



Town of Bridgewater

Open Space & Recreation Plan

2026 - 2036

Presented to:
Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee
Town of Bridgewater Parks and Recreation Committee
&
Town of Bridgewater Dept. of Community & Economic Development
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Prepared by:
Beals and Thomas, Inc.
144 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772
www.bealsandthomas.com



Corporate Office

144 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772

bealsandthomas.com T 508.366.0560 F 508.366.4391

Regional Office

32 Court Street
Plymouth, MA 02360

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Acknowledgements

Town of Bridgewater Community and Economic Development

Town Planner, Shane O'Brien
Assistant Town Planner, Nicole Salvo
Conservation Agent, Dan Levesque

Town of Bridgewater Open Space Committee

Eileen Hiney, Chair
John FitzGerald
Maureen Minasian

Other Participants

Town of Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee
Town of Bridgewater Historical Commission
Survey Respondents, Public Outreach Meeting Attendees & Residents of the Bridgewater community!

Special Thanks To:

Town of Bridgewater Planning Board
Town of Bridgewater Town Council
Town of Bridgewater Parks and Recreation Committee
Town of Bridgewater Conservation Commission
Town of Bridgewater Tree Committee

Consultant

Beals and Thomas, Inc.
144 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772
Phone: 508-366-0560
www.bealsandthomas.com

Stacy H. Minihane, Project Director and Project Manager
Mary Kate Schneeweis, Senior Environmental Planning Specialist
Jacqueline Boyer, Environmental Planning Specialist

Section 1.0
Plan Summary

1.0 PLAN SUMMARY

1.1 Report Background

The Town of Bridgewater's 2026 - 2036 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update has been prepared to serve as a guide to the many committees, boards, commissions, and volunteer groups in the community. The Town strives to continue providing a variety of open space and recreational opportunities to its residents and recognizes the need to improve existing resources while continuing to acquire additional resources.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared under the guidance of the Bridgewater Community & Economic Development Department and the Open Space Committee. It represents an update to the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared by VHB. Since the adoption of the prior Plan, the Town has undertaken multiple initiatives to implement the goals outlined in the previous Action Plan, which are further detailed throughout.

In addition to serving as a guide for the Town, the final 2026 OSRP, once approved by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS), will allow Bridgewater to apply for specific types of grant funding for projects related to open space and recreation. Participants in the OSRP update process identified the following themes throughout:

- Protection, preservation, enhancement and connectivity of existing open space, passive recreation areas and active recreation facilities
- Importance of water quality protection through acquisition and conservation of land adjacent to water resources
- Maintenance needs at existing open space and recreation facilities
- Continuity and availability of information regarding available open space and recreational opportunities

1.2 Report Organization

This report follows the format outlined in the Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook, prepared by DCS, last revised in March 2025. More specifically, early chapters of this report outline existing and historic conditions in town, including a discussion of the community setting, the most recent demographic information available (population, employment and housing data), and an environmental inventory and analysis. The OSRP also provides an inventory of existing open space and recreational facilities. A significant section of this report is the ten-year action plan, which details suggested steps that different boards, commissions and committees in Bridgewater can take to achieve the identified goals and objectives.

Bridgewater is a unique suburban-rural town with a wide variety of natural resources, open space areas, and recreational and athletic facilities within its borders. The overall goal of this entire planning effort has been to provide another tool for the Town and its residents to use to help better understand the natural and recreational assets of the community.

Section 2.0 Introduction

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Statement of Purpose

The Town of Bridgewater is a vibrant community with a diverse assortment of natural resources, open space areas and recreational amenities. The purpose of this plan is to assist with efforts to evaluate, protect and enhance open space and recreation resources within the community. The 2026 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update is intended to inventory existing open space and recreational resources, educate residents and solicit feedback, provide an overview of previously identified goals and their current status, develop new action items, and create a realistic action plan for the upcoming years.

Through these efforts, the Town hopes to provide adequate passive and active recreation opportunities, preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, expand locally and regionally connected trails and park systems, protect natural resources such as wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, and water resources. The OSRP will also ensure the Town's eligibility for state support in these endeavors through the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant Program (formerly Self Help), the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Community Preservation Act, and related resources.

The OSRP update has been prepared as a document that will be educational and informative to those who read it. Overall, the intent and hope is that this plan will guide public policy in the areas of open space preservation and recreation facilities and that it will function as an agenda to implement the identified goals and objectives for the next ten years.

Some definitions to keep in mind while navigating this document, as defined in the Open Space and Recreation Planners Workbook, are listed below.

Open Space: *conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, and amenities such as green buffers along roadways or any other predominantly undeveloped area that is owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation or recreation. Can also refer to undeveloped land with conservation or recreation potential including vacant lots and brownfields that can be redeveloped into recreation areas or community green spaces.*

Passive Recreation: *any outdoor activity that occurs in a natural setting with minimum disturbance of the natural and cultural resources and that is consistent with quiet enjoyment of the land including walking, hiking, and nature study.*

Active Recreation: *outdoor recreation that occurs in parks and requires significant alteration of the natural landscape to provide playground or active sports facilities including soccer, tennis, or baseball.*

Conservation Restriction: *a legally enforceable agreement whose purpose is to ensure permanent protection of specific conservation values while permitting limited land uses consistent with the protection of said conservation values.*

2.2 Planning Process and Public Participation

2.2.1 Planning Process

Beals and Thomas, Inc. (B+T) was selected to prepare the OSRP Update and has worked closely with the Bridgewater Department of Community & Economic Development. Several coordination meetings were held to discuss progress, solicit feedback and general coordination to ensure effective plan preparation.

The planning process included review of existing studies, reports and plans related to the Town's open space and recreation resources including the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan, 2015 Recreation Needs Assessment, 2025-2030 CPC Plan, 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan and 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan, among others. B+T incorporated information from these documents as well as input obtained through coordination with the Bridgewater municipal staff, the OSC and feedback provided during the public outreach process, which is further described below.

This OSRP update final report is the culmination of a collaborative effort focused on providing an informative and comprehensive plan to guide the Town's open space and recreation efforts in the upcoming years.

2.2.2 Public Participation

The public participation process for the OSRP update included a widely circulated survey, two public forums held on April 16, 2026 and May 14, 2026, and solicitation for comment in local news media, social media and via word of mouth.

2.2.2.1 Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey

B+T prepared and analyzed an Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Survey. The survey was intended to gauge how residents use current open space and recreation lands as well as identify priorities and opportunities for the future.

The survey was conducted between January 28, 2026 and February 28, 2026. Web links to the survey were distributed by Town staff via social media, including the Town of Bridgewater Community & Economic Development Facebook page, and the Town's website (<https://www.bridgewaterma.gov/>), among others.

Flyers were posted at the library, Town Hall, downtown businesses and a local grocery store. Hard copies were distributed at the Senior Center and Town Hall to reach additional interested persons.

In total 102 responses were received. Respondents reported a lengthy history with the Town, with 65% of respondents indicating that they have lived in Bridgewater for over 20 years. Nearly all respondents were 36 years of age or older, with the most represented age group being 36-64 years old at 50%. The household size for respondents was predominantly one to four occupants, which comports with the Town average family size. The full public survey and a summary of responses can be found in Appendix A. Results of the survey are discussed more specifically in Section 6: Analysis of Needs.

2.2.2.2 Public Outreach Forums

An initial public outreach forum was held in person at Bridgewater State University's Dana Mohler-Faria Science and Mathematics Center on April 16, 2026.

The forum was led by B+T and the Town staff. The focus of the forum was to engage residents in a discussion about open space and recreation resources in the community. B+T made a presentation that included a discussion of why the OSRP update is important, demographic data, open space data, and open-ended questions to help the audience think about what aspects of open space and recreation in the community is important. A question and answer session was held, during which community input was taken.

In addition to feedback taken verbally, B+T also provided a mapping activity, where participants noted areas of potential open space or recreation areas on a map of the Town, and a separate activity where participants voted on their top priorities for the focus of the OSRP.



A second public outreach forum was held by B+T and Town staff virtually via Zoom on May 14, 2026. The focus of this forum was to review key components of the draft OSRP, solicit additional feedback, and kick-off the public comment period.

A copy of the presentations given at these forums are included in Appendix B. Both forums are available on the Town's YouTube page as well.

2.2.3 Enhanced Public Outreach

According to the 2020 U.S. Census data, there are three Environmental Justice census blocks within the Town of Bridgewater (Block Group 1, Census Tract 9802, Block Group 1, Census Tract 9803, and Block Group 2, Census Tract 5614). Therefore, enhanced public outreach was undertaken to ensure an inclusive public engagement process was conducted. In an effort to ensure equal opportunities for all Bridgewater residents to participate in the planning process, the April 16, 2026 public outreach forum was held at Bridgewater State University which is located within EJ Census Block Group 1, Census Tract 9803 and has public transportation access on the campus via the MBTA. The forum was held at 6:00 PM after standard work hours, and refreshments were made available to attendees. Additionally, the May 14, 2026 public forum was held virtually via Zoom at 6:00 PM, after standard work hours, to allow for participation and input from residents who may have been unable to attend in person.

Section 3.0
Community Setting

3.0 COMMUNITY SETTING

3.1 Regional Context

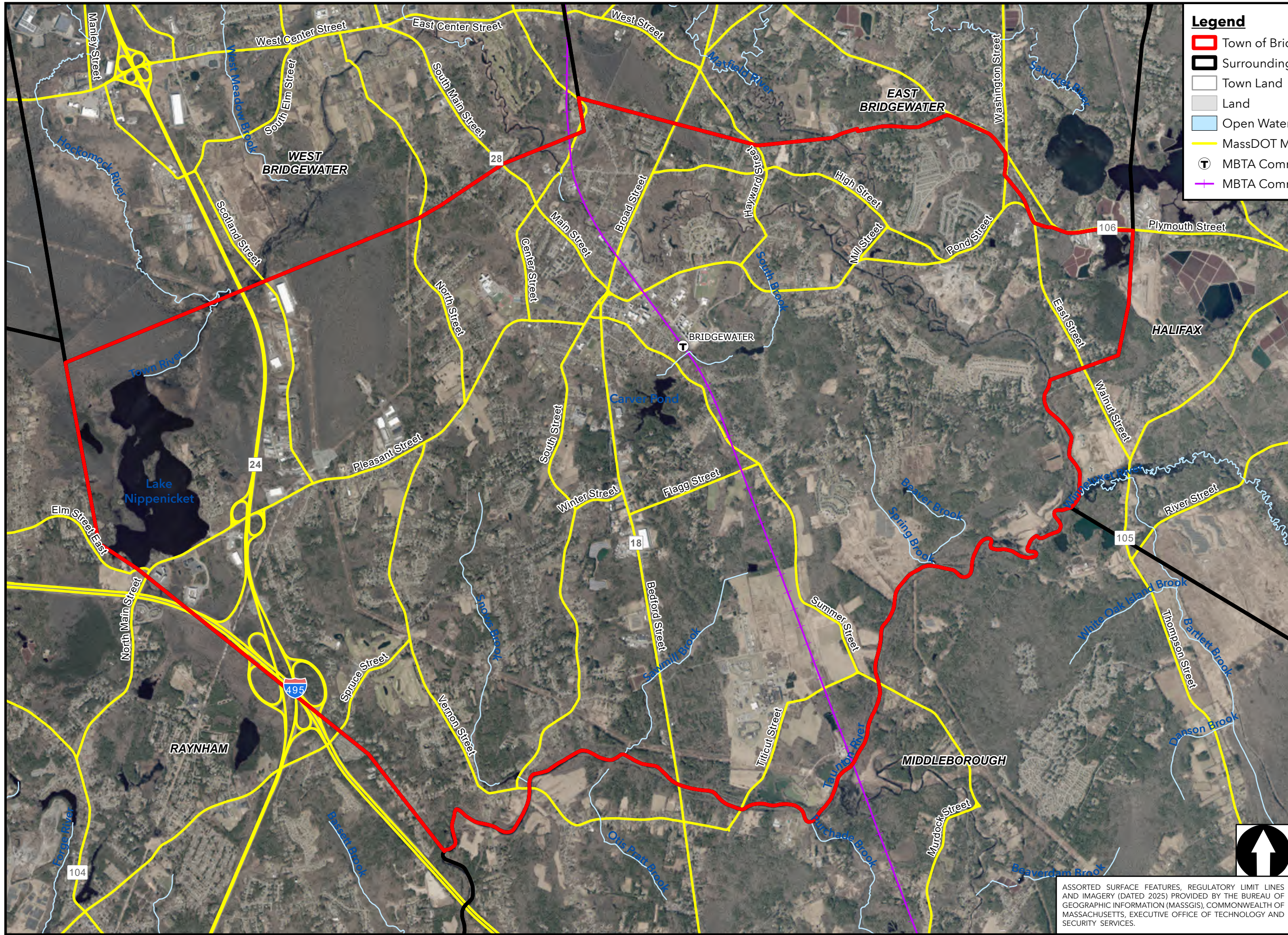
Bridgewater is a suburban-rural town 23 miles south of Boston and 29 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island. Bridgewater abuts West Bridgewater and East Bridgewater to the north, Raynham to the west, Halifax to the east, and Middleborough to the south. It is home to 28,633 inhabitants according to the 2020 U.S. Census. It houses two major state institutions—Bridgewater State University, with 9,492 full-time students in 2025 (roughly 19% enrolling as graduate students and 81% as undergraduate students)¹ and 808 faculty/librarians, and the Bridgewater Correctional Complex (BCC) with an operational capacity of about 1,700 inmates as of 2026.

A major feature in the Town is the Wild and Scenic Taunton River and its main tributaries, the Town and Matfield Rivers. The Taunton River begins at the junction of the Town River and the Matfield River northeast of the Town Center. The resulting Taunton River essentially wraps around Bridgewater forming its eastern and southern boundaries².

The Town is served by a MBTA commuter rail station located at Bridgewater State University. The rail service connects the Town to Middleborough/Lakeville to the south, Fall River and New Bedford to the east, and to Quincy/Boston/Cambridge and the entire MBTA transit system to the north. Several highway systems also provide vehicular access. Specifically, Route 24 and Interstate 495 are oriented north-south through the western portion of the Town; these roads provide highway access to Boston, Brockton and Providence. Route 44 travels east to west to the south of the Town and connects to both I-495 and Route 28, providing a connection to neighboring Taunton and Middleborough. Route 104 connects Bridgewater center to Raynham to the west and Halifax to the east. Route 18 and Route 28 pass directly through the center of Town to provide access to neighboring communities like West Bridgewater and East Bridgewater. This accessibility has partially driven Bridgewater's appeal and development over the years.

¹ <https://www.bridgew.edu/about-us/bsu-facts>

² Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- MBTA Commuter Rail Stations
- MBTA Commuter Rail

PREPARED FOR:
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
 66 CENTRAL SQUARE
 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

PREPARED BY:
BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
 T 508.366.0560 | www.bealsandthomas.com

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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



REGIONAL CONTEXT

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

<small>B+T JOB NO. 3648.00</small>	FIGURE
<small>B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -001</small>	1

3.1.1 Regional Resources

Bridgewater shares regional open space and natural resources with several neighboring communities including Hockomock Swamp, the Town River/Taunton River corridor, the Bay Circuit Trail and the Nunckatessett & Satucket Greenway.

The Town River begins at Lake Nippenicket in the Bridgewater portion of the Hockomock Swamp and flows easterly through West Bridgewater, joining the Matfield River in Bridgewater to form the Taunton River. The Taunton River, which was designated as a Federal Wild and Scenic River in 2000, flows through the Town's eastern and southern borders. The Taunton River is the longest undammed coastal river in New England and is host to over 154 species of birds and 45 species of fish, providing an array of agricultural, ecological and biological diversity³.

Hockomock Swamp is the largest vegetated freshwater wetland system in Massachusetts, spanning 16,950 acres through portions of Raynham, Norton, Taunton, Easton, Bridgewater, and West Bridgewater. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) owns approximately 5,000 acres of the Hockomock Swamp, within all six communities. The Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area provides public access to the swamp and to several recreational areas.⁴ An approximately 1,131-acre portion of the swamp is located in the northwestern corner of Bridgewater. It drains directly into Lake Nippenicket. It is one of the largest inland Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designated by the state. It is also the location of at least 13 rare and endangered species.

Productive agricultural lands are located on the uplands adjacent to the wetlands, brooks, and rivers.

The Bay Circuit Trail was established in 1929; it passes through West Bridgewater and East Bridgewater to the north, and into Bridgewater at Main Street and High Street to include the Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley on the Town River. Collectively, this land and water trail is known as the Nunckatessett & Satucket Greenway. Over 50 communities are connected by the more than 230-mile Trail. The Bay Circuit Alliance, a volunteer implementing body, encourages and supports filling gaps for continuity through trails and scenic areas as well as open space acquisition and protection of key resources where possible, and seeks to integrate the trail with such resources. The project's advocates envision the Greenway providing community members greater access to the natural as well as historic elements of their area, such as the Haseotes Mass Wildlife Trail, Holmes' Hill, War Memorial Park, Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley, and Bridgewater's Stiles & Hart Conservation Area.

³ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hockomock-swamp-acec> accessed January 27, 2026

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/hockomock-swamp-acec> accessed January 27, 2026

The Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater through its Nunckatessett & Satucket Greenway initiative has been fostering a majority of the project’s development. The Towns of Bridgewater and West Bridgewater embrace a vision for the greenway with the goal of linking Town-owned conservation areas to the nationally recognized Bay Circuit Trail and the Town River to create one contiguous, walkable or paddleable trail and parkland system. Additionally, the Old Colony Planning Council, Bay Circuit Trail and Town representatives are leading efforts to create a multi-use pathway through Abington, Whitman, East Bridgewater and Bridgewater known as the Frederick Douglass Trail.

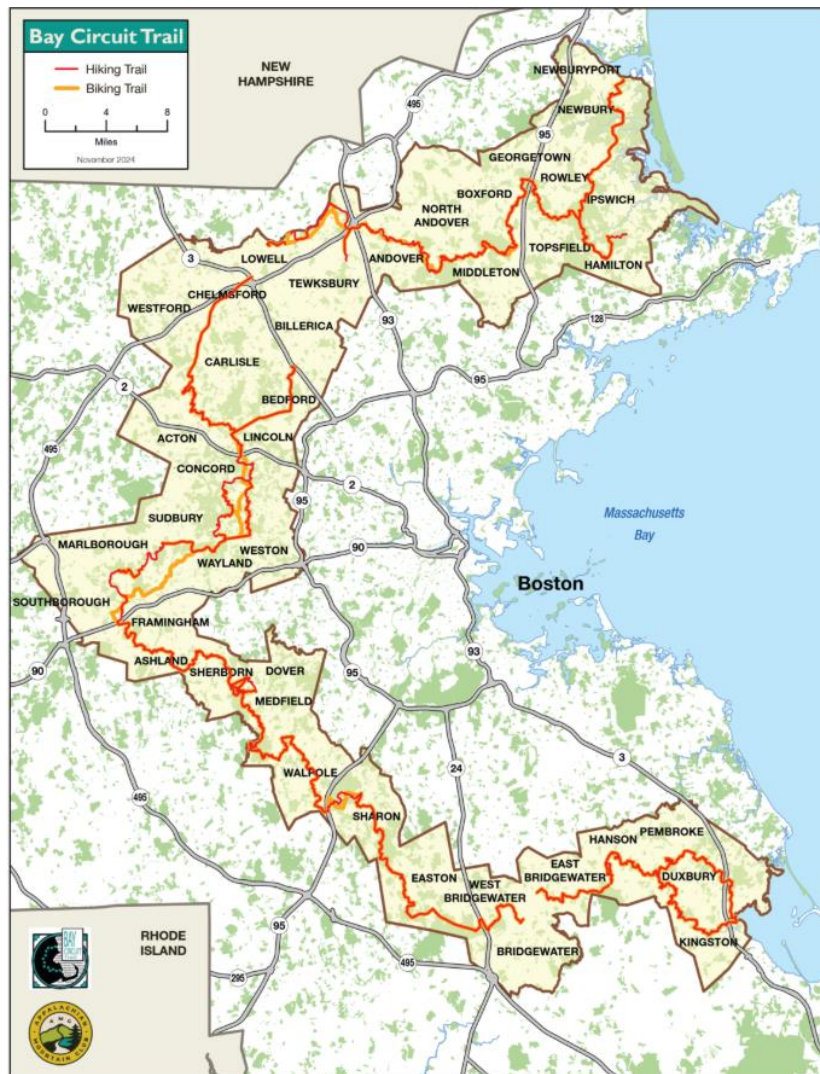


Image 3-1: Current Bay Circuit Trail Map, obtained March 25, 2026 from <https://www.baycircuit.org/>
(Note: this map is being revised as the initiatives described above continue to be implemented)

3.2 History of the Community

The present-day Town of Bridgewater is part of the traditional territory of the Mattakeeset Tribe of the Massachuset Indian Nation⁵. Archaeological studies performed prior to the construction of Route 495 in Mansfield, Norton, Taunton, Raynham, and Bridgewater indicate that indigenous peoples fished, shellfished, and traveled along the Taunton River for thousands of years prior to the arrival of European colonists.^{6,7} The Mettakeeset Tribe sachem signed a deed to the land where the State prison is now located in 1641, before the 1649 deed signed by Massasoit of the Pokanoket tribe.⁸

Old Bridgewater was the first inland settlement of English colonists in Massachusetts, chartered in 1656 by Myles Standish. Old Bridgewater, comprised of the current day Bridgewater, Abington, West Bridgewater, Brockton, and East Bridgewater, was purchased from Chief Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe by Captain Standish and 54 other purchasers.

Through additional purchases, Old Bridgewater grew to 96 square miles. In 1706 Abington broke away, eventually followed by the communities that would become East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, and North Bridgewater (now Brockton).

Bridgewater grew as a farming and manufacturing community with activities based on clay, bog iron, and water power. Other industries making nails, shoes, and bricks grew in the late 1800s. The 19th century saw the formation of two major institutions in Bridgewater: the Normal School, which became Bridgewater State University, and the various state facilities now comprising the Bridgewater Correctional Complex. Bridgewater continued growing into the 20th century with extensive agriculture, large dairy farms, scattered long-term industries, and a slowly growing population. Late in the century agriculture declined with reduced profitability and rising land values for development. A major reduction followed the US Department of Agriculture's Whole Herd Buyout program of the late 1980s when the Department bought out productive herds, reportedly including Cumberland Farms' large operation, to reduce milk production. The last thirty years have seen a continuing loss of agriculture even on the most suitable soils.

⁵ <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/12/09/mashpee-wampanoag-mattakeeset-massachuset-land-dispute>

⁶ National Park Service, Taunton Wild and Scenic River Study, Draft Report and Environmental Assessment, June 2007

⁷ Massachusetts Historical Commission, Roads, Rails, and Trails: Transportation-Related Archaeology in Massachusetts, 2012.

⁸ Email communication with Carlton D. Hunt, Bridgewater Community Preservation Commission, dated April 17, 2026

3.2.1 Open Space and Recreation History

Current day Stiles & Hart Conservation Area is the location of the former Plymouth County Agricultural Society and fairgrounds, which contained a large grandstand, a half mile racetrack, and a 3000-seat exhibition hall. The fair operated at this location for several decades until 1892 when it merged with Bridgewater Grange. Abundant clay deposits at this site also led to the establishment of a brick operation. The brick operation began as Bridgewater Brick Company before being bought out by Stiles & Hart Brick Company in 1913. Brick production ceased after the hurricane of 1938 and eventually clay mining was discontinued after World War II. The property was left abandoned until the 1990's when the Town acquired it. Numerous improvements have been made over the years and continue today⁹.



Images 3-2 & 3-3: Plymouth Country Agricultural Society Fairgrounds circa 1800's, courtesy of David Moore, Bridgewater Historical Commission

Bridgewater Ironworks Park at Stanley has conducted iron processing operations since as early as 1694. It is reported to be the first iron rolling mill to reopen after the close of the American Revolution, and by 1860, it had become the second-largest iron rolling mill in America. The site continued to process iron until 1988. The site's history, as a National Historic Site, has given the Town the title of the oldest continuously operating iron manufacturing town in the United States. In 1990, the owners donated the 20-acre site to the Town of Bridgewater for Open Space and the location of a new Highway yard.¹⁰

⁹ Email correspondence from David R. Moore, Bridgewater Historical Commission, dated April 19, 2026

¹⁰ Email correspondence from David R. Moore, Bridgewater Historical Commission, dated April 19, 2026



Image 3-4: *Bridgewater Ironworks Park at Stanley circa 1800's, courtesy of David Moore, Bridgewater Historical Commission*

Numerous additional open space and conservation areas are rooted in the Town's long history including, but not limited to, Hockomock Swamp, Carver's Pond, which was utilized as a mill in the 18th and 19th centuries, Titicut Conservation Area (formerly Titicut Reservation), which has a rich Native American history and former iron and brick manufacturing operation, and the Bridgewater Correctional Complex, which was initially established in the 1850's as a charitable institution.

In April 2005, Bridgewater adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to fund a variety of affordable housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation initiatives. This legislation offers much potential for saving key open space and historic resources while adding or preserving affordable housing. Since its enactment in Bridgewater, CPA funds have been used to fund a variety of projects in the community, including but not limited to, the construction of new softball fields, the purchase of a Conservation Restriction at the Murray-Needs Farm as well as acquisition of the Keith Homestead, and the rehabilitation of the Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley Stone Building, among others.

3.3 Population Characteristics

According to data obtained during the 2020 Census, overall, the population of Bridgewater has a median household income of \$112,482 which is slightly higher than the state average, a varied demographic of age groups, as well as diverse employment. The median income for families in Bridgewater is marginally higher than the overall Town average, as detailed in the graph below provided by the US Census Bureau.

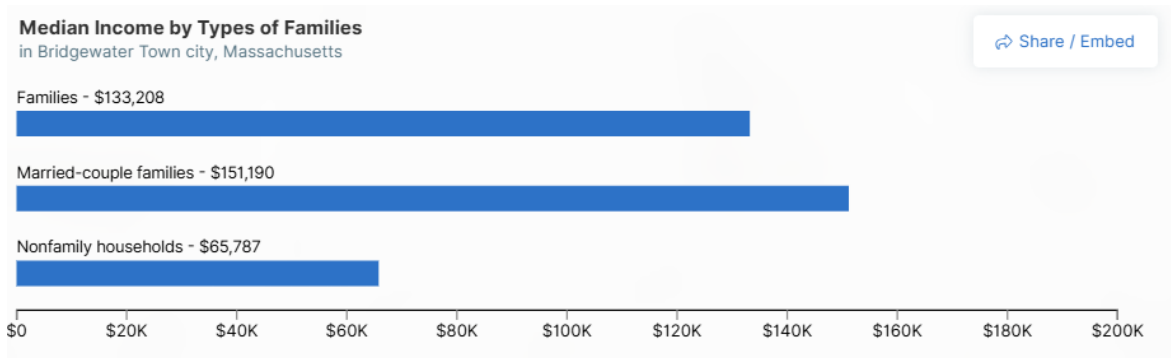


Image 3-5: Median Income by Types of Families, 2020 US Census

As depicted in the table below, the Town’s population has grown continuously in recent decades, although the rate of growth has slowed since its peak in the 1980s.

Table 3-1: Town of Bridgewater Population Growth

Year	Population	Rate Change
1950	9,512	
1960	10,276	8.0%
1970	12,902	25.6%
1980	17,902	33.2%
1990	21,249	23.5%
2000	25,185	18.5%
2010	26,563	5.5%
2020	28,633	7.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

Consistent with trends seen both regionally and nationally, the age composition of Bridgewater has changed since the years of postwar population growth. A significant portion of the population ranges in age from 15 to 24 years old, which can likely be attributed to the Bridgewater State University student population. However, the remaining population is relatively uniform, with most age groups containing roughly 2,000 residents.

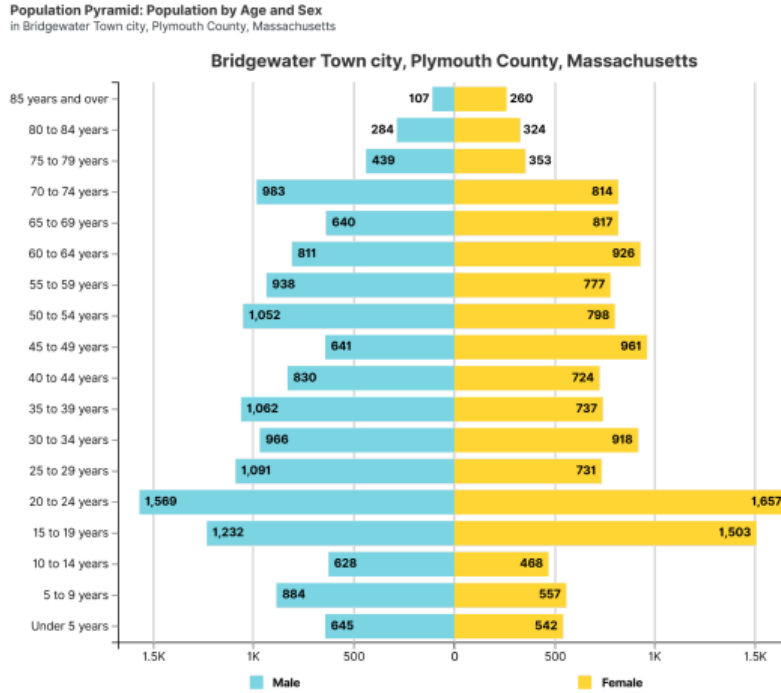


Image 3-6: Population Pyramid, 2020 US Census

The average family size in Bridgewater is 3.05, which is comparable to the state average of 3.03. Additionally, of the approximately 9,100 occupied housing units in Town, 4,800 are occupied by families. Family household demographics are further broken down in the table below.

Total Households by Type of Households ×
in Bridgewater Town city, Massachusetts
DP02

Measure	Value
Married-couple family household	57.6%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present, family household	12.4%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present, family household	22.9%

Image 3-7: Type of Households Table, 2020 US Census

Residents and visitors alike utilize the available open space and recreation opportunities available throughout the Town. The continued population growth and variety of age groups directly influence the need for adequate and well-balanced open space areas and recreation facilities. Current population trends indicate increased demands for recreation resources that suit the particular needs of both the senior population, such as passive recreation areas and/or trails, and teenage and young adult populations, such as active recreation and athletic facilities. Projecting future population trends is vital to anticipating and being responsive to future needs. The Analysis of Needs and Action Plan detail actions that the Town hopes to undertake to address the needs of the current and future population.

3.3.1 Environmental Justice Populations

According to the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs, (EEA), Environmental Justice (EJ) is based upon 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. The EEA established an Environmental Justice Policy to help address the disproportionate share of environmental burdens experienced by lower-income people and communities of color, who often lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods.

EJ populations in Massachusetts are determined by the following criteria based upon 2020 Census Block Data:

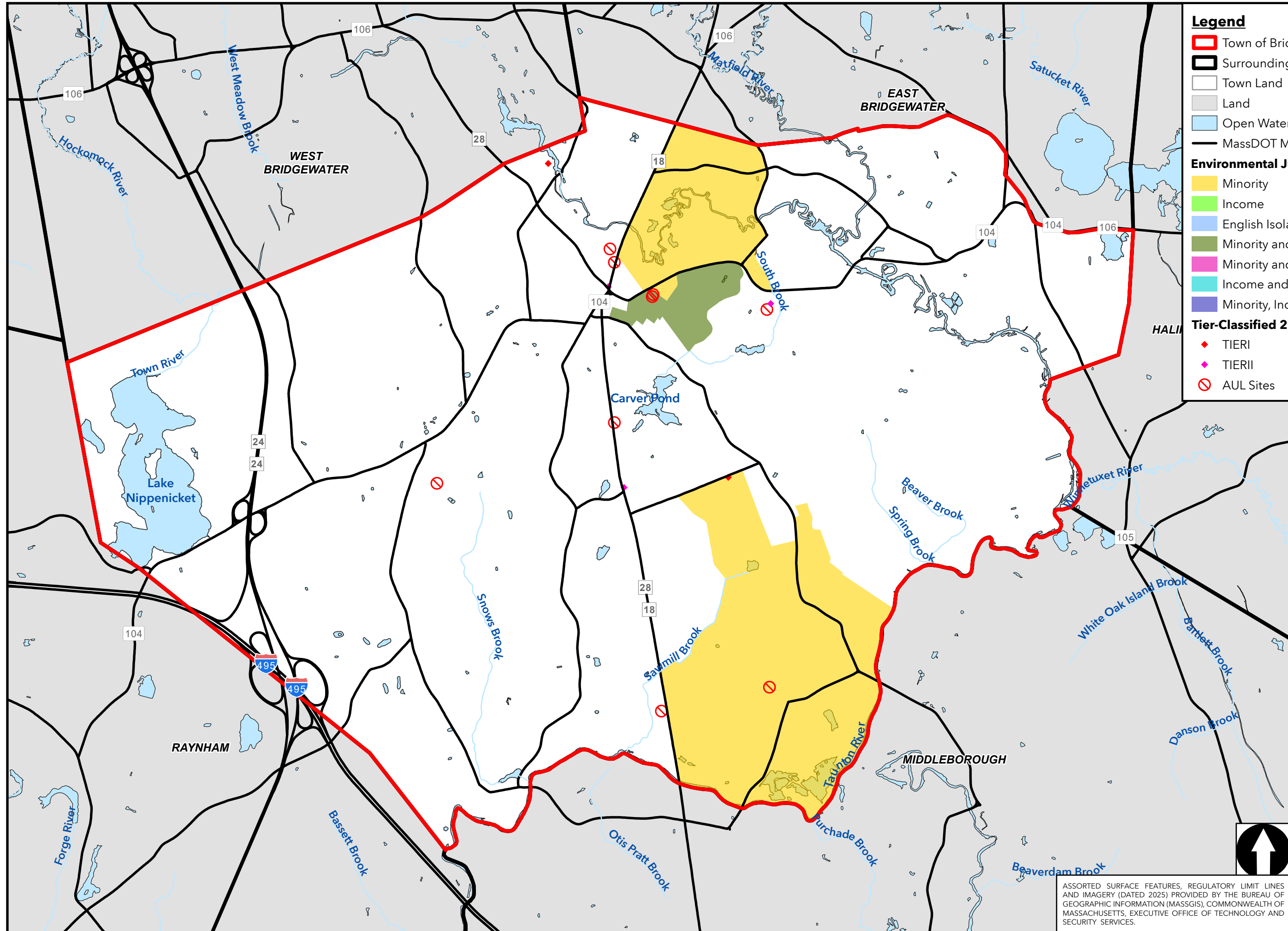
- Households earn 65% or less of the statewide household median income; or
- 25% or more of the residents are minority; or
- 25% or more of the residents are foreign-born; or
- 25% or more of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

Based upon the 2020 U.S. Census, the Town of Bridgewater contains the following EJ Populations:

Block Group 1, Census Tract 9802, Plymouth County, Massachusetts
Criteria: Minority. The Bridgewater Correctional Complex is located within this block group.

Block Group 1, Census Tract 9803, Plymouth County, Massachusetts
Criteria: Minority and Income. Bridgewater State University and Cape Cod Community College are located within this block group.

Block Group 2, Census Tract 5614, Plymouth County, Massachusetts
Criteria: Minority



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads

Environmental Justice 2010 Populations

- Minority
- Income
- English Isolation
- Minority and Income
- Minority and English Isolation
- Income and English Isolation
- Minority, Income and English Isolation

Tier-Classified 21E Sites

- ◆ TIER I
- ◆ TIER II
- ⊘ AUL Sites

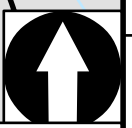
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 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

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 144 Turnpike Road
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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

<small>B+T JOB NO. 3648.00</small>	FIGURE
<small>B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -002</small>	2

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

3.4 Growth and Development Patterns

3.4.1 Open Space-Based Infrastructure

3.4.1.1 Transportation

Bridgewater is accessible via several major routes including Route 24, Route 28, Route 106, Route 18 and Route 104 as well as Interstate 495. These roadways provide access to and from surrounding Towns, the Greater Boston area to the north, and Providence, Rhode Island to the south.

The Town of Bridgewater is considered an MBTA Community under the MBTA Communities Program, adopted in 2021. It is accessible via the MBTA transit station at the BSU campus. Rail service provides access to Brockton, Quincy and Boston to the north and Middleborough and Lakeville to the south.

Additionally, the Middleborough/Lakeville line, which services Bridgewater, now connects to the Fall River/New Bedford line via the South Coast Rail project as of March 2025.¹¹

The BSU campus is serviced by several bus services. Paratransit services including the Brockton Area Transit system (BAT) and the Bridgewater Council on Aging's paratransit service.

Bridgewater has an extensive variety of bikeways and pedestrian ways throughout Town that are utilized by residents and visitors alike. Although bicycle and walking paths are abundant within the Town's open space areas, many open space areas lack connectivity between each other, as well as to other areas throughout the Town, such as downtown. Several studies and plans have been developed to analyze strategic strategies to address connectivity issues, improved traffic flow and pedestrian and bicycle access and safety. These include the 2025 Old Colony Planning Council (OCP) Route 104 Corridor, Bridgewater, MA Transportation Planning Study, 2014 OCP *Central Square Parking, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Traffic Operations Improvement Plan*, the 2013 OCP *Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study*, and Bridgewater's 2014 *Downtown Community Development Master Plan* among others.

¹¹ <https://www.mbta.com/projects/south-coast-rail>

The OCP *Central Square Parking, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Traffic Operations Improvement Plan* outlines numerous bicycle and pedestrian accessibility problems, including lack of bicycle lanes, particularly in Central Square, lack of bicycle storage areas downtown and at open space areas and recreational facilities, safety issues with angled parking spaces and lack of or faded cross walks at Central Square and lack of ADA compliant ramps.

As of the writing of this OSRP, Bridgewater does not currently have a designated bicycle lane in Central Square. However, since the adoption of Bridgewater's Comprehensive Master Plan in May 2022, the Town has undertaken several initiatives to improve downtown access for all modes of transportation. These include the Bridgewater: Vision to Reality Community Workshop held in September 2023 and the Town of Bridgewater Pathways to Progress: Central Square Traffic & Pedestrian Improvements Plan.¹²

Additionally, Bridgewater received a \$499,989.60 grant for Summer Street and Plymouth Street Intersection Pedestrian Improvements as part of the 2026 Complete Streets Funding Program. The project will include the tightening of intersection radii, updated signal timing and pedestrian signals, new crosswalks, and ADA-compliant curb ramps with detectable warning panels.¹³ The Town anticipates the work to be completed in 2027.

3.4.1.2 Water Supply

According to the 2024 Bridgewater Water Department Annual Water Quality Report, the Town's water supplies come from 9 wells installed in three different aquifers in the Taunton River Basin. The first aquifer provides water to four wells located on High Street near the Matfield River (Wells #3, #6, #8, and #9). The second aquifer supports five wells located in the vicinity of Carver's Pond (active wells include Wells #2, #4a, and #5a). The third aquifer includes two wells located on Plymouth Street (Wells #10A and #10B).

¹² <https://metrosouthchamber.com/event/town-of-bridgewater-pathways-to-progress-central-square-traffic-pedestrian-improvements/>

¹³ <https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-announces-66-million-in-complete-streets-funding-program-awards>

These wells have associated Zone II groundwater recharge areas shown on the enclosed Water Resources map and are further discussed in Section 4.2 below. The water supply is protected by ownership of land around the wells and by the Town’s Aquifer Protection District zoning discussed below. This district is mapped over the Zone II areas shown on the enclosed Water Resources map and Aquifer Protection District Map below.

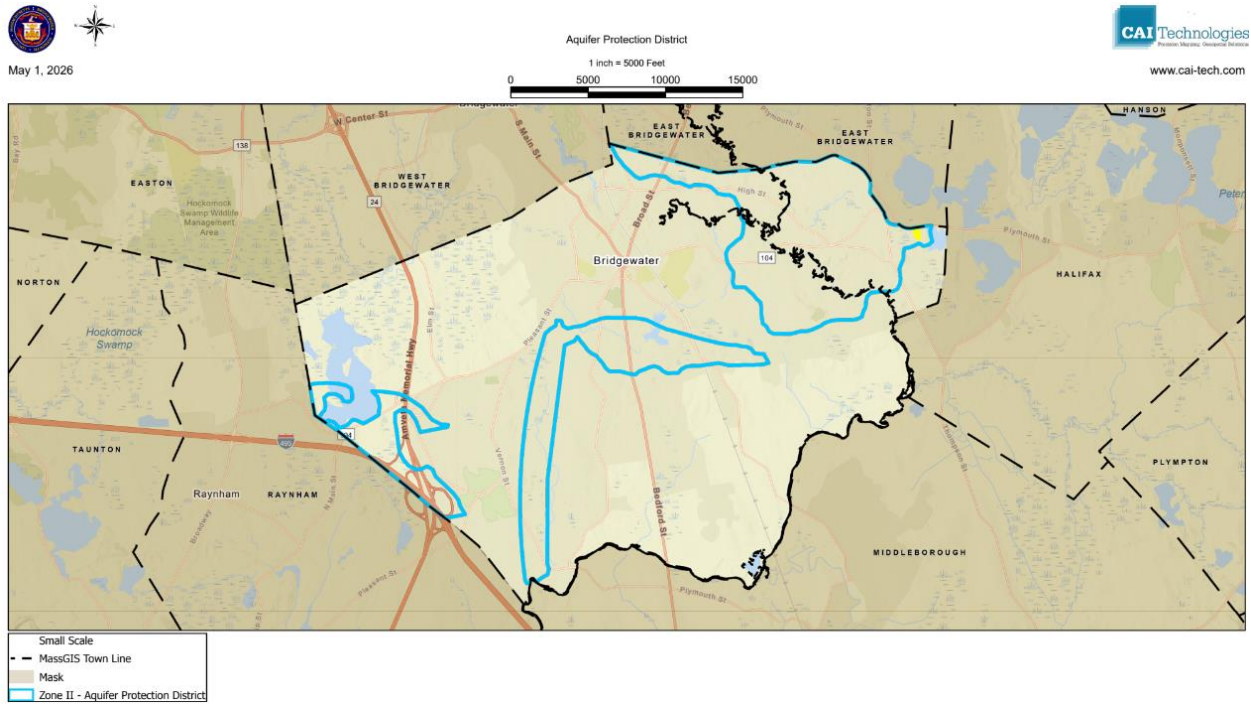


Image 3-8: Town of Bridgewater Aquifer Protection District Overlay Map

The new High Street Water Treatment Plant (WTP) treats Wells 3, 6, 8, and 9 while the Carvers Pond WTP treats Wells 2, 4a, and 5a. The instrumentation and controls at the Carver Pond WTP were upgraded in May 2021. The High Street WTP is newly constructed and went online in February 2023. Both WTPs serve to remove iron and manganese from the source water and also provide pH adjustment and disinfection.¹⁴ The Town is currently in the process of upgrading the current system and looking at additional opportunities to improve water quality with small-scale WTPs off of Plymouth Street. The Town was recently awarded a grant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to assist with the ongoing improvements to Wells 10A and 10B including the construction of a permanent on-site treatment facility designed to address PFAS, iron and manganese in the water supply.

¹⁴ Bridgewater Water Department Annual Water Quality Report, January 2024- December 2024

Several parcels owned either partially or entirely by the Water Department offer recreational opportunities. Parcels associated with the Carver's Pond watershed located on Winter Street and Conant Street as well as the Wyman North Fork Conservation Area parcels on Plymouth Street offer recreational opportunities including boating and hiking. Additionally, although not currently utilized for recreational purposes, the Matfield River Lands on High Street owned by the Water Department have a good potential for passive recreation, particularly on parcel 14-17. The Water Department has also acquired land on Vernon Street which has potential to be used for recreation, especially if added to the adjacent Titicut Conservation Area.

3.4.1.3 Sewers and Septic Systems

The present sewer system serves the heart of the community around the Town Center, the University and some recently added outlying areas including the Elm Street and Scotland Park industrial areas and the office/retail/residential complex at Lakeshore Center, south of Lake Nippenicket, (located over a portion of Raynham's aquifer). It also serves the High Pond Estates and Stone Meadow Community at the former Wyman's Farm, along with some blocks along North Street, the upper portion of South Street, Laurel Street, Hayward Street and Whitman Street.

The Water Pollution Control Subdepartment, led by the Director of Public Works, manages wastewater collection and disposal, including operation and maintenance of the treatment plant and septage processing facility, pumping stations, and gravity sewage collection mains; operation of an industrial pretreatment program testing laboratory for septage/sewage and effluent regulatory compliance; and maintenance of an accounts receivable and billing system for sewer use. There are 42 miles of sewer lines in Bridgewater. The sewage treatment plant treated 392 million gallons in 2019, or 1.074 million gallons per day and the wastewater treatment facility received 5.2 million gallons of septage in 2019, or 14,247 gallons per day. The Town completed a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) in 2019 to address its wastewater needs and water quality goals for a 20-year planning period and recommends the extension of the municipal sewer system. The EPA/DEP also recently required a treatment plant upgrade as part of their regulatory compliance schedule, which may impact those on the Town system¹⁵.

¹⁵ Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan, 2022

In areas of the Town not serviced by sewer, soil limitations for on-site septic systems greatly influence the location and density of residential development. Areas mapped with severe limitations due to high water tables, rock, or impermeable soils (e.g. fragipan) are the most difficult to develop with such systems and steep slopes add to the limitations.

Maps in the 1969 Plymouth County Soil Survey by US Soil Conservation Service show that such restricted lands cover as much as 45% of the community, running north-south in irregular bands. These cover extensive areas northwest of the Correctional Complex, northeast of Lake Nippenicket, southeast of Bridgewater State University, along much of the Town and Taunton Rivers and South Brook, over the State Forest and east of Vernon Street.

Development without sewers will be constrained in these areas, but generally possible, particularly at the low densities required in Bridgewater. The result is that most severely restricted soils are able to accommodate up to three quarters of the development otherwise allowed, though system maintenance may be a problem. Thus, septic limitations do not predict development potential so much as future maintenance problems. In addition, more recent innovative and alternative on-site sewage treatment systems can reduce the needed depth to the water table, or other dimensional requirements, along with the required percolation rates, making previously marginal sites useable.

Nonetheless, sewerage has a major impact in removing consideration of soil suitability for disposal systems. This makes development more likely and increases feasible densities. Thus, the soil maps still can suggest priorities for protection among comparable sites in presently un-sewered areas.

3.4.2 Long-term Development Patterns

Development and land use in Bridgewater have changed drastically throughout the Town's 370-year history but have followed clear patterns still visible in its landscape today. The axes along which development has occurred in town are the traditional Town Center, dating back to Bridgewater's founding, and the robust system of state highways opened in the twentieth century that crisscross the landscape. Residential uses continue to dominate Bridgewater's landscape, with low-density residential development taking up the largest portion of the Town's land area by a significant margin.

Much of the available developable land zoned for single-family residences has already been subdivided and built on; therefore, developers have turned to higher-density projects and mixed-use conversions. Higher density developments include VIVA Bridgewater (300 units), McElwain School Apartments (57 units), and Duxburrow Estates (148 single family units)¹⁶ as well as the Perkins Foundry Redevelopment and Broad Street Mixed-Use Project.

Industrial and commercial uses, in contrast, occupy only a combined six percent of its land. Commercial, industrial and institutional uses are predominantly located in the Town Center, along the major routes, and around the BSU campus and Bridgewater Correctional Complex. Additional areas of industrial and commercial use include the Lakeshore Center, south of Lake Nippenicket, and Elm Street located off Route 24.

In the northwest, large stretches of wetlands (including Lake Nippenicket and Hockomock Swamp) limit buildable areas. To the southeast, the correctional facility and surrounding swaths of state-owned land discourage residential development.

Residential and institutional growth have claimed multiple agricultural properties and other open space including portions of the Imhoff Farm, much of the Homenook Farm, the Perkins land (Calthrop Trust Property off of Cherry Street), the McIntyre Farm, the Pole Farm, the Pawlowski Farm, much of the Wyman Farm, and woodlands on Pine and Conant Streets. According to the 2022 Master Plan, natural farmland has declined from 2,964 acres in 1971, to 263 acres in 2019. Working farms include the Murray and Needs properties on North Street and the Hanson Farm on Route 104. Efforts by the community have preserved portions of these remaining farmlands. These agricultural areas and the acres of non-forested wetland make up the majority of the Town's open vistas.

¹⁶ Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan, 2022

3.4.3 Zoning

Zoning districts in Bridgewater include 12 base zoning districts and eight overlay districts designated as follows:

Residential Districts

- Residential A/B (RA/B)
- Residential C (RC)
- Residential D (RD)

Business Districts

- Business (B)
- Central Business District - Redevelopment (CBD-R)
- Central Business District - Standard (CBD-S)
- South Business (SB)
- Gateway Business (GB)
- East Gateway Business (EGB)

Industrial Districts

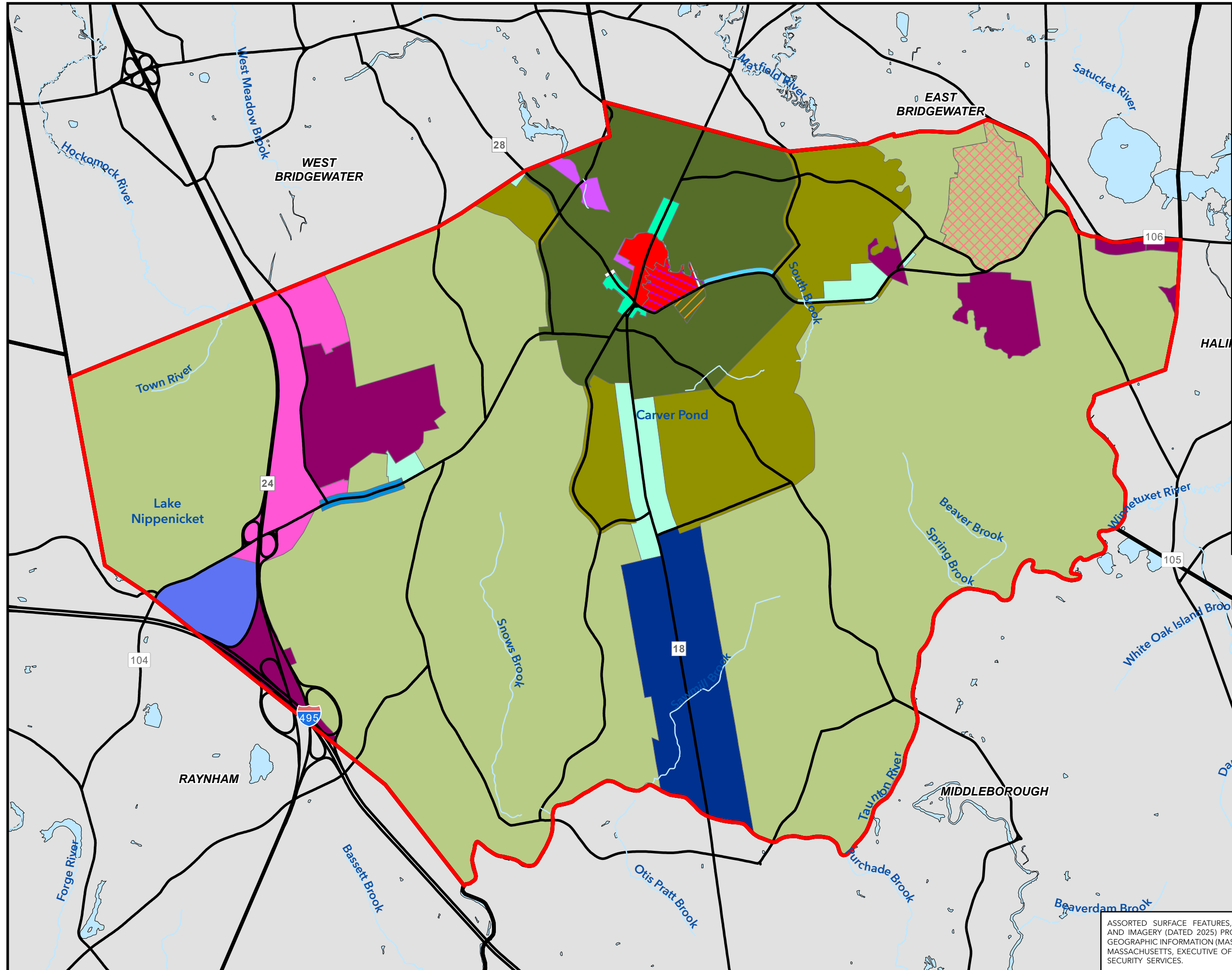
- Industrial A (IA)
- Industrial B (IB)
- Elm Street Industrial (IE)

Overlay and Special Districts

- Flood Plain Overlay District (FPOD)
- Aquifer Protection Overlay District (APOD)
- Bedford Street Overlay District (BSOD)
- Planned Development District (PDD)
- Elm Retail Overlay District (EROD)
- Mobile Home Elderly Community (MH)
- Waterford Village Overlay District 40R (WVOD)
- MBTA Communities Overlay District (MBTACOD)
 - MBTA-RD and MBTA/.RCBD subdistricts

Please see below for a list of zoning bylaw amendments adopted since the 2017 OSRP update related to open space and recreation.

- Stormwater Ordinance, September 2019
- Recodification of Zoning Bylaws to Ordinances - July 2022
- Senior Housing Village Development - November 2024



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water

Bridgewater Zoning Map

- Residential A/B
- Residential C
- Residential D
- Business B
- East Gateway Business District
- Planned Development District
- Central Business District Standard
- South Business District
- Central Business District Redevelopment
- Gateway Business District
- Industrial A
- Industrial B
- Industrial E
- MBTA/RD Subdistrict
- MBTA/RCBD Subdistrict
- Mobile Home Elderly Community Overlay District
- MassDOT Major Roads

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 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

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 144 Turnpike Road
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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

ZONING

B+T JOB NO. 3648.00	FIGURE 3
B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -003	

Section 4.0
Environmental Inventory & Analysis

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

4.1 Geology, Topography and Soils

4.1.1 Geology and Topography

The vast majority of Bridgewater's bedrock is comprised of Narragansett Basin Sedimentary, with the exception of a small sliver along the southern municipal boundary. Bridgewater's surficial geology was shaped through glacial action and is characterized by lowland terrain. Additionally, the Town is located within the Taunton River watershed, which is unusually flat with only a 20-foot drop over its 40-mile main stem.

The terrain throughout Bridgewater has limited relief ranging from 10 feet above mean sea level (MSL) along the southern end of Taunton River to 175 feet MSL at Sprague's Hill and 157 feet MSL at Great Hill on the Bridgewater State University Campus. Much of the land is low-lying with poor drainage and scattered wetlands, especially in the southern and western parts of the Town.¹⁷

4.1.2 Soils

Soils within Bridgewater vary from very poorly drained to excessively drained and from sandy to stoney. Glacial till containing layers of clay, gravel and other materials are common in Bridgewater and can be found throughout. The large, glacial lake, Lake Taunton, left behind thick silt and clay deposits in the southern and eastern sections of Town and also along stream beds. Thin layers of organic soils are found in the northeastern section of Town, mostly in the Hockomock Swamp.¹⁸ These tight glacial soils limit on-site wastewater disposal opportunities and groundwater yields.

The Taunton Basin is characterized by low permeability glacial till soils and less frequent very coarse sand and gravel outwash soils; by shallow depths to groundwater; and by many wetlands. These features significantly constrain conventional on-site wastewater disposal and may exacerbate storm water runoff issues, but they provide unique habitats for aquatic and upland wildlife.

Table 4-1 below summarizes the ten most prevalent soil types throughout the Town.

¹⁷ Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017

¹⁸ Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, prepared by Weston & Sampson Engineers, January 2020

Table 4-1: Ten Most Prevalent (by Acre) Soil Types Within Bridgewater

Soil Name	Drainage	Acres	%Total
Swansea muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Very poor	1021.6	5.6
Merrimac fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Somewhat Excessive	900.6	5
Raynham silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Poor	861.4	4.7
Freetown muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Very poor	848.9	4.7
Squamscott fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Poor	640.7	3.5
Birdsall silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Very poor	548.6	3
Scio very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Moderate	507.9	2.8
Hinckley loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Excessive	500.2	2.8
Eldridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Moderate	489.3	2.7
Eldridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Moderate	486.3	2.7

The various soils' suitability for septic systems can help to prioritize open space acquisitions if two similar sites have very different potential for development. Similarly, in cases where maintaining the amount and quality of ground water recharge is a concern, a site's recharge value may be an important consideration. Site topography and soils may determine future land use opportunities and should be taken into consideration when evaluating parcels for either recreational or open space acquisition.

4.1.2.1 Prime Farmland Soils

Prime farmland soils are those that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and are also available for these uses (the soil's use could be cropland, pastureland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up or water)¹⁹. Prime farmland soils are abundant throughout the Town as depicted in the image below. There are several prime farmland soils within the list of prevalent soil types by acre in Table 4-1, including Merrimac fine sandy loam, Hinckley loamy sand, Scio very fine sandy loam, and Eldridge fine sandy loam.

¹⁹ Prime farmland soil information obtained from [Prime Farmland Map Units, Massachusetts](#) obtained February 24, 2026

Prime Farmland Soils

- All Areas Are Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Farmland of Unique Importance

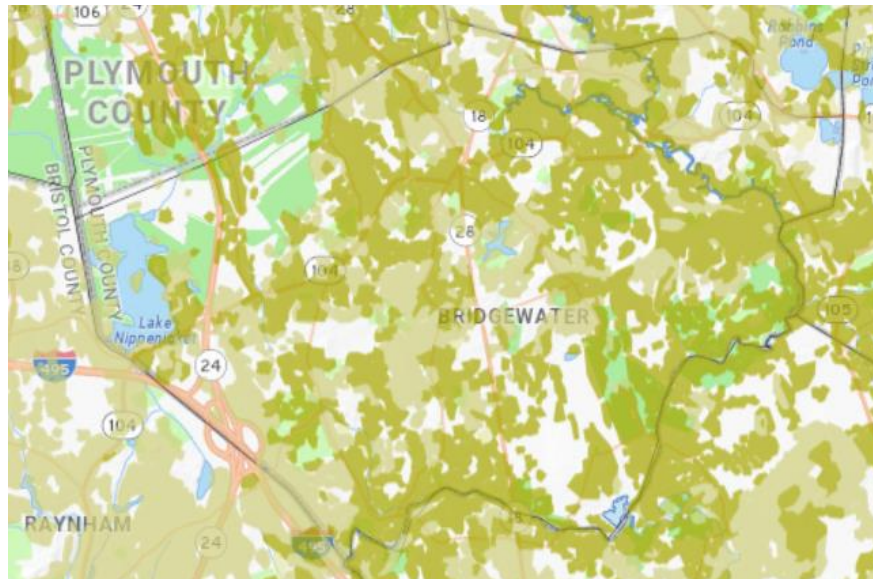


Image 4-1: Prime Farmland Soils obtained from MassMapper online, accessed February 24, 2026

In addition to the above-identified prime farmland soils, the Town submitted a request to the United States Department of Agriculture to evaluate obtaining designation of additional soils representing Farmland of Local Importance. In response to this request, Bridgewater was designated as a Town with Official Locally Important Farmland Soils in January 2025. These soil types are further depicted in Table 4-2.

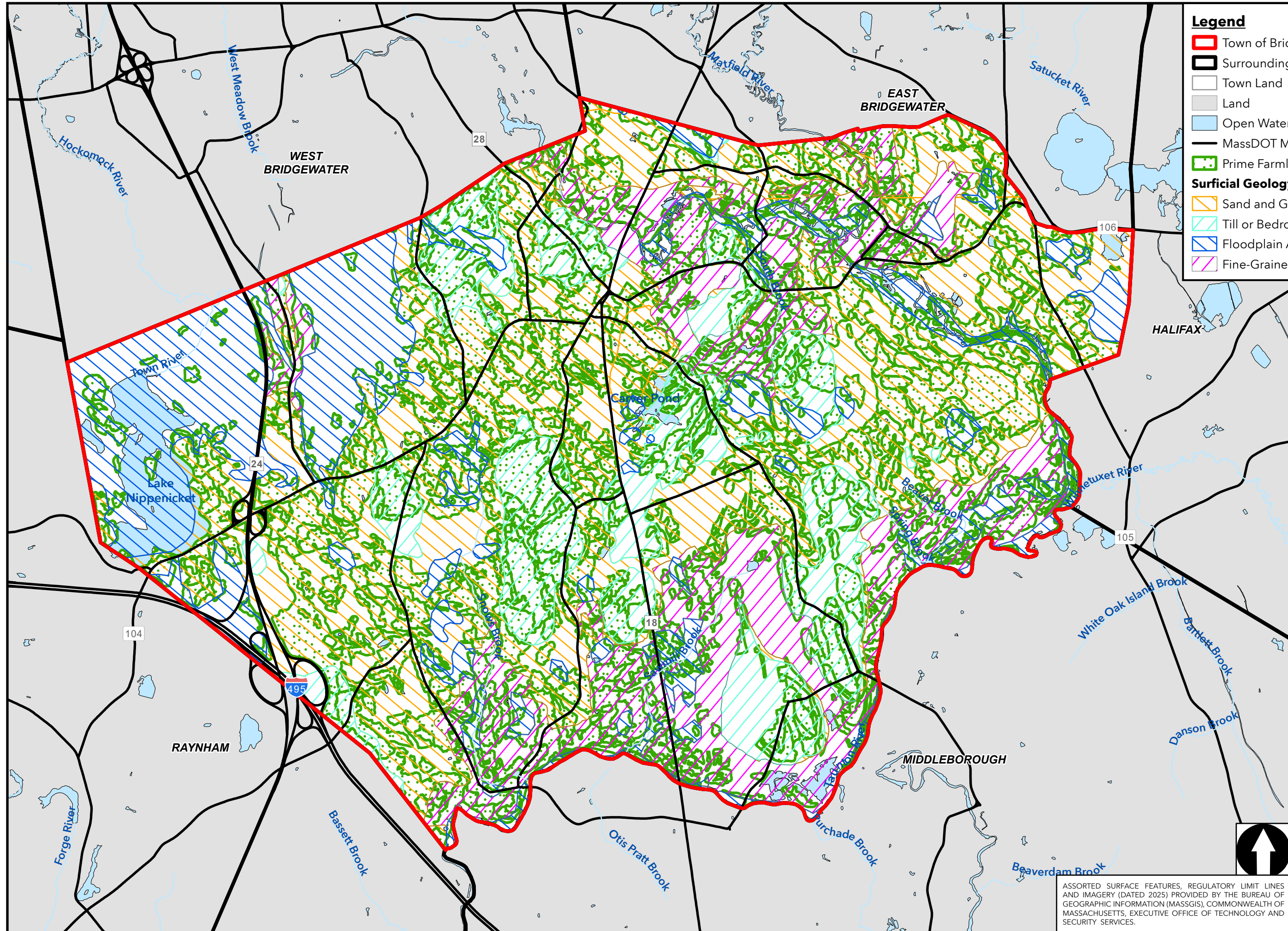
For additional information on agriculture in Bridgewater, refer to Section 4.3.5.

Table 4-2: Farmland of Local Importance

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Qualifier
5A	Saco mucky silt loam, frequently ponded, 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	Where historically ²⁰ drained, or growing season saturation or flooding in years of normal precipitation do not preclude crop production ²¹ viability
6A	Scarboro muck, coastal lowland, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability.
8A	Limerick 0 to 3 percent slopes, frequently flooded	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation or flooding in years of normal precipitation do not preclude crop production viability.
9A	Birdsall silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability, and/or where managed to enable cranberry production and compliant with applicable wetland regulations.
30A	Raynham silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability, and/or where managed to enable cranberry production and compliant with applicable wetland regulations.
37A	Massasoit - Mashpee complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability, and/or where managed to enable cranberry production and compliant with applicable wetland regulations.
51A	Swansea muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Where managed to enable cranberry production and compliant with applicable wetland regulations.
69A	Mattapoisett loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes, extremely stony	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation and the distribution of surface stones and boulders do not preclude crop production viability.
70A	Ridgebury fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability.
200A	Squamscott fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Where historically drained, or growing season saturation in years of normal precipitation does not preclude crop production viability, and/or where managed to enable cranberry production and compliant with applicable wetland regulations.
654B	Udorthents, loamy, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Where managed to enable cranberry production.
665B	Udipsamments, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Where managed to enable crop production viability.

²⁰ "Historically" defined as prior to December 23, 1985, in accordance with the wetland conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985.

²¹ Crop production is the process of managing land to grow and harvest food, feed, fiber, forage, and/or oilseed crops including fertilizing, pest control, irrigation, cultivating, and preparation for planting as applicable to the crop, and harvesting to maintain viable yields without causing excessive erosion. In addition to row crops, crop production includes hay and other feed crops, perennial fruit and nut crops, and improved pasture. Improved pasture is defined as grazing lands that are not in crop rotation and are planted primarily to forage species that receive periodic renovation and/or cultural treatments such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, and weed control.



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Prime Farmland Soils

Surficial Geology

- Sand and Gravel
- Till or Bedrock
- Floodplain Alluvium
- Fine-Grained Deposit

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 66 CENTRAL SQUARE
 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

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BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
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SOILS AND GEOLOGIC FEATURES

B+T JOB NO. 3648.00	FIGURE
B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -006	4

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4.2 Water Resources

4.2.1 Watersheds

Bridgewater lies within the approximately 562-square mile Taunton Basin, the second largest in Massachusetts. It contains the headlands of the Taunton River where the 14-mile-long Town River meets the Matfield River. The Matfield River draws on the Salisbury Brook and Beaver Brook, which converge in East Bridgewater. The Matfield River then picks up the Satucket River in the Joppa section of East Bridgewater just north of the Bridgewater town line. The Matfield River flows south to meet the Town River in Bridgewater, together forming the Taunton River.

The Taunton Basin has 108 sub-watersheds or sub-basins of which six are wholly or partially within Bridgewater. These are typically the areas upstream of the confluence of second-order streams and range from 5 to 10 square miles. In all, eight mapped sub-basins (smaller brooks, streams and wetlands draining into the Town, Matfield and Taunton Rivers) discharge to the Taunton River and ultimately to Mount Hope Bay and Narragansett Bay.



Image 4-2: Taunton River Watershed Map obtained from Taunton River Watershed Alliance, accessed February 24, 2026

4.2.2 Surface Waters

Bridgewater contains various surficial freshwater resources.

The Taunton River is the longest undammed coastal river in New England and provides excellent habitat for all life stages of fish. The river begins in the Town of Bridgewater at the confluence of the Matfield and Town Rivers. It is the second largest drainage area in Massachusetts and has one of the flattest courses in the state. Its level terrain creates extensive wetlands throughout the basin, including the 16,950 acre Hockomock Swamp, one of the largest wetlands in New England.



Image 4-3: View of Taunton River courtesy of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance

While the region's extensive drainage system has many streams, none except the Matfield River, the Town River and the Taunton River itself are very large due to the Town's proximity to the headwaters of several basins. Most smaller streams run for a short distance to the Town and Taunton Rivers.

Bridgewater's lakes and ponds are ecological, recreational and historic assets, providing important wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities including fishing, boating, and skating, and historic resources with particular significance for Native American, Colonial, and industrial history.

Bridgewater has nine primary lakes and ponds: Lake Nippenicket (Great Pond), Carver's Pond, Skeeter Mill Pond, Sturdevant's Pond, Blood Pond, Ice Pond, Cross Street Pond, the Town River Impoundment, and Paper Mill Village Backwater. Most of Bridgewater's smaller ponds have been altered (or created) through dams/impoundments to provide water control.

4.2.3 Aquifer Recharge Areas

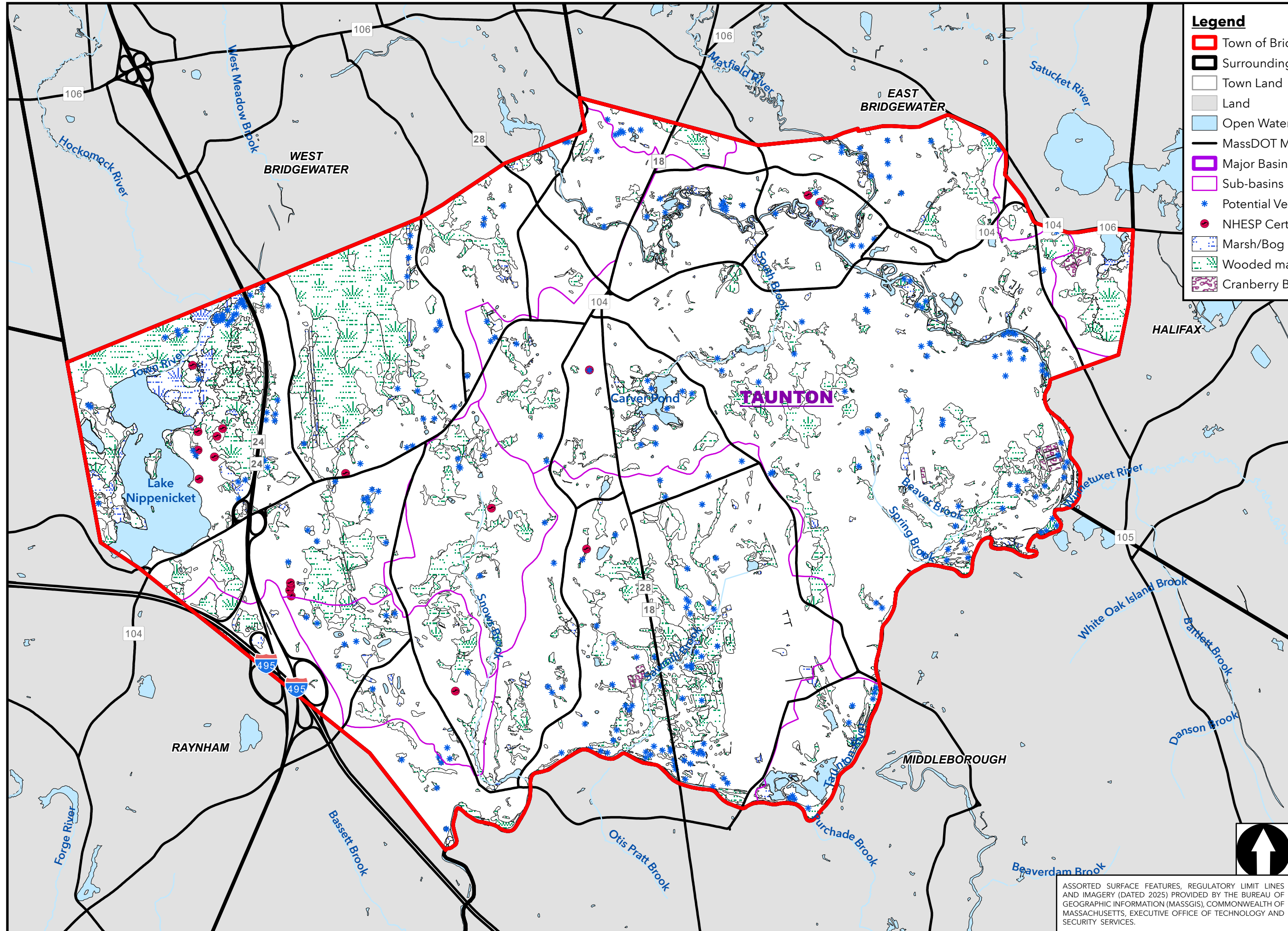
As discussed more fully in Section 3.5.1.2, the Town's water supply comes from groundwater sources from 9 wells installed in three different aquifers in the Taunton River Basin.

Aquifer recharge is essential in maintaining the groundwater table on which the Town relies. It is also important to maintain water as a general resource, particularly in areas where it is reflected in pond levels. Thus, it would be important to maintain or increase recharge over the Matfield River, Carver's Pond Zone II areas, and the Raynham recharge area that encompasses Lake Nippenicket. It is also important to maintain recharge in outlying Zone III areas from which groundwater eventually flows to the Zone II areas (i.e., the areas from which water is drawn by a well over a 6-month drought.)

Bridgewater's Aquifer Protection District (APOD), per Section 15 of the Zoning Ordinance, was written to address the following goals: preserve and protect the Town's groundwater resources; protect, preserve and maintain the existing and potential groundwater supply and surface water quality; prevent pollution of ground and surface water supplies; and promote public health, safety and general welfare.

The APOD is mapped over the Town's main aquifers and over land significantly recharging the aquifer (Zones I, II and III) and covers extensive sensitive areas. More specifically, the APOD covers the northeastern section of the Town, the area around the southern portion of Carver Pond, and a north-south strip west of Routes 18 and 28. In adjacent communities, East Bridgewater's comparable district covers a small area east of Stump Pond, and the Raynham district covers much of the area south of Lake Nippenicket to the Raynham line. The APOD in Bridgewater prohibits or limits uses potentially contaminating the aquifer and requires special permits for dams, paved areas, or other uses affecting storm water management and recharge, and sets standards for storm water management systems. The current ordinance could be strengthened with the addition of performance standards for nitrogen management.

While these regulations prohibit or restrict certain land uses within the APOD, they do not prevent development meeting certain performance standards. Accordingly, undeveloped parcels in the District may be targets for Town acquisition.



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Major Basins
- Sub-basins
- ★ Potential Vernal Pools
- NHESP Certified Vernal Pools
- Marsh/Bog
- Wooded marsh
- Cranberry Bog

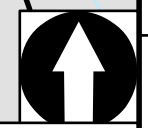
PREPARED FOR:
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
 66 CENTRAL SQUARE
 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

PREPARED BY:
BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
 T 508.366.0560 | www.bealsandthomas.com

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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

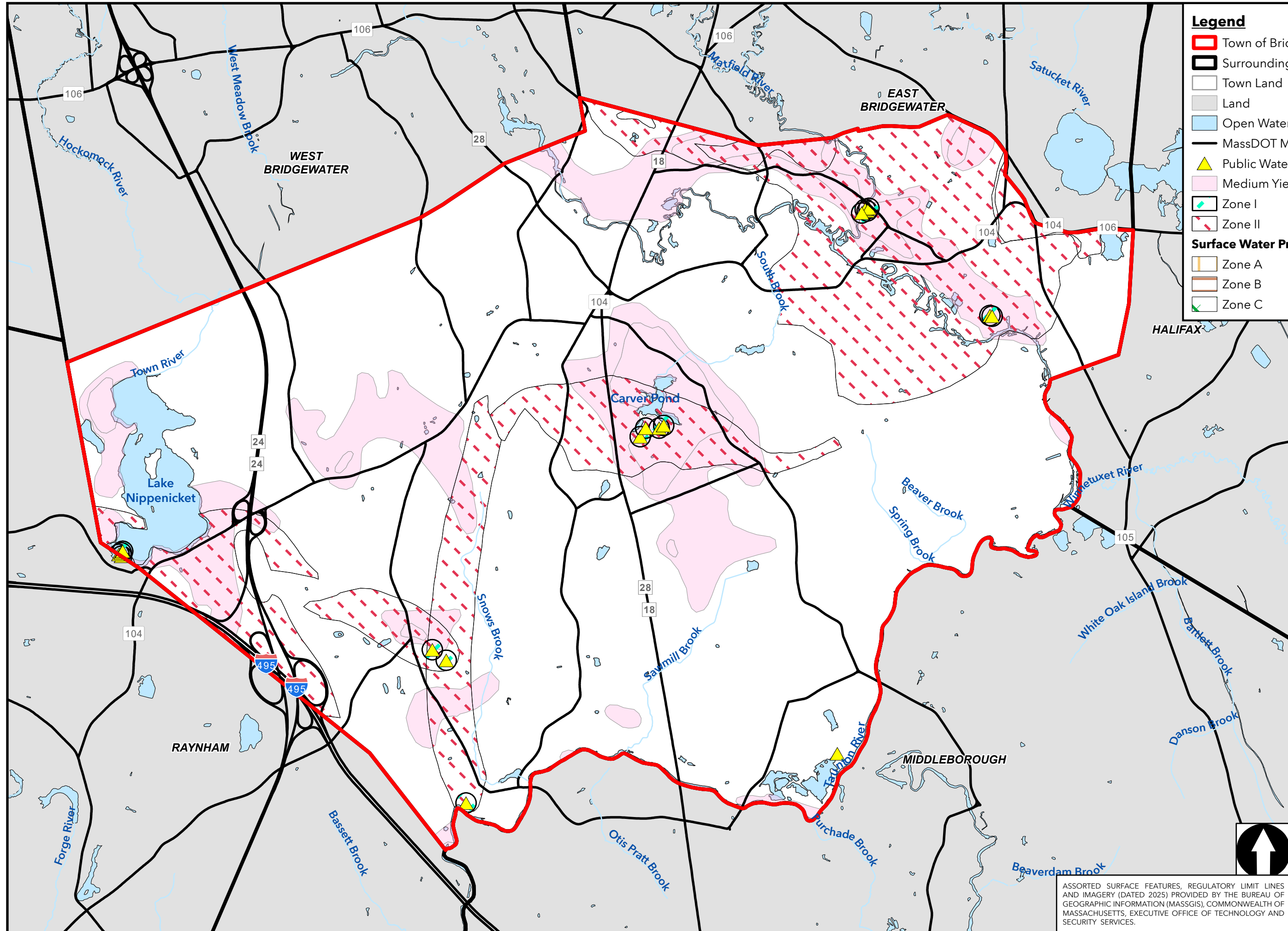
SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



WATER RESOURCES

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

<small>B+T JOB NO. 3648.00</small>	FIGURE
<small>B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -005a</small>	5A



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Public Water Supply
- Medium Yield Aquifers
- Zone I
- Zone II

Surface Water Protection Zones

- Zone A
- Zone B
- Zone C

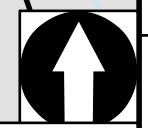
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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



WATER RESOURCES

<small>B+T JOB NO. 3648.00</small>	FIGURE
<small>B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A - 005B</small>	5B

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

4.2.4 Flood Hazard Areas

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Town of Bridgewater, the 1% annual chance storm (colloquially, the 100-year storm) is anticipated to result in flooding of portions of the Hockomock Swamp in the northwestern corner of the Town, and along river-side swamp and farmland. These are mapped in the eastern-most corner of the Town just past East Street; from Auburn Street to and along Spring Brook; from Summer Street to Sawmill Brook and adjacent wetlands; on to lowland by Sturtevant's Bridge; south under Forest Street and then through Sturtevant's Pond, and up Snow's Brook to Pleasant Street. To date, risks and losses due to flood hazards have been slight due to the terrain affected and to effective Flood Plain District zoning regulations. However, increased precipitation volumes and storm frequency are anticipated to result from climate change in the near future. Refer to Section 4.6 for additional information.

4.2.5 Wetlands

Wetlands provide a variety of important functions, including 1) the protection of public and private water supply; 2) the protection of groundwater supply; 3) flood control and storm damage prevention; 4) the prevention of pollution; 5) the protection of fisheries and shellfish; and 6) the protection of wildlife habitat.

The Town has an estimated 3,048 acres in wetlands. These include 459.4 acres of non-forested wetlands such as streamside marshes and wet meadows, and extensive areas of wooded swamp. Some wetlands are located along streams or contain streams, such as the state's largest, the Hockomock Swamp. Other wetland systems are isolated. Very few wetlands are located along the boundary of the Taunton River due to its generally steep banks.

The Town has a Wetlands Protection Bylaw and Regulations, established November 1990 and amended through February 2006. This bylaw and regulations additionally protect all wetland resource areas, buffer zones, and protected interests in combination with the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL c. 131, §40) and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.00).

Bridgewater also adopted a Stormwater Management Ordinance and Stormwater Management Regulations, effective since October 2019. The purpose of the Stormwater Ordinance and Regulations is to protect, maintain and enhance the public health, safety, general welfare, and environment by establishing minimum requirements and procedures to control the adverse effects of increased runoff, decreased ground water recharge, erosion and sedimentation, and nonpoint source pollution associated with new development and redevelopment of land.²²

²² Town of Bridgewater Stormwater Management Regulations, effective October 24, 2019

4.2.6 Impaired Waters

According to the DEP 2022 Integrated List of Rivers, Sawmill Brook and the Taunton River are both waters requiring a Total Maximum Daily Load (TDML). TMDLs indicate the greatest amount of a pollutant that allows a waterbody to meet water quality standards for public health. Causes of impairment to these waterbodies include low dissolved oxygen levels and presence of *Escherichia coli* (E. coli).

Through the Taunton River Watershed Alliance (TRWA), a dedicated crew of volunteers performs monthly testing at 20 sites on the Taunton River and tributaries, measuring levels of nitrate, total phosphorus, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH and temperature. The TRWA has been testing some of these sites since 1999. Based on their research, the primary water quality problems in the Taunton River watershed are driven by excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and stormwater runoff.²³

Additionally, the Matfield River showed low oxygen levels and high nutrient levels when tested by the Water Access Laboratory at Bridgewater State University from 1996 to 2005. The upstream Brockton wastewater treatment plant has since been updated for nitrogen and phosphorus removal.

Both Lake Nippenicket and Carver's Pond have been assessed as impaired according to the DEP 2022 Integrated List of Waters. Lake Nippenicket is classified as a Category 4A waterbody impaired for fish consumption and aquatic plants but does not require the development of a TDML. In the past, nitrogen loading has been a major problem at Lake Nippenicket. Impairments to Lake Nippenicket are caused by atmospheric deposition toxics. Carver's Pond was classified as a Category 4C waterbody impaired for non-native aquatic plants but does not require the development of a TDML.

²³ Water Quality Monitoring Program, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, accessed February 24, 2026

4.3 Vegetation

4.3.1 General Inventory

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Bridgewater falls within the Bristol Lowland/Narragansett Lowland ecoregion. This ecoregion is described as *"gently rolling plains. Forests are mostly central hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. There are numerous wetlands, some cropland/pasture, and many cranberry bogs. Many rivers drain this area."*²⁴

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has more specifically classified the natural communities of Massachusetts. NHESP organizes vegetation community types into three systems, defined as follows:

- **Terrestrial** communities are upland natural communities on predominantly well-drained soils that are dry to mesic. The vegetation is never hydrophytic even if the soil surface is seasonally flooded or saturated.
- **Palustrine** communities are wetland natural communities in which the species composition is affected by flooding or saturated soil conditions, and the water table is at or near the surface most of the year.
- **Estuarine** communities are tidal wetlands with fresh to salt water, in which the vegetation and substrate is flooded twice daily by fresh, brackish, or saltwater tides. These wetland communities have some direct hydrological connection to the open ocean.

Of these broad community types, two occur in Bridgewater. More specifically, the following specific vegetative communities occur in Bridgewater:

- Coniferous, deciduous, and mixed deciduous/coniferous upland forests (Terrestrial)
- Herbaceous, shrub and tree riverine natural community systems (Palustrine)

4.3.2 Wetlands and Fields

As noted in the previous section, the Town has an estimated 3,048 acres in wetlands. Several rare communities of acidic fens, and white cedar swamps and bogs are found in the Town's diverse Hockomock swamp lands, and the Alluvial Atlantic White Cedar Swamp habitat occurs in spots along the Taunton River where it floods in the Spring and remains wet most of the year. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species (NHESP) Program notes that "Fortunately much of the land in and around the Hockomock where these occur is protected for conservation by the Town and Commonwealth."

²⁴ Office of Geographic and Environmental Information, "MassGIS", Metadata for US EPA Ecoregions, accessed February 24, 2026 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-us-epa-ecoregions>

Elsewhere there are some open fields offering grasslands depending on mowing practices. An example is the town-owned Wyman North Fork Conservation Area. There are also small areas of fresh marsh with non-forested wetlands.

4.3.3 Forests

Bridgewater has sizable tracts of conifer forest, red maple, and cedar swamps throughout the Town. These vegetated areas offer important wildlife habitat and their upland portions offer hiking opportunities most of the year. Selective installation of boardwalks and removal of some trailside briars and brambles could increase such opportunities particularly during the wet seasons.

According to the latest land use information from MassGIS, less than half of the Town's land is in mixed hardwood and softwood forests. These are found in both uplands and wetlands. These extensive forests reflect untouched land and reforested former farmland. With increasing development on both forest and farmland, solid blocks of forest are likely being lost more rapidly than new forests are replacing farmland. Many former solid blocks of forest are broken up by development along existing roads. It is important to leave gaps in such development and maintain areas large enough and/or well connected to give wildlife needed range and migration corridors.

4.3.4 Street and Public Shade Trees

The Bridgewater Tree Committee was formed to develop a comprehensive tree management program for the Town's public trees. The Committee advises Town officials, municipal boards and committees, and the general public to promote activities that encourage the planting, care, and management of all existing and new public trees reflective of state-wide best management practices. Recent accomplishments of the Tree Committee include organizing Arbor Day celebrations, townwide tree plantings, providing a comprehensive tree list for the Bridgewater Planning Board, proposed a tree mitigation schedule and proposed language updates to the Town's Shade Tree Ordinance²⁵.

4.3.5 Agricultural Land

Bridgewater contains extensive existing and historic agricultural land. As noted previously, natural farmland throughout the Town has declined from 2,964 acres in 1971, to 263 acres in 2019. Working farms include the Murray and Needs properties on North Street and the Hanson Farm on Route 104.

²⁵ The Bridgewater Tree Committee Progress Report, February 17, 2026

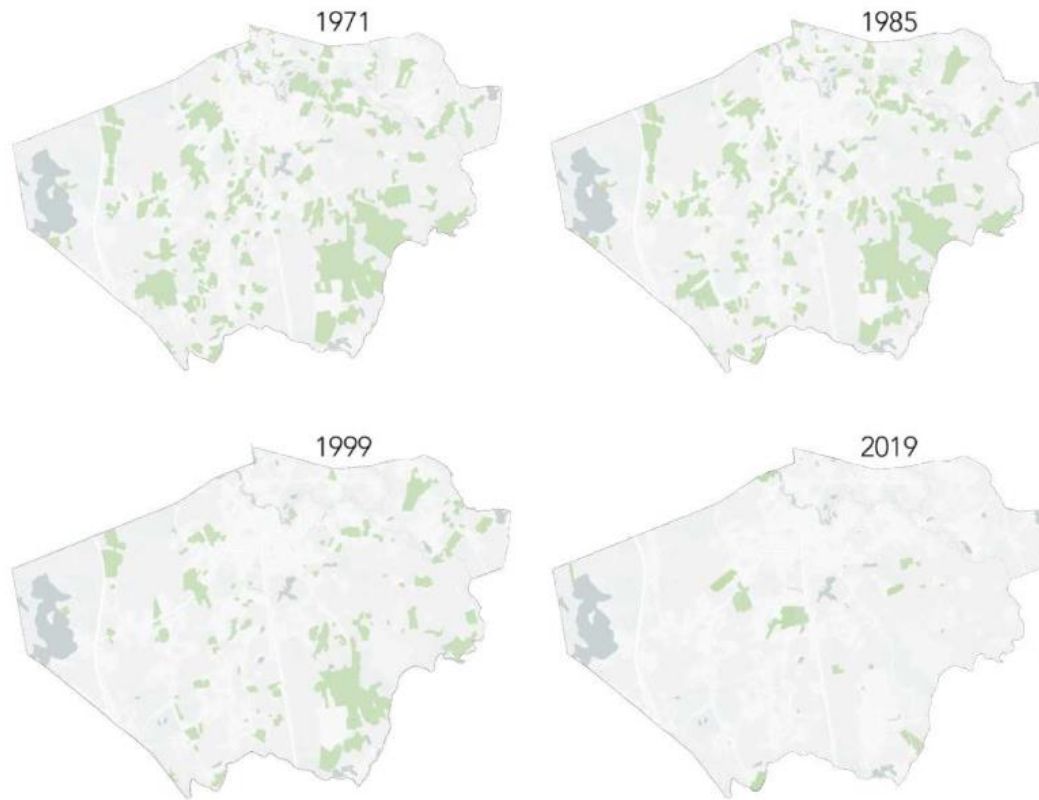


Image 4-4: Acreage Change of Farmland in Bridgewater, 1971-2019. Source: 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan

Residential and institutional growth have claimed multiple agricultural properties and other open space including portions of the Imhoff Farm, much of the Homenook Farm, the Perkins land (Calthrop Trust Property off of Cherry Street), the McIntyre Farm, the Pole Farm, the Pawlowski Farm, much of the Wyman Farm, and woodlands on Pine and Conant Streets.

There have been several local efforts to preserve remaining farmlands. For example, the Town purchased the Hogg Farm in 2000 for municipal and recreational use, purchased the historic Keith Homestead and Farm on the shores of Lake Nippenicket and adjacent land in 2011 for historic preservation and open space/recreational uses, and acquired a Conservation Restriction to protect the Murray and Needs farms on North Street in 2015. Most recently, a Conservation Restriction was finalized in July 2025 to permanently preserve a 72-acre portion of Hanson Farm.



Image 4-5: Hanson Farm CR Sign,
obtained from the Town of Bridgewater Facebook page

The Town of Bridgewater has enrolled approximately 352 acres of Town's land in state Chapter 61B (Open Space and Recreational Land) state program, and approximately 847 acres in Chapter 61A (Farmland) program. In addition, there are approximately 220 acres of private agricultural land currently enrolled in the state Chapter 61A program.

4.3.6 BioMap

BioMap utilizes the most current scientific data and resources to help state and local governments, land trusts, non-government organizations, and other conservation partners strategically protect and manage the habitats and ecosystems critical for biodiversity conservation²⁶.

- Core Habitat identifies areas that are critical for long-term persistence of rare species, exemplary natural communities, and resilient ecosystems. This designation includes:
 - Habitats for rare, vulnerable, or uncommon mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, invertebrate, and plant species;
 - Priority Natural Communities;
 - High quality wetland, vernal pool, aquatic, and coastal habitats; and
 - Intact forest ecosystems.
- Critical Natural Landscape identifies large tracts of land that are primarily undeveloped as well as buffers to core habitats and coastal areas which promote connectivity and resilience
- Local Components are additions to Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape which are assessed locally to inform municipalities and others in decision-making.

²⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/biomap-town-report-bridgewater>

- Regional Components are additions to BioMap that shows areas that are particularly important for maintaining sub-continental connections among habitats, which will support the shifting ranges of native species.

Bridgewater at a Glance

- **Total Area:** 18,150.3 acres
 - Total Open Space Protected in Bridgewater: 2,615.6 acres or 14.4% of total area
- **BioMap Core Habitat:** 4,412.1 acres
 - Percent of Bridgewater Covered by Core Habitat: 24.3%
 - BioMap Core Habitat Protected in Bridgewater: 1,267.7 acres or 7.0%
- **BioMap Critical Natural Landscape:** 5,479.9 acres
 - Percent of Bridgewater Covered by Critical Natural Landscape: 30.2%
 - BioMap Critical Natural Landscape Protected in Bridgewater: 1,618.1 acres or 8.9%
- **BioMap Local Components:** 4,908.1 acres
 - Percent of Bridgewater Covered by Local Components: 27.0%
 - BioMap Local Components Protected in Bridgewater: 1,110.1 acres or 6.1%
- **BioMap Regional Components:** 890.6 acres
 - Percent of Bridgewater Covered by Regional Components: 4.9%
 - BioMap Regional Components Protected in Bridgewater: 258.5 acres or 1.4%

Source: [BioMap Town Report: Bridgewater](#) accessed February 24, 2026



Image 4-6: BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscapes viewed February 24, 2026 online at <https://gis.eea.mass.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e2b6c291e0294c3281488621aaa095bf&find=Bridgewater>

4.3.7 Rare and Endangered Plant Species

The population status of rare plants and animals in Massachusetts is described using three categories:

- **Special concern** species have either experienced a decline that could threaten the species without intervention, or whose populations are so small, localized, or dependent upon specialized habitats that they could become threatened.
- **Threatened** species are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.
- **Endangered** species are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.²⁷

Table 4-3 lists the most recent rare plant observations in Bridgewater. These state-listed plant species are protected pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

Table 4-3: Rare Plant Species within Bridgewater²⁸

E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Vascular Plant	<i>Ludwigia Sphaerocarpa</i>	Round Fruited Seedbox	E	2016
Vascular Plant	<i>Sabatia kennedyana</i>	Plymouth Gentian	SC	2016
Vascular Plant	<i>Scirpus longii</i>	Long's Bullrush	T	2001
Vascular Plant	<i>Platanthera flava var. herbiola</i>	Pale Green Orchid	T	1912

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>, access on February 24, 2026

Refer to Section 4.4.2 for information pertaining to state-listed rare wildlife species.

²⁷ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. "Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program." 11 Feb. 2009 <www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/nhosp.htm>.

²⁸ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer> viewed July 23, 2025

4.4 Fisheries and Wildlife

4.4.1 General Inventory

Diverse wildlife habitats exist throughout Bridgewater, particularly along the Town, Matfield and Taunton Rivers and various brooks, streams, ponds and adjacent upland areas. Habitat along the Town and Matfield Rivers is limited by relatively high-density development while the Taunton River flows through the Town's longest stretch of undisturbed habitats. The river's riparian areas need to be protected vigorously as continuing development nearby can be disruptive even if outside of the 200-foot Riverfront Area regulated by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. While this buffer is far less than the quarter mile buffer on public lands protected by the Wild and Scenic River designation, these river buffer areas function as critical wildlife corridors within the town boundaries and beyond.

Despite the limited buffer area, white-tailed deer, coyote, fox and wild turkey are plentiful here along with varied small mammals common to northeastern forests and wetlands. The migratory habits of some large mammals have changed with the 1998 commuter rail restoration leaving the fields along Summer Street bisected by a 6-foot-high chain link fence. Yet these grasslands and farm fields are still a vital component of the regional habitats and flyway for migratory birds, and the occasional Bald Eagle is seen.



Image 4-7: View of Taunton River, obtained from Taunton River Watershed Alliance Facebook ([Taunton River Watershed Alliance | Facebook](#))

The greatest natural setting in the community remains the several hundred acres of land surrounding Lake Nippenicket. This nearly 500-acre great pond attracts a diversity of waterfowl, amphibians and mammals indigenous to the greater Hockomock Swamp. Other significant functioning reserves for wildlife are Carver's Pond, Ice Pond, Sturdevant's Pond, and Skeeter Mill Pond and their surrounding landscapes.

The joint West Bridgewater-Bridgewater Town River Fishery Committee was established by the two towns in 1994 for restoration, protection and management of the herring fishery while respecting competing needs for stream flow and working to improve public viewing and catching areas. Fish ladders exist at the town-owned War Memorial Park dam in West Bridgewater and at the deteriorated privately-owned and maintained dam at Iron Works Park near High Street in Bridgewater. There are none on South Brook connecting the Town River to Skeeter Mill Pond and Carver's Pond. The need for such ladders and their cost/benefit require study. Downstream from these sites the NRTB and Trout Unlimited have worked to protect wild and native trout streams in portions of the Old State Farm/BCC land.

4.4.2 Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors become increasingly important as natural areas are divided by development. Bridgewater has vast areas supporting wildlife as described above. Hockomock Swamp ACEC represents a large wildlife corridor spanning approximately, 16,950 acres, 1,131-acres of which is located in Bridgewater. Additionally, Wildlands Trust recently acquired an additional 90 acres contained in two contiguous parcels along the upper Taunton River corridor in Bridgewater. The property, known as the Perkins Bridgewater Preserve, is located off Cherry Street, directly across the river from Wyman North Fork Conservation Area. The property includes 11 potential vernal pools and approximately one mile of frontage on the Taunton River. Collectively, the Perkins Bridgewater Preserve and Wyman North Fork Conservation Area properties comprise 186 acres—the largest expanse of protected lands along the upper Taunton River corridor above Cherry Street²⁹.

Though many of the largest open land areas are discontinuous and thus may impede free movement of larger wildlife, there are still many opportunities for wildlife corridors along streams such as South Brook, Snow's Brook, Spring Brook, etc. In addition, various protected riverside lands along the Town and Taunton Rivers offer a valuable and near continuous wildlife corridor for stream-dependent species to move up and down the streams while its width gives good access to the upland and wetlands forests.

²⁹ 90 Acres Protected on the Taunton River in Bridgewater, Wildlands Trust, August 14, 2025

The remaining various potential uplands and streamside wildlife corridors all require further study with close attention to preserving needed connections between habitats. This research calls for coordination among various Town departments and stakeholders in order to retain needed habitats and to preserve connections between or behind subdivisions. Protection of wildlife corridors could be accomplished through an Open Space Community Development approach that allows preservation of such connections while still fostering desired degree of development.

4.4.3 Rare and Endangered Wildlife Species

NHESP has recent records for observations of MESA-listed animal species within the Town of Bridgewater that include Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), Scarlet bluet (*Enallagma pictum*), and Northern red-bellied cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*).

Many of Bridgewater's rare animal species are associated with the Town's extensive wetlands, the Town and Taunton River riparian zones, ponds, streams and wetland and upland forests. As such, it is important to protect the wetland forests, pine forests, vernal pools, buffer zones and open nesting areas which provide critical habitat for these species.

Table 4-4: Rare Animal Species within Bridgewater ³⁰
E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Bird	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn Owl	SC	1981
Bird	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper Sparrow	T	1997
Bird	<i>Asio otus</i>	Long-eared Owl	SC	1978
Bird	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	Upland Sandpiper	E	1980
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Papaipema sulphurata</i>	Water-willow Stem Borer	T	2015
Crustacean	<i>Sicifera chamberlaini</i>	Coastal Swamp Amphipod	SC	2019
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Williamsonia lintneri</i>	Ringed Boghaunter	T	1987
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Enallagma pictum</i>	Scarlet Bluet	T	2012
Mammal	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	Red Bat	SC	1905
Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	Creeper	SC	2005
Mussel	<i>Sagittunio nasutus</i>	Eastern Pondmussel	SC	2014
Mussel	<i>Atlanticoncha ochracea</i>	Tidewater Mucket	SC	2014
Reptile	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle	T	2020
Reptile	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	Eastern Box Turtle	SC	2020
Reptile	<i>Pseudemys rubriventris</i>	Northern Red-bellied Cooter	E	2005
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	2004

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer> accessed February 25, 2026

³⁰ Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. "Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program." 25, February 2026 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>

4.4.3.1 Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are typically ephemeral in nature, with water ponded through the spring but drying by the middle to end of summer, although some pools do contain water year-round. Such intermittent drying precludes fish from establishing permanent populations within these wetlands; many amphibian and invertebrate species rely on breeding habitat that is free of fish predators. Physical factors such as water temperature, sunlight exposure, water acidity, and the duration of ponding all affect the type of animal community inhabiting a pool.³¹ As of February 2026, Bridgewater has 18 certified vernal pools and over 300 potential vernal pools. Although there are certified and potential vernal pools throughout the Town, the majority are found in proximity to the Taunton, Matfield and Town Rivers, Sawmill Brook and Lake Nippenicket. Information regarding certifying vernal pools can be found at this website: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/vernal-pool-certification>.

4.4.3.2 Priority and Estimated Habitats and BioMap Aquatic Core

NHESP identified Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats for rare and endangered species within Bridgewater. Estimated Habitats are wetland-related areas significant for rare wildlife. They are intended to be used in enforcing the Wetlands Protection Act while the slightly more inclusive Priority Habitats are the probable habitats of State listed rare species to guide protective activities.

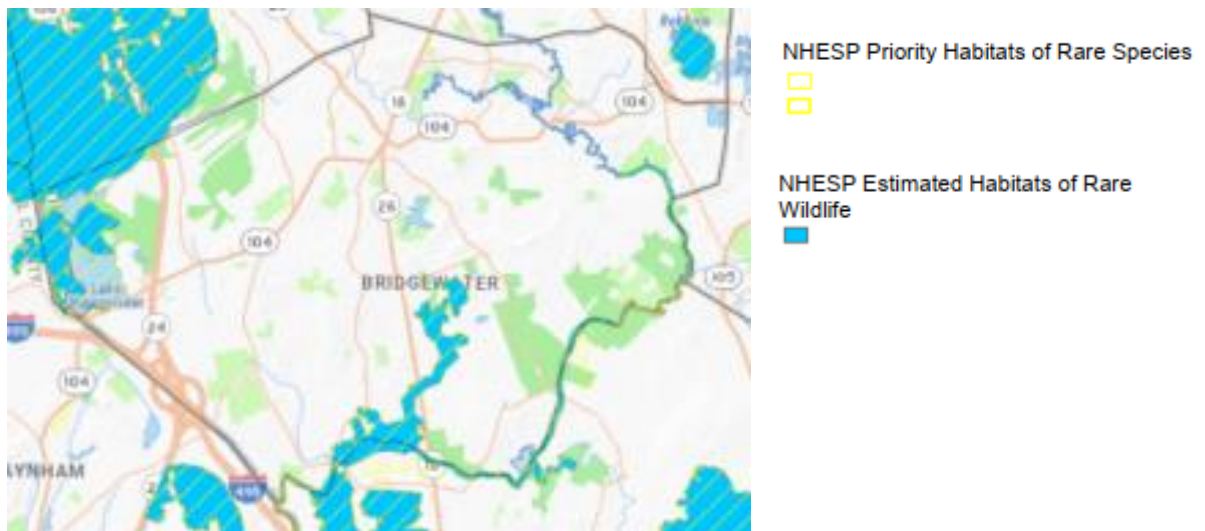


Image 4-8: NHESP Priority and Estimated Habitats viewed February 25, 2026, online at <https://maps.massgis.digital.mass.gov/MassMapper/MassMapper.html>

³¹ Leo P. Kenney and Matthew R. Burne, *A Field Guide to the animals of Vernal Pools* (Westborough, MA: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 2001).

Additionally, according to BioMap2, these areas are also designated as Aquatic Core. According to NHESP, the Aquatic Core identifies intact aquatic habitats (rivers, streams, lakes and ponds) supporting a diversity of aquatic species and important physical and ecological processes.³²

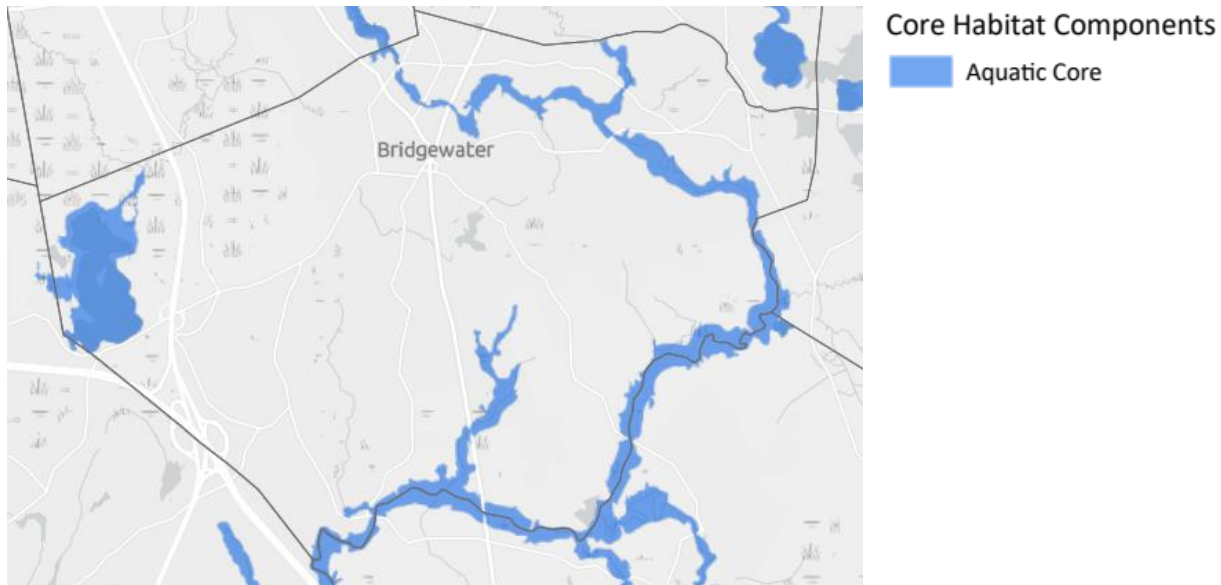


Image 4-9: BioMap Aquatic Core Habitat viewed February 25, 2026, online at <https://gis.eea.mass.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e2b6c291e0294c3281488621aaa095bf&find=Bridgewater>

Large un-fragmented conservation land provides the best opportunities to maintain populations of species and limit further species loss from the Town. As such, protection of land adjacent to these areas, including existing public or private open space locally and across municipal boundaries, is important in establishing large areas of biodiversity protection.

³² <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-biomap-the-future-of-conservation> accessed February 25, 2026

4.5 Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

4.5.1 Scenic Landscapes

The Town's most compelling landscapes are its open fields, particularly along Summer Street through leased acreage on the Old State Farm at BCC, and Flagg Street soccer fields on BCC land, the Taunton River Wildlife Management Area, the Great River Preserve, the long view up Lake Nippenicket and many shorter views along the rivers from bridges, such as the view up the Matfield River from High Street. The approximately 200-acre Cumberland Farm fields (approved for a solar field and other land use changes) are significant despite being hidden from upland view by woodlands and development, except from along Curve Street south of Auburn Street which allows a view of approximately 2,400 feet of river frontage. This view is a key part of the river's wild, scenic, and sometimes pastoral character. Some views have been degraded by alterations such as the paved wellfield access drive bisecting the Wyman North Fork Conservation Area. Other iconic landscapes are the fleeting view of the former McIntyre's farm field from Plymouth Street and the charming Town Center views of Central Square. Stiles & Hart Conservation Area also provides scenic views of the Town River and remaining historic features of the site.

The Town has a number of potential Scenic Ways proposed in multiple earlier Open Space Plans. These include:

- Auburn Street
- Spruce Street
- Summer Street (South of Flagg Street)
- Elm Street (Northern portions)
- Plymouth Street (East of Pond Street)
- South Street (South of South Drive)
- Lakeside Drive along the edge Lake Nippenicket

These roads have not been officially designated by the Town under the Scenic Roads Act. Therefore, they do not have the protection afforded by a mandatory Planning Board hearing before road-side trees can be cut or stone walls may be altered. However, they add to the Town's character and should be considered for official Scenic Road designation and the afforded protections.

4.5.2 Characteristic Geologic Features and other Resources

The Town's main geologic feature is its virtual enclosure by the Town and Taunton Rivers. Opportunities to view them, to protect their water quality and to increase usable access are central to this plan and its recommendations. The Town's two main hills, Great Hill on the BSU campus (157 feet above mean sea level [msl]) and Sprague's Hill (170 feet msl) on the East Bridgewater line, could be pleasant viewing points except that each is dominated by a large water supply tank and is otherwise largely tree covered. However, such opportunities might well be explored consistently with tank security since each is accessible by the water tank access road.

4.5.3 Cultural, Archeological and Historic Sites

Bridgewater's cultural and historic sites are largely proximate to the Central Square area and the Titicut Conservation Area (formerly Titicut Reservation), which represents a large tract of land rich in Native American history.

According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, archaeological sites in the vicinity of Hockomock Swamp wetland complex are known to span a period of 9,000 years; the potential quality and significance of the archaeological resources are enormous. Additional Native American archeological sites might be expected along the rivers and nearby fertile fields, but original inhabitants' seasonal movements along the river system involved very few permanent settlements and left few artifacts.

In addition to the churches and former schools listed earlier, most notably the Academy Building, the Town's major cultural resource is Bridgewater State University. This is the flagship of the state college system and brings many classes, concerts, plays, athletic events and other cultural happenings to the Town and the region.

Cultural and historical sites are further discussed in Section 3.2 where a discussion of major historic structures and locations is provided.

4.5.4 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

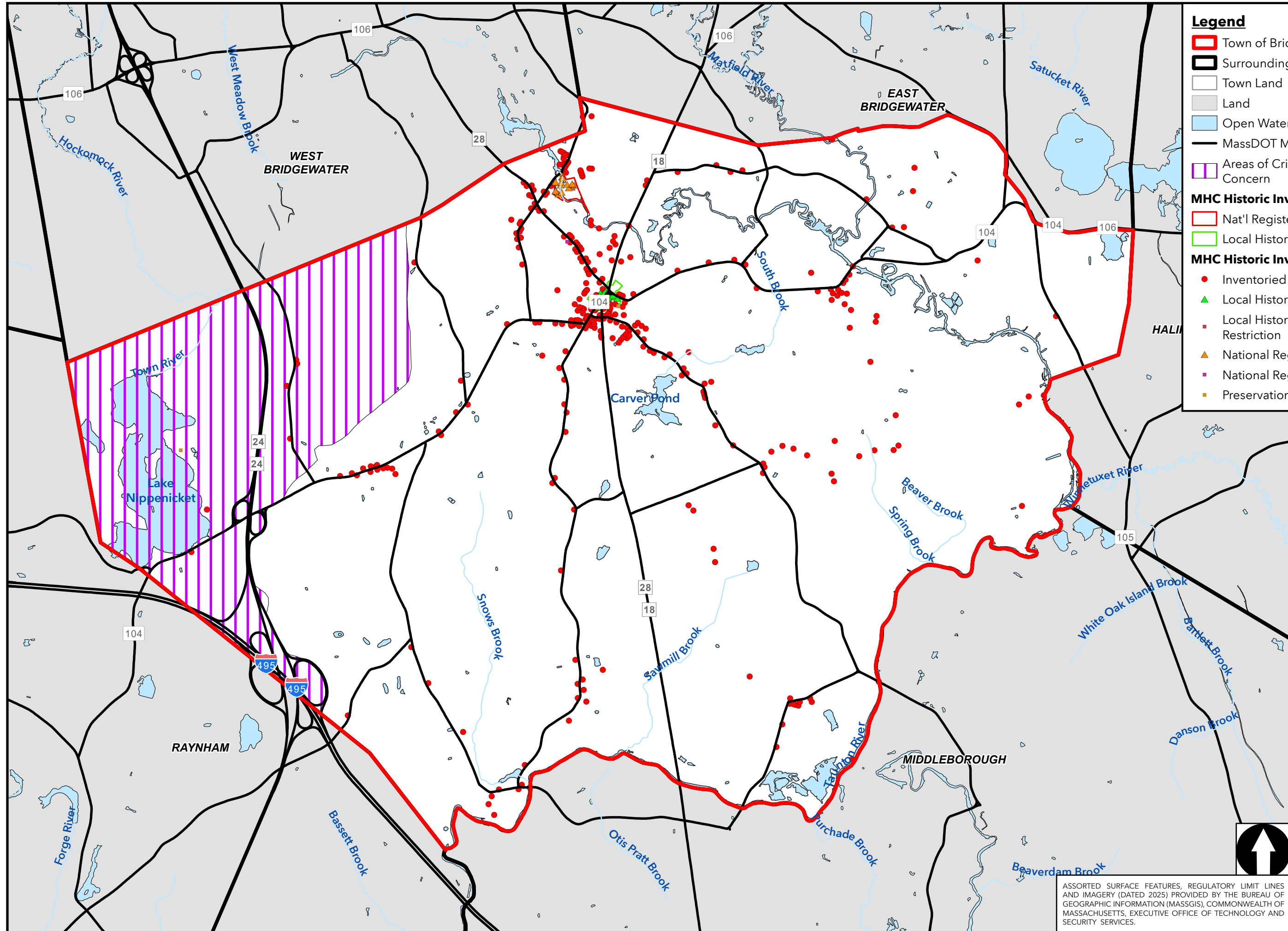
Hockomock Swamp, the largest fresh-water swamp in Massachusetts, is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and comprises 16,800 acres located in the Towns of Bridgewater, Easton, Norton, Raynham, Taunton, and West Bridgewater.

The Secretary of Environmental Affairs approved designation of this ACEC area in 1990 after extensive research and advocacy led by Bridgewater residents concerned with the implications of potential commercial and residential growth, particularly around Lake Nippenicket. The Massachusetts Division of Fish and Game owns approximately 5,000 acres of Hockomock Swamp.



Image 4-10: Hockomock Swamp, obtained from <https://www.mass.gov/news/into-the-hockomock-where-wildlife-and-stories-dwell>

In Bridgewater the ACEC includes the western end of the Town west of Pine Street, and much land east of Rte. 24 about two thirds of the way to North Street. It includes much Ch. 61B land and land in the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area. This is only a small portion of the ACEC which extends far into Raynham, Easton, Taunton, Norton and West Bridgewater. The designation does not prevent development, but it requires lower thresholds for jurisdiction and a higher standard of review than apply elsewhere.



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

MHC Historic Inventory Areas

- Nat'l Register of Historic Places
- Local Historic District

MHC Historic Inventory Points

- Inventoried Property
- ▲ Local Historic District
- Local Historic District Preservation Restriction
- ▲ National Register District
- National Register - Individual Property
- Preservation Restriction

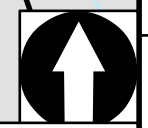
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 66 CENTRAL SQUARE
 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

PREPARED BY:
BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
 T 508.366.0560 | www.bealsandthomas.com

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OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 3,500' DATE: MAY 12, 2026



UNIQUE FEATURES

<small>B+T JOB NO. 3648.00</small>	FIGURE
<small>B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -006</small>	6

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2025) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

4.6 Climate Change Impacts

Bridgewater, like many other communities, has seen an increase in extreme weather in recent years. Factoring in climate change impacts while determining future development opportunities, as well as designating land for conservation and development of parks, are important mitigation strategies for protecting against the impacts of climate change.

In an effort to be proactive, the Town of Bridgewater has completed the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning process through a grant offered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). Additionally, the Town developed a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) under the direction of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

4.6.1 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP)

The Town of Bridgewater received a state grant to complete the Community Resilience Building (CRB) Workshop under the MVP program, which was completed during two workshop days in February 2019. As such, Bridgewater is eligible to apply for Action Grants through the MVP program.

The Town of Bridgewater partnered with Green International Affiliates, Inc. to complete the MVP planning process. The MVP Core Planning Team identified flooding, wind (including Nor'easters, tornadoes, etc.) winter storms/extreme cold, and drought/extreme heat as the top natural hazards facing the community. The following excerpts from the MVP Report detail the areas of concern that were identified throughout the processes.

Table 4-5 - 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan: Vulnerable Areas and Attributes for Bridgewater based on Climate Change Projections

INFRASTRUCTURAL	SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dams • Bridges/Roads/Culverts • Wastewater and Water Treatment Facilities • Town Wells, Water Tanks and Water System • Drainage System • Shelter Buildings • Electrical Distribution System • Public Transportation Infrastructure/MBTA Station • Zoning Regulations • Telecommunications • Fire Department • Bridgewater Correctional Complex (incl. State Hospital) • Transfer Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior and Vulnerable Population Facilities and Housing • Densely Populated Neighborhoods • Roche Bros. Supermarket • BSU • Recreational Fields & Parks • Intra-Town Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stormwater Ordinance • Existing Septic Systems within Flood Zone • Farm Land Loss to Residential Development • Old Pine Plantations/Aging Trees (Town Forest) • Waterborne Diseases • Sea Level Rise • Wastewater Treatment Plant • Town Wells/Water Supply • Wetlands • Hockomock Swamp • Water Resources (Ponds, Lakes and Rivers) • High Street Dam Removal

Items specific to open space and recreation planning include:

Infrastructural

Zoning Regulations Zoning Regulations in Bridgewater are not currently addressing the issue of new development in vulnerable areas. A review of the present zoning ordinance is necessary to address this issue and make changes with regards to the projected climate change effects and to build Town’s resiliency.

Societal

Recreational Fields & Parks: Considering the Town’s location within the Taunton River watershed, participants felt that climate change, with projected sea level rise and increased precipitation events could threaten the recreational fields and opportunities, especially passive recreational areas along the rivers. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate vulnerabilities of parks and recreational fields for future use.

Environmental

Farm Land Loss to Residential Development: Between the years of 1971 and 2013, acreage of farmland in Bridgewater declined from close to 3,000 acres to just over 1,000 acres. Those developments and increased impervious surfaces from housing development contribute to the potential hazards discussed in this report. Even though the Town has put a lot of effort in addressing the farm land loss and preserving agricultural land, the farm loss is still an on-going vulnerability in Bridgewater Community. The agricultural preservation initiatives need to be continued.

Wetlands: The Town's has an estimated 3,048 acres in wetlands, including the above mentioned ACEC Hockomock Swamp. The hydrology of wetlands is very dependent on precipitation and evaporation; therefore, they will be directly and indirectly impacted by the effects of climate change. The alterations in precipitation and temperature might threaten sensitive habitats, as well as water quantity and quality. Increased temperatures and precipitation projected for the future could also result in increased mosquito populations and increased spread of diseases transmitted by mosquitos and other waterborne diseases. Increased hydrology in wetlands could result in increased wetland vegetation, invasive species encroachment and increased mosquito populations. Increased maintenance costs may occur to keep ahead of these changing conditions.

Hockomock Swamp: The Hockomock Swamp is an important wetland and is protected against inappropriate development by the ACEC designation. The swamp reduces flooding by storing water and also provides some recharge to underlying aquifers, thereby contributing to drinking water supplies, and helping to maintain stream flow. The southern part of the Lake is in the Raynham's Aquifer protection district. Since the Hockomock Swamp is the largest wetland in Bridgewater, it brought concerns within the workshop participants with regards to flooding and potential loss of wildlife habitat as a result of the projected climate change. Since the Hockomock Swamp is the largest wetland in Bridgewater, the actual risk and extent of flooding and potential loss of wildlife habitat as a result of the projected climate change is unknown until a model is run with climate change projections.

Water Resources (Ponds, Lakes and Rivers): Town River, Matfield River, Taunton River are the main water courses in Town. However, there are several smaller streams and intermittent channels throughout Bridgewater. The major water bodies are Carvers Pond and Lake Nippenicket. They have been affected by urbanization and developments throughout the Town's history, and they play an important role in the Town's water supply and recreational opportunities.

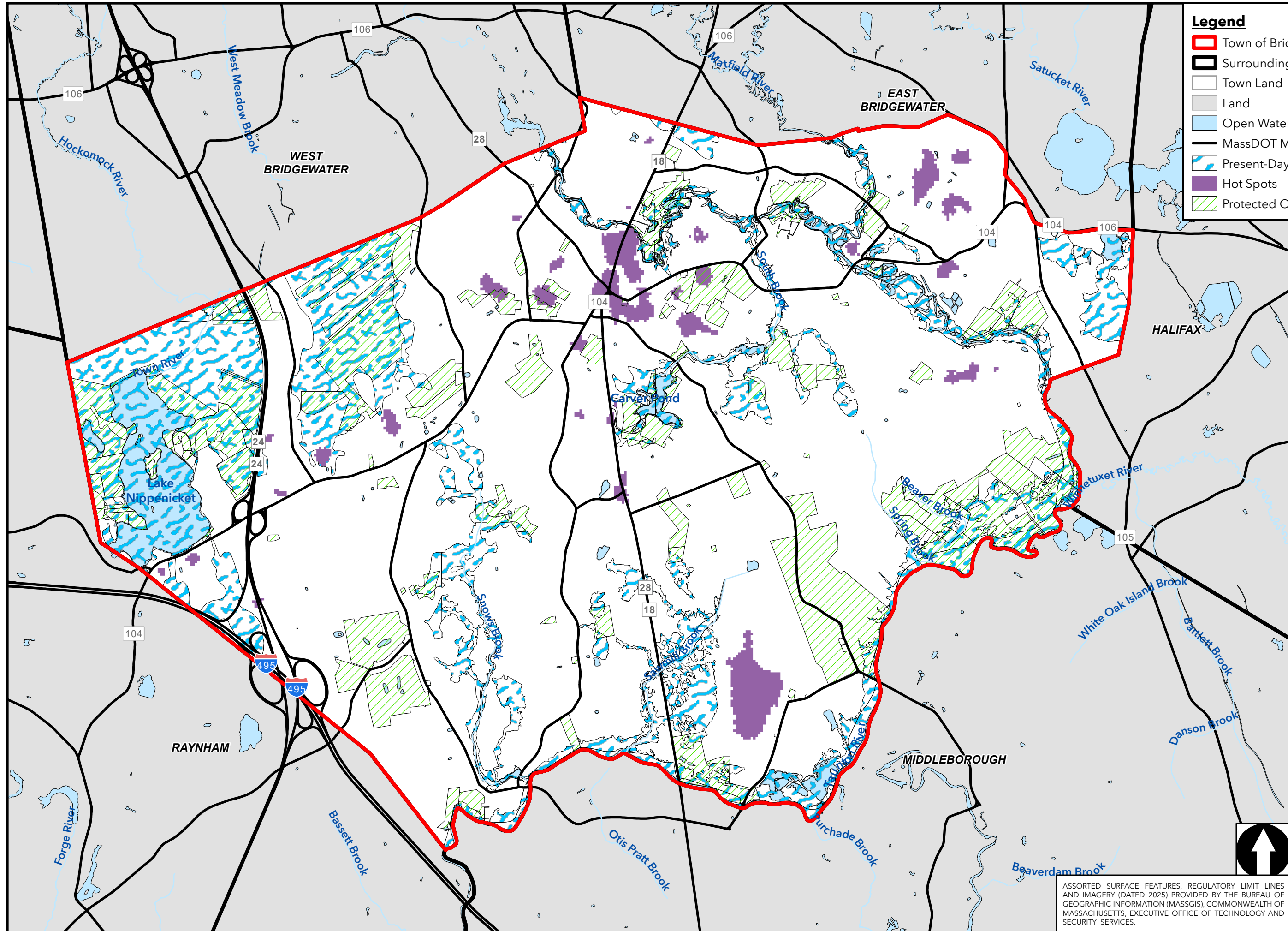
With the Town's population growth has come increased concerns with water quality, water supply and management of water resources, stormwater and wastewater. more developments have been built, including the neighborhoods in vulnerable locations within the Flood Plains of major water resources in Bridgewater. If climate change projections are realized in the future, there will be a constant demand from people living in the Flood Plains for the Town to do something about the flooding. However, it will not be possible for the Town to control flooding along these water bodies in a way that meets any kind of acceptable cost-benefit ratio, that it would be acceptable from an environmental permitting standpoint and would not impact Flood Plains either upstream or downstream. Many structures were built too low in Flood Plains before the NFIP and FEMA flood maps existed and these Flood Plains will likely increase with climate change.

High Street Dam: High Street Dam and Bridge had been a topic of discussion in Bridgewater for a few years now. The High Street Dam is a privately-owned dam, that serves no purpose for its current owner and obstructs natural fish passage, therefore, having a negative environmental impact. As a part of the Town River Restoration, The Nature Conservancy, the Department of Ecological restoration (DER), the Division of Marine Fisheries, the NOAA Restoration Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other stakeholders conducted the High Street Dam Removal Feasibility Study in January 2018 and presented the results at a public meeting in April 2018. The project seeks to restore the Town River (the primary tributary to the Wild & Scenic Taunton River), strengthen coastal ecosystem and community resilience, and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing environmental conditions by removing the obsolete High Street Dam (a.k.a. Jenkins Pond Dam; National ID: MA00327; c. 1919) and replacing the undersized, 200-year-old High Street Bridge (c.1790) in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. DER intends to facilitate preparation of final engineering design plans and complete the regulatory permitting process for the controlled removal of the High Street Dam, replacement of the High Street Bridge with a structure sized to accommodate climate change, and protection of other nearby public and private infrastructure. The project team, which includes the Town of Bridgewater, is currently seeking state and federal funding to advance preliminary designs for the dam removal and bridge replacement. There are still many factors that need to be researched, assessed and considered with regards to the High Street Dam removal and restoration of the Town River's natural fish passage, such as the extent of alteration of the current ecosystems and potential impacts on the existing Stanley Iron Works Park design and infrastructure, storm water management issues, fishery management, historical preservation and also potential flooding and weakening of already unstable dams.

4.6.2 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)

The 2022 Town of Bridgewater Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared by the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) under the direction of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The plan was funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The HMP assesses the potential impacts to public and private infrastructure, vulnerable populations, natural resources, public health, and the local economy from various natural hazard events including flooding, high winds, winter storms, brush fire, geologic hazards, extreme temperatures, drought and invasive species. Additionally, the HMP identifies the projected impacts of climate change for each risk.



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Present-Day 100-Year Flood
- Hot Spots
- Protected Open Space

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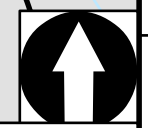
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 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

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CLIMATE CHANGE

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B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -007

FIGURE

7

Section 5.0

Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest

5.0 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION & RECREATION INTEREST

5.1 Types of Open Space & Recreation Land Protection

Conservation lands may be permanently protected through fee-simple ownership or through a conservation restriction (CR). Conservation and other public and private lands may be further restricted under an agricultural preservation restriction (APR), to preserve farmland use in perpetuity. Temporary protection may be through current use programs (Ch. 61, Ch. 61A, and Ch. 61B). These types of programs/tools illustrating the different ways open space is protected in Bridgewater are described further below as well as tools that could be used in the future.

Article 97 Protection: Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts protects publicly owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes. A property is protected under Article 97 if public land has been designated or dedicated for a purpose consistent with Article 97, such as open space, conservation, natural resources, or other related purposes. Such dedication must be made before the public, orally or in writing. This may be accomplished by a vote of local legislature, accompanied by transfer of property control to the appropriate municipal entity.

In order for a protected property to be sold, transferred or converted to a different use, Article 97 requires a vote of the Town (Conservation Commission, Parks Department, or other, whichever is appropriate) in which the land use would be changed. A 2/3 vote at Town Meeting or City Council in support of the disposition, a 2/3 vote of the legislature in support of the disposition, and compliance with applicable funding sources must be demonstrated. The municipality must also file an Environmental Notification Form with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act office.

Conservation Restriction: A Conservation Restriction or CR is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a public agency (usually a land trust or a Town's Conservation Commission) where the landowner agrees to keep the land undeveloped by placing permanent limitations on development and on certain uses of the property. Public access may be permitted but is not required. CRs are permitted under the Conservation Restrictions Act (M.G.L. Ch. 184) and must be approved by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. Conservation restrictions have a number of advantages: (1) they cost less than a fee simple acquisition, (2) the owner still pays real estate taxes (although at a lower rate) and (3) the owner continues to maintain the land. Stewardship of CRs requires periodic property monitoring to ensure the agreements are being upheld.

There are currently 11 Conservation Restrictions in Bridgewater, which have been signed by the state and recorded at the Registry of Deeds covering over 270 acres. An additional potential CRs is being pursued at Murphy's Landing.

Easements: An easement is typically listed on a property deed, and it allows permanent access to a property for a specific purpose. It is a right of use, not a right of possession.

Chapter 61: Chapter 61 encourages preservation of agricultural, recreation and forestland in Massachusetts. Landowners can ensure long-term protection of their property by receiving a tax benefit if they agree to the terms of Chapter 61. If an owner wants to take property out of Chapter 61 designation, the Town can recover the tax benefits given and it also has the right of first refusal to purchase the property if the land is sold for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes.

As of April 2026, the Town has approximately 580 acres placed properties under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B.

Transfer of Development Rights: Although not itself a form of protection, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) can be used in conjunction with the protection programs described above to ensure that appropriate and meaningful open space is preserved in conjunction with development. The Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Tool Kit very simply defines the concept of Transfer of Development Rights as *"A system that assigns development rights to parcels of land and gives landowners the option of using those rights to develop or to sell their land."*

TDRs are used to promote conservation and protection of land by giving landowners the right to transfer the development rights of one parcel that may be suitable for conservation purposes to another parcel that may be more appropriate for development. By selling development rights, a landowner concedes the right to develop his/her property, but the buyer could use the rights to develop another piece of land at a greater intensity than would otherwise be permitted.

Prior to implementing TDR in Bridgewater, additional information and analysis would be required. For example, an evaluation of the amount of land area that is available for protection as "sending parcels," an assessment of the general acceptability in the Town to increase density in other areas, as well as a determination of the capacity of the Town to administer the technique, would be required. While an increasing number of towns in Massachusetts have adopted the technique, it may not be appropriate for all.

5.2 Open Space Inventory

To prepare the inventory of lands serving a conservation and recreation interest, parcel data was obtained from the Bridgewater Assessors Department based on land use codes that serve an open space interest. This data was compared to the inventory prepared for the 2017 OSRP.

Town-owned open space includes conservation land, municipal land, recreation land and public-school land. Government and institutional non-conservation land also contributes to the Town's open space and recreational resources but are not protected as such because their use can easily change. Most contain buildings, but the buildings are generally surrounded by large amounts of open space and fields. This land is important because it draws visitors for activities that are compatible with conservation and recreation use.

The Open Space and Recreation Inventory column headings include:

Property Name: Typical name used when referencing the property, if available.

Map-Lot: Indicates the Assessor's reference for the parcel.

Acres: Total number of acres or a close approximation. One acre equals 43,560 square feet.

Owner/Manager: Name of the property owner and entity responsible for managing the property.

Current Use: Current use of the property

Condition: Details regarding the condition of the site or facility.

Public Access: Notes whether or not the site is open to public use.

ADA Accessible: Notes whether property is physically accessible to people with disabilities.

Recreation Potential: Indicates whether recreational opportunities exist at the site or facility, and if so, the type of recreational use.

Zoning: Zoning Districts based upon "Town of Bridgewater Massachusetts Zoning District Map" February 3, 2025

Protection Status: Notes whether the site, if by virtue of zoning, or by the receipt of state or federal funding, is protected from sale and development. MassGIS notes the following characteristics about level of protection:

Permanent (In Perpetuity) - Legally protected in perpetuity and recorded in a property's deed. Public land is typically in perpetuity if it is owned by the Conservation Commission, if there is a conservation restriction on the property, if it is owned by a State conservation agency, if it is owned by a non-profit land trust or if state or federal monies were used to purchase or improve the property. Private land is in perpetuity if it has a deed restriction in perpetuity, if there is an agricultural preservation restriction, or if there is a conservation restriction on the property.

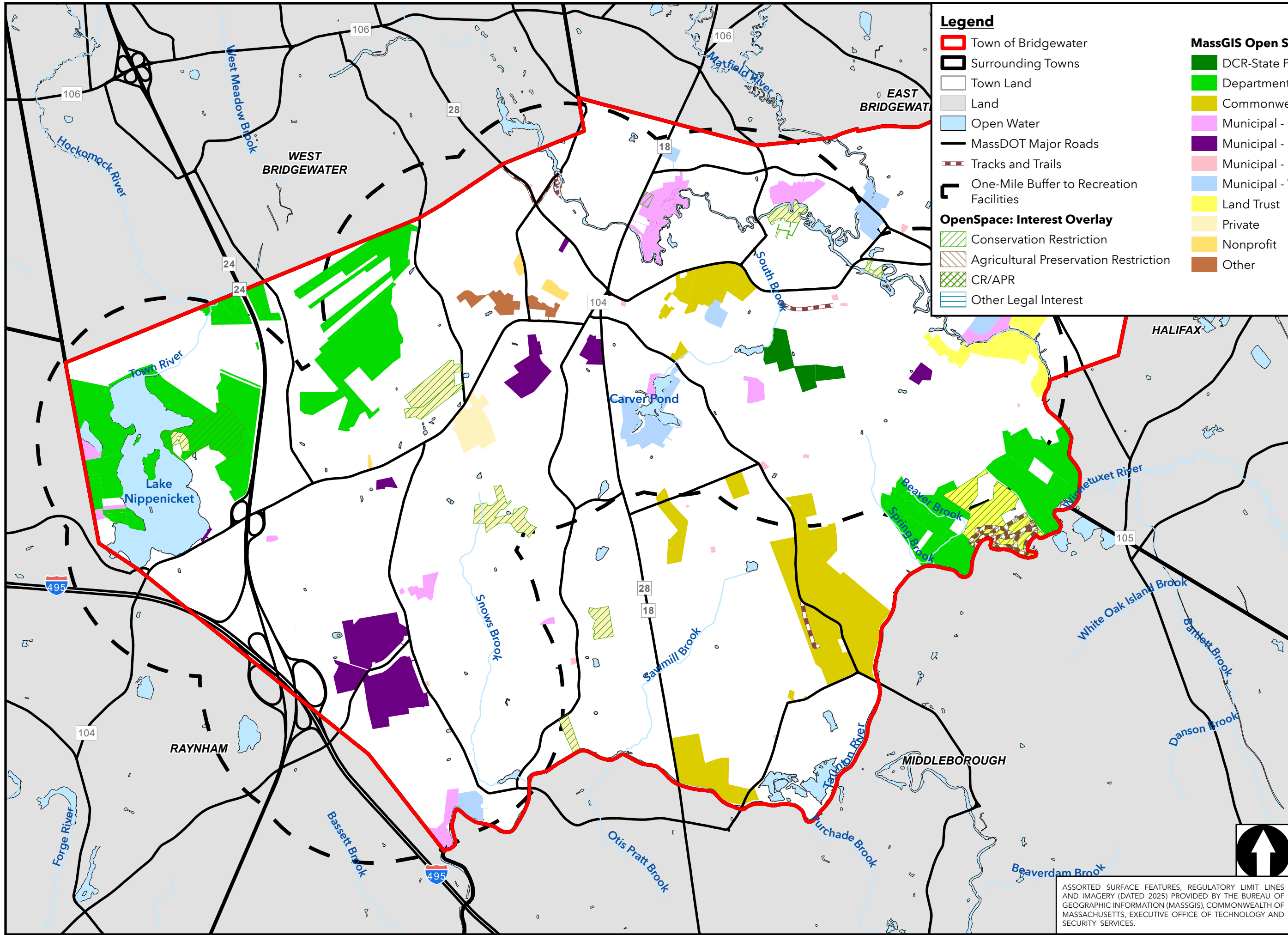
Temporary - Legally protected for less than perpetuity (short-term conservation restriction) or temporarily protected through a functional use. Example: water district lands are only temporarily protected while water resource protection is their primary use.

Limited - Protected by legal mechanisms other than those listed above. Land might be protected by a requirement of a majority municipal vote for change in status or Chapter 61 land.

Unknown - Should be researched through the property deed to see if any protection level is listed.

For the purposes of the updated Bridgewater OSRP, the levels of protection defined above have been used.

Grants Received: Local, state, or federal funding sources used to acquire or improve a property.



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Surrounding Towns
- Town Land
- Land
- Open Water
- MassDOT Major Roads
- Tracks and Trails
- One-Mile Buffer to Recreation Facilities
- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- CR/APR
- Other Legal Interest

- MassGIS Open Space**
- DCR-State Parks & Recreation
 - Department of Fish & Game
 - Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 - Municipal - Conservation
 - Municipal - Recreation
 - Municipal - Historical/Cultural
 - Municipal - Water Supply Protection
 - Land Trust
 - Private
 - Nonprofit
 - Other

OpenSpace: Interest Overlay

- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- CR/APR
- Other Legal Interest

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BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
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OPEN SPACE

B+T JOB NO. 3648.00

B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -008

FIGURE

8

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5.3 Parks and Open Space Equity

5.3.1 Access and Proximity

The majority of respondents to the public survey indicated that open space and recreation areas were accessible within walking distance or a short car ride from their residence. To further analyze the distribution of parks and open space, B+T applied a one-mile buffer to properties with a primary purpose of Recreation or Conservation and Recreation as established by MassGIS. This buffer represents the “walkshed” of these open space areas.

Based on this analysis, the northern portion of the Town is generally located within typical walking distance of a park or recreation area. The neighborhood of South Bridgewater represents the largest gap in coverage for recreation areas. This area is also mapped as an Environmental Justice community for Minority criteria and includes the Bridgewater Correctional Complex. A partnership between the Town, the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, and the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater (NRTB) is working to address this gap via construction of the Old State Farm Trail. This trail will be constructed in three phases and eventually provide a 1.8-mile connection between the Taunton River and the Nunckatessett & Satucket Greenway. The Town received a MassTrails grant in 2025 to construct the trailheads.

Additional areas in need located greater than one mile from recreation facilities include the northeastern portion of Town proximate to the East Bridgewater town line.

Note that this analysis does not take into account the presence of sidewalks or other forms of multimodal transportation. Additionally, as discussed further in section 6.0 Analysis of Needs, local and regional connectivity of open space areas is of high importance to residents.

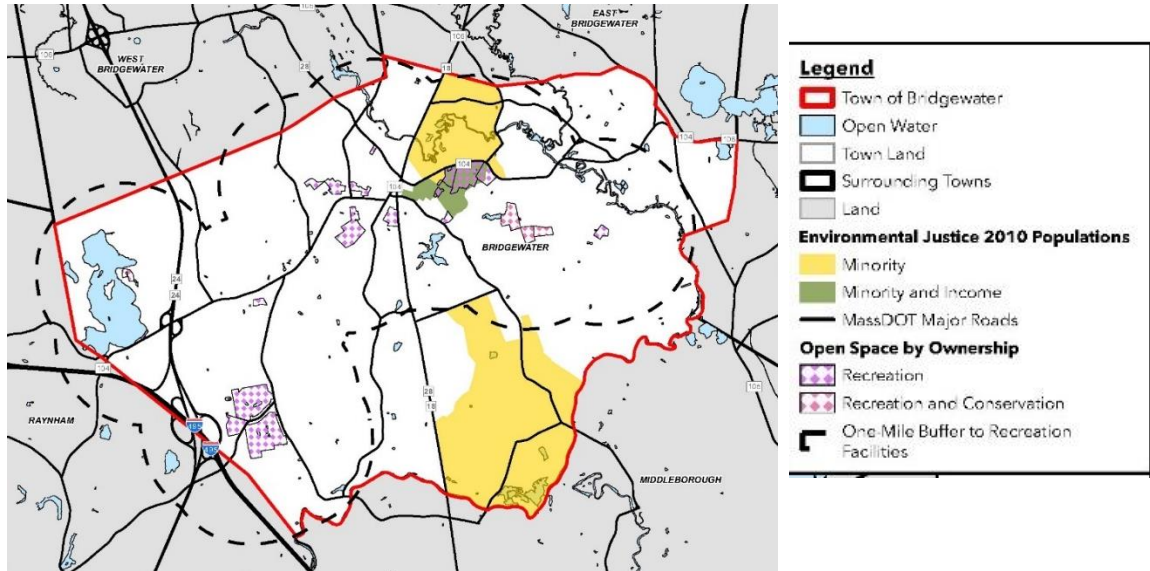


Image 5-1: Walkshed of Recreation Facilities

5.3.2 Quality of Facilities

Where the condition of open space areas and recreation facilities is known, they were generally assessed in “Good” to “Fair” condition. Recent improvements were implemented at numerous open space and recreational areas. The Town has completed updates to trails and signage at Stiles & Hart Conservation Area, finalized a 72-acre Conservation Restriction on Hanson Farm, installed six new pickleball courts, upgraded lighting at Hayes & Lazaro fields, and installed three new score boards at Legion Field. Additionally, safety hazards were addressed at Jennie Leonard Park and Scotland Field playground.

In particular, Jennie Leonard Park was additionally identified in both the inventory and in the public survey as a facility where additional improvements are needed.

The Town is in the process of evaluating several other opportunities to upgrade the quality of existing facilities as detailed in Section 7.0.

5.3.3 Maintenance and Safety

Many of the Town's open space and recreation areas face maintenance issues due to lack of resources. Maintaining safe, clean, and well-functioning open space and recreational amenities is essential to ensuring equitable access to open space for all residents of Bridgewater. Regular maintenance, including landscaping and tree removal, invasive species monitoring and management, trash removal, pathway upkeep, and repair of recreational amenities, helps ensure that parks remain welcoming and usable across neighborhoods and for people of all ages and abilities.

Safety is also supported through adequate lighting, clear sightlines, routine inspections of play structures and facilities, and coordination with public safety staff when needed.

5.3.4 Inclusive Design

In 2025, the Town retained the risk minimization company, Bureau Veritas, to conduct a comprehensive Accessibility Assessment of parks and recreational areas throughout Bridgewater. Through this assessment, areas of both conformity and improvement were identified. Most parks and recreational areas were found to have ADA parking available and direct or adjacent access to accessible pathways. Recreational facilities were noted as maintaining handicap accessible restrooms as well. However, many facilities were noted as containing an inadequate number of ADA compliant parking spaces, accessible entrances, handrails or signage. Additionally, the trails at Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley and Carver's Pond were noted as containing access to adjacent accessible pathways but many others including Tuckerwood Conservation Area, fishing and boating areas around Lake Nippenicket and Stiles & Hart Conservation Area were found to be lacking.

5.3.5 Free Access

Generally, access to recreational properties including athletic fields and playgrounds operated by the Town are free, with the exception of Olde Scotland Links Golf Course which is publicly accessible with a small user fee. The pickleball courts located at 10 Wally Krueger Way are open to the public free of charge during certain hours, 7 days a week. However, membership to the Bridgewater Pickleball Club to access the courts for additional hours is available for an annual fee. The Parks and Recreation Department webpage provides information regarding free field and facility usage for youth sports groups and the Bridgewater Before and After School Enrichment (BASE) Program. Additionally, public access to open space and conservation areas owned by the Town or State, including sports fields, walking or hiking trails and parks or playgrounds, are provided free of charge.

Section 6.0
Analysis of Needs

6.0 ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The needs of Bridgewater were identified through research, planning and public engagement and are outlined throughout this report. A summary of priority needs is provided below.

6.1 Summary of Natural Resource Protection Needs

Bridgewater's water and wetlands are among its most important resources to residents, with natural open space, water resources and walking and hiking trails identified as the most frequently used open spaces in Town. Bridgewater has an abundance of passive recreation opportunities that residents indicated they would like to see maintained, expanded upon and conserved.

6.1.1 Water Quality

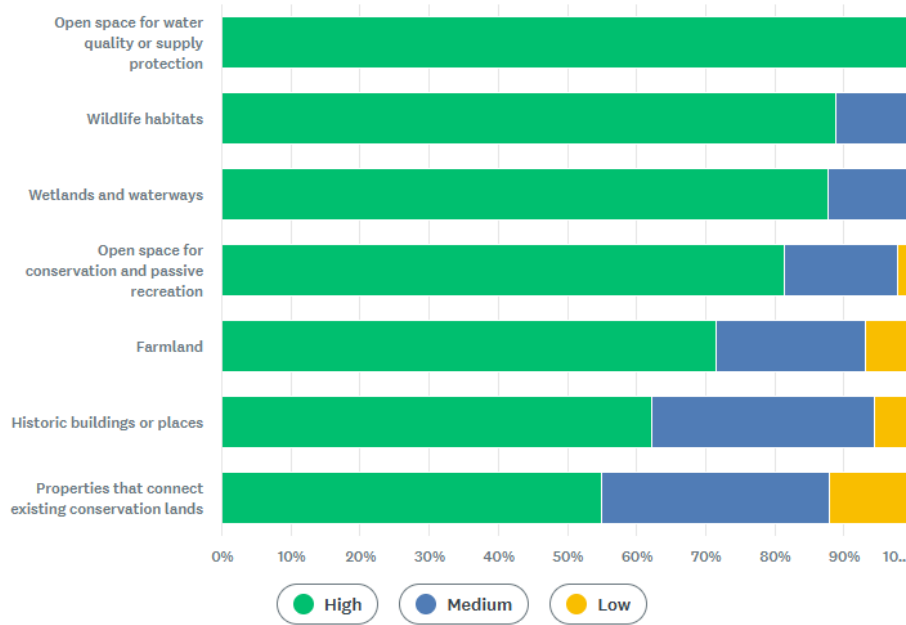
The top priority for open space and recreation expenditures utilizing existing, available funding is protection of water quality, with nearly 100% of survey respondents as well as public forum attendees indicating that this is the highest priority. Bridgewater's water supply includes a surface water supply via Carver's Pond and groundwater supplies through its wells, with approximately 40% of the Town's water supply originating from the High Street wells located adjacent to the Matfield River. The Town of Bridgewater owns the majority of land directly abutting Carver's Pond and the High Street wells. However, undeveloped parcels in proximity to these water supply resources, as well as Lake Nippenicket, may pose as opportunities to expand protected areas as noted in the Open Space Inventory Section.

6.1.2 Conservation and Passive Recreation Opportunities

The majority of survey respondents indicated that preserving land for the purposes of passive recreation, water quality protection, and improving or expanding wildlife corridors were top priorities. Furthermore, approximately 65% of respondents indicated that they support acquiring new open space for conservation and passive recreation.

Acquisition and preservation of natural resources serve many of the interests expressed by the public. In addition to the numerous physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation, protection of undeveloped areas can contribute to water quality improvements by limiting potential sources of pollution and preserving the natural filtration qualities. Furthermore, preservation of vegetation adjacent to waterways provides a buffer for floodwaters as storms increase in severity and frequency.

How important is it to you to preserve each of the following?



Source: 2026 OSRP Public Outreach Survey

As a result of development pressure, Bridgewater’s wildlife, water resources and environmentally sensitive areas face potential impacts. Acquisition of natural resources preserves habitat and connectivity, reducing the risk to both humans and wildlife from exposure.

6.2 Summary of Community’s Outdoor Recreation Needs

Bridgewater has a rich history of outdoor recreation opportunities for residents, as detailed throughout this plan. The Town has many established recreational activities such as boating and fishing on Carver’s Pond and Lake Nippenicket, numerous athletic fields and playgrounds, pickleball and tennis courts, a golf course, and many walking and hiking paths.

Wildlands Trust - Great River Preserve Town River Landing
 Parks & Playgrounds Stiles Hart
Carver Pond
 Stanley Iron Works Park Walking & Hiking Trails
 Lake Nippenicket Camp Titicut Reservation
 Athletic Fields (Softball, Baseeball, Soccer)

Source: 2026 OSRP Public Outreach Survey: most frequently used open space and recreation areas

6.2.1 Accessibility and Connectivity of Open Space Areas

Public survey respondents and attendees at the public outreach sessions cited a lack of parking as one of the main reasons for not utilizing Bridgewater's open space and recreation areas. Respondents also broadly agreed that limited opportunities to access open space by public transit exist. Furthermore, as noted in the Town's Accessibility Assessment, many open space and recreation areas lack adequate ADA-compliant parking and ramps. Given the dependency on cars for access, additional parking opportunities, particularly accessible spaces, should be evaluated.

In an effort to support this need, the Town acquired additional land at Stiles & Hart Conservation Area and is actively pursuing necessary permits for improvements, including an application to MassDOT for paving of a parking lot. Additionally, the Summer Street and Plymouth Street Intersection Pedestrian Improvements project is currently underway and will include ADA-compliant curb ramps with detectable warning panels.

Respondents and attendees also indicated a need for an expansion of locally and regionally connected trails and parks systems. Coordinated efforts are currently underway between Town staff, the Bay Circuit Alliance, the Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater, and Bridging the Bridgewaters Stewards among others, to establish several local and regional trail systems including portions of the Old State Farm Trail and Nuncketessett & Satucket Greenway and the Frederick Douglass Trail. The Town's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is also coordinating with the Bridgewater Fire Department to establish trails at the Fire Station Headquarters as part of the Trust agreement on the property with the intention of allowing visitors to view the flora and fauna of the site through passive recreation. Continued support of these efforts as well as assessment of additional opportunities to expand connectivity should be evaluated.

6.2.2 Opportunities for Residents of All Ages and Abilities

Recreational opportunities for teens and seniors were identified as the greatest recreational needs during public outreach. Additionally, lack of accessible walking paths for people with disabilities was noted during the Town's recent Accessibility Assessment. To meet the needs of its population, Bridgewater's recreation and open space resources must serve both an aging population of comfortable means and a growing number of families with children as well as residents and visitors with disabilities.

Top priorities for allocating funds to address this need included improving recreation amenities available to teens and seniors. Only about 7% of survey respondents reported being very satisfied with recreational opportunities for teens and seniors. Of note, participants indicated that surrounding Towns provide extensive summer and afterschool programs whereas Bridgewater does not. However, feedback regarding suggested opportunities for improvement was somewhat limited; therefore, additional outreach should be conducted to establish actionable items.

Furthermore, while the Town's Senior Center provides activities for residents including a walking group that travels to nearby trails and is located adjacent to the recently installed pickleball courts, it was noted that the facility itself would benefit from updates. Participants suggested an expansion of the space to allow for room for exercise classes and installation of, or access to, a nearby walking track for residents who have difficulty navigating trails. The Town's CPC is currently considering an application for development of a walking path/trail at the Senior Center.

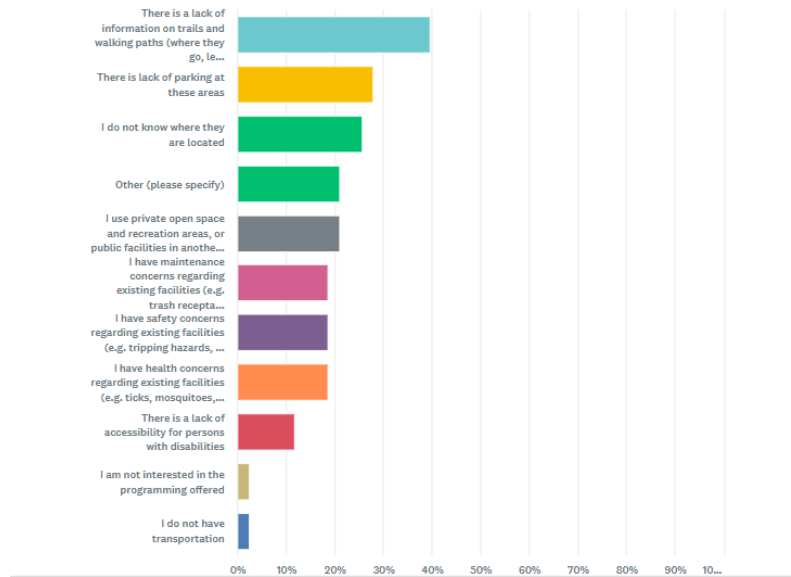
To address the need to provide adequate accessible open space and recreation amenities, the Town intends to adopt an ADA Transition Plan for implementation at key open space and recreation areas throughout Town. Additionally, an action item is included herein to establish priority areas for accessibility improvement at recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds and walking/hiking trails based on ADA Transition Plan and identify funding opportunities for implementation.

6.3 Management Needs

6.3.1 Improved Trail Marking and Wayfinding

Public survey respondents and attendees at the public outreach session cited a lack of trail information as one of the main reasons for not utilizing the Town's open space and recreation areas. Increased awareness of trail paths and markers should be evaluated as well as establishment of a uniform naming scheme to help residents easily identify passive recreation areas.

If you do not use Bridgewater’s public open space and recreation areas, why not?
(select all that apply)



Source: 2026 OSRP Public Outreach Survey

In addition to improving access to and connectivity of open space areas, participants identified the maintenance and upkeep of existing open space and recreation areas as a top priority. The Town should evaluate community outreach and volunteer coordination as well as potential funding sources for maintenance staff.

6.3.2 Ecologically-Friendly Maintenance Alternatives

Participants expressed an interest in investigating ecologically friendly maintenance activities for existing open space and recreation facilities. Such opportunities may include installation of climate and drought resilient native plantings and mowable native grasses and low- to no pesticide use on natural fields.

6.3.3 Operational and Funding Considerations

One of the top management needs is the ability to have dedicated staff for maintenance and upkeep of the existing open space and recreation areas in Town. Respondents were most interested in pursuing funding opportunities that include application to grant programs, allocation of Town funds, and increasing CPC allocations in order to acquire or maintain full-time maintenance staff. The Town and respondents also discussed the need for coordinated community outreach and volunteer efforts to assist with maintenance efforts.

By prioritizing consistent maintenance and proactive safety practices across the Town's park system, Bridgewater can help ensure that every resident has reliable access to outdoor spaces that feel safe, cared for, and inclusive. In support of these efforts, the Town has established several action items to address maintenance needs including coordinated volunteer efforts, community outreach and research into potential funding options to acquire or maintain maintenance staff.

Section 7.0
Ten Year Action Plan

7.0 TEN YEAR ACTION PLAN

7.1 Development of Goals and Objectives

The Town of Bridgewater Department of Community & Economic Development (CED) has solicited opinions from Town Officials and staff, various Town Departments and Commissions, and the public at large to develop a broad suite of goals and specific objectives for inclusion in this 2026 Open Space & Recreation Plan Update. The Action Plan offers tangible steps for resource preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management and maintenance that the Town can take over the next ten years to achieve the vision and goals defined herein. It lays out specific actions under each goal and objective and identifies the timeline, responsible parties, and potential funding sources for each.

Based on the Analysis of Needs described more fully in the foregoing session, the following major goals and objectives were developed:

- Explore acquisition and enhancement of active and passive recreation opportunities
- Create and preserve town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connect neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities
- Protect the quantity and quality of drinking water and other water resources
- Increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities
- Preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands
- Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities
- Improve recreation opportunities for people of varying abilities and ages, including both teenage residents and seniors
- Improve maintenance activities and consider opportunities to incorporate ecologically-friendly practices

In support of these goals, the actions in Section 7.2 were developed.

7.1.1 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Action Items

Since 2017, the Town of Bridgewater has made progress in accomplishing a number of tasks listed in Section 9.0 Action Plan of the previous OSRP. An update of the status of each of the objectives outlined in the 2017 OSRP as well as the approved extended from a 7-Year Action Plan to a 10-year Action Plan approved in April 2025. Specifically, the OSC and CED noted whether an action was achieved, not achieved, or partially achieved, and whether that action should remain a goal for the present OSRP update (refer to Appendix

Following is a summary of notable accomplishments resulting from Bridgewater's 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan:

- Submitted application to CPC for multi-use fields at Bridgewater Middle School
- Placed Conservation Restriction on 72-acre portion of Hanson Farm, finalized in July 2025
- Acquired additional land at Stiles & Hart Conservation Area and actively pursued necessary permits for improvements, including an application to MassDOT for paving of parking lot
- Completed improvements to trails, entrance and signage at Stiles & Hart Conservation area from 2024 to 2025
- Completed the High Street Dam Removal and Bridge Replacement in 2024
- Installed six pickleball courts adjacent to the Bridgewater Senior Center
- Obtained a Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant for the former Mobile Station on Summer Street, which is out to bid for design and construction at the time of the writing of this OSRP
- Obtained a MassTrails Grant for the Old State Farm Trail which is anticipated to be complete in 2026
- Installed three new score boards at Legion Field
- Endorsed the Bridgewater Disability Commission's proposal for Marathon Park accessibility improvements which is anticipated to utilize CPC funds and grants
- Upgraded to new and improved lights at the Hayes & Lazaro major league fields
- Dismantled degraded park facilities at Jennie Leonard Park
- Removed Scotland Field playground for safety concerns
- In-progress of establishing a public-private partnership for use of Jennie Leonard Park
- Revised Stormwater Management Standards to allow for Low Impact Development (LID) techniques

7.2 Ten Year Action Plan

Implementation of this Ten-Year Action Plan will require support from and collaborations among key Town departments, commissions, boards, in coordination with the Town volunteers and partners. The following is a list of acronyms for Action Plan responsible parties and funding sources:

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Full Name</u>
AC	Agricultural Commission
BRRSD	Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District
ConCom	Conservation Commission
CED	Community and Economic Development Department
CPA	Community Preservation Act
CPC	Community Preservation Committee
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DOC	The Department of Correction
DPW	Department of Public Works
GCEF	Golf Course Enterprise Fund
HC	Historical Commission
LAND	Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (state)
NGC	Nunckatessett Greenway Committee (regional)
NRTB	Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater
OCPC	Old Colony Planning Council (regional)
OSC	Open Space Committee
PB	Planning Board
PRC	Parks and Recreation Commission
PRD	Parks and Recreation Department
TC	Town Council
TRFC	Town River Fishery Committee
TM	Town Manager
Town	Town of Bridgewater
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals

The following are the action plan recommendations for the 2026 OSRP, which will be sought to be implemented throughout its ten-year period.

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1. Explore acquisition and enhancement of active and passive recreation opportunities													
1.a.	Establish a standardized Town definition of passive vs. active recreation for use when discussing open space and recreation areas. Responsible Party: OSC	Medium	X	X	X								
1.b.	Evaluate opportunities to expand existing recreational facilities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Olde Scotland Links Golf Course and/or establish a learning area across the street Install additional pickleball courts Install multiuse fields to support variety of youth and teen recreational activities (lacrosse, flag football, etc.) Responsible Party: OSC, PRD, CED, CPC	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town, PARC, CPA

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1.c	Explore opportunities for additional passive and active recreational areas at existing Town-owned properties, including the proposed trail at the Bridgewater Fire Station Headquarters. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, CPC	Medium				X	X	X					Town, Trust
1.d.	Provide or enhance parking availability at existing open space and recreation areas and identify potential funding sources. Specifically, explore space for peak-period overflow parking at Legion Field. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRD, PRD	Medium					X	X	X				Town, PARC

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1.e.	<p>Provide aesthetically consistent furnishings, improved pond-side trails, and additional interpretive signage at Carver’s Pond, Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley, Titicut Conservation Area, Wyman North Fork Conservation Area, and Tuckerwood Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OCS, DPW, CPC</p>	Medium			X	X	X						Town, CPA
1.f.	<p>Continue improvements at the Town River Landing parcel including signage and develop ADA-accessible and designated parking and passive recreation access</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, DPW, CPC</p>	High	X	X	X	X	X						Town and Volunteers, Municipal ADA Improvement Grant

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1g.	<p>Establish priority areas for accessibility improvement at recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds, and walking/hiking trails based on ADA Transition Plan and identify funding opportunities for implementation.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, PRD, Disability Commission, Facilities Director</p>	Medium					X	X	X				Town, Municipal ADA Improvement Grant
1.h.	<p>Establish a point person from the PRD/PRC to address ongoing passive recreation needs</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> TC, TM</p>	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town
1.i.	<p>Continue to coordinate with Wildlands Trust and other existing stewards in a more guided way.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, TM</p>	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town and Volunteers

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1.j.	Repair the basketball court and softball dugouts, replace benches and bleachers, and repave the parking lot at Scotland Field. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRC, PRD	Medium			X	X	X						Town, CPA
1.k.	Examine and improve visibility of exiting entrances, signage, and parking availability at conservation areas, particularly Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley and Tuckerwood Conservation Area. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, DPW	Low					X	X	X				Town, CPA
1.l.	Improve existing canoe/kayak launching areas and explore the possibility of adding new launch points at Bridgewater Iron Works Park at Stanley, Perkins Foundry, Stiles & Hart, and/or Summer Street. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, DPW	Low						X	X	X	X	X	Town, CPA, Grants

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
1.m.	Explore seasonal or year-round opportunity for cross country skiing, snowshoe, Frisbee golf, and public skating at large tracks of Town recreation land, such as the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course, Carver’s Pond, etc. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRC, PRD	Low								X	X	X	GCEF
2. Create and preserve town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connect neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities.													
2.a.	Extend existing walking trails, where appropriate, to connect to other nearby trails. Specifically, at the Crescent Street Field into the wooded area southwest of the field. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC	Medium						X	X	X	X		Town, CPA, GCEF

2.b.	<p>Identify and prioritize gaps in existing bicycle/pedestrian paths, and hiking trail systems in town and with the regional network. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider connecting hiking trail at Mitchell Elementary School from South St. to Bedford St. with long range plan to connect to Carver's Pond via crosswalk on Route 18/28. • Consider trail spurs connecting to BSU through the campus to Great Hill (BSU) and Carver's Pond. • Continue collaboration with the Bay Circuit Alliance and their partners to implement the "Bridge the Bridgewaters" initiative. 	Medium			X	X	X	X	X					Town. CPA, BSU, W. Bridgewater CPA
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Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
	<u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRC, CED, BSU												
2.c.	Pursue the design and implementation of a townwide bicycle/pedestrian network <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, PRC, CED, TC	Low								X	X	X	Town
2.d.	Develop a master trail system design with publicly accessible way-finding (physical and electronic). <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, CED	Low								X	X	X	CPA, OCPC
2.e.	Continue to develop the Old State Farm land & water trail head in collaboration with EEOA, DOC, DAR, DFW Public Access Board, Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater, and Wild & Scenic Taunton River Stewardship Council. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD	High	X	X	X	X	X						CPA, Town, GCEF, NGOs

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
2.f.	<p>Coordinate with private landowners and conservation holders to create trails with access to the Town and Taunton Rivers. For example, explore the possibility of Murphy's Landing (canoe launch and picnic area via private developer, DF&BA, Taunton River Stewardship Council, and the Town) at the Route 104 confluence with the Town, Matfield and Taunton Rivers in the Pratt Town section of Town.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD</p>	Low					X	X	X				Citizen donations, CPA, GCEF

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
2.g.	Develop a land prioritization plan that identifies high priority vacant municipal properties to be considered for recreation reuse, particularly parcels in underserved neighborhoods and parcels adjacent to existing recreation and conservation areas. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, PRD, CED	Low							X	X	X	X	CPA, Town
2.h.	Continue to collaborate with West Bridgewater to implement the Nunckatessett Greenway on the Town River and Bay Circuit Trail. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, NGC, NRTB	Low								X	X	X	CPA, LAND, Volunteers
3. Protect the quantity and quality of drinking water and other water resources													
3.a.	Evaluate strategies to improve water quality conditions of rivers and other surface water bodies in Bridgewater <u>Responsible Party:</u> ConCom, DPW, DEP	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
3.b.	<p>Acquire additional land for conservation around water resources including Lake Nippenicket, Carver's Pond, Town River, Matfield River and Taunton River.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, AC, Con Com, CED</p>	Medium				X	X	X					Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant
3.c.	<p>Establish responsible party and funding sources or volunteer groups to perform annual water quality testing at water based recreational locations including Lake Nippenicket and Carver's Pond, as well as the portions of the Town River, Matfield River and Taunton River that flow through Bridgewater.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED</p>	Low							X	X	X	X	Watershed Planning Program, Volunteers
3.d.	<p>Continue to enforce local wetland and riverfront protection regulations.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> ConCom, ZBA</p>	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
3.e.	Continue to enforce the aquifer protection district regulations. <u>Responsible Party:</u> ZBA, PB, CED	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town
3.f.	Explore grants and research opportunities for Agricultural Water Use Efficiency in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). <u>Responsible Party:</u> CED	Low								X	X	X	Watershed Planning Program
3.g.	Encourage new subdivisions to provide subdivision-specific water sources (e.g., subdivision wells) and wastewater treatment systems. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PB, ZBA	Medium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
4. Increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities.													
4.a.	Develop and maintain an up-to-date parcel-based inventory of Town recreation facilities, conservation areas, trails and paths, potentially using mapping applications. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRD, CED	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town, Volunteers
4.b.	Develop and maintain a comprehensive map of public open space and recreation areas that identifies passive and active recreation areas, sports fields, trails, playgrounds and parks, etc. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, Assessors Office	Medium			X	X	X	X					Town
4.c.	Make recreation and conservation information available at the Parks and Recreation Department, including trail locations and length, available parking, etc. through both large map displays and brochures. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRD	Medium	X	X	X								Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
4.d.	Develop a uniform branding and wayfinding signage plan for the Town's recreation facilities and conservation areas, in coordination with existing local and regional signage systems as appropriate. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, NGC	Medium					X	X	X				CPA, NGC, Town
4. e.	Develop consistent naming schemes for open space and conservation area signage and wayfinding resources, with acknowledgement of historical use or ownership of the property, if applicable <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, HC	Low							X	X	X	X	
4.f.	Prepare a schedule to implement a phased signage plan. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED, PRC, PRD	Low								X	X	X	Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
5. Preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands													
5.a.	Communicate with and encourage landowners to protect agricultural lands through CR and APR <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, AC, Con Com, CED	Medium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Citizen Participation, LAND
5.b.	Prioritize use of CPA funding for projects that encourage the protection of Bridgewater’s agricultural legacy and preserve opportunities for local food production. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CPC, CED	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town, CPC
5.c.	Publicize community garden opportunities. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, AC	Low							X	X	X	X	Volunteers
5.d.	Identify and pursue state funding to support agricultural activities. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, AC	Medium			X	X	X						Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
5.e.	Collaborate with DOC & BSU to promote usage of existing community gardens. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, AC, DOC	Low							X	X	X	X	Volunteers
6. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities.													
6.a.	Update the Bridgewater Priority Protection Areas accepted by OCPC in 2013/2014 <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC, CED	Medium					X	X	X				Town
6.b.	Communicate with and incentivize landowners to protect significant habitat from impacts of development. <u>Responsible Party:</u> ConCom, OSC	Low								X	X	X	Citizen participation

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
6.c.	Identify impoundments/water control structures with the potential to be managed for active flood control and develop a management program. <u>Responsible Party: DPW, TRFC</u>	Medium				X	X	X	X				Town
6.d.	Acquire additional land for conservation and passive recreation with focus on parcels contiguous with existing open space or conservation areas to improve connectivity and protect wildlife corridors. <u>Responsible Party: OSC, PRC, CPC</u>	Medium					X	X	X	X	X		CPA, Grants
6.e.	Amend Zoning Ordinance to require all new residential developments to incorporate conservation areas or open space components. <u>Responsible Party: ZBA, PB</u>	Low								X	X	X	Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
6.f.	Use existing permitting processes to establish access points with developers of properties that can support open space links. <u>Responsible Party:</u> ZBA, PB, ConCom	Medium				X	X	X	X				Town
6.g.	Maintain Titicut Conservation Area for camping and recreational uses with the Town of Raynham. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC	Low								X	X	X	Town
7. Improve recreation opportunities for people of varying abilities and ages, including both teenage residents and seniors													
7.a.	Evaluate establishment of a Community or Recreational Center, possibly in proximity to downtown, potentially through a public-private partnership <u>Responsible Party:</u> Town	Medium					X	X	X	X			Town, CPA, Grants
7.b.	Establish community sports programs and summer programs for all ages. <u>Responsible Party:</u> Town, PRC	High			X	X	X	X	X				Town

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
7.c.	<p>Conduct outreach to teenagers and their parents to more specifically identify recreation programming needs</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> PRC, OSC</p>	High		X	X	X	X	X					Town
7.d.	<p>Coordinate with Senior Center to identify opportunities for outdoor activities and programs such as land for bird watching, a community garden, and walkways with shaded seating and wind protection. Coordinate with CPC to implement the proposed trail development at the Senior Center.</p> <p><u>Responsible Party:</u> ConCom, PRC, OSC, Senior Center, CPC</p>	Medium			X	X	X	X					Town, Grants

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
8. Improve maintenance activities and consider opportunities to incorporate ecologically-friendly practices													
8.a.	Conduct continued community outreach for coordinated volunteer efforts to assist with maintenance needs at open space and recreation areas. <u>Responsible Party:</u> CED, OSC, DPW	High	X	X	X	X	X						Volunteers
8.b.	Evaluate funding opportunities to establish, strengthen and/or maintain full-time maintenance staff including Town funds or grant opportunities. <u>Responsible Party:</u> Town	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town
8.c.	Revitalize citizen trail stewardship groups to assist with volunteer and coordination efforts. Organize, train, support, and recognize the efforts of volunteer park stewards to help maintain and protect public parks and open space. <u>Responsible Party:</u> OSC	Medium				X	X	X					n/a

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
8.d	Collaborate with public safety officials to establish and maintain visibility of public recreational areas, particularly parks and playgrounds, in an effort to promote safety and prevent vandalism. <u>Responsible Party:</u> Town	Low							X	X	X	X	Town, Police
8.e.	Collaborate between Parks and Recreation Commission, schools, and sports groups to enforce field use policies, guidelines, and agreements of understanding with all sports groups. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRC, BRRSD, Bridgewater Police Department	Medium					X	X	X				BRRSD, Police Dep. Budgets
8.f.	Evaluate opportunities to implement eco-friendly maintenance practices such as low-to-no pesticide use on natural fields. <u>Responsible Party:</u> DPW, PRC	Low								X	X	X	DPW & PRC Budgets

Action No.	Actions	Level of Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Potential Funding Source
8.g.	Implement native, drought-resistant landscaping policies and regulations. <u>Responsible Party:</u> ConCom, PB, ZBA	Medium				X	X	X	X				Town
8.h.	Use rain gardens and other LID techniques for paved areas adjoining new athletic facilities and open spaces. <u>Responsible Party:</u> PRD, DPW	Low	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Town

7.3 Potential Funding Sources and Grant Opportunities

In order to pursue the actions identified in Section 7.3, the following grant programs were identified. We have summarized eligibility criteria for these programs. While these grants represent those that are commonly applicable to open space and recreation, the list is not exhaustive; additional funding opportunities may be available for specific projects.

7.3.1 Grant Programs Through the Division of Conservation Services

*Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant*³³

The LAND Grant Program helps cities and towns acquire land for conservation and passive recreation purposes. The grants reimburse cities and towns for the acquisition of land in fee or for a conservation restriction.

Municipal conservation and agricultural commissions from communities with an up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan are eligible to apply.

Eligible projects include the:

- Purchase of land in fee simple for conservation and passive recreation
- Purchase of a Conservation Restriction

*Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant*³⁴

The PARC Program was established to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. These grants can be used by municipalities to acquire parkland, build a new park, or to renovate an existing park.

Any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, which has an authorized park /recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program. Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" project provisions of the program.

Applications are open to all municipalities that have submitted an up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan.

³³ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-acquisitions-for-natural-diversity-land-grant-program>

³⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program>

*Massachusetts Land and Water Conservation Grant Fund*³⁵

The LWCF is administered by Massachusetts on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), an agency of the Department of the Interior. The LWCF program provides grants to states and local governments and federally recognized Indian tribes for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

Eligible projects are those for the acquisition of parkland, development of new parks, renovations of existing parks, development of trails in an existing conservation or recreation area, or the acquisition of conservation land.

*Landscape Partnership Grant*³⁶

The program provides funding to assist municipal, state, federal, and non-profit partners, acting in cooperation, in acquiring interests in lands suitable for conservation purposes, including undeveloped lands, farms and forests, water supply lands, unique ecosystems, rare species habitats, and restored lands. The grant is intended to enable projects that stretch beyond the scope of other state land grant programs.

Applications must be submitted jointly by partners from a minimum of two of the following category types: 1) municipalities acting through their conservation commission, agricultural commissions or municipal departments managing water supply land, or another political body established for the purpose of acquiring and managing land and interests for conservation purposes and public benefit; 2) non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations that have been formed for purposes related to land conservation and stewardship ; 3) state or federal environmental land agencies; and 4.) water or fire districts or other public water suppliers.

*Drinking Water Supply Protection*³⁷

EEA seeks to further the conservation of lands contributing to the protection of drinking water supplies within the Commonwealth by offering grants to municipalities for acquisition of unprotected land in existing MassDEP approved drinking water supply protection areas, or land in estimated protection areas for existing and planned future water supply wells and reservoirs. Applications may be to purchase land in fee simple, a Conservation Restriction, or Wetland Preservation Restriction.

³⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-massachusetts-land-and-water-conservation-fund-grant-program>

³⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-landscape-partnership-grant>

³⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-drinking-water-supply-protection-grant-program>

*Land Acquisition for Forest Reserves Grant*³⁸

The Land Acquisition for Forest Reserves Grant Program provides funding to non-profit conservation organizations and municipalities to permanently conserve forested land to be passively managed for older forest habitats to mature and continue to contribute to carbon sequestration and storage. The grants reimburse eligible project costs for the acquisition of eligible forest land in fee or the acquisition of a conservation restriction.

*Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Program (ORLPP)*³⁹

This grant program helps connect people in urban areas to outdoor spaces, such as parks and playgrounds. It funds projects in areas that don't have many recreational resources.

Applications will be accepted from communities of 30,000 or more people that have an Open Space and Recreation Plan on file with DCS by the grant submission deadline for projects that are located within a Census tract that is determined to be disadvantaged per the Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (includes tract of project site and community(ies) served).

7.3.2 Additional Grant Opportunities

*Community Preservation Fund*⁴⁰

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property, and municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum.

Each CPA community creates a local Community Preservation Committee (CPC) upon adoption of the Act, and this five-to-nine-member board makes recommendations on CPA projects to the community's legislative body. The following summarizes projects eligible for CPA funding:

³⁸ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/land-acquisition-for-forest-reserves-grant-program>

³⁹ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-grant-program-orlpp>

⁴⁰ <https://www.communitypreservation.org/about>

	Open Space	Historic	Recreation	Housing
Acquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Create	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support	No	No	No	Yes
Rehabilitate and/or Restore	No (unless acquired or created with CPA \$\$)	Yes	Yes	No (unless acquired or created with CPA \$\$)

*EEA Planning Assistant Grants*⁴¹

Planning Assistance Grants are available to the Commonwealth’s municipalities to support their efforts to plan, regulate (zone), and act to conserve and develop land consistent with Massachusetts’ Sustainable Development Principles.

These Planning Assistance Grants are part of an effort to encourage municipalities to implement land use regulations that are consistent with the Administration’s land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change. Funds help communities retain appropriate technical expertise and undertake the public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations.

Priorities for funding relevant to open space and recreation include:

1. Mitigation of climate change through zoning and other regulations that reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions via a better mix of land uses, more compact growth, enhanced design, etc.; and
2. Zoning that results in permanent land conservation (e.g. Natural Resource Protection Zoning or Transfer of Development Rights).

⁴¹ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/planning-assistance-grants>

EEA Cooling Corridors⁴²

The Cooling Corridors Grant Program offers financial resources for conducting tree planting and related activities, that specifically target neighborhoods located within identified hotspots, to assist with mitigating extreme heat and to enhance the local tree canopy and public spaces.

EEA Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal⁴³

The Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program offers financial resources to support projects that repair or remove dams, levees, seawalls, and other inland flood control and coastal protection infrastructure.

DCR MassTrails Grant⁴⁴

MassTrails provides grants to support recreational trail and shared-use pathway projects across the Commonwealth. The award maximum depends on the project type and needs and is generally \$100,000 for recreational trails projects and up to \$500,000 for shared-use path projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance.

Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared-use pathways, and the amenities that support trails.

DCR Urban Community and Forestry Challenge Grant⁴⁵

Annual grant opportunity for municipalities and nonprofit groups in Massachusetts to improve and protect their urban forests. These 50/50 matching grants help develop, grow and sustain programs that plant, protect and maintain a community's public tree resources and develop partnerships with residents and community institutions.

This grant program seeks to fund projects which will result in sustained improvements in local capacity for excellent urban and community forestry management in six key areas:

- Building and Strengthening Citizen Advocacy and Action Organizations
- Community Wood Bank Special Grant Opportunity
- Developing and Adopting Tree and Forest Ordinances and Policies
- Securing or Training Professional Staff
- Developing and Implementing Systematic Urban Forestry Management

⁴² <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-cooling-corridors-grant-program>

⁴³ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-the-dam-and-seawall-repair-or-removal-program>

⁴⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>

⁴⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-urban-and-community-forestry-challenge-grants>

- Completing Strategic Community Tree Plantings and “Heritage” Tree Care Projects
- Other projects which result in sustained improvements to urban and community forestry management in other areas

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant⁴⁶

The MVP Action Grant offers financial resources to communities that are seeking to advance priority climate adaptation actions to address climate change impacts resulting from extreme weather, sea level rise, inland and coastal flooding, severe heat, and other climate impacts.

Action Grants are open to municipalities who have received “MVP Community” designation from EEA by completing an MVP plan through the original MVP Planning Grant process or being designated for prior work in line with the original MVP Planning Grant process.

Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program⁴⁷

SRTS is a free, federally funded program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that works to increase safe walking, biking, and rolling among public elementary, middle, and high school students. Grant programs are available for partnerships between municipalities and schools that have been an SRTS partner for at least six months before applying and have implemented several SRTS Programs. Grant programs include:

- The SRTS Signs and Lines Program will provide design services and up to \$10,000 in construction funding to a selected municipality for a low-cost infrastructure project around a public elementary, middle, or high school. The goal of these projects is to eliminate small barriers that students encounter when walking, bicycling, or using a wheeled mobility device to get to school.
- The SRTS Bike Rack Grant will order and install bike racks at selected schools within the school year.

⁴⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mvp-action-grant>

⁴⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safe-routes-to-school-engineering#technical-assistance-for-srts-grants>

- The SRTS Infrastructure Funding Program provides grants for infrastructure projects such as transportation construction and capital improvement projects that will improve safety and/or increase the number of children walking and biking to school and are located within two miles of a school serving children in any grades between kindergarten and twelfth grade. The infrastructure project must be within the public way or any bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail. This may include projects on private land that have public access easements or public property that is owned by a public entity. Projects may be completed on state-owned roadways.

Complete Streets Funding Program⁴⁸

The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides Massachusetts municipalities with tools and financial support to address gaps in their local transportation networks. A “Complete Street” is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes—including walking, biking, transit, and vehicles—for people of all ages and abilities. Eligible activities include:

- Projects that address infrastructure barriers to walking, biking, or taking transit at a signalized or unsignalized intersection include spot improvements such as tightening curb radii, adding curb extensions, adding a roundabout or mini traffic circle, adding bicycle facilities, and/or reducing vehicular speeds.
- Projects that reallocate roadway space from vehicles to provide exclusive space for people walking, biking, and/or taking transit.
- Projects that enhance pedestrian crossings at a signalized, unsignalized, or midblock crossing by upgrading curb ramps and/or adding Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), crossing islands, raised intersections or crosswalks, markings, and/or signs.
- Projects that add new pedestrian and/or bike facilities along a roadway segment such as sidewalks, shared use paths, separated bike lanes, or bike lanes.
- Projects that enhance transit access through station and stop improvements and/or service improvements such as bus lanes, queue jumps, or transit signal priority.

⁴⁸ <https://transportationgrantcentral.mass.gov/s/program/a3lcs000001U0GZEA0/complete-streets-funding-program>

*Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant*⁴⁹

The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) federal competitive grant program is focused on improving roadway safety for all users by reducing and eliminating serious-injury and fatal crashes through the development, refinement, and subsequent implementation of comprehensive safety action plans (referred to as “Action Plans”).

The SS4A provides funding for two types of grants: Planning and Demonstration Grants and Implementation Grants.

For a Planning and Demonstration Grant, eligible activities include the following:

- Developing, updating, or completing an Action Plan.
- Conducting supplemental safety planning to complete or enhance an Action Plan.
- Carrying out demonstration activities to inform Action Plan development or updates.

Implementation Grant activities must include implementing roadway safety strategies and projects identified in an eligible, complete Action Plan.

Projects and strategies must be infrastructural, behavioral, and/or operational activities identified in an Action Plan and must be directly related to addressing the safety problem(s) identified in the Action Plan.

*AARP Community Challenge*⁵⁰

The AARP Community Challenge is a program to make communities more livable for people of all ages with tangible improvements that jump-start long-term change. Eligible projects relevant to open space and recreation should benefit residents – especially those age 50 and older – and include:

- Creating vibrant public places (i.e., parks, open spaces, community amenities)
- Expanding transportation and mobility options (i.e., walkability, bikeability, transit access)
- Strengthening disaster resilience (i.e., disaster preparedness and mitigation)
- Conducting walkability assessments with support from America Walks and using the AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit.

⁴⁹ <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

⁵⁰ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2026/2026-challenge.html>

- Conducting bikeability assessments with support from The League of American Bicyclists and using the AARP Bike Audit Tool Kit.

7.4 Consistency with Regional and State Open Space and Recreation Plans

7.4.1 Regional Plans

The following regional planning documents were reviewed for open space and recreation goals and initiatives. Consistency with these documents is detailed throughout the OSRP and Action Plan.

- MetroSouth Chamber of Commerce, *Town of Bridgewater - Pathways to Progress: Central Square Traffic & Pedestrian Improvements*
- Old Colony Planning Council, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study*, 2013, January
- Old Colony Planning Council, *Route 18 Corridor Transportation Planning Study East Bridgewater - Bridgewater*, 2023, October
- Old Colony Planning Council, *Route 104 Corridor, Bridgewater, MA Transportation Planning Study*, 2025, December
- Old Colony Planning Council, *Regional Water Plan*, 2025, July

7.4.2 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023

The 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the open space plan for the entire state of Massachusetts. This OSRP is consistent with the following goals and objectives of the SCORP.

Goal 1: Improve Access to Beaches and Other Water-based Recreation Facilities - the proposed improvements to canoe/kayak launches and passive recreational access to Carver's Pond and Lake Nippenicket support this goal.

Goal 2: Support Trail Projects - the proposed trail and wayfinding improvements, connectivity between open space and recreation areas including local and regionally connected trail systems and acquisition of additional land for passive recreation including walking trails support this goal.

Goal 3: Create and Renovate Neighborhood Parks, Especially to Benefit the Underserved - the ongoing efforts to renovate and reestablish Jennie Leonard Park, implementation of the ADA Transition Plan to ensure accessibility of existing parks and evaluating opportunities for additional active recreational areas support this goal.

Section 8.0
Public Comments

RE: Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan for Comment

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 5/19/2026 5:31 PM

To McGraw, Joshua [REDACTED]

Cc O'Brien, Shane [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Shane, quick question: why is the fish ladder at High Street shown on the cover? The dam and historic bridge were removed a couple of years ago. If the intent is to show the Ironworks Park, there are much better images. Better would be an image of the Styles and Hart Park upgraded trails/fishing platform or Hanson Farm etc.

Carlton

From: McGraw, Joshua [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 2:17 PM

Cc: O'Brien, Shane [REDACTED]

Subject: Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan for Comment

All,

Please see the below:

https://www.bridgewaterma.gov/community/parks_recreation/open_space_plan.php

The Draft of the Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan is now available!

The public comment period will be open through **May 31, 2026**.

Please email all comments or questions to Shane O'Brien, Town Planner, at [REDACTED].

Best,
Josh

Joshua McGraw

Special Assistant to the Town Manager for Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Town of Bridgewater

Municipal Office Building

66 Central Square - 2nd floor

Bridgewater, MA 02324

Office: 508-659-1253

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Open Space and Recreation comments

From David R Moore [REDACTED]

Date Tue 5/19/2026 6:19 PM

To O'Brien, Shane [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

In my opinion, we have an ample number of open space and recreational properties. The major problem that I see is that the town repeatedly fails to maintain these properties. I cite Jenny Leonard Park, Rainbows End, and Marathon. While these parks require a little more maintenance than simple trails, they still need maintenance.

The beautiful wooded trails that we currently have miles of see little or no maintenance over the course of the year. It would take just one or two passes with a brush machine to keep them open. Until the town dedicates some time and effort to keeping those trails open, the acquisition of more trails is a waste of time.

There also has to be greater emphasis on police access to parks. You can not expect police to patrol them off hours but you can keep the brush down between the road/parking areas and parks. This lack of visual access is what killed Jenny Leonard and Rainbows End.

David Moore

Comments on the Open space plan

From [REDACTED]
Date Mon 5/25/2026 8:56 AM
To [REDACTED]
Cc [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good day,

I hope you had a relaxing weekend. I finished reviewing the draft Open Space Plan and found several editorial issues such as misspelled words, failure to capitalize the first word of a sentence, capitalization of proper nouns (mostly not capitalizing Town when referring to the Town of Bridgewater as the Town, comma duplications etc. etc.

I find the lack of a table of tables, table of figures, table of maps, and confusing paging makes the document hard to read. Also not putting maps and figures (the caption numbers say images without citing the source) immediately after the first reference is challenging (specifically the maps referred to but located later in the document. As a reader I don't want to look for a map when the text is discussing it. Having authored/coauthored dozens of this type of document it's better to have continuous paging It can be by chapter (e.g., 1-1, 1-2,... ; 2-1, 2-2,.. etc. so it's easy for the reader to find the information from the table of contents. Will the table of contents have live links to the page so the reader can go easily to a chapter of interest?

I also have several comments on the information presented (sometimes not correct or out of date) and other questions. Is there a way I can upload the document to a Town folder? I don't have the email memory to send it to you with my edits and comments.

I'm happy to meet with you to review my comments once you have seen the comments.

Best
Carlton
CPC Vice Chair

RE: Comments on the Open space plan

From [REDACTED]
Date Fri 5/29/2026 9:32 AM
To [REDACTED]
Cc [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks Shane, I understand the challenges you are under. The new image is great. I'm wondering if any of the Open Space Committee members have relevant images such as the parking lots at the Old State Farm Trail or trail from Wyman Meadows to the WLT contiguous Conservation parcel. Maybe an image of an area proposed for improvement such as the Jenney Leonard "Park". Did I send you the image of the fishing platform at Stiles and Hart.

My hope is to provide you and the consultants with a marked-up version of the draft with my comments. It's not read lined but grammatical issues highlighted and other concerns annotated as comments. I'd like to send it to the Town's website due to my limitations of file size in emails. I'm assuming the Department has capacity to receive large files electronically, hence my ask.

I can meet if you think it would be productive. Maybe after my comments in the draft are received.

Notes: the CPC voted all items (except the carpet replacement request) in the Public Library's request for CPA funds were eligible. The next step is to submit an application with more details. I'm not sure if that falls in your wheelhouse or the Town Manager's. Josh and the CPC offices are working with IT to simplify the CPC application as an online fillable form. We hope to finalize it by July 1.

There are two trail development options that should be noted. One is at the Fire Station HQ where the revised Trust agreement calls for a trail on the property to enjoy the fauna and flora of the site. I have a preliminary path concept. I sent the language to and concept to the Fire Chief including the fact that there is a Trust account with over \$110K to support the recreational development; the other is a path/trail at the senior center trail. I have been speaking with the Director about it and have encourage her to submit an eligibility form with concept. I'm told there was some preliminary engineering done several years ago but don't have access to that documentation. This trail is likely eligible for CPA funds.

Comment on Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan

From [REDACTED]

Date Thu 5/28/2026 3:48 PM

To [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Shane,

1 comment. Feel free to contact me if you need more details.

- Best
- David Sbabo (25 year Bridgewater resident)

My comment pertains to page 191 part of the Town-owned Open Space and Recreation Land chart

Property Name: Jennie Leonard Park -Cherry St.

*Current Use: **Playground***

My observation: Jennie Leonard Park has been in disrepair for well over a decade and currently has no playground equipment that I am aware of. Used to have slides, swings, and other playground equipment in poor conditions, but not anymore. I am not sure when they were removed.

I believe the more accurate description is: **Current Use: Playground (removed)** like the entry for the Former Rainbow's End Playground

Jackie Boyer

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 6:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: open space comments

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2026 4:21:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: open space comments

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To CED:

Hello Shane,

I read the OSRP to the best of my ability. On page 4-25 under Environmental Inventory and Analysis, I agree that the town needs to address zoning. It says we are not currently addressing the issue of new development in vulnerable areas. We do need to protect areas and fix our zoning to do that. We need to also protect areas along the rivers and the Nip.

On page 4-26 it points out that the Hockomock Swamp is an important wetland. It says it is protected against inappropriate development by the ACEC designation. It is suppose to be protected but we have seen encouragement development by the Claremont Company despite many residents attempts to discourage and point out issues with every attempt to build there. This is still an area that needs protection. Need to protect wildlife habitat . ACEC needs to be respected!

I would like to see stronger language with regard to protecting that area.

Also I agree the agricultural preservation initiatives need to be continued.

We need to continue to protect opens space from development. Less strain on our infrastructure when we don't let things be built.

I did read the ten year action plan 7.1-7.2.

Very short section. I actually missed it at first then had to go back to the table of contents to find it.

The information before that section was interesting but maybe the Ten year action plan could have been a little more informative.

I just hope we continue to protect open space for wildlife habitat and some passive recreation. I don't want to see anymore athletic fields necessarily and pickle ball courts. All those are disruptive to the environment although I

know they do not attribute to schools and water infrastructures like housing does. We need to curb housing. And not push for mixed use either.

Thank you

Janet Hanson
665 Pleasant St
Bridgewater

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Jackie Boyer

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 6:28 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Open Space Plan Feedback / Melissa Ramondetta
Attachments: Bridgewater_019-333.DFW.pdf; MOA + Alternatives to Impact Consideration.pdf

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2026 7:47:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Space Plan Feedback / Melissa Ramondetta

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Shane:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Open Space Plan. It was good to see greater protection and land acquisition mentioned for the areas on and near Lake Nippenicket.

The work of the CED, town boards, committees and Beals and Thomas is appreciated.

Please find my comments below.

- 1. Route 44 passes through the southern portion of the town and connects Bridgewater to neighboring Taunton and Middleborough. (3-1)*
This is not accurate.
- 2. which was designated as a Federal Wild and Scenic **Rover** in 2000, flows (3-2)*
River
- 3. 3.4.1.1. Transportation (3-10)*
Add [Route 104 Bridgewater Corridor Study](#)
- 4. The Zone II Aquifer for the Town of Raynham at Lake Nippenicket should be listed in 3.4.1.2 Water Supply. Although it's not Bridgewater's water supply – it's a significant aquifer and the Zone II for Raynham. This aquifer needs protection too.*
- 5. 3.4.1.3 The present sewer system serves the heart of the community around the town center, the University and some recently added outlying areas including the Elm Street and Scotland Park industrial areas and the **office/retail complex** south of Lake Nippenicket, (located over a portion of Raynham's aquifer).*
There is more than an office/retail complex at Lakeshore Center. The 589 residences should also be mentioned. Should read office/retail/residential. It's the largest density of population in Bridgewater!

3.4.1.3 *Public Work, manages wastewater collection and disposal, including Public Works*

3.4.1.3 *maintenance problems. In addition, more recent Innovative and alternative on-site sewage treatment systems can reduce the needed (3-13)*

lowercase i

3.4.1.3 *Much of the available developable land zoned for single-family residences has already been subdivided and built on; therefore, developers have turned to higher-density projects and mixed-use conversions. Recently permitted higher density developments include VIVA Bridgewater (300 units, open and accepting tenants at the time of writing), McElwain School Apartments (57 units), and Duxburrow Estates (148 single family units).*

Not recently permitted – old information. What about Broad Street and Perkins (& the hotel at Lakeshore Center?).

3.4.1.3 *Industrial and commercial uses, in contrast, occupy only a combined six percent of its land. Commercial, industrial and institutional uses are predominantly located in the town center, along the major routes, and around the BSU campus and Bridgewater Correctional Complex. There is a large percentage of industrial (ie: warehouse on Fruit Street) and commercial (ie: one hotel, two office buildings and another hotel to be built) at Lakeshore Center. Why isn't Elm Street mentioned, Scotland, etc?*

3.4.1.3 Last Paragraph

Mention recent preservation of Hanson Farm

6. 4.1.1. *the Taunton watershed*

Taunton River watershed (4-1)

7. 4.2.2. *Bridgewater has nine primary lakes and ponds: Lake Nippenicket, Carver's*

Add to Lake Nippenicket ([Great Pond](#))

8. 4.2.3 *As discussed more fully in Section 3.5.1.2, the town's water supply comes from groundwater sources from 9 wells installed in three different aquifers in the Taunton River Basin.*

Need to mention the Zone II aquifer for the Town of Raynham at Lake Nippenicket that is in Bridgewater.

9. 4.2.5 *Wetlands: The Town has a Wetlands Protection Bylaw as well as detailed Rules and Regulations, as amended through November 1990. This bylaw and these regulations additionally protect all wetland resource areas, buffer zones, and protected interests in combination with the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL c. 131, §40) and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.00).*

The Wetlands Protection Bylaw is outdated and requires updating, however, the Conservation Commission needs to hire a third-party to guide them through the process and the town has no funds.

10. 4.2.6 *Impaired Waters Both Lake Nippenicket and Carver's Pond have been assessed as impaired according to the DEP 2022 Integrated List of Waters. Lake Nippenicket is classified as a Category*

4A waterbody impaired for fish consumption and aquatic plants but does not require the development of a TDML. In the past, nitrogen loading has been a major problem at Lake Nippenicket. Impairments to Lake Nippenicket are caused by atmospheric deposition toxics. Carver's Pond was classified as a Category 4C waterbody impaired for non-native aquatic plants but does not require the development of a TDML.

Unfortunately, neither the Town of Bridgewater nor the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have addressed this impairment or instituted water testing at Lake Nippenicket.

11. 4.3.7 *Rare and Endangered Plant Species*

You could mention here that the Eastern Box Turtle had significant population at Lakeshore Center, however, NHESP permitted Claremont to “take” the population in exchange for a “mitigation” payment (see attached).

12. 4.5.3 *Cultural, Archeological and Historic Sites* *Bridgewater's cultural and historic sites are largely proximate to the Central Square area. They have been discussed in Section 3 where a list of all major historic structures and places is provided. Native American archeological sites might be expected along the rivers and nearby fertile fields, but original inhabitants' seasonal movements along the river system involved very few permanent settlements and left few artifacts.*

Not totally true – Please see attached MOA that describes a significant site across from Lake Nippenicket, where a Hilton Garden Inn is to be built. Claremont told MHC that protection and avoidance of the lot was not prudent or feasible, so it was “moved” and or “re-interred.” (4-22). This report should be transparent and include this information as it shows what has been lost.

13. *Water Quality* *The top priority for open space and recreation expenditures utilizing existing, available funding is protection of water quality, with nearly 100% of survey respondents as well as public forum attendees indicating that this is the highest priority. Bridgewater's water supply is achieved through a surface water supply via Carver's Pond and groundwater supplies through its wells, with approximately 40% of the Town's water supply originating from the High Street wells located adjacent to the Matfield River. The Town of Bridgewater maintains ownership of the majority of land directly abutting Carver's Pond and the High Street wells. However, undeveloped parcels in proximity to these water supply resources may pose as opportunities to expand protected areas as noted in the Open Space Inventory Section.*

Lake Nippenicket aquifer should be included here.

Best,
Melissa Ramondetta

E-mail sent or received via the Town of Bridgewater network are subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts Public Records Law (M.G.L. Chapter 66, Section 10) and the Federal Freedom of Information Act. However, portions of this message, including any attachments, may be confidential, legally privileged and/or exempt from disclosure pursuant to Massachusetts Law (M.G.L. Chapter 78, Section 7). It is intended solely for the addressee. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer under your control.

Comments on OSRP: Eileen Hiney

Town has a Open Space Committee not Open Space Reaction Committee

Report Background: The Town consistently seeks additional volunteers to fill vacancies on Town Committees. Reference to volunteers and Town Staff.

High St Dam Update

427

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Acknowledge success with creation of Wyman Meadow Trail aka North Folk Conservation collaboration with Wildlands trust. Now referred to as “Wyman North Fork Conservation Area”

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67c319d4cd35a96ef7741cca/t/69fe394b60dfc32803684f88/1778268491060/WymanNorthFork_TrailMap_FINAL2.pdf

Action Items 1.c, Titicut, Iron Woods, Wyman Norfolk, and Tuckerwood.

Draft OS Plan

From Kitty Doherty [REDACTED]

Date Thu 6/4/2026 10:18 PM

To O'Brien, Shane [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi, Shane;

I've been plowing through the draft update to our Open Space Plan as I have the time and have a few general comments.

The professional consulting team has done a lot of work on this but they can only write what people tell them. This plan is the blueprint for the next decade and needs more research. It also still needs some editing for official accuracy.

Please note that what had been called the Nunckatessett Greenway on the Town River is now a tri-town land and water trail initiative known as the Nunckatessett & Satucket Greenway. This was done in harmony with the work that the Bridging the Bridgewaters Stewards are doing to encourage implementation of each of the 3 Bridgewater community's Open Space and Master Planning.

The related tri - town maps included in the draft should be removed as obsolete, and, unfortunately, there is not an updated version yet available.

Please also know that Bridging the Bridgewaters is a spin -off Grassroots group of Stewards sponsored by the nonprofit NRTB as a direct result of the huge interest that the Old State Farm Trail has generated. The BtBS meetings are hosted by BSU.

This draft still presents variation in the name of each Open Space Parkland. This new updated document is to last for a decade and NEEDS to be correct. Titicut is no longer 'Camp Titicut' or Titicut Reservation.

Wyman Meadow is now connected to Wildlands Trust and their Norfolk Preserve. That arrangement needs official documentation between the town and that nonprofit, and the new name made part of the record.

The Town River Landing should be added to the community's inventory of riverside parklands.

All of the site parcel maps need to be double checked for boundary accuracy. The layout and trail routes have been updated or changed since some of the Old information was compiled.

All of the Old Space or Conservation Parklands and the associated Trail Network are just that, Parklands, now that the town has established a passive recreation component. They ALL should be

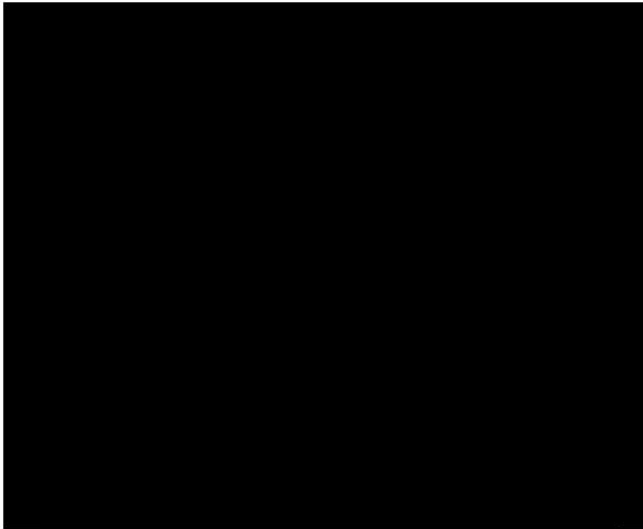
listed and described.

The ball fields and original Active rec attractions are PARKS.

All of the Parks and Parklands have a theme that should be part of the narrative about each site. It records the history of the town's development. Plymouth County Agricultural Society Fairgrounds, Iron Foundry, ship building site, brick yard, dairy farm, stagecoach way station, etc.

The updated plan needs an expanded glossary of terms.

Sorry; out of time now,
Kit





**TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE**

Academy Building, 66 Central Square, Room 003
Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02324

June 5, 2026

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston MA 02114

Re: Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan Update 2026-2036

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Bridgewater Open Space Committee has participated in the recent process to revise the Town's 2017 Open Space Plan. We fully endorse the Town's 2026-2036 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which updates the 2017 version.

The Town Planner, Shane O'Brien, has attended recent Open Space Committee meetings to discuss Plan revisions. Open Space Committee members have participated in the public meetings held to discuss the revised Plan and have provided feedback that has been incorporated into this revision.

We believe that the 2026-2036 Plan will provide valuable guidance in upcoming years as the Town seeks to preserve the Open Space that remains in Bridgewater. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the Community & Economic Development Department staff to prepare and submit this document, and we look forward to your agency's review and approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Hiney". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Eileen Hiney
Open Space Committee Chair



**TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
PLANNING BOARD**

Academy Building, 66 Central Square, Room 003

Bridgewater, Massachusetts 02324

☎: (508) 697-0942 ✉: CED@bridgewaterma.org

*Patrick Driscoll, Chair
Michael MacDonald, Vice Chair
Steven Geller,
Thomas Pratti
Daniel Greenburg
Eric Costa, Associate
Kris Fabroski, Associate*

June 5, 2026

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston MA 02114

Re: Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan Update 2026-2036

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Planning Board has reviewed the Town's 2026-2036 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update and approved it at its meeting held on June 3, 2026. At the May 20th meeting, the Town Planner Shane O'Brien presented the draft plan to the Board and during that time since, the Board reviewed the document and provided additional feedback to be incorporated into this final Plan.

The Board appreciated the time and effort spent on the update to the Open Space and Recreation Plan by the Community & Economic Development Department, Town Staff, Town Council, other Boards & Committees and members of the community who participated in the update process.

Respectfully,


Patrick Driscoll
Planning Board Chair

Section 9.0
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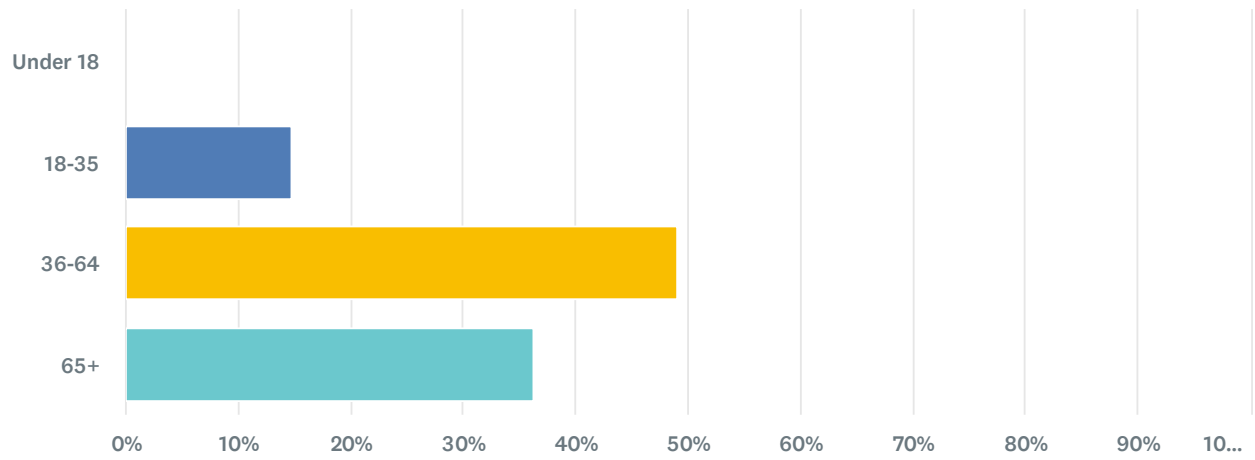
Appendices

Appendix A

Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan
Update Survey Results

Q1 How old are you?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Under 18	0%	0
● 18-35	14.71%	15
● 36-64	49.02%	50
● 65+	36.27%	37
Total		102

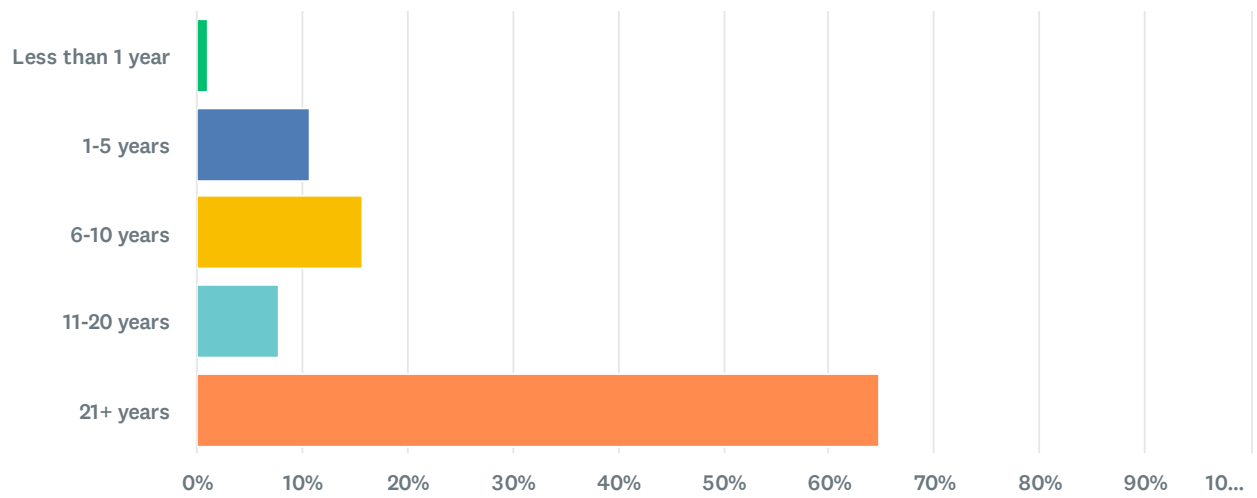
Q2 How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 1

1		11.88%	12	View all	Edit	Delete
2		45.54%	46	View all	Edit	Delete
3		16.83%	17	View all	Edit	Delete
4		13.86%	14	View all	Edit	Delete
5		7.92%	8	View all	Edit	Delete
6		2.97%	3	View all	Edit	Delete
7		0.99%	1	View all	Edit	Delete

Q3 How many years have you lived in Bridgewater?

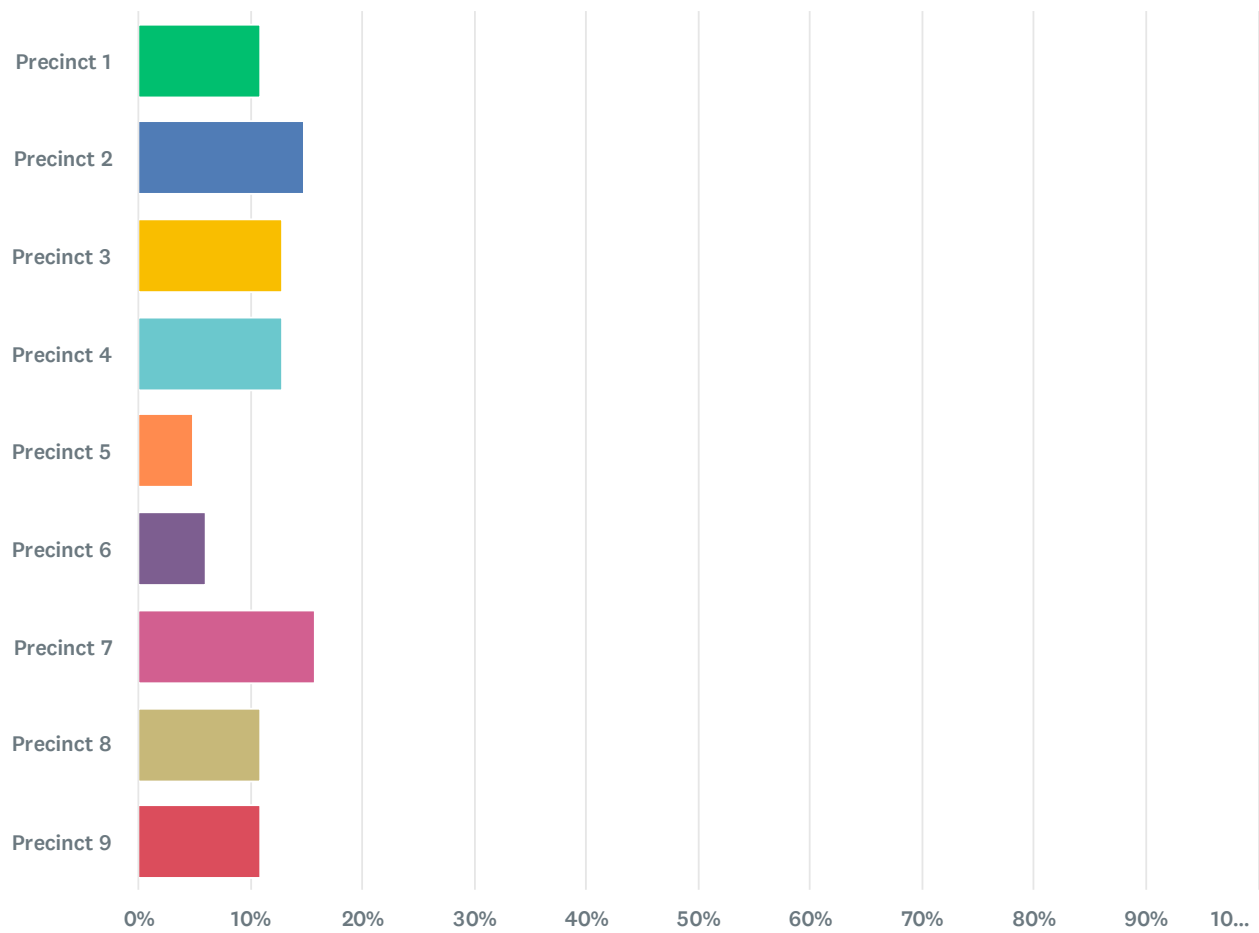
Answered: 102 Skipped: 0





Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Less than 1 year	0.98%	1
● 1-5 years	10.78%	11
● 6-10 years	15.69%	16
● 11-20 years	7.84%	8
● 21+ years	64.71%	66
Total		102

Q4 What Precinct do you live in? (Precinct Map)

Answered: 101 Skipped: 1

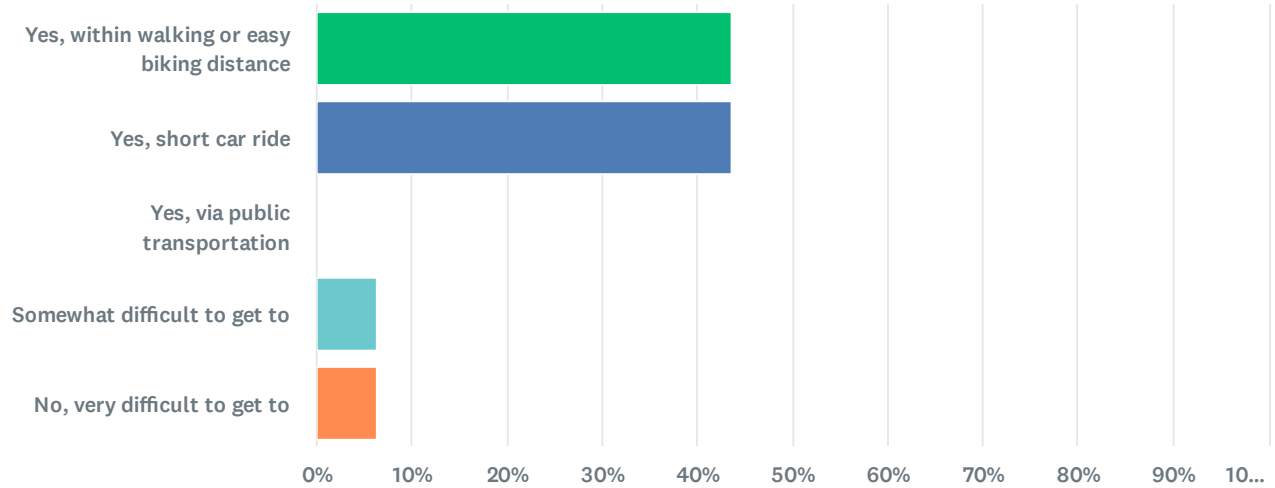


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Precinct 1	10.89%	11
● Precinct 2	14.85%	15
● Precinct 3	12.87%	13
● Precinct 4	12.87%	13
● Precinct 5	4.95%	5
● Precinct 6	5.94%	6
● Precinct 7	15.84%	16
Total		101

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Precinct 8	10.89%	11
 Precinct 9	10.89%	11
Total		101

Q5 Are open space and recreation areas in Bridgewater accessible from your neighborhood?

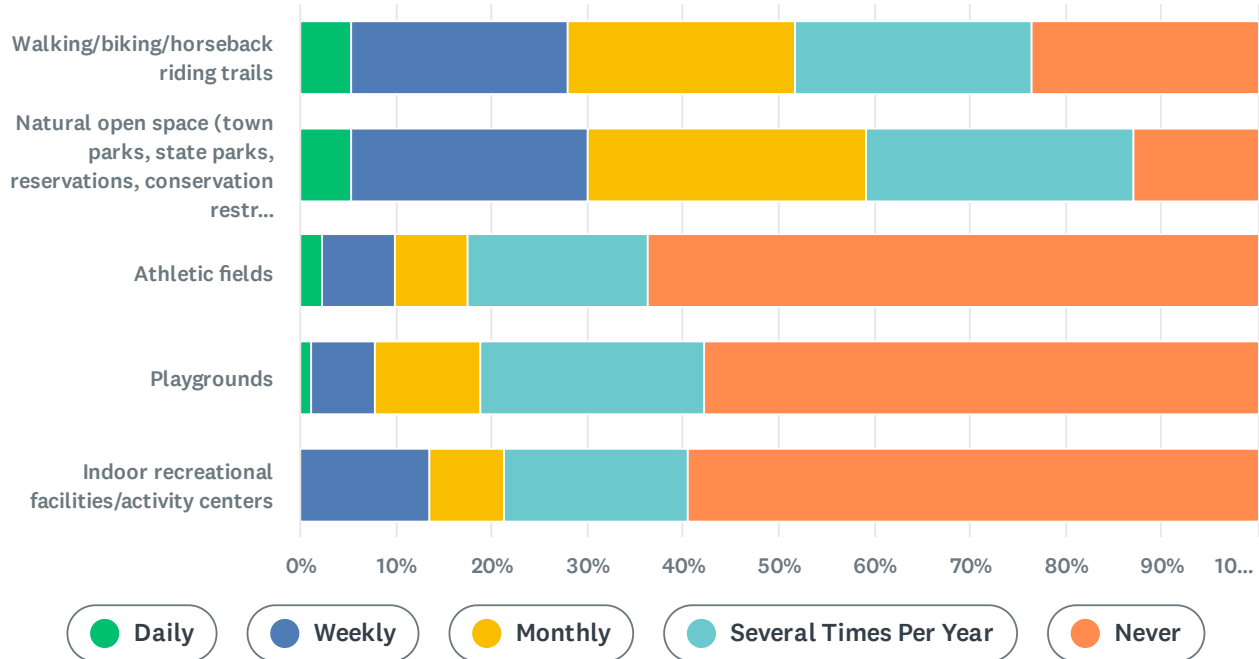
Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes, within walking or easy biking distance	43.62%	41
● Yes, short car ride	43.62%	41
● Yes, via public transportation	0%	0
● Somewhat difficult to get to	6.38%	6
● No, very difficult to get to	6.38%	6
Total		94

Q6 How often do you or those in your household use the following types of public open space and recreation areas in town?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Several Times Per Year	Never	Total
Walking/biking/horseback riding trails	5.38% 5	22.58% 21	23.66% 22	24.73% 23	23.66% 22	93
Natural open space (town parks, state parks, reservations, conservation restrictions, etc.)	5.38% 5	24.73% 23	29.03% 27	27.96% 26	12.90% 12	93
Athletic fields	2.20% 2	7.69% 7	7.69% 7	18.68% 17	63.74% 58	91
Playgrounds	1.11% 1	6.67% 6	11.11% 10	23.33% 21	57.78% 52	90
Indoor recreational facilities/activity centers	0% 0	13.48% 12	7.87% 7	19.10% 17	59.55% 53	89
						456

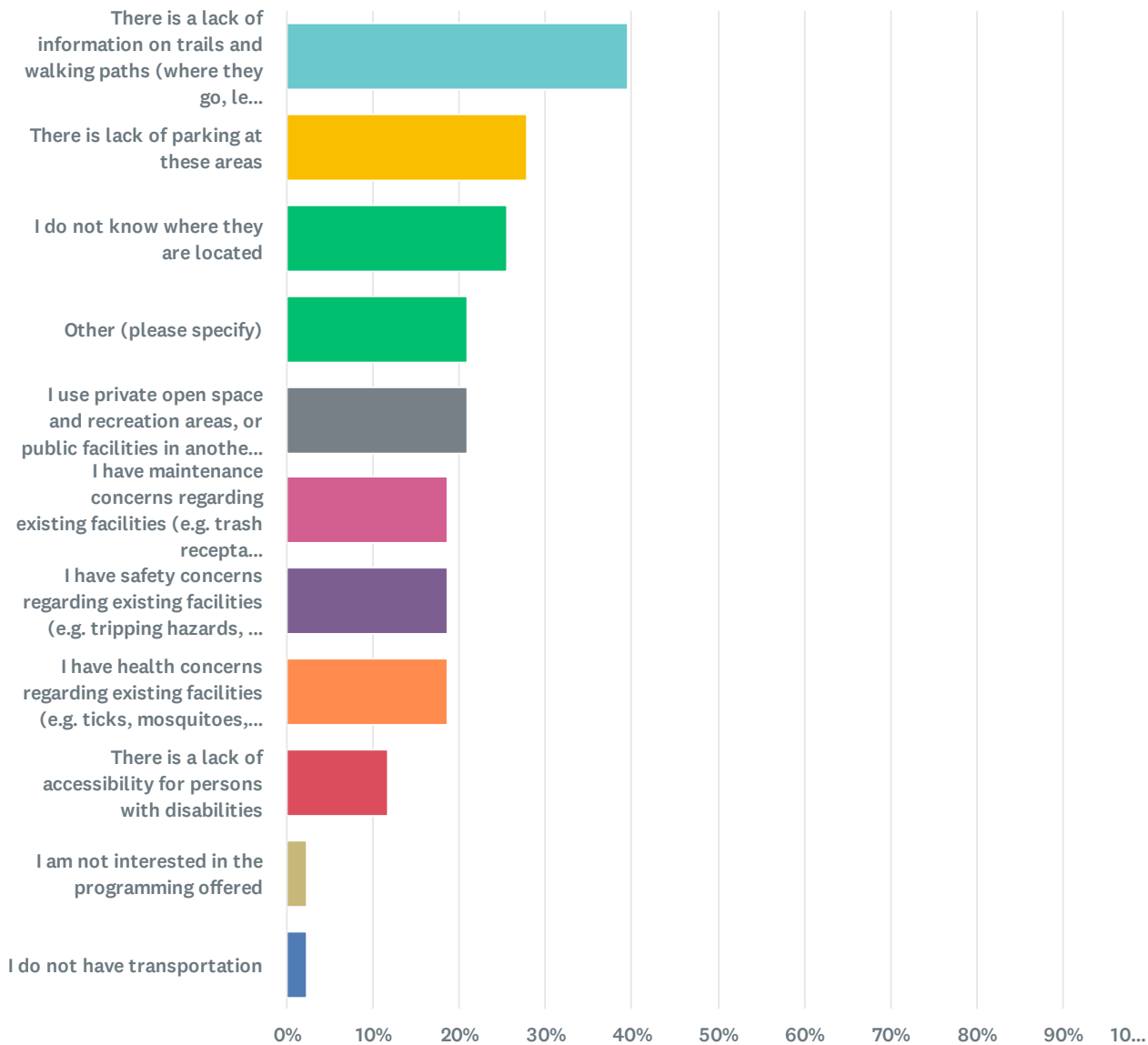
Q7 If you do use Bridgewater's public open space and recreation areas, what location(s) do you use most often?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 26










Q8 If you do not use Bridgewater’s public open space and recreation areas, why not? (select all that apply)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 59

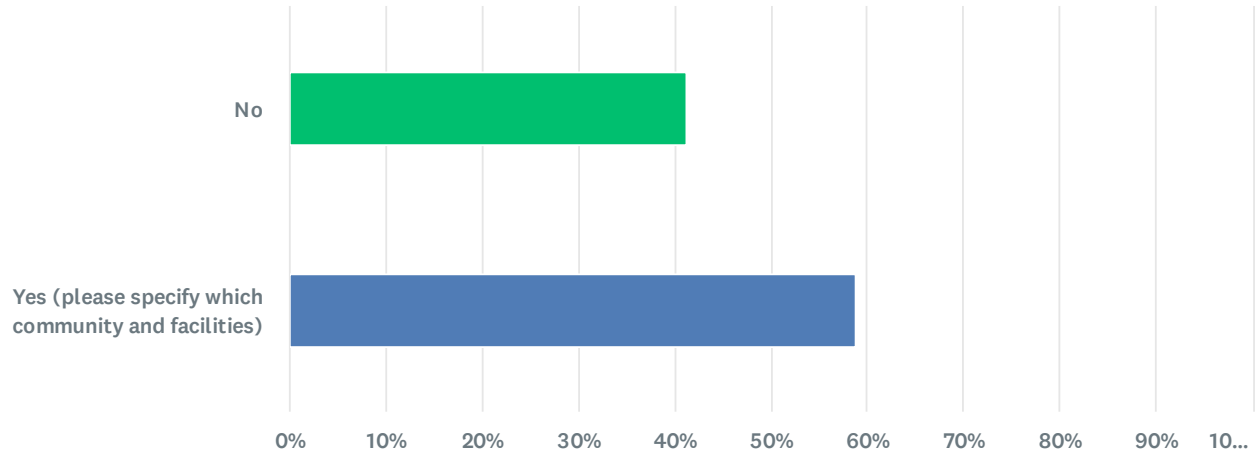


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● There is a lack of information on trails and walking paths (where they go, length, etc.)	39.53%	17
● There is lack of parking at these areas	27.91%	12
● I do not know where they are located	25.58%	11
Total		89

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Other (please specify) Show responses	20.93%	9
 I use private open space and recreation areas, or public facilities in another town	20.93%	9
 I have maintenance concerns regarding existing facilities (e.g. trash receptacles, etc.)	18.60%	8
 I have safety concerns regarding existing facilities (e.g. tripping hazards, lighting, etc.)	18.60%	8
 I have health concerns regarding existing facilities (e.g. ticks, mosquitoes, etc.)	18.60%	8
 There is a lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities	11.63%	5
 I am not interested in the programming offered	2.33%	1

Q9 Do you regularly travel to any nearby communities for open space and/or recreational opportunities?

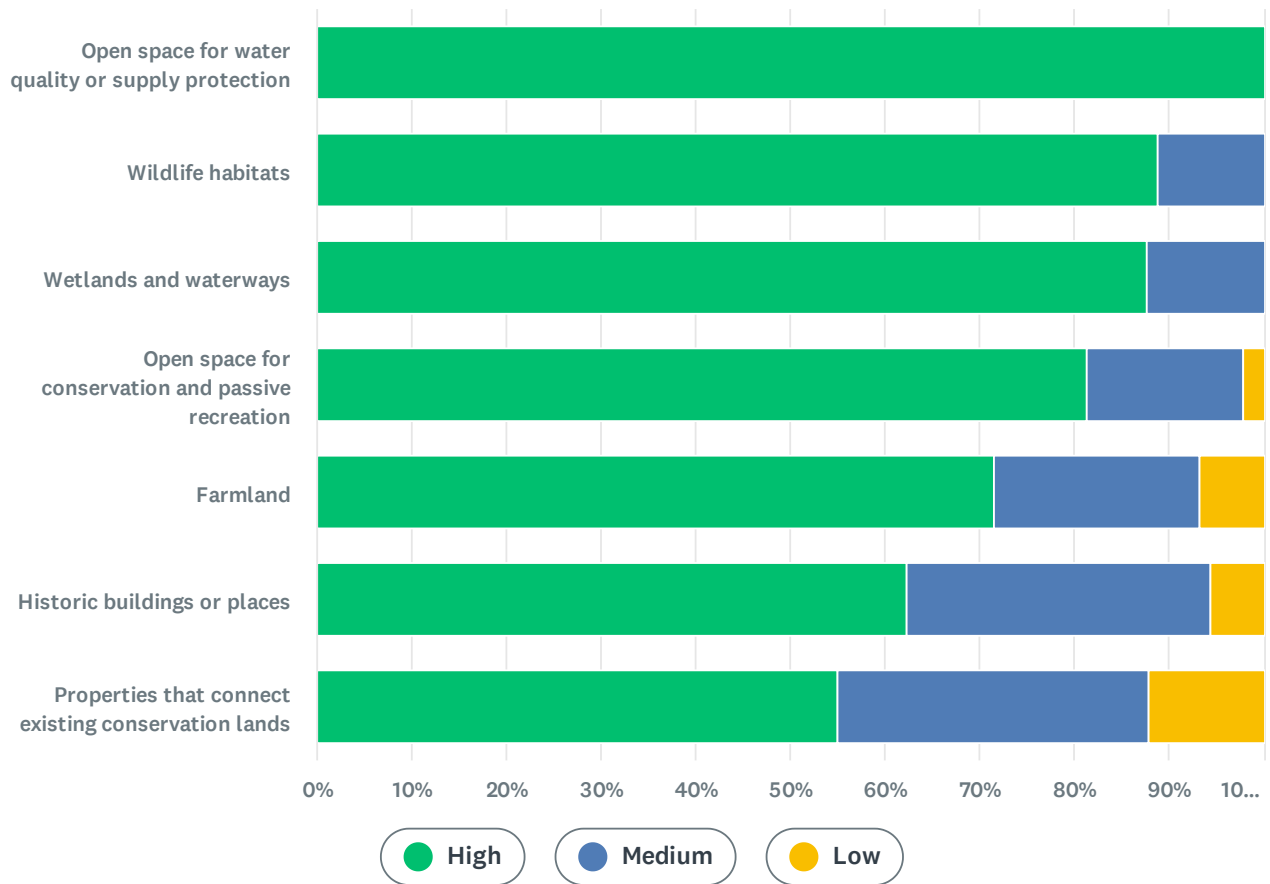
Answered: 92 Skipped: 10



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
<input type="radio"/> No	41.30%	38
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes (please specify which community and facilities) Show responses	58.70%	54
Total		92

Q10 How important is it to you to preserve each of the following?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 11



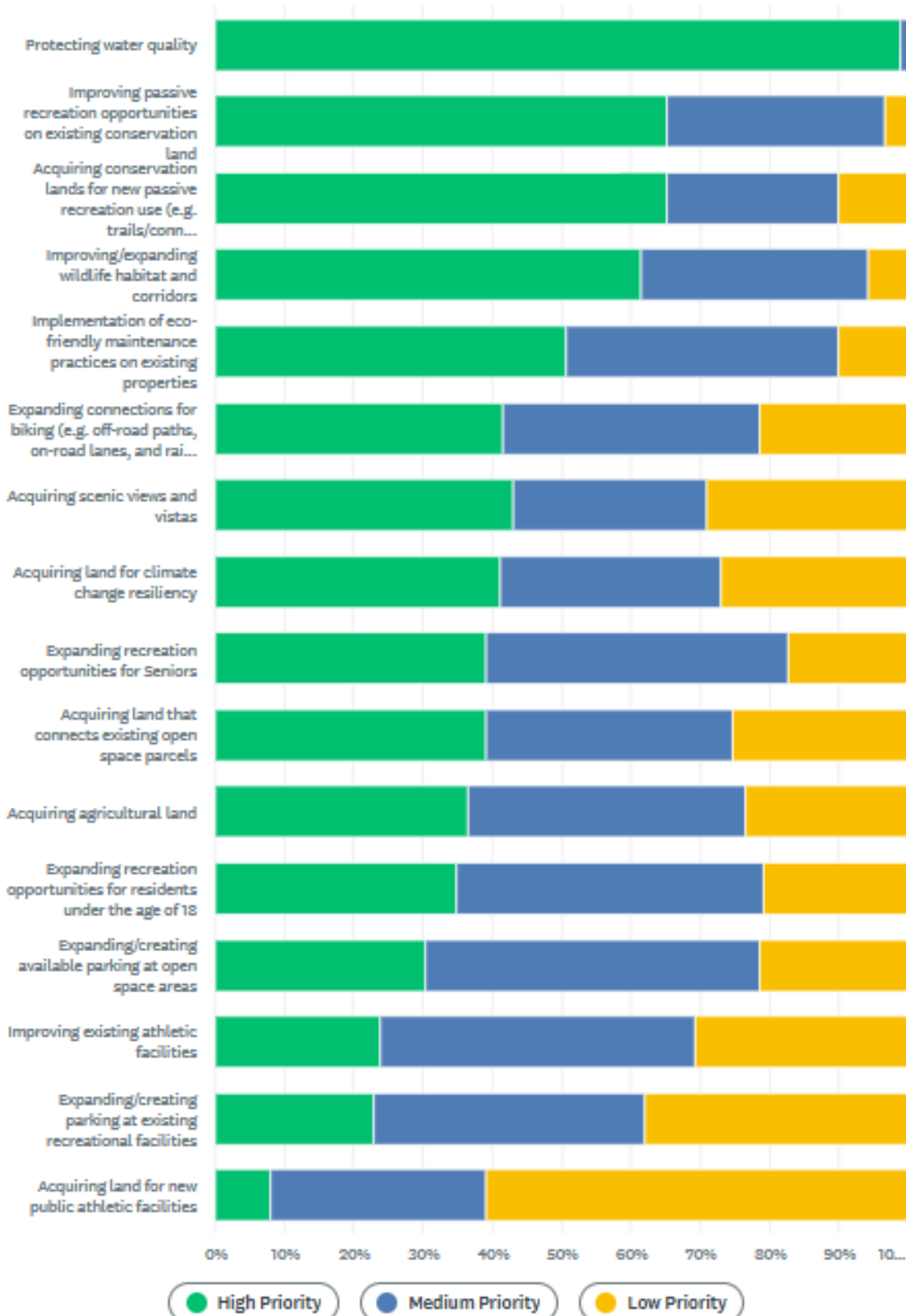
	● High	● Medium	● Low	Total
Open space for water quality or supply protection	100.00% 90	0% 0	0% 0	90
Wildlife habitats	88.76% 79	11.24% 10	0% 0	89
Wetlands and waterways	87.78% 79	12.22% 11	0% 0	90
Open space for conservation and passive recreation	81.32% 74	16.48% 15	2.20% 2	91

629

	● High	● Medium	● Low	Total
Farmland	71.59% 63	21.59% 19	6.82% 6	88
Historic buildings or places	62.22% 56	32.22% 29	5.56% 5	90
Properties that connect existing conservation lands	54.95% 50	32.97% 30	12.09% 11	91
				629

Q11 What should the Town's priorities be for open space and recreation expenditures utilizing existing, available funding *?*Note: tax increases are not proposed for funding the expenditures discussed herein. Funding sources may include: Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds, existing Town funds, future grant opportunities

Answered: 90 Skipped: 12



● High Priority

● Medium Priority

● Low Priority

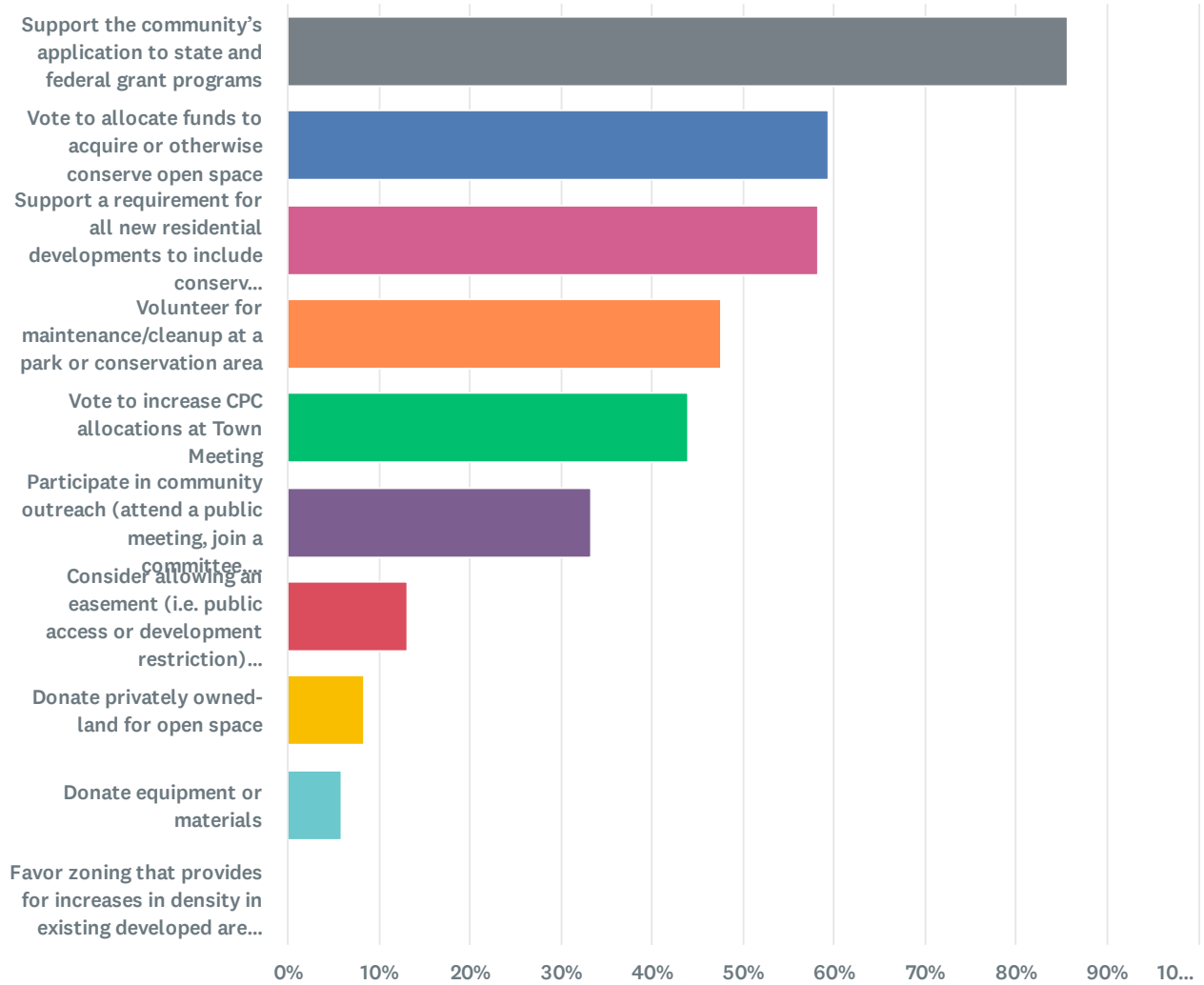
	● High Priority	● Medium Priority	● Low Priority	Total
Protecting water quality	98.89% 89	1.11% 1	0% 0	90
Improving passive recreation opportunities on existing conservation land	65.17% 58	31.46% 28	3.37% 3	89
Acquiring conservation lands for new passive recreation use (e.g. trails/connecting trails, sidewalks, etc.)	65.17% 58	24.72% 22	10.11% 9	89
Improving/expanding wildlife habitat and corridors	61.36% 54	32.95% 29	5.68% 5	88
Implementation of eco-friendly maintenance practices on existing properties	50.56% 45	39.33% 35	10.11% 9	89
Expanding connections for biking (e.g. off-road paths, on-road lanes, and rail trails)	41.57% 37	37.08% 33	21.35% 19	89
Acquiring scenic views and vistas	43.02% 37	27.91% 24	29.07% 25	86
Acquiring land for climate change resiliency	41.18% 35	31.76% 27	27.06% 23	85
Expanding recreation opportunities for Seniors	39.08% 34	43.68% 38	17.24% 15	87
Acquiring land that connects existing open space parcels	39.08% 34	35.63% 31	25.29% 22	87
				1401

	● High Priority	● Medium Priority	● Low Priority	Total
Acquiring agricultural land	36.47% 31	40.00% 34	23.53% 20	85
Expanding recreation opportunities for residents under the age of 18	34.88% 30	44.19% 38	20.93% 18	86
Expanding/creating available parking at open space areas	30.34% 27	48.31% 43	21.35% 19	89
Improving existing athletic facilities	23.86% 21	45.45% 40	30.68% 27	88
Expanding/creating parking at existing recreational facilities	22.99% 20	39.08% 34	37.93% 33	87
Acquiring land for new public athletic facilities	8.05% 7	31.03% 27	60.92% 53	87
				1401






 [Show comments](#)

Q12 Would you be interested in pursuing any of the following? (select all that apply)

Answered: 84 Skipped: 18

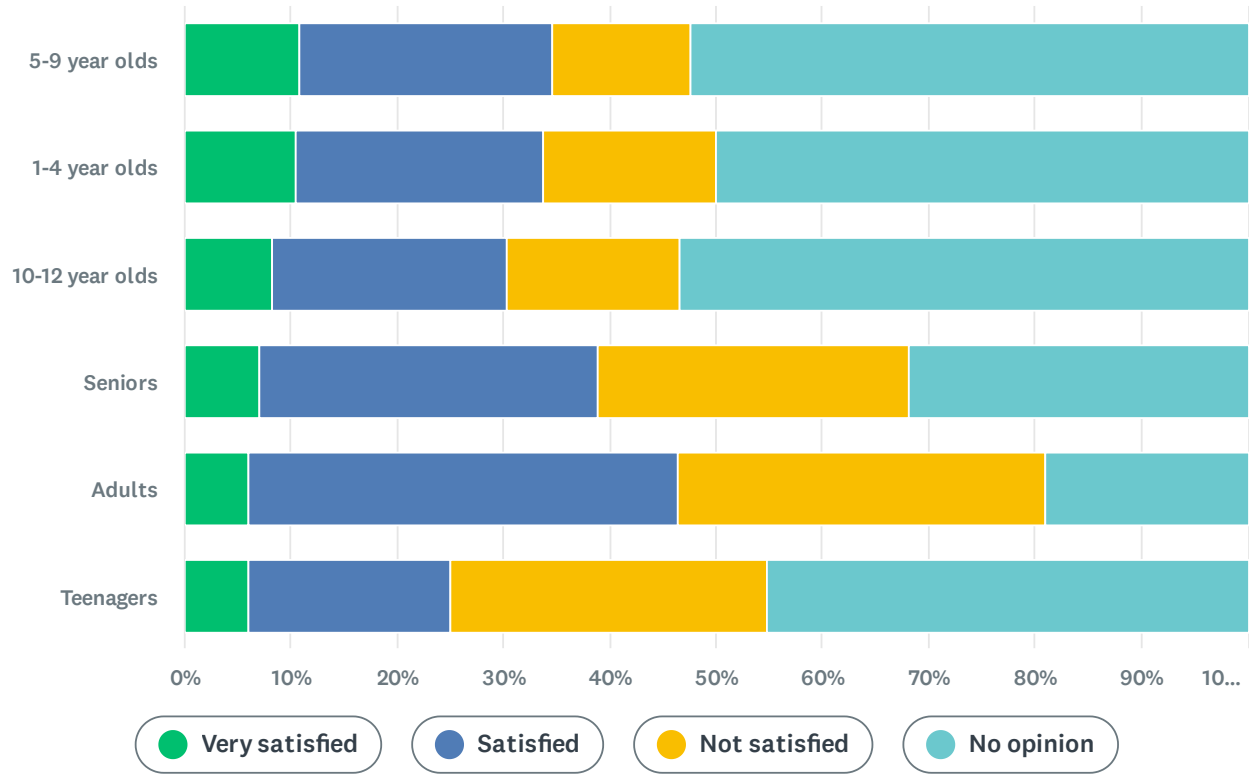


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Support the community's application to state and federal grant programs	85.71%	72
● Vote to allocate funds to acquire or otherwise conserve open space	59.52%	50
● Support a requirement for all new residential developments to include conservation/open space areas	58.33%	49
● Volunteer for maintenance/cleanup at a park or conservation area	47.62%	40
Total		299





Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
 Vote to increase CPC allocations at Town Meeting	44.05%	37
 Participate in community outreach (attend a public meeting, join a committee, etc.)	33.33%	28
 Consider allowing an easement (i.e. public access or development restriction) on a portion of your property in order to add to existing open space or connect to open spaces (e.g. to access a hiking trail or extend a bike path)	13.10%	11
 Donate privately owned-land for open space	8.33%	7
 Donate equipment or materials	5.95%	5

Q13 Are you satisfied with the current recreational opportunities and facilities available for the following age groups?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 16

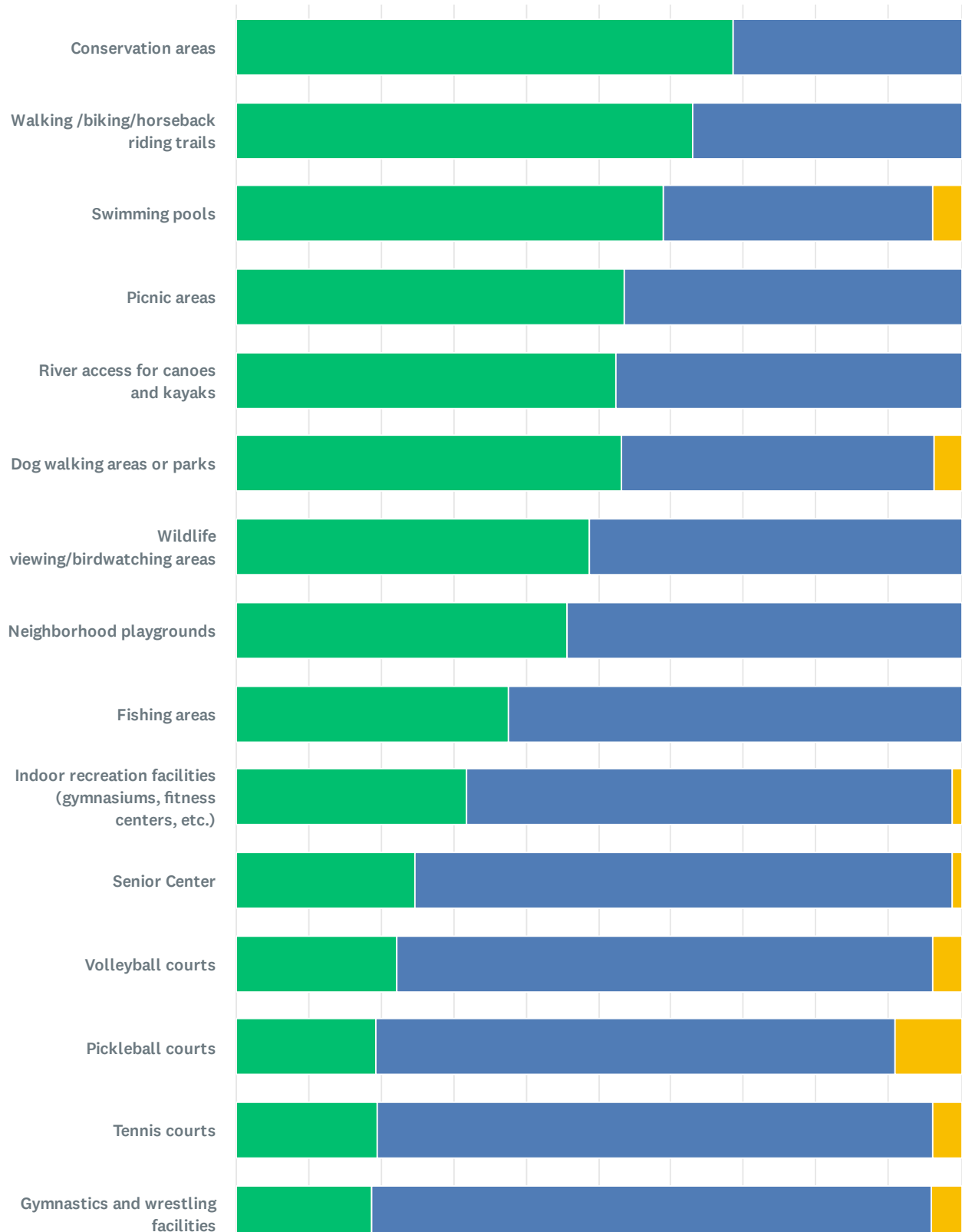


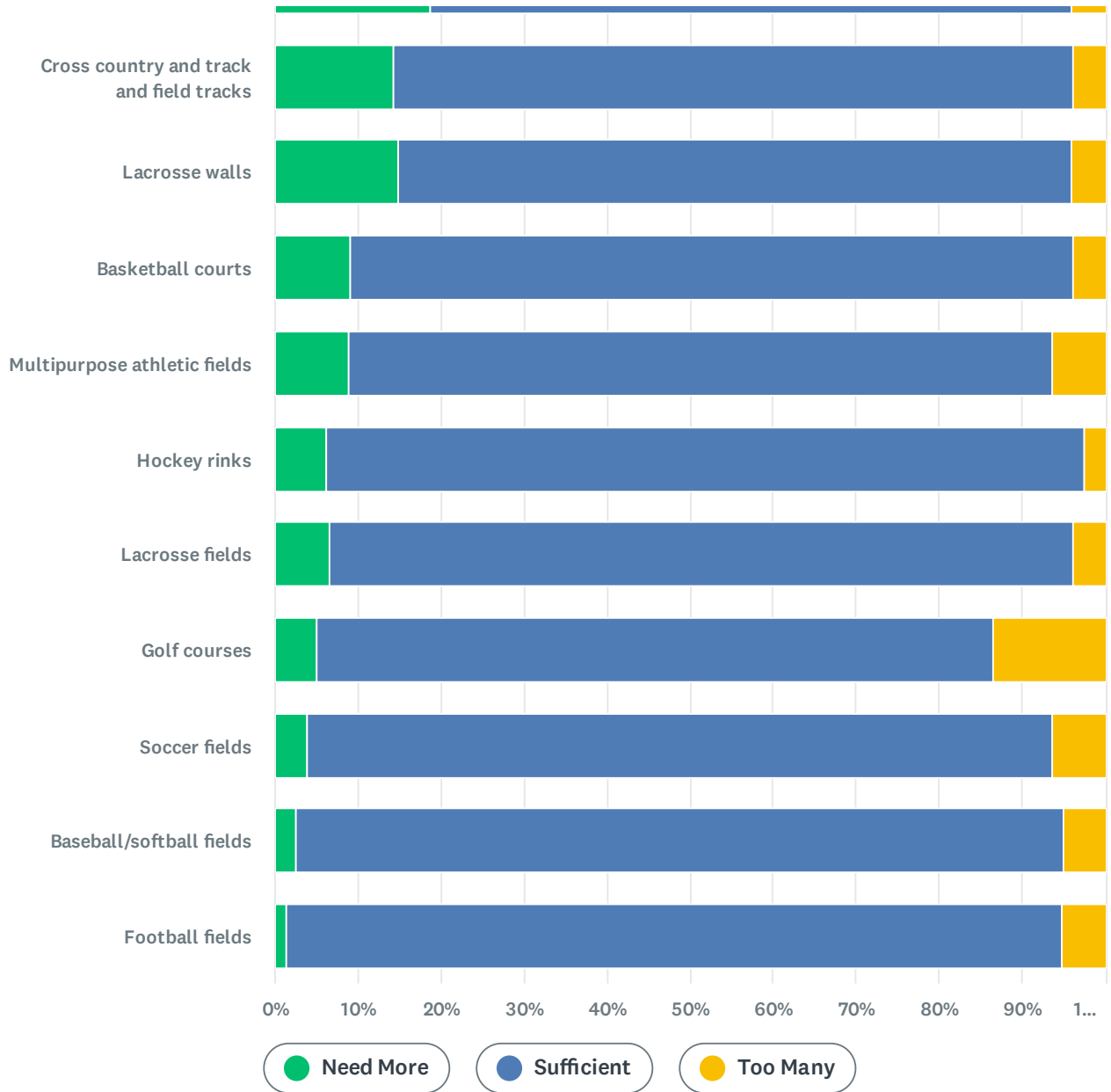
	● Very satisfied	● Satisfied	● Not satisfied	● No opinion	Total
5-9 year olds	10.71% 9	23.81% 20	13.10% 11	52.38% 44	84
1-4 year olds	10.47% 9	23.26% 20	16.28% 14	50.00% 43	86
10-12 year olds	8.14% 7	22.09% 19	16.28% 14	53.49% 46	86
Seniors	7.06% 6	31.76% 27	29.41% 25	31.76% 27	85
Adults	5.95% 5	40.48% 34	34.52% 29	19.05% 16	84
					509

	 Very satisfied	 Satisfied	 Not satisfied	 No opinion	Total
--	---	--	--	---	-------

Q14 Please rate the adequacy/availability of the following open space areas and recreational facility types in Bridgewater




Answered: 85 Skipped: 17








	● Need More	● Sufficient	● Too Many	Total
Conservation areas	68.67%	31.33%	0%	83
	57	26	0	
Walking /biking/horseback riding trails	63.10%	36.90%	0%	84
	53	31	0	
Swimming pools	58.97%	37.18%	3.85%	78
	46	29	3	

1984

	 Need More	 Sufficient	 Too Many	Total
Picnic areas	53.66% 44	46.34% 38	0% 0	82
River access for canoes and kayaks	52.44% 43	47.56% 39	0% 0	82
Dog walking areas or parks	53.09% 43	43.21% 35	3.70% 3	81
Wildlife viewing/birdwatching areas	48.78% 40	51.22% 42	0% 0	82
Neighborhood playgrounds	45.68% 37	54.32% 44	0% 0	81
Fishing areas	37.50% 30	62.50% 50	0% 0	80
Indoor recreation facilities (gymnasiums, fitness centers, etc.)	31.71% 26	67.07% 55	1.22% 1	82
Senior Center	24.69% 20	74.07% 60	1.23% 1	81
Volleyball courts	22.08% 17	74.03% 57	3.90% 3	77
Pickleball courts	19.23% 15	71.79% 56	8.97% 7	78
				1984

	 Need More	 Sufficient	 Too Many	Total
Tennis courts	19.48% 15	76.62% 59	3.90% 3	77
Gymnastics and wrestling facilities	18.67% 14	77.33% 58	4.00% 3	75
Cross country and track and field tracks	14.29% 11	81.82% 63	3.90% 3	77
Lacrosse walls	14.86% 11	81.08% 60	4.05% 3	74
Basketball courts	9.09% 7	87.01% 67	3.90% 3	77
Multipurpose athletic fields	8.86% 7	84.81% 67	6.33% 5	79
Hockey rinks	6.25% 5	91.25% 73	2.50% 2	80
Lacrosse fields	6.49% 5	89.61% 69	3.90% 3	77
Golf courses	4.94% 4	81.48% 66	13.58% 11	81
Soccer fields	3.80% 3	89.87% 71	6.33% 5	79
Baseball/softball fields	2.53% 2	92.41% 73	5.06% 4	79
Football fields	1.28% 1	93.59% 73	5.13% 4	78
				1984

Q15 Are there existing open space and recreation facilities that should be prioritized for improvement? Please list:

Answered: 42 Skipped: 60

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Stiles + Hart need more work to make the trail safe, esp. heading off to the left from the parking lot. Trail is too narrow and unsafe if wet, snowy, or icy.	2/20/2026 12:13 PM
2	Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Finish stiles & hart aswell as old Plymouth street	2/18/2026 4:55 PM
3	Lake Nippenicket Land at the state farm. The Nip.j hi	2/16/2026 8:32 PM
4	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Stiles and Hart needs to be completed asap. All parklands (Carver, Iron Works, Titicut, Tuckerwood) need more town resources allocated to upkeep, maintenance of parking areas, invasive species removal, signage.	2/16/2026 4:54 PM
5	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands Any conservation land should be too priority	2/16/2026 3:15 PM
6	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands There needs to be more funding and employees for maintaining our open spaces. My understanding is that one town employee maintains all and volunteers also assist.	2/16/2026 12:47 PM
7	Tuckerwoods	2/16/2026 7:11 AM
8	Senior Center has been outgrown. Not enough space for all the exercise classes & educal programs that want to be offered.	2/15/2026 7:17 PM
9	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands All town parks need better signage and parking	2/15/2026 5:50 PM
10	Lake Nippenicket Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Summer Street Mobile Station all	2/15/2026 3:51 PM
11	Lake Nippenicket Walking trails along or near The Nip	2/15/2026 10:04 AM
12	Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Continue improvement of trails Stiles & Hart and Improve Tuckerwood	2/15/2026 9:50 AM
13	Carver pond, trail bridge to circle pond	2/15/2026 9:00 AM
14	Summer Street Mobile Station Vacant lot near BSU - old gas station	2/15/2026 8:15 AM
15	Connecting the Bay Curcuit Trail - Bridging the Bridgewaters and widening sidewalks / trail areas for those who use alternative mobilities - bicycle/ wheelchairs- motorized wheelchairs (Main Street - downtown)	2/12/2026 10:28 AM
16	Create walking trails where there already exist parks/fields. Would likely not cost more (land purchase) just small costs to clear and mark pathways.	2/11/2026 12:14 PM
17	Summer Street Mobile Station The former Mobile station at the top of Summer Street needs to be completed. It is an eyesore.	2/8/2026 1:05 PM
18	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands I would like to see all existing parks ,reservations and preserves with signs and well established trails as needed. Some in the area are well established while others not as well.	2/6/2026 3:31 PM
19	Jenny Leonard Playground	2/6/2026 3:27 PM
20	Lake Nippenicket Preserve Bridgewater's most important open recreational space - Lake Nippenicket	2/5/2026 12:22 PM
21	Jenny Park	2/5/2026 7:59 AM
22	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands Legion Field is a beautiful area, but has gotten a little worse for wear over the past several years. It could use some investment in seeding and trash	2/5/2026 6:36 AM

	collection/pickup.	
23	Better promotion of all that currently exist!	2/4/2026 10:05 PM
24	Marathon Park	2/4/2026 7:31 PM
25	Maintain & Improve Existing Parklands Upgrade existing parklands, trails, use wayfinding signs through the downtown to include circular routes that people might enjoy during 20 minute lunch breaks, improve the egress access to the downtown parklands to blend in with BSU landscaping design, consider user fees for out-of-towners, use a contribution blank form in tax, water bills to garner extra funds for infrastructure improvement. Provide standard training for volunteer stewards and for parkland / trail maintainers. promote what the town has better; aim for a parkland / trail in each precinct walkable from the local neighborhood.	2/4/2026 2:49 PM
26	Unknown	2/4/2026 2:02 PM
27	Playground across from the VFW	2/3/2026 3:29 PM
28	What happened to Biddy basketball for high-school boys? Why only now for younger boys? The teens need more opportunities for team sports other than the varsity and jv leagues. It keeps them busy and fit.	2/3/2026 12:16 PM
29	Lake Nippenicket Area around Lake Nippenicket	2/3/2026 9:29 AM
30	Playground next to Police station has poison ivy all along the fences and side walks and need to be extracted and better maintained, better maintained needed. Hasiotis property off of Curve and Summer street, to be obtained for open space as opposed to more housing. No more 40B housing development which we don't have the water supply to support.	2/3/2026 9:14 AM
31	Information on Existing Resources Our park lands need better signage for trails, trailhead & parking areas. We also need to improve the multiple canoe launches that used to be around town like adjacent to the water dept building on high street	2/3/2026 8:01 AM
32	Information on Existing Resources I'd need more information and education to answer this	2/3/2026 7:30 AM
33	Establish Community Center We need places for Bridgewater to gather. Would love to see whatever gets built over by roche and the center of town have plenty of trees near them	2/3/2026 7:12 AM
34	Lake Nippenicket Town land on Lakeside road, at new Pleasant st Fire station, develop picnic area at old beach at the Nip, improved Stanley millwork park with West Bridgewater war memorial park as a gold standard example	2/3/2026 6:51 AM
35	No	2/3/2026 12:28 AM
36	Stiles & Hart Conservation Area Styles and hart	2/2/2026 9:19 PM
37	Lake Nippenicket Titicut and around the nip.	2/2/2026 8:56 PM
38	Make playgrounds more accessible	2/2/2026 8:35 PM
39	Playground at Legion Field on Cottage St, swings were removed recently so it's just a slide.	2/2/2026 8:23 PM
40	Summer Street Mobile Station Yes - the damn vacant Mobil station on Summer St. Get it done!!!	2/2/2026 7:20 PM
41	Lake Nippenicket ACEC area around Lake Nippenicket	2/2/2026 5:32 PM
42	Establish Community Center Open space/parks and community centers in the downtown district. Create another reason for people to be on foot downtown. Public parking improvement is required.	2/2/2026 10:04 AM

Q16 What areas of Bridgewater do you think could be enhanced by additional open space or recreation facilities?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 71

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Bridgewater, West Bridgewater & East Bridgewater need to work together to establish greenways between our towns.	2/18/2026 4:55 PM
2	Lake Nippenicket Around lakes, ponds, rivers	2/18/2026 10:19 AM
3	Lake Nippenicket The Nip.	2/16/2026 8:32 PM
4	The area around Precint 2	2/16/2026 3:15 PM
5	Lake Nippenicket The shoreline of Lake Nippenicket on Route 104 could be enhanced as open space if the majority of the shoreline was not owned by a developer who wants to add a restaurant to the site. A vacant home on the shoreline next to the boat ramp could be removed and the space used for picnics and passive recreation. The boat ramp could connect to the site via a wood bridge over the stream. The Town needs to stop any plans for development of the Lake Nippenicket shoreline owned by the developer now.	2/16/2026 12:47 PM
6	Tuckerwood Conservation Area Tuckerwoods	2/16/2026 7:11 AM
7	Bike trails	2/15/2026 5:50 PM
8	all	2/15/2026 3:51 PM
9	Lake Nippenicket Walking trails and other open spaces to enjoy the views and nature at The Nip	2/15/2026 10:04 AM
10	Tuckerwood Conservation Area Sidewalk extension along High St to connect Tuckerwood to Stiles & Hart	2/15/2026 9:50 AM
11	End of Auburn St	2/15/2026 8:15 AM
12	Accessibility in the downtown and clearing the river for kayaking at the Landing	2/12/2026 10:28 AM
13	Behind the new fire station, there should be hiking/biking trails that connect to the incoming Frederick Douglas Trail. Check WHERE that Trail will be with Chairwoman Kitty Doherty.	2/8/2026 1:05 PM
14	Murray Need Farm needs a place to park vehicles to access the property	2/6/2026 3:31 PM
15	Don't allow developers to encroach upon wetlands in the Hockomock Swamp	2/5/2026 12:22 PM
16	playground on the east side, maybe rebuilding the play area that used to be off of Cherry Street	2/5/2026 10:34 AM
17	There are very few large, open parcels left in Bridgewater. I think the best approach is aggressively conserving what's left, and refactoring our zoning and subdivision rules to create new open space going forward. Every subdivision should have an open space requirement, and every lot should have a buffer of conservation space around the perimeter.	2/5/2026 6:36 AM
18	there are current town-owned properties that are not in the highest and best use. Better communication, standardize the definitions between parks and parklands,	2/4/2026 2:49 PM
19	Everywhere for open space	2/4/2026 2:02 PM
20	A Bridgewater recreation center would be the dream	2/4/2026 9:12 AM
21	Lake Nippenicket Lake Nippenicket	2/3/2026 9:29 AM
22	Bridgewater Preserve can add canoe access and perhaps more open space.	2/3/2026 9:14 AM
23	The entire town!	2/3/2026 8:01 AM

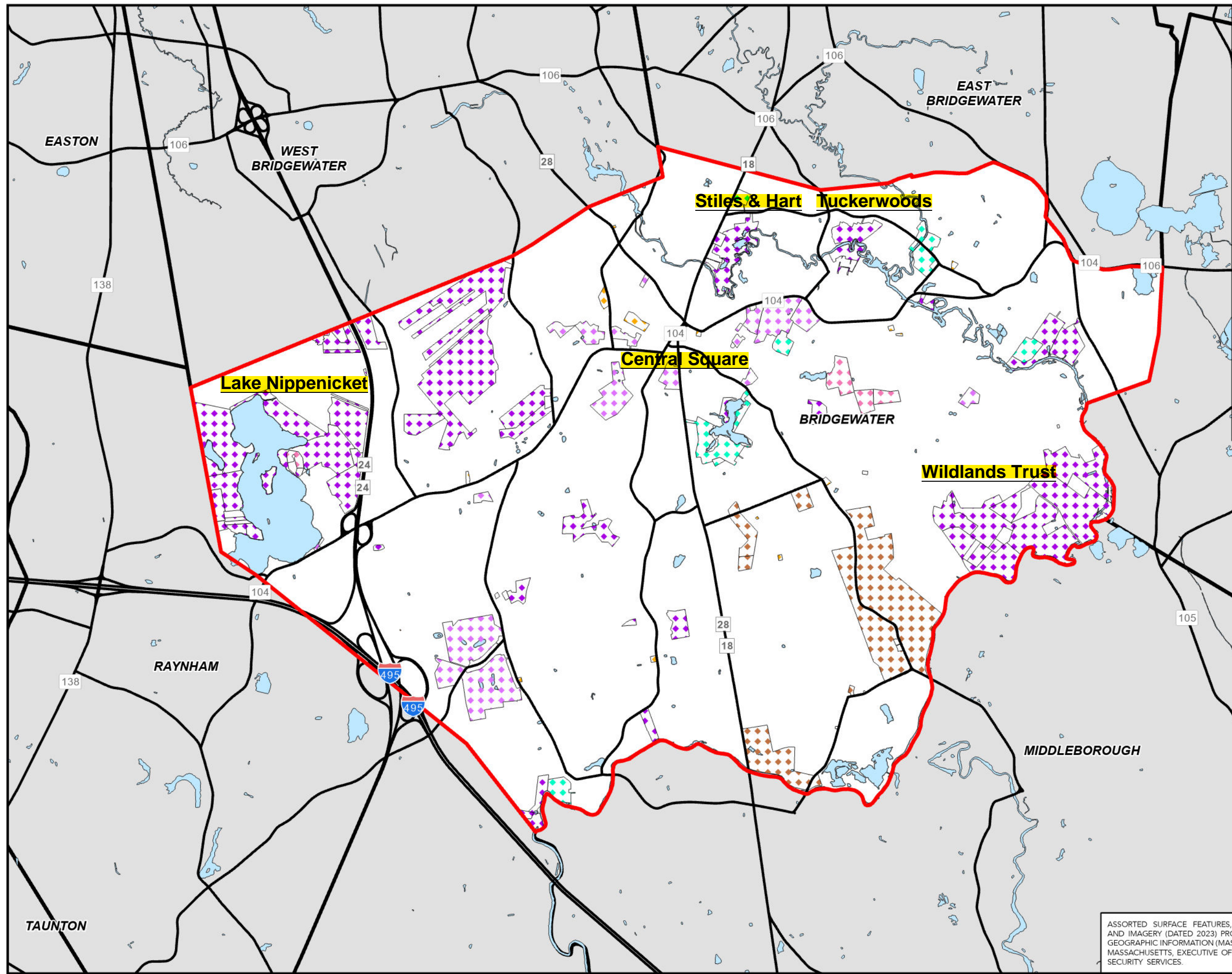
24	Around the state prison land.	2/3/2026 7:30 AM
25	Better upkeep signage, promotion	2/3/2026 7:12 AM
26	West side of town to preserve farm land, more connecting trails to improve length of walking trails, signage on Lakeside road to indicate where town owns land so it can be used without straying on private land	2/3/2026 6:51 AM
27	Precinct 1	2/2/2026 8:56 PM
28	Cherry st	2/2/2026 8:35 PM
29	Area in the aquifer protection overlay districts	2/2/2026 7:20 PM
30	Lake Nippenicket ACEC area around Lake Nippenicket	2/2/2026 5:32 PM
31	Downtown district	2/2/2026 10:04 AM

Q17 Please provide any additional comments or suggestions that you think may be helpful in preparing the OSRP.

Answered: 20 Skipped: 82

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Better maintained sidewalks, add more sidewalks especially busy streets	2/18/2026 10:19 AM
2	Prioritize bike enhancements.	2/16/2026 8:32 PM
3	Thank you!	2/16/2026 3:15 PM
4	The Town does not have any programs that bring people to these sites (with the exception of events such as the fishing derby that is run by residents) so most people don't know where they are. Bridgewater should reach out to groups such as the Taunton River Watershed Alliance and others to try to align activities and get residents engaged in their open space areas.	2/16/2026 12:47 PM
5	Because most of the current outdoor recreational/conservation areas wooded and remote, they can feel unsafe for an individual when there's no other people around. Also, the trails can have trip hazards because they are more of a natural facility. An open public space with lighting and actual paved/gravel (or at least flat) walking paths, picnic/sitting/open space would be a welcomed option.	2/16/2026 7:11 AM
6	More sidewalks so people can explore neighborhoods safely and interact with other residents	2/15/2026 9:50 AM
7	Nearly all athletic and open space recreation is geared to age <12. Misguided police action to remove skate park; nothing for teenagers. And nothing for adults and especially older residents.	2/11/2026 12:14 PM
8	It would be helpful to have a few picnic tables (metal) at every public space, to encourage enjoyment of the "great outdoors".	2/8/2026 1:05 PM
9	Further restrict hunting in key recreational areas like Lake Nippenicket and other public spaces so these spaces can be enjoyed safely by town residents.	2/5/2026 12:22 PM
10	If the schools are to continue half days regularly we need to direct students to areas that are appropriate for them to hang out instead of the Roche Brothers plaza where they are a menace.	2/5/2026 8:04 AM
11	Our budget will continue to be tight in the years ahead. I would suggest a focus on conservation and preservation for now. For active facilities, let's focus on maintaining what we have instead of building new.	2/5/2026 6:36 AM
12	listen to the people; these public lands belong to the community. Provide in balance; for all people, young, old, hearing / visually impaired, make connections with a blue-green trail network that will enhance the economy, support local agriculture, protect our forests and fisheries.	2/4/2026 2:49 PM
13	No solar farms on open space as the radiation on land contaminates property ,is harmful to wildlife, humans, and water supply. Does not contribute to energy needs under many weather conditions thereby not being a sufficient source of energy needs of residents.	2/3/2026 9:14 AM
14	No solar panel fields. No more 40B housing developments, (limited water supply, further contamination to water supply).	2/3/2026 9:02 AM
15	There is NO Town Meeting. We have. Town Council government. One of your questions about funding states it incorrectly	2/3/2026 7:30 AM
16	We currently leave town for walking trails of any length. Hanson, Pembroke, Halifax. Prefer trails that don't cross large fields or grassy areas as high risk for ticks	2/3/2026 6:51 AM
17	Surrounding towns have amazing summer rec programs for school aged kids. Bridgewater is severely lacking in this space.	2/2/2026 8:00 PM

18	Get the park done at Mobil station on Summer St!!!!'	2/2/2026 7:20 PM
19	Town should do a better job of protecting the ACEC area around Lake Nippenicket. If continued development is granted there, the Town should extract favorable terms and conditions on required improvements to the infrastructure of the Town.	2/2/2026 5:32 PM
20	Prioritize the downtown district - create parking and park areas to draw more people - for residential development, require open space, playground's, dog parks, etc. Senior village open space requirement is on the right track with recent amendments	2/2/2026 10:04 AM



Legend

- Town of Bridgewater
- Open Water
- Town Land
- Surrounding Towns
- Land
- MassDOT Major Roads

Open Space by Ownership

- Conservation
- Recreation
- Recreation and Conservation
- Agriculture
- Habitat
- Historical/Cultural
- Scenic
- Water Supply
- Underwater
- Flood Control
- Other
- Unknown

PREPARED FOR:
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
 66 CENTRAL SQUARE
 BRIDGEWATER, MA 02324

PREPARED BY:
BEALS AND THOMAS
 BEALS AND THOMAS, INC.
 144 Turnpike Road
 Southborough, Massachusetts 01772
 T 508.366.0560 | www.bealsandthomas.com

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PROJECT:
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN
 BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

SCALE: 1" = 4,000' DATE: MARCH 12, 2026



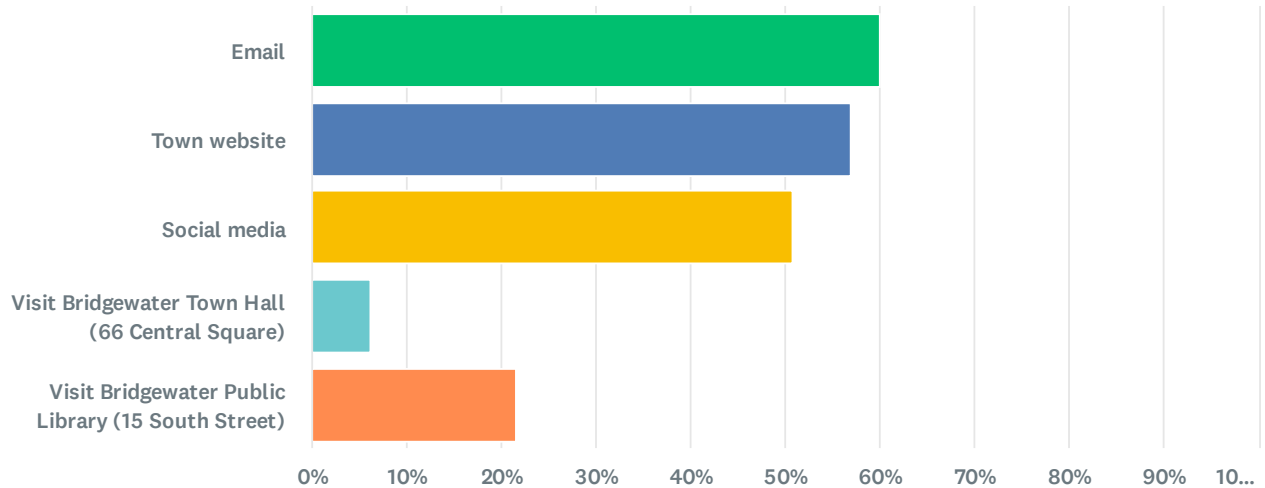
OPEN SPACE

ASSORTED SURFACE FEATURES, REGULATORY LIMIT LINES AND IMAGERY (DATED 2023) PROVIDED BY THE BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (MASSGIS), COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY SERVICES.

B+T JOB NO. 3648.00
 B+T PLAN NO. 364800P001A -008
FIGURE 8

Q18 If you would like more information about these resources, how would you like to receive that information?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 37



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Email	60.00%	39
● Town website	56.92%	37
● Social media	50.77%	33
● Visit Bridgewater Town Hall (66 Central Square)	6.15%	4
● Visit Bridgewater Public Library (15 South Street)	21.54%	14
Total		127

Appendix B
Public Forum Presentations

Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

Lake Nippenicket; photo credit Jeremy Gillespie



Public Forum April 16, 2026
Presented by: Beals and Thomas, Inc.



Guiding Principles for Today's Forum

- Be present!
- Assume good intentions and be mindful of others
- Be open to different perspectives
- Make space/take space
- You don't need any expertise to be an active participant
- No question is silly or bad! Ask and we will respond to the best of our ability



- For over 40 years, Beals and Thomas, Inc. (B+T) has provided professional services that support the development and conservation of land and water resources throughout New England, with a focus in Massachusetts
- Thoughtful planning and active stewardship play a vital role in protecting and maintaining a community's open spaces, plants and animal habitats, neighborhood parks, and outdoor recreation facilities
- B+T has prepared OSRP's for other communities and is well suited to provide these services to Bridgewater



What Is Open Space?



Undeveloped land that provides recreational opportunities for citizens while preserving scenic views & supporting wildlife habitat



Conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, green buffers along roadways



Can be owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation or recreation, or has conservation or recreation potential.

What Is Recreation Land?

Passive Recreation

- Outdoor activities that occur in a natural setting with minimal disturbance of natural/cultural resources
 - Walking, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding, nature study



Active Recreation

- Outdoor activities that occur in parks, athletic fields or similar areas which require significant alteration of the natural landscape
 - Playgrounds, sports facilities, athletic fields



Why Write an Open Space and Recreation Plan?



- Maintain eligibility for state grant programs to fund projects identified therein
- Protect Bridgewater's open space and recreation resources to enhance their benefits
- Manage growth and development in a way that preserves and protects the environment
 - Prevent dramatic alterations
 - Enhance the attractiveness of the community
 - Encourage compatible growth in the future

Content of OSRP

Follows format of 2025 Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook

- Plan Summary and Introduction
 - Community Setting
- Environmental Inventory & Analysis
- Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest
 - Analysis of Needs
 - 10-year action Plan
 - Public Comments

Bridgewater's Open Space History

- Formerly part of "Old Bridgewater" the first inland settlement in Massachusetts, established in 1656 by Myles Standish
- Bridgewater grew through agriculture and manufacturing
- One of the Town's oldest open spaces is Bridgewater common, which was initially laid out in 1822
- Many public and semi-public reserves established in early 20th century
 - Stile & Hart Conservation Area
 - Tuckerwood Conservation Area
 - Wildlands Trust
 - Ironworks Park
- Bridgewater has maintained an OSRP for over 25 years



2017 Plan Goals and Objectives

- Balance passive and active recreational needs
- Prioritize connectivity through town-wide and regionally linked trails and parks
- Improve public awareness of open space and recreation resources
- Preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands
- Protect and preserve the natural environment



Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Process

Public Outreach

- Elicit input from residents through OSRP survey and public forums
- Email and social media campaigns, signage in public locations, etc. to promote engagement

Draft OSRP

- Conduct extensive research
- Utilize input from residents
- Coordinate with CED
- Update and draft text of plan

Approval and Implementation

- Review and approval by the Division of Conservation Services
- Implementation of Action Plans

Process is anticipated to take approximately 6 months from engagement of B+T through DCS approval and finally implementation

Potential Funding Sources: DCS Grant Programs

Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity

Grant program for municipal conservation commissions for the acquisition of land for conservation purposes

Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities

Grant program for municipalities to acquire parkland, develop new parks or renovate existing parks

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Federal grant program for municipalities for the acquisition of conservation land and/or parkland, development of new parks, renovation of existing parks, or development of trails

Landscape Partnership

Grant program for the acquisition of property interests in large, unique, unfragmented conservation and working landscapes, in single or multiple parcels, by 2+ entities working in cooperation

Drinking Water Supply Protection

Grant program for municipalities for acquisition of land in existing DEP approved drinking water supply protection areas, or land in estimated protection areas for identified and planned future water supply wells and reservoirs

Examples of Active Projects

- PARC Grant Program: Summer Street Park
- MassTrails Grant: Old State Farm Trail
- EEA Technical Assistance Grant: paid for this update!



Update on
Bridgewater's ...

OLD STATE FARM TRAIL

May 2025

The new OSF hiking trail will:

- have two, 10-car trailhead parking areas on Summer Street
- include 8 stream bridges and 1200' of raised boardwalk
- provide pristine natural areas for Outdoor Classrooms and nature study
- provide a QR code StoryMap website housing the information library
- provide a hiking experience along meadows and the Wild & Scenic Taunton River for the sight-impaired
- be located adjacent to the public DF & W Summer Street Canoe Launch which is also under ADA renovations

NRTB is excited to announce...

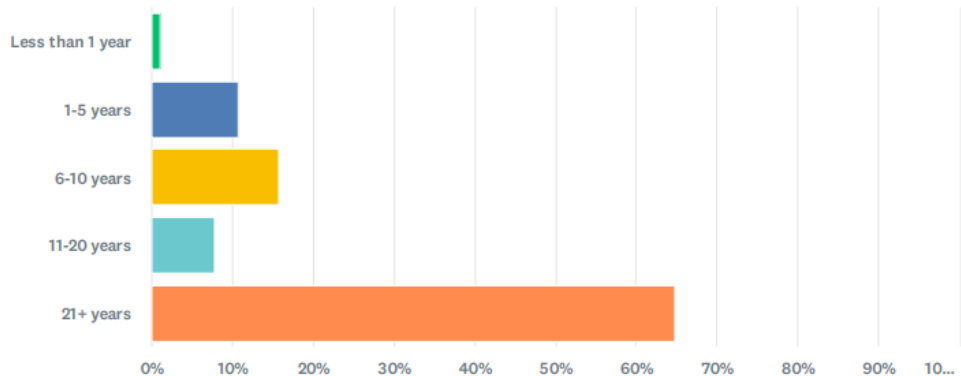
the construction of the two Trailheads for the Old State Farm Trail should be completed this spring!

The nonprofit Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater (NRTB), partnering with the Town of Bridgewater, the State Legislature, Department of Corrections, DCR MassTrails, the National Park Foundation, National Park Service Taunton River Stewardship Council, Bridgewater State University Geography Department, Northern Woodlands, AMC / Bay Circuit Trail, Sheehan Family Charities, Duxburrow Estates, Scout Troop 31, Bridgewater Lions Club and others will construct a hiking trail on a town – owned permanent trail easement through woodlands and along the Wild & Scenic Taunton River on Department of Corrections land.

Results of Public Input Survey

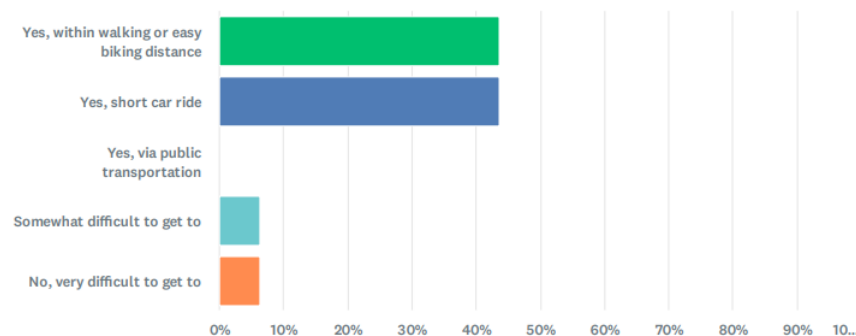
Q3 How many years have you lived in Bridgewater?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



Q5 Are open space and recreation areas in Bridgewater accessible from your neighborhood?

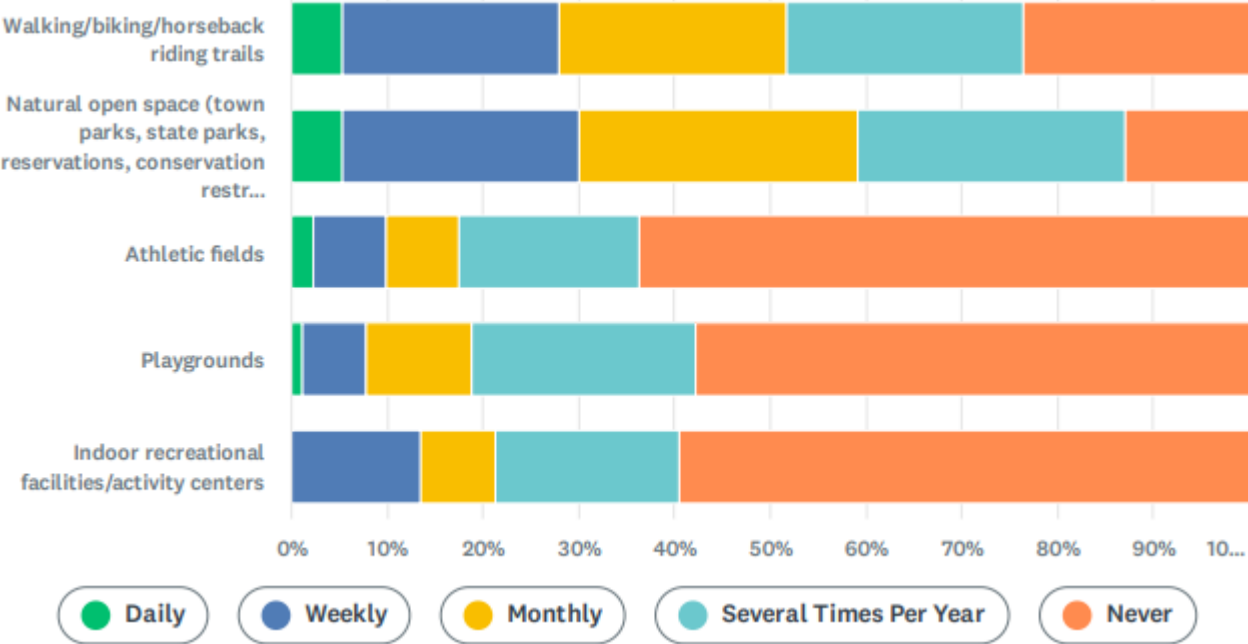
Answered: 94 Skipped: 8



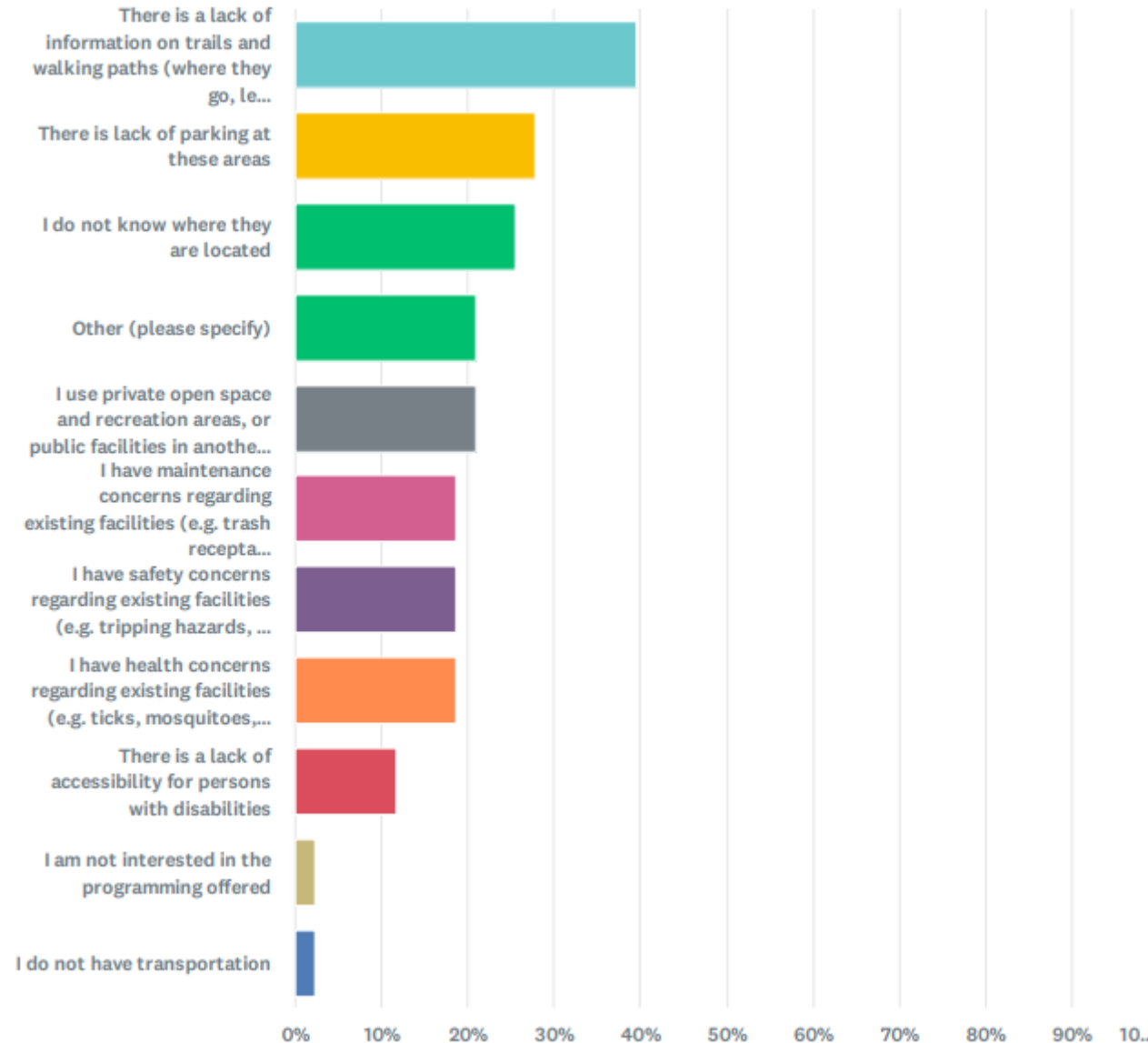
- 102 responses from residents in all precincts
- Nearly all respondents were age 35 or older with only about 15% aged 18-35
- 65% of respondents have lived in Bridgewater for over 21 years
- 88% of respondents have open space and recreation areas within walking distance or a short car ride from where they live

Use Trends: Natural open space, including walking or biking trails/paths were identified as the most frequently used resources in Town

Wildlands Trust - Great River Preserve Town River Landing
 Parks & Playgrounds Stiles Hart
 Carver Pond
 Stanley Iron Works Park Walking & Hiking Trails
 Lake Nippenicket Camp Titicut Reservation
 Athletic Fields (Softball, Baseball, Soccer)



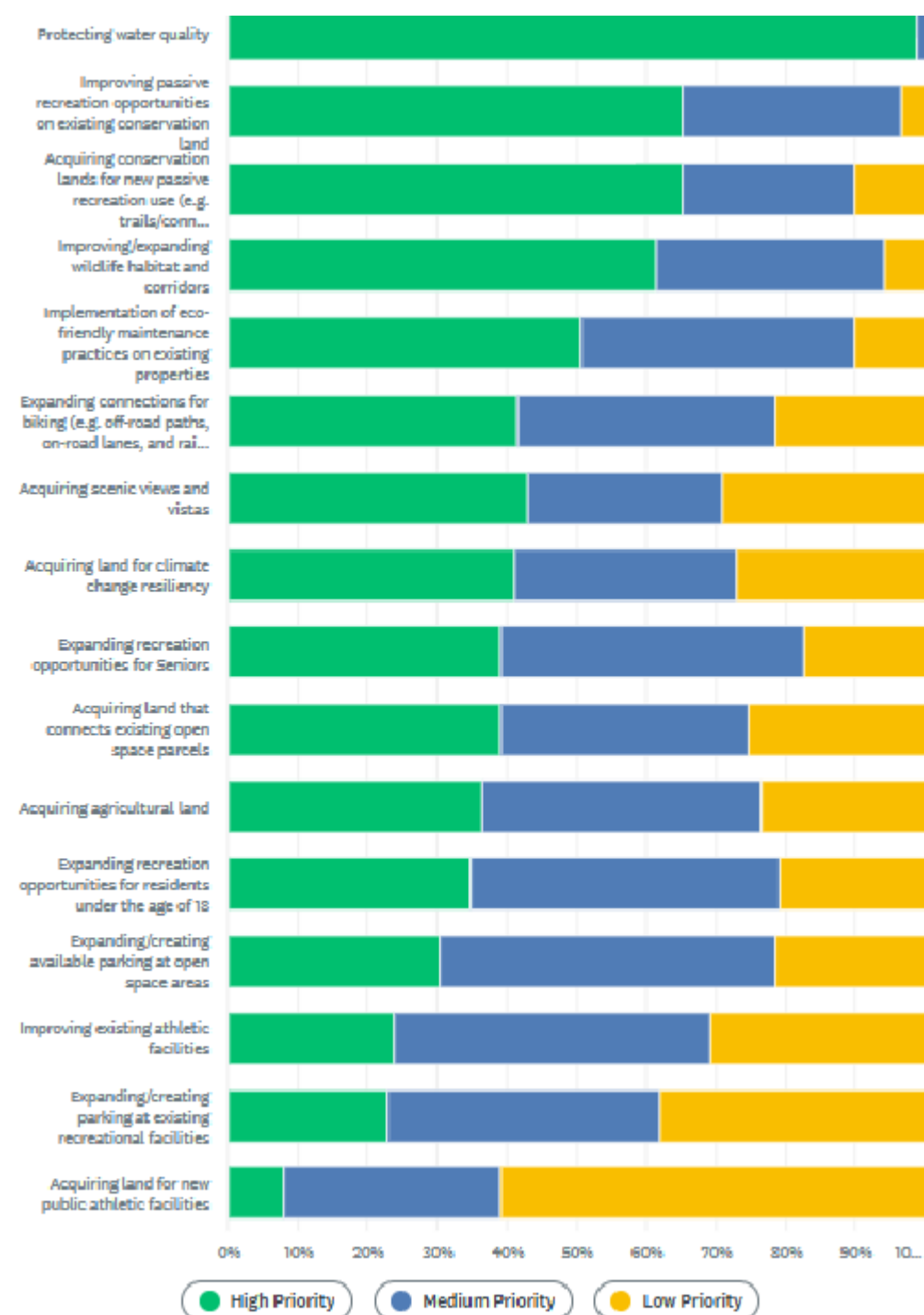
Use Trends: Lack of information and lack of parking were main reasons for not using open space and recreation areas



Priorities for Open Space Expenditures

Top priorities include:

- Protect water quality
- Improve passive recreational opportunities on existing land
- Acquire conservation land for new passive recreation opportunities
- Improve/expand habitat and wildlife corridors
- Implement eco-friendly maintenance practices



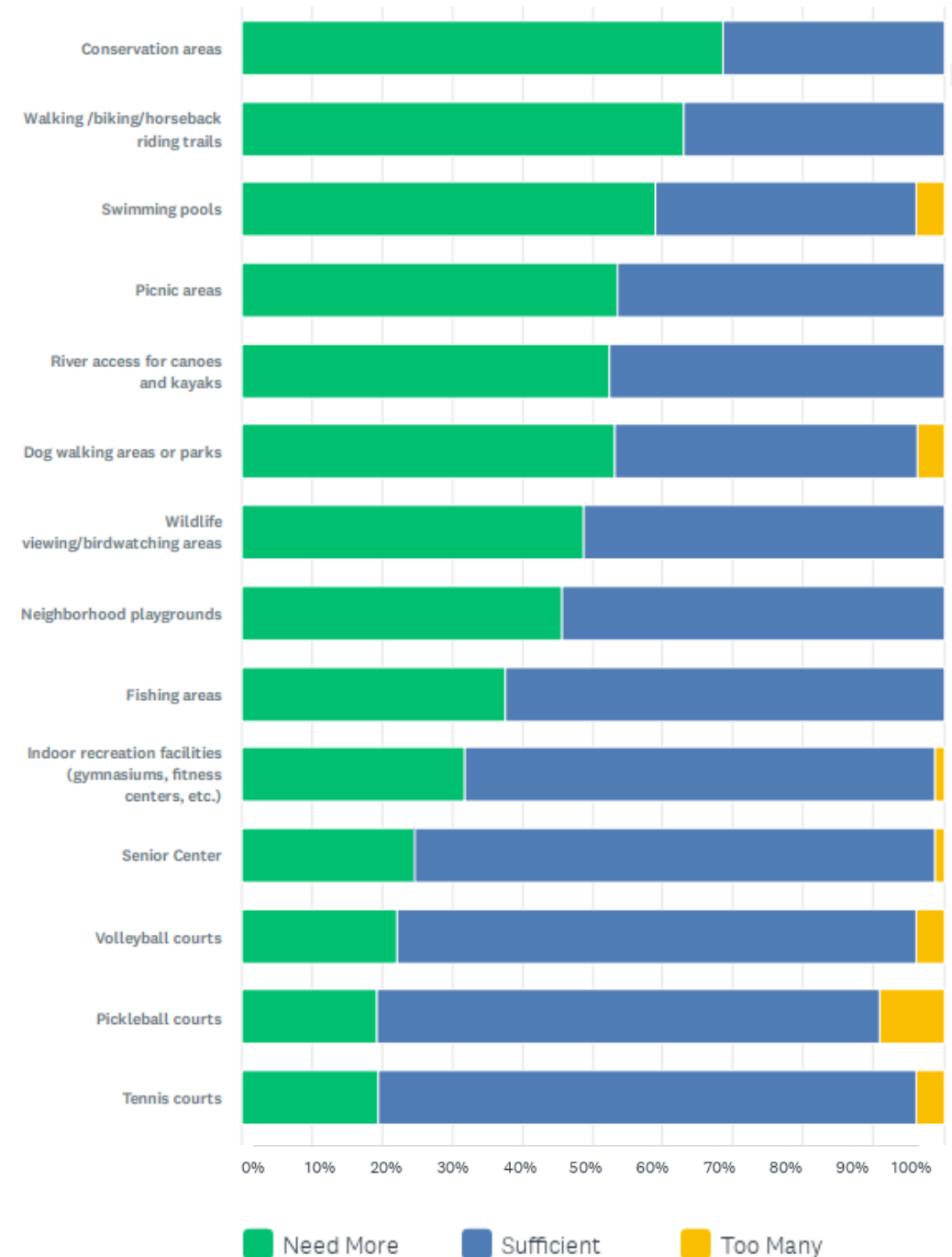
Existing Recreation Opportunities

Respondents are most satisfied with recreational opportunities for adults, although opportunities for teens and seniors could be improved

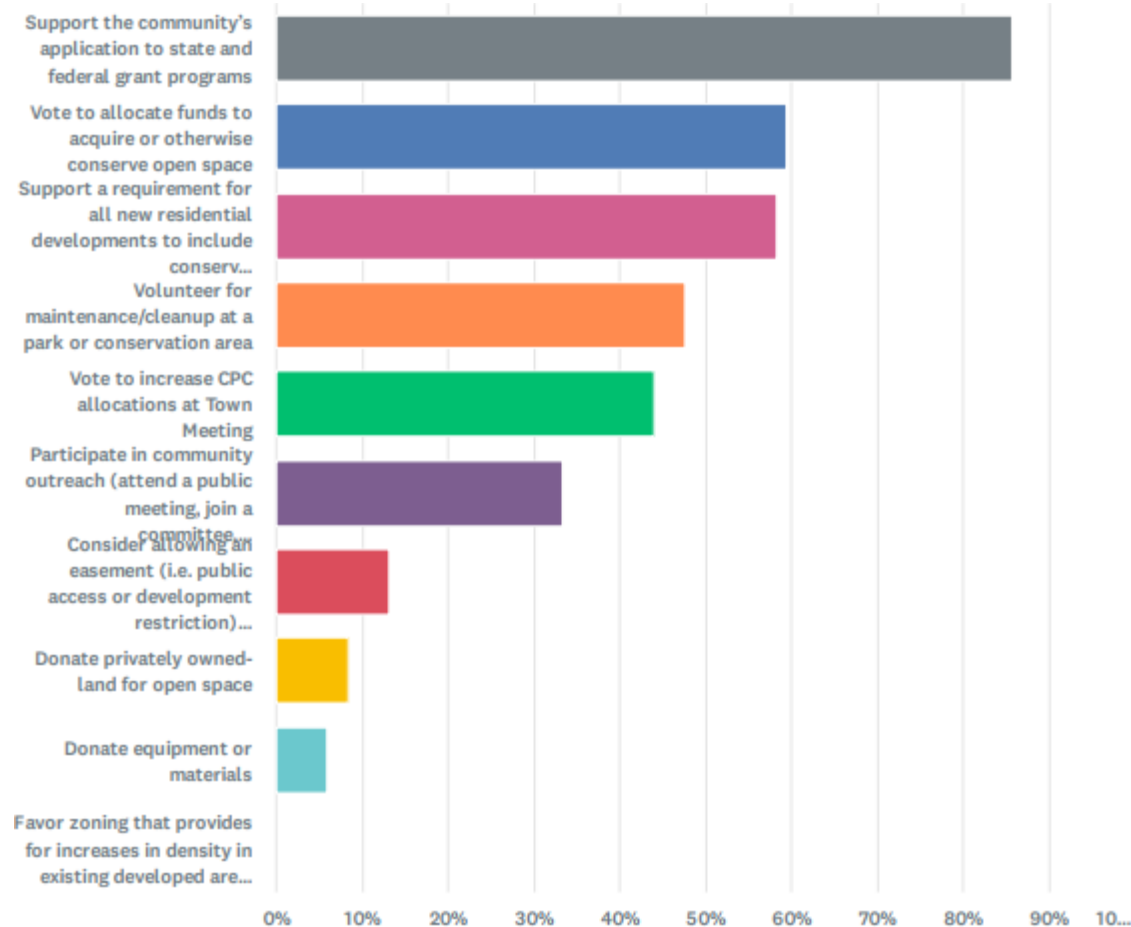


Recreation Needs

- Passive recreation needs include: conservation areas, walking/hiking trails, river access/fishing areas and dog parks
- Active recreation needs include: swimming pools, neighborhood playgrounds, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and a new senior center



Future Opportunities for Involvement



BRIDGEWATER TOWN-WIDE CLEAN UP!
Clean Town. Strong Community. Happy Earth.

SATURDAY APRIL 18TH | STARTING AT 10:00 AM

JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS!
 Kick off spring by cleaning up our town. Fresh air. Teamwork. A stronger Bridgewater.

THREE LOCATIONS:

- LAKE NIPPENICKET**
- CARVER'S POND**
- DOWNTOWN**
Meet at Town River Landing

AFTER CLEAN UP: Groups will meet at Town River Landing to drop off trash in a dumpster donated by **MARCHAND ENVIRONMENTAL**

SMALL EFFORTS. BIG IMPACT!

COME OUT. PITCH IN. MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Q&A

- **What open spaces & recreational opportunities do you most value here? What are we lacking? Where are we lacking it?**
- **What do you see as the most critical conservation issues facing us?**
- **What group(s) are underserved by existing resources?**
- **What characteristics of Bridgewater would you like to preserve?**
- **Are there additional goals you want to see addressed?**



Mary Kate Schneeweis,
Senior Environmental
Planning Specialist
mschneeweis@bealsandthomas.com

Jackie Boyer,
Environmental Planning
Specialist
jboyer@bealsandthomas.com



[\(508\) 366-0560](tel:(508)366-0560)

www.bealsandthomas.com

[Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#)



What would you like the OSRP to focus on?

 Hiking Trails //

 Ball Fields


 Playgrounds

 Community Character ()

 Bicycling Opportunities /

 Dog-Friendly Spaces ()

 Water Resources


 Benches/Sitting Areas

 Informational Signage /

 Pedestrian Accessibility

 Child/Family-Friendly Spaces ()

 Town Acquisition of Private Land

 Wildlife/Habitat /

 Parking/Access]

Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan Update



Public Forum May 14, 2026
Presented by: Beals and Thomas, Inc.



Guiding Principles for Today's Forum

- Be present!
- Assume good intentions and be mindful of others
- Be open to different perspectives
- Make space/take space
- You don't need any expertise to be an active participant
- No question is silly or bad! Ask and we will respond to the best of our ability

About Us



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- Thoughtful planning and active stewardship play a vital role in protecting and maintaining a community's open spaces, plants and animal habitats, neighborhood parks, and outdoor recreation facilities
- B+T has prepared OSRP's for other communities and is well suited to provide these services to Bridgewater



Investing in People. Delivering for Clients.

What Is Open Space?



Undeveloped land that provides recreational opportunities for citizens while preserving scenic views & supporting wildlife habitat



Conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, green buffers along roadways



Can be owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation or recreation, or has conservation or recreation potential.



What Is Recreation Land?

Passive Recreation

- Outdoor activities that occur in a natural setting with minimal disturbance of natural/cultural resources
 - Walking, hiking, bird watching, horseback riding, nature study



Active Recreation

- Outdoor activities that occur in parks, athletic fields or similar areas which require significant alteration of the natural landscape
 - Playgrounds, sports facilities, athletic fields

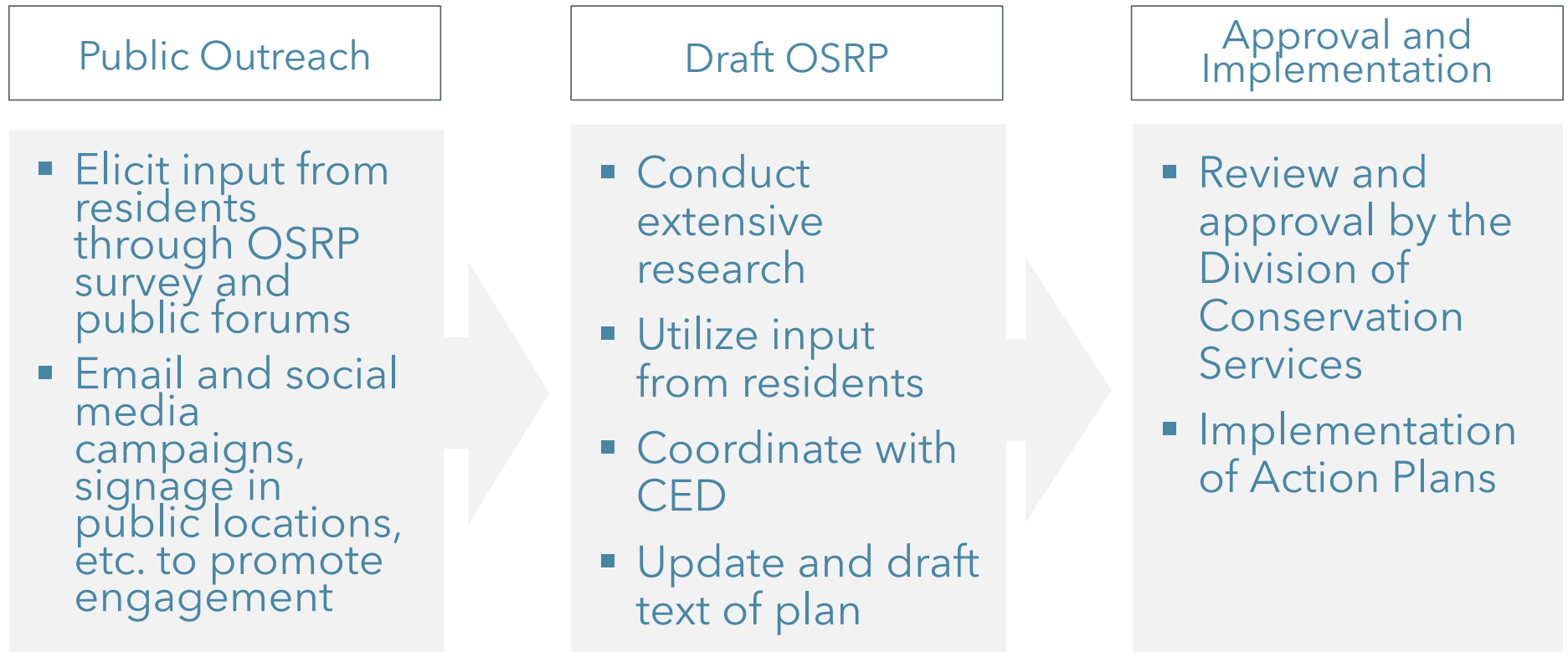


Why Write an Open Space and Recreation Plan?



- Maintain eligibility for state grant programs to fund projects identified therein
- Protect Bridgewater's open space and recreation resources to enhance their benefits
- Manage growth and development in a way that preserves and protects the environment
 - Prevent dramatic alterations
 - Enhance the attractiveness of the community
 - Encourage compatible growth in the future

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Process

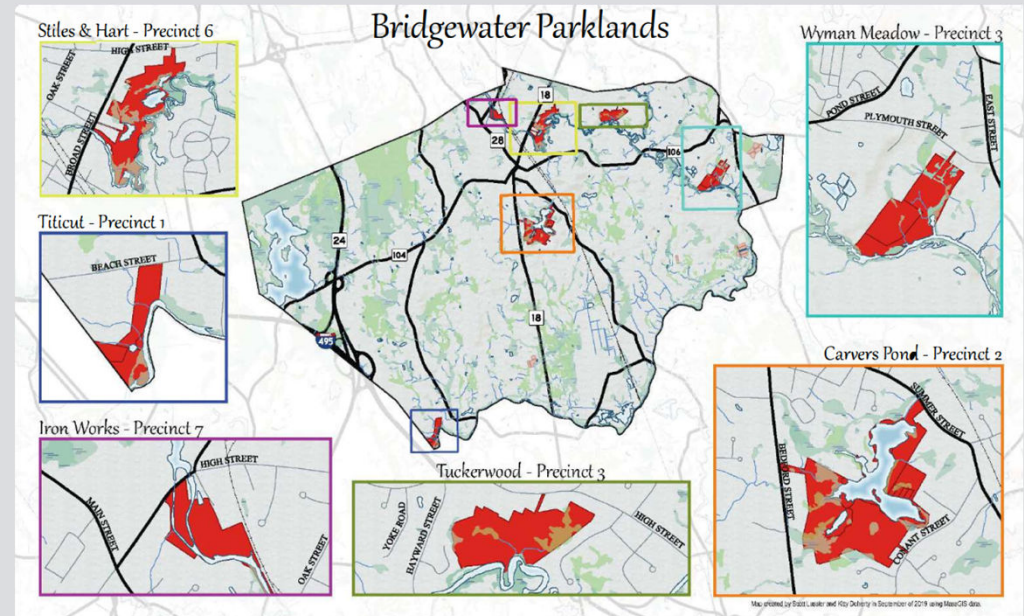


Process is anticipated to take approximately 6 months from engagement of B+T through DCS approval and finally implementation

Content of OSRP

Follows format of 2025 Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook

- Plan Summary and Introduction
- Community Setting
- Environmental Inventory & Analysis
- Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest
- Analysis of Needs
- 10-year Action Plan
- Public Comments



Draft OSRP

OSRP is currently in draft form



Includes information from:

- ❖ Previous OSRPs
- ❖ 2017 Plan Goals and Objectives
- ❖ Various Town plans and initiatives
- ❖ Results of environmental and historical research
 - ❖ Initial input from Town staff
 - ❖ Public input received to date

Action Plan

- Consist of 8 Goals the Town would like to achieve through this OSRP
- Under each goal is a list of actionable items that can be implemented to assist in achieving each goal
- Developed based on:
 - Outstanding goals/action items from previous OSRP
 - Other Town Plans
 - Feedback from Town
 - Results of Public Outreach



Goal 1: Explore acquisition and enhancement of active and passive recreation opportunities

- Key Action Items:
 - Evaluate opportunities to expand existing recreational facilities including Olde Scotland Links Golf Course and pickleball courts
 - Provide or enhance parking availability at existing open space and recreation areas and identify potential funding sources. Specifically, explore space for peak-period overflow parking at Legion Field.
 - Establish priority areas for accessibility improvement at recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds and walking/hiking trails based on ADA Transition Plan and identify funding opportunities for implementation.



Goal 2: Create and preserve town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connect neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities

■ Key Action Items:

- Identify and prioritize gaps among existing bicycle/pedestrian path, and hiking trail systems in town and with the regional network.
- Extend existing walking trails, where appropriate, to connect to other nearby trails.
- Develop a master trail system design with publicly accessible way-finding (physical and electronic).



Goal 3: Protect the quantity and quality of drinking water and other water resources



■ Key Action Items:

- Evaluate improvements to water quality conditions of rivers and other surface water bodies in Bridgewater
- Continue to enforce local regulations for wetlands, riverfront protection and aquifer protection
- Acquire additional land for conservation around water resources including Lake Nippenicket, Carver's Pond, Town River, Matfield River and Taunton River.

Goal 4: Increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities

- Key Action Items:
 - Develop consistent naming schemes for open space and conservation area signage and wayfinding resources, with acknowledgement of historical use or ownership of the property, if applicable
 - Develop a uniform branding and wayfinding signage plan for the Town's recreation facilities and conservation areas, in coordination with existing local and regional signage systems as appropriate
 - Prepare a schedule to implement a phased signage plan.



Goal 5: Preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands

- Key Action Items:
 - Prioritize use of CPA funding of projects that encourage the protection of Bridgewater's agricultural legacy and preserve opportunities for local food production.
 - Identify and pursue state funding to support agricultural activities.
 - Communicate with and encourage landowners to protect agricultural lands through CR and APR



Goal 6: Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities

■ Key Action Items:

- Communicate with and incentivize landowners to protect parcels of habitat significance from development impact.
- Acquire additional land for conservation and passive recreation with focus on parcels contiguous with existing open space or conservation areas to improve connectivity and protect wildlife corridors.
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to require all new residential developments incorporate conservation areas or open space components.



Goal 7: Improve recreation opportunities for people of varying abilities and ages, including both teenage residents and seniors

■ Key Action Items:

- Conduct outreach to teenagers and their parents to more specifically identify recreation programming needs
- Establish community sports programs and summer programs for all ages.
- Coordinate with Senior Center to identify opportunities for outdoor activities and programs such as land for bird watching, a community garden, and walkways with shaded seating and wind protection.



Goal 8: Improve maintenance activities and consider opportunities to incorporate ecologically-friendly practices

- Key Action Items:
 - Conduct continued community outreach for coordinated volunteer efforts to assist with maintenance needs at open space and recreation areas.
 - Evaluate funding opportunities to establish or maintain full-time maintenance staff including Town funds or grant opportunities.
 - Revitalize citizen trail stewardship group to assist with volunteer and coordination efforts. Organize, train, support, and recognize the efforts of volunteer park stewards to help maintain and protect public parks and open space.

Town Clean Up Day



Q&A



What additional goals or action items would you like to see carried in the Action Plan?

Please also provide any questions you may have in the chat under the Q&A function!

Additional Public Input

Draft OSRP can be viewed on the Town Website & [Towns Open Space & Recreation Plan Webpage](#)



Public comment period will be open from today (May 14, 2026) through May 31, 2026

Please email all comments to Shane O'Brien, Town Planner at sobrien@bridgewaterma.org



Mary Kate Schneeweis,
Senior Environmental
Planning Specialist
mschneeweis@bealsandthomas.com

Jackie Boyer,
Environmental Planning
Specialist
jboyer@bealsandthomas.com



[\(508\) 366-0560](tel:(508)366-0560)

www.bealsandthomas.com

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Appendix C

Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreational Interest

Town-owned Open Space and Recreation Land

Property Name	Map-Lot	Size (Acres)	Owner/Manager	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Accessible	Recreation Potential	Zoning	Protection Status	Grants Received
Aldrich Rd.	9-27	5.30	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Auburn St. Cemetery Auburn St.	77-17	0.76	Town	Open Space/Historical Resource	Good	Yes	No	None	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Bedford St. Woods Bedford St.	120-1	11	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	SBD	Low	N/A
Bob White Ln./Old Forest St. Bob White Ln.	99-49 99-50 99-51 99-53 99-55 99-65	9.9	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Red Wing Dr.	98-87	0.55	Town	Drainage/Wetland	Fair	No	No	None	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Bridgewater Middle School Center St.	33-47 33-48	21	Bridgewater-Raynham School District	Football, tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields	Good	Yes, no fee		Moderate, sports fields	RA/B	Limited	N/A
Broad St.	4-1	2.67	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	R/D	Low	N/A
Carver's Pond watershed Winter St./Conant St.	49-27 49-44 62-28 63-2 63-18 63-19 63-20 63-21	70.1	Conservation Commission/Water & Sewer Dept./Audubon	Passive Recreation, water supply protection	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Boating, hiking	R/C, R/D, B/B	Perpetuity Moderate as water supply protection	N/A
Music Alley	34-188	0.1	Town and private	Outdoor music	Good	Yes, no fee	Yes	Maximized	CBD-S	High	CPA
Chaffee Farm Vernon St.	109-8 109-12 109-13	60	Town/ Golf Commission/ Highway Dept./	Town compost/Open Space	Fair	NA	No	High but time sensitive, passive recreation	RA/B	High	N/A
Cobblestone Lane Subdivision Vernon St.	98-3	21.5	Conservation Commission/Town	Open Space/Conservation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Limited, passive recreation	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Crescent St. Fields Marathon Park Crescent St.	47-115	49.9	Recreation Commission/Conservation Commission	Conservation/Softball, playground, picnicking, wetland, open space, hiking	Very good	Yes, no fee	Yes	Almost maximized Potential to add walking trails	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Cross St.	110-16	2.3	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Dundee Dr.	98-7 98-31	20.1	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
East St. Sand Pit Tony Terrace	54-7	18	Highway Dept.	Sand pit for Highway Dept.	Fair	No	No	Moderate, passive recreation	RA/B	Moderate	N/A
Emerald Lane Cross St.	117- and 119- multiple	19.1	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Great Hill Water Tank Great Hill Dr.	35-31 35-32 35-33	10.67	Water Department	Water tank	Fair	Yes	No	Low, passive recreation	R/D	Moderate	N/A
Heather Hills Woods Heather Hill Dr.	123-2	6.15	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Iron Works Park High St.	10-40 11-3	16	Conservation Commission/ Highway Dept.	Conservation, Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Possible carry-in boat launch	I/B, R/D	Perpetuity	N/A
Jennie Leonard Park Cherry St.	52-11	10.4	Town of Bridgewater/ no designated maintenance entity	Playground (removed)	Poor	Yes, no fee	No	Moderate, add walking trails, improve upkeep	RA/B	High	N/A
Lake Nippenicket Overlook Dr., Bridle Rd., Lakeside Dr. Laurel St.	69-, 70-, 82-, 83- multiple 50-5	17.78 12.2	Conservation Commission Town	Passive Recreation/ Conservation/ Recreation Open Space	Fair Fair	Yes, no fee Yes, no fee	No No	Water sports development Low, passive recreation	RA/B R/C	Low/Perpetuity Low	N/A N/A
Legion Field/Williams Middle School Rte. 18 at Cottage St.	48-86	23.3	Recreation Dept.	Basketball courts, baseball fields, skate park	Fair to very good	Yes, no fee	Limited	Maximized	R/D	High at Legion Field, moderate at school	N/A
Matfield River Lands High St.	14-11 14-12 14-17 14-18	34	Water Department	Protection of water supplies	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Good potential for passive recreation, esp. on parcel 14-17	RA/B/C	Moderate, as active water supply	N/A
Mitchell Elementary School South St.	62-19	22.17	Bridgewater-Raynham School District	Playgrounds, baseball, basketball, pickleball courts adjacent to Senior Center	Excellent	Yes, no fee	Yes	High, sports fields	R/C	Limited	N/A
New Bridgewater Raynham High School 415 Center St.	32-8 33-1 33-5 33-6 33-9 33-114 33-123 33-124	56.94	Bridgewater-Raynham School District	Football, baseball, softball, soccer, track	Excellent	Yes, no fee	Yes	High, sports fields	RA/B	Limited	N/A
Old Forge Rd. Old Forge Rd.	20-25	0.06	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Olde Scotland Links Golf Course Vernon St.	108-1 108-2 108-7 116-7	210	Town, managed by Indigo Sports	Golf	Good	Yes, user fee	Yes	High for winter sports dev't	RA/B	High	N/A
Plymouth St.	25-81	2.6	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Red Mill Road Cluster Land Jaclyn Way	124-68	16.6	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Scotland Field Vernon St.	72-33	6.7	Recreation Dept.	Playground, soccer, softball, lacrosse, archery	Good	Yes, no fee		Maximized	RA/B	High	N/A
Sprague Hill Water Tank Bedford St.	4-5	7.4	Water Department	Water tank	Good	No	No	Low, passive recreation	R/D	High	N/A
Starr Park Starr Rd.	47-128	10.5	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes	No	High, passive recreation	RA/B	Low	N/A
Stiles & Hart Conservation Area High St./Rte. 18	12-44, 11-117, 11-156, 11-161	74.5	Conservation Commission	Conservation/Passive Recreation	Good	Yes, no fee	No	Added canoe landing, foot bridge, new parking	R/D	Perpetuity	Self Help, CPA
Sturtevant's Pond Green St./South St.	132-2	3.33	Conservation Commission	Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Moderate, enhanced passive recreation	RA/B	Perpetuity (but Town owns only 1/3 of shore)	N/A
Titicut Conservation Parkland Beach St.	131-8 131-10 131-11	27.8	Conservation Commission	Campground/Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Improve camp-ground facilities	RA/B	Perpetuity	Self Help
Titicut Water Land Vernon St.	131-7	20.2	Water Department	Acquired for well, not in use	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High, if included with adjacent Titicut	RA/B	Moderate	N/A
Toole Memorial Park ("Toole Legacy") Pleasant St - Fire Station	72-1	9.2	Town	Open space	Fair	Yes	No	Low, passive recreation	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Town River Landing Spring St	21-167	2.2	Selectmen/Park Stewards	Boat launch (part of former Highway Dept yard), Events	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High, improved boat launch, picnic	CBD-R	Moderate	N/A
Tuckerwood Conservation Area High St.	14-21	33	Conservation Commission	Conservation/Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Add carry-in boat launch	R/C	Perpetuity	Self Help
Winter St. Canton St.	76-7 76-8 76-56	4	Town	Open Space	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Low, passive recreation	R/C	Low	N/A
Wyman Meadow Plymouth St.	39-3 39-4	55	Conservation Commission/Water Dept.	Conservation/Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	Possible carry-in boat launch	RA/B	Perpetuity	Self Help
Summer St Gas Station Project	34-218	0.44	Town	Passive Recreation	Poor	Yes, no fee	No	Once project is complete, high	CBD-R	High	PARC and CPA

State-owned Open Space and Recreation Land

Property Name	Map-Lot	Size (Acres)	Owner/Manager	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Accessible	Recreation Potential	Zoning	Protection Status	Grants Received
Bridgewater State University Plymouth St., Grove St.	22-, 34-, 35-, 50- multiple	211.1	BSU	University recreational uses	Good	Yes	Yes	Low	RA/B	Moderate	N/A
Bridgewater State Forest - Water St.	50-85	58.5	Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	Passive Recreation/Conservation	Fair	Yes	No	Moderate	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Old State Farm Trail /Bridgewater Correctional Complex State Farm Rd., Conant St.	90-999 multiple	1485.72	Dept. of Corrections	Open Space/ Agriculture/Trails	Fair	Yes	No	Moderate	RA/B	Limited (high on 425 Ag acres, low on remainder)	CPA
Flagg St Soccer Fields (on Dept. of Correction land)	90-999B	14.6	Dept. of Correction/ Bridgewater Youth Sc	Eight soccer fields	Very good	Yes, no fee	No	Maximized	RA/B	Moderate	N/A
Former Rainbow's End Playground & North Hay Fields (on Dept. of Correction land)	90-999B	49.6	Dept. of Correction	Playground (removed)	Very Poor	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Limited	N/A
Hockomock Wildlife Management Area Harvest Lane, Brown Ave.	17,18,2 multiple	9,31,44, 58-	415.6 MA Division of Fish and Wildlife	Wildlife Protection/Stormwater Storage/Passive Recreation/Conservation	Fair	Yes	No	Moderate	RA/B/AI/	Perpetuity	N/A
Keith Homestead Lakeside Drive	70-61 57-18 57-19 57-20 57-21 57-22 57-23	8.53	MA Division of Fish and Wildlife	Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	CPA
Lake Nippenickett Rte. 104	30,56,57,69, 71, 82- multiple	252.8	MA Division of Fish and Wildlife	Conservation/Wildlife habitat/ Boating/Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Lake Nippenickett Peninsula	57/75, 76, 77, 83; 70/2	88	MA Division of Fish and Wildlife	Conservation/ Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Skeeter Mill Pond Water St.	49,50/multiple	34.37	State Division of Capital AssetManagemer	Conservation/Passive Recreation	Fair	Yes	No	Low	R/C	Moderate (temporary)	N/A

Non-profit Open Space and Recreation Land

Property Name	Map-Lot	Size (Acres)	Owner/Manager	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Accessible	Recreation Potential	Zoning	Protection Status	Grants Received
North Fork Preserve Plymouth St., East St.	39-7	41.2	Wildlands Trust of SE MA (WTSEM)	Conservation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Taunton River WCR/ Great River Preserve	80-10 80-12 80-29 92-7 93-5 93-6	125	Wildlands Trust of SE MA (WTSEM)	Conservation	Fair	Yes, no fee	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Wildlands Trust of SE MA Conservation Restriction South St.	118-4	12.7	Private owner Wildlands Trust of SE MA (WTSEM)	Conservation	Fair	No	No	No	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A
Wildlands Trust of SE MA - Perkins Preserve	67-3, 52-14	85	Wildlands Trust of SE MA (WTSEM)	Conservation	Fair	In progress	No	High	RA/B	Perpetuity	N/A

Private Land held in Chapter 61, 61A, 61B

Property Name	Map-Lot	Size (Acres)	Owner/Manager	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	ADA Accessible	Recreation Potential	Zoning	Protection Status	Grants Received
Broad St.	4-10	3.59	ADGA Realty	Forested	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	R/D	61	N/A
Main St.	10-73 10-74 10-170	17.9	Flaherty Realty Trust	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	R/DI/B	61A	N/A
0 Plymouth St	40-7 40-8	8.689	Morse Brothers Inc	Nec Rel Land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	
North St.	46-126	37	Murray	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	CPA
139 Worcester St	48-25	13.7	Wood Jane W Trustee	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B, B	61B	
0 Dantono Dr	50-40	3.15	Dantono David & Barbara	Mixed Comm/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	
6 Dantono Dr	50-92	7.58	Dantono David & Barbara	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	
Carriage House Dr.	51-51	0.06	Turner	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
Pleasant St. & Forest St.	60-8 60-18	2.1	Hanson Family Realty Trust	Truck crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
600 Pleasant St	60-10	2.119	Chaffee Carol & Hanson David E	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0 RES	61A	
Fox Hill Dr. & Willow Ridge Dr.	61-47 61-98 61-160 62-13	26.2	Wood Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
566 South St	62-20	14.555	Lefebber William E & Carol A	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0 RES	61B	
Nelson Dr.	63-87	1.1	Nelson	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	R/C	61A	N/A
Laurel St.	64-18	18	Turner	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
Sharon Ct.	65-66 65-81 65-82	5.5	Turner	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
Pleasant St.	72-48	21.5	Andruk Realty Trust	Hunting	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
Pleasant St.	73-22 73-108	14.7	Hanson Family Realty	Non-productive land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
Ledgewood Dr.	73-23	11.3	Wood Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
South St & Bedford St.	74-10 74-39	60	South Street Realty Trust	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B R/C	61A	N/A
0 South St	74-102	0.582	Panasuk Alyce Trustee	Nec Rel Land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		61A	
South St & Bedford St.	75-25 75-26 75-28	31.2	South Street Realty Trust	Productive woodlands	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	R/CB/B	61A	N/A
Grange Ct.	74-84	1.04	Wood Family Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
963 Auburn St	80-11	16.9	Lehtola Priscilla S &	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0 RES	61B	
Brookside Dr.	86-2 86-60 86-61 86-72	10.1	Wood Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
885 Bedford St.	88-10	10.88	Wood Realty Trust	Nature Study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
Bedford St.	88-14	14.6	Pad Corporation	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SBD	61B	N/A
Forest St.	99-14	10	Forest St. Realty Trust	Non-productive land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A
Bedford St.	101-4	20.48	Bedford Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SBD	61B	N/A
Conant St.	102-4 102-6	11.2	Curtin	Forested land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SBD	61	N/A
0 Bedford St	112-2	34.71	Kravitz Stanley A	Hiking	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		61B	
76 Lyman Pl	119-21	25.6	Theberge Eric A & Melissa	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0 RES	61B	
Bedford St.	120-6 120-7 120-28	20	RJ Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SBD	61B	N/A
Cook St.	122-2	4.9	Stiles & Hart Brick Co.	Forested land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61	N/A
Summer St.	122-10	10.1	Riverside Realty Trust	Nature study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61B	N/A
1300 Vernon St	124-6	27.966	Buginga Jr Manuel T & Jennifer L	Forestry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		61	
0 Bedford St	127-4	4.673	Sullivan Robert Trustee	Nature Study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		61B	
0 Bedford St	127-8	2.537	Sullivan Robert A Trustee	Nature Study	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		61B	
Titicut St.	128-7	0.21	Stiles & Hart Brick Co.	Forested land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61	N/A
Cook St.	129-2	23	Stiles & Hart Brick Co.	Forested land	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61	N/A
221 Beech St	131-2	6.173	Larrimore Zachary & Lindsey	Mixed Res/Ch L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0 RES	61B	
98-B Green St.	132-5	24.43	98B Green Street Realty Trust	Field crops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	RA/B	61A	N/A

Conservation Restrictions

CRs Reference	Parcel ID	Type	Project Name	Received Date	Restriction Acres	CR Street	Grantor Name	Secretary Signed	CR Recording Registry	CR Recording date	CR recording Book Page	Grantee
11532				5/5/1974			Albert Schofield					Town
11533	23-117	Regular		4/15/1993	21.7	0 Pheasant Lane	Trustees of Bismark Realty Trust	5/3/1994	Plymouth	5/5/1994	12861, Page 220	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
11534	118-4	Regular		8/26/1999	12.5	1776 South Street	Phyllis A. Packard	5/23/2000	Plymouth	5/25/2000	18551, Page 238	Wildlands Trust
11535	87-39	Regular		9/20/2001	45.44	0 Harvest Lane	Chaves and Cincotta Inc.	4/11/2002	Plymouth	5/1/2002	22012, Page 236	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
11536	24-48	Regular		6/20/2005	5	1121 Plymouth Street	Wolski Family Trust	7/28/2005	Plymouth	10/20/2005	31565, Page 302	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
11537		Regular		3/28/2006	88.6	0 Lakeside Drive	Bridgewater Lakeside LLC/Campanelli	12/27/2006	Plymouth	12/21/2007	LCD #631378	Wildlands Trust
11538				8/19/2010	11.5		Town (Lake Nippenicket)					Wildlands Trust
11539	46-126	CPA & Grant (LAND)	Murray/Needs Farm	4/15/2014	36	0 North Street	Peter M. Murray	12/9/2014	Plymouth	12/19/2014	45070, Page 145	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
11540	46-15	Grant (LAND)	Murray/Needs Farm	9/9/2014	24	90 North Street	John S. and Elizabeth J. Needs	12/9/2014	Plymouth	12/19/2014	45070, Page 111	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
16401	111-40	Permit	Deer Hollow	8/18/2017	20.18	Colonial Drive	Deer Hollow Charitable Wildlife Trust, Inc.	12/20/2018	Plymouth	1/17/2019	50730, Page 324	Conservation Commission, Bridgewater
16959	12-44	CPA & Grant (LAND)	Stiles and Hart Conservation Area Addition CR	2/12/2021	5	Broad Street	Town of Bridgewater	6/24/2021	Plymouth	6/30/2021	55243, Page 211	Wildlands Trust, Inc.
TBD	24-51	Regular	Murphy's Landing (tentative)		2.37	Plymouth St	464 Crescent Street LLC		Plymouth			Wildlands Trust, Inc.
TBD	60-10, 60-18	MVP	Hanson Farm (tentative)		56.6							
					269.92							
					58.97							

Appendix D
2017 OSRP Action Plan

Goals and Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2017- 2019	Mid-term 2020- 2025	Long-term 2026- 2028	Potential Primary Funding
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Goal 1. To provide and enhance a balance of both active and passive recreation opportunities that meet the sports-oriented and nature-oriented needs of Bridgewater's age demographics.

Maintain and improve facilities at Olde Scotland Links Golf Course, such as:

- Small clubhouse expansion including coat room and table/chair storage.
- Paved parking lot.
- Continuous cart paths.
- Composting toilets instead of portable toilets on one or two holes.
- Irrigation Improvements.

PRC, PRD

√

GCEF

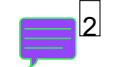


Expand community recreation use of the club house at Olde Scotland Links Golf Course. Explore the possibility of using the club house as a large, modern venue as a means to increase revenue to the town.

PRD, PRC

√

GCEF



Explore seasonal or year-round opportunity for cross country skiing, snow shoe, Frisbee golf and public skating at large tracks of town parklands, such as the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course, Carvers Pond, etc.

PRD, PRC

√

GCEF



Explore the possibility of creating a multipurpose play field for lacrosse and football with appropriate irrigation and parking.

PRC, PRD,
BRRSD

√

Town
BRRSD



Provide esthetically consistent furnishings, improved pond side trails and additional interpretive signage at Carver's Pond, Iron Works, and Stiles & Hart Parklands.

OSC, DPW

√

Town
CPA



Create ADA accessible trails/parking at Carver's Pond or Iron Works Park.

OSC, DPW

√

Town
CPA



Improve signage at the Town River Landing parcel and develop designated parking and passive recreation access.

OSC, DPW

√

Town
Volunteers



Allocate additional financial resources to support overall upkeep of the passive and active recreation facilities.

TC, TM

√

Town



Establish a point person from the PRD/PRC to address passive recreation needs.

TC, TM

√

Town



Build capacity and coordinate volunteer organizations to assist town staff in monitoring and maintaining town conservation lands. Use existing stewards in a more guided way.

OSC, PRD,
TM

√

N/A



Summary of comments: Ten Year Action Plan Town of Bridgewater with Comments.pdf

Page:1

 Number: 1 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:38:24

Golf course managed by Troon since 2022. Clubhouse has a Barrett's restaurant and parking lot is paved.

 Number: 2 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-03-12 09:58:47

Clubhouse has been used for events with Metro South, however, it is through the management company.

 Number: 3 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:41:50

Not sure where recreation is with this but I don't believe any progress has been made.

 Number: 4 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:54:09

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:53:55

CPC took in a application in 2025 for multi-use fields at Bridgewater Middle School.

 Number: 5 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:54:30

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:54:53

Improvements made at Stiles and Hart for trails completed in 2024-2025

 Number: 6 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:56:18

Edge of the pond may offer ADA accessibility, the other trails have small transitions and a few rocks that make it less wheelchair accessible

 Number: 7 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 09:57:09

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 10:57:11

Town River landing work has progressed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lyhbk4SoLgY>

 Number: 8 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 10:58:08











Grants have been utilized to acquire, however, upkeep has been a work in progress.

 Number: 9 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 10:58:41

Town has a park steward, but not necessarily a point person

 Number: 10 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 10:59:05


Work in progress, worked with Wildlands Trust on projects.

Goals and Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2017-2019	Mid-term 2020-2025	Long-term 2026-2028	Potential Primary Funding	
Update basketball courts, T-ball fields, and playground at Legion Field.	PRC, PRD	√			Town	 1
Improve lighting on Hayes and Lazzaro Major League fields. Repair the basketball court and softball dugouts, replace benches and bleachers and repave the parking lot at Scotland Field.	PRC, PRD	√			Town CPA	 2
Explore space and funding opportunities for additional peak-period parking at Legion Field.	PRC, PRD		√		Town	 3
Rebuild and add irrigation to Babe Ruth or Lane Field at Legion Field.	PRC, PRD		√		Town	
Identify the opportunities to introduce a small practice field, tennis courts, or playgrounds in the former skate park at Legion Field.	PRC, PRD		√		Town CPA	
Dismantle existing degraded park facilities at Jennie Leonard Park.	DPW		√		Town	 4
Consider mitigation of Duxburrow Estates 40B project at Curve Street to include playground to serve east side of town.	ZBA, PRC, PRD		√		Town Private developer	 5
Remove or relocate the small playground at Scotland Field which has safety concerns and is in disrepair.	PRD, DPW,		√		Town CPA	 6
Implement seating, interpretive signage, viewpoints, trail improvement, and a footbridge to the Stiles & Hart Conservation Area across from the Town River Landing parcel.	OSC, HC, PRD, PRC, DPW, NGC		√		Town CPA NGC	 7
Examine and improve visibility of exiting entrances, signage, and parking availability at conservation areas, particularly Iron Works Park, Stiles & Hart, and Tuckerwood Conservation Area.	OSC, PRD, DPW		√		Town CPA	 8
Improve existing canoe/kayak launching areas and explore the possibility of adding new launch points at appropriate intervals on waterfront conservation sites.	OSC, PRD, DPW			√	Town CPA	 9
Ensure small craft access and fisheries improvements to Town River and Lake Nippenicket by appropriate removal/cleaning of the Town River and Taunton River	ConCom, TFC		√		Town	
Provide esthetically consistent and vandal resistant furnishings at Town recreation facilities.	PRC, PRD			√	Town	
Explore a public-private partnership for proper/potential recreation use of the Jennie	PRC, PRD			√	Town Private developer	 10

 Number: 1 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:52:34

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:52:43

Updates to each

 Number: 2 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:52:17

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/legion-field-lights-project>

 Number: 3 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:52:53


Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:53:01

I do not believe any progress

 Number: 4 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:54:43

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:54:56

Dismantled by developer and now vacant

 Number: 5 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:58:18

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 12:58:30

I do not believe that there was any mitigation

 Number: 6 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:00:42

Has been removed

 Number: 7 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:01:30

Completed through grant with Stiles and Hart.

 Number: 8 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:01:47




Stiles and Hart has been done, not sure for others


 Number: 9 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:02:34

Has been discussed, there are potential launch points with work done at High St Dam, Perkins Foundry project and Stiles and hart, and Summer St parking lots

 Number: 10 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:03:06

Work in progress, trying to transfer from Developer to Town

Goals and Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2017-2019	Mid-term 2020-2025	Long-term 2026-2028	Potential Primary Funding
Leonard Park site with developers of the adjoining and nearby residential areas.					
Provide esthetically consistent and vandal resistant furnishings at all Town conservation areas.	OSC, DPW			√	Town
Goal 2. To create and preserve town-wide, regionally linked trails and parks system that connects neighborhoods with various open space and recreation amenities.					
Extend walking trails, where appropriate, at the Crescent Street Field into the wooded area southwest of the field to connect to other nearby trails.	OSC	√			CPA Town GCEF  1
Identify and prioritize gaps among existing bicycle/pedestrian path, hiking, and horse riding trail systems in town and with the regional network. For example:	OSC, PRC, CED,				Town CPA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider connecting hiking trail at Mitchell Elementary School from South St. to Bedford St with long range plan to connect to Carver's Pond via crosswalk on Route 18/28. Consider trail spurs connecting to BSU through the campus to Great Hill (BSU) and Carver's Pond. Explore collaboration with the Bay Circuit Alliance and their partners AMC to improve the Bay Circuit Trail between Iron Works and East Bridgewater's Route 106, along an old rail bed. Some board walks may be needed between Wall St and the rail bed (plus conservation easement). 	OSC, PRC, CED, BSU	√			Town, BSU, CPA
	OSC, PRC, CED				W. Bridgewater CPA, Bridgewater CPA
Pursue the design and implementation of the town-wide bicycle/pedestrian network.	OSC, PRD, PRC, CED, TC			√	Town  2
Develop a master trail system design with publicly accessible way-finding (physical and electronic).	OSC, CED, PRD			√	CPA OCPC  3
Pursue the establishment of the Old State Farm land & water trail head in collaboration with EEOA, DOC, DAR, DF&BA and Wild & Scenic Taunton River Stewardship Council.	OSC, PRD		√		CPA Town GCEF NGOs
Coordinate with private land owners and conservation holders to create trails with access to the Town and Taunton Rivers. For example, explore the possibility of Murphy's Landing (canoe launch	OSC, PRD		√		Citizen donation CPA GCEF

 Number: 1 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:05:14

Do not believe any progress made

 Number: 2 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:16:59

Not complete

 Number: 3 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:16:52

Not complete

Goals and Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2017-2019	Mid-term 2020-2025	Long-term 2026-2028	Potential Primary Funding
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and picnic area via private developer, DF&BA, Taunton River Stewardship Council and the town) at the Route 104 confluence with the Town, Matfield and Taunton Rivers in the Pratt Town section of Town.

Based on actions identified in the 2014 Master Plan, develop a land prioritization plan that identifies high priority vacant municipal properties to be considered for recreation reuse, particularly parcels in underserved neighborhoods and parcels adjacent to existing recreation and conservation areas.	OSC, PRD, CED		√		CPA Town
Create walking trails in the wooded areas at the Jennie Leonard Park site that connect to nearby residential areas.	OSC		√		Town Private developer GCEF
Pursue acquisition, as opportunities rise, of identified high priority parcels.	OSC, CED, ConCom, CPC		√		CPA, Land trusts LAND
Collaborate with West Bridgewater to implement the Nunquatessett Greenway on the Town River and Bay Circuit Trail.	OSC, NGC, NRTB		√		CPA, LAND Volunteers

Goal 3. To increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities.

Develop and maintain an up-to-date parcel-based inventory of Town recreation facilities, conservation areas, trails and paths, potentially using mapping applications.	PRD, CED	√			Town Volunteers
Create a recreation and conservation information page on the Town website.	PRD, TM	√			Town
Make recreation and conservation information available at the Parks and Recreation Department, such as large map displays and brochures.	PRD	√			Town
Develop a uniform branding and wayfinding signage plan for the Town's recreation facilities and conservation areas, in coordination with existing local and regional signage systems as appropriate.	OSC, CED, NGC		√		CPA NGC Town
Prepare a schedule to implement a phased signage plan	OSC, CED, PRC, PRD			√	Town
Restore Old Stone Building at Iron Works Park as a trailhead.	OSC, HC		√		CPA, Private, NGO

Goal 4. To preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands.









 Number: 1 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-03-12 12:37:18

walking trails are located on Open Space Parcel 2 for Oldfield Estates II

 Number: 2 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-03-12 12:36:39

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-03-12 12:36:36


On website

Goals and Actions	Responsible Parties	Short-term 2017-2019	Mid-term 2020-2025	Long-term 2026-2028	Potential Primary Funding
Communicate with and encourage landowners to protect agricultural lands through CR and APR.	OSC, AC, ConCom, CED	√			Citizen participation LAND
Publicize community garden opportunities.	OSC, AC			√	Town  1
Identify and pursue state funding to support agricultural activities.	OSC, AC		√		Town
Collaborate with Department of Correction to promote community usage of existing community garden.	OSC, AC, DOC			√	N/A  2
Goal 5. To protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas that promote local and regional ecological and environmental integrities.					
Update water quality conditions of rivers and other surface water bodies in Bridgewater.	ConCom, DPW, DEP	√			Town
Update the Bridgewater Priority Protection Areas accepted by OCPC in 2013/2014.	OSC, CED	√			Town
Continue to enforce local wetland and riverfront protection regulations.	ConCom, ZBA	√			Town  3
Communicate with and incentivize landowners to protect parcels of significant habitats from development impact.	ConCom, OSC		√		Citizen participation
Develop a Water Resource Management Plan.	ConCom, OSC, DPW			√	Town  4
Use rain gardens and other LID techniques for paved areas adjoining new athletic facilities and open spaces.	PRD, DPW		√		Town  5
Incorporation of LID principles in applicable Town regulations.	TC, TM		√		N/A  6
Continue to enforce the aquifer protection district regulations.	ZBA, PB, CED			√	N/A  7
Encourage new subdivisions to provide subdivision specific water sources (e.g., subdivision wells) and waste water treatment systems.	PB, ZBA		√		N/A  8
Identify impoundments/control structures with the potential to be managed for active flood control and develop a management program.	DPW, TRFC			√	Town

 Number: 1 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:06

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:11

No progress

 Number: 2 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:03

No progress

 Number: 3 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:42

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:49

Continuously enforced

 Number: 4 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:08:34

We have a water systems master plan not so much a water resource management plan

 Number: 5 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:07:13

Rain gardens are rare, but so is large drainage systems around fields and open spaces.

 Number: 6 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:06:39

Updated stormwater standards allow for LID

 Number: 7 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:06:16

Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:06:25

Enforced still

 Number: 8 Author: Shane O'Brien Subject: Sticky Note Date: 2026-01-14 13:06:10

New subdivisions are encourage to look at private wells