this type of coordination. MetroFuture guides the work of MAPC agency-wide and every project MAPC undertakes works towards reaching the goals defined in the plan. Many of the 65 goals defined in MetroFuture are applicable to the Walpole Open Space and Recreation Plan, including:

- Goal 7 – Cities, towns, and neighborhoods will retain their sense of uniqueness and community character.
- Goal 8 – Historic resources will be preserved and enhanced.
- Goal 9 – The region's landscape will retain its distinctive green spaces and working farms.
- Goal 11 – The region will be prepared for and resilient to natural disasters and climate change.
- Goal 23 – All neighborhoods will have access to safe and well-maintained parks, community gardens, and appropriate play spaces for children and youth.
- Goal 25 – Most residents will build regular physical activity into their daily lives.
- Goal 42 – The region's agricultural economy will grow through a focus on sustainable farming and by bringing more locally produced foods to the market.

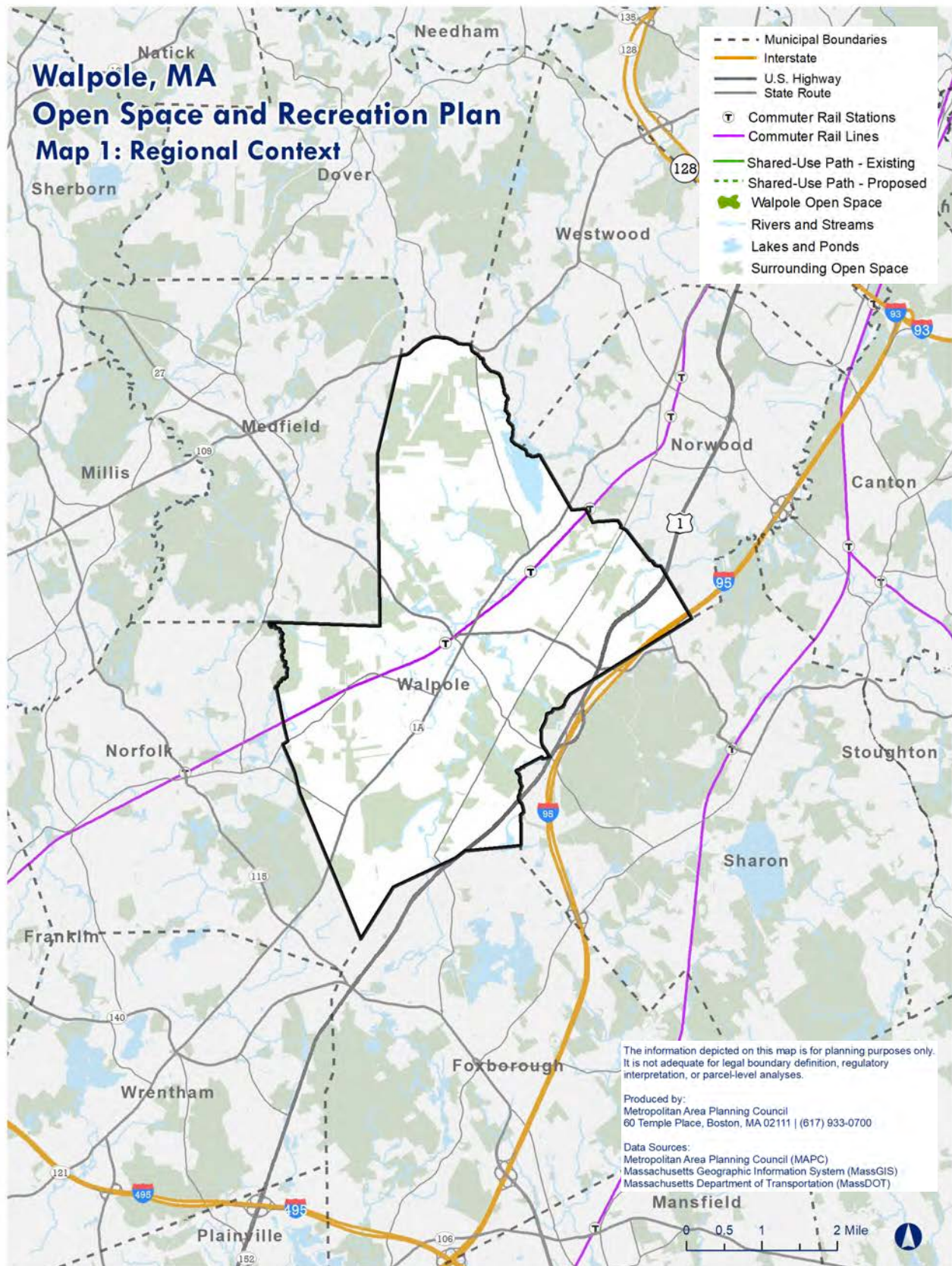
- Goal 61 – Water resources will be carefully budgeted and sustainably managed so that clean water is available for appropriate uses and development.
- Goal 62 – The region's rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds will have sufficient clean water to support healthy populations of native fish and other species, as well as recreational uses.
- Goal 63 – The ecological condition of wetlands will improve, and fewer wetlands will be lost to development.
- Goal 64 – The region will retain its biodiversity and will have healthy populations of native plants and animals, and fewer invasive species.
- Goal 65 – A robust network of protected open spaces, farms, parks, and greenways will provide wildlife habitat, ecological benefits, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.

In addition to regional planning documents from MAPC, neighboring municipalities have local plans that represent opportunities for municipal collaboration. In the immediate vicinity of Walpole, the town of Norfolk has recently completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan. A full listing of neighboring municipalities Open Space and Recreation Plans and the date of the most recently completed plan include:

- Town of Dover (2011)
- Town of Westwood (2019)
- Town of Norwood (2020)
- Town of Sharon (2010)
- Town of Foxborough (2011, an update is underway)
- Town of Norfolk (2017)
- Town of Medfield (2016)

History of Community

The history of Walpole began long before records of any type were being kept. The next section on geology points to the long history of the land and the natural resources



that this plan is intended to steward. The histories of people on that land began with the indigenous populations of the area. The area that is now called Walpole was originally territory claimed by the Neponset Native American tribe. The rocky uplands and cedar swamps provided a natural buffer between the Neponset tribes to the east and the Wampanoag and Narragansett tribes to the south and west. Artifacts from the activities of these indigenous populations have been found near Plimptonville and Hilltop Farm and a native village site has been identified along the river in South Walpole (Town of Walpole, 1987).

The first European settlers arrived between 1660 and 1670 to live on the high ground between the Neponset River and Spring Brook. They harvested cedar from the cedar swamps, or were subsistence farmers. During the Colonial Period (1676-1776) the population increased to nearly 1,000 people, most of who were engaged in agriculture during the summer and lumbering during the winter. Mills were built on the Neponset and other streams to process local products. Forges and smelters were also constructed to process bog iron. Several two-story central chimney houses and Cape Cod cottages that were built during this period still remain in the town. A lime kiln from this era has also been excavated in West Walpole (Town of Walpole, 1987).

In 1724 the town was set off from Dedham and named for Sir Robert Walpole. Walpole was an eminent English statesman and political leader. The first town meeting was held in Walpole on December 24, 1724. At this time, the town had two prominent trails that were traveled by foot or horseback and used in carting lumber from the cedar swamps to the old sawmill. The paths of the trails are distinguished to this day and were known as

“the Old Post Road” where Pleasant Street passes through East Walpole on through to Foxborough and Attleboro. The other trail passing through Walpole Center was “the Old Saw Mill Road” it followed the Medfield Trail from Dedham through Westwood to North Street and Main Street to the Walpole Common, from there it went from West Street and then to King Philip’s Road to Wrentham (History of Walpole, Maude Greaves).

During the Federal Period (1775-1830), the small mills developed into established industries, producing cotton, wool, paper and agricultural implements. The Town Center continued to develop and villages were created in South Walpole and East Walpole. The Town continued to grow with the region. Following this period, railroads developed, commercial and industrial activities grew, and the population of the town grew. Mary Bird started a small library in East Walpole in 1876. The Town Hall was completed in 1881 at a cost of \$30,000 dollars. In 1893, the town authorized to supply its inhabitants with waster, using the water of Spring Brook, Trap Hole Brook, Mill Brook, and artesian or driven wells (History of Walpole, Maude Greaves). Trolleys at the turn of the century fostered suburban development that continued into the remainder of the twentieth century with the popularization of the automobile and development of a regional highway network that offers convenient connections to Walpole afforded by Interstate 95 and Route 1 (Town of Walpole, 1987).

Demographic Context

Population Trends

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the residential population of Walpole was 24,070. The population of the town has seen continued growth over most of the past century. From 1920 to 1970 the town grew

rapidly with the most substantial growth in the 1950's when the population grew 54.44% or nearly 5,000 residents in a decade. Between 1950 and 1970, the population of the town doubled. The population has continued to grow in more recent decades, but not at that peak pace. Total town population increased by nearly 20% between 1990 and 2010.

The analysis of population trends in Walpole was developed for the recently completed update to the town's Housing Production Plan in 2019. Walpole's total population, using estimates from the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 2012-2016, 5-Year Estimates, is 24,913. This reflects an increase of 843 since 2010. This data shows that the population in Walpole is aging with most age cohorts under 55 years declining and most age cohorts over 55 years increasing in size.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has prepared population projections through 2030 for the Metropolitan Boston region. These projections are based on two scenarios: Status Quo, based on the continuation of existing rates of births, death, migration, and housing occupancy; and a Stronger Region that assumes higher population growth, greater housing demand, and a larger workforce. Specifically, the Stronger Region scenario assumes that in the coming years:

- The region will attract and retain more people, especially young adults, than it does today;
- Younger householders (born after 1980) will be more inclined toward urban living than were their predecessors, and less likely to seek out single family homes; and
- An increasing share of senior-headed households will choose to downsize from single family home to apartments and condominiums.

The Status Quo projections show that Walpole's population is to remain relatively stable through 2030, increasing by 2.9 percent. The Stronger Region projections show a 7% population increase between 2010 and 2030 with a projected population in 2030 of 26,333. In addition to projections by total population, the projections are also made by the measure of a household. A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. Household numbers increased over 30% between 1990 and 2010. The Stronger Region projections show a 20% increase in households between 2010 and 2030. The average household size in the town is 2.77, which is larger than the Massachusetts average of 2.63.

A significant portion of the total population is between the ages of 35 and 64 with a total of 10,779. The next largest age cohort is 5-19 with 4,494 residents. The combination of these two cohorts point to the large proportion of family households where these two age cohorts form the household. The next largest age cohort is 65+ with 3,570 residents. As of 2010, about 49% of people living alone in Walpole were over the age of 65 (U.S. 2010 Census).

Walpole is a relatively homogeneous municipality with an estimated 88.8 percent of its residents identifying as White (non-Hispanic Origin). The town has been diversifying over the past two decades as the percent of residents identifying as White has decreased from 95.4 percent in 2000. The next largest racial group is Asian, which has grown over the same time period from 1.1 percent in the year 2000 to 4.5 percent based on the 2016 estimates. The next largest racial group is African American, which has grown from 1.59 percent in the year 2000 to 2.5 percent based on the 2016 estimates.

Environmental Justice Population Characteristics

In 2002 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts developed an Environmental Justice Policy. Environmental justice is “based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment.”

Massachusetts uses three criteria to identify Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, including income, race and ethnicity, and English language proficiency. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) defines EJ populations as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block groups) that meet one of more of the following criteria:

- Median annual household income is at or below 65% of the statewide median income;
- 25% or more of the residents are a minority;
- 25% or more of the residents are foreign born; or
- 25% or more of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

The most recent analysis completed by MassGIS (Bureau of Geographic Information), using data from the 2010 Census and ACS 2010 5-year Estimates, identifies no areas within Walpole that meet the environmental justice criteria, including foreign-born, minority population and income. A map of the Environmental Justice Populations data in Walpole is below. Although no EJ communities exist within the municipal boundaries of Walpole, two EJ communities directly abut the municipal boundaries in the adjacent municipalities of Norwood and Sharon. The nearest clean and healthful environments in the form of publicly accessible parks may be in Walpole for these EJ communities given their proximity to the municipal boundary.

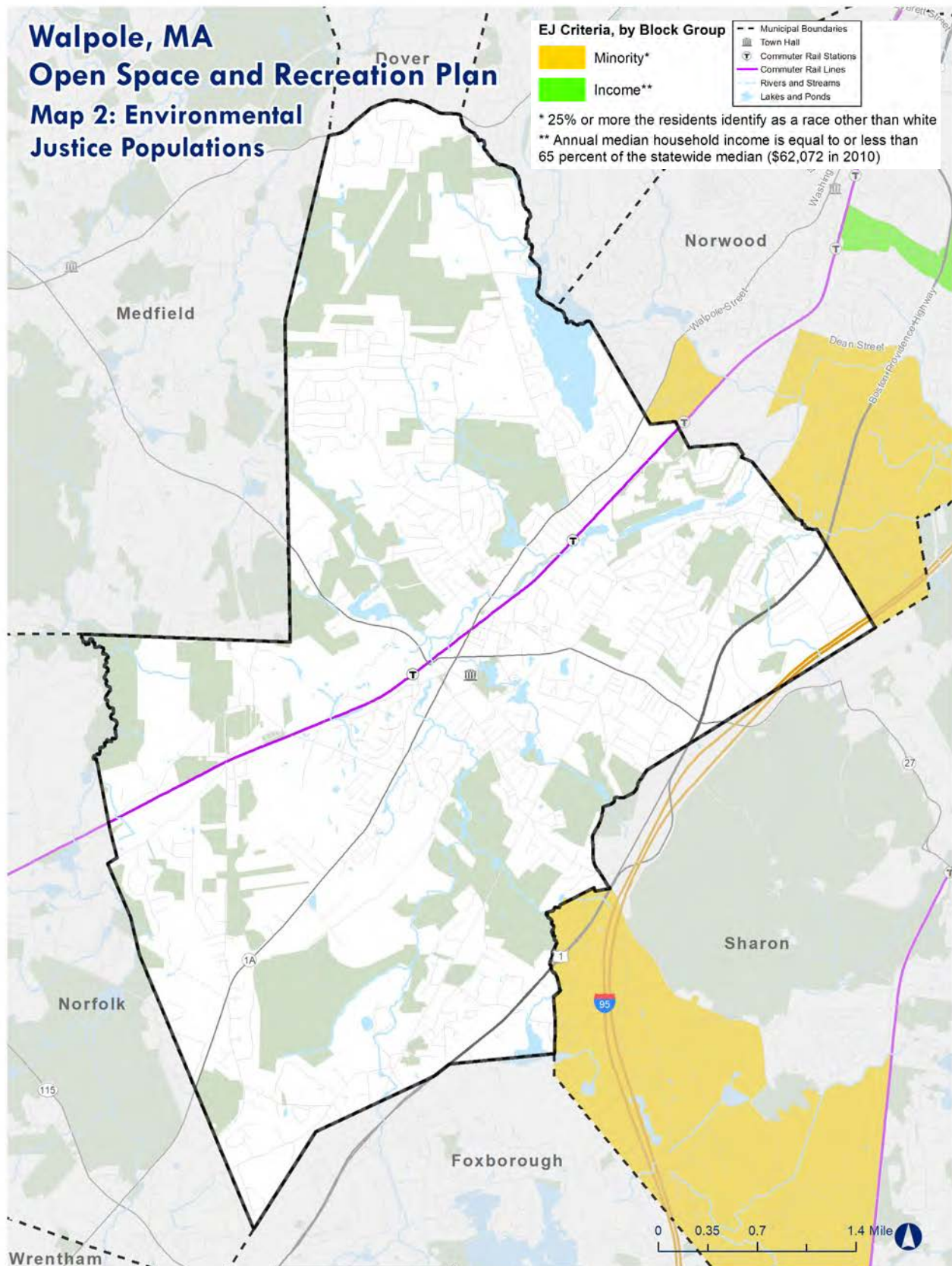
Community Characteristics

Growth and Development Patterns

MAPC characterizes Walpole as a maturing New England Town. This type of community is generally characterized by a mixed-use town center surrounded by compact neighborhoods (1/4 – 1/2 acre lots); low-density outlying areas; large amounts of vacant and potentially developable land; new growth characterized by conventional subdivision development on vacant land; and population and households that are growing rapidly and adding residential land rapidly.

The following summary of historic growth and development patterns in Walpole was sourced from the Town of Walpole’s 2008 Communitywide Historic Properties Survey. Walpole’s earliest development patterns have been characterized by a joining of natural resources and industry. The discovery of an extensive cedar swamp at the heart of the current municipality led to the establishment of a sawmill near the junction of the Neponset River and School Meadow Brook. This area is within the present Town Forest. Initially, to encourage growth, large lots of land known as “Sawmill Dividends” were granted and resulted in a geographic and socially distinct settlement.

The town’s industrial history is closely linked to the development of its villages and village centers. Much of this history is closely connected to the surface water features of the town. These features include the Elbridge Smith dam at Washington Street in South Walpole, the Clark privilege at Summer Street in South Walpole, Old Rucaduc fall near South Walpole, Blackburn privilege near the Town Forest, Union Factory dam at South Street near Common Street, Walpole Center dam at West Street, Stetson privilege near Main Street and Kendall Street, Linden Spring at



Plimpton Street, Bird upper privilege in East Walpole and Bird lower privilege in East Walpole. Bog iron deposits along these brooks supplied forges for about a century and drove settlement around these resources and mills. In addition to these industries, subsistence farming also characterized Walpole's economy at this time. Well-preserved Colonial farmhouses remain in Walpole today.

The 19th century saw the construction of two regional turnpikes through the town and the population of the town doubled. Settlement and surrounding residential development grew along these regional turnpikes, one of which is now Washington Street and concentrated in East Walpole and South Walpole. Industry and farming continued to prosper in the town and the Town Center began to take shape with the former First Parish Church, then Walpole's Unitarian Church, moving the meetinghouse to Common Street. Construction of the Norfolk County Railroad bypassed East Walpole, but included stops in Plimptonville, the town center, and West Walpole, solidifying these locations as centers of activity and commerce. Some of the industries referenced in this period of industrialists are the a manufacturer of twine and fish lines, a boot factory, Plimpton Iron Works, paper manufacturing.

In 1881, Walpole built its first Town Hall at 980 Main Street. Town Center saw further improvements with the construction of Union Station and private development around these assets. Other activity centers in town were solidified with a neighborhood of residential and institutional development complementing sizable industrial complexes in East Walpole. The Plimptonville area developed as a result of the adjacent iron works. South Walpole developed with a connection to rail service as well. Many of the patterns of development and major assets of the town were established

at the end of this late industrial period with prominent citizens donating land to the Town for the Walpole Town Forest, fountain on the town common, a high school and grammar school.

The Bird Family of East Walpole had a significant impact on the open space resources of the Town working in 1914 with the town to beautify the community, secure and improve open space, and guide future development working with town planner and landscape architect John Nolen. These efforts resulted in designing improvements for the layout and landscaping of Walpole Center, East Walpole and South Walpole, Walpole Town Forest, Memorial Park at Town Center, and Bird Park on Washington Street. The Town Forest is the third Tree Farm in the Commonwealth to be recognized by the Massachusetts Forestry Association and the first town forest in Massachusetts to be managed for timber revenue (Town of Walpole Communitywide Historic Properties Survey, 2008).

The foundational development pattern and structure of the town has remained in place as established through this historic evolution. More recent development has seen largely the growth of residential that is filling in around the town and village centers. According to the recently completed 2019 Housing Production Plan Update, the American Community Survey estimates that Walpole's population is housed in 9,207 housing units. The majority of these units, 74.9 percent, are single-family detached structures. 5.8 percent of Walpole's housing units are single-family attached structures. 4.6 percent of the housing stock is 2-unit duplexes and 3.2 percent of the housing stock is 3-unit triplexes or 4-unit structures. 11.5 percent of the housing stock is multi-family with 5 or more units. The majority of Walpole's housing stock has been built since 1950, including 51.2

percent that has been built between 1950 and 1990 and an additional 26.2 percent built from 1990 to 2010. This represents a relatively new housing stock that mirrors the population growth of the town since the 1950's.

Today over 46% of Walpole's land is comprised of residential development, the large majority of which, as noted, is single-family homes. Overall, 6,215 acres of land are dedicated to residential uses. Of that total residential area, 4,647 acres are devoted to single-family homes. Tax-exempt public and institutional land, which includes open space in the town, is the second largest land use by area accounting for about 29% of the town's area. This category of land use accounts for 3,872 acres of land in the town. The other main categories of land use include commercial or industrial land representing about 11% of the total land area or 1,548 acres; other land uses (for example, right-of-ways or water) at about 8% of the total land area or 1,143 acres; open space (Chapter 61 land) at about 3% or 361 acres; and mixed use at about 3% or 343 acres. There is relatively little vacant land that remains in the town that is free of constraints.

Recent and Anticipated Development Activity

The vacant land in Walpole, as in much of the Boston metropolitan area, continues to be subjected to development pressure. According to MassBuilds, Walpole currently has 2 projects in the development pipeline. Recently completed projects include Pennington Crossing a 55+ adult condominium community. A listing of developments under construction or recently completed in the Town is below:

Multifamily Development

- Barberry Homes – 174 affordable rental units

- Liberty Station at Walpole Center – 152 market rate rental units
- Meadowbrook – 30 market rate age-qualified ownership units
- Moose Hill – 157 affordable and market rate rental units
- Pennington Crossing – 186 market rate age-qualified ownership units
- Residences at Burns Avenue – 32 affordable home ownership units
- Renmar – 105 market rate age-qualified ownership units
- 95 West Street – 192 market rate rental units

Single-family Subdivisions

- Boyden Estates – 7 lots
- High Meadows – 6 lots
- Olmstead Estates – 11 lots
- Roscommon – 30 lots (Open Space Residential Development)

As identified in this listing of developments, residential activity in the town has shifted to the production of multifamily dwelling units. This shift is consistent with broader trends across the region. This trend in development is expected to continue given that the Town remains below the Subsidized Housing Inventory threshold of 10 percent affordable housing required under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section B. This allows developers to propose affordable housing development that does not comply with the local zoning bylaw in order to produce housing in the community. This fact combined with the ability to identify and acquire developable land in the Town will lead to an expected continuation of these development patterns.

Infrastructure is another aspect of future development to consider with anticipated activity. The Town of Walpole has a water management plan in place and should consider

integrating water conservation requirements and enhancing connections to nearby open space and trails connections to further advance open space and recreation goals with each new investment in the community.

Employment Trends

At the time of the writing of this report, it is difficult to predict where employment trends will go due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to that disruption,

the largest 25 employers in Walpole are listed below. The list is ordered by size range, then alphabetically with the size range. The employer information does not come from the Unemployment Insurance reporting system, but is provided by Infogroup in 2020 through the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance. The list of employers is relatively diversified pointing to a strong employment base in the town. As of March 2020, the labor force in the town was 13,457 with

Largest 25 Employers in Walpole			
Name	Address	Number of Employees	NAICS Code
Hollingsworth & Vose Co	Washington St	1,000-4,999	3221
Walmart Supercenter	Providence Hwy	250-499	4522
Baker Hughes	Providence Hwy #4	250-499	2389
Big Y World Class Market	Providence Hwy	100-249	4451
Filling Station	West St	100-249	5416
Hollingsworth & Vose Co	Fleet St	100-249	3221
Kohl's	Providence Hwy	100-249	4522
Longview Farm	Lincoln Rd	100-249	6241
Minuteman Trucks Inc	Providence Hwy	100-249	8111
New Pond Village	Main St #1	100-249	6233
Ninety Nine Restaurant & Pub	Providence Hwy	100-249	7225
Rolls-Royce Naval Marine Inc	Norfolk St	100-249	4412
S M Lorusso & Sons Inc	West St	100-249	3279
Walpole High School	Common St	100-249	6111
Applebee's	Providence Hwy	100-249	7225
Bird Middle School	Washington St	50-99	6111
Boston Trailer Mfg Co	Production Rd	50-99	5322
Brightview Landscape Svc	Summer St	50-99	5617
Canine Joint	Industrial Rd	50-99	6243
Chili's Grill & Bar	Providence Hwy	50-99	7225
Dental Associates of Walpole	Main St #1	50-99	6212
Elm St School Kindergarten	Elm St	50-99	6111
Fisher School	Gould St	50-99	6111
Harrington House Nurse & Rehab	Main St	50-99	6231
Johnson Middle School	Robbins Rd	50-99	6111

13,044 employed and 413 unemployed for an unemployment rate of 3.1%. Over the past 10 years, the unemployment rate in Walpole was at its low of 2.5% in 2019 and reached its high of 7.3% in 2010 (Labor Market Information LMI from the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Division). The state's average unemployment rate for 2019 was 2.9%, slightly higher than Walpole's for the same time period. The largest industries in Walpole include Construction (142 establishments), Professional and Technical Services (124), Health Care and Social Assistance (104), Other Services, Except Public Administration (90), and Retail Trade (76) (Labor Market Information LMI from the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Division). Walpole's median family income, as estimated for 2016 was \$119,338. This estimated income exceeds the Massachusetts median family income of \$99,102.

Recent Open Space Projects

The Town completed an Athletic Fields Master Plan in 2008. The plan identified the need for additional athletic fields and an implementation program to meet the future athletic field needs in the community. Town Meeting approved a request for \$500,000 to design new playing fields on a town-owned site on Route 1A as part of the Town Budget for fiscal year 2019. The same Town Meeting approved \$1 million to dredge Memorial Pond. The Memorial Pond dredging and improvement project was completed in May 2020.

Infrastructure Characteristics

Transportation Systems

The Town's primary transportation infrastructure system is the roadway network with a hierarchy of highways, state routes, and local roads. Interstate 95 and U.S. Route

1 provide regional access and State Routes 27 and 1A provide more local access that bisects the town and intersect at Town Center. The town roadway network is comprised of approximately 119 miles of town roads.

In addition to the vehicular roadway network, the Town is well-served by suburban transit. MBTA commuter rail service offers access to Boston via the Franklin Line that has two stops in Walpole. A fully available stop is located in Walpole Town Center and a limited service stop is available at the Plimptonville stop. MBTA bus service, Route 34E, is also available from Walpole Town Center to Boston. A freight rail line bisects the town and intersects the commuter rail line near the Town Center stop. Truck lines also operate between Walpole and the Boston and Logan International Airport. In addition to Logan Airport in Boston, Norwood Municipal Airport and Norfolk Airport are easily accessible from Walpole for smaller aircraft.

The Town is considered a "car-dependent" community according to Walk Score, scoring only a 33 out of 100. Walk Score measures the walkability of any address based on the distance to nearby places and the pedestrian friendliness. This score for Walpole means most errands in the town require a car. Sidewalks are present in Walpole Town Center and the Village Centers of the town. In more residential or rural areas of the town, fewer sidewalks exist.

Water Systems

Walpole is served by town groundwater. As mentioned in the history section, the town's water system was authorized in 1893 and completed in 1895 with 15 miles of water main, 2 water storage tanks, and a small well field serving 110 customers. Over the years, the system has grown to serve the entire town

with over 145 miles of water mains, 7 large water storage tanks, 2 water treatment plants, and 7 large producing wells, serving over 7,200 customers. The groundwater is drawn from two underground water formations called aquifers.

These major aquifer systems include the School Meadow Brook Aquifer located in the southern area of the town and the Mine Brook Aquifer located in the west-northwestern area of the town. The town has ten operational wells in the School Meadow Brook Aquifer and four sets of operational wells in the Mine Brook Aquifer (2018 Water Quality Annual Report).

As an alternative source of water, Walpole has interconnections with the towns of Foxborough and Norwood. These connections are located on Washington Street, Water Street, and Union Street. They have not been used in recent years, but are maintained on a regular basis to ensure their availability, if needed (2018 Water Quality Annual Report).

The Town of Walpole has improved its water treatment, storage, and distribution infrastructure to create a system that has the capacity to safely provide a water supply of 4.25 million gallons per day (mgd). This is sufficient to accommodate the projected residential population and small-scale non-residential growth. In recent years the town has placed mandatory water demand management policies in to place guidance and limitations on outdoor water use.

Wastewater/Sewer Systems

About 70% of the town's population is served by a municipal sewer system. The system of sewer mains is municipally owned, but the sewage flows into the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) regional system for treatment and disposal. A sewer

plan prepared in 1981 by a consultant, recommended expanding the sewer through the central portion of Walpole, but did not recommend extending it to the rural areas of the Town. The first three phases of the recommended expansion have been completed. The Sewer and Water Division of the Public Works Department is responsible for the administration, operation and maintenance of Walpole's utility infrastructure. About 30% of Walpole's households use septic systems. The proper maintenance of these systems is critical to the town's groundwater supply and to protect Walpole's public health, wetlands, ponds, and waterways. These septic systems provide millions of gallons of groundwater recharge that would be lost to the sewer system if more homes were connected to that system.

Long Term Development Patterns

The primary land use management tool in Walpole is the Zoning Bylaw. The Conservation Commission locally administers the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, the Town of Walpole Wetland Bylaw, and the Town of Walpole Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw. The Planning Board provides Subdivision review and approval and is a Special Permit granting authority. The Zoning Board of Appeals is a permit granting authority appointed by the Board of Selectmen to hear and decide applications for zoning variances, applications for Special Permits, and to hear and decide appeals from decisions of administrative officials made under the Zoning By-law.

Zoning Characteristics

The Town of Walpole Zoning By-law was most recently amended in May 2019. The Town of Walpole is divided into three types of zoning districts including Type 1 – Special Purpose Districts, Type 2 – Residential Districts,

and Type 3 – Non-Residence Districts. The three types of zoning districts include eleven separate zoning districts listed in order of restrictiveness, as follows:

- **Type 1 – Special Purpose Districts**

- o WP – Water Protection
- o FP – Flood Plain District
- o PSRC – Park, School, Recreation and Conservation District

- **Type 2 – Residential Districts**

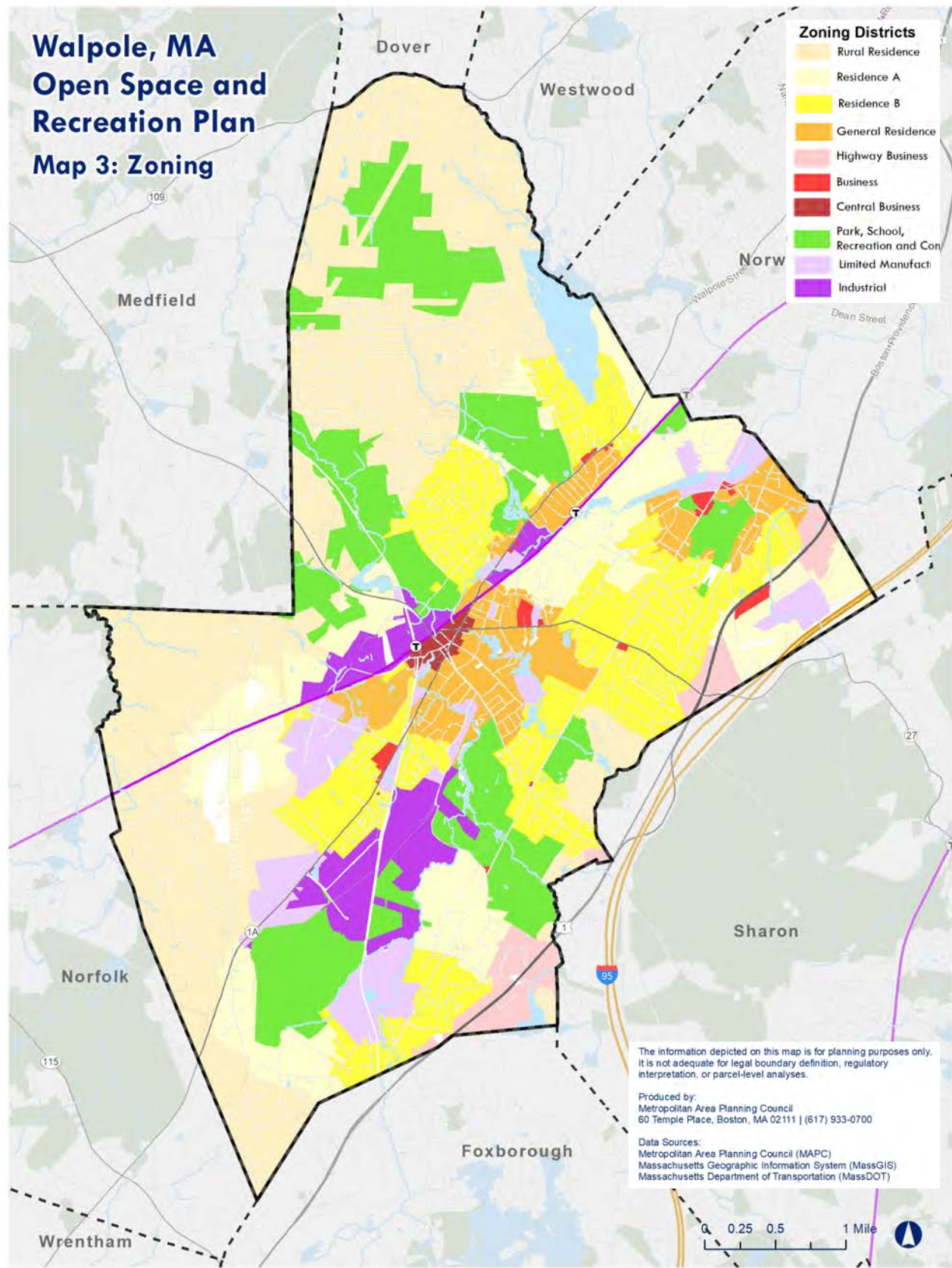
- o R – Rural Resident Districts. The primary purpose of this district is to provide an area for agriculture, open space and low density, single-family residential land use.
- o RA – Resident A District. The primary purpose of this district is to provide an area for medium low density, single-family residential land use.
- o RB – Resident B District. The primary purpose of this district is to provide an area for medium density, single-family residential land use.
- o GR – General Residence District. The purpose of this district is to provide an area for low density, single and multifamily residential land use, public, semi-public,

institutional and recreational uses and professional offices compatible with low density, residential land uses, and to provide a transition area between single family residential and commercial or industrial land uses.

- **Type 3 – Non-Residence Districts**

- o B – Business District. The purpose of this district is to accommodate a wide range of retail, office and service uses.
- o CBD – Central Business District. The purpose of this district is to provide for a center of business activity accessible by pedestrian travel, to provide a center for municipal and cultural activities and to act as a landmark and symbol of the Town.
- o LM – Limiting Manufacturing District. The purpose of this district is to provide an area for low-density wholesale and unobtrusive manufacturing uses.
- o IND – Industrial District. The purpose of this district is to provide an area for general manufacturing and wholesale uses.





Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis

Walpole is located almost entirely within the Neponset River watershed. This watershed defines many of the environmental characteristics of the municipality. The Neponset River is 30 miles long and starts near Walpole in the Town of Foxborough. The River ends in Dorchester and Quincy. The watershed includes roughly 130 square miles of land southwest of Boston. All of this land drains into the Neponset River and ultimately into the Boston Harbor. Many of the communities in the watershed get their drinking water from within its boundaries. Walpole's natural and environmental characteristics are shared with other communities in the watershed and include varying soils, forestland and wetlands, and a system of rivers, streams and water bodies. These characteristics are described in more detail in this section.

Topography, Geology, and Soils

Walpole lies within the New England Upland section of the New England province. The New England province is a physiographic province of the larger Appalachian division of eastern North America. The topography of the New England Upland is that of a maturely dissected plateau with narrow valleys that have been greatly modified by glaciation (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Geomorphic Provinces and Sections). The Topography of this section is characterized by the Neponset River and by the wetland areas adjacent to the river; further from the river the topography forms gently rolling hills with low relief and subtle breaks between major landforms (U.S. Department of Agriculture). As it passes through Walpole, the Neponset River falls 170 feet. The river enters South Walpole at an elevation of 234 feet. It falls to 180 feet at the Cedar Swamp, 140 feet at West Street, and 100 feet at the Bird

site in East Walpole. As it crosses into the Town of Norwood it is at an elevation of 64 feet. The general bedrock geology of Walpole, including the broader geographies of Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, is the Wamsutta Formation in the central portion of the municipality. The Wamsutta Formation consists of conglomerate, lithic greywacke, sandstone, and shale. In the northern and southern portions of the municipality the bedrock geology is Dedham Granite. Several areas of the town consist of Roxbury Conglomerate or "Roxbury pudding stone", a conglomerate of sandstone, siltstone, argillite, and melaphyre. Most of the town's soils consist of sand and gravel while the northern part of town is primary glacial till. (United States Geological Survey)

Soils

Walpole's soil is primarily classified as the Hinckley-Merrimac-Urban type. These soils are very deep and range from nearly level to steep. They are excessively drained and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in sandy and loamy glacial outwash overlying stratified sand and gravel, and areas of urban land (National Cooperative Soil Survey, USA 2017). These soils are usually found in major stream valleys and on coastal plains. They are generally well suited for buildings as well as roads and streets. However, because they are well drained they can pose a water pollution hazard when used for septic systems since they readily absorb, but do not adequately filter, the effluent.

North Walpole consists primarily of Woodbridge-Paxton and Canton/Charlton soil types (C series Hydrologic group). These are very deep and range from nearly level

to steep. They are moderately well drained and well drained soils formed in friable, loamy glacial till overlying a firm substratum. These soils are well suited for cultivating crops, as pasture, and as woodlands because of smooth slopes and high productivity. They are poorly suited for septic systems because the firm substratum does not readily absorb the effluent.

Landscape Character

Most areas are forested, brush land, or used as urban land. Northern red, black, white, scarlet and scrub oak, eastern white and pitch pine, eastern hemlock, gray birch, and red maple are common trees. Unimproved pasture and idle land support hardhack, little bluestem, bracken fern, sweet fern, and low bush blueberry (National Cooperative Soil Survey, USA 2017).

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

In 2008, The Town of Walpole received a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to conduct an extensive survey of the historic and cultural resources in the town. The following scenic resources and unique environments were highlighted in that survey. As noted in the History of the Community section, the historically significant planner and landscape architect, John Nolan, had a major impact on the scenic resources and unique environments of Walpole. He was retained by a five-member planning committee lead by Charles Bird to draft a town plan that resulted in many of the current scenic resources and unique environments. The committee adopted the plan in 1914 to beautify the community resulting in the Walpole Town Forest (1914-1916), Memorial Park (1923-1924) and Francis William Bird Park (1924). These efforts remain scenic town resources today.

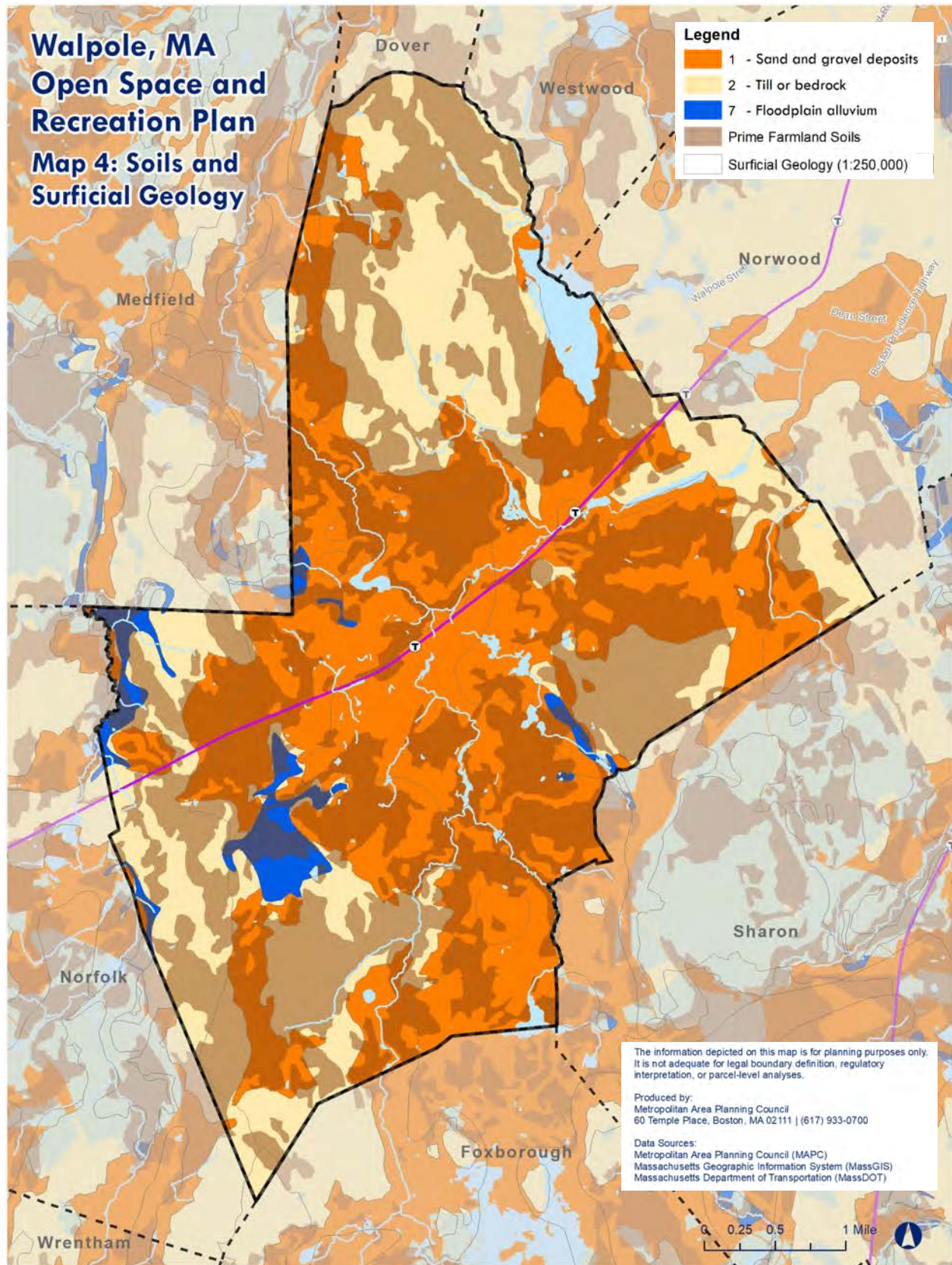
The Norfolk County Agricultural School (1916) is a scenic resource. The 97-acre school property in North Walpole includes a campus and pond located at Main and Fisher Streets, and pasture and farmland. The Neponset River, a defining feature of the town, and its tributaries and ponds are also scenic resources. These resources include Bird Pond in East Walpole, Rucaduc Pond, and Clarks Pond on Stone Street. Each of these scenic resources played an important role in the development of Walpole. The remnants of the old mills and dams are a part of the cultural landscape of Walpole and are unique environments.

Walpole has designated a number of Scenic Roads under the Massachusetts Scenic Road Act. These designated roads include North Street, High Street, Lincoln Road, Pine Street, Peach Street, Baker Street, and Lewis Avenue. It should be noted that scenic road designation does not guarantee protection of the scenic views, but does require a public hearing prior to any changes in the stone walls and large trees located within the road right-of-way.

Cultural, Archaeological, and Historic Areas

Based upon research of Dr. Curtiss Hoffman, Professor of Archaeology at Bridgewater State College referenced in the 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan, evidence of Native American activity within the present boundaries of the Town of Walpole has been found throughout the town with a concentration of activity at the elbow of the Neponset River near Plimptonville. In this location, Native Americans collected fish at the falls, made stone tools, and ground corn in stone mortars. There is also evidence that the area may have been a Native American burial ground.

According to the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), there are a total of 413 historic and cultural



resources that have been inventoried in the Town of Walpole. These include areas, buildings, homes, churches, bridges, cemeteries and other historic structures or sites. Many of the significant sites and monuments are contributed by have been contributed by the Bird family, prominent in the history of Walpole, including Bird House, Bird Park, the Bird Estate, Bird Pond, Bird Memorial Fountain, Bird Memorial Clock and Tower, and Bird School.

Water Resources

The water resources of Walpole are critically important to the community. They are the source of drinking water, a source of recreation and scenic beauty, and provide natural habitats. The Neponset River watershed, the many surface ponds and tributaries, and wetlands define the visible water resources of the town with the aquifer the most critical feature of the system underground.

Watersheds

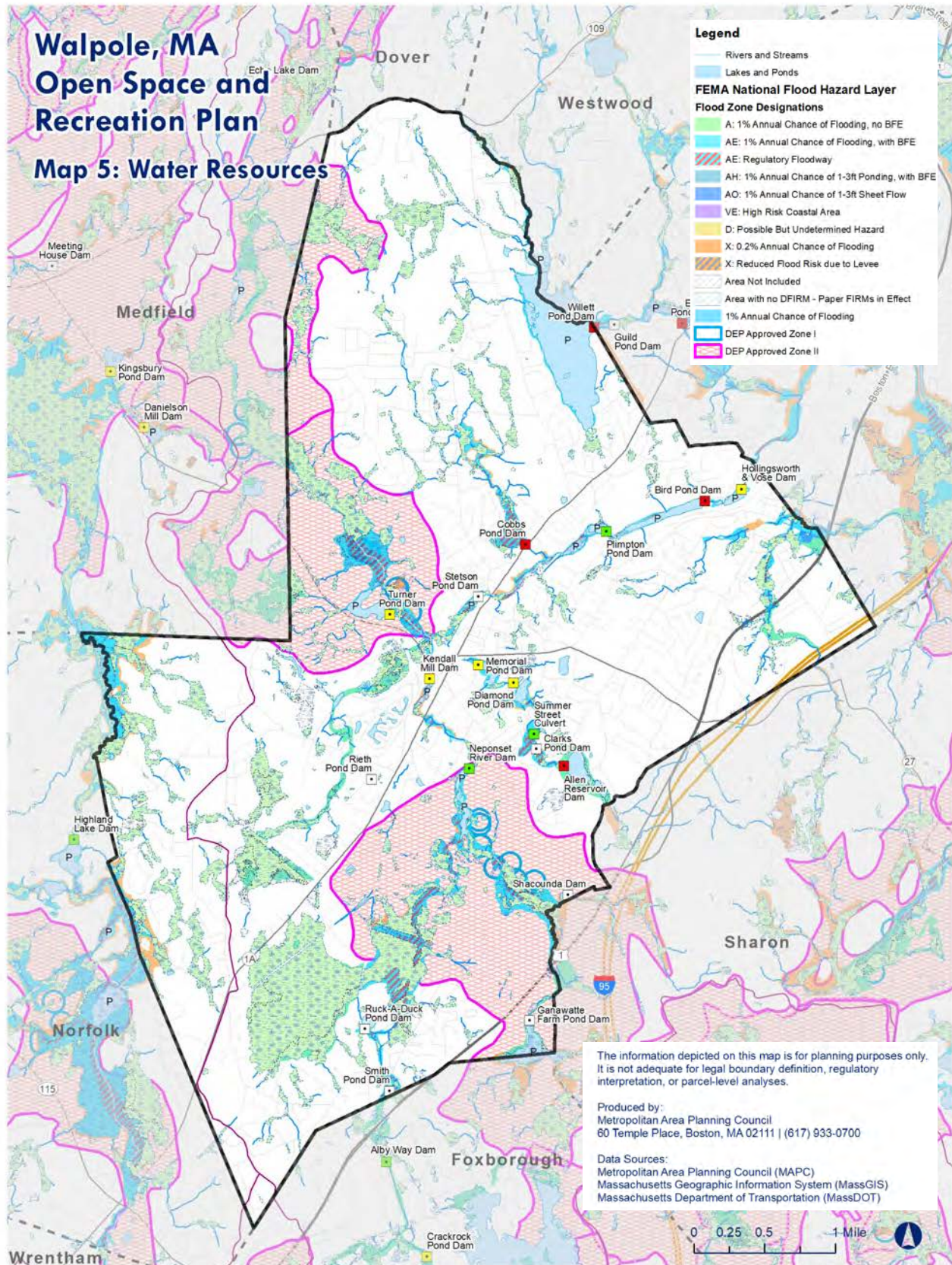
The majority of the Town of Walpole is located within the Neponset River watershed, only a small corner of the western edge is located in the Charles River watershed. The Neponset River watershed includes the Neponset River, seven tributary brooks and streams, sixteen small to large named ponds, Cedar Swamp, and bordering vegetated wetlands. The Stop River located along the western boundary of the town is located in the Charles River watershed.

Surface Water

The Neponset River flows from south to north from the Town of Foxborough through the center of Walpole and into the Town of Norwood. The river has influenced development of the Town as outlined in the History of Community section. Several dams,

that are remnants of the past industrious relationship with the river, remain along the river. The Neponset River is fed by seven tributaries in Walpole that include the Spring/Diamond Brook, School Meadow Brook, Bubbling Brook, Mine Brook, Cedar Swamp Brook, Cobbs Brook, and Traphole Brook. The brooks feed many of the Town's sixteen public and private named ponds. The majority of the ponds are man-made and created by dams. The ponds of Walpole include (based on the 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan):

- Allen Dam Pond – (public, 6 acres) a town owned and managed pond built for flood control located off of Washington Street. A town-owned earthen dam creates the impoundment of the Spring Diamond Brook. The pond is bordered by wetland and forested land. Public access and limited parking is available. Activities include fishing, ice-skating and non-motorized boating.
- Bird Pond – (private, 15 acres) a privately owned dammed pond located along the Neponset River in East Walpole. Flows under Washington Street into the Hollingsworth and Vose Pond.
- Clark's Pond – (public, 11 acres) a town owned and managed man-made pond located off Stone Street and part of the Spring/Diamond Brook. Clark's pond has two basins connected by two culverts. The small basin is three acres and the main basin is 8 acres. The Town maintains the dam at Stone Street. It flows into Diamond Pond. Clark's Pond is managed by the Town and periodically treated to control aquatic vegetation. The pond is bordered by town land and private land. Public access and parking is available. Activities include fishing, ice-skating and non-motorized boating.
- Cobb's Pond – (public, 24 acres) a town owned and managed pond located off of Main Street and Fisher Street. The pond is managed by the town and periodically



treated to control aquatic vegetation. A Pond Management Plan was drafted in 2001 for the pond. Limited public access is provided from Main Street and Cobb Terrace.

- Diamond Pond – (private, 9 acres) a privately owned pond with two basins, the main basin and small basin. It is part of the Spring Brook system with Clarks Pond flowing to Diamond Pond and Diamond Pond flowing to Memorial Pond.
- Ganawatte Pond – (private, 29 acres) a privately owned pond located off of Pine Street and bordering the Town of Foxborough. School Brook Meadow flows in a northerly direction from the pond into Walpole.
- Hollingsworth and Vose Pond – (private, 6 acres) a privately owned dammed pond located on the Neponset River and managed by the Hollingsworth and Vose Company.
- Memorial Pond – (public, 4-5 acres) a town owned and managed pond located off of School Street. A Pond Management Plan was drafted in 1998 to enhance water quality and control aquatic vegetation. The pond is treated periodically for aquatic vegetation. Town Meeting approved the dredging of Memorial Pond in 2019. Public access and parking is available on School Street. Activities include fishing, ice-skating and non-motorized boating.
- Post Office Pond (Clark Pond) – (private, 8 acres) a privately owned pond that drains to the Neponset River from the Town of Foxborough.
- Plimpton Street Pond – (private, 5 acres) a privately owned dammed pond that is located on the Neponset River flowing into Bird Pond in East Walpole.
- Rainbow Pond – (private, 3 acres) a privately owned pond located on the property of the Royal Crest Country Club.
- Rucaduc Pond – (private, acres) a privately owned manmade pond associated with the Neponset River spillway system on the old Bird Machine site in South Walpole.

• Stetson Pond – (private, 4 acres) a privately owned dammed stretch of the Neponset River located between Main Street and Robbins Road.

- Turner's Pond – (public, 13.8 acres) a town owned and managed pond located off of Elm Street. It flows to Stetson Pond. A Pond Management Plan was drafted to allow the town to treat for aquatic vegetation when needed. Residential dwellings border the pond. Public parking and access is available on Elm Street. Activities include fishing, ice-skating and non-motorized boating.
- Walpole Country Club Allen Pond – (private, 16 acres) a privately owned pond located on the grounds of the Walpole Country Club. Fed by Spring Brook and drains to the larger Allen Pond dam.
- Willet Pond/Pettes – (private, 200 acres) a privately owned pond that is predominantly owned and managed by the Neponset River Land Holdings Association. Located along the boundary with the Town of Norwood and the Town of Westwood. It is created by an earthen dam and fed by Bubbling Brook.

The town-owned dams are listed below. The Town Engineer works with Dam Safety to review the dams every 2 or 5 years depending on the dam. The town-owned dams include the Allen Dam, Cobb's Pond Dam, Memorial Pond Dam, Neponset River Dam, and Turner Pond Dam. Past interest has occurred in filing for a grant to remove abutments along the Neponset River in the Town Forest. However, it was determined not to move forward due to opposition to the potential removal. One non-town-owned land is the Bird Dam with its owner unknown.

Wetlands

A variety of wetland types are found in Walpole and range from deciduous and coniferous forested wetlands, scrub-shrub

wetlands, meadow or fen wetlands, emergent marsh, and aquatic deep or shallow marsh wetlands associated with Walpole's rivers, streams and ponds. The deciduous and coniferous-forested wetlands are dominated by woody vegetation that is 20 feet in height or more. The scrub-shrub wetland is dominated by woody vegetation that is under 20-feet in height. The meadow or fen wetland is dominated by herbaceous vegetation. The town has several notable wetland areas that have played a major role in the historic development of the town, Cedar Swamp, Mine Brook, and wetlands associated with the Neponset River and its tributaries.

- **Cedar Swamp** – Cedar Swamp is the largest wetland in town and located in South Walpole. Cedar Swamp is a forested wetland characterized by Atlantic White Cedar trees and Red Maple swamp. The Natural Heritage Program lists Cedar Swamp as a Priority Habitat. This area is within the Town's primary recharge area for drinking water and is an important resource to protect. At the northerly end of the swamp the land use is dominated by industrial uses located along Main Street and within the industrial park. The southerly edge of the swamp is mostly residential uses. A tributary from the swamp flows to the Neponset River in the area of the old Bird Machine factory.

- **Mine Brook** – Another significant wetland system in the town borders Mine Brook. Mine Brook is a tributary to the Neponset River. The area below Mine Brook is one of two aquifers that supply the town's public drinking water. This area extends from the Town of Medfield border to Robbins Road. This wetland system consists of floodplain, Red Maple swamp, open water, and emergent swamp areas. It is bordered predominantly by residential subdivisions.

- **Other Riparian Wetland Systems** – Considerable vegetative wetland systems exist

along the Neponset River, School Meadow Brook, Spring Brook, and Traphole Brook. The area below School Meadow Brook is the second of two aquifers that supply the town's public drinking water.

Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Areas

The Town of Walpole's drinking water supply is provided by two ground water aquifers. The two aquifers are the School Meadow Brook Aquifer and the Mine Brook Aquifer. The Town's Zoning Bylaw's Water Resource Protection Overlay Districts regulate uses within these areas. The Water Resource Protection Overlay Districts consist of Zone 1 - 400-foot well radius, Area 1 – Area of Pumping Influence, Area 2 – Potential Water Supply, Area 3 – Primary Recharge Area and Area 4 – Secondary Recharge Area.

Flood Hazard Areas

The Flood Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) are used to determine the 1% annual chance floodplain in Walpole and other municipalities throughout the nation. The main flood plan areas are along the Neponset River and its tributaries. In addition to the federal floodplain mapping through FEMA, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act provides regulations around the protection and management of floodplain areas. The Walpole Conservation Commission locally enforces these regulations. The Walpole Wetlands Protection Bylaw and the Town's Zoning Bylaw also protect floodplain areas with local regulations in Walpole.

Vegetation

There are five major plant communities that are found within the Town of Walpole. These plant communities include Upland Oak-Hickory, Upland Northern Hardwood, Mixed Hardwood-Softwood, Coniferous, and Bottom

Land or Wetland Hardwood. Below is a more detailed description of these major plant communities:

- Upland Oak-Hickory – this plant community includes White, Red, and Scarlet Oak and Hickory. Often scattered within the community is Pitch Pine while the understory vegetation includes Flowering Dogwood, Sassafras, and Greenbrier.
- Upland Northern Hardwood – this plant community includes Sugar Maple, Northern Red Oak, Black Cherry, American Beech, White Ash, White Birch, Quaking Aspen, Basswood, and Red Maple. The understory vegetation consists of Arrowwood, Wild Raisin, Sarsaparilla, Sprouts of American Chestnut, Spicebush, Witch Hazel, and Greenbrier.
- Mixed Hardwood-Softwood – this plant community consists of mixed stands of deciduous and coniferous trees. White Pine, American Beech, Red Maple, Red Oak, Pitch Pine, Sugar Maple, Eastern Hemlock, White Ash, Grey Birch, American Elm, and Basswood compose this mixture. The understory plants common in this community are Arrowwood, Honeysuckle, Wild Raisin, Spicebush, Greenbrier, Wild Grape, Shining Clubmoss, Partridge Berry, Sassafras, Sarsaparilla, Wintergreen, and Witch Hazel.
- Coniferous – this plant community consists of White Pine, Eastern Hemlock, Scotch Pine, Pitch Pine, Norway Spruce, Red Pine, and White Spruce. This community has very few understory plants that occasionally consist of Greenbrier and Honeysuckle.
- Bottom Land or Wetland Hardwood – this plant community consists of American Elm, Red Maple, Swamp White Oak, Green Ash, and an occasional Black Willow. Scattered understory plants consist of Highbush Blueberry, Greenbrier, Witch Hazel, Silky Dogwood, Northern Arrowwood, Spicebush, Honeysuckle, and Speckled Alder. Other vegetated areas consist of wet meadows, shallow marsh and

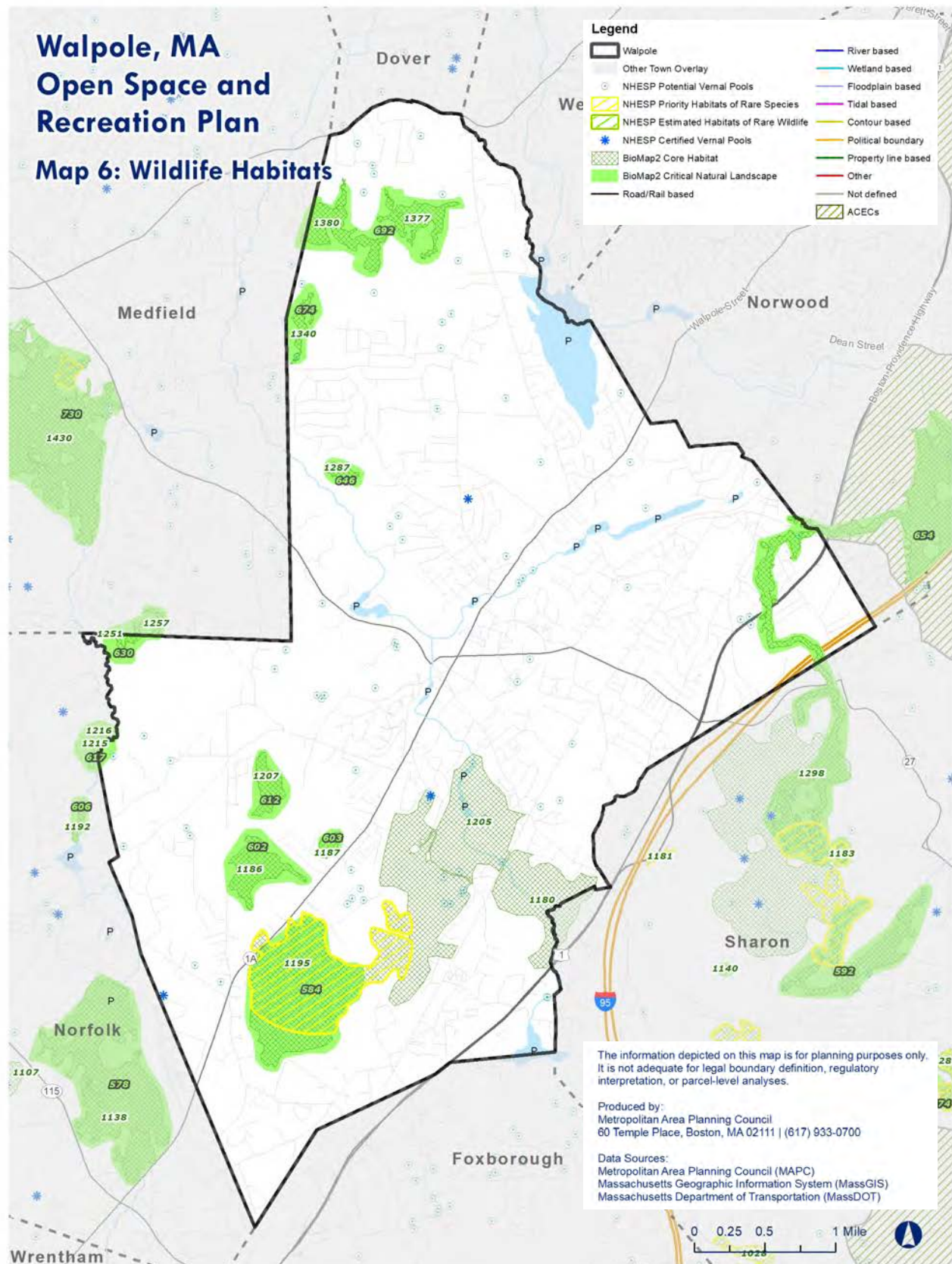
deep marsh communities dominated by Pickerelweed, Northern Arrowhead, Cattails, Joe-Pye-Weed, Sweet Flag, Woolgrass, Sedges, and Varied Bulrush.

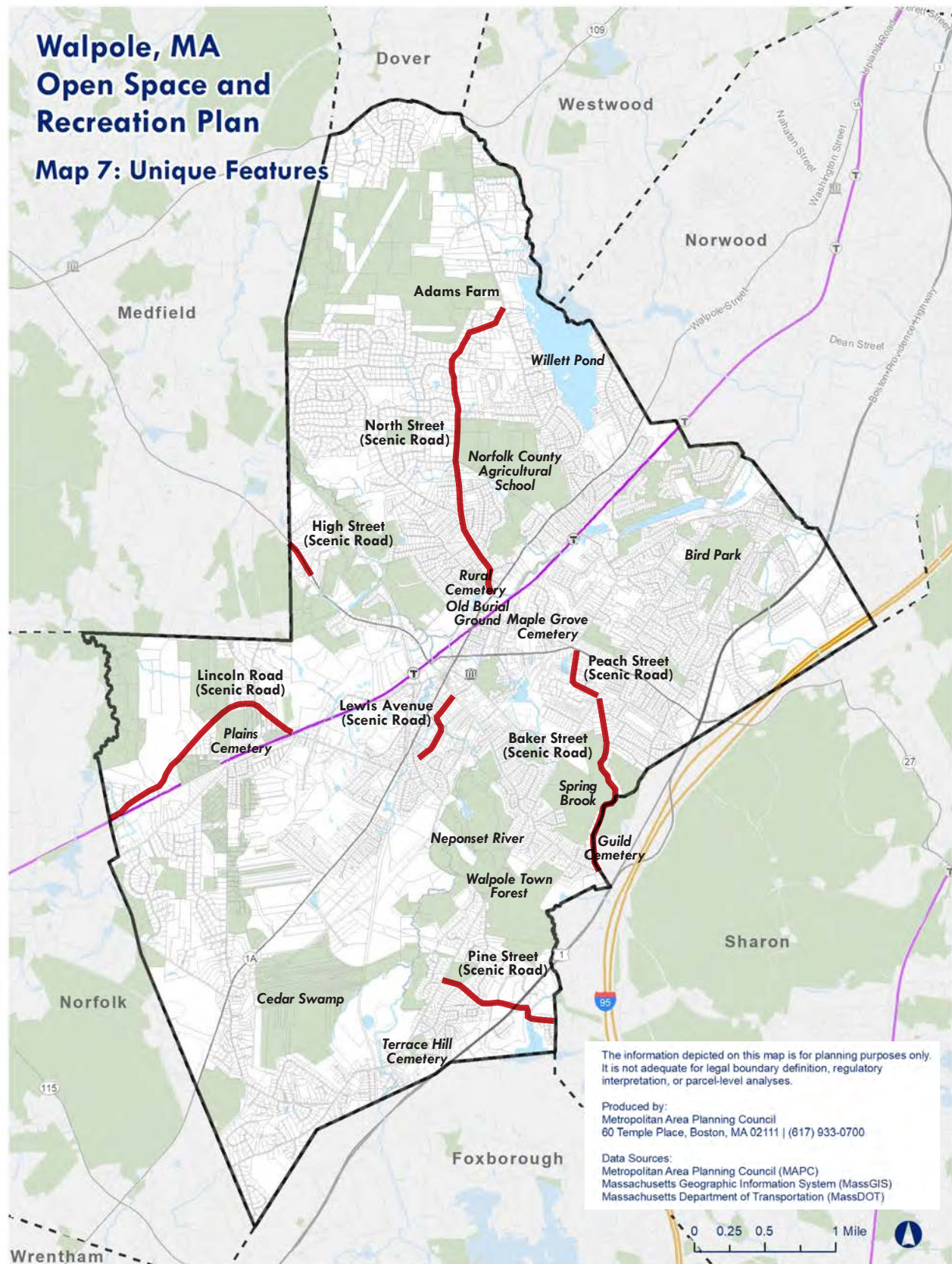
The Priority Habitat area of the Cedar Swamp has its own plant community description as Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program lists it as a Priority Habitat and Estimated Habitats of Endangered Species. This program describes the plant community as a forested wetland with a dense primarily evergreen canopy, a deciduous layer, and a sparse herb layer dominated by mosses. The inland Atlantic White Cedar Swamp located in Walpole is mixed with Hemlock, Red Maple, and Yellow Birch, a shrub layer of Sweet Pepper Bush, and Winterberry, and an understory of Cinnamon Fern, Starflower, and Common Mayflower.

Fisheries and Wildlife

The Town of Walpole has several important wildlife habitats and corridors within its borders. Some of these areas and corridors are contained within the town, while others are part of broader regional systems that cross many municipal boundaries. The wildlife habitats include Willet Pond, the Norfolk Agriculture School land, Adams Farm, and Cedar Swamp. The corridors include the Neponset River that runs from the Town of Foxborough, through Walpole, to the Town of Norwood and beyond, the several railroad and electrical right-of-ways that cross the town, Mine Brook that connects to the Charles River watershed, and Core Habitat Area of Traphole Brook as it passes from the Town of Norwood into the Town of Walpole.

Examples of the pipeline and transmission corridors that represent natural habitat connections between several significant habitat areas in the town are listed here. All such





corridors should be considered in planning and evaluating development projects and open space acquisitions to enhance continuous corridors and natural connections between habitat areas. Pipeline and transmission line corridors connect School Meadow Brook with the Neponset River and beyond to an old railroad bed. This railroad bed then passes through Cedar Swamp and then to the Town of Wrentham creating links to other core habitat areas and both Crocker Pond and Lake Pearl. Another pipeline corridor links both Cedar Swamp and the Cedar Hill area with sites in the Town of Medfield north of Noon Hill and the Charles River Watershed. Willett Pond is linked to core habitat areas in the Town of Dover and the Town of Westwood south of Noanment Pond.

Rare and Endangered Species

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife lists one mapped Priority Habitat and Estimated Habitat area in Walpole. This Priority Habitat area is Cedar Swamp.

The MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program maintains a list of all documented Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA)-listed species observations in Massachusetts. This list is searchable by Town. The table listing species observed in Walpole is listed below.

Environmental Challenges

The environmental challenges that the Town of Walpole has been responding to include protection of groundwater sources, degradation of surface water and wetland environments, pond sedimentation, invasive plant management, and management of brownfield sites.

Protection of Groundwater Sources

Wastewater systems near groundwater sources are always a concern for protecting and managing drinking water quality. Adjacent malfunctioning septic systems, cracked sewer pipes, or incorrectly installed systems can leak untreated wastewater and sewage into streams, either through over-the-ground flow or through the ground and its groundwater

Table – Rare and threatened species observed in Walpole				
Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Adder's Tongue Fern	Ophioglossum pusillum	Vascular Plant	Threatened	Historic (1908)
Blanding's Turtle	Emydoidea blandingii	Reptile	Threatened	2010
Blue-spotted Salamander (complex)	Ambystoma laterale pop. 1	Amphibian	Special Concern	Historic (1992)
Great Laurel	Rhododendron maximum	Vascular Plant	Threatened	Historic (1908)
Green Adder's-mouth	Malaxis unifolia	Vascular Plant	Threatened	Historic (1899)
Hessel's Hairstreak	Callophrys hesseli	Butterfly/Moth	Special Concern	2016

systems. This waste acts like fertilizer potentially leading to excessive growth of algae and plants. Raw sewage also adds to viruses and bacteria in the water. Toxins in the wastewater can also affect the natural inhabitants of the stream. Excessive water use and groundwater withdrawal is another risk that must be managed to protect groundwater sources. Excessive use patterns can lower a stream's water level significantly, even to the point of drying the streambed, leading to poor water quality and wildlife habitats, particularly for aquatic species.

Degradation of Surface Water and Wetland Environments

Walpole's dams have been listed previously in this section. A dam on a waterway obstructs the movement and migration of aquatic wildlife, such as fish. It slows the flow of the water, causing the water to drop the sand, dirt, nutrients, and contaminants that it is carrying. This dropping of materials is sedimentation and it occurs behind the dam. This can cause an imbalance in nutrient load – too many above the dam and too few below the dam. The slow moving water also has more time to warm, decreasing the oxygen that is carried in the water, and reducing the ability to support aquatic life.

Sedimentation can also cause waterway turbidity that makes it more difficult to see through the water and for aquatic organisms to catch prey. Stormwater, roadway runoff, and erosion can all contribute to sedimentation. The application of road salts during the winter also degrades the surface water and wetland quality for areas adjacent to the roadway. In 2019, the Town of Walpole received a grant from the Baker-Polito Administration to conduct field data collection and analysis for a culvert replacement project on Traphole Brook, a designated coldwater fishery

resource. Upgrading the culvert improves fish and wildlife passage and water quality in the area.

Another contributing factor to the degradation of these environments is the removal of native vegetation from the edges of the waterways. This may also contribute to the warming of water, reduces the filtering of pollutants, and decreases the food supply for aquatic organisms.

Pond Sedimentation

Although pond management plans have been created over the years, and aquatic vegetation has been actively managed, several of the Town's ponds are shallow due to many years of sedimentation. The sedimentation of ponds created shallower ponds with little deep water. The shallow ponds warm faster with less deep cold-water areas and contribute to the growth of more nuisance vegetation. Resolving this problem is difficult because it is both costly and time consuming to permit these activities. The town has made progress in addressing the on-going sedimentation of the ponds by installing a variety of stormwater structures and recently completed the dredging of Memorial Pond to directly address this issue.

Invasive Plant Management

Invasive plants are on-going maintenance issues to rid the nuisance vegetation along the Town's rivers, ponds, and streams. Invasive plant species such as Purple Loosestrife, Glossy Buckthorn, Bitter-sweet Vine, Grape Vine, and Bamboo are prominent along Walpole's rivers and ponds. The ponds have a variety of nuisance aquatic vegetation that ranges from Water Chestnuts, Fanwort, Watershield, Coontail, Watermilfoil, and White and Yellow Water Lilies. Nuisance aquatic vegetation can cause issues for fishing and ice-skating.

Management of Brownfield Sites

Walpole has been actively pursuing redevelopment and cleanup activities for existing Brownfield sites, abandoned, or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. A search for waste site and reportable releases on the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs website shows 186 sites in Walpole dating back to 1987. Ten of these sites remain classified as “open sites.” All others are classified as “closed sites” or “closed sites with use limitation.” These ten open sites include the Blackburn and Union Privileges site on South Street, 1065 Main Street, 1340 Main Street, 1425 Main Street, 1900 Main Street, 2000 Main Street, 935 East Street, 55 West Street, 642 Boston Providence Highway, and a Rhoades Avenue site near Bird Park.

Efforts have been underway since 1999 when the Town received an EPA Brownfield Assessment Demonstration Grant Pilot. More recently, in 2015 the Town completed a brownfield covenant with the Massachusetts Attorney General to allow for the redevelopment of a 26-acre parcel of property located on the Blackburn Union Superfund site. The site, which had been heavily contaminated with asbestos, lead, arsenic, and nickel has been redeveloped into a new Police Station, Senior Center, and parking facility. The project also redeveloped an abandoned rail bed on the property into a walking trail that links the site to the High School and Town Forest, enhancing the open space available for public use. The Trails Committee and other leaders in Town have expressed a goal to extend this trail connection underneath Common Street in the future.





Spring Brook Conservation Area

Image: MAPC

Section 5: Inventory of Lands

Introduction to the Inventory of Conservation and Recreation Lands

This section contains an inventory of all conservation, open space, and recreation lands, both publicly and privately owned. Information on ownership, management responsibility, level of protection, and primary use of the property are included in this inventory. The inventoried properties are shown in the inventory table are depicted on the Open Space and Recreation Inventory Map. The open space and recreation resources of a community are critically important to its quality of life, community character, and environmental health. The protection and stewardship of these assets via past, future, and current Open Space and Recreation Plans is a crucial element in retaining the importance of these resources as a community is shaped by other changes.

Open space has many different definitions and can mean different things to different people. The Open Space and Recreation Planners Workbook defines open space as “conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks and amenities such as small parks, green buffers along roadways or any open area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation.” A broader definition of open space can and should include undeveloped land with conservation or recreation potential. Open space and parks are critical to the quality of life in a community and provide a wide range of benefits. Access to parks can contribute public health benefits, enhanced property values, and improved environmental quality including air quality, water quality, and the mitigation of urban heat island effects. Public health benefits

include reducing the incidence of childhood obesity by providing safe places for kids to be active. Open spaces and parks also serve as important meeting places for neighbors to get to know one another.

Determining where the open space and recreation land is located in Walpole is a foundation for fully understanding what resources the town has and how best to manage them. Once this land has been identified, it is important to ensure its protection and maintenance into the future to help guarantee that many more generations of residents can enjoy them. According to the Division of Conservation Services, land within a community is permanently protected if it is managed by the local Conservation Commission or Recreation Department, by Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) agencies, by a nonprofit land trust, or if the municipality received state or federal monies for the improvement or purchase of the land. Typically, land owned by other Town departments or the local school system should not be presumed to be permanently protected, but is partially protected by the nature of its ownership.

Inventory of Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Resources

The inventory matrix below includes 40 town-owned areas covering about 2,266 acres of open space, recreation, conservation, and cemetery land owned and managed by the Town of Walpole. These sites comprise the primary open space and recreation resources of the town. Additional publicly or privately owned sites exist in the town for conservation, flood protection, or agriculture and include 9 areas covering about 1,143 acres. An

additional 762 acres of privately owned land is restricted for agriculture or conservation purposes.

The column headings of the inventory are defined below:

- **Site Key** – Provides an easy reference number for identification in the OSRP table.
- **Name** - Names the open space property.
- **Ownership** - Indicates the owner of the property.
- **Management Agency** - Indicates the agency or department responsible for managing and maintaining the property. May be the same as the owner.
- **Current Use** - Details the main use for the site and its facilities.
- **Condition** - Identifies the site condition (excellent, good, fair, or poor). Town-owned open spaces and parks were surveyed to obtain a general sense of the condition of the property and any facilities located on it.
- **Recreation Potential** - Indicates the recreational use of sites. For land not used for recreational purposes, potential for recreational activities is identified. Conservation land is generally deemed to have limited recreation potential except for passive recreation such as hiking and walking. Small tax title lands and sensitive environmental areas are presumed to have no recreational potential.
- **Public Access** - Indicates if the public can access the site. All Town- and State-owned sites are publicly accessible.
- **Type of Public Grant Accepted** - Identifies the funds used for the acquisition of or upgrades to the site, including grant funds.
- **Zoning District** - Identifies the zoning district in which the site is located.
- **Degree of Protection** - Indicates if the site, either by virtue of its ownership, existence of deed restrictions, or by the fact that it has

received state or federal funding, is protected from conversion to some other use. Levels of protection are described in more detail later in this section.

- **Acres** - Gives the site's acreage or an approximation in cases where specific information was not attainable. One acre is 43,560 square feet or 1/640 of a square mile.

Levels of Protection

The level of protection for a particular parcel of land is important information for future planning purposes, it is important to identify the degree of protection for each parcel that has been identified as open space or conservation land in the inventory. Knowing the level of protection may highlight the susceptibility of some properties, which are assumed to be open space, to development. This knowledge can help in identifying those open space and recreation areas that require additional effort in order to ensure their long-term preservation and protection. The following designations regarding level of protection are used in the inventory.

Permanently Protected

Properties in this category are considered to be legally protected for perpetuity. A site is considered to be permanently protected if it is recorded in a deed or other official document. Such land is to be considered protected in perpetuity if it is deeded to and managed by the local Conservation Commission or Parks & Recreation Department and thereby subject to Article 97, if it is subject to a conservation restriction or easement in perpetuity, if it is owned by one of the state's conservation agencies and thereby subject to Article 97, if it is owned by a nonprofit land trust, or if the municipality received federal or state assistance for the purchase or improvement of the property. Private land is considered

protected if it has a deed restriction in perpetuity or a conservation restriction has been placed on it.

Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects publicly-owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes. In order for a property to be sold, transferred, or converted to a different use, Article 97 requires a 2/3 vote obtained at Town Meeting in support of the disposition, a 2/3 vote of the Massachusetts Legislature in support of the disposition, demonstration of compliance with applicable funding sources, and the municipality must file an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). Given the extensive nature of this process and the rarity with which the disposition process occurs, these public recreation and conservation lands are assumed to be permanently protected.

Limited Protection

Properties in this category are considered to have limited protection if they are legally protected for less than perpetuity (i.e. short term conservation restriction) or temporarily protected through an existing functional use. These lands could be developed for other uses when their protection expires or when their functional use is no longer necessary or viable. In general, this includes all land owned by other municipal departments or commissions, including lands managed by the Town for non-recreational purposes.

No Protection

Properties in this category are considered to have no legal protection. This category includes land that is totally unprotected by any legal or functional means. This land is usually privately owned and could be sold without restriction at any time for another use.



Walpole Center Playground
Image: MAPC

Table – Inventory of Lands

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
Town-owned Land – Parks											
1	Bird Middle School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use fields for baseball, softball and soccer with middle school and parking	Good	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RB	Permanent	7.6
2	Boyden School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use field, playground and pool with parking	Good	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RB	Permanent	9.6
3	Elm Street School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use fields and nature trails	Fair	No changes anticipated	Full	None	R	Permanent	11.5
4	Fisher School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use field, playground, nature trails and pond with parking	Fair	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	0.9
5	Walpole High School Fields	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use fields, synthetic turf field with track and bleachers with baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse and football fields with parking	Excellent	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	8.6
6	Jarvis Farm (former Sharon Day Camp)	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Baseball, basketball, tennis, and multipurpose fields	Fair	Potential for passive recreation	Full	None	RB/R	Permanent	24.7
7	Johnson Middle School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use fields with parking	Good	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	5.5
8	Memorial Park/Joe Morgan Field	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Baseball field, playground, pool, pond, and trails and parking	Good	No changes anticipated	Full	None	GR	Permanent	20.0

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
9	Mylod Street Fields	Town of Walpole	Walpole Youth Soccer	Soccer Field with parking	Good	No Changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	13.0
10	Old Fisher	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use field with parking	Fair	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	1.0
11	Old Post Road School	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use field with baseball, basketball court, and playground with parking	Fair	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RB	Permanent	1.5
12	Stone Field	Town of Walpole	Recreation Department	Multi-use fields with baseball and Blackburn Hall with parking	Good	No changes anticipated	Full	None	GR	Permanent	2.1
Town-owned Land - Conservation											
13	Adams Farm	Town of Walpole (157.8 acres), Conservation Commission (121 acres)	Adams Farm Committee	Network of trails, community garden, barn with parking	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	Article 97, State Grant	PSRC	Permanent (Conserv. Restriction)	278.8
14	Allen Pond Dam/Spring	Town of Walpole (15.2 acres), Conservation Commission (41.2 acres)	Conservation Commission, Ponds Committee	Trail, pond, fishing, skating, and flood control with parking	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	Article 97	PSRC	Permanent	56.3
15	Bay Circuit Trail	Varies	Trails Committee	Trail	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	Varies	Varies	Permanent	NA
16	Boyd School Nature Trail	Town of Walpole	Walpole Schools, Trails Committee	Trail	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	R	Permanent	5.7
17	Bird Estate	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission, Trails Committee	Trail	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	30

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
18	Cedar Swamp	Town of Walpole (133.4 acres), Conservation Commission (263.4 acres)	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	396.7
19	Clarks Pond	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission, Ponds Committee	Nature trail with parking	Not Applicable	Potential additional trail	Full	Article 97	RB	Permanent	14.2
20	Cobbs Pond	Town of Walpole (20 acres), Conservation Commission (32.8 acres)	Conservation Commission, Ponds Committee	Nature trail, pond, fishing with parking	Not Applicable	Potential additional trail	Full	Article 97	PSRC	Permanent	52.8
21	Elm Street School/ Goetz Trails	Town of Walpole (7.5 acres), Conservation Commission (87.3 acres)	Conservation Commission, Trails Committee	Nature trails with parking	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	R/PSRC	Permanent	94.8
22	Johnson to Elm Trail	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission, Trails Committee	Nature trail between two schools	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	NA
23	Lincoln Road/ West	Town of Walpole (46.4 acres), Conservation Commission (163 acres)	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	R	Permanent	210.4
24	Memorial Pond	Town of Walpole	Conservation Commission, Ponds Committee	Pond, conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	GR	Permanent	24.1

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
25	Mine Brook	Town of Walpole (40.5 acres), Conservation Commission (170.2 acres)	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	210.7
26	Moosehill Road/ Coney Street	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RA/RB	Permanent	17.8
27	Moosehill Road/ Chieftain Way	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RA	Permanent	9.3
28	Neponset River	Town of Walpole (18.2 acres), Conservation Commission (153.7 acres)	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	Varies	Permanent	171.9
29	North Walpole	Town of Walpole (17.5 acres), Conservation Commission (71.8 acres)	Conservation Commission	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	88.1
30	Old Fisher	Town of Walpole	Town of Walpole	Conservation	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	1.3
31	Pinnacle Point	Town of Walpole (3.4 acres), Conservation Commission (14.2 acres)	Conservation Commission, Trails Committee	Trails	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	RA	Permanent	17.9

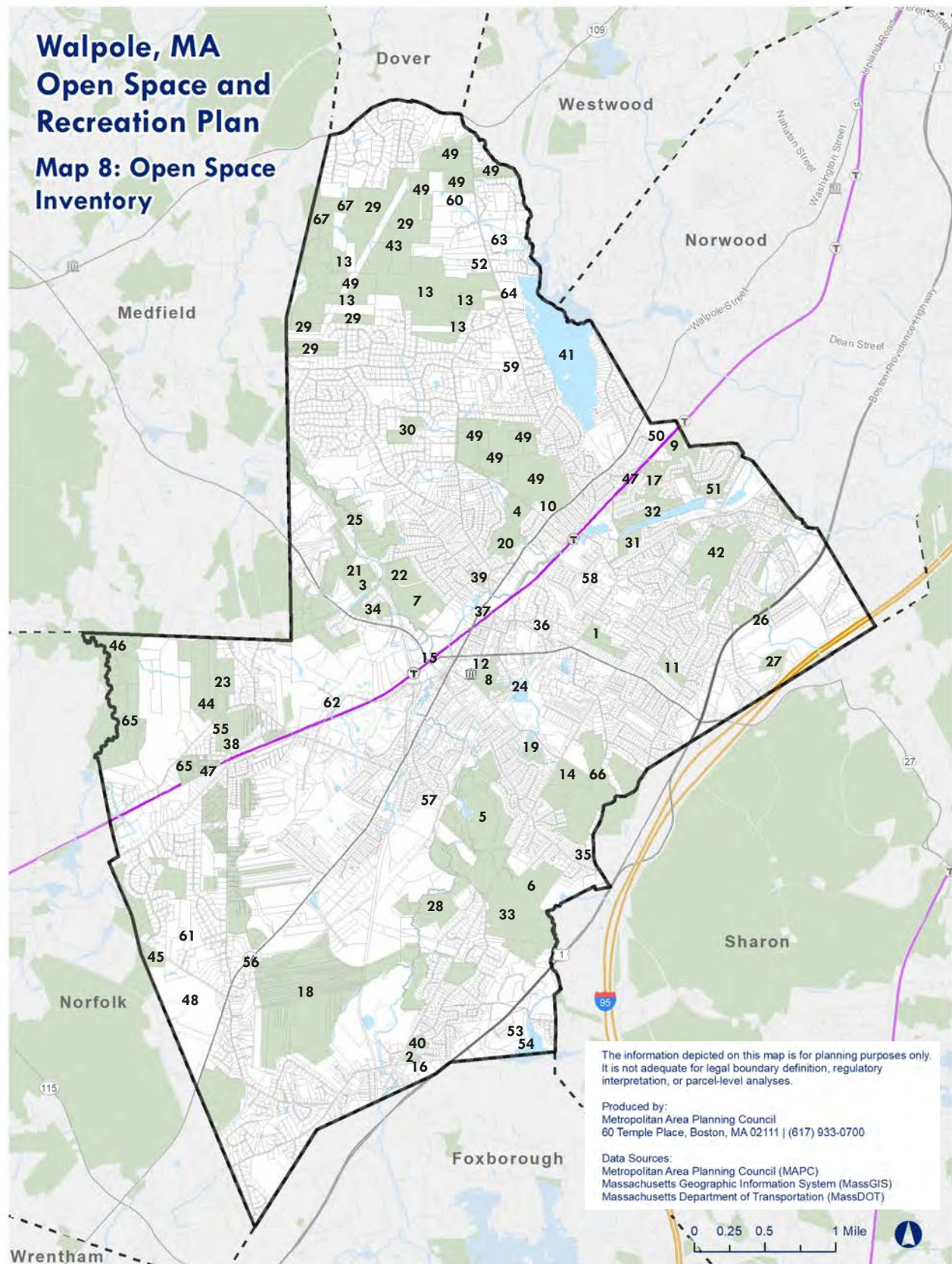
Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
32	Plimpton/Endean Trail	Town of Walpole	Conservation Commission, Trails Committee	Trail with parking	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	Article 97	RA	Permanent (Conserv. Restriction)	NA
33	Town Forest	Town of Walpole (334 acres), Conservation Commission (32 acres)	Town Forest Committee	Trails, canoe launch	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	365
34	Turner Pond	Conservation Commission	Conservation Commission, Ponds Committee	Trail, pond, parking	Not Applicable	No changes anticipated	Full	None	PSRC/RA	Permanent	71.9
Town-owned Land - Cemeteries											
35	Guild Cemetery	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	RB	Permanent	0.3
36	Maple Grove Cemetery	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	GR/RA	Permanent	5.6
37	Old Burial Ground	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	GR	Permanent	0.5
38	Plains Cemetery	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	RA	Permanent	1.5
39	Rural Cemetery	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	RB/GR	Permanent	6.5
40	Terrace Hill Cemetery	Town of Walpole	Public Works – Parks and Cemeteries	Cemetery	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	RB	Permanent	8.2

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
Non-Profit Land - Conservation											
41	Willett Pond	Neponset River Land Holding Association	Friends of Willett Pond	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Public access and use of pond for passive use	None	R/RA/RB	Permanent (easement)	190.8
42	Francis William Bird Park	Trustees of Reservations	Trustees of Reservations	Trails with parking, conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	94.5
43	Patten Memorial Forest and Warren Forest (Adams Farm Area)	New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF)	NEFF	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Full	None	PSRC	Permanent	66.2
44	Longview Farm	Home for Little Wanderers	Home for Little Wanderers	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Unconfirmed	None	R	Permanent	159
Other Public and Unprotected Lands											
45	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Office of the Commissioner	Office of the Commissioner	Forested, prison	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	Varies	None	104
46	Federal	US Bureau of Land Management	US Bureau of Land Management	Forested	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	R/CBD	None	25.8
47	MBTA	Mass. Bay Transport. Authority	MBTA	Transportation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	Varies	None	27.5

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
48	MWRA	Mass. Water Resources Authority	MWRA	Forested	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	R	Limited	94
49	Norfolk County Agricultural School	Norfolk County Agricultural School	Norfolk County Agricultural School	Agricultural fields, baseball field and school	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Passive rec.	None	PSRC/R	Limited	353.0
Privately-owned Land - Conservation											
50	Christina Drive	Neponset Farm Home-owners Trust	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Conserv. Restriction (CR) to Con Comm	13.1
51	Estates at Walpole (former Bird property)	Estates at Walpole Homeowners	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – CR to Con Comm	70.0
52	Falcone Easement	Iris Falcone	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	R	Limited – Conserv. Easement to Adams Farm trail	15.0
53	Ganawattee Pond	Hilltop Land LLC C/O The Gatehouse Companies	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	HBD/R	Limited – Conserv. Restriction (CR) to Con Comm	18.6
54	Ganawattee Farm Pond	Ganawattee Farm Preserve Homeowners Association	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	R	Limited – Conserv. Easement to Con Comm	14.3

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
55	Glengreen Farm/ Cynthia Green Trail	John and Jennifer Lee	Trustees of Reservations	Residential	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	R	Limited – Chapter 61A/CR to Trustees of Reserv.	49.3
56	Main Street 2040-2050	Gary Whitehouse	Not Applicable	Light industrial	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	LM	Limited – Conserv. Easement for Access to Cedar Swamp Conserv. Comm. Land	1.6
57	Sterling Lane Condominium	7 Sterling Lane Family Trust	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	LM	Limited – Conserv. Easement to Con Comm	1.4
58	Wisteria Ways II Subdivision	Wisteria Ways II Homeowners Trust	Not Applicable	Conservation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Conserv. Restriction to Con Comm	38.7
Privately-owned Land - Restricted											
59	George and Jeanne Ellis	George and Jeanne Ellis	Not Applicable	Tillage	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61A	12.1
60	Catherine Kennedy	Catherine Kennedy	Not Applicable	Cropland	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61A	18.3
61	Frank Mahoney	Frank Mahoney	Not Applicable	Animal farm	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61A	23

Site Key	Name	Ownership	Management Agency	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Public Grant Accepted	Zoning District	Degree of Protection	Acres
62	SM Lorusso & Sons	SM Lorusso	Not Applicable	Recreation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61B	113.2
63	Tracy Firth	Tracy Firth	Not Applicable	Horse Farm	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61A	24
64	Jessamine Warren	Jessamine Warren	Not Applicable	Pasture	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61A	12.1
65	Walpole Sportman's Club	Walpole Sportman's Club	Not Applicable	Gun club/ wooded area	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61B	100.3
66	Walpole Country Club	Walpole Country Club	Not Applicable	Golf club	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61B	28.2
67	Westwood Gun Club	Westwood Gun Club	Not Applicable	Gun club	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	None	None	RA	Limited – Chapter 61B	36.3





Bird Park
Image: MAPC

Section 6: Community Vision

Description of the Process

The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan Core Group guided the development of Walpole's Open Space and Recreation Plan. This Core Group was comprised of representatives from relevant Town departments, boards, and committees. The work of the OSRP Core Group was coordinated and supported by the Town's Conservation Agent. Throughout the planning process, the Core Group and Town staff met regularly with the lead project planner from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to review and contribute to elements of the plan and assist with community engagement strategies. In order to incorporate perspectives from the larger Walpole community, MAPC and the Town of Walpole organized and hosted public forums on October 29, 2019 and September 2020, and administered an online survey.

October 2019 Public Forum

At the October forum, the lead project planner introduced the purpose and utility of Open Space and Recreation Plans and presented an overview of Walpole's demographics, land use patterns, and highlights of the Town's open space and recreation properties. Following the presentation, members of the public in attendance were invited to ask questions and provide comments about the presentation and the OSRP. Following the Q&A, the forum shifted to an open house style event, with a series of engagement activities available for interested attendees to complete.

At the first station, attendees were presented with a series of boards presenting the OSRP's five subject specific goals (See Section 8: Goals and Objectives) and asked to indicate

whether each Goal should be considered a Low, Medium, or High priority by using dot voting. Participants were also provided space to write any additional goals they would like to see incorporated into the plan. Attendees were invited to complete a "SWOT" analysis of Walpole's open space resources, with space to indicate the system's Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as identify Opportunities and Threats.

Participants were also invited to review a map displaying the inventory of open space and recreation properties throughout Walpole and indicate areas that they enjoy visiting or highlight areas that present challenges. Post-its were available to provide park specific comments or suggestions. Please see Section 7: Analysis of Needs for summary and analysis of the received feedback and Appendix C for complete vote tallies and responses.

Open Space and Recreation Survey

In order to provide a wider array of residents, beyond those able to attend the community forums, an opportunity to weigh in on the process MAPC also developed a survey for broad distribution. The survey was administered through an online service, and was widely publicized through a variety of channels, including posting a link to the Town website and social media accounts, posting flyers at Town Hall, and emailing a notice to the Recreation Departments email list. Responses were accepted from January 31, 2020 through February 28, 2020. The survey received 375 responses in total. Please see Section 7: Analysis of Needs for summary and analysis of the received feedback and Appendix C for complete vote tallies and responses.

Walpole Open Space and Recreation Vision Statement

Walpole's vision for Open Space and Recreation is a Town with a green open space network with walking and bike trails that connect a series of recreational fields and other community amenities, as well as provide access to natural areas and the town's abundant ponds.

The vision includes an abundance of clean drinking water from our Town wells and other groundwater sources.

The vision includes an abundance of playing fields for youth and adults where overuse does not exist.

The vision includes clean water resources (rivers, ponds, streams, wetlands, and aquifers) for today and the future; where our ponds are clear and free of nuisance aquatic vegetation and available for fishing, boating, skating and other passive recreational uses.

This vision includes walking trails and canoe launches along the Neponset River; trails for dog walking and bridge watching; and habitat for wildlife.

This vision includes a Walpole with a mixture of the new and the old; where our most significant natural, historic, and cultural resources are saved for future generations.

Section 7: Analysis of Needs

Introduction

The analysis of Walpole open space and recreation needs is based on information received from the Core Group guiding the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan community meetings, the Open Space and Recreation Plan community survey, the Athletic Fields Master Plan, townwide Master Plan, and the previous 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan. As it was presented in that plan, the analysis of needs is grouped into three categories: resource protection, community needs, and management needs. The resource protection needs relate to the natural systems and resources of the town. Community needs relate to the needs of the population of the town and the quality of life and lifestyle expectations for the residents of Walpole. The management needs relate to how resources should be managed and what procedures and routines should be in place to ensure appropriate stewardship of these resources over time.

Resource Protection

The protection of the Town's existing and future water supply is a fundamental need for the town. The source of Walpole's drinking water is aquifer-based and drawn on by public wells. The aquifer water supply is finite and irreplaceable and the quality and quantity of water in the aquifer needs to be protected. This protection is achieved both through groundwater protection and treatment in the Mine Brook River and School Meadow Brook watersheds and through the conservation of water resources through regulation and education. The town will need to continue to devote resources to protecting drinking water and respond to any threats identified to the quality or quantity through the continuous and

careful monitoring of drinking water resources in the town.

In addition to protecting drinking water, these protection measures benefit groundwater more generally and help to improve the quality of water in surface water features. The town's many ponds, rivers and streams are a continuous focus for maintenance and improvement efforts to assist the health and functioning of these natural systems. The need to reduce wastewater contamination, reduce invasive species, and decrease sedimentation should be monitored and managed for each of the town's ponds, rivers, and streams.

The surface water features in the Town are important habitats. Habitat areas include streams, wetlands, river corridors, forests, agricultural lands, and other natural areas that are of critical importance in the Town and should remain a continued focus for resource protection. Protecting and restoring a water body, river, or stream benefits drinking water, groundwater and habitat for both fish and wildlife. These areas include important habitat land including BioMap2 Core and Critical Natural Landscape areas and riparian buffers. The riparian buffers include land within 100 feet of surface waters and wetlands. The conservation and protection of these lands enhances biodiversity and this resource protection remains a priority for the town; particularly as more land continues to face development pressure and may result in fragmented habitat areas.

The review and approval of future development remains an important aspect of resource protection. The Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of

Appeals and other committees and boards responsible for project review should continue to review projects from a perspective of resource protection and define conditions for approval that will improve conservation and resource protection efforts in the town. This may include placing conservation restrictions on critical portions of a development parcel to add to contiguous conservation areas that may be adjacent to the parcel, to encourage low impact development techniques as part of the development plan, and to retain natural features on the property.

Community Needs

Although the town continues to strengthen a network of convenient and amenity-rich open space resources, many groups within the community may not feel included or accommodated in park and recreation spaces. It is important that a network of parks and open spaces provides active and healthy recreational opportunities for all users and that a sense of inclusiveness and welcome be strengthened among the open space resources. In Walpole, the demographics and community discussion point to seniors among an aging population as the group most in need of future accommodation and a thoughtful approach to inclusiveness.

Seniors, particularly seniors that live alone, are more vulnerable to social isolation and physical and mental health issues that may be associated with lower levels of activity. Parks, open space, and recreational facilities provide settings where seniors can interact with others, get active and exercise, and enjoy the benefits and beauty of the natural surroundings. The needs of elderly residents are generally divided between the younger, more active senior citizens and the less active elderly population that may be experiencing declining health. The less active elderly generally

require therapeutic recreational services. More active seniors tend to enjoy walking, golf, tennis and swimming, among other activities. Elderly residents may also have similar needs as residents with disabilities in terms of their ability to access recreation facilities.

As it relates to open space areas, seniors and those with disabilities would benefit from more benches, paved pathways around parks, sufficient shade trees, and more age-appropriate and low impact active programming such as bocce, shuffleboard, corn hole, and walking groups may be uses that enhance a sense of welcome and inclusion.

Different age and user groups within the town each have particularized needs, which can be accommodated through good planning and design. The use of Universal Design concepts in parks provides accessibility for those with disabilities and enables multi-generational play between youth, teens and seniors. The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University provides the following seven guiding principles for Universal Design:

1. Equitable Use: The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities
2. Flexibility in Use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Simple and Intuitive Use: Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. Perceptible Information: The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities
5. Tolerance for Error: The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6. Low Physical Effort: The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7. Size and Space for Approach and Use: Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

In order to best serve elderly residents and other individuals with mobility limitations, both the design of internal park layouts and the pathways residents take to access them should be evaluated and improved as necessary. Following these principles helps to reinforce inclusion and welcoming for all users in the community. This type of inclusion can build a

sense of social cohesion where individuals of different backgrounds and abilities are coming together to share community spaces and resources. As all users feel more welcomed and invited to participate, the more likely positive social interactions become in these community spaces. This has the potential to create benefits for social cohesion in the community and creates opportunities for other benefits, such as intergenerational spaces.

Another way to enhance access to the open space resources in Walpole is to enhance the multimodal connections to them. Walpole is already connected to the Bay Circuit Trail, one of the great multimodal trails in the region. The Bay Circuit is a permanent recreation



trail and greenway extending through 37 towns in Eastern Massachusetts, linking parks and open spaces in fifty-seven Boston area communities. In Walpole it passes through Walpole Center. As the town considers changes and improvements in Walpole Center, the Bay Circuit Trail should be considered as part of the transportation network improvements. The trail could be improved in the center by improving signage and prominence of the linear park and trail connection.

There are several other great opportunities to create linear park or rail trail connections that would cross the municipality and connect many of the existing open space resources. The first opportunity is the rail corridor along the Framingham and Foxboro Line. This line is shared with an active single-track freight line, but the corridor may have enough width and space to accommodate a multimodal path. The corridor runs through the center of town and could potentially provide a multimodal connection from Walpole to Gillette Stadium and Medfield.

The Walpole-Wrentham Line is another opportunity to connect local assets and make regional connections through a linear park on a past rail corridor. Locally, this linear park could connect assets such as Bird Park, the middle school, high school, and the Town Forest. This corridor is occasionally interrupted by development, but could be continued using multimodal paths on adjacent residential streets. Future development along the corridor should be required to retain its continuity through a preserved right-of-way or easement. A local friends group, The Friends of the King Philip Greenway, has been formed to support the trail to advance the utilization of the abandoned railroad corridor in Walpole, Norfolk, Wrentham, Plainville and North Attleboro.

The Warner Trail is a hiking trail perpendicular to the Bay Circuit running southwest to northeast and connecting Rhode Island to Sharon MA. Efforts to connect this trail to the north with the Skyline Trail in the Blue Hills would also make this a local entry to regional connections. Near Moose Hill the trail merges with the Bay Circuit into Walpole. Each of these trail locations and opportunities are mapped with a conceptual routing as part of MAPC's Landline plan and trail map.

Increasing the awareness of open space resources in another way to enhance knowledge and access for the community. The Town has open space resources that are underused because people are unaware of the available resources. This fact was evident and confirmed by the number of respondents to the Open Space and Recreation Survey that were not aware of many of the open space resources in town. The existing open space areas need signs, maps, and programs to publicize what resources are available and the amenities offered there.

Management Needs

Management and maintenance of the Town's open space and recreation facilities is critical to the safe functioning and continuing operation of these resources. Maintaining safe and secure access by residents, maintenance of grounds and fields, maintenance of equipment, and protection against vandalism are a few of the many issues which must be addressed on a routine schedule by the Town. Funding for management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities must be evaluated when considering the acquisition of future resources.

The athletic fields in town are in high demand and have the potential to become overused. This may lead to maintenance issues with

the fields unable to rest in many locations to allow for restoration and re-growth of natural turf. Some of the town's fields need drainage improvements to mitigate impacts of overuse. Poor turf coverage and compacted soil from overuse can lead to hazardous conditions for players. The current field conditions cannot support the ongoing level of play. Many of these needs have been outlined in detail in the Walpole Fields Master Plan (2008) and the Town has made great progress in implementing these recommendations. Increasing maintenance for town fields is a continuing need that is addressed in detail in the fields master plan.

The Community Resilience Building Workshop (2019) also identified management needs to respond to the top four hazards that

were identified by the community including flooding, snow and ice, extreme temperatures, and severe weather events. The workshop identified several concerns relevant to this plan and management needs. The town's culverts and bridges need to be assessed with a detailed inventory to catalogue the size and condition of culverts town-wide. The town-owned dams are regulated under State dam safety regulations. Less information is available for private dams in the town. The town has conducted improvements and repairs to the Allen Reservoir Dam and Turner Pond Dam. The Willet Pond Dam and Bird Pond Dam are known dams of concern that may require improvements or repairs. The feasibility of dam removals has not yet been explored in depth, but may become an important future management consideration as



dam maintenance and function may become stressed with increased precipitation and flooding related to climate change.

Increased maintenance of the stormwater management systems in the town may become necessary with increased precipitation and flooding related to climate change. The town's many waterbodies require continued attention and management efforts. In 2018, Walpole completed a pond restoration project on Memorial Pond to dredge the pond's sediment. Other ponds may have similar requirements and benefit from management efforts to reduce excessive weed growth, sedimentation to improve the environmental conditions and water storage capacity of these

water features. The management of invasive plant species is another important routine to follow on the town's open space network. The management of pests and disease control is another important aspect of the open space and conservation lands of the town. Mosquitoes and ticks with vector-borne diseases are increasing in the state and require proactive management to control. Walpole is a voluntary member of the Norfolk County Mosquito District.

The Community Resilience Building Workshop identified the following top recommendations to improve resilience in Walpole. Additional information for these recommendations can be found in the Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings (2019).



Stone Field
Image: MAPC

The highest priority items that are also management needs in the town include:

- Conduct a field inventory of culverts and bridges
- Complete a town-wide dam inventory and assessment of all public and private dams
- Develop a comprehensive tree, forest and land management program
- Assess additional mosquito/tick/pest control options
- Increase maintenance of catch basins, conveyances and detention ponds

The moderate priority recommendations that are also management needs include:

- Perform a risk assessment of the drinking water pump stations
- Study the possibility of expanding the public water supply
- Provide public education and outreach to private well owners
- Continue to offer extended hours at public swimming pools
- Pursue opportunities to fund open space acquisition
- Continue to develop relationship with the Neponset River Watershed Association
- Develop a management plan for Great Cedar Swamp

The lower priority recommendations that are also management needs include:

- Review and revise town stormwater regulations
- Explore options to make town fields and parks more resilient to weather impacts
- Pursue opportunities to fund pond restoration
- Develop comprehensive invasive species management
- Update mapping of town-owned open space and parks

Finally, athletic field needs and field use policy recommendations are outlined in the Town of Walpole Athletic Fields Master Plan (2008) as part of the report's Needs Assessment in

Section 4 and site analysis, field use policy and recommendations in Section 5. The town has made progress in improving management and maintenance procedures for athletic fields, but recommendations of the report remain relevant.

One aspect of open space and field management that is not addressed in these previous documents are considerations pertaining to COVID-19. The town's open space resources are likely seeing renewed use and attention during the time of social distancing and outdoors activity. Signage defining safe use of open spaces should be posted at the entry of each open space resource highlighting the importance of safe social distancing and the use of facemasks. For specific resources, other management procedures may be necessary, such as limiting the number of people present at one time, placing social distancing markers on the ground where people may wait for the use of an amenity, or marking painted circles on a lawn to show proper social distancing.

While these management procedures are shifting dynamically as more is learned about safe and responsible activities during these pandemic times, it is important to highlight them as an important management consideration. One example of this type of responsive and innovative approach to the use of open space resources during this time is the town's Open Space Pilot Program in Walpole Center during the summer of 2020. Street segments in the town center were closed to expand pedestrian space around the town common and to provide additional space for socially distanced seating in an outdoor environment.



Mylod Fields
Image: MAPC

Section 8: Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Core Group decided to accept and reinforce its commitment to the goals and objectives articulated in the Town of Walpole's previous 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan by using those goals as the basis for this plan. Walpole residents also reviewed, commented upon, and affirmed these goals at the October 2019 public forum. These goals were designed to reflect the values of the Walpole community and guide the community's efforts to protect and enhance its open space and recreation resources.

Goals for 2020–2027

The following six goals and their associated objectives guide the 2020-2027 Plan and are based on a review of the Town's recent accomplishments, as well as its vision for the future. The "General Goal" articulates the overarching value statement informing the OSRP, and the remaining goals are categorized between "Conservation Goals" and "Recreation Goals". A series of objectives are nested beneath each of the subjective specific goals, which provide general areas of action to advance the related goal.

These goals and objectives provide a continuing mandate for the Town to pursue a coordinated and focused plan for protecting and managing open space and recreation facilities, working collaboratively within the Town and throughout the region to ensure continued protection of our fragile environment, and enhancing public awareness, accessibility, and stewardship of the existing open space resources in Walpole. The numbering and categorization of the Goals and Objectives do not reflect their priority level. All are important components of the

Town's overall open space and recreation activities.

Overall Goal

"Preserve and enhance the overall quality of the natural and cultural environment within the Town of Walpole while providing a well maintained system of parks, recreation facilities and conservation lands, trails, town forest, ponds and other lands subject to land restrictions that meet the diverse needs of the community and make Walpole a healthier community."

Conservation Goals

- Goal 1: Protect and improve the quality of Walpole's surface and ground water.
- Objective 1.1: Protect, preserve and maintain existing and potential groundwater supply, ground water recharge areas and watershed protection districts within the Town to ensure sufficient quantities and quality of safe drinking water.
- Objective 1.2: Enhance the Town's ability to protect rivers, streams, ponds, floodplains and other land important for water quality and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities for passive and active recreational uses.
- Goal 2: Protect and encourage preservation of the Town's natural and cultural resources.
- Objective 2.1: Preserve, through acquisition and/or regulatory strategies, unique and/or ecologically valuable and significant land areas.
- Objective 2.2: Encourage the preservation and conservation of agricultural parcels and large forested parcels.
- Objective 2.3: Identify and protect wildlife habitats and corridors, particularly those of endangered and threatened species.

- Objective 2.4: Preserve the Town's heritage and character through the preservation of scenic areas, roads, and structures of historic significance.
- Objective 2.5: Acquire additional conservation lands, easements, and restrictions, adjacent to existing Town-owned open space.
- Objective 2.6: Work with Federal, State, Local and private parties to clean up identified brownfields and other existing contaminated lands and ensure that future contamination does not occur.
- Goal 3: Maintain and manage existing Town open space land.
- Objective 3.1: Develop management plans for all Town ponds and other Town-owned Open Space.
- Objective 3.2: Develop a plan for educational programs and accessibility (specifically signage, maps, ADA accessibility, and awareness).
- Objective 3.3: Provide a budget to maintain and manage existing Town Open Space properties.
- Objective 3.4: Forge private, nonprofit and public partnerships to help with management and maintenance of Open Space properties including active and passive recreational areas.
- Objective 3.5: Connect existing and potential Open Space with trails, sidewalks and bicycle paths.
- Objective 3.6: Develop methods to restrict use of motorized vehicles on Town Open Space properties other than Town authorized vehicles.

Recreation Goals

- Goal 4: Continue to expand recreational facilities to provide a wide variety of active recreation opportunities to encourage a healthy and active community.
- Objective 4.1: Continue to implement goals of the trails master plan and revisions.

- Objective 4.2: Continue to implement goals of 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan.
- Objective 4.3: Encourage public, nonprofit, and private partnerships in planning and development of outdoor recreational facilities.
- Objective 4.4: Encourage multiple uses of recreation and conservation facilities through coordinated efforts of the schools, various Town departments and private organizations.
- Goal 5: Maintain and manage existing recreation facilities.
- Objective 5.1: Provide adequate resources and management for the maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.
- Objective 5.2: Educate the public on outdoor opportunities currently available in Walpole.
- Objective 5.3: Develop a plan for making existing, as well as new, playfields AAB/ADA accessible as required.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the Commonwealth's equivalent of a municipal open space plan. SCORP plans are developed by individual states in order to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. In 2017, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs completed the Massachusetts SCORP to help guide the distribution of federal funding to state agencies and municipalities for the acquisition of open space, renovation of parks, and development of new parks. The SCORP is a planning document that discusses the available recreational resources in a state, as well as its needs, and identifies the gaps between the two. The goals of the 2017 SCORP are to:

- Goal 1: Improve Access for Underserved Populations

- Goal 2: Support the Statewide Trails Initiative
- Goal 3: Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation
- Goal 4: Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks

This plan is consistent with these goals and has particular alignment with Goal 2: Support the Statewide Trails Initiative with the asset of the Bay Circuit Trail and other local trail networks throughout the town. Given the existence of trail assets in the community, the focus would be less on the objective of acquiring new land for development of new open spaces that can provide a trail network and more focused on filling gaps in the existing trail network and ensuring that any existing or new trails are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Another alignment is with Goal 1: Access for Underserved Populations that includes people with disabilities. This plan includes increasing accessibility to new and existing playfields and recreation facilities. One of the SCORP objectives for this goal recommends developing parks and open spaces that offer amenities that go above and beyond ADA requirements for people with disabilities.

Another alignment is with Goal 3: Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation. The SCORP describes this goal as serving multiple purposes in the protection of water resources. Protecting water resources is a major goal in Walpole's plan. The SCORP objectives associated with this goal include supporting the acquisition of land that will provide for water-based recreation, support the acquisition of land that will increase drinking water supply protection, and develop water-based recreational facilities, including swimming areas, spray parks, boating facilities, fishing areas, or others.

Finally, this plan is aligned with Goal 4: Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks in that residents must know and care about parks and open spaces to ensure future protection and maintenance. This plan seeks to expand awareness, access, and use of open space resources in Walpole. The SCORP objectives for this goal include developing amenities supported by neighborhood parks, such as playgrounds, off-leash dog parks, and community gardens and working with community development organizations to improve walking access to local parks.



Endean Trail
Image: MAPC



Adams Farm
Image: MAPC

Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan

Introduction

The Town of Walpole's Open Space and Recreation Plan's Seven Year Action Plan translates higher level goals and objectives into concrete actions for the Town to pursue during the period between 2020 and 2027. It strives to deliver on the goals and objectives expressed throughout this process with a program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next seven years.

These actions are targeted to address the physical and organizational issues confronting the Town, as described and analyzed in previous sections of this Plan, especially in Chapter 7. This Action Plan attempts to examine various needs and visions realistically in light of current economic conditions, while maintaining a focus on the substantive issues of open space and recreation, preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management, and maintenance.

Progress since the 2011 Plan

Since the development of the 2011 OSRP, the Town has acquired new open space property, maintained its management of open space resources, and actively made improvements to its park and recreation system. Highlighted accomplishments since 2011 include:

- In 2012, the Conservation Commission received ownership of 16 acres of land off Plimpton Street and Atlantic Court. The property includes part of Plimpton Pond and adds to the Town owned property adjacent to Bird Pond.
- The Parks Department made multiple upgrades to the irrigation systems of athletic fields and implemented a rigorous turf management strategy

- The Fisher School field was lengthened to accommodate lacrosse and other youth sports
- New bleachers were installed at Turco field, and an ADA accessible pathway leading to the John Lee Press Box was constructed
- The former Sharon County Day Camp was acquired by the Town, and renamed Jarvis Farm. The 25-acre property includes active recreation facilities, and trails on the property connect to the adjacent Town Forest.
- The Trails Committee received a \$14,000 grant through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) which was used to construct a boardwalk through the Meadow Brook wetland and link Jarvis Farm to the east parcel of the Walpole Town Forest
- The Spring Brook Park Project activated underutilized through landscaping and the construction of a pedestrian bridge across Spring Brook. The Bay Circuit Trail was rerouted through the enhanced green space to connect with Memorial Pond. The project was a collaborative partnership with the Town, Northeastern University, and the American Society of Civil Engineers.
- A new wading pool at the Center Pool was completed in 2015
- Acquisition of Route 1A Land and vote to build new athletic fields
- A vegetable garden was installed at the Old Post Road School in 2014
- A 100th Anniversary event celebrating the Walpole Town Forest was held, featuring tree planting, horse drawn carriage rides, and demonstrations of forestry equipment
- The DPW constructed a rail trail on Town Forest property, running behind the newly constructed police station, community center, and Senior Center.
- The South Walpole common received a new bench dedicated to Mrs. Kathy Winston,

former Selectman, and a new concrete walkway was added to improve the overall appearance of the common.

- The Town purchased roughly 64 acres of land from the state that is deed restricted for conservation and recreation purposes. The deed restriction allowed the Town to acquire the land for a relatively low price. Site designs to use the space for a new athletic fields complex were prepared, and following an unsuccessful Town Meeting vote in spring 2019, funding for an amended proposal including multipurpose turf fields, grass soccer fields, and diamond fields was approved at 2019 Fall Town Meeting.



Trailhead Sign
Image: MAPC

2020-2027 Action Plan

The Seven-Year Action Plan provides specific recommendations for meeting the goals and objectives in Section 8. The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee developed the 2020-2027 Action Plan, with guiding input provided by Town staff, the project planner, and citizens who participated in the planning process. Using the 2010-2017 Action Plan as a basis, actions completed since the prior plan were removed from the present version, while actions not yet performed but still relevant were retained. Additional action items were added to reflect new opportunities and priorities. Some of these actions are already in the planning process; others are ongoing but need additional support. The Seven-Year Action Plan lists a wide range of action items, and Map 8 indicates the project areas of select action items.

The following table identifies the specific actions to be undertaken by the Town to implement this plan. Each action item is organized by goals and where applicable, a funding source is identified. The timing for implementation is broken out into short-term (1 to 3 years), medium-term (4 to 5 years), long-term (6 to 7 years), and ongoing timeframes. The designation of a target year is meant as a guide only; it is more important to be flexible and take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Many items will need to occur over several years and in each case, a primary responsible party or parties is identified. The formation of a committee or board (most likely the Open Space and Recreation Committee mentioned earlier in this plan) will be key to advancing successful implementation of this plan, and it is this group that will take charge of delegating the recommended responsibilities and actions to

Town departments, local nonprofit groups, and other stakeholders. This Committee will also be responsible for public outreach and education regarding actions being taken.

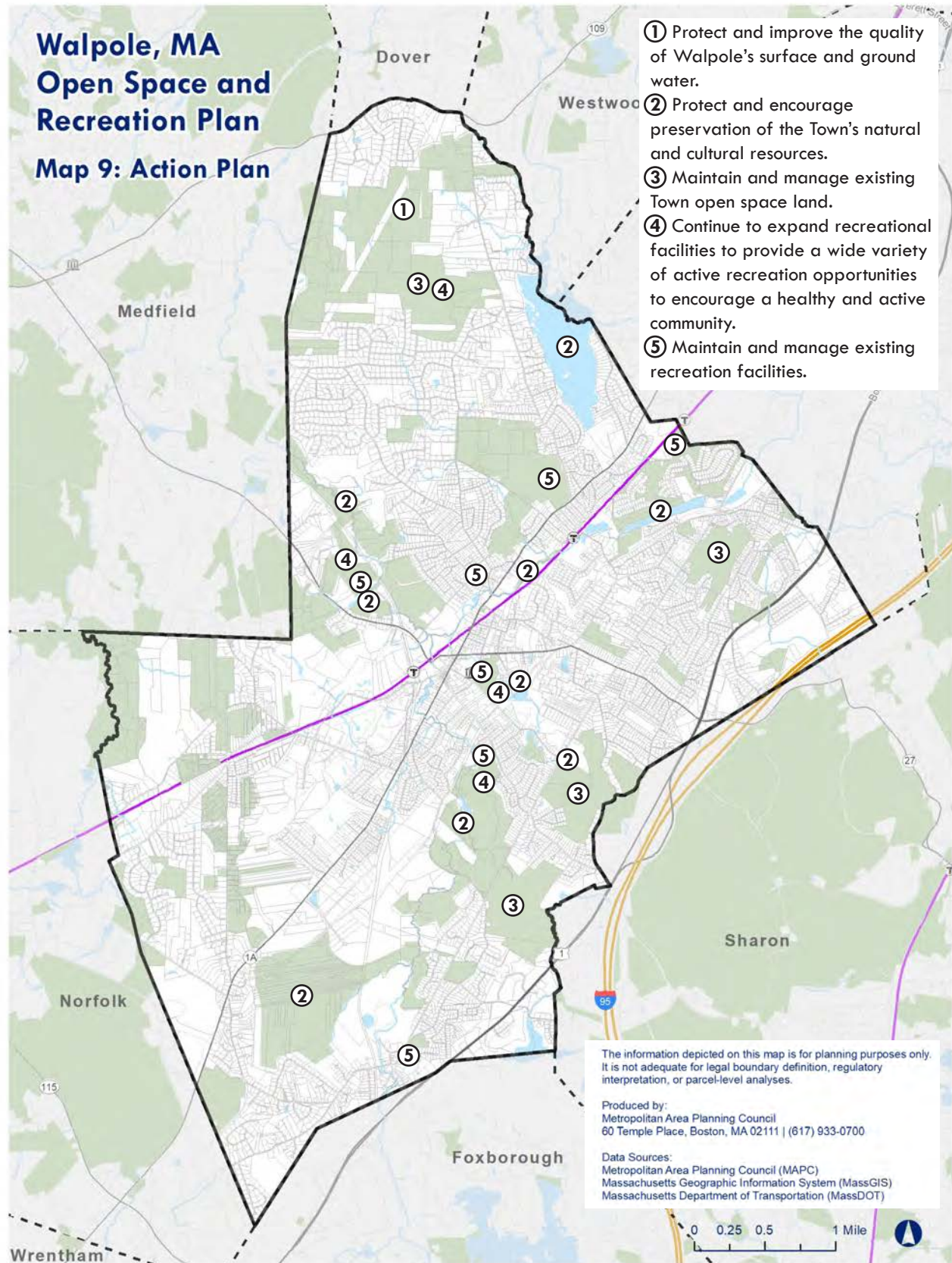
Responsible Parties Acronyms

- BOH – Board of Health
- BOS – Board of Selectmen
- CC – Conservation Commission
- COA – Council on Aging
- DPW – Department of Public Works
- HS – Historical Commission
- ODS – Office of Dam Safety
- PB – Planning Board
- PC – Ponds Committee
- PD – Parks Department
- RC – Recreation Committee
- SWC – Sewer and Water Commission
- TC – Trails Committee
- WHS – Walpole Historical Society
- WPD – Walpole Police Department

List of Potential Funding Sources

- Chapter 90 - State transportation funding allocated for roadway projects
- Complete Streets – Grants provided through the MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program
- CPA – Community Preservation Act
- LAND – Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity Grant Program through the Division of Conservation Services (DCS)
- LWCF – Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program through DCS
- MassTrails – Includes both Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, which are federally funded and Commonwealth Trails grants, which are supported by the state's annual Capital Investment Plan.
- PARC – Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Grant Program through DCS





2020-2027 Action Plan

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
Goal 1: Protect and improve the quality of Walpole’s surface and ground water.				
Objective 1.1: Protect, preserve and maintain existing and potential groundwater supply, ground water recharge areas and watershed protection districts within the Town to ensure sufficient quantities and quality of safe drinking water.				
1.	Coordinate with partners to identify and pursue priority watershed restoration projects in these areas.	CC, Neponset River Watershed Association	Massachusetts Environmental Trust	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Identify locations for stormwater management improvements (e.g. undersized culverts or pipes contributing to stormwater issues) utilizing the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) funded culvert survey.	DPW, CC, SWC	Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration’s Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
3.	Develop stormwater management best practices for municipal systems to enhance compliance with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements.	DPW, CC, SWC	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 1.2: Enhance the Town’s ability to protect rivers, streams, ponds, floodplains and other land important for water quality and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities for passive and active recreational uses.				
1.	Continue with clean-up of invasive species that impair water flow, water quality, or negatively impact native plants and animals.	CC, DPW, SWC	Town staff and funding	Ongoing

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
2.	Require low impact development and water conservation techniques in new development and redevelopment to reduce water usage and add connections to the surrounding open space network.	PB, CC, SWC	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
3.	Evaluate existing dam locations and conditions and plan to remove any obsolete dams.	ODS, DPW, CC	Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) Restoration Potential Model Tool, DER Priority Project Program	Long-term (6 to 7 years)
Goal 2: Protect and encourage preservation of the Town's natural and cultural resources.				
Objective 2.1: Preserve, through acquisition and/or regulatory strategies, unique and/or ecologically valuable and significant land areas.				
1.	Create a new source of funding for land conservation, open space, and preservation through the Community Preservation Act.	BOS, PB	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Identify significant BioMap2 lands that are a top priority for protection and encourage conservation restrictions on these properties.	CC, BOS, PB	Commonwealth Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC) offered to land owners	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
3.	Explore a transfer of development rights (TDR) program to balance conservation and development.	PB, CC	Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) grant	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
Objective 2.2: Encourage the preservation and conservation of agricultural parcels and large forested parcels.				
1.	Partner to protect Norfolk Agricultural School vacant parcels	CC, BOS, PB	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Work with Norfolk County to pursue conservation restrictions on Norfolk County Agricultural owned property.	CC, BOS, PB	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
3.	Encourage landowners to enroll properties in the Chapter 61 program.	CC	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
4.	Establish a Town of Walpole Agricultural Commission to support agriculture and farming activities.	BOS	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
5.	Draft and adopt a Right to Farm Bylaw.	BOS	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 2.3: Identify and protect wildlife habitats and corridors, particularly those of endangered and threatened species.				
1.	Identify parcels that would increase large areas of contiguous land and explore appropriate acquisition, conservation, management, or regulations.	CC, PB	Town staff and funding, MassWildlife Land Protection Program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Work with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to identify all vernal pools in Walpole.	CC, BOH	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 2.4: Preserve the Town's heritage and character through the preservation of scenic areas, roads, and structures of historic significance.				
1.	Define and advance local Historic Districts.	PB, HC, WHS	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Promote public awareness of the Scenic Roads Bylaw and the procedures required for changes on these designated roadways.	PB, HC	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
3.	Identify priority structures for historic preservation and pursue historic designation of these structures with the National Register for Historic Preservation.	PB, HC, WHS	CPA, Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 2.5: Acquire additional conservation lands, easements, and restrictions, adjacent to existing Town owned open space.				
1.	Identify locations that would improve access to existing open space resources (e.g. parcel near Adams Farm, parcel near Cedar Swamp Trail).	CC, PB	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Establish a fund that can be contributed to each year for acquisition of priority conservation lands.	BOS	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Objective 2.6: Work with Federal, State, Local and private parties to clean up identified brownfields and other existing contaminated lands and ensure that future contamination does not occur.				
1.	Follow the success of local innovative models for productive use of brownfield sites for solar energy (e.g. the Bird Machine Solar Farm).	BOS, PB	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Partner with owners of suspected brownfields where contamination is not known, to pursue Environmental Site Assessment funding from the Massachusetts Brownfield Redevelopment Fund.	BOS, PB	Environmental Site Assessment funding from Massachusetts Brownfield Redevelopment Fund	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Goal 3: Maintain and manage existing Town open space land.				
Objective 3.1: Develop management plans for all Town ponds and other Town-owned Open Space.				
1.	Develop pond management plans for Clarks, Turners, Cobbs, and Memorial Ponds. Memorial Pond was recently dredged.	PC, DPW, CC	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Develop open space management best practices with a baseline for each open space resource in the town and specific management requirements for unique activities or features.	DPW, CC	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
Objective 3.2: Develop a plan for educational programs and access (specifically signage, maps, and awareness).				
1.	Promote awareness of open space amenities through education and outreach.	BOS, CC, PB, RC, TC	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Continue current recreation programming in the parks with adaptation for future community needs or requests.	RC	Town staff and funding	Long-term (6 to 7 years)
3.	Address specific ADA and universal access improvements that have been defined in the ADA Self Assessment Appendix.	BOS, CC, PB, RC, TC	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 3.3: Provide a budget to maintain and manage existing Town Open Space properties.				
1.	Define best practices list of annual maintenance procedures for each Town-owned recreation and conservation land.	DPW, CC	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Identify resources and partners to bridge gap between best practices and current practices integrating efforts with community clean-up days and other volunteer opportunities.	DPW, CC	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 3.4: Forge private, nonprofit and public partnerships to help with management and maintenance of Open Space properties including active and passive recreational areas.				
1.	Support development of “Friends of...” groups to supplement management and maintenance activities and funding needs for open space properties.	BOS, RC, PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Assist interested Town residents to organize for improvements to parks and open spaces.	RC, TC, PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Objective 3.5: Connect existing and potential Open Space with trails, sidewalks and bicycle paths.				
1.	Identify and prioritize sidewalk installations, extensions or improvements that would expand connections between neighborhoods and open spaces.	TC, PB, DPW	Massachusetts Complete Streets Grants	Ongoing

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
2.	Support the development and design of the Walpole-Wrentham Line rail trail and linear park, with potential to extend from Attleboro to Plainville, working with other regional partners such as the Friends of King Philip Greenway.	TC, PB, DPW	Massachusetts MassTrails Grants; Federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
3.	Explore the development and design of a rail trail parallel to the active rail corridor of the Framingham-Foxboro Line.	TC, PB, DPW	Massachusetts MassTrails Grants; Federal TA Program	Long-term (6 to 7 years)
4.	Advance a trail extension behind the Senior Center under Common Street toward Walpole Center in coordination with Housing Authority.	TC, PB, DPW	Massachusetts MassTrails Grants; Federal TA Program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
5.	Improve visibility, signage and integration of the Bay Circuit Trail with Walpole Center transportation improvements.	TC, PB, DPW	DHCD Downtown Initiative	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Objective 3.6: Develop methods to restrict use of motorized vehicles on Town Open Space properties other than Town authorized vehicles.				
1.	Increase signage that defines restrictions for motor vehicles or other activities at town open spaces.	CC, DPW	MA EOEEA PARC grant program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Increase police patrol and enforcement where motorized vehicle use of open space is identified.	WPD, CC, DPW	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Goal #4: Continue to expand recreational facilities to provide a wide variety of active recreation opportunities to encourage a healthy and active community.				
Objective 4.1: Continue to implement goals of the trails master plan and revisions.				
1.	Pursue the design and installation of consistent trail marking systems that provide uniform and recognizable trailhead markers and blazes.	TC, CC, DPW	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Support and work with friends groups and volunteer efforts to maintain trails and forge new trails.	TC, CC, DPW	Town staff and funding	Ongoing

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
Objective 4.2: Continue to implement the goals of the 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan.				
1.	With new playing fields in place, enforce Walpole Field Use Policies and Procedures for all fields to maintain field conditions.	RC, BOS	Town staff and funding	Ongoing
2.	With new playing fields in place, set aside funds and time period to renovate existing facilities	BOS, DPW	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
3.	Provide annual town operating budget funding to renovate and maintain existing fields.	BOS	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
4.	Continue to install state-of-the-art water conserving irrigation systems at all town fields.	BOS, DPW	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Objective 4.3: Encourage public, nonprofit, and private partnerships in planning and development of outdoor recreational facilities.				
1.	Leverage Earth Day, Town beautification days, or other annual volunteer traditions to advance volunteer improvements at town open spaces.	BOS, PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Partner with the Norfolk Agricultural School and other private schools to share outdoor resources and strengthen connections to nearby open space assets.	BOS, PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
Objective 4.4: Encourage multiple uses of recreation and conservation facilities through coordinated efforts of the schools, various Town departments and private organizations.				
1.	Use scheduling procedures to maximize coordination and use of shared facilities.	RC, PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Identify town-owned property that could be used more flexibly for additional active recreation uses.	CC, PB, RC, PD	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Goal #5: Maintain and manage existing recreation facilities.				
Objective 5.1: Provide adequate resources and management for the maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.				
1.	Codify field maintenance operations outlined in the 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan into a written plan of annual maintenance standards for each field.	PD	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)

Action		Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
2.	Continue to increase annual Town budget for field maintenance.	BOS, DPW	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
3.	Continue to build Department of Public Works staff capacity for field maintenance.	BOS, DPW	Town staff and funding	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 5.2: Educate the public on outdoor opportunities currently available in Walpole.				
1.	Create a user-friendly inventory of publicly accessible open space based on the OSRP inventory with the location, a photo, and description of amenities for each resource.	CC, PD, TC	Town staff and funding	Short-term (1 to 3 years)
2.	Develop a consistent welcome signage and a wayfinding system to be installed at all open spaces.	CC, PD, TC	Town staff and funding, DHCD's Downtown Initiative Grant Program	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
Objective 5.3: Develop a plan for making existing, as well as new, playfields AAB/ADA accessible as required.				
1.	Add universal accessibility play features to town playgrounds.	BOS, DPW, PD	Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Grant	Mid-term (4 to 5 years)
2.	Address accessibility needs defined in the Accessibility Self Evaluation and outlined in the 2008 Athletic Fields Master Plan.	BOS, DPW, PD	Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Grant	Short-term (1 to 3 years)

Potential Local Funding Sources

Community Preservation Act

The establishment of a real estate transfer tax was signed into law on September 14, 2000 as the Community Preservation Act (CPA). CPA is a tool for communities to preserve open space, park and recreational facilities, historic sites, and affordable housing. The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation that allows cities and towns to exercise control over local planning decisions by providing an additional funding source. CPA must be enacted locally through a Town Meeting vote. The funding created through it can be used to address four core community concerns:

- Acquisition and preservation of open space
- Improve park and recreation facilities
- Creation and support of affordable housing
- Acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes

A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each four core community concerns. The remaining 70% can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses. This gives each community the opportunity to determine its priorities, plan for its future, and have the funds to make those plans happen.

Potential State and Federal Funding Sources

Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program

The LAND Program (formerly the Self-Help Program) was established in 1961 to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farmland. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird

observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required. This state program pays for the acquisition of land, or a partial interest (such as a conservation restriction), and associated acquisition costs such as appraisal reports and closing costs.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This is a federal program administered by the State Division of Conservation Services for the acquisition and development or renovation of park, recreation and conservation land. The Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (P.L. 88-578) provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development and renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply. Nearly 4000 acres have been acquired and hundreds of parks renovated using the \$95.6 million that Massachusetts has received from the state side portion of the federal program since 1965. DCS administers the state side Land & Water Conservation Fund program in Massachusetts. Access by the general public is required.

Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTGP)

The Recreational Trails Program provides grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000 on a reimbursement basis for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. It is part of the National Recreational Trails Program, which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Funds are disbursed to each state to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. In Massachusetts, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administer funds, in partnership with the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board.

Town of Walpole **Open Space and Recreation Plan**

September 2020