

Leicester Open Space & Recreation Plan

February 2015





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

Charles D. Baker
GOVERNOR

Karyn E. Polito
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Matthew A. Beaton
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181

February 25, 2015

RECEIVED

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LEICESTER PLANNING BOARD

Michelle Buck
Planning Board
3 Washburn Square
Leicester, MA 01524-1333

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Buck:

Thank you for submitting Leicester's Open Space and Recreation Plan to this office for review for compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. I am pleased to write that the plan is approved. This final approval will allow Leicester to participate in DCS grant rounds through December 2021.

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

Sincerely,

Melissa Cryan
Grants Manager

Acknowledgements

The Town of Leicester extends their gratitude to the many people who contributed their knowledge, time, and energy to the completion of this Open Space & Recreation Plan.

Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee

Michelle Buck, Town Planner/Director of Inspectional Services

John Marc-Aurele, Conservation Commission

Sharon Nist, Planning Board

Stephen Parretti, Conservation Commission

Joanne Petterson-Bernier, Parks & Recreation Commission

Dianna Provencher, Board of Selectmen

Alternates:

Jason Grimshaw, Planning Board

Debra Friedman, Planning Board

David Wright, Planning Board

Adam Menard, Planning Board

Kathleen Wilson, Planning Board

Others:

Kathy Asquith, Assessors' Office Department Assistant

Dennis Griffin, Tree Warden

Maureen Henderson, Parks & Recreation Commission Clerk

Mike Knox, Superintendent, Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District

Sujatha Mohanakrishnan, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Colin Novick, Greater Worcester Land Trust

Jan Parke, Common Ground Land Trust

Glenda Williamson, Common Ground Land Trust

Thomas Wood, Highway Superintendent

In addition, thanks goes to graduate students from the Conway School, Teodoro Livio Senni and Brandon Tennis, for providing the initial draft of the plan, case studies, and required maps.

A very special thanks goes out to all the Leicester residents that participated in this process by filling out a survey or participating in the public meetings regarding the plan.

Cover: Cover images clip art from Microsoft Office, design by Michelle Buck, Town Planner.

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Section 1: Plan Summary

Leicester, a suburban community with a population of 10,970 (2010 US Census), is located in Central Massachusetts, just west of the City of Worcester. Leicester is bisected by state Routes 56 and 9. Route 9 carries high volumes of traffic to Worcester, the second largest city in Massachusetts.

The people of Leicester express a deep desire to protect open space and natural resources. However, like so many towns across the Commonwealth, a period of shrinking budgets has limited Leicester's capacity to meet even basic needs, such as clean drinking water and fully functional parks. This plan presents a set of strategies for rebuilding this capacity, aimed at restoring not only the capacity to meet basic needs, but ultimately at restoring the community's capacity to realize its vision for the future: simply that Leicester remain a healthy, pleasant place to live, with open spaces, well-maintained recreational areas, healthy forests, clean air and water.

Rather than explore "capacity building" in the abstract, however, this update proposes an action plan designed to directly address priority needs, with dual focus on water quality protection and park revitalization. These are priorities set by the community, but they are selected from several priorities indicated by residents because they were judged to have the best chance of generating sufficient support and interest to ensure a successful outcome. Employing the strategies proposed in this plan will increase Leicester's capacity to undertake further projects.

Key to the success of these strategies is the mutual benefit possible through a network of public and public/private partnerships. As public funding for conservation and recreation is unlikely to return to twentieth-century levels, new sources of funding and support must be cultivated, and new strategies adopted. A water quality initiative designed to serve multiple, overlapping purposes, such as wildlife habitat protection, or passive recreation access, enlists the support of a broad range of user groups, public land trusts, and private citizens. This increases the chance of success by leveraging a broader pool of resources than the town is able to access on its own. The two main proposed initiatives, parks and water protection, themselves overlap, as for example in the provision of opportunities for water-based recreation. In addition, the plan recommends an ongoing open space and recreation planning process.

The seven-year action plan proposed not only assumes but encourages adaptability to changing circumstances, and the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Furthermore, this strategy assumes that the town will not accept partnership agreements that do not meet its goals, or that are inconsistent with community vision. The action plan includes specific tasks and recommendations that, if adopted, may also support the broader set of community goals identified here. The action plan also identifies the agency or board that has agreed to undertake each specific action item, and recommends a timeline for adoption and implementation.

Section 2. Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The Town of Leicester values its forests, ponds, farms, parks, and recreational facilities. The 2014 plan is an update of the previous plan approved in 2007.

The 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) for the Town of Leicester:

- Updates the town's 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Assesses the natural resources within the town and inventories the current open space.
- Establishes goals and recommendations for open space preservation and recreation planning.
- Involves as many residents as possible in the decision-making process.
- Meets the requirements of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEA) for an Open Space and Recreation Plan. Approval is required from the Division of Conservation Services (DCS), and will make Leicester eligible to participate in DCS grant rounds for up to seven years.

Town resources for land-management and land-protection projects are limited, which puts great emphasis on their strategic use. The plan emphasizes efforts to expand and diversify strategies to implement plan goals and objectives. A seven-year action plan establishes specific, actionable steps that can be undertaken to address these priorities.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Leicester's 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan update (OSRP) was developed under the guidance of Michelle Buck, Town Planner, and members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee (OSRPC) with technical assistance and maps provided by graduate students from the Conway School. [The Conway School is a graduate school that focuses on land planning. Their mission is to "explore, develop, practice, and teach design of the land that is ecologically and socially sustainable." (www.csld.edu)] The Conway students also facilitated two community meetings and administered a questionnaire online and in paper format to solicit public input.

To gather information and direction from community members, meetings were held with the Town Planner, the OSRPC, and both elected and volunteer officials. In addition, three community meetings were held, on February 12, 2014, February 26, 2014 and October 7, 2014. As Leicester's Environmental Justice population met the income, but not the language criteria, outreach for this plan update was conducted in English, through flyers posted in a variety of important centers of activity in town and through inserts to the Spencer New Leader, which is distributed to the majority of households in Leicester. Additionally, notice of all public meetings was posted on the main page of the town website. However, there were very few residents at the public meetings. Additional attention to generating public involvement in stewardship of open space and recreation facilities is one priority in the action plan.

A public survey was prepared and administered online, with paper copies distributed at the Town Hall, Town Library, Senior Center, post offices, and Cooper's Hilltop Farm. Notice of the survey was also included as a newspaper insert in the Spencer New Leader, which is delivered to Leicester

households free-of-charge. Paper copies were recorded by Barbara Knox, Department Assistant, Office of Development & Inspectional Services. Responses from 121 residents were recorded, of which eight were paper. Survey results are discussed throughout this plan as they relate to issues and topics presented. A copy of the survey and tabulation of responses are provided in **Appendix A**.

The Conway School students produced an initial draft of the OSRP Update in March 2014. This document provided recommendations on achieving the goals identified by Town officials, OSRPC Committee members, attendees of the community meetings, and the survey results. In addition, the Conway School students, through research, analysis, and an inventory of natural resources, identified several areas of concern and opportunity for consideration by town officials and the public.

Following receipt of the draft OSRP prepared by Conway students, the plan was distributed for review and comment by OSRPC members and put online for general comment. Over the summer and fall of 2014, the Town Planner, Michelle Buck (in consultation with OSRPC members) worked on revisions to the student draft including gathering additional information to meet all Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. A revised draft was made available for public comment in October 2014. An additional public meeting was held on October 7, 2014 to provide an overview of the plan and publicize the revised draft. This meeting was advertised in the *Telegram & Gazette*, as well as posted on the Town's website and throughout Town Hall. The revised plan will also be distributed to other Town departments, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, and made available to the general public. Comments received were incorporated into a final plan submitted to the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs for review.

Section 3: Community Setting

A. Regional Context

Leicester is in Worcester County, bordered by Paxton to the north, Auburn and Worcester to the east, Charlton and Oxford to the south, and Spencer to the west. Leicester encompasses an area of 24.53 square miles, or 15,900 acres, 5% of which (850 acres) is water. Within its boundaries are the headwaters of three major river basins, the Chicopee, the French, and the Blackstone. Many of Leicester's water bodies serve as drinking water reservoirs, mostly for surrounding cities and towns. These water bodies will only become more important as growth in the region continues, and as expected shifts in climate unfold.

*Figure 1:
Regional Context*



Source: MassGIS, Figure prepared by Conway Students

Leicester is currently included in the 2nd Massachusetts Congressional District, the 7th Councilor District, the 1st Worcester and Middlesex State Senatorial District, the 17th Worcester Representative District, and the Worcester Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The town has three distinct villages: Leicester Center, Cherry Valley (on the east side of town, near Worcester), and Rochdale (a crossroads in the southeast, near the Oxford line, that includes Greenville). The village boundaries are legacies of past settlement patterns and have no official standing, but nevertheless provide many residents with a sense of place and identity. Historically a quiet rural community, Leicester saw significant population growth in a period of suburbanization in the second half of the twentieth century (US Census).

Two state highways (Routes 9 and 56) bisect the town, dividing it roughly into quarters. These roads carry considerable amounts of traffic to the Massachusetts Turnpike and to Worcester, the second largest city in New England (2010 US Census) and the major employment center in Central Massachusetts. Worcester has historically looked to Leicester to supply its drinking water, as well as open space and recreational opportunities. Most of Worcester's Kettle Brook water reservoir system,

including the Lynde Brook Reservoir, is in Leicester, along with much of the Worcester Regional Airport property.

Leicester is a member of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), which encompasses the southern two-thirds of Worcester County. CMRPC regularly works on statewide and regional planning initiatives to assist communities in meeting the challenges of future growth. Recent initiative related to land use in Leicester include Central Thirteen Prioritization Project and the Leicester Water Resource Project. The Central Thirteen project, completed in 2012, identified Priority Development Areas and Priority Preservation Areas in each of the communities in the study area. The Central Thirteen Region is comprised of the following communities: Auburn, Boylston, Charlton, Dudley, Holden, Leicester, Oxford, Paxton, Southbridge, Spencer, Sturbridge, Webster, and West Boylston. Leicester Center and a portion of Route 56 south of the Town Center were later designated as Regionally Significant Priority Development Areas. In addition, five areas in Leicester were designated as regionally-significant Priority Preservation Areas: Johnson Farm, Mannville, Ballard Hill, Cooper's Hill Top Farm, and the Mid-State Trail.

Leicester, along with 23 other cities and towns, is part of the part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Corridor, an affiliated area of the National Park Service, was established by Congress in 1986 to tell the story of the American Industrial Revolution, promote the environmental recovery of the Blackstone River, and encourage preservation of historic resources in the Corridor. The Corridor is currently managed by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. (Blackstone Heritage Corridor), a non-profit.

Leicester's regional context, including proximity to the City of Worcester and transportation access, provide potential for future development pressure. Maintaining recreational spaces and preserving open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas should be a priority as further development occurs. In addition, Leicester's water bodies should be protected to continue to serve the needs of Leicester residents and residents of neighboring communities. See **Map 1, Regional Context**.

B. History of the Community

Settled at the crossroads of ancient Nipmuc trails and incorporated in 1713, Leicester is older than the United States which it helped to found, with its militia and minutemen playing an important role in our nation's founding at the pivotal battles of Lexington and Concord. It was a Leicester resident, Colonel William Henshaw, who coined the phrase "minute men" at a Committee of Safety held in Worcester in 1774. Leicester sits at the headwaters of the Blackstone River, the "Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution" and America's "Hardest Working River." Leicester's early growth and development can be traced to these abundant water resources found within its borders. Settled as a farming community, Leicester became an important center of the early period of America's Industrial Revolution, manufacturing hand cards for the textile industry. Today, although Leicester is no longer an industrial center, its waterways continue to suffer the effects of this early period of industrial development.

Oraskaso, a Nipmuc Sachem, sold the land that would one day become Leicester (an area originally known as "Towtaid") to colonists to establish a buffer against marauding Mohawks. By the mid-seventeenth century, agrarian European settlement essentially replaced the local Nipmuc population who had fished and farmed the fertile floodplains for thousands of years. The leading factors of the decline of the Nipmuc and other Native American tribes were disease introduced by the colonists and direct conflict with Europeans, but the story is a complex one; many on both sides of this conflict were open to, and enjoyed, friendships with their new neighbors. William Blackstone, for

example, for whom the valley was named, lived alone for many decades, in friendly contact with neighboring tribes (Washborn: *Historical Sketches*, Town documents, BRVNHC Publications).

European farmers settled Leicester in the early 1700s, the only flourishing colonial community between Worcester and the Connecticut River during the early years. Eventually, roads were developed between these farms to facilitate marketing; these roads still exist as Routes 9 and 56. Local tradition holds that “plot one,” where the Reverend Samuel May's house stands, was the site of the first residence in the community; the original house, however, no longer exists. Samuel May was a pastor and active abolitionist in the 1860s, and the May House, now the property of Becker College, was a stop on the Underground Railroad. The oldest house remaining in town, the Henshaw Place near Henshaw Pond, was built in 1720 by one of the original town proprietors, Judge Menzies.

Established on February 15, 1714, and incorporated as a town on June 14, 1722, Leicester still has an open town meeting form of government headed by a five-member Board of Selectmen. The first recorded Town Meeting was held on March 17, 1722.

Religion played an important part in the early life of the town. One of the earliest buildings was the Congregational Meeting House, constructed before 1722. In 1736 a society of Baptists formed in Greenville, where they continue to this day, although not in the original building. The Society of Friends had a meetinghouse as early as 1732. The Episcopal Church was formed in Clappville (now Rochdale) in 1823 and the church building (the oldest in the county) was consecrated in May 1824. The Unitarians organized their society on April 30, 1833, and built a church, which is still in use on the Town Common. In 1846, the Methodists built two town meeting houses: one in Cherry Valley, the other in the center of town. The first Catholic Church, built in 1855, was eventually moved to Rochdale. Architect Elbridge Boyden, who also designed the famous Mechanics Hall in Worcester, designed the brick church currently used, which replaced the original building. Churches and their grounds continue to serve as centers of many social and recreational activities in the town.

The floodplains were cleared of forests and plowed, and the early European settlers harnessed the rivers. This represents the first “layer” of land-use practices that still affect Leicester’s open spaces and development today, with a legacy of stone walls and the second-growth forest on former fields characteristic of much of New England. Small sawmills, gristmills, and forges furnished materials needed on the farms. In 1790, Samuel Slater built the first American water-powered textile mill, in the Blackstone River Valley in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, establishing the first manifestation of the industrial revolution on this continent. The mills and the accompanying mill villages were built to implement a set of business practices that came to be known as the Rhode Island system of production: small, independently owned mills, each with exclusive water power supplies, with the families of the labor force housed in the adjacent villages. Examples are evident throughout the region and Rochdale is an important example within Leicester. Today the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor recognizes the important cultural contributions of this region to our national history. The Corridor also serves to identify and address the effects of industrial development on the natural resources of the region, especially the waterways.

By 1814, all available dam sites were occupied on the Blackstone river. This era represents a second historical “layer” of environmental impacts on the land that are still of consequence today. As mills and villages were established to harvest the waterpower, structures were built within, immediately beside, and overhanging the water. The moving water was intercepted to provide power to run the mill machinery and used as a disposal system for both human and industrial wastes. Flood storage capacity for the river, habitat for native plants and animals, and breeding grounds for wetland

species were eliminated as development displaced riparian areas. Today this history manifests itself not only with continuing issues surrounding water quality, but also with private ownership of many dams and the lands surrounding Leicester's many water bodies. This complicates conservation efforts, and restricts public access to water resources.

Before cotton and wool fibers could be spun into threads to be woven into cloth, they were untangled and straightened by means of leather "cards" set with bent wire teeth. These cards were manufactured in Leicester. By 1826, card manufacturing establishments in Leicester were powered mainly by water, sometimes by hand or by steam. As the century progressed, the mills gradually shifted from water to steam power. The high brick chimneys typical of mill boiler houses were once a prominent feature of Leicester, but few remain today. One chimney, in ruin, still stands over the remains of the mills on Rawson Street by Rawson Brook. Today, silted ponds and numerous dilapidated dams remain as a legacy of the mills.

While Leicester dominated the early manufacture of hand and machine cards, accompanying industry sprang up in town. By the early 1800s, Worcester began producing textile machinery, eventually surpassing Leicester in card production, and the manufacture of spinning, weaving, and shearing machines. Footwear production replaced card production in Leicester, and the production of wire products increased.

The completion of the Blackstone Canal and the Providence & Worcester Railroad solidified the centralization of administration and transportation in Worcester that exists today. From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, Worcester began acquiring the waterways in Leicester in order to establish a reservoir system for its growing population. This period coincided with the end of Leicester's hydro-industrialization.

Following World War Two, Leicester saw a boom in population as suburban developments sprang up throughout town. These developments, with their resource-intensive design features, represent a third "layer" of historical land-use, with implications still being felt today (discussed below, Section 3, subsection D, Growth and Development Trends).

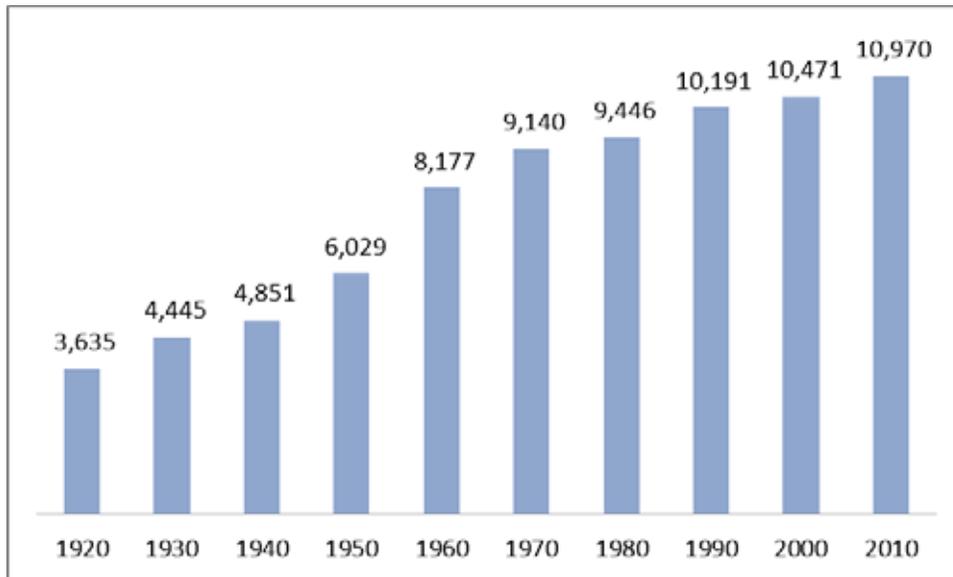
Leicester's Town Common has been the center of life in town for nearly 300 years, and was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a crossroads, it was the site for the meetinghouse and several taverns, along with a few small shops. The Common has also been a center of education since 1784 when Leicester Academy was established. Today, Becker College sits on the eastern side of the Common and owns many of the historic buildings along Main Street.

C. Population Characteristics

Leicester's total population of 10,970 in 2010 (US Census), showed modest growth since 2000, when total population was 10,471. Leicester's population has seen a steady increase over a long period of time as shown **Figure 2**. The fastest rate of population growth in Leicester between 1920 and 2000 occurred between 1950 and 1960, when population grew by 35.6 percent in only ten years. In recent decades, growth has been more modest. Compared to similar-sized communities in the region, Leicester's population is experiencing relatively slow growth (see **Table 1**).

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) projections place Leicester's population at 12,360 in 2035, which would be an increase of 13% over 2010 population levels. However, November 2013 population projections prepared by the Donahue Institute show Leicester's population increasing slightly by 2015, then slowing decreasing by 2030 to 10,705. (UMASS Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program).

Figure 2:
Leicester Population, 1920 – 2010



Source: US Census Bureau, chart prepared by Michelle Buck, Town Planner

Table 1:
Population Size and Percent Change – Leicester & Comparable Communities
(Figures in parentheses represent growth over previous decade)

Year	Charlton	Dudley	Leicester	Oxford	Spencer	Uxbridge	Webster
1980	6,719	8,717	9,446	11,680	10,774	8,374	14,480
1990	9,576 (42.5%)	9,540 (9.4%)	10,191 (7.9%)	12,588 (7.8%)	11,645 (8.0%)	10,415 (24.4%)	16,196 (11.8%)
2000	11,263 (17.6%)	10,036 (5.2%)	10,471 (2.7%)	13,352 (6.1%)	11,691 (0.4%)	11,156 (7.1%)	16,145 (1.3%)
2010	12,981 (15.3%)	11,390 (13.5%)	10,970 (4.8%)	13,709 (2.7%)	11,688 (0%)	13,457 (20.6%)	16,767 (2.9%)

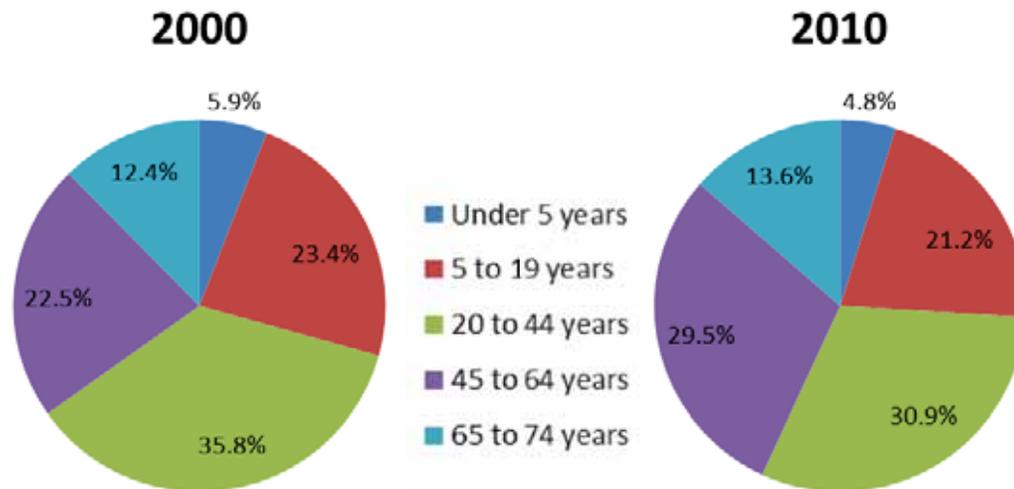
Source: US Census Bureau

Density figures provide an understanding of how Leicester has changed over the years. The 24.68 square miles of the town support a current average density of 444 persons per square mile. This is more than double the 1940 density figure of 197 persons per square mile (US Census). Much of this increase has occurred in suburban housing developments, with attendant environmental and municipal costs as described above.

As shown in **Figure 3**, Leicester’s population is aging. Between 2000 and 2010, the population over age 65 has increased since from 12.4% to 13.6%, while percentages of residents in other age groups have declined. The median age of Leicester residents has increased from 36.4 to 40.4. This is

consistent with the overall population of Massachusetts, which had a similar percent of residents over age 65 in 2010 (13.8%) and a median age in 2010 of 39.1 (US Census).

*Figure 3
Leicester Population by Age, 2000 & 2010*



Source: US Census Bureau, charts prepared by Michelle Buck, Town Planner

While consideration must be given to the needs of all community members, funding is always a limitation, so demographic considerations can guide a town’s decision making when it comes to best meeting the needs of its citizens. Leicester’s aging population suggests that special attention be given to appropriate recreational opportunities, such as hiking, walking, and birdwatching. Survey respondents indicated walking (and dog-walking) as the most popular recreational activity in Leicester, after gardening.

The 2010 Census reported 4,021 households in Leicester, of which 32.9 % had children under the age of 18. The average household size of 2.64 persons has decreased from 2.73 in 2000. As shown in **Table 2**, Leicester’s population is predominately white.

Table 2:
Leicester Population by Race, 2010
(Race alone or in combination with one or more other races)

	#	%
White	10,374	94.6
Black or African American	281	2.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	105	1.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	19	0.2
Other Race	168	1.5

Source: US Census Bureau

Leicester, historically a farming community, currently has only 2% of its workforce employed in the agricultural sector (See **Table 3**). The largest category of employment, at 27%, is “Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance,” followed by Retail Trade (12%) and Manufacturing (10%).

Table 3:
Estimated Leicester Employment by Industry, 2005-2009
(Civilian Employed Population 16 years and Over)

Industry	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	102	2%
Construction	556	9%
Manufacturing	621	10%
Wholesale trade	149	2%
Retail trade	754	12%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	245	4%
Information	170	3%
Finance & insurance, real estate, and rental & leasing	386	6%
Professional, scientific, management, admin, and waste mgmt services	480	8%
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	1,627	27%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	321	5%
Other services, except public administration	240	4%
Public administration	430	7%
Total	6,081	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

As shown in **Table 4** on the following page, Leicester’s largest employers include a variety of industry types.

Data for 2000 show the Town’s 5,879 person labor force had a 2.7% unemployment rate. As shown in **Figure 4**, Leicester’s unemployment rate fluctuated during the next several years, then rose to a peak of 8.8% in 2009. By 2013, unemployment had declined to 7.1 %. Leicester had a total of 6,008 people in the labor force in 2013, declining from a peak of 6,161 in 2007. Between 2010 and 2013, Leicester’s unemployment rate closely mirrored the statewide unemployment rate.

The estimated median household income of Leicester is \$72,000, higher than the Massachusetts median household income of \$66,558 (2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). In the same time period, 4.5% of the population was under the poverty line, increasing over the year 2000 when the percentage was 3.2%.

A requirement of Open Space and Recreation Plans is that special attention be given to designated Environmental Justice Populations. Environmental Justice Populations are those that meet certain demographic criteria, and that have historically been underserved by public spending on open space protection, recreational opportunity, and environmental quality. Leicester’s Environmental Justice Population meets the income criteria, meaning that the median income of the census block in question (encompassing Town Center, Hillcrest, Henshaw Pond, and Five Points area – **See Map 2, Environmental Justice**) is under \$43,994 (66% of the state median income of \$66,658 in 2012). There are 318 households within this census block, with 1,050 individuals, or roughly one-tenth of the population of Leicester.

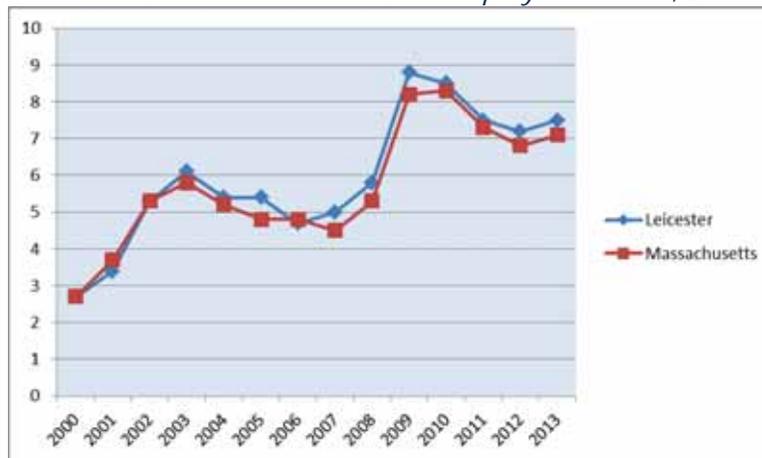
Table 4:
Largest 25 Employers in Leicester, 2014

Company Name	Number of employees	NAICS Code	NAICS Category
UNFI Specialty Dist Services	250-499	4244	Grocery and Related Product Wholesalers
Walmart Supercenter	250-499	4521	Department Stores
Meadows Rehab & Nursing	100-249	6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)
Leicester High School	50-99	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Leicester Memorial School	50-99	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Leicester Primary School	50-99	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Leicester Town Ambulance	50-99	6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services
Lusignan Security Agency	50-99	5616	Investigation and Security Services
Barbers Crossing Road House	20-49	7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places
Becker College Vet Clinic	20-49	5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services
Camp Wind In the Pines	20-49	7212	RV Parks and Recreational Camps
Country Bank For Savings	20-49	5221	Commercial Banking
Dunkin' Donuts	20-49	7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places
Giguere's	20-49	6116	Other Schools and Instruction
Leicester Fire Dept	20-49	9221	Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities
Leicester Middle School	20-49	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Leicester Police Dept	20-49	9221	Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities
Liberty Movers Inc	20-49	4841	General Freight Trucking
Lincare	20-49	4234	Professional and Commercial Equipment
Nazareth Home For Boys	20-49	6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners
St Joseph's St Pius X Rectory	20-49	8131	Religious Organizations
Worcester Tool & Stamping	20-49	3321	Forging and Stamping
Accu-Trak Tool Corp	10-19	3322	Cutlery and Handtool Manufacturing
Leicester Die & Tool Inc	10-19	3321	Forging and Stamping
Leicester Golf Course	10-19	7139	Other Amusement and Recreation Industries

*North American Industry Classification System

Source: Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development (EOLWD)

Figure 4:
Leicester & Massachusetts Annual Unemployment Rate, 2000-2013



Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), chart prepared by Michelle Buck, Town Planner

The median household income of this Environmental Justice census block is only 51% of the state median, or \$31,875. It should be mentioned that households that fit the income and other criteria are found throughout Leicester, and not only in this block, which only designates a statistical concentration. Several hundred other households in Leicester also fall below 66% of state median income (US Census). Efforts to expand open space and recreational opportunities should be sure to include Leicester's Environmental Justice Area, with focus on park revitalization and improving connections between residential and recreational areas.

The vast majority of Leicester's workforce (85%) commutes out of town for work; 11% works outside Worcester County (2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The mean travel time to work is 28.7 minutes, with 19.1% of workers having a travel time of 45 minutes or longer. This is a point of concern for Leicester's tax base, which does not enjoy the tax proceeds of the economic activity generated by the town's commuting workforce. Nearly all commuters (86.5%) drove alone to work, with only 13.6% carpooling, 2.8% walking, and only 0.6% taking public transportation (2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

The lack of employment options is also an issue of special concern for low-income members of the community, who may not have the necessary resources to support a daily commute, or access to public transportation needed to sustain employment. Pedestrian access throughout town, a need highlighted in the 2009 Master Plan, could provide important social, recreational, and economic opportunities for all segments of society, but especially benefits this demographic. Pedestrian access is not just a pleasant luxury; it plays an important role in the health of a town's people, its society, and economy.

D. Growth and Development Trends

1. *Patterns and Trends*

Massachusetts is the third-most populated state in the United States, with its cities forming part of what is designated by the Census Bureau as a "Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area," a designation that acknowledges urban areas that have expanded and merged over recent decades, providing a more or less contiguous urban corridor stretching from Washington, DC, all the way up to Maine. Leicester's demographic and open space future is intimately tied with the growth and development of this urban corridor, as Leicester sits right at the interface between this urban belt and the more open, rural areas of the interior.

Historically, Leicester has experienced slow, steady growth. The areas of population density mirror the historic villages built around former mills in Cherry Valley, Rochdale, and Leicester Center. Leicester was once part of neighboring Spencer, and Cherry Valley and Rochdale were once independent villages. Many residents today still identify with their own village. Leicester is home to three water districts and four sewer districts, and has three zip codes. This historical shifting of administrative centers over time has likely contributed to a pattern of settlement more dispersed than is typical of New England towns settled before trains and automobiles, and this may play a role in explaining some of the town's infrastructure issues (discussed below, and in more detail in the 2009 Master Plan), as well as its social and political dynamics.

Historically, slow growth had allowed Leicester to maintain and enjoy a rural atmosphere. In the twentieth century, the population of Leicester boomed as suburban developments sprang up throughout the central and southern portions of town. These post-war settlements, while providing needed housing and supporting economic growth in the town, also created environmental and

economic impacts such as resource-intensive lawns which negatively impact water quality, and an extensive system of roads and streetlights that require regular and costly maintenance.

Though somewhat constrained by the lack of water and sewer in much of the Town, new residential subdivisions continued to be developed regularly until roughly 2005, when housing development slowed considerably in Leicester. Land use changes have historically taken place over long periods of time. Today’s technology allows these changes to occur much more rapidly, and for building to take place on more marginal lands. Low-density housing subdivisions away from traditional neighborhood centers have dominated residential development for several decades. New commercial development in recent decades has typically been along Leicester’s major roadways on undeveloped lands rather than on former industrial sites such as mill complexes or commercial centers.

Developed land constitutes approximately 14% of Leicester, and is concentrated in the central and southern portions of town. Most recent construction is on frontage lots on established roads. This pattern of development fragments open space and leaves large unbuilt areas behind the frontage strips, with significant environmental impacts. Contiguous open spaces provide greater ecological value, as plants and animals are able to migrate freely through these areas, and ecological processes unfold with less interference. In much the same way, this pattern fragments the traditional New England landscape by converting farmlands to suburbs and cutting roads through the forest. Adoption of new zoning regulations that concentrate development and protect contiguous open spaces is way to address this pattern of development, while simultaneously promoting sustainable economic development.

These land use patterns in Leicester mirror the changes in the region. As agriculture has declined, open space and scenic landscapes have been lost.

Between 1999 and 2005, Mass Audubon has found that [statewide] 22 acres of land were lost to development each day, mostly due to residential development. This development caused over 30,000 acres of forestland and 10,000 acres of agricultural land to be converted from open space to development. (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan draft (SCORP 2012, p.8)

Developed land has increased, along with car-oriented commercial uses and the accompanying impervious surfaces. An impervious surface is any surface which impedes or prevents the natural infiltration of water into the soil.

Table 5:
Impervious Surface Area by Town, Leicester & Surrounding Communities

Town	Total Impervious Acres	Percent of Total Acres Impervious
Auburn	1787.43	9.94%
Charlton	1853.82	10.31%
Leicester	902.39	5.02%
Oxford	1622.49	9.03%
Paxton	462.51	2.57%
Spencer	1293.05	7.19%
Worcester	8786.92	48.88%

Source: Greater Leicester Water Resource Project Report, December 2010

Such surfaces include a roads, buildings, paved parking lots, sidewalks etc. Impervious surfaces exacerbate hydrological issues by altering the flow of water through the landscape. While Leicester has a relatively low percentage of impervious area compared with neighboring communities (see **Table 5**), it remains important to limit or appropriately mitigate additional impervious surfaces.

Typical housing subdivisions in the region consist of home sites of an acre or more. Large properties with high-maintenance lawns strain local resources, particularly water supplies. Suburban landscape practices can pollute or degrade water resources when high nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides leach into groundwater. This nutrient loading of waters can contribute to significant cumulative impacts.

Housing development in Leicester has slowed considerably in the last several years due to the economic downturn (discussed in more detail later in this section, see Long Term Growth and Development Patterns). Development can be expected to resume as the economy improves, though demographic and economic changes may result in demand for different types of housing than large-lot single family housing. Areas in the region expected to experience the most commercial development growth over the next several years are those near the eastern boundary of Worcester along Route 9, and along Route 56 near the southern boundary, via the Massachusetts Turnpike (CMRPC).

2. Infrastructure

a) Transportation

The principal highways through Leicester are Massachusetts Route 9, which runs east-west through the state, and Massachusetts Route 56, running north-south. The Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) passes near the southern boundary of the town and is easily accessible from Route 56 through Auburn. Leicester is served by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority with regular daily bus service along Route 9 providing service to Union Station in Worcester to the east, and to Spencer and the Brookfields to the west.

Traffic is a growing concern for Leicester residents, particularly along Route 9. A Wal-Mart opened near the Spencer border in March 2007, and a traffic light was added to help manage anticipated increases in traffic volume. Data from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, however, indicates weekday volumes (combined east and westbound vehicles) on Route 9 have shown modest changes since 2007. For example, traffic counts for traffic east of Route 56 were 13,453 in 2007 and 13,876 in 2010 (a 3% increase). Traffic volumes at the Spencer Town line and the Worcester city line have actually decreased slightly in recent years, likely due to the economic downturn.

Table 6:
Selected Traffic Counts, Route 9 Leicester

Location	Date	Total Traffic
Route 9 at Worcester city line	2006	17,102
	2010	16,499
Route 9 at Spencer town line	2007	14,012
	2010	13,471
Route 9 East of Route 56	2007	13,453
	2010	13,876

Source: CMRPC, *Daily Traffic Counts and Peak Period Turning Moving Counts, 2011*

The 2009 Master Plan includes the following recommendation: “facilitate pedestrian access Town-wide for all ages of the population” (p. 5-10). The Master Plan observes, however that:

the majority of Leicester roadways are narrow, rural roadways. The Planning Board requires sidewalks in new subdivisions, but most existing local roads outside of Leicester Center do not have sidewalks. Most of Leicester’s roadways are also not suitable for safe bicycle transportation. The speed of automobile traffic is also a common area of concern among residents. These conditions discourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation (p. 5-7).

Public transit and pedestrian access are particularly important resources for low-income members of a community.

b) Water Supply Systems

There are three existing water districts that service different portions of Leicester: Cherry Valley/Rochdale Water District, Hillcrest Water District, and the Leicester Water Supply District. Each of these districts is separately administered and maintains and operates their own facilities for water service. Water lines serve the majority of existing structures in the eastern, central, and southern sections of Leicester. In addition, the Moose Hill Reservoir is a potential future source of water, and is overseen by the Moose Hill Water Commission.

While the more densely settled areas of Leicester are served by water lines, the vast majority of vacant developable land in Leicester has no water service. Private wells serve most new residential developments over the last few decades.

Seven of the town’s twenty-six water bodies serve as drinking water reservoirs for Leicester and the neighboring communities of Spencer and Worcester. As water needs in the region increase over time, Leicester’s waters will play an increasingly important role, and become increasingly valuable, both to Leicester and communities downstream.

c) Sewer Service/Septic Systems

There are four existing sewer districts within the Town boundaries of Leicester: Cherry Valley Sewer District, Hillcrest Sewer District, Leicester Water Supply District, and Oxford/Rochdale Sewer District.

Most of the land area in Leicester is not served by sewer lines, and development requires private septic systems. Title 5 of the State Environmental Code dictates proper siting, construction, upgrade, and maintenance of on-site systems. Severe limitations for septic systems due to soil conditions occur on over half of the land in Leicester, including moderately to excessively drained poor-filter soils, shallow depth-to-bedrock soils restricted by Title 5, and high-water-table soils restricted by Title 5 (see **Map 4.2, Soils & Geologic Features: Septic Suitability**). On-site septic systems that are not properly sited or maintained can contribute pathogens and nutrients to groundwater and surface water, endangering drinking water supplies and surface water bodies. Such “nutrient loading” can also contribute to the establishment of aquatic invasive species. .

Modification of zoning and subdivision requirements could help to channel development into areas where water and sewer services currently exist. However, having multiple independent water and sewer districts presents a challenge to the Town in its ability to effectively plan and manage long-term growth. The interests of a particular water or sewer district may or may not be consistent with Town interests and priorities. Where water and sewer is centrally managed by a community, the community can target certain areas for residential and commercial growth, and limit development in areas that are unsuitable. Fragmentation of water and sewer services makes effective long-term community wide planning for water and sewer difficult.

As development increases in Leicester, the demand for services will also increase. These include sewers, solid waste disposal facilities, gas and electric lines, schools, and other municipal services. A more detailed assessment of town infrastructure may be found in Leicester's 2009 Master Plan.

3. Long Term Growth and Development Patterns

Leicester has the following Zoning Districts (see **Map 3, Zoning Map**):

- Residential 1 (R1)
- Residential 2 (R2)
- Suburban-Agricultural (SA)
- Business (B)
- Industrial (I)
- Business-Industrial-A (BI-A)
- Recreational Development (RD)
- Business Residential-1 (BR-1)
- Residential Industrial Business (RIB)
- Highway Business-Industrial District (HB-1)
- Highway Business-Industrial District (HB-2)
- Central Business (CB)
- Greenville Village Neighborhood Business District (NB)

Additionally, there are three zoning overlay districts: the Water Resource Protection Overlay District, which limits activities for the protection of water resources within the district; the Flood Plain District, which prohibits loss of flood storage capacity; and the Adaptive Re-Use Overlay District, which allows for reuse of allows easier reuse of former mills, religious buildings, and former municipal building.

The Water Resource Protection Overlay District was adopted after a study was completed by Lycott Engineering in 1987. The purpose of this district is to “prevent the contamination of those areas within Leicester that contribute ground or surface water to existing or planned public water supplies,” according to the Zoning Bylaw. This district encompasses much of the important water resource areas in Leicester. In this district, application of fertilizers and pesticides are permitted by special permit only, but building and subdivision are not prohibited. The boundaries of this district were expanded in 2002 to include the Conceptual Zone II of the Grindstone Well, a new drinking water source for the Cherry Valley and Rochdale Water District.

In 2001, the town introduced several revisions to the bylaws increasing minimum lot size in residential districts. Within the Suburban Agriculture (SA) district, the minimum lot size was increased from 50,000 to 80,000 sq. ft. The minimum lot size the Residential 1 (R1) district was increased from 20,000 to 50,000 sq. ft. (40,000 where public water and sewer are available). Increases in the minimum lot size were introduced to limit development in Leicester by reducing the total number of homes that could be built. However, this strategy may also have the effect of spreading out development, rather than concentrating development in previously-developed areas better served with existing infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.)

While Leicester has a district called the “Recreational Development District,” which was designed to preserve open space and recreational opportunities by allowing concentrated residential development, this district only encompasses the Hillcrest Country Club property. After a large subdivision was proposed on the site of the Hillcrest Country Club, the Town purchased the property so that it could be permanently protected as recreational and water supply protection land.

The Town adopted an Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Bylaw in 2009 to provide a mechanism for protected open space in exchange for higher density residential development. No developments have been built under this bylaw to date, likely due to the struggling housing market in Leicester in the last several years. Only one subdivision has been approved after 2009, a 23-lot subdivision approved in 2010. This development, Boutilier Estates, was designed and under review prior to adoption of the OSRD Bylaw. Boutilier Estates is the only subdivision approved in

Leicester between 2006 – present (September 2014). (A preliminary proposal for an 8-lot subdivision in 2011 has not moved forward due to litigation.)

In addition to zoning bylaws, Leicester has a separate body of Subdivision Regulations that affect residential development. These regulations specify construction standards for new subdivisions. Currently, the Subdivision Regulations require the following basic requirements for new roadway construction:

- 40 foot minimum right-of-way
- 28 foot minimum paved surface
- 5 foot sidewalk on both sides of proposed roadways
- 500 foot dead-end limit
- Underground utilities
- Streetlights at the end of cul-de-sacs and at intersections

Changes to the Subdivision Regulations, such as narrower roadway pavement requirements, updated stormwater management requirements, and adoption of low impact development practices, could reduce the environmental impacts of new subdivisions allowing for continued growth while protecting Leicester’s highly valued open spaces (see the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s online Smart Growth Toolbox, and the Mass EOEEA’s Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit for further information, case studies, and sample language). Comprehensive revisions to the Subdivision Regulations are currently being considered by the Planning Board, with completion anticipated in 2015.

As previously noted, housing development has slowed significantly in Leicester in recent years. **Figure 5** shows housing units authorized by building permits from 2000 through 2013, which have declined from a high of 65 housing units in 2003 to a low of only 7 housing units in 2010. The number of building permits for residential units has only increased slightly since 2010. Ten (10) housing units have been authorized by building permits in 2014 (through 8/31/2014).

*Figure 5:
Total Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits, Leicester
1990-2013*



Source: Leicester Building Department Records (as reported in Annual & Monthly reports), chart prepared by Michelle Buck, Town Planner

The majority of permits issued between 2004 – 2006 were for multi-family (2-4 unit structure) senior housing developments. There are currently four unfinished residential subdivisions throughout Leicester with 79 remaining lots/units available for building (see **Table 7**). With the exception of Oakridge Estates, there has been essentially no development in these projects in several years. There are no pending subdivision applications. ANR lot development (development along existing roads, rather than on new subdivision roads) has also been relatively slow in recent years, though there was an increase in 2014. Between 2008 and August 2014, 37 new building lots have been created with ANR Plans, as shown in **Figure 6**.

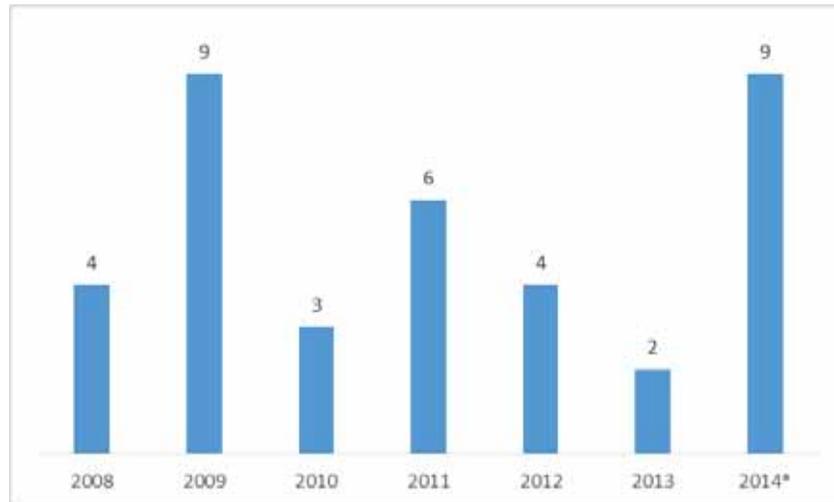
Table 7:
Unfinished Residential Subdivisions in Leicester

Project Name	Date of Approval	Number of Units Approved	Number of Units Built	Remaining Units Available for building*
Boutilier	2010	23	0	23
Briarcliff (senior dev.)	2004	34	8	26
Hammond Street	2008	2	0	2
Oakridge Estates (senior dev.)	2004	74	46	28
Total		133	54	79

*As of August 2014

Source: Leicester Planning Board Subdivision database and Building Permit records

Figure 6:
New Building Lots Created by ANR Plans, Leicester
2008-2014*



*through August 2014

Source: Planning Board ANR database, chart prepared by Michelle Buck, Town Planner

Even with Leicester’s current Zoning Bylaws, existing protected land, and lands protected by the Wetlands Protection Act, the town could still lose much of its fields, farms, forests, and other open spaces if the town were built out to maximum capacity under existing zoning laws. The town would

see considerable degradation of its open space, with severe impacts in many areas. CMRPC completed a build-out analysis as part of the 2010 Greater Leicester Water Resources Project. As described in this report:

“A build-out analysis does not attempt to estimate *when or if* a community will reach full build-out – it simply attempts to describe what the community would look like if it were fully built out according to the town’s current zoning policies (p.6)

The results of this analysis show that Leicester’s potential population could grow as high as 24,088 people, more than twice what it is today, at full build-out under Leicester’s zoning. It should be noted that this buildout was based on 1999/2000 data. Since that time, Leicester has increased lot sizes for residential development in three zoning districts (SA, R1 , and R2). This would reduce the total population at buildout.

Fortunately, recent zoning changes provide promising opportunities for smart growth in Leicester. These changes illustrate Leicester’s attempt to direct growth in a way that provides appropriately for a growing population, while preserving the open space and recreational opportunities that make the town appealing. Encouraging the re-use of existing buildings and allowing higher density development, (with provisions that large tracts of open space be preserved and natural resources be protected) can accommodate a growing population without greatly adding to the amount of developed land.

Section 4. Environmental Inventory & Analysis

A. Geology, Soils, and Topography

Glaciers scraped across Leicester's landscape and left behind a series of north-south oriented drumlins that rise 50 to 150 feet. Dendritically shaped drainage patterns form three distinct river basins. Most of the drumlins are excessively drained while most of the valley floors are poorly drained. These soil characteristics create a risk of water contamination, which could affect above- and below-ground drinking water supplies.

Small valleys pool water in surficial depressions that vary significantly in size from vernal pools to large ponds. Under the influence of glacial outwash deposits, networks of streams both actively feed and drain water bodies. Dams (built in the early nineteenth century) and reservoirs (in the twentieth century) add to the town's water features.

The topography of Leicester divides the landscape into three watersheds, each with numerous streams and ponds. The town's glaciated landscape serves as the headwaters of the Blackstone, French, and Chicopee Rivers. Groundwater aquifers are the source of headwater streams.

Hills along the northern Leicester and Paxton town boundary consistently top 1,000 feet. As the landscape gently slopes down to the south, the last hill of this size (Leicester Hill) stands above Leicester Center. Hilltops grow smaller toward the town of Auburn (southeast of Leicester) as the topography flattens into the wetlands of Leicester's Great Cedar Swamp. The Grindstone Brook drains the swamp into Rochdale Pond, at Leicester's lowest surface elevation (720 feet).

Leicester's gently undulating landscape rarely reaches slopes steeper than 15%. However, elongated areas of 15 to 35% slopes define isolated hills. Bedrock outcrops strewn about the town's landscape generally jut out from relatively level ground (*Greener Views: Planning for an Evolving Community* 15), though a few of these outcrops have been exposed by erosion on the steeper slopes. Boulders, gravel, and sand compose the glacial till that define Leicester's elevated landscape. A mixture of sand, silt, and clay compose a relatively impermeable surface in Leicester's lowlands (*Greener Views* 15).

Leicester's soils range from the poorly drained Paxton-Woodbridge-Ridgebury series in the floodplains to the well or excessively drained Canton-Montauk-Scituate series in more than half of the town. Where relatively free of stones, these soil types rank among the most agriculturally productive soils in the country (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report: Blackstone Valley/Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory* 2). The combination of excessively drained and poorly drained soils, along with the prevalence of intricately connected drainage patterns, may prove detrimental to the ubiquitous water supply as potential contaminants may not be sufficiently filtered or containable.

B. Landscape Character

Of Leicester's 15,700 acres, 83% is open and undeveloped. Forests almost directly correlate to Leicester's open space and account for 78% of open land; 2,638 acres of forest are under limited or, more commonly, permanent protection. Active farmlands add to Leicester's rural character and account for an additional 6% of the town's open space (MassGIS).

Small ridges and low hills give rise to Leicester's undulating landscape and, at places, allow for clear views across the forests of town. Both in its lowlands and its highlands, Leicester's forests have grown back since its agricultural and industrial past and now encompass 66% of the town's total area. These forests form significant patches and narrow corridors of local and state importance, as

well as three blocks of interior forests that are essential to the lives of interior plant and animal species (Massachusetts Geographical Information Systems). And since Leicester's vegetated landscape has had to evolve for both dry and saturated soils, the forests have a species diversity and ecological richness. At least one swamp of rare inland Atlantic white cedar has been identified by the National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (further described in Section 4, subsections D. Vegetation, and E. Fisheries & Wildlife).

Settled by colonists as a farming community, since then Leicester has continually lost its farmland to forest regeneration and, as more commonly in the later part of the twentieth-century, development (Leicester Master Plan 8-1).

Currently, scattered cropland and pasture make up 6% of the town's open space (second to forests). But of the 3,540 acres of prime agricultural soils in town, only 863 acres are currently being used for active agriculture (Mass GIS, 2014). An additional 121 acres of prime agricultural soils lay beneath Leicester's permanently protected forests (Mass GIS). However, Leicester's farmland continues to produce an array of bounty that includes vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, dairy, maple syrup, honey, flowers, herbs, value-added products, compost, and stock animals (*Local Food Guide for Worcester County: Farm Guide for Leicester, MA*, 2014). Several of Leicester's farms strive to be pesticide spray-free by using integrated pest management, which helps reduce nutrients and chemicals in runoff that would otherwise impair water resources. **See Map 4.1, Agricultural Soils.**

Leicester's economic past was driven by its abundant water resources (Leicester Master Plan 7-1). During the Industrial Revolution multitudes of small mills disrupted streams to harness hydraulic energy (Emory 23). New ponds and lakes were formed and the flows of feeder streams were altered. Marshes, bogs, and swamps evolved from the saturated soils. Although the mills are mostly gone, many of the dams remain. Today these millponds serve wildlife as well as the rural character of the town, but no longer provide the energy they were once designed for. Mostly privately owned, these water bodies largely remain unavailable for recreation or fishing.

See also subsection F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments.

C. Water Resources



Rochdale Pond (photo by M. Buck)

Like forests, water is a prominent feature in Leicester's rural environment. Ranging in size from less than one acre to more than 100 acres, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs cover approximately 850 acres of town. But multiple of the town's ponds and streams are impaired by invasive species, eutrophication, and pollutants. Also, aging dams pose high risks of failure. Despite the prevalence of water, there is no public water access, no town beach, and very limited fishing available to residents outside of the Southwick Pond Preserve. **See Map 6.1, Water Resources.**

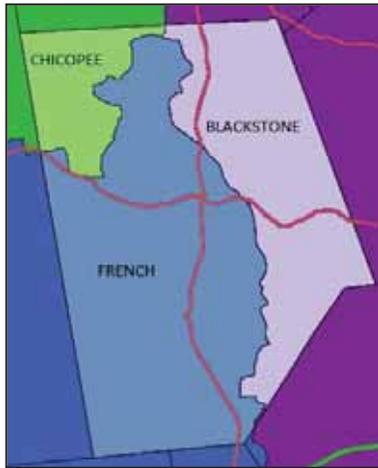
1. Watersheds

A watershed is a geographic area of land in which all surface and ground water flows downhill to common point, such as a river, stream, pond, lake, wetland, or estuary. Leicester is located at the

headwaters and within the watersheds of three major rivers: the Blackstone, the French, and the Chicopee. The watersheds for each of these are described below:

The **Blackstone River Watershed** encompasses all or part of 29 communities in south central Massachusetts and Rhode Island. 382 square miles of its total drainage area of 640 square miles are in Massachusetts (this includes 24 of the 48 river miles). The watershed also encompasses 1300 acres of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. The major tributaries of the Blackstone are the Quinsigamond, West, Mumford, Mill, and Peters Rivers. Worcester and Providence, the second and third largest population centers in New England, are in the Blackstone Watershed.

The **French & Quinebaug Watersheds** and the Quinebaug-Shetucket River Valley form the Thames River Watershed. The watersheds encompass approximately 1,474 square miles of land area, 251 of which occur in Massachusetts, and include all or part of 13 Massachusetts municipalities. The French River runs for 21 miles, 14 in Massachusetts, while the Quinebaug River stretches about 65 miles, 19 in Massachusetts. The region comprises the "Last Green Valley" in the megalopolis that stretches from Boston to Washington, DC.



The **Chicopee River Watershed** - the largest of the 27 major drainage basins in Massachusetts - drains more than 720 square miles of central Massachusetts before joining the Connecticut River in the City of Chicopee. It includes all or part of 39 cities and towns and a population of almost 200,000 people (based on 2000 U.S. Census data). The watershed has a drainage area of approximately 720 square miles and includes approximately 135 rivers, 842 miles of brooks and streams, and 170 lakes, ponds, and reservoirs that collectively cover more than 48 square miles. It is comprised of three major river systems: the Swift, Ware, and Quabog Rivers that each drain approximately 200 square miles of land. The three rivers join to form the Chicopee River in the aptly named village of Three Rivers.

(Text: Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs website. Map: MassGIS Oliver data, edited by Michelle Buck, Town Planner)

This geographical position poses great responsibility on Leicester to preserve clean waters for communities downstream. Few resources, however, are available to Leicester for protecting the integrity of these shared waters.

2. Surface Waters

According to Mass DEP's Division of Watershed Management multiple ponds and streams within the town are impaired (2008, 2009, 2010). The eight impaired ponds – Southwick, Sargent, Waite, Dutton, Cedar, Bouchard, Greenville, and Rochdale – are designated as such due to the presence of invasive aquatic plant and micro-invertebrate species, eutrophication, and low flow due to sedimentation (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection: Division of Watershed Management. 2008, 2009, 2010). Five of the town's streams, however, are impaired due to a pollutant, including the section of Kettle Brook that drain from Worcester's Kettle Brook Reservoir #1 into Waite Pond, and then again as the stream drains further south, east, and then out of town (Mass GIS). Other streams impaired by a pollutant include Burncoat Brook, Town Meadow Brook, and Grindstone Brook (Mass GIS). Grindstone Brook (which also drains directly from a surface

water drinking supply pond, Henshaw Pond) has tested positive for fecal coliform and *E. Coli.* on five occasions between May – September 1994 (Mass DEP, *French and Quinebaug* 14). Fish tissue samples taken from Waite Pond and the headwaters of the French river have tested positive for mercury (Mass DEP, *Blackstone*, 2010; *French and Quinebaug* 13). Even with these impairments all of the town’s ponds and streams are classified as being at least class B (Mass DEP, 2008, 2009, 2010). Class B waters are deemed suitable for habitat, primary and secondary recreation, as well as a source of water supply with appropriate treatment.

The city of Worcester (to the east) has done the most for the protection of the Kettle Brook (the headwaters of the Blackstone River) to safeguard its own drinking water supply. Worcester owns approximately 1,071 acres within Leicester, including four reservoirs: Kettlebrook Reservoirs 1 – 3, and Lyndebrook Reservoir (Mass GIS); three of these use the Kettle Brook as a supplier of surface drinking water. This ownership also serves to protect Leicester’s open space from westerly expansion of suburban sprawl, but fails to provide clean water for downstream communities as the Kettle Brook is listed as impaired a presence of *E. Coli.* (Mass DEP, *Blackstone* 5). The town of Spencer (to the west) has also preserved 94 acres of Leicester’s open space and protected the 64-acre Shaw Pond (Mass GIS), which to date has not been developed as a public drinking water supply resource (Town of Spencer Open Space and Recreation Plan 17).

Case Study: John Todd's Eco-Machine, Burlington VT

Since 1995 John Todd's Eco-machine has been working as the South Burlington's sewage water treatment process. This system uses plants and micro-organisms to metabolize waste out of the water. Solids are literally digested by organisms living within the Eco-machines tanks. These tanks are situated inside of a greenhouse where plants suspended above the tanks grow and flower. Designed to achieve stable nutrient removal, an Eco-machine is a cost competitive alternative to conventional systems that also provide educational services to elementary and university students alike. An eco-machine was also built in Grafton, MA in 2006. This living system (composed of plants, micro- and macro-organisms including snails and fish) is used to treat heavy contaminates from a canal along the Blackstone River on an old industrial mill site. Proven to clean sewage and heavy contaminates, Leicester may consider implementing a comparable solution to address its water impairment issues such as organic enrichment, turbidity, fecal coliform and *E. Coli.*, and potentially mercury. Addressing these root impairments can begin to address the symptom impairments such as invasive plant and micro-invertebrate species by simply supporting the function of natural ecosystems. Pleased with the outcomes of the Eco-machine, Chuck Hefter (South Burlington's City Manager) said, "As we move into the 21st century we need to be developing ways to manage water using ecological systems. Supporting projects like the [Eco] Machine is consistent with a progressive and forward-thinking economic development strategy," (John Todd Ecological Design, South Burlington, VT).

Source: John Todd Ecological Design: City of South Burlington; The Fisherville Canal, Case Study prepared by Conway School Students

Recreation is restricted on and around surface water supply ponds and reservoirs to reduce the risk of contamination of public drinking water as a response to 9/11 (Novick). Only Southwick Pond, owned and maintained by the Greater Worcester Land Trust, is open for recreation and fishing (Novick). The town does own the dam on Waite Pond, but questions remain as to whether the dam can be used as access to the pond for recreation and fishing (Scoping Meeting). Burncoat Park (purchased in 1968 with the use of a state Self Help grant) includes 1,400 feet of town-owned shoreline without water access (*Greener Views* 17). For years the park’s shoreline was used as a public beach but a series of events involving disrepair, lack of funding and maintenance, and vandalism of the park’s facilities resulted in the closure of the Leicester’s only beach (Scoping Meeting). The

Town also owns a small parcel of land adjacent to Greenville Pond (acquired through tax title) that has been informally used for fishing and non-motorized boat access. There is potential to expand public access and use at this site.

3. Aquifer Recharge Areas

Leicester's own drinking water supply, including its wellheads and wellhead recharge areas, are relatively well protected by the town's Water Resources Protection Overlay District which restricts certain land uses within these areas. (Refer to Section 4, subsection G. Environmental Challenges for more information regarding Leicester's water districts and drinking water supply impairments.)

4. Flood Hazard Areas

The Town of Leicester Zoning Bylaw has a Flood Plain District; the purposes of this district are to:

1. Ensure public Safety through reducing the threats to life and personal injury;
2. Eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials;
3. Prevent the occurrence of public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding;
4. Avoid the loss of utility service which if damaged by flooding would disrupt or shut down the utility network and impact regions of the community beyond the site of flooding;
5. Eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of flooding conditions; and
6. Reduce damage to public and private property resulting from flooding waters.

See Map 6.2, Flood Hazard Areas.

5. Wetlands

Leicester's abundant wetlands and floodplains serve ecological functions vital to ecosystem and community health. Disturbed, developed, and drained for decades, these natural waterscapes provide ecosystem services that work to slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater and runoff. Federal, state, and local agencies are now heavily investing in green infrastructure designed to mimic these natural, passive, and low-cost functions, to prepare for common natural disasters and for the rise in climate change-related natural disasters

(Environmental Protection Agency. *Green Infrastructure Funding Opportunities*). Rich in wetlands and floodplains, Leicester is poised to invest in protection of these natural features (through the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act as well as the town's own Wetland and Stormwater Bylaws).

Leicester's water features and wetlands also serve as critical habitat for rare and important species including the inland Atlantic white cedar, the swamp lousewort, and the triangle floater mussel (*Greener Views* 19, 21). (Refer to Vegetation as well as Fisheries and Wildlife later in this section.) However, environmental stressors such as invasive

Case Study: Wetlands as Flood Storage Control, Charles River

Wetlands have the ability to spread, slow, and contain flood waters resulting in the prevention of a loss of property and life. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has invested in the preservation of wetlands along the Charles River (Massachusetts). Wetland restoration began in 2009. The Corps of Engineers estimated annual flood damage along the Charles River to cost \$17 million. "The Corps of Engineers concluded that conserving wetlands was a natural, less expensive solution to controlling flooding than the construction of dikes and dams alone, and they proceeded to acquire 8,103 acres of wetlands in the Charles River basin for flood protection,"

Source: *Wetlands: Protecting Life and Property from Flooding*. Environmental Protection Agency, Case Study prepared by Conway School Students.

species, habitat fragmentation, and water impairment may pose great threats to these sensitive species. (Refer to Section 4, subsection G. Environmental Challenges.)

D. Vegetation

Worcester County is a transitional area between the Carolina zone to the south and the Canadian zone to the north. The Carolina forest type is made up of oak, hickory, red maple, pitch pine, hemlock, white pine, and gray birch. The Canadian zone includes beech, varieties of birch, sugar maple, white pine, hemlock, fir, and spruce. The dividing line between these zones extends from the northeast to the southwest corner of New England, cutting through northern Worcester County.

In the 1700s, the highland forests of Spencer and Leicester were dominated by oak, walnut, and chestnut, while the swamps supported maple, birch, and elm. Originally, white pine dominated the terraces of the county, while soft maple dominated the bottomlands. Much of the pine was cut in the uplands, yielding a secondary growth in which oak predominated, and abandoned fields often grew back with pioneering species such as gray birch and aspen species.

Today, Forests make up 66% of Leicester's 15,768 acre landscape; roughly correlating to the town's entire open space (13,127 acres).

See Map 9, Forested Lands. Leicester's highlands drain quickly and are therefore conducive to upland forest species such as oak and hickory (*Landscape History of Central New England*. Dioramas: Harvard Forest). The lowlands and swamps hold water in saturated soils that support a different guild, including maple, birch, and elm (*Greener Views* 18). This guild of canopy trees is particularly attractive to the Asian Long-Horned beetle that was discovered in the forests of Worcester in 2008 (Augustus). Although the city of Worcester directly abuts Leicester, according to Leicester's Tree Warden the Asian long-horned beetle has yet to appear in Leicester (Griffin). This may be due to the naturally slow dispersal of this invasive species, whereas its arrival in Worcester was expedited by interstate commercial trade (Griffin).

As the population of Massachusetts declined in the late 1800s, abandoned pastures and fields rapidly developed into forests. In central Massachusetts and across much of central New England these forests were initially dominated by fast-growing pioneer species such as white pine

Case Study: Warwick Town Forest

Approximately 45-years ago the town of Warwick, MA acquired nearly 200 acres through tax title foreclosures. Shortly afterwards, Warwick's Selectmen created a town forest committee as an advisory group to oversee the forested land. The committee hired a forester and developed a forestry plan. The plan called for a timber harvest to improve the forest's structure as well as to produce revenue for the town. Since this time the town has harvested multiple areas of the town forest and generated \$75,000 - \$100,000 (a portion of the revenue generated by each harvest is always saved for the planning and production of the next harvest). Thirty-years later Warwick is in the midst of second-round harvesting. Before each harvest the forest committee and the hired forester offer a pre-production hike. After the harvest a post-production hike is offered. These hikes allow towns people to ask questions, express concerns, and receive a first-hand experience in forestry. The committee wanted to use harvesting the town forest as an educational opportunity for private forest owners. Warwick has since harvested multiple sections of the town forest by using different methods. These methods have produced different results such as more open or closed canopies. Forest committee member Keith Ross thinks the harvesting program has been a complete success as Warwick residents are comfortable with an active town forestry economy that supports the mixed-use of the town forest, as well as residents' ventures into managing their own woodlots (Ross).

Source: Interview with Keith Ross, Warwick Forest Committee Member. Case Study Prepared by Conway School students

(*Landscape History*). White pine plantations can still be found in town, especially along roads in the northeast quadrant of town. At least three areas of Leicester have never been tilled or pastured (*Greener Views 20*), most likely due to their position in some of Leicester’s wettest swamps, and today these areas make up Leicester’s invaluable interior and rare species forests. At least one stand of rare inland Atlantic white cedar exists in the northwest quadrant of town. As noted by some residents, other rare cedar stands may exist elsewhere in town as remnants of past wetland habitats (Scoping Meeting). Cedar Meadow Pond was named after the cedar forest displaced by the damming of Burncoat Brook. These rare swamps are fire dependent and need to be burned or strategically cut to regenerate (Motzkin). Currently, in Leicester, these swamps are privately owned and not known to have Chapter 61 protection or a forestry plan through DCR’s forestry stewardship program. The wetlands directly beneath Hillcrest Country Club are referred to as the Great Cedar Swamp (Mass GIS). Other rare plant species identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Swamp Lousewort and Great Laurel, are listed in **Table 8** and described further under the Fisheries and Wildlife Section.

Atlantic White-Cedar Swamps

The larvae of one rare butterfly, Hessel's Hairstreak (*Callophrys hesseli*) (SC), feed exclusively on Atlantic White-Cedar (AWC). The federally endangered Ringed Boghaunter Dragonfly (*Williamsonia lintneri*) (E) is found in open fens and bogs that are often associated with AWC Swamps. Ringed Boghaunters can use AWC Swamps as resting and mating habitat. Spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*) (delisted in 2006, but protected on state lands) can also be found in associated open wet areas. Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*) (SC) and Northern Parula warbler (*Parula americana*) (T) are two state-protected bird species that can be found in AWC Swamps but are not restricted to them.

Atlantic white-cedar will regenerate best following catastrophic disturbance events such as hurricanes and fires. Data suggest that in the absence of disturbance, red maple and shrubs increase in abundance at the expense of Atlantic White-Cedar. Fire suppression negatively threatens the long-term persistence of AWC swamps, and controlled burning practices may be an appropriate restoration tool in many areas. Small-patch clear-cuts are another recommended restoration tool. By clear-cutting small patches (generally 20 m x 20 m) and removing the slash and competing vegetation, pure, even-aged stands of Atlantic White-Cedar are able to regenerate.

AWC swamps require a natural cycle of wet and dry periods for their survival and reproduction. Any alterations to the natural hydroperiod of the community threatens its persistence. Standing water for much of the year is unfavorable for both seed germination and seeding survival, and young seedlings are killed by both drowning and drought. It is recommended that any alterations in water levels be avoided, this includes development and road construction in uplands surrounding AWC swamps which can alter water levels.

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Natural Community Fact Sheet: Atlantic White Cedar Swamp.

The Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources characterizes Leicester’s forests as “prime” for forest productivity. Leicester’s forests have been historically timbered by private citizens, albeit not always using sustainable methods such as the clear-cut of the Hillcrest area sometime around the mid-1900s (Scoping Meeting). However, initiatives such as the reported bare root project (that helped establish a woodland pasture of fruit trees in Burncoat Park twenty to thirty years ago) may again take advantage of these prime forestry soils (Griffin). And with large parks such as Burncoat and Hillcrest, Leicester may have the opportunity to establish a town forest managed for the production of forestry products. A town forest could provide revenue for the town, as well as preserve rural character and help reestablish a rural economy (Ross, see **Case Study: Warwick Town Forest**).

Currently the town has limited funds to maintain its forests, shade trees, and street trees (Griffin). Leicester does not have a public shade tree program, forester, forestry plan, or regular maintenance program. Parks are mowed, fertilized, and seeded by the Leicester Highway Department (Wood). Budget cuts do not allow for tree care beyond hard-edging right of ways and removal of diseased or pest-laden trees by the part-time town Tree Warden (Griffin). However, developers of new subdivision roads are required to plant shade trees every 50 feet within road rights-of-way. In addition, shade trees are required along the road in new commercial developments in most commercial and industrial zoning districts, regulated through the Zoning Bylaw and the Planning Board's Landscaping Regulations. Though currently addressed through the permit review process, these Regulations should be amended to specifically exclude tree species susceptible to the Asian Longhorned beetle.

Forest and agricultural lands account for the majority of open land in Leicester. While dairy farming was once the dominant agricultural business in the town, today only one working dairy farm remains. Other agricultural business in Leicester includes nurseries, swine, horse stables, llama farms, maple sugaring, vegetables, and Christmas trees. Active agriculture contributes to Leicester's rural character and provides a continued source of fresh, locally grown produce and dairy products. Residents have identified a range of visually, culturally, and historically significant resources that contribute to Leicester's character, including the Cooper's Hilltop Farm (the town's only active dairy farm), the Town Common, reservoirs, lakes, ponds, and farmlands. Although agricultural uses have been in decline in recent decades, there is renewed interest in locally grown and produced agricultural products. Since the last Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town has enacted a Right-to-Farm Bylaw and established an Agricultural Commission.

The Right-To-Farm Bylaw, a General Bylaw "encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities, and protects farmlands within the Town of Leicester by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and local agencies" (*Town of Leicester General Bylaws*). Where agricultural uses may locate is governed by the Zoning Bylaws and the State Zoning Act (MGL, Chapter 40A, §3), which exempts agricultural uses on parcels over 5 acres (and in some cases on parcels over 2 acres). The Right-To-Farm Bylaw is designed to address potential complaints regarding typical noises and odors that may be associated with agricultural uses.

Right-To-Farm Declaration

The Right-to-Farm is hereby recognized to exist with the Town of Leicester. Agricultural activities may occur on holidays, weekdays, and weekends by night or day and shall include the attendant incidental noise, odors, dust and fumes associated with normally accepted agricultural practices. It is hereby determined that whatever impact may be caused to others through the normal practice of agriculture is more than offset by the benefits of farming to the neighborhood, community, and society in general. The benefits and protections of this Bylaw are intended to apply exclusively to those agricultural and farming operations and activities conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices.

Source: Town of Leicester General Bylaws

Leicester's wetland vegetation is protected through administration of the Wetlands Protection Act and a local Wetlands Protection Bylaw (adopted 5/2008) and Wetland Regulations (adopted 5/2009). One key feature of the Wetland Regulations is a 25 foot "No Disturb Zone." As outlined in the regulations: "Vegetation in the No Disturb Zone shall not be cut or trimmed in any manner. Prohibited activities within the No Disturb Zone include, but are not limited to, grading, landscaping, planting, harvesting, mowing, vegetation clearing, cutting, trimming, filling, depositing

of any materials (including yard waste and construction debris) composting, excavating, construction, fencing and installation of roads, driveways and walkways.

Case Study: Land's Sake, Weston, MA

Land's Sake is a non-profit land stewardship organization in Weston, MA that began by improving hiking trails in the town's woodlands. Since that time Land's Sake has grown into a well-rounded rural stewardship organization that both engages and employs people in the tasks of actively managing landscapes within the town. Besides improving trails, the organization (which works directly with Weston's schools to involve children in traditional rural stewardship practices) has actively farmed the town's vacant farmlands, established a maple sugaring process by tapping the town's trees, and initiated small scale forestry within the town's forests including providing fire wood to residents for small fees. The organization has also actively grazed animals on town fields and meadows. Land's Sake works directly and successfully with the Weston's Conservation Commission, the Weston Forest and Trails Association, local schools and universities, as well as the town residents. For thirty years the organization has educated the town's children in rural traditions and economy while managing lands that the town may not be able to do on its own otherwise (Donahue).

Leicester's Conservation Commission and Parks & Recreation Commission could benefit from such a successful partnership. As in Weston, school children could experience hands-on skill training while working to preserve the town's rural character and re-establish the town's rural economy. Vital monitoring and improvements could be made in Leicester's parks, forests, and agricultural lands while rekindling an engaged relationship between townspeople and the land.

Source: Donahue, Brian. Reclaiming the Commons, Case Study Prepared by Conway School students

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

1. Inventory

Leicester's abundance of open space supports a diversity of ecosystem characteristics vital to the health of its fisheries and wildlife. **See Map 10, Wildlife & Fisheries.**

Typical upland wildlife that frequent the natural areas of the town include white-tailed deer, moose, coyote, raccoon, cottontail rabbit, grouse, woodcock, chipmunk, woodchuck, turkey and skunk. Animals that thrive near wetland habitat include beaver, wood ducks, and several species of snake, salamander, and turtle. Neighboring wildlife habitat areas in Paxton, Charlton, and Oxford are linked to Leicester by important wildlife corridors along streams and wetlands. The Audubon's acquisition of land in neighboring Spencer increases opportunities for wildlife around Burncoat Pond.

The Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area, in the far northwest corner of Leicester (and extending into Paxton & Spencer) has abundant wildlife including grouse, woodcock, deer, aquatic fur-bearers, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, raccoon, waterfowl and numerous upland and lowland nongame species. A limited number of pheasant are stocked during the open season.

In the northwest section of Leicester, the Leicester Rod and Gun Club has maintained more than 100 acres as a wildlife preserve that is open to its members for hunting year round. This preserve is stocked with pheasant and grouse annually.

Leicester's abundance of warm-water ponds provides nearly year-round potential habitat for lunker, anglers, large mouth bass, bluegill, and sunfish. The watersheds of many ponds, especially the Grindstone Brook drainage between Henshaw and Rochdale ponds, provide good waterfowl and

furbearer habitat. Muskrat, fox, beaver and mink are perhaps the principal furbearers, with an occasional sighting of otter.

Besides their importance in the ecological food web, wildlife species provide opportunities for hunting and fishing. The biggest problems facing recreational fishing in Leicester is the lack of access to the lakes and rivers and the need for water quality protection. There are no public boat ramps on the rivers and few public places to fish from riverbanks; however, hunting opportunities exist on the many private woodland and meadow parcels throughout town.

The town's critical and core habitats essential to its rare plant and animal species remain largely unprotected. Two additional species in Leicester have been added to the state's species of concern list with the 2010 release of BioMap2. Along with at least one rare inland Atlantic white cedar swamp, dozens of vernal pools also remain unprotected.

Leicester's landscape consists of a mix of forests, meadows, wetlands, and surface waters. These landscapes vary by elevation, aspect, soils, and other characteristics to create thousands of microclimates and great biodiversity. Mixed-landscape areas dominate the landscape and form the background in which other smaller scale communities occur. Animals that benefit from such diverse ecosystems have a large home-range that extends across multiple forests, woods, meadows, and streams.

Ecosystem patches (such as Leicester's dry hilltops, low wetlands, maintained grasslands, or even vernal pools and warm water ponds) may provide the essential needs of a particular species' daily life or the essential needs of one stage of that species' life (*Vernal Pools*. Environmental Protection Agency). Patches are smaller pieces of the landscape. Animals that benefit from these ecosystems don't migrate far from their individual home-range or need a set of landscape characteristics too specific to be represented well by a larger, mixed landscape.

2. Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are isolated, shallow ponds characterized by periods of dryness. The indefinite nature of a vernal pool attracts and protects a variety of wildlife that would otherwise fall prey to predatory fish populations in more reliable water resources (*Vernal Pools*. EPA). Vernal pools are essential for animal species that require warm shallow water to lay and fertilize eggs. The characteristics of individual vernal pools can vary and act as microclimates (*Vernal Pools*. EPA). This allows an animal to choose which environment is most suitable to its reproduction. In this respect, areas of clustered vernal pools are even more important than isolated vernal pools (*Greener Views* 19-20). Vernal pools do not fall under the protection of the Wetland Protection Act but, to date, two vernal pools within Leicester have been certified with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (*Greener Views* 20). Although NHESP has identified dozens of potential vernal pools within Leicester, no additional certifications have been made since before the last OSRP update in 2007. Species of special concern observed in these pools include the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*). Other obligate vernal pool species observed include the spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*), unidentified mole salamanders, fairy shrimp (Order *Anostraca*) and the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*) (*Vernal Pools Information*, Mass Nature).

3. Corridors for Wildlife Migration

Habitat edges provide essential habitat for species that need access to multiple ecosystems on a regular basis. Corridors are elongated habitat areas that connect patches. Streams, interior forests, and habitat are just a few examples of corridors. Corridors provide habitat and mobility for a wide array of wildlife. Corridors become even more important for a species in times of disturbance due to predation, fires, floods, or even development.

Several power transmission lines cross Leicester that serve as corridors for wildlife. These should be managed to serve as wildlife habitat, to reduce opportunities for the establishment of invasive plant species, and to reduce herbicide use, which will reduce negative effects on groundwater. These transmission line rights-of-way are managed by National Grid through their Vegetation Management Plan.

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks the Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area and manages these properties as wildlife habitat for public licensed hunting (*Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area*. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs). Leicester’s Rod and Gun Club also stocks and manages its properties as a wildlife preserve (*Greener Views* 19). The Rod and Gun Club’s 100+ acres are open to its members for hunting year round. Fishing is allowed on Waite Pond and Southwick Pond in the Greater Worcester Land Trust’s preserve (Novick). Other hunting and fishing opportunities within town are available by private property owner permission only.

4. Core Habitats & Rare Species

NHESP’s BioMap2 Core Habitats and Critical Natural Landscapes

In 2010, Massachusetts’ Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) updated its BioMap project and released BioMap2. According to NHESP, BioMap2 is: “designed to guide strategic biodiversity conservation in Massachusetts over the next decade by focusing land protection and stewardship on the areas that are most critical for ensuring the long-term persistence of rare and other native species and their habitats, exemplary natural communities, and a diversity of ecosystems” (*BioMap2* 5). BioMap2 has identified the core habitats and critical natural landscapes within Leicester, as shown in **Figure 7**.

The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act protects rare species and their habitats by prohibiting the taking of any plant or animal species listed as endangered, threatened, or of special conservation concern. Leicester’s rare, threatened, and endangered species are shown in **Table 8** and described in further detail below.

Table 8,
Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species, Leicester

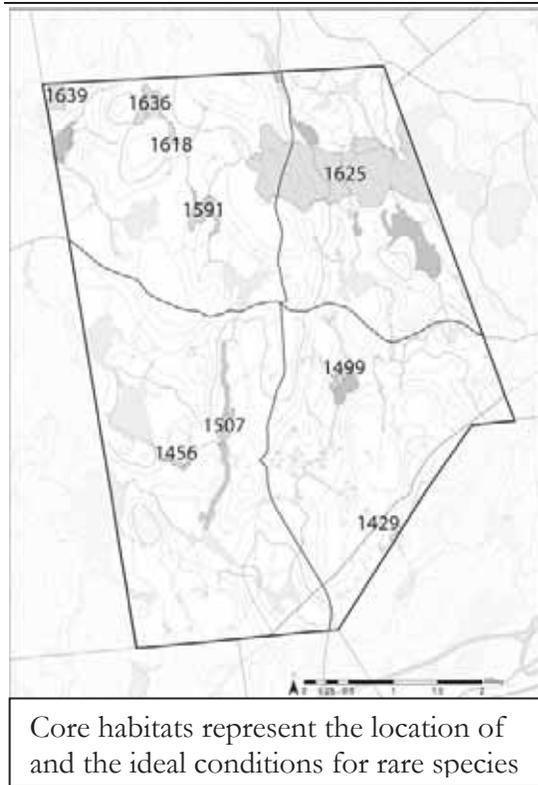
Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status*	Most Recent Observation
Bird	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Henslow's Sparrow	E	1974
Bird	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper Sparrow	T	2009
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	1989
Vascular Plant	<i>Pedicularis lanceolata</i>	Swamp Lousewort	E	1940
Vascular Plant	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Great Laurel	T	2006

E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

* Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. There currently are no Federally Listed Species in Leicester.

Source: *Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, Division of Fisheries & Wildlife*

Figure 7:
BioMap2 Habitats, Leicester



Core 1429 consists of an unprotected 12-acre core habitat featuring a wetland core (*BioMap2: Leicester*). This swamp is shared by Leicester and Auburn. The Kinnear Brook drains the swamp and then joins the Chapin Brook before feeding into the Stoneville Reservoir.

Core 1456 and 1507 consists of an unprotected 12-acre and an unprotected 90-acre (respectively) core habitat featuring an aquatic core habitat and a species of conservation concern (*BioMap2: Leicester*). A section of the Burncoat Brook and the entire length of the Town Meadow Brook contain populations of the triangle floater mussel. The Cedar Meadow Pond, which feeds Burncoat Brook, is considered impaired by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs due to invasive aquatic species (Mass DEP, *French and Quinebaug* 10).

Core 1499 consists of a protected 23-acre core habitat featuring a wetland core habitat (*BioMap2: Leicester*). This swamp drains into the Cherry Valley and Rochdale Water District's Henshaw Pond and sits within a block of wet forest that supports a diversity of habitats and wildlife.

Core 1591 consists of an unprotected 44-acre wetland core habitat occurring on mid-elevation slate, one of the least common ecological settings for wetland core habitats in the state (*BioMap2: Leicester*). This wetland surrounds the Whittemore Street Pond and abuts Leicester's largest block of interior forest. Development has encroached on this core wetland from the south and east.

Core 1618 and 1636 consists of an unprotected 8-acre and an unprotected 49-acre (respectively) core habitat featuring a priority natural community (*BioMap2: Leicester*). Inland Atlantic white cedar swamps are forested wetlands dominated by Atlantic white cedar, with a supporting guild of hemlock, spruce, red maple, and yellow birch. As in all Atlantic white cedar swamps, water-saturated peat overlies the mineral sediments. This example of Inland Atlantic white cedar swamp is moderate-sized, with mature structure and good floral diversity.

Core 1625 consists of a partially protected 1,061-acre core habitat featuring species of conservation concern (*BioMap2: Leicester*). These grasslands are maintained by mowing and the grazing of dairy cows, which proves suitable habitat for whip-poor-wills as well as the grasshopper sparrow, a state-protected rare bird. Natural succession would transform the grasslands into shrubland without such a management regime, leaving the grasshopper sparrow without a suitable environment.

Core 1639 consists of a partially protected 54-acre core habitat featuring a species of conservation concern (*BioMap2: Leicester*). The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife manage the Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area. This WMA abuts large parcels of private land in Leicester that are mostly void of structures or impervious surfaces. In Spencer, however, the opposite is true. The smooth green snake relies on the soft edges of grasslands, marshes, wet meadows, fields, and forests within this area (*BioMap2: Leicester*).

Source: Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

Endangered species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts. Endangered species found in Leicester include the Henslow's sparrow and the swamp lousewort (*BioMap2: Leicester*).

The Henslow's Sparrow is historically a migratory bird that has adapted to grasslands in

response to the loss of its natural habitat in coastal marshes. It is rarely seen because of its preference to flee on foot instead of by flight. The managed grasslands of Worcester airport had proven suitable for this species although it hasn't been seen since 1974 (NHESP, *Henslow's Sparrow*).

The Swamp Lousewort grows in open areas that are periodically flooded such as wet meadows, marsh edges, and stream banks. It thrives in open sunny habitat, so competition from woody vegetation or invasive species are a threat. Swamp Lousewort hasn't been seen in Leicester since 1940 (NHESP, *Swamp lousewort*).

Threatened species are likely to become endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range. Threatened species found in Leicester include the grasshopper sparrow and the great laurel (*BioMap2: Leicester*).

Grasshopper Sparrows nest in dry grasslands. Sandplain grasslands, specifically, are the grasshopper sparrow's natural habitat. But they have adapted well to anthropogenic habitats such as airports and landfills. They are very sensitive to changes in plant composition and respond well to the effects of fire management. The mowing and grazing maintenance regime of the Worcester airport has also proven suitable for the Grasshopper Sparrow. It has most recently been seen in Leicester in 2009 (NHESP, *Grasshopper Sparrow*).

Great Laurel is an evergreen shrub with clustered pink or white flowers. Its habitats include the edges of boggy swamps, Atlantic white cedar swamps, near open ponds, within forested seepage fens (a peat-forming area where very cold, nutrient-poor water seeps to the surface); and the on the edges of a red maple swamps. Great laurel has been threatened by illegal wild harvesting for transplanting as landscape shrubs. Great laurel has last been identified in Leicester in 2006 (NHESP, *Great Laurel*).

Special concern species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked, or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become threatened in Massachusetts. Species of special concern found in Leicester include the wood turtle, the eastern box turtle, and the triangle floater mussel (*BioMap2: Leicester*). Whip-poor-wills and smooth green snakes have been added to the MESA special concern species list for Leicester since the last OSRP update in 2007 (*BioMap2: Leicester*).

Wood Turtles prefer riparian areas. Slower moving mid-sized streams are favored, with sandy bottoms and heavily vegetated banks. The stream bottom and muddy banks provide hibernating sites for overwintering, and open areas with sand or gravel substrate near the streams edge are used for nesting. Wood turtles spend most of the spring and summer in mixed or deciduous forests, fields, hay-fields, and in riparian wetlands including wet meadows, bogs, and beaver ponds. Then they return to the streams in late summer or early fall to their favored overwintering location. Habitat management considerations should include the size and lack of fragmentation of both riverine and upland habitats and proximity and connectivity to other relatively unfragmented habitats, especially within existing protected open space. The last wood turtle seen in Leicester was in 1989 (NHESP, *Wood Turtle*).

The Eastern Box Turtle is a small, terrestrial turtle. Habitat destruction resulting from residential and industrial development, road mortality, disturbance of nest sites by atvs, and the mowing of fields during the turtles active season largely account for its threatened status. Habitat management considerations should include the size and lack of fragmentation of habitat and proximity and connectivity to other relatively unfragmented habitats, especially within existing protected open space (NHESP, *Eastern Box Turtle*).

Preferred habitats of the Triangle Floater Mussel include low-gradient river reaches with sand and gravel substrates and low to moderate water velocities. It has been found in streams smaller than five meters wide and rivers wider than 100 meters. The triangle floater is the only species in the genus *Alasmidonta* that inhabits lakes; it occurs in both natural lakes and reservoirs. Because triangle floaters are essentially sedentary filter feeders, they are unable to flee from degraded environments and are vulnerable to the anthropogenic alterations of waterways. Some of the many threats to the triangle floater and its habitat in Massachusetts include: nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, point-source pollution, alteration of natural flow regimes, water withdrawal, encroachment of river corridors by development, non-native and invasive species, habitat fragmentation caused by dams and road-stream crossings, and a legacy of land use that has greatly altered the natural dynamics of river corridors (NHESP, *Floater Mussel*).

Conservation and management recommendations include:

- Maintain naturally variable river flow and limit water withdrawals
- Identify, mitigate, or eliminate sources of pollution to rivers
- Identify dispersal barriers (e.g., dams, impassable culverts) for host fish, especially those that fragment the species range within a river or watershed, and seek options to improve fish passage or remove the barrier
- Maintain adequate vegetated riparian buffers
- Protect or acquire land at high priority sites

Whip-poor-wills are nocturnal, ground-nesting birds of open dry oak woodlands and pine barrens. Their diet consists primarily of moths taken on the wing. Though seldom seen, their call was once a common nighttime sound of summer nights across Massachusetts. Whip-poor-wills have experienced a dramatic range contraction in Massachusetts over the past few decades, and are now mostly relegated to a handful of large pine barrens. This range contraction is believed to be the result of development and the habitat succession caused by fire suppression. Whip-poor-wills often reclaim their former haunts following active habitat management, such as prescribed fire and targeted logging (NHESP, *Eastern Whip-poor-will*).

Smooth Green Snakes mature to 14-20 inches long with a uniform light green back and yellow-to-white venter. The smooth green snake is found in moist open or lightly forested habitat where grasses and shrubs are abundant (edges of marshes, wet meadows, fields, and forest edges or open forests, grasslands, blueberry barrens, pine barrens) and prefers to forage on the ground with activity in the daytime. Smooth green snakes overwinter in rodent burrows, ant mounds and rock crevices, either singly or communally (*Smooth Green Snake*. Michigan Department of Natural Resources).

Rare species in Leicester may be stressed by the loss or fragmentation of habitat. Efforts to widen corridors into patches and connect patches with corridors can help counteract these stressors by

buffering integral ecosystems. The rare species found in Leicester help distinguish the town's open space as more than just rural but as important and unique. The damage of rare inland Atlantic Cedar Swamp in particular may harm the ecosystem as a whole. This specific and rare ecosystem hosts an array of plants and animals dependent on its health and existence (NHESP, Natural Community Fact Sheet, see box Atlantic White-Cedar Swamps, on **page 26**).

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Hills dot Leicester's landscape and mark significant historical/cultural areas in town, including the remains of former town villages. Leicester's historic neighborhoods are distinct and some of the old buildings have been preserved well. Rare inland white Atlantic cedar swamps are relics of an earlier time as well. Leicester's parks provide scenic views and unique landscapes. **See Map 5, Unique Features.**

Leicester's very first settler, Arthur Carey, was a hermit who dug himself a cave in one of the town's many hills (Washborn 4). Today, Carey Hill and many other named hills mark historically significant places in town. Cooper's Hill Dairy Farm and Ballard Hill (located in the southwest quadrant of town) were identified in community meetings as having important and culturally significant agricultural resources. Along with Tupper Hill, these hills have also been identified by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report 5*). Tupper Hill resides beneath Ballard Hill to the south and has largely become covered with young deciduous forest, whereas Ballard Hill has been maintained as hayfields and offers panoramic views (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report 5*).

Johnson's Farm (located on Whittemore Street north of Leicester Center), along with Cooper's Hill Farm (located on a drumlin in the southeastern quadrant of town) are recognized by the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program as valuable open space that remains largely intact (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report 14, 17*). With a small percentage of land in Chapter 61A status, Johnson's Farm is the only one of these sites that has been afforded any kind of protection, albeit limited. With modern agricultural stresses (such as higher costs and lower returns) it is understandable that farmers shy away from permanently protecting their lands (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report 17*) as the ability to subdivide and develop may be essential for a farmer to survive financially. However, Leicester has an interest in helping to preserve these sites, which residents regularly identify as important landscapes.

One of the success stories related to Leicester's historic preservation efforts was the 2006 designation of the Washburn Square-Leicester Common National Register District. Listing of the Washburn Square District provides recognition of Leicester's historic importance and assures protective review of Federal or State projects that might adversely affect the character of the district. However, this designation does not regulate or limit construction or remodeling within the district. A National Register District designation is primarily an honorary designation, except where Federal or State funds are used (such as with road widening)

Swan Tavern and May House (located within Leicester Center) have also been recognized for their historic value by the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program (11). With their clapboard exterior and pillar porch posts, these structures help identify Leicester Center as a historic landmark (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report 11*).

Mannville, Brick City, and Lakeside are former villages within the northeast quadrant of town. As the city of Worcester bought and improved its surface water drinking supply in this part of town, villages such as these were destroyed or simply abandoned. Structural remains of Mannville,

however, serve as an important archeological site, and of these remains the historic Quaker Cemetery (better known as “Spider Gates”) is still largely intact (*Leicester Reconnaissance Report* 9). The Mannville archeological site is owned by the Worcester Water Department and access is restricted. The Quaker Cemetery is owned by the Society of Friends and is also inaccessible, surrounded in all directions by Worcester water supply lands. The historic Southgate Pasture Cemetery (in the southwest quadrant of town) dates back to the Revolutionary War and is recognized by the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program as well (7), but similarly restricted to access because it is on private property. It would be beneficial for the Town of Leicester to be able to reclaim improved public access to parts of these open spaces as they pertain to the historical significance of the town as a whole.

As noted in Section 1 (Regional Context), five areas in Leicester were also designated as regionally-significant Priority Preservation Areas: Johnson Farm, Mannville, Ballard Hill, Cooper’s Hill Top Farm, and the Mid-State Trail.

As described earlier in Section 4 (see subsection D. Vegetation), at least one rare inland Atlantic white cedar swamp exists in the northwest quadrant of town. Some residents believe that other remnants of rare cedar swamps exist around Cedar Meadow Pond and Great Cedar Swamp (directly south of Henshaw Pond).

Approximately three miles of the 96-mile-long Midstate Trail runs through Leicester from near Burncoat Park to Moose Hill Reservoir and Wildlife Management Area. Although there are shelters along the trail, no camping spots are designated within the town (*Midstate Trail*). Most of Leicester’s portion of the trail is on roadway. The second largest portion is under agreement with private landowners with trail easements so that the trail traverses along fields and hedgerows (Novick). Finally, the trail leaves Leicester and diverts back into Spencer in the Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area. The Greater Worcester Land Trust has expressed interest in not only helping to divert the trail from roads into natural habitats, but also to establish a connector trail from the Midstate Trail, across Leicester, and into Worcester (Novick).

Less well known, the remnants of a wooded pasture in Burncoat Park produce small fruit beneath a swarm of invasive plant species (Griffin). Hillcrest Country Club provides uplands and wetland habitats to explore by foot and snowmobile. The top of Hillcrest provides long views across forest and into Worcester from the golf course. Also, Rochdale Park is considered by some as a top notch college-level baseball field surrounded by a forest buffer and a 43-acre pond behind the dugouts (Wood).

G. Environmental Challenges

Drinking Water

Leicester’s residents are well aware of the impaired conditions of its drinking water. At this time these impairments stem more from systems failures than from environmental contamination, although unprotected, excessively-drained recharge areas along Routes 9 and 56 may pose risks to drinking water.

Leicester is serviced by three private water districts (and four private sewer districts), two of which – at times over the past several years – have provided questionable water quality as is noted in annual drinking water quality reports (2011, Cherry Valley and Rochdale; 2012, Hillcrest; 2012, Leicester). All three of Leicester’s water districts have been cited for exceeding acceptable levels of coliform (2011, Cherry Valley and Rochdale; 2012, Hillcrest; 2012, Leicester). Leicester Water District’s Whittemore Street well has been shut down due to arsenic contamination (2012 *Annual Drinking*

Water Quality Report. Leicester Water Supply District 9). The Cherry Valley and Rochdale Water District has been cited for additional violations of exceeding turbidity and trihalomethanes and has been found to have high levels of manganese as a secondary contaminant (*2011 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report* 5). The DEP issued the Cherry Valley and Rochdale Water District an Administrative Consent Order (ACO) for violations of the Surface Water Treatment Rule, the Disinfectant/Disinfection Byproduct Rule, and the Total Coliform Rule (TCR) (*2011 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report* 5). To be addressed immediately by the Cherry Valley and Rochdale Water District is the partial rebuilding of water treatment filters (*2011 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report* 5). Although the Grindstone Brook (which drains from the public water supply Henshaw Pond) has tested positive for fecal coliform and E. Coli. (Mass DEP, *French and Quinebaug* 13), these current water issues do not seem to reflect environmental contamination as much as systems failure as trihalomethanes and coliform can result from irregular maintenance of water lines (Knox). According to each district's water quality report, all three water districts are consistently working toward meeting codes.

Due to Leicester's excessively drained soils, efforts to protect Leicester's drinking water should not only include restricting development of unprotected land in the surface-water and groundwater watershed (as is the intent of the Water Resource Protection Overlay District), but should include the active protection of these lands as natural landscapes to reduce the filtration burden on Leicester's water districts. The Town of Leicester should also continue to actively support the Moose Hill Water Commission in its attempts to provide the town with water from the permanently protected Moose Hill Reservoir. State regulations and financial difficulties prevent the town from being able to use the reservoir for clean drinking water (*Moose Hill Minutes*. Moose Hill Water Commission). First, the state stopped approving surface water drinking supplies in 1970. Second, state regulations restrict diverting water from one watershed to another. Third, the town owns the water but not the land around or under it, preventing the water commission from building the infrastructure needed to deliver the water from the reservoir to residents. And lastly, the Moose Hill Water Commission faces a \$2 million price tag to complete the task (*Moose Hill Minutes*).

Despite the abundance of surface waters in town, there is no public water access and few locations to fish outside of the Greater Worcester Land Trust's Southwick Pond in the northeast quadrant of town (Community meeting). In fact, most of the ponds not preserved as municipal drinking supplies are privately owned (Scoping meeting). In large part, these water bodies are private due to legacy ownership rights that extend back to the development of mill dams (*Cedar Meadow Lake 2013-2014 Action Plan*. Cedar Meadow Lake Watershed District). Many of these mill dams remain. There are 25 dams in Leicester; two of which (on Waite Pond and Greenville Pond) are owned by the town and 9 of which are privately owned (Mass GIS). Nine of Leicester's dams are deemed high hazards and an additional six dams are considered significant hazard (Mass GIS). According to the Office of Dam Safety a failure in these dams may cause loss of life and damage home(s), industrial or commercial facilities, secondary highway(s) or railroad(s) or cause interruption of use or service of relatively important facilities.

Along with the Town of Leicester, watershed districts are slowly acquiring dams from their previous private owners to actively address the dam's current conditions (Dam and Lake and Pond Meeting). These dams should be monitored for their structural integrity. While some grant money may be available to help property owners revitalize these historic town features, neighbors adjacent to the ponds and dams should consider taking ownership and care of the dams themselves (*Financial and Technical Assistance for Infrastructure Removal/Repair and Planning*. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs).

Chronic Flooding

Beavers can contribute to the water quality and flooding concerns. While beaver ponds can provide wetland habitat, beaver activity can flood roadways, septic systems, and basements. Beavers may also damage valued landscape plants and trees. In addition, beavers also transmit *Giardia* (a microscopic parasite that causes intestinal illness), which is a health concern near water supplies.

According to the Central Massachusetts Region-wide Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (2012):

One single family property has experienced repetitive loss due to flooding. There is one child day care facility, and one fire station (valued at less than \$300,000), located in the 100-year flood plain. There are several High Hazard dams in Leicester, including 4 in the northeastern quadrant associated with Kettle Brook water bodies, and 3 in the southwestern quadrant. The Waite Pond Dam was deemed “critical” by the Office of Dam Safety (8/2010). FEMA reports two areas (3 properties) experiencing repetitive losses in recent years.

Implementation of the recommendations in this plan will help to alleviate that can be taken to reduce or prevent long-term risks to human life and property from flooding.

Erosion & Sedimentation

Erosion and sedimentation related to new development has been an ongoing challenge. While the Town has taken steps to improve the situation through a more comprehensive evaluation of these issues through implementation of the Stormwater Bylaw, there continue to be problems with long-term oversight and maintenance. Also, there are erosion and sedimentation concerns related to residential projects that were discontinued or abandoned during the recent downturn in the economy after extensive land clearing had been done. One of these, the former Laurel Ridge Estates site, has been developed as a solar farm (Auburn Solar), which should help stabilize the site once vegetation is established.

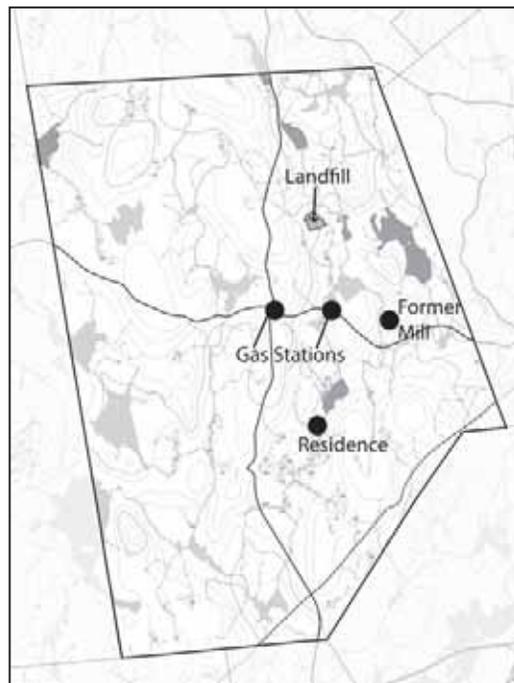
Title 5 Setbacks, established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do restrict disturbance within 50 feet of all water bodies and wetlands (except within the drainage basin for a public surface water supply where the buffer zones are enlarged to 100 feet around wetlands, 200 feet around streams and ponds, and 400 feet around public surface water supplies) (*Greener Views* 17). However, according to the 2008, 2009, and 2010 water quality assessment reports released by the office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, invasive species and low flows are responsible for impairments in Leicester’s private water bodies (Mass DEP, 2008, 2009, 2010). This information may suggest that these setbacks provide only limited protection by restricting development but do not adequately address other influences of environmental degradation including warm and salted runoff waters, nutrient enrichment (most likely from the treated municipal wastewater from the Leicester Water Supply District facility on an unnamed tributary of Dutton Pond (Mass DEP, 2009 9), sedimentation (heavily influenced by road sand), and introduction of invasive aquatic species. Therefore, active measures to protect water bodies and wetlands in Leicester should not stop at setbacks but should consider green infrastructure to catch, store, and bio-remediate contaminants.

Brownfields

Residents and businesses can also help protect drinking water supplies by reporting spills or point source pollution. Today the Massachusetts DEP (which monitors reported spills) has identified fifty-two sites in Leicester (mostly along Route 9) where spills of fuel oil or other hazardous materials have been addressed between 1985 and 2006 (*Waste Site/Reportable Releases Look Up*. Mass DEP). There are currently four brownfields in Leicester, shown in **Figure 8**.

Four release sites remain under some phase of assessment or cleanup: two sites are currently-working gas stations, one site is a residential property, and the fourth site is the former Worcester Spinning and Finishing Mill factory (*Waste Site/Reportable Releases*). The mill is noted for the presence of oil as well as hazardous materials (*Waste Site/Reportable Releases*). According to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection 21E database only one of these sites (the Mobil gas station) is actively being remediated. Status is unclear for the remaining three sites. Three of the four brownfields are in or near wetlands or water bodies.

*Figure 8:
Brownfield Locations, Leicester*



Three of the four brownfields are located in or near wetlands or water bodies.

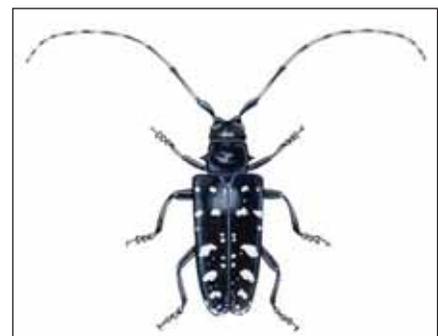
Source: Mass DEP Waste Site/Reportable Releases Look Up. Prepared by Conway School students

Landfill

Leicester’s capped, but unlined, landfill can also contaminate underground water if not monitored properly (*Closure of the Unlined Landfill Located on Old Fall River Road, Dartmouth, MA*. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection).

Asian Longhorned Beetles

The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) remains a serious environmental concern for the Town of Leicester. This beetle is an invasive wood-boring insect that attacks hardwood trees, including maple, birch and elm. A large infestation of ALB was discovered in neighboring Worcester, MA in August 2008 and is currently under eradication. According to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs: “The spread of ALB would cause negative impacts to the maple sugaring, nursery,



Female Asian Longhorned Beetle
Source: Massachusetts Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program

tourism and forest product industries of Massachusetts, and would seriously threaten our state's forest, park and street trees" (EOEAS website).

Although ALB has not yet been identified in Leicester, it has not been eradicated from Worcester County. Currently, there are 110 square miles under regulation in Worcester County, including all of the city of Worcester, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and a portion of the towns of Holden and Auburn. Within the regulated area, residents are prohibited from moving or transporting live beetles, firewood, lumber or any infested or "host" tree, branch, twig, stump or other woody materials from the regulated area to outside zones. By early 2014, 23,549 infested trees and 10,250 high-risk host trees had been removed within the regulated area. Additional high-risk host tree removals have taken place on 1,400 acres within the city of Worcester, and the towns of West Boylston, Boylston, Holden and Shrewsbury (USDA Animal & Plant Inspection Service, March 2014 Press Release). In the United States, the beetle prefers maple species including boxelder, Norway, red, silver and sugar maples. Other preferred hosts are birches, Ohio buckeye, elms, horse-chestnut and willows. Occasional to rare hosts include ashes, European mountain ash, London plantree, mimosa and poplars.

At present, the Town employs a part-time tree warden to treat sick trees in parks and right-of-ways. The Town also employs an overburdened seven-member highway-department crew that is responsible for the removal of dead or dangerous limbs and sick trees (Wood). However, the town has been unable to provide for the proper maintenance and care of its public trees as municipal budgets are frequently cut (Wood). Trees within woodland and forest areas receive no maintenance at all. An outbreak of pests or diseases could seriously damage Leicester's rural character as well as put the town's water bodies and important habitats at risk.

Forest Fragmentation

Fragmentation, such as that caused by the two sets of powerlines that cut across the length of town, can also expose interior ecosystems to environmental stressors such as invasive species (*EIA Toolkit*. Endangered Wildlife Trust). How such areas are managed can negatively affect sensitive environments. The Town should consider the environmental impacts of the management of these areas.

Climate Change

Climate change is projected to have considerable impacts on New England in the century to come. As these effects mount, the valuable ecosystem services (such as water filtration, floodwater absorption, and heat mitigation) provided by Leicester's forests, water bodies and wetlands will increase in value and importance. Planning for climate change will help Leicester to transition into a new climate regime with its environmental resources intact.

According to the report of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCUSA, the Changing Northeast Climate, 2006) the number of summer days when the temperature exceeds 100°F are expected to increase throughout the United States, with significant impacts to agriculture, human health, ecosystem integrity, and local economies. As these impacts mount, and urbanization in the region increases, the ecosystem services provided by Leicester's natural resources will prove increasingly important. With careful management and stewardship, Leicester may find itself in a position to generate income and economic activity from its waters, its cool, shaded forests, and its considerable stock of important agricultural soils.

In addition to summer heat, climate change is likely to bring significant changes to the traditional New England winter. By late century, Leicester may see only occasional snow (UCUSA). This will have dramatic impacts on the hydrological regime of the region, a problem that will be exacerbated during the summers by far more irregular and yet far more severe patterns of precipitation. Leicester's wetlands and floodplains will play an increasingly important role as these changes occur, while Leicester's many lakes and ponds will act as important water resources during periods of drought.

The Town of Leicester can address these environmental challenges issues by expanding its revenue resources for maintenance, prioritizing and revitalizing its parks, and preventing development that compromises interior landscapes. **See Map 11, Environmental Challenges.**

Section 5. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

This section provides an overview of Leicester’s open space. Leicester’s conservation and recreation lands encompass 1,184 acres, 7.5% of the town’s total land area. Open space includes larger parcels of undeveloped or partially developed land, as well as conservation and recreation land. Open space is important to the Town of Leicester for several reasons. Open space improves the quality of life for residents, providing recreational opportunities, scenic views, and places to simply enjoy the outdoors. Parks can provide health benefits by providing places for active recreation, as well as providing places for social gathering. Open spaces also provide valuable wildlife habitat, help to protect water resources, and provide natural stormwater storage. Protection of open space is an important Town priority.

Leicester’s open space resources have various levels of protection. Permanently protected open space lands have the maximum legal protection and are protected by permanent deed restrictions that restrict development. Temporary protections on open space include protected lands which have a legal protection of a set term (temporary easements), or with conditions for conversion to other uses but which may be converted at any time (such as land protected by Chapter 61). Unprotected open space is land with no legal restriction against future development. These properties may be currently protected, but could be sold or developed at any time.

Ninety-two percent of 2014 survey respondents polled feel there is a need to protect Leicester’s open space. In addition, 93% are in favor of a town trail system that would connect parks and established trailheads, and 70% of respondents said they would be willing to pay higher taxes or user fees to support the maintenance of Leicester’s recreation areas and facilities.

See the following maps related to Section 5:

Map 7.1, Conservation & Recreation Lands

Map 7.2, Conservation & Recreation Lands: Grant-Funded Lands

Map 7.3, Conservation & Recreation Lands

A detailed inventory of all categories lands of conservation and recreation interest is located in the Appendices (Appendix B). Summary Information is contained below.

A. Privately Owned Parcels

1. Chapter 61 and Agricultural Preservation Restriction Properties

According to September 2014 Assessors’ records, there are 2,198 acres in Chapter 61 protection in Leicester, a significant increase since the last Open Space & Recreation Plan in 2007 (1,116 acres). Chapter 61 provides a limited protection that the landowner may withdraw from. Chapter 61 lands include “forest, agricultural/horticultural, and recreational lands valued according to MGL Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B. Land is valued at its current use rather than the full and fair cash value. The commercial property tax rate is applicable for land defined under these chapters (Mass Department of Revenue website).” If a parcel protected under Chapter 61 status goes up for sale, the Town has the right to first to purchase refusal. The Town can assign its right to a conservation partner, such as the Common Ground Land Trust or Greater Worcester Land Trust. Until the town is able to adequately maintain its parks and recreational facilities it may be easier to pursue right to-first-refusal partnerships in order to avoid further overburdening Town resources. The town and its partners (e.g.

land trusts and user groups) can make efforts to work with private landowners to achieve limited protection by assisting them in achieving Chapter 61 status.

There are no lands with an active Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) in Leicester. However, the Common Ground Land Trust has begun working with Leicester’s farmers toward establishing APRs on active farms (Parke).

2. Forest Stewardship Program Properties

Currently, in Leicester, there are 429.92 acres enrolled in the Department of Conservation Resources’ Forest Stewardship Program. This program helps private landowners develop a ten year management plan based on the owner’s personal goals. The YWCA owns 40 acres of forested land in accordance with this program in Leicester. Again, the town and its partners can make efforts to work with landowners to help them enroll in this educational non-regulatory program that promotes healthy, productive forested open space.

3. Other Privately-Owned Parcels

Becker College and the Green Mountain Club allow public access on their private land, while Leicester’s Rod and Gun Club, and the Leicester Country provide access to members only (Mass GIS).

B. Public and Non-Profit Parcels

1. Town-Owned Parks & Recreation Properties

Leicester has 8 Town-owned public parks and 1 conservation area, as listed in the table below and shown on **Map 7.3, Conservation & Recreation Land Inventory**. Descriptive information about each park is on the following pages. Management of the parks is overseen by the volunteer members of the Parks & Recreation Commission, with the assistance of a part-time clerk. Highway Department staff assist with park maintenance. The Conservation Commission is responsible for Willow Hill Conservation Area.

Table 9:
Leicester Parks & Conservation Areas

Park Name	Address	Assessors Map/Parcel
Burncoat Park	12 Town Beach Road	18/A2
Community Field	22 Waite Street	212B/A1
Hillcrest Country Club	325 Pleasant Street	30/A1.1 & 30A/A24
Leicester Lions Park	252 Main Street	23A/A32
Rochdale Park	1040 Stafford Street	46/ A3
Russell Memorial Fields	92 South Main Street	21/A3
Town Common	Washburn Square	2A/C1
Towtaid Park	Church Street	23D/B19 & 23D/B21
Willow Hill Conservation Area	Willow Hill Road	24/C8

Source: Town Records (Assessors, Conservation, Parks & Recreation)

Burncoat Park

The Town was awarded a \$37,500 Self-Help grant in 1967 towards the purchase of the 115 acre Burncoat Park (the total cost of the land was \$95,000). Burncoat Park was used as a Town Beach

from the time of purchase in 1968 until 1990, when the beach was closed due to lack of funding for a park ranger, life guards, and general maintenance and upkeep. After the beach was closed, the park continued to be used for softball, and there was also playground equipment. With the exception of the softball field (which is only used during softball season) Burncoat Park is no longer open to the public. There is no active maintenance except related to the softball field. However, hikers, dog walkers, snowmobilers, and hunters use the forest land (Scoping Meeting). Some residents also fish at Burncoat Pond. The parking lot is locked behind a gate, leaving visitors to the park parking their vehicles on the sides of a dead-end road. Attendants at the community meeting report that constant vandalism had made the park very difficult to maintain. At the Annual Town Meeting on May 1, 2006 (Article 31), the Town voted to petition the Massachusetts General Court (the legislature) to change the use of 10 acres of Burncoat Park from passive to recreational use. This was to allow the construction of soccer and softball fields (as well as associated parking) at Burncoat Park. At the Special Town Meeting on November 13, 2006 (Article 6), an additional 10 acres was proposed for conversion to active recreational use. In 2008, the Massachusetts legislature voted to approved the change passive to active recreational use for “a 20 acre more or less parcel located west of the existing paved access road known as Town Beach Road and north of Burncoat Pond in the Town of Leicester.” Conceptual Plans were prepared for the fields and parking (available in the Office of Development & Inspectional Services). The Town has been unable to move forward with additional planning for this project due to limited staffing and funds. This 115-acre park abuts the Mass Audubon Society’s Burncoat Pond Wildlife Sanctuary in Spencer. There is potential to make formal connections between the two areas through extensions of the extensive trail system at the Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Midstate Trail (that traverses the boundary between Leicester and Spencer).

Community Field

This field on Waite Street is used for football and soccer. This field also has a swing set for younger children to play on, and also sometimes used for movie nights. The field has a sprinkler system and lights (for night games). The Leicester High School football team uses the field. The Field is also used by the Leicester Soccer Club, Leicester Youth Soccer, and occasionally by the Leicester High School soccer team. Highway Department staff mow the field; the Leicester Soccer Club and the High School are responsible for lining the fields. The field is often in poor condition, due to drainage problems and damage caused by being used for soccer practice during wet weather. The public restrooms are not in working order; porta-potties are used during the soccer season. (Henderson)

Case Study: Sibley Farm

A creative partnership between the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Greater Worcester Land Trust, Common Ground Land Trust and the Town of Spencer helped preserve 350 acres at Sibley Farm in Spencer (O’Conner). The Greater Worcester Land Trust holds ownership of the northern 325 acres while Mass Audubon retained ownership of the southern 25 acres, establishing the Burncoat Wildlife Sanctuary. Private citizens also contributed money toward the acquisition. Sibley Farm is open to mixed-use including hiking, hunting, snowmobiling, and horseback riding. The property directly abuts Leicester’s 115-acre Burncoat Pond. Currently there is no formal trail connection between Leicester’s park and Spencer’s conservation area, but the Greater Worcester Land Trust has expressed interest in working with the Town of Leicester to extend trails from the Sibley Farm into Burncoat Park. Source: O’Conner, Michael P. *Partnership Including Mass Audubon Saves Sibley Farm in Spencer, Case Study* Prepared by Conway School students



Hillcrest Country Club golf carts, Photo by M. Buck

Hillcrest Country Club

Hillcrest Country Club was acquired in a successful effort by the Town to protect the 310 acres from proposed residential development. This purchase was funded by the Town of Leicester and a Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The Trust for Public Land also assisted with the purchase of the property. The Hillcrest site is divided into three general use restriction areas: 1) water supply/protection, 2) public outdoor

recreation, and 3) recreation with the ability to convert to general municipal use with Town Meeting approval. **(See Map 11, Hillcrest Country Club.)** Protecting this large, centrally located property from development offers vital protection for Henshaw Pond, which supplies drinking water to roughly forty percent of the town's residents, and creates multiple recreation opportunities, including a municipal golf course and hiking trails. The 48.6-acre nine-hole golf course includes a club building with a restaurant. The Town leases the golf club operations to a private management company. Any changes to the golf course portion in particular require a complicated conversion process. Such changes must be for another public outdoor recreational use, unless an equivalent additional parcel of land is provided to substitute (such land may not currently be in use for recreation). Repurposing of a portion of the property could potentially provide for much needed ballfields as well as directly serving the environmental justice population.



Photo from Leicester Lions Club web page

Leicester Lions Park

Leicester Lions Park is located on Main Street (Route 9) in Cherry Valley. The park, dedicated in 2005, was created by the Leicester Lions Club on a vacant Town-owned parcel. The park provides a peaceful place to relax, with landscaping and benches. The park is maintained by members of the Leicester Lions Club.

Rochdale Park

Rochdale Park is eight acres and within walking distance (approximately one-quarter mile) of Rochdale village center. The park has two baseball fields, used by Becker College, Leicester High School, Little League, and American Legion Baseball. Lighting is available for night games. Becker College is under contract with the Town for the park's use as its baseball team's playing field (Griffin).

Under this contract, Becker is responsible for maintenance of the baseball field during the baseball season. The park also has a basketball court, volleyball court, and a skatepark. Besides the ballfields, residents report that this park in disrepair. Recent improvements include sealcoating and crack-filling of the parking lot, skateboard park, and basketball court. Residents report mostly using the park for walking their dogs (Community meeting). Vandalism is reported to be a problem at this park. Rochdale Park is adjacent to 43-acre Rochdale Pond. The pond is not available for swimming or fishing, but provides scenic views.

Russell Memorial Fields

This field is used by Leicester Little League and by Becker College for baseball and softball. Becker College has a long-term lease for use of the field, and is responsible for maintenance of the field. A concession stand building (with broadcast booth) was constructed in 2004.

Town Common

The Town Common in Leicester Center is used for town functions, such as July Fourth, Arts and Crafts Festival, the Harvest Fair, a Mother’s Club Apple Festival, and summer concerts. The Town Common is a favorite place for Leicester’s residents (Questionnaire, 2014). The Town is considering re-design of the Common, including increased accessibility for the disabled.



Town Common, Photo by M. Buck

Towtaid Park

Towtaid Park is one of the town’s oldest parks. It originally encompassed 4.5 acres. In 2009, the town acquired an additional 15.5 forested acres directly abutting the park that incorporates Olney Pond and an informal trail system used by walkers and snowmobilers. [This property was taken for non-payment of taxes; the 2009 vote (October 7, 2009 Town Meeting, Article 5) transferred care and control to the Parks & Recreation Commission.] The park also abuts the 2.5-acre Cherry Valley Cemetery to the south. Towtaid Park is within walking distance of Cherry Valley village center. Park amenities include a basketball court, tennis court, and playground equipment. Currently, the park’s amenities are somewhat in disrepair (with vandalism identified as the main culprit). A Towtaid Park Master Plan was completed in 2004, but the Town has had insufficient funding and staff to implement the recommendations of the plan.



Towtaid Park basketball court, Photo by M. Buck

Willow Hill Conservation Area

The Town of Leicester acquired the 3 acre Willow Hill Conservation Area in 2002 (November 13, 2002 Town Meeting, Article 17) from the National Wildlife Federation Endowment, Inc. (at no cost to the Town). This parcel contains woods and wetlands, and is bisected by a National Grid utility easement. There are no improvement to the property, it is intended to remain as conservation land.

2. Other Town-Owned Properties with Recreation or Conservation Potential

Recreational facilities are available at all of the town’s schools, as shown in Table 10 on the following page.

Table 10:
Leicester School Recreational Facilities

School	Recreational Facilities
Leicester Primary School	Playground and soccer field
Leicester Memorial School	Softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, play area
Leicester Middle School	Baseball field, tennis courts, indoor basketball court
Leicester High School	Football field, outdoor track, indoor basketball court

The Town also owns two cemeteries: Cherry Valley Cemetery and Elliot Cemetery.

3. State-Owned Wildlife Management Lands

Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area

The Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area is owned by the EOEA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and provides 194 acres near Moose Hill for passive recreation and hunting. These parcels of land continue across the town boundaries into Spencer (to the west) and Paxton (to the north) for an additional 384.6 acres. The Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area is the only conservation land in Leicester that serves the protection of the Midstate Trail. Leicester's section of the Midstate Trail is less than three miles and is predominantly a road walk until entering these state-owned lands.

4. Water Resource Management Lands

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, two municipalities (Worcester and Spencer), as well as several water supply and watershed protection organizations own land in the town related to water resource management. These lands are described in more detail in Section 4 (Environmental Inventory & Analysis). These lands are generally available for passive recreational uses.



Moose Hill Reservoir, photographer unknown

5. Non-Profit Owned Properties

Greater Worcester Land Trust Land

The Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT), together with the City of Worcester, owns **Conservation Restrictions** on 63 acres in the northeast corner of town, known as Southwick Brook Pond, Southwick Pond (portion in Paxton) and Muir Meadows (portion in Paxton).

A listing of these properties with Conservation Restrictions is included in Appendix B.

These properties are open to the public for passive recreation on a loop-trail system and includes unimproved lake access to Southwick Pond as well as opportunities for fishing (Novick). These properties abut and connect to portions of these GWLT properties in Paxton. A map of these properties and their walking trails is available on the GWLT website at www.gwlt.org. At present, the access in Leicester is via a former fire road, but the property is gated (there is room for 1-2 cars off the road in front of the gate). GWLT plans to add a parking lot off Marshall Street for improved access for Leicester residents to this property.

In addition, GWLT owns two parcels totaling 27 acres of land off Paxton Street (east of Hyland Ave) which were donated to GWLT by the Cooke family in 2013. These parcels are open to the public and are currently accessible via an existing snowmobile trail. GWLT is working to improve public access to the site.

Other Non-Profit Owned Parcels

The YMCA’s Camp Wind in the Pines, the Girl Scouts’ Camp Laurel Wood provide access to members only (Mass GIS).

Other

Three senior housing projects in Leicester have set aside protected open space as part of their developments: Oak Ridge Estates (7.83 acres), Briarcliff Estates (4.02 acres), and Grandview Estates (8.4 acres). Though these don’t have state-approved Conservation Restrictions, the open space is protected by deed restrictions that prohibit development.

6. Recreational Programs

The Parks & Recreation Commission is responsible for several recreational programs, including the following:

Program	Location
Indoor Basketball	Town Hall
Tennis	Leicester Middle School
Fitness Boot Camp:	Leicester Middle School & Primary School
Golf:	Hillcrest Country Club

The Parks & Recreation Commission also organizes field trips, such as trips to Pawtucket Red Sox and the Basketball Hall of Fame. In addition, the Parks & Recreation Commission runs fundraisers such as tailgate parties, movie night on the Town Common, and a Christmas Party at the Leicester Senior Center.

7. Trails

As noted above, a portion of the Mid-State Trail is in Leicester (see www.midstatetrail.org for more information). Leicester’s section of the Midstate Trail is less than three miles and is predominantly a road walk until entering the Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area. Leicester’s snowmobile trails connect many of the town’s conservation and recreation lands. These trails are managed and maintained by the private Leicester Snowmobile Club with formal and informal arrangements with landowners. Some of the Town’s parks, notably Hillcrest, Towtaid, and Burncoat also have walking trails. Improved mapping of these trails would increase awareness and use of Leicester’s trails.

8. Park and Open Space Equity

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs requires special attention be given to Environmental Justice Populations in respect to open space. The Environmental Justice Program is founded on the observation that certain populations – including minorities and the poor – are systematically underserved by public spending on open spaces, recreation, and environmental quality issues. Leicester’s Environmental Justice Population area was identified in Leicester by the state based upon household annual income (Mass GIS). **See Map 2, Environmental Justice.** Although this area includes Leicester Center, the largest portion of the Environmental Justice Population is isolated from all three of the town’s village centers. Few sidewalks and a lack public transportation (Leicester Master Plan 5-7) contributes to the isolation of the Environmental Justice Population from the village centers.

At the center of the Environmental Justice Population area lies the 310 acre, mostly forested, Hillcrest Country Club property, which includes a golf course and an informal trail system. The trails and trailheads may not be obvious to most residents. The Town could better serve its

Environmental Justice Population by revitalizing this area with facilities and trails that serve as a connection to Leicester Center.



Hillcrest Country Club, photo by M. Buck

Section 6. Community Vision

A. Description of Process

An updated community vision for the Leicester's Open Space and Recreation Plan was developed on the basis of public input, including results from a community survey, community meetings, and conversations with residents and officials. On the basis of these communications, recommendations intended to address community priorities while simultaneously building the Town's capacity for subsequent efforts were developed.



Towtaid Park, photo by M. Buck

To gather information and direction from community members, meetings were held with the Town Planner, the Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRPC), and both elected and volunteer officials. In addition, three community meetings were held on February 12, 2014 and February 26, 2014, and October 7, 2014. (The community meeting on February 12, 2014 was originally scheduled for February 5th, but was rescheduled due to weather.) Notices for the February 2014 meetings were posted on the Town's website and flyers were posted throughout town. In addition, notice was provided in an insert to the Spencer New Leader, which is delivered free to Leicester households. The October 7, 2014 meeting was posted in the Telegram & Gazette, the Town's web page, and posted in Town Hall. Attendance was sparse with eight attending the first meeting, seven attending the

second, and one attending the third meeting. Additional attention to generating public involvement is a major priority in all aspects of the action plan. (See Section 2 for a complete overview of the public process.)

While due weight is given to public input collected in the community meetings, the limited attendance of these meetings limit their value as a basis for discussion of the needs of the people of Leicester as a whole. The online survey results were also used (121 results, a little more than 1% of the population). See **Appendix A** for survey detail. Comparisons with surveys from the 2007 Open Space Plan and 2009 Master Plan were helpful in evaluating patterns over time. Consideration was also given to the findings of the 2012 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Also, multiple discussions with Town staff, Open Space & Recreation Committee members, and interested residents throughout the update process were used to help shape the community's vision.

A chief finding concerns a pattern of slow decline in Leicester's parks and recreational spaces. One respondent to the 2014 survey wrote: "There used to be beaches to go to many many years ago, it would be nice to have the water clean enough to do that again in Rochdale and Burncoat." It is a familiar problem seen in many towns these days: shrinking budgets lead to cuts in important municipal services, as public servants struggle to keep up. Historical analysis also revealed that while broad public support exists for a variety of efforts around environmental quality and open space protection, the strategies employed by the Town to achieve these goals are no longer as effective as they once were in today's changed economic climate. As a result of this analysis, a broad program of capacity-building is recommended. However, rather than explore "capacity-building" in the abstract, this plan recommends a primary focus around two very grounded objectives: water quality improvement and park revitalization. These initiatives (as detailed in Section 9. Action Plan) employ

a range of strategies as a means of meeting community needs while simultaneously building capacity for subsequent efforts.

In the 2009 Master Plan Survey, in response to the question: “How should Leicester prioritize planning efforts over the next 5-10 years,” 279 respondents, or 79% of the sample, ranked “protect natural resources (water, open space, etc.)” a “high priority,” higher than any other category, including “promote increased commercial development,” which only 33.5% (128) ranked as a “high priority.” Similarly, when asked to rank the top 3 reasons Leicester should protect its open spaces, “To potentially raise property values” was ranked last. When asked in the 2014 Survey whether they felt open space and recreational opportunities should be protected, 92% of respondents answered “yes.” This demonstrates a sustained commitment to the principles of open space protection on the part of the people of Leicester, and an appreciation of the intrinsic value of nature as a component of the rural way of life.

In this and other results, the people of Leicester clearly express how highly they value the protection of open space for its own sake, but particularly as it concerns water quality, which emerged as the chief priority of respondents. When asked to rank the top 5 conservation issues in Leicester (2014 Survey), water quality and recreation emerged as the top two concerns. The 2012 SCORP reports that “the two most popular resources and activities for families are playgrounds and water facilities” (p.14). When asked in the 2014 survey what initiatives they would support, clean water was the clear front-runner. In addition, respondents indicated that they viewed the depressed local economy and residential development as the chief threats to open space in Leicester. (see **Appendix A** for a complete summary of 2014 survey responses.)

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Leicester shows great pride in its forests, open fields, working farms, and its plentiful ponds and streams. Survey respondents show broad agreement on the basic principle of open space protection, but do not always agree about how to go about it. The great majority of participants in the public process expressed concern about the impact of development on the rural character of the town, but show a broad range of positions on the question of what kind of growth and development, if any, would be appropriate. Respondents expressed a desire for a grounded update to the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan, with an achievable action plan.

Limited progress has been made towards the goals outlined in the town’s 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan due to limited staffing and financial resources. However, it is important to note the Town’s successes and action items that have been addressed:

- Establishment of an Agricultural Commission (5/2013)
- Adoption of local Stormwater Regulations (9/2011)
- Completion of ADA Transition Plan for Town facilities, including parks (2011)
- Adoption of a Right-To-Farm Bylaw (5/2010)
- Adoption of an Open Space Residential Design Bylaw (5/2009)
- Establishment of Leicester Farmers’ Market (2009)
- Adoption of a Local Wetland Bylaw (10/2008)
- Adoption of a Stormwater Bylaw (5/2008)
- Improved coordination regarding tax-title auction properties (ongoing)
- Stormwater Committee public education regarding recycling, solid waste disposal, and other threats to water quality (ongoing)

However, survey results and public feedback indicate some frustration with the lack of movement on a number of issues outlined in the 2007 OSRP, chief among them issues related to water quality and the condition and function of the parks. Addressing this frustration is at the heart of the proposal that new strategies, funding sources, and partnerships be explored and adopted.

Goals for the 2014 OSRP were identified on the basis of community input, research, and environmental analysis. They were found to be significantly in line with the goals of the 2007 OSRP. Similarly, it was found that community needs had not significantly changed in 2014. What has changed is not the needs of Leicester's residents, but the town's capacity for meeting those needs. The economic downturn of the last several years has squeezed already limited funds and staffing available to implement the plan. The five goals identified by citizens, and refined through this analysis, are as follows:

1. Protect natural resources.
2. Provide and maintain recreational opportunities.
3. Protect environmental quality, especially water quality.
4. Increase public participation in open space and recreation planning.
5. Identify appropriate resources to support the above goals.

Overall, respondents and participants in the public meetings expressed a vision of Leicester's future where its abundant open space and natural resources have been preserved for future generations. Residents expressed a desire to see "everything remain just the way it is," and one said that "I just want the green parts to stay green." There is a deep desire for seeing a small-town way of life continue into the twenty-first century. Concern for Leicester's economic development was also expressed, but few respondents expressed the sense that economic development and open space protection were diametrically opposed, and many respondents indicated visions of the future in which open space protection and economic growth could be mutually supporting. Above all, Leicester's residents want to see progress toward addressing their basic needs.

Section 7. Analysis of Needs

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Resource protection needs are many, but water supply protection is far and above the leading concern of Leicester's residents, as indicated by findings of this update, the 2009 Master Plan, and the 2007 OSRP Update, thus establishing a historical pattern of need that must be addressed.

Analysis indicates that a slowly developing pattern of insufficient funding and staffing has, over time, resulted in a reduction in the Town's capacity to meet basic needs, and that addressing this problem is a critical prerequisite to achieving the community's goals. Preservation and protection of farms, forests, and recreational or scenic water resources are also important priorities identified by residents and survey respondents.

Water supply protection is the leading concern of survey respondents and an important priority in previous planning documents. Ecological issues are often the result of a complex interplay of causes, suggesting a multi-tiered approach to their resolution. While in an ideal world all natural resources would receive equal priority, choices must be made about how to best deploy Leicester's limited resources. As discussed in earlier sections, a focus on water supply protection would not preclude serving other interests, such as protection of wildlife habitat or the expansion of passive recreational opportunities. These overlapping interests present an opportunity to enlist a wide variety of local and regional partners, spreading costs, distributing responsibility, and multiplying the benefits to the town and all parties concerned. A coalition assembled around central issues recognized by the public, such as water quality and the revitalization of town parks, could be an important first step towards building a diverse, and thus robust network of partners capable of implementing further protection efforts. In the case of recreational water access, a distinct need identified by residents, the goals of park revitalization and water protection overlap.

The complex interactions of ecological systems suggest that water protection can be achieved in areas not immediately associated with water quality, for example by the reduction of road widths (reducing runoff), adoption of bylaws and/or regulations that limit water use and encourage or require water recycling, and the investigation and possible remediation of polluted sites not immediately adjacent to water bodies yet potentially contributing pollutants through groundwater. However, there are many steps that can be taken to address water quality more directly, such as further protection of watersheds contributing to drinking water, expansion of the requirements of Leicester's Water Resource Protection Overlay District, adoption of similar requirements for the protection of other zoning districts, and direct management of invasive aquatic plant species.

Forests and wetlands are known to protect water quality and provide countless other ecological benefits. Leicester is home to several small areas of rare inland cedar forest (one officially designated, with others identified by residents), and includes several areas designated as interior forest, which offer high biodiversity value. These areas, however, are largely fragmented by roads and development, limiting their overall ecological value. Land protection in partnership with public land trusts and private citizens, including permanent and temporary protections, easements as well as outright acquisition, can provide valuable connections between Leicester's forests and other natural resources, increasing the system's overall capacity for the provision of valuable ecosystem services such as water quality protection.

Only 24% of Leicester's prime agricultural soils are currently in production, and not all of Leicester's farmers take full advantage of programs that would allow them to preserve the farming way of life in Leicester, protect their farms from the pressure of development, and reduce their tax burden. A

number of programs exist, from temporary protections under Chapter 61A, to permanent solutions such as Conservation Restrictions or Agricultural Protection Restrictions (APRs). In supporting the adoption of these programs, the best advocates will be area farmers and landowners who currently have land under protection, as they will be best able to understand and respond to concerns. As these are voluntary programs and adoption is up to the discretion of individual landowners, the Town's role can be to act as an advocate and facilitator of the adoption of these programs by maintaining an ongoing conversation and providing informative materials.

Many towns throughout New England now pursue the active support and development of their agricultural sector. While each town must adopt a strategy suited to its resources and needs, countless success stories exist, from the town farm and forests of Weston, Massachusetts, managed to great success by the nonprofit Land's Sake, to the Intervale in Burlington, Vermont, a remarkably successful farm-incubation program that, over the last twenty years, has transformed an informal dumping ground into a nationally recognized center for agricultural innovation (intervale.org). Preservation and expansion of Leicester's agricultural activity is an important part of protecting Leicester's community character. When asked to rate the top 5 conservation issues for Leicester, "Open space for scenic value" was the second-most important issue identified by 2014 survey respondents. Farms are an essential part of the visual fabric of rural New England.

A legacy of the postwar population boom and large-lot zoning, suburban sprawl has resulted in a proliferation of environmental impacts while simultaneously draining the town's budgets with the addition of long, wide roads and streetlights requiring regular maintenance. This larger historical pattern of development can be addressed through the continued adoption of Zoning Bylaw amendments and updates to the Subdivision Regulations that support compact development, set aside protected areas, and minimize impact to the Town's budget. When asked to identify the greatest threats to open space in Leicester, survey respondents identified "residential development" as the second greatest threat (after "depressed local economy").

Leicester is also home to several rare and endangered species. These represent part of the natural heritage of Leicester and as such their protection, as well as the overall effort to protect the natural environment, is consistent with the community's vision of a future where this heritage is preserved.

While cities and towns across the Commonwealth are investing heavily in creating green infrastructure, Leicester with its forests, fields, ponds and wetlands already enjoys the real thing, and with a smart approach to leveraging a wider pool of opportunities and resources for the continued management and protection of these resources, the town will be able to enjoy its forests and waters in the years and decades to come.

B. Summary of Community Needs

Its mix of open spaces, forests, and proximity to metropolitan areas contribute to making Leicester an attractive, enjoyable place to live. This proximity also introduces growth and development pressures on Leicester's open spaces. Water protection and recreation needs are two primary areas of concern for Leicester's residents. However, shrinking budgets have meant there has been little progress over recent years towards meeting these needs, suggesting that the underlying strategy behind meeting these needs requires an expansive update.

As discussed in Section 6, citizens expressed needs have not changed all that much over the years, suggesting that Leicester should consider new strategies to meet those needs. Respondents cite water quality as their chief concern, and indicate a broad frustration with the upkeep and maintenance of existing recreational infrastructure. Residents express a broad consensus around the need for

improved and increased recreational facilities. Given the insufficient level of current funding for management, acquisition by the town of more recreational facilities may not represent the best use of Leicester resources. Revitalizing the town's recreation spaces, bringing them back up to full operational status, and developing a management plan sustainable over the long term, along with the development of sustainable and independent funding, will allow the town to more accurately assess any remaining recreational needs or deficits.

Walking and dog-walking are the most popular daily recreational activities in Leicester (2014 survey), a finding which corresponds with the finding of the 2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP p.15). The most popular seasonal activity is gardening, followed by swimming, sledding, bicycling and hiking (2014 survey). The SCORP also notes in their public outreach results that the public expresses “a strong desire for more car-free options, meaning options where a resident would not have to get in his or her car to access a recreational activity” (p.17). The four goals outlined in the SCORP are:

1. Increase the availability of all types of trails for recreation.
2. Increase the availability of water-based recreation.
3. Invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home for short visits.
4. Invest in racially, economically, and age diverse neighborhoods given their projected increase in participation in outdoor recreation. (p.22-23)

These statewide goals are found to be largely in line with Leicester's needs. The four parks chosen for focus of revitalization in this plan—Towtoid, Hillcrest, Burncoat and Rochdale—meet all of these criteria. Analysis of geographic information from MassGIS and demographic information from the US Census (and 2014 Survey results) shows the four parks within a half a mile of the most densely populated areas in town, and Leicester's low-income census groups in particular. This does not take into account, however, the actual distance someone would need to walk: it was measured “as the crow flies.” Trails and sidewalks will increase access to these parks, increasing use and public participation. Finally Burncoat, while somewhat less close to population centers, offers the town's best opportunity for access to water-based recreation.

Respondents to the 2014 survey also indicate that they consider the depressed local economy as the chief threat to open space in Leicester. In 2006, hunting, fishing and wildlife watching generated a total of \$1,773,130,601 in the state of Massachusetts (SCORP p.9) and farming and forestry more than \$1 billion (p.20). The SCORP further suggests that pedestrian access to passive recreation facilities and mixed-use development can attract businesses and generate commerce (pp.9-10). These and other considerations suggest that open space protection can and should be an important part of a town's overall strategy for economic development, and it can simultaneously address conservation, recreation, and economic needs.

Placing a priority on efforts to improve water quality and the revitalization of four main parks does not mean disregarding other community priorities or other environmental issues and town liabilities. After water quality and recreational needs, respondents express concern about the future of Leicester's rural character and way of life. Zoning requirements should be updated while development pressure remains relatively low, so that Leicester's current residents set the pace and direction of future developments.

Special Populations

In addition to the general community needs discussed above, Leicester's parks and recreational facilities should meet the needs of special populations, such as the elderly and people with

disabilities. Demographic trends (See Section 3) show the possible need for programming for aging adults. According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP, 2012), the most popular resources and activities for seniors are senior centers and hiking/walking trails (SCORP, 14). Planning for park and recreational improvements should include participation from the senior community to ensure their needs are addressed.

Most Leicester parks and recreational facilities need upgrades to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. While most parks have some degree of accessibility, such as marked handicapped spaces, much work remains to bring the parks up to full compliance. With Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, an Americans with Disabilities Transition Plan was completed for Town buildings and facilities, including the Town’s parks. A summary of the cost of needed improvements at Leicester’s recreational facilities is summarized below:

Table 11:
Estimated Cost of ADA Accessibility Improvements at Leicester Parks, 2011

Park	Estimated Cost
Hillcrest Golf Course and Clubhouse	\$59,450
Rochdale Park	\$3,500
Towtaid Park	\$2,750
Lion’s Park	\$1,700
Community Fields (Waite Street)	\$64,050
Burncoat Park and Fields	\$4,750
Town Common and Gazebo	\$14,500
Russell Memorial Park	\$49,000
TOTAL	\$199,700

Source: Americans with Disabilities Transition Plan, Town of Leicester, MA, December 2011

More detailed information regarding ADA Accessibility is described in **Appendix D**. Working toward making Town facilities available to disabled residents should be a high priority.

C. Summary of Management Needs

Leicester has limited financial and staffing resources to meet open space and recreation needs. Leicester’s management needs are summarized below.

Management & Capital Improvement Planning

Management plans for existing conservation and recreation lands will help to keep them in good condition. At present, there are no management plans or capital improvement plans for the Town’s recreational facilities. Attention to ecological design (design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts) could provide parks and recreation spaces with higher ecological value than traditional management programs, at lower long-term management costs. [One reference in this field is *Sustainable Landscape Construction* (Thompson and Sorvig, 2008), which provides detailed discussion of the costs and benefits (ecological and financial) of a variety of landscape construction techniques.] Upgrading facilities to provide universal accessibility should be specifically addressed. Leicester also does not have a Forestry Plan for its extensive forest holdings

The division of responsibility for the upkeep and management of Town-owned conservation and recreation lands should be reviewed. Such assignments should be based on the primary management objective of each parcel, taking careful consideration of the consequences and advantages of different designations. Management plans with clear objectives for each park and parcel will reduce conflicts and take full advantage of the resources that these lands have to offer.

The involvement of residents and regional partners in active stewardship of recreation and conservation lands may help to reduce town expenses; existing funding is inadequate to meet current management needs. Leicester holds significant recreational lands, which have tremendous potential. A revitalization effort, if successful, will result in increased use of town parks, requiring an expansion of management activities.

Funding

Leicester's shrinking budget and staff cuts have left public maintenance workers struggling to keep up with park maintenance. For example, the Highway Department's staff of seven is all that remains. They are able to keep the parks mowed, but with their many other responsibilities more extensive management is not possible. The part-time tree warden struggles to keep up with the removal of damaged and diseased trees along right-of-ways, with little resources for more extensive management. A Town Forester could do much more than manage the town's forests, potentially serving to reestablish forestry as an active part of Leicester's economy.

Funding for ongoing management will continue to be an issue and addressing this issue is crucial to meeting community needs.

When asked to rank methods for open space protection, survey respondents ranked "donation of land", "donation of development rights", "direct purchase using state and federal grants", and "zoning changes" as their top four choices (in order of preference). "Direct purchase using tax revenues" was the least popular choice.

This plan recommends several options, including adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). While there seems little appetite for raising taxes in Leicester today, the CPA would allow the Town to leverage state matching funds for open space protection with only modest increases in taxes. The specific requirements of a CPA referendum can be tailored to a town's particular needs. A small increase on property taxes is leveraged against matching funds from the State fund. In contrast to the reimbursement programs, CPA matching funds are a guaranteed and reliable way to leverage Leicester's tax dollars for open space protection (see box **What is the Community Preservation Act?**).

In addition, the Town should consider endowments or the creation of ongoing maintenance funds separate from the town budget can ensure the upkeep of open space and recreational facilities in the face of changing budget constraints.

What is the Community Preservation Act?

The Community Preservation Act (CPA), which must be adopted by referendum, allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund by raising money through a surcharge of up to 3% of the real estate tax levy on real property. This revenue can then be used for open space protection, recreation, historic preservation, and the provision of affordable housing. The Act also creates a significant state matching fund, which serves as an incentive to communities to pass the CPA. See communitypreservation.org for further information, case studies, and sample language.

Source: Open Space Planners Workbook.

Increased use of Chapter 61 programs, as well as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) plan would protect Leicester's cultural heritage and natural resources while decreasing landowners' tax burden. (See box, **What is an Agricultural Preservation Restriction?**).

Partnerships

One of this plan's central recommendations is adoption of an active program to coordinate efforts, distribute responsibilities, and leverage a broader pool of resources than the town currently has

What is an Agricultural Preservation Restriction?

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program which is intended to offer a non-development alternative to farmers and other owners of "prime" and "state important" agricultural land who are faced with a decision regarding future use and disposition of their farms. Towards this end, the program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability.

Massachusetts' APR program, began as an act of the Legislature in 1979, was the first in our nation and has since been a model upon which many other states have built their programs. The Massachusetts APR program has permanently protected over 800 farms and a total land area of over 68,000 acres. The primary purpose of the APR program is to preserve and protect agricultural land, including designated farmland soils, which are a finite natural resource, from being built upon for non-agricultural purposes or used for any activity detrimental to agriculture and to maintain APR land values at a level that can be supported by the land's agricultural uses and potential.

Source: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

access to. While in recent years, the Town has begun working with other organizations such as the Greater Worcester Land Trust and Common Ground Land Trust, more active partnerships would benefit the Town. With the Town's limited funding and staffing, other cooperative partnerships should be explored, such as partnerships with local schools, landowners, and volunteer groups.

An example of this type of partnership would be the Town assigning its right of first refusal to partnering organizations. The town has 120 days to exercise this right with any Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B parcels that come up for sale. In addition, the town has the right to take ownership of lands in tax title. In both cases, the town may choose to assign its right of first refusal to land trusts or other entities, according to terms of use and management set and subsequently monitored by the Town. This would ultimately provide the town more control over the future direction and management of its open space than it currently enjoys.

Partnership with private landowners in protection of the town's natural resources represents another cornerstone of this strategy. As these are voluntary programs, the Town can only support and facilitate an ongoing conversation: the best advocates for these programs are local landowners who are currently enjoying their benefits. Temporary protections under Chapter 61 can reduce an owner's tax burden while increasing the conservation value of the land. More permanent protections can provide numerous benefits to landowners, with agreements carefully crafted to meet individual needs and concerns. A broader adoption of Chapter 61, conservation easements, and Agricultural Protection Restrictions can help to ensure that Leicester's legacy of farms and forests remains intact in the face of development pressures, preserving a rural way of life for future generations.

In addition, the Town may wish to develop a means to coordinate efforts between volunteer, neighborhood, and Friends of the Parks Associations. The Town can also consider pursuing additional successful arrangements such as the Town's agreement with Becker College concerning Rochdale Park.

While volunteer efforts are vital to the success of this plan, building a robust network of partnerships is difficult work that requires a long-term approach. While Leicester has many dedicated volunteers, additional support will probably be needed. One strategy could be to obtain the commitment of local conservation groups to the strategies laid out in this plan. Providing sufficient staffing to Town Departments responsible for open space and recreational priorities would also be beneficial.

Prioritization of Efforts

Leicester doesn't currently have a detailed set of specific priorities for park improvements, land acquisition needs, or other open space goals. While this Open Space and Recreation Plan is a step in that direction, more detailed work in setting priorities and identifying gaps would help the Town meet its goals. For example, identifying and monitoring the status of parcels of interest for watershed or other natural resource protection would be an important first step, allowing the Town and its partners to plan appropriately and act quickly when priority parcels become available. Perhaps more importantly, adopting a protocol for prioritization of efforts allows the Town to make strategic choices that stretch a limited budget further. The park management and capital improvement plans discussed above would help the Town move forward with implementation of improvements over time.

Resource Mapping: Public Resources and Public Engagement

The Town currently does not have detailed maps of open spaces, parks, and trails. Residents would be more aware of recreational opportunities with such mapping. More public awareness of Leicester's existing recreational opportunities can only increase support for future efforts

Mapping technology is a rapidly changing field. Accurate and detailed mapping can assist the town in meeting a variety of needs, and with some of the new tools available, this can be done at little cost, and by citizen volunteers. These resources could provide valuable support for the revitalization and management of Leicester's open spaces. Development of these and other resources is also consistent with one of the goals adopted in Leicester's 2009 Master Plan "Increase access and delivery of Town information and services through utilization of the Internet." (Goals: Facilities & Services, p. 1-4).

Many residents have expressed a desire for a map of trails in Leicester. Today this data can be acquired with common consumer-grade equipment such as handheld GPS units or smartphones, and shared through the Town website. While professional mapping software can be prohibitively expensive for small communities, numerous free and open source platforms exist that enable basic mapping. Google Earth is free and publicly available software that, in conjunction with citizen-derived mapping data, could be used to provide a map of trails or any number of other geographical features.

Citizen mapping could also serve an important role in protecting or conserving land, for example through observation and reporting of endangered species, or the documentation and registration of vernal pools. In a similar vein, citizen mapping can assist the town in the reporting of everything from non-point source pollution, to emergency reporting, and to road maintenance issues, such as reporting the location of potholes. Quicker reporting means that problems can be often addressed while they are still small, and relatively inexpensive to address.

In addition, a number of publicly available mapping resources currently exist that could assist the town and its partners in meeting open space needs. MassGIS's OLIVER is an online map viewer that includes nearly all of the map layers available through MassGIS, including parcel data. The Census Bureau provides a number of online map viewers which present various forms of economic and demographic data. While these do not have the full functionality of professional mapping software, they provide a wealth of information that is useful and highly relevant to the planning process and both public and private efforts at conservation.

Section 8. Goals and Objectives

The general goals identified in Chapter 6 were modified through the completion of the Open Space and Recreation Planning process and analysis to create the more comprehensive set of goals and objectives below. Specifically, “Establish a continuous open space planning process” was added as a goal.

Responsible entities and timelines are included in Section 9: Action Plan.

It is an overarching goal of this Open Space & Recreation Plan to increase public participation throughout the implementation process.

Goal 1: Protect open space and natural resources, particularly water resources

- A. Develop strategies to prioritize land protection efforts.
- B. Improve water quality.
- C. Protect Significant Habitats, Vernal Pools, Wetlands, and Rare Species
- D. Increase the ecological value of protected lands through the establishment of contiguous blocks or greenways of undeveloped, permanently protected land.
- E. Preserve farmlands and forest lands
- F. Promote low-impact development practices and encourage the permanent protection of ecologically valuable land with new development.

Goal 2: Provide and maintain recreational opportunities

- A. Revitalize town parks, beginning with Hillcrest, Burncoat, Rochdale, and Towtaid to improve recreation opportunities.
- B. Provide for improved maintenance of Town recreational facilities
- C. Enhance Leicester’s trail networks to provide access to parks and increase connections between parks and neighborhoods
- D. Increase awareness and participation at recreational facilities and programs

Goal 3: Develop and maintain partnerships

- A. Form a network of partnerships to support land protection efforts and the management and upkeep of public parks.
- B. Increase the participation of landowners in the voluntary protection of private land
- C. Actively seek volunteer assistance
- D. Engage students and schools as a resource

Goal 4: Expand revenue sources and resources

- A. Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- B. Pursue grant opportunities for open space and recreation opportunities
- C. Establish endowments to provide sustainable, independent funding of public lands.
- D. Evaluate additional funding sources such as user fees and fundraising

- E. Leverage funding toward meeting the town's goals through partnerships with local and regional land trusts and conservation organizations.

Goal 5: Establish a continuous open space planning process

- A. Designate responsible Board/Committee for general oversight of implementation
- B. Evaluate implementation progress regularly
- C. Post and publicize implementation success stories
- D. Prepare for 2021 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Section 9. Seven-Year Action Plan

This seven-year action plan outlines an action and proposed timetable for each open space and recreation goal and objective. Implementation of this Action plan is subject to the constraints of staff, volunteers, and town funding. Given Leicester’s budget constraints, there is a greater emphasis on volunteer participation and coordination with partner organizations such as land trusts than in past Open Space and Recreation Plans. This plan is deliberately more narrowly focused than previous action plans. It is not a comprehensive listing of any and all actions that could be taken to protect and enhance open space and recreation; it is intended to be a more targeted “do-able” plan.

The actions should be reviewed at least annually, updated, and reevaluated to ensure consistency with current goals and objectives. **See Map 8, Action Plan Map.**

Key to groups potentially responsible for implementing action items:

AG	Agricultural Commission	OSRC	Open Space & Recreation Committee
BC	By-Law Committee	PB	Planning Board
BS	Board of Selectmen	PR	Parks and Recreation Committee
CC	Conservation Commission	SD	School Department
DC	Disabilities Commission	SC	Stormwater Committee
HD	Highway Department	TP	Town Planner
LT	Land Trusts	V	Volunteers
LA	Lake and Pond Associations	WD	Water Districts
MS	Moose Hill Water Commission		

Goal 1: Protect open space and natural resources, particularly water resources

- A. Develop strategies to prioritize land protection efforts.
- B. Improve water quality.
- C. Protect Significant Habitats, Vernal Pools, Wetlands, and Rare Species
- D. Increase the ecological value of protected lands through the establishment of contiguous blocks or greenways of undeveloped, permanently protected land.
- E. Preserve farmlands and forest lands
- F. Promote low-impact development practices and encourage the permanent protection of ecologically valuable land with new development.

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
1A1	Develop strategy to identify and prioritize land that should be protected	CC, PB, LT	Staff and Committee member time	High	1-2

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
1A2	Increase awareness of incentive programs for private protection of land, such as Chapter 61, 61A, 61B, and estate planning incentives.	CC, V	n/a	High	1-7
1A3	Distribute lists of tax title properties to all Town Departments for review of potential open space or recreation potential	BS	n/a	Medium	1-7
1B1	Pursue Moose Hill as a municipal water source	MS, WD, BS	Grants, Town	Medium	3-7
1B2	Produce and publicize public educational materials about the location and value of water resources	SC, CC			
1B3	Create comprehensive inventory of water bodies (lakes and ponds in particular) and dams. Clarify ownership of dams and land under water where unknown. Identify roles, responsibilities, and recreation potential	CC, PB, LA	Staff and Committee member time	High	1
1B4	Enforce state and local stormwater regulations	CC, PB, HD	Staff and Committee member time	High	1-7
1C1	Certify Vernal Pools for enhanced protection	CC, V	n/a	Medium	1-7
1C2	Provide information about rare species habitat and wetlands to permitting Boards and Town officials	CC	Staff and Committee member time	Medium	1-7
1C3	Publicize MA Endangered Species Act (MESA) regulations	CC	Staff and Committee member time	Low	1-7
1D1	Prioritize protection of parcels that serve as habitat connections between passive recreation lands	CC, LT	Staff time, partner funds	Medium	1-7
1E1	Publicize benefits and support applications for Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR), Conservation Restrictions, and Chapter 61 Programs	CC, AG	Staff and/or volunteer time	Medium	1-7
1E2	Publicize that Leicester is a Right to Farm Community.	AC	volunteer time	Low	1-7
1E3	Update local Forest Cutting Bylaw	CC, BC, TP	Staff Time	Medium	2

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
1E4	Amend Landscaping Regulations and Subdivision Regulations to restrict new plantings of tree species susceptible to Asian Longhorned beetles	PB	Staff Time	Medium	2
1F1	Update Subdivision Rules and Regulations to reduce impervious surface and/or increase open space in new subdivisions	PB, HD	Staff Time	Medium	2
1F2	Encourage developers to use the Open Space Residential Design Bylaw	PB	Staff Time	Medium	1-7
1F3	Encourage development and re-development of commercial and residential properties in village center to concentrate development in previously-developed areas rather than on undeveloped land. Implement related Master Plan action items.	PB, CC	Staff Time	Medium	1-7

Goal 2: Provide and maintain recreational opportunities

- A. Revitalize town parks, beginning with Hillcrest, Burncoat, Rochdale, and Towtaid to improve recreation opportunities.
- B. Provide for improved maintenance of Town recreational facilities
- C. Enhance Leicester's trail networks to provide access to parks and increase connections between parks and neighborhoods
- D. Increase awareness and participation at recreational facilities and programs

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
2A1	Prepare Park Status Reports for each park, prioritizing Hillcrest, Burncoat, Rochdale, and Towtaid (identify existing facilities and programs, funding sources, and condition)	PR, V	Staff & Committee member time	High	1
2A2	Complete Master Plans for Each Park (identify needed repairs/renovations and potential park enhancements). Include planning for ADA accessibility improvements.	PR, V	Committee member & volunteer time	Medium	2
2A3	Work on bringing on facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	PR, BS, DC, V	Town funds, private fundraising, grants	High	1-7
2A4	Submit capital improvement requests related to needed improvements to the Capital Improvement Committee	PR	Staff & Committee member time	High	3-7

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
2A5	Seek funding for park revitalization and maintenance, including Town funding, grants, and fundraising (See Goal 4)	PR, V	Staff, Committee member & volunteer time	High	1-7
2A6	Incorporate Ecological Design into park revitalization planning	PR, Consultants	Town funds, private fundraising, grants	Medium	2
2B1	Develop a comprehensive park maintenance plan for each park (identify responsible parties, develop maintenance schedule, identify deficiencies in maintenance)	PR, V	Committee member & volunteer time	High	1-2
2B2	Seek volunteers to assist with ongoing park maintenance and improvements	PR, V	Volunteer Time	High	3-6
2B3	Consider actions to expand public access at Town-owned property adjacent to Greenville Pond	PR, BS, CC	Staff & volunteer time	Medium	2-3
2C1	Develop a map of all existing trails, identifying level of protection and access	CC, V, PR	Partner Funds and/or Town funds	Medium	1-7
2C2	Identify Mid-State Trail locations in private ownership and susceptible to development. Work with landowners to obtain permanent easements.	CC, PB, PR, V	n/a	Low	2-7
2C3	Identify potential new trails and greenways that connect village centers, parks, and recreation facilities, especially trails in the Environmental Justice neighborhood	CC, PR, LT	n/a	Low	1-7
2C4	Develop an accurate and up-to-date map of snowmobile trails	PR, V	Volunteer time (snowmobile club)	Medium	1
2C5	Investigate the possibility of expansion of the Blackstone River Bikeway into Leicester	PR, BS, CC	Staff & Volunteer Time	Medium	1-2
2D1	Develop a brochure of Town parks and recreational facilities	PR, V	Staff & Volunteer Time, Town funding	Medium	1-2

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
2D2	Enhance the Parks & Recreation Commission webpage with more detailed information regarding all town recreational facilities and programs	PR, V	Staff Time	Medium	1-2
2D3	Prepare and publicize an inventory of available fishing areas	PR, V	Staff & volunteer time	Medium	2-3

Goal 3: Develop and Maintain Partnerships

- A. Form a network of partnerships to support land protection efforts and the management and upkeep of public parks.
- B. Increase the participation of landowners in the voluntary protection of private land
- C. Actively seek volunteer assistance

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
3A1	Form partnerships with land conservation organizations (Aubudon Society, Common Ground Land Trust, Greater Worcester Land Trust)	CC, PB	n/a	High	1-2
3A2	Contact neighboring Open Space committees to coordinate efforts	PB	n/a	Medium	1-2
3A3	Invite local land trust (Common Ground Land Trust and Greater Worcester Land Trust) representatives to attend Planning Board and/or Conservation Commission meetings to discuss priorities and coordination	PB, CC, LT	n/a	Medium	1-7
3A4	Consider assigning Chapter 61 right of first refusal to local land trusts under terms set by town	PB, BS	n/a	High	1-7
3A5	Provide an up-to-date list of tax-title and Chapter 61 properties to partnering organizations such as local land trusts	PB	Staff Time	High	1-7
3A6	Support formation of Friends of the Parks Associations	PR	n/a	Medium	1-3
3A7	Work with snowmobile club on maintenance of trails	PR, CC	n/a	Medium	1-7

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
3A8	Actively seek assistance from outside agencies such as the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc.	PR, CC, PB	n/a	Medium	1-7
3B1	Distribute information (such as estate planning information and tax benefits of land donation) to assist private stewardship by large landowners or owners of important open space resources	CC, PB, LT	Staff Time	Medium	1-7
3B2	Publicize the Landowners Incentive Program offered by the Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game	CC, PB	Staff Time	Medium	1-7
3C1	Enlist interested volunteers to map trails, monitor water quality, certify vernal pools, survey public information resources, and serve on committees.	ALL	n/a	Medium	2-5
3D1	Engage student volunteers and schools to explore and develop innovative strategies for Leicester's management needs	PR, CC, SD	n/a	Medium	1-7

Goal 4: Expand Revenue Sources

- A. Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- B. Pursue grant opportunities for open space and recreation opportunities
- C. Establish endowments to provide sustainable, independent funding of public lands.
- D. Evaluate additional funding sources such as user fees and fundraising
- E. Leverage funding toward meeting the town's goals through partnerships with local and regional land trusts and conservation organizations.

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
4A1	Assess Town interest in adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA)	PB, CC	n/a	Medium	4
4A2	Develop CPA referendum language and develop support	PB, CC, LT	n/a	Medium	1

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
4B	Pursue grant opportunities, including but not limited to the following: Conservation Partnership, Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, LAND (Location Acquisitions for Natural Diversity), and Landscape Partnership Program, and PARK (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities) grants	PB, CC	n/a	Medium	1-7
4C1	Establish Conservation Fund as authorized by MGLCh.40 §8C. Appropriate Town funds and seek private donations.	CC	Town funds, Donations	High	2
4C2	Establish a Recreation fund for park revitalization and maintenance. Appropriate Town funds and seek private donations.	PR	Town funds, Donations	High	2
4C3	Publicize available tax-deductible charitable contributions to Town funds for open space & recreation purposes	BS, CC, PB, PR, V	Staff & volunteer time	Medium	1-7
4D1	Consider additional reasonable user fees and/or parking fees for recreational facilities	PR	n/a	Medium	1-2
4D2	Establish active fundraising efforts for park revitalization and open space protection programs	CC, PB, LT, V	Staff & volunteer time	Medium	1-7
4E1	Leverage funding toward meeting the town's goals through partnerships with local and regional land trusts and conservation organizations.	CC, PB, V	Staff & volunteer time	Medium	1-7

Goal 5: Establish a continuous open space planning process

- A. Designate responsible Board/Committee for general oversight of implementation
- B. Evaluate implementation progress regularly
- C. Post and publicize implementation success stories
- D. Prepare for 2021 Open Space & Recreation Plan

#	Action Plan Item	Agency	Funding	Priority	Year
5A	Designate responsible Board/Committee for general oversight of implementation	OSRC	n/a	High	1
5B1	Review Action Plan at least twice per year	Board/ Commission identified in 5A	Staff Time	Medium	1-7
5B2	Schedule public meetings to discuss implementation progress		Staff Time	Medium	1-7
5B3	Request updates from responsible parties for all action items		Staff Time	Medium	1-7
5C	Post and publicize implementation success stories		Staff Time	Medium	1-7
5D1	Form an Open Space & Recreation Plan update Committee	TP, PB, CC, PR	Staff Time	Medium	6
5D2	Seek funding or other assistance to meet mapping requirements	TP	Staff Time	Medium	7
5D3	Develop timeline and responsibilities to complete updated plan	TP	Staff Time	Medium	7

Section 10. Public Comments

The Town of Leicester received a draft of the Open Space and Recreation Plan in March 2014 from the Conway School. This early draft was put on the Town's web page for comment at that time. Between April and September 2014, the plan was significantly revised by Michelle Buck, Town Planner, with input from Open Space and Recreation Committee members and Town staff to meet EOEAs Open Space Plan requirements. The revised draft was released October 2014 and was distributed to the Board of Selectmen, Parks & Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) for review and comment. A public meeting was held on October 7, 2014 to announce the completion of the revised plan and to publicize the public comment period (through November 5, 2014). The revised plan was also posted on the Town's web page; in addition, printed copies were made available at the Leicester Public Library and in Leicester Town Hall at the Town Clerk's Office and at the Office of Development and Inspectional Services.

The plan was further revised after the public comment period ended to incorporate photographs, add more detail to the ADA Access Self-Evaluation, and to incorporate comments from public, other Town Boards and Departments, and the CMRPC. In early December 2014, the plan was sent to the EOEAs Division of Conservation Services for review and comment.

See **Appendix C** for all comments.

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<p>Soils & Geological Features: Agricultural Soils</p> <p>Chapter 61A. Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs, March 2014. Zip files.</p> <p>Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014</p> <p>Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003</p> <p>Leicester Chapter 61A, March 2014</p> <p>Land Use (2005), 2009</p> <p>Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p> <p>NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils, Nov. 2014</p> <p>Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>	<p>Soils & Geological Features: Septic Suitability</p> <p>Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014</p> <p>Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003</p> <p>Title 5 Setback Areas, Mar. 2010</p> <p>Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p> <p>NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils, Nov. 2014</p> <p>Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>
<p>Unique Features</p> <p>BioMap2, Feb. 2011</p> <p>Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014</p> <p>Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003</p> <p>Farmer's Markets, Jan. 2014</p> <p>Long Distance Trails, July 1999</p> <p>School (PK- High School), Oct. 2012</p> <p>Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010</p> <p>Mass DEP 2012 Integrated List of Waters (305(b)/303(d)), May 2003</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p> <p>MHC Historic Inventory, updated continually</p> <p>NHESP Certified Vernal Pools, updated continually</p> <p>NHESP Potential Vernal Pools, Dec. 2003</p> <p>NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils, Nov. 2014</p> <p>Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>	<p>Environmental Challenges: Threats to the town's waters and ecosystems</p> <p>Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014</p> <p>Dams, Feb. 2012</p> <p>Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003</p> <p>Mass DEP DWP Major Facilities, Jan. 2013</p> <p>Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010</p> <p>Mass DEP Tier Classified Oil/Hazardous Material Sites (MGL c. 21E), Jan. 2014</p> <p>Mass DEP Underground Storage Tanks, Jan. 2013</p> <p>Mass DEP Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II, IWPA), Oct. 2013</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p> <p>Outstanding Resources Waters, Mar. 2010</p> <p>Transmission Lines, Mar. 2007</p>

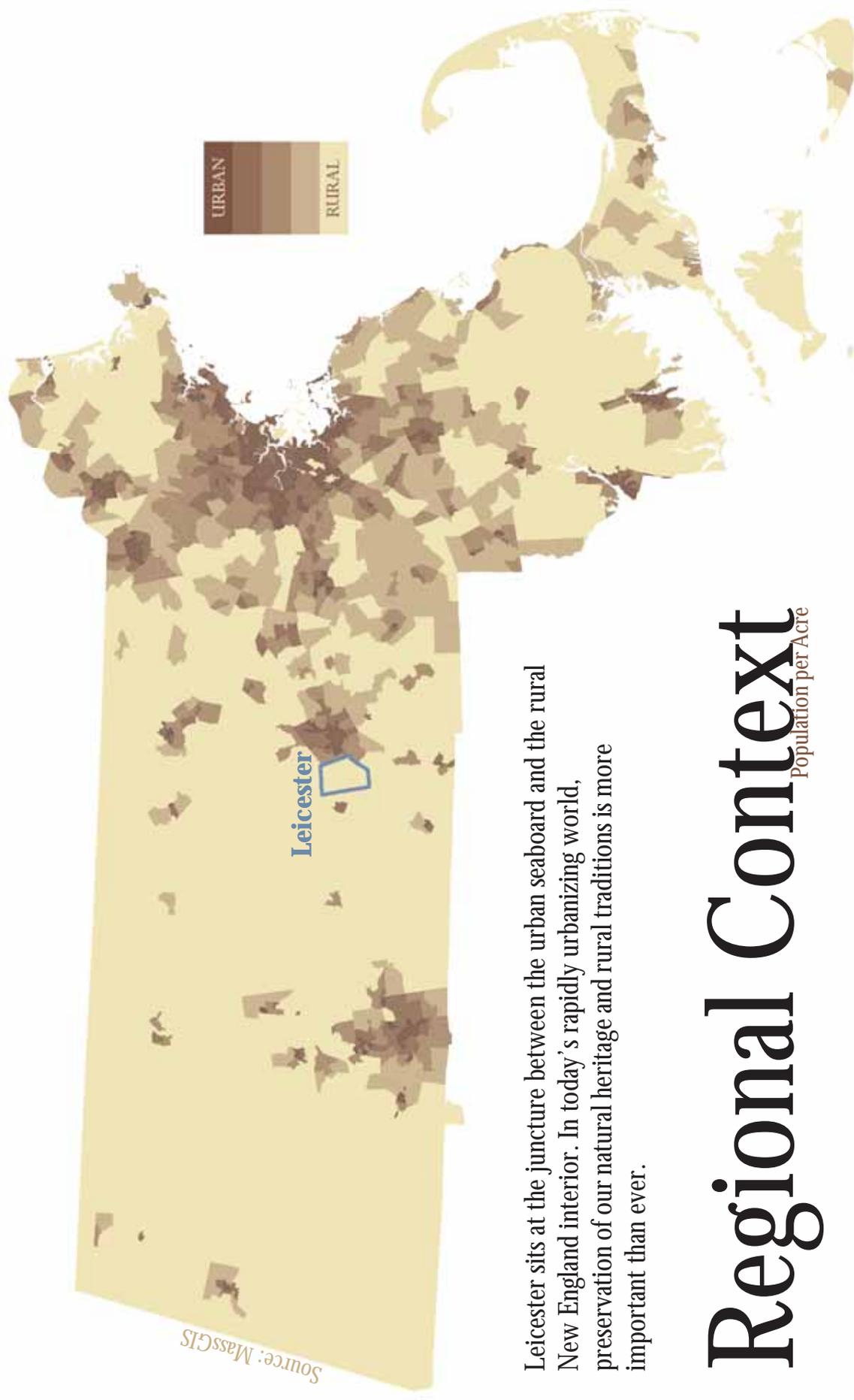
<p>Water Resources: Flood Hazard Areas Building Structures, n/a Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, Oct. 2013 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p>	<p>Wildlife & Fisheries BioMap2, Feb. 2011 Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012 NHESP Certified Vernal Pools, updated continually NHESP Potential Vernal Pools, Dec. 2003 Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>
<p>Vegetation: Forested Lands Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Interior Forest, Oct. 2009 Prime Forest Land, Jan. 2013 Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014 Land Use (2005), June 2009 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012 Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program Properties, Jan. 2008</p>	<p>Water Resources Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Mass DEP Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II, IWPA), Oct. 2013 Mass DEP Ground Water Discharge Permits, April 2011 Mass DEP 2012 Integrated List of Waters (305(b)/303(d)), May 2003 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012 Outstanding Resources Waters, Mar. 2010 Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>
<p>Conservation & Recreation Lands Chapter 61, 61A, 61B. Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs, March 2014. Zip files. Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Leicester Chapter 61, 61A, 61B, March 2014 Long Distance Trails, July 1999 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012 Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>	<p>Conservation & Recreation Lands Inventory Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Long Distance Trails, July 1999 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012</p>
<p>Conservation & Recreation Lands: Grant Funded Lands Community Boundaries (Towns), Feb. 2014 Elevation Contours (1:250,00), June 2003 Land Use (2005), June 2009 Mass DEP Hydrography (1:25,000), Mar. 2010 Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) Roads, April 2012 Protected and Recreational Open Space, Jan. 2014</p>	

Section 12: Maps

- 1.** Regional Context
 - 2.** Environmental Justice
 - 3.** Zoning Map
 - 4.1.** Soils & Geologic Features: Agricultural Soils
 - 4.2.** Soils and Geologic Features: Septic Suitability
 - 5.** Unique Features
 - 6.1.** Water Resources
 - 6.2.** Water Resources: Flood Hazard Areas
 - 7.1.** Conservation & Recreation Lands
 - 7.2.** Conservation & Recreation Lands: Grant-Funded Lands
 - 7.3.** Conservation & Recreation Lands Inventory
 - 8.** Action Plan Map
 - 9.** Vegetation: Forested Lands
 - 10.** Wildlife & Fisheries
 - 11.** Environmental Challenges
 - 12.** Hillcrest Country Club Map
- [Note: numbering for maps 1 – 8 corresponds to the eight EOEEA required maps]

Maps are on following pages.

All maps, except the Zoning Map and the Hillcrest Country Club Map, were prepared by Conway School Students.

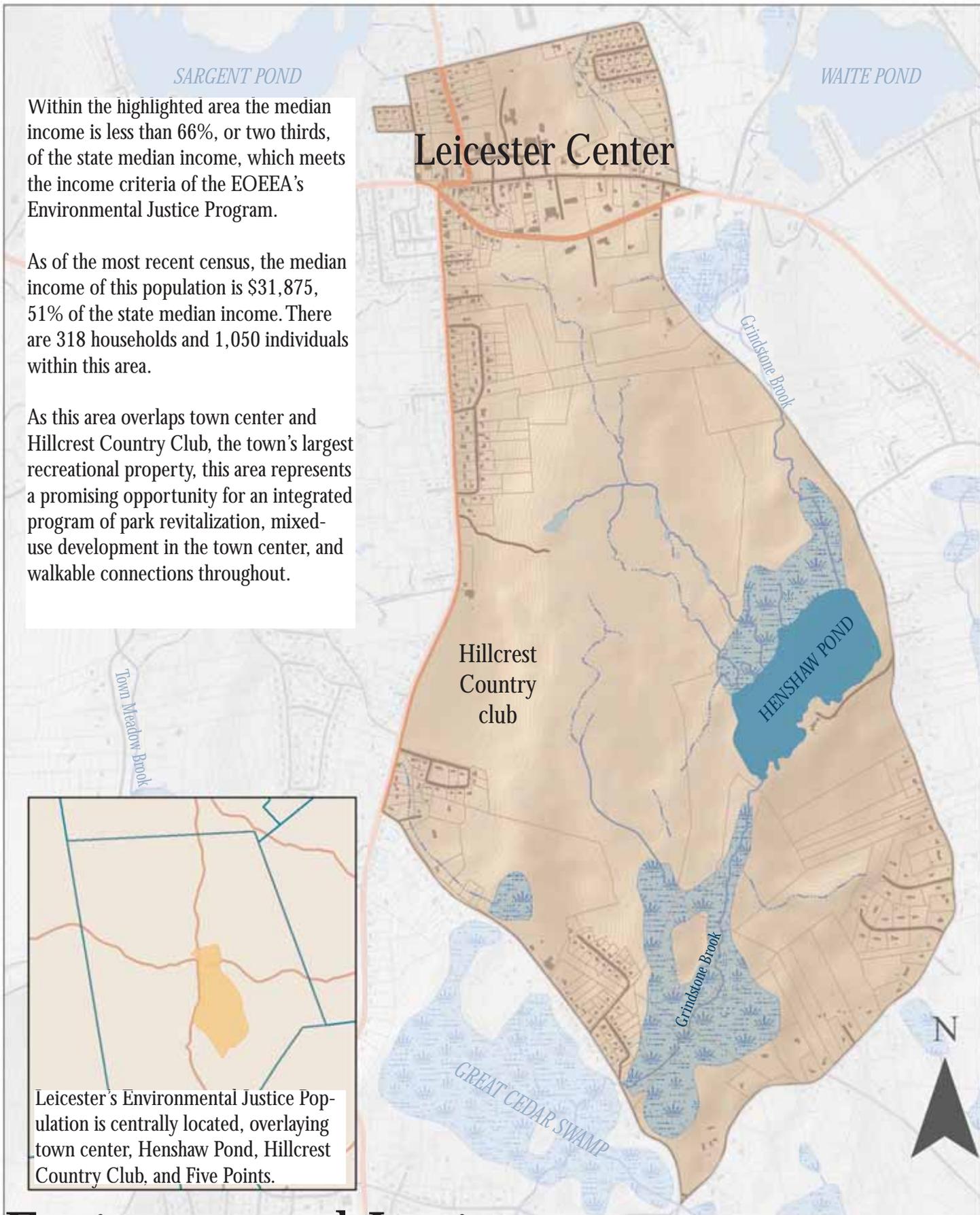


Source: MassGIS

Leicester sits at the juncture between the urban seaboard and the rural New England interior. In today's rapidly urbanizing world, preservation of our natural heritage and rural traditions is more important than ever.

Regional Context

Population per Acre



Within the highlighted area the median income is less than 66%, or two thirds, of the state median income, which meets the income criteria of the EOEEA's Environmental Justice Program.

As of the most recent census, the median income of this population is \$31,875, 51% of the state median income. There are 318 households and 1,050 individuals within this area.

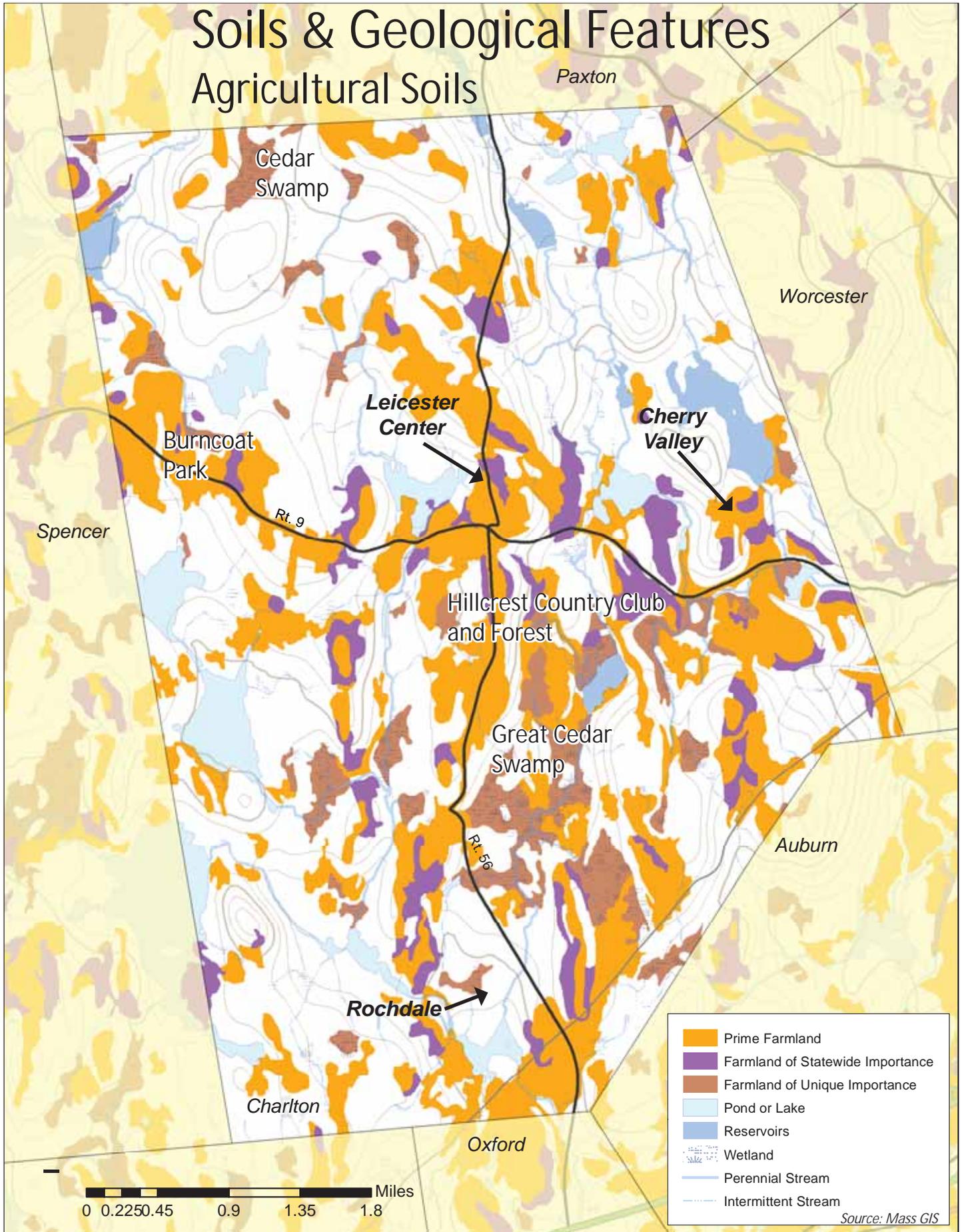
As this area overlaps town center and Hillcrest Country Club, the town's largest recreational property, this area represents a promising opportunity for an integrated program of park revitalization, mixed-use development in the town center, and walkable connections throughout.

Leicester's Environmental Justice Population is centrally located, overlaying town center, Henshaw Pond, Hillcrest Country Club, and Five Points.

Environmental Justice

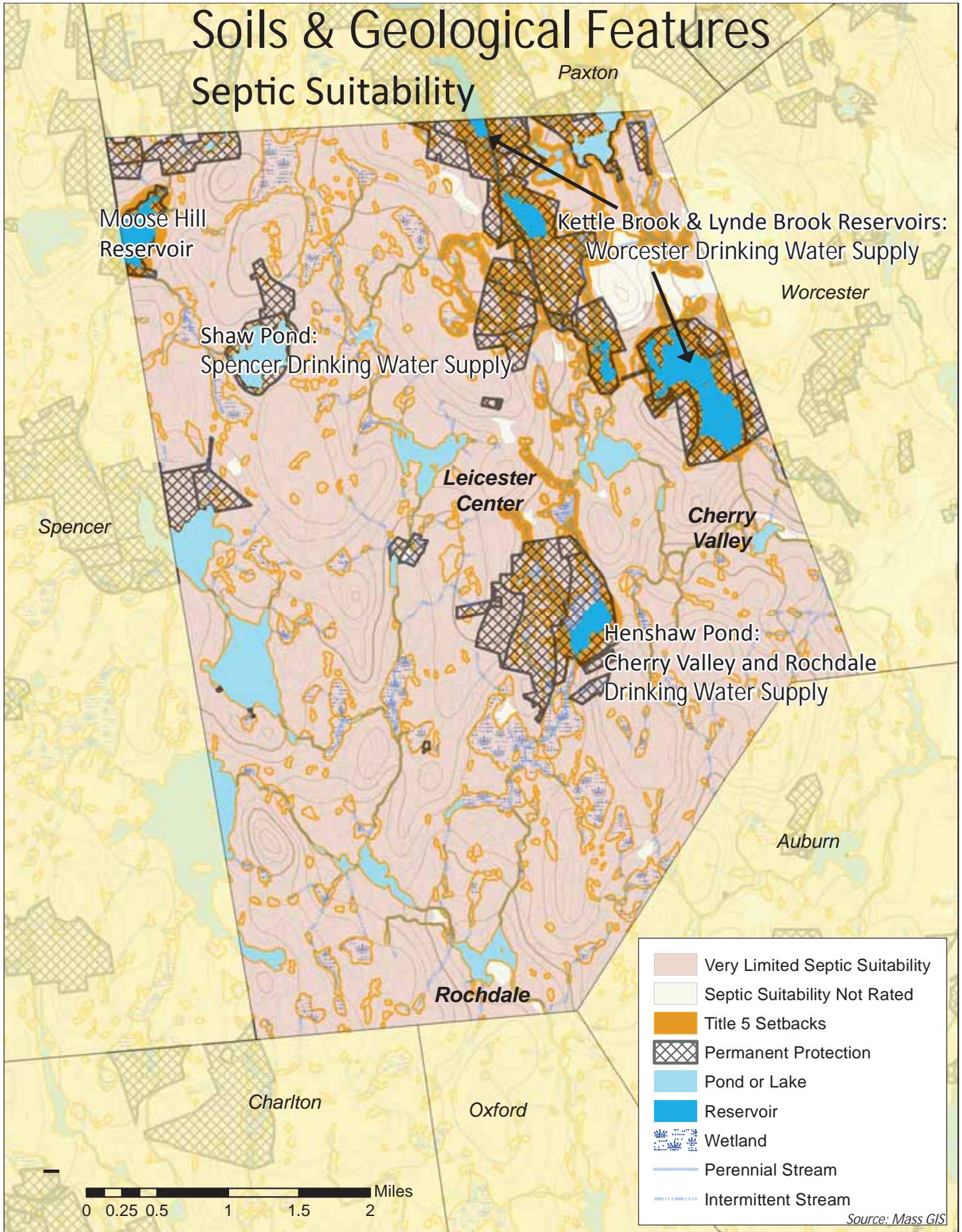
Soils & Geological Features

Agricultural Soils

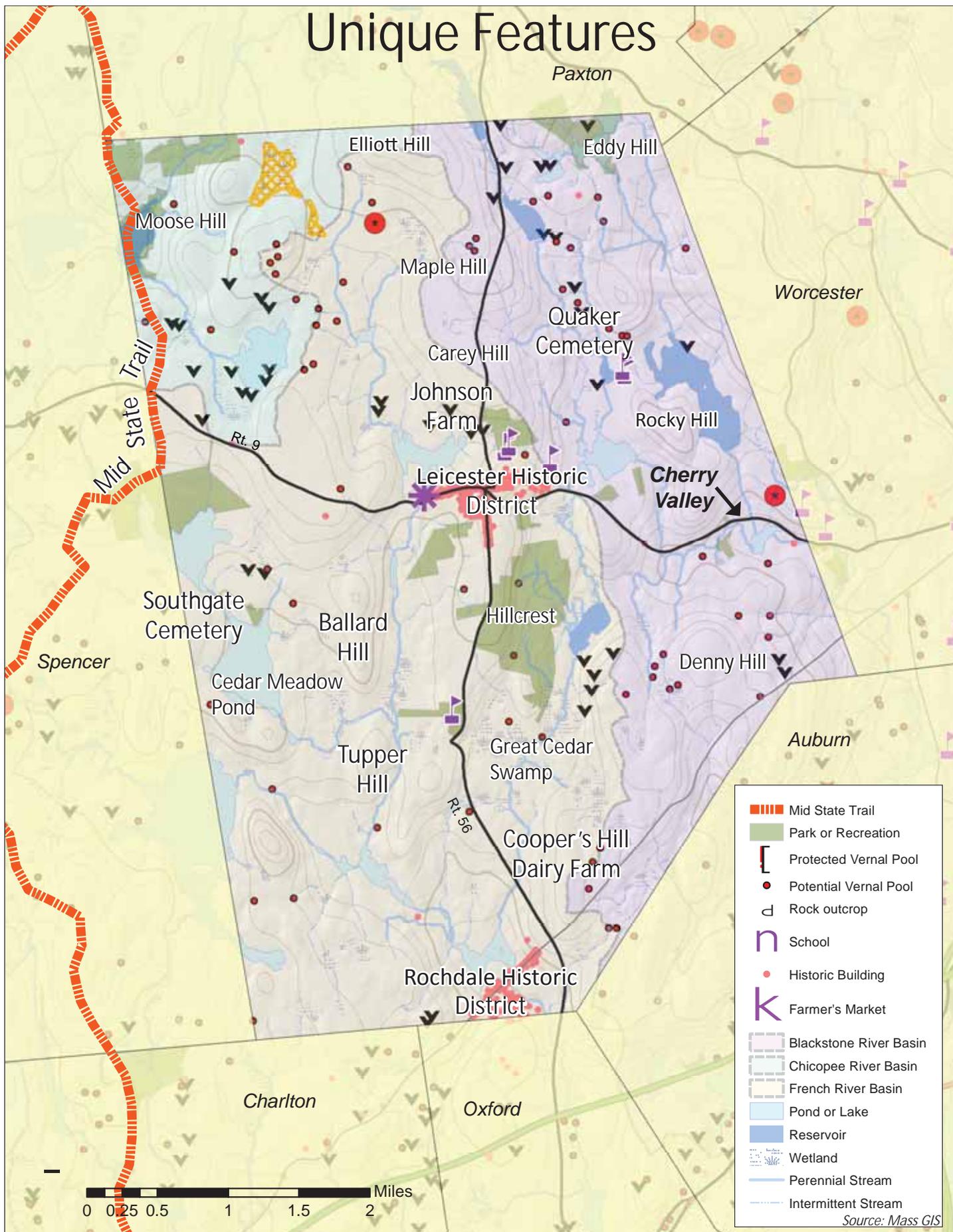


Soils & Geological Features

Septic Suitability



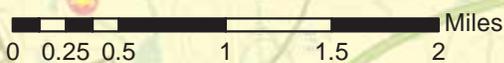
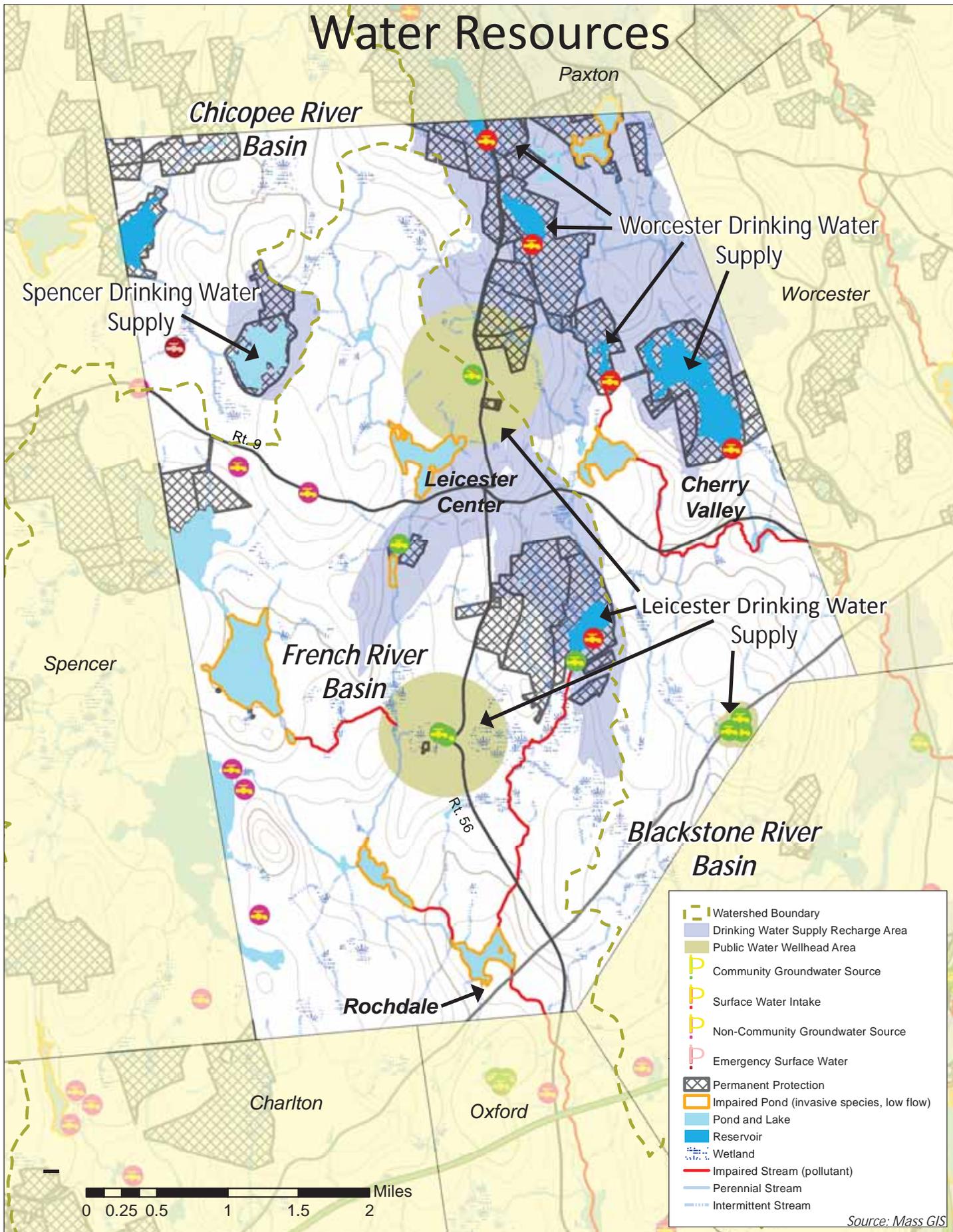
Unique Features



- Mid State Trail
 - Park or Recreation
 - Protected Vernal Pool
 - Potential Vernal Pool
 - Rock outcrop
 - School
 - Historic Building
 - Farmer's Market
 - Blackstone River Basin
 - Chicopee River Basin
 - French River Basin
 - Pond or Lake
 - Reservoir
 - Wetland
 - Perennial Stream
 - Intermittent Stream
- Source: Mass GIS

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

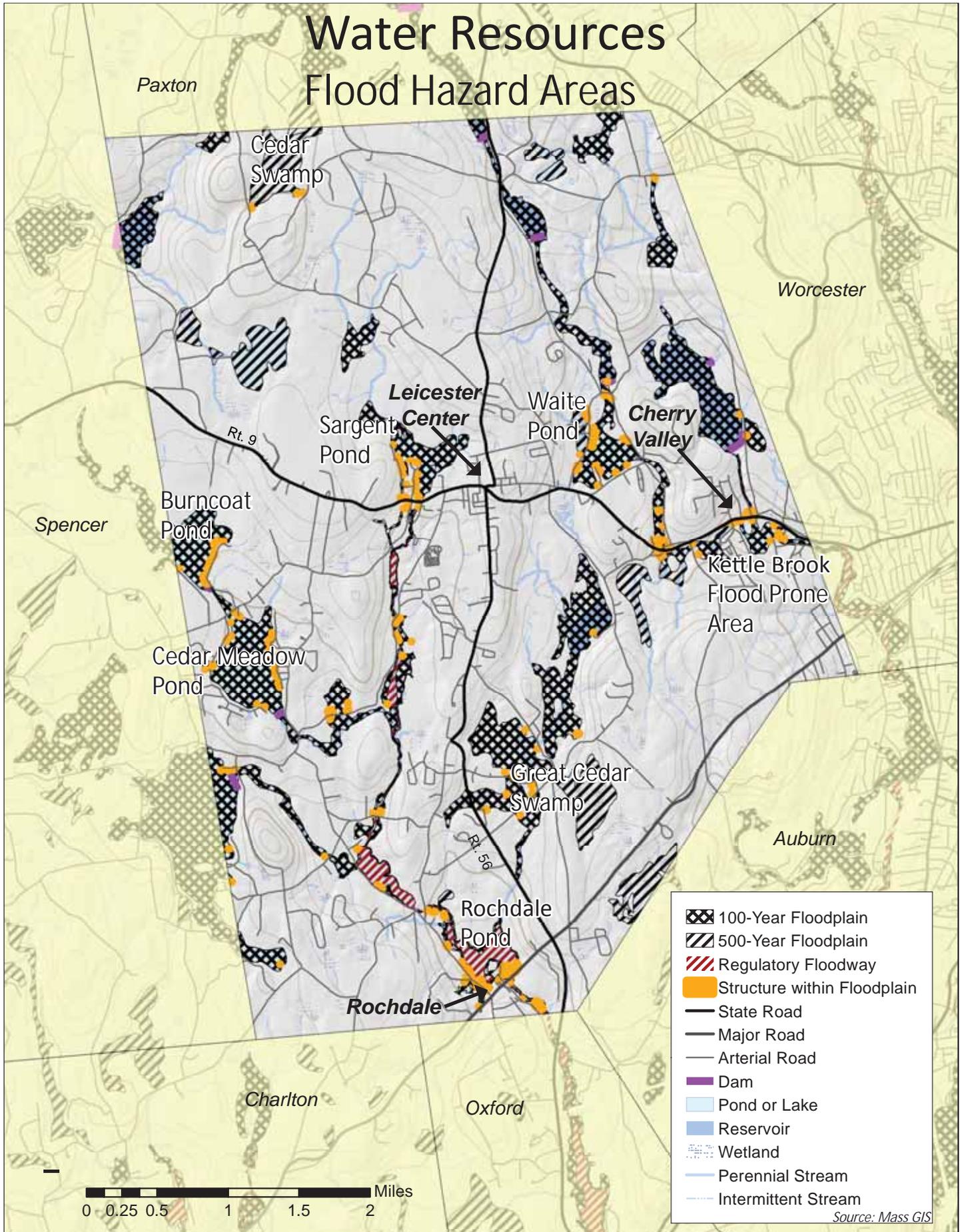
Water Resources



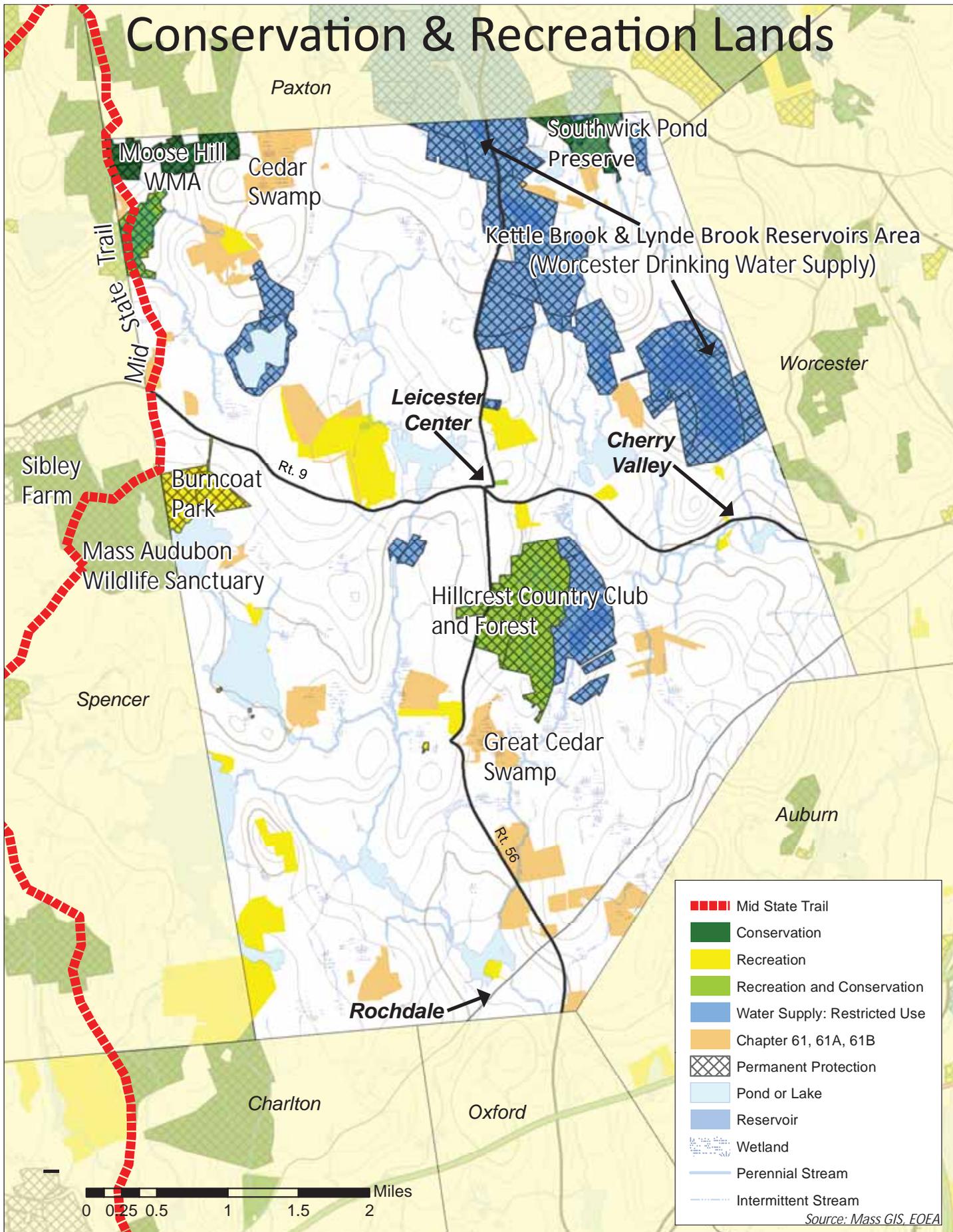
	Watershed Boundary
	Drinking Water Supply Recharge Area
	Public Water Wellhead Area
	Community Groundwater Source
	Surface Water Intake
	Non-Community Groundwater Source
	Emergency Surface Water
	Permanent Protection
	Impaired Pond (invasive species, low flow)
	Pond and Lake
	Reservoir
	Wetland
	Impaired Stream (pollutant)
	Perennial Stream
	Intermittent Stream

Source: Mass GIS

Water Resources Flood Hazard Areas

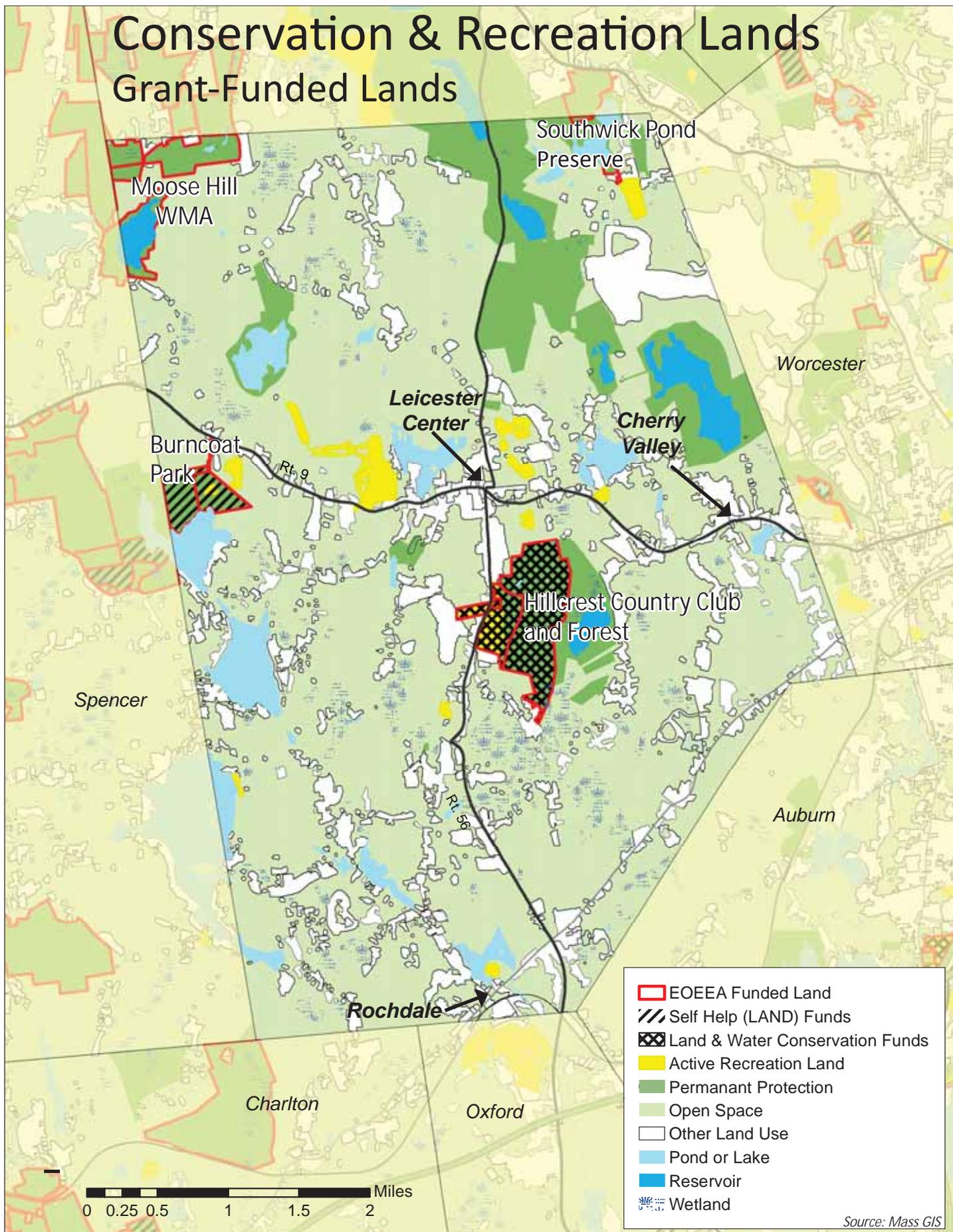


Conservation & Recreation Lands

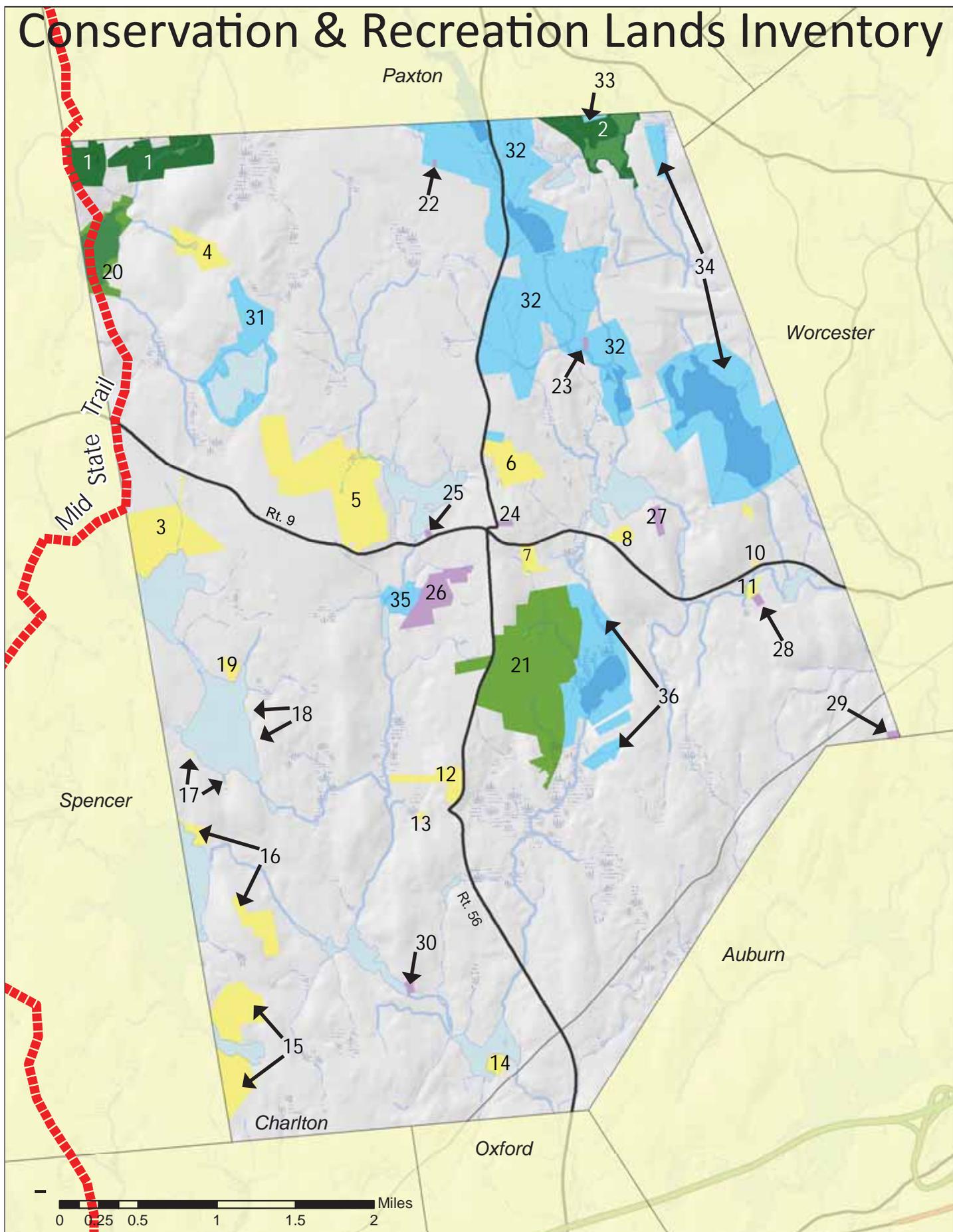


Conservation & Recreation Lands

Grant-Funded Lands



Conservation & Recreation Lands Inventory



Conservation & Recreation Lands Inventory



Conservation

1. Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area
2. Southwick Pond Reserve



Recreation

3. Burncoat Park (public)
4. Rod & Gun Club (private)
5. Hillcrest Country Club (private)
6. Leicester Primary & High Schools (public)
7. Russell Memorial Fields (public)
8. Community Field (public)
10. Leicester Lions Park (public)
11. Towtaid Park (public)
12. Memorial School (public)
13. Dawn Acres Park (private)
14. Rochdale Park (public)
15. Camp Laurelwood (private)
16. Camp Wind in the Pines (private)
17. Meadow Lake Beach (private)
18. Cedar Meadow Pond Beach (private)
19. Green Mountain Club (private)



Recreation and Conservation

20. Moose Hill Flood Control Site (public)
21. Hillcrest Country Club (public)



Historical/Cultural

22. Elliot Cemetery (public)
23. Quaker Cemetery (private)
24. Town Common (public)
25. Rawson Brook Cemetery (private)
26. Pine Grove Cemetery (private)
27. St. Joseph Cemetery
28. Cherry Valley Cemetery (public)
29. Sons of Jacob Cemetery
30. Greenville Baptist Cemetery



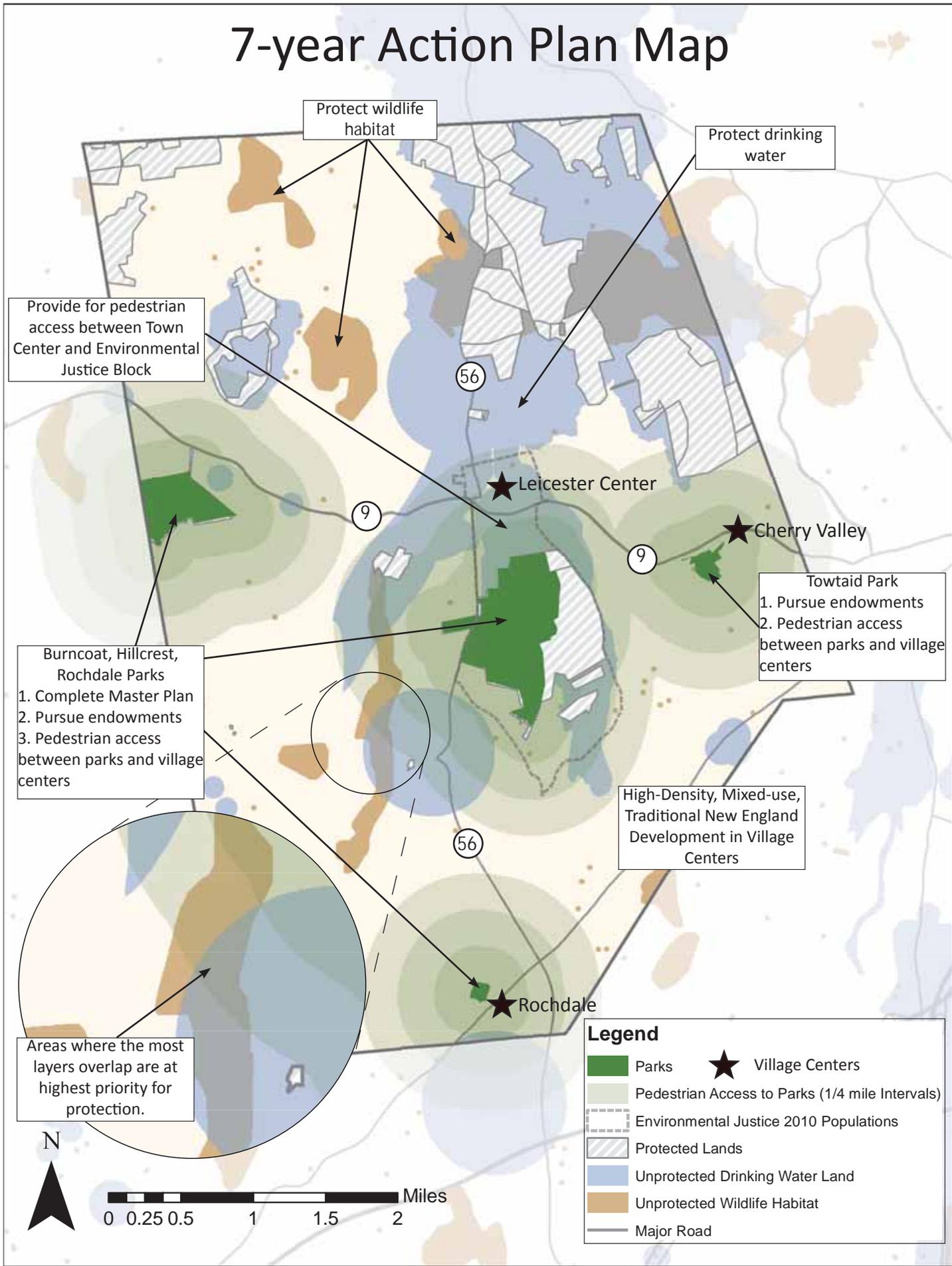
Water Supply

31. Shaw Pond
32. Kettle Brook Reservoir Area
33. Muir Meadow Water Supply Area
34. Lynde Brook Reservoir
35. Leicester Water Supply Lands
36. Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water Supply

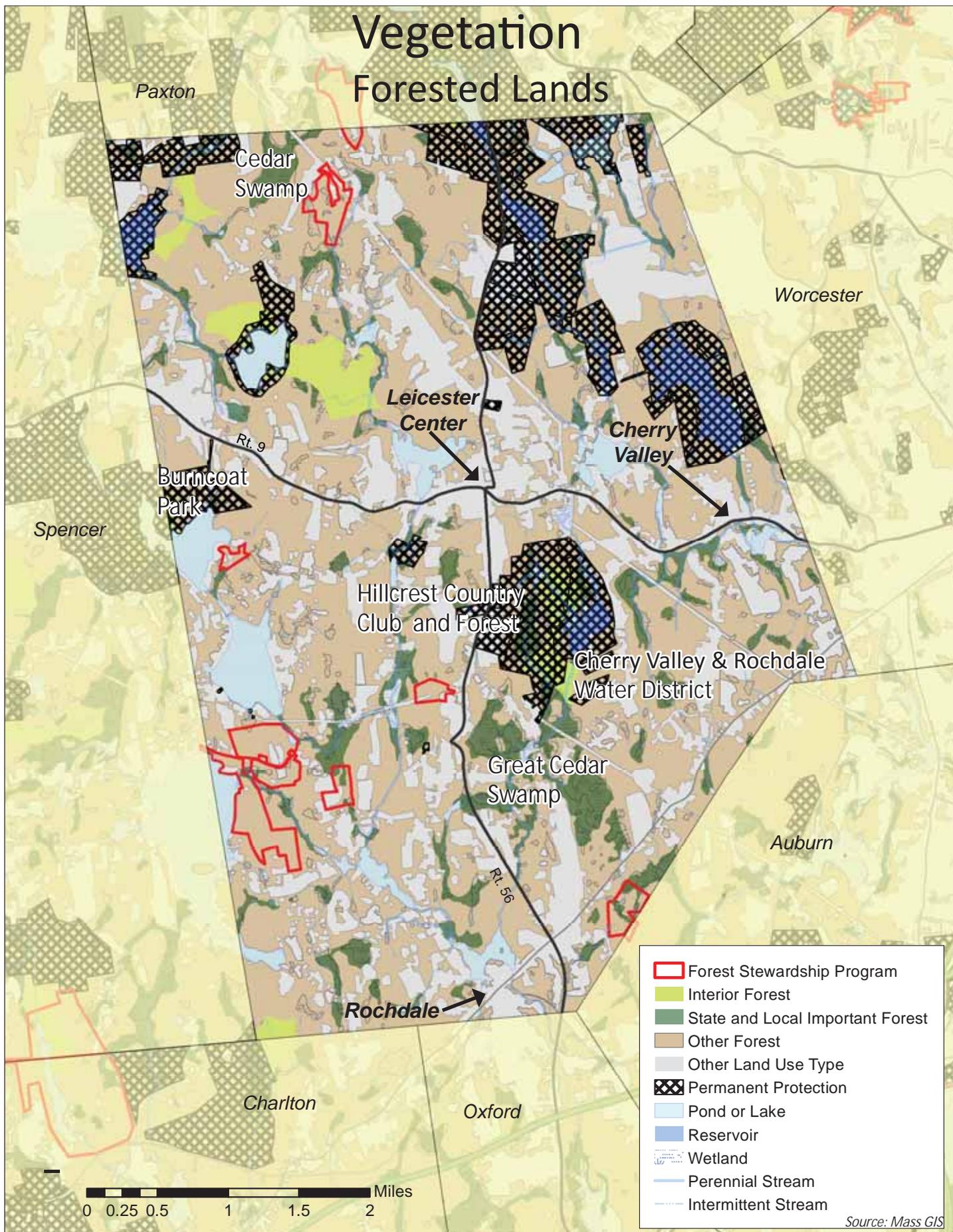


Mid-State Trail

7-year Action Plan Map



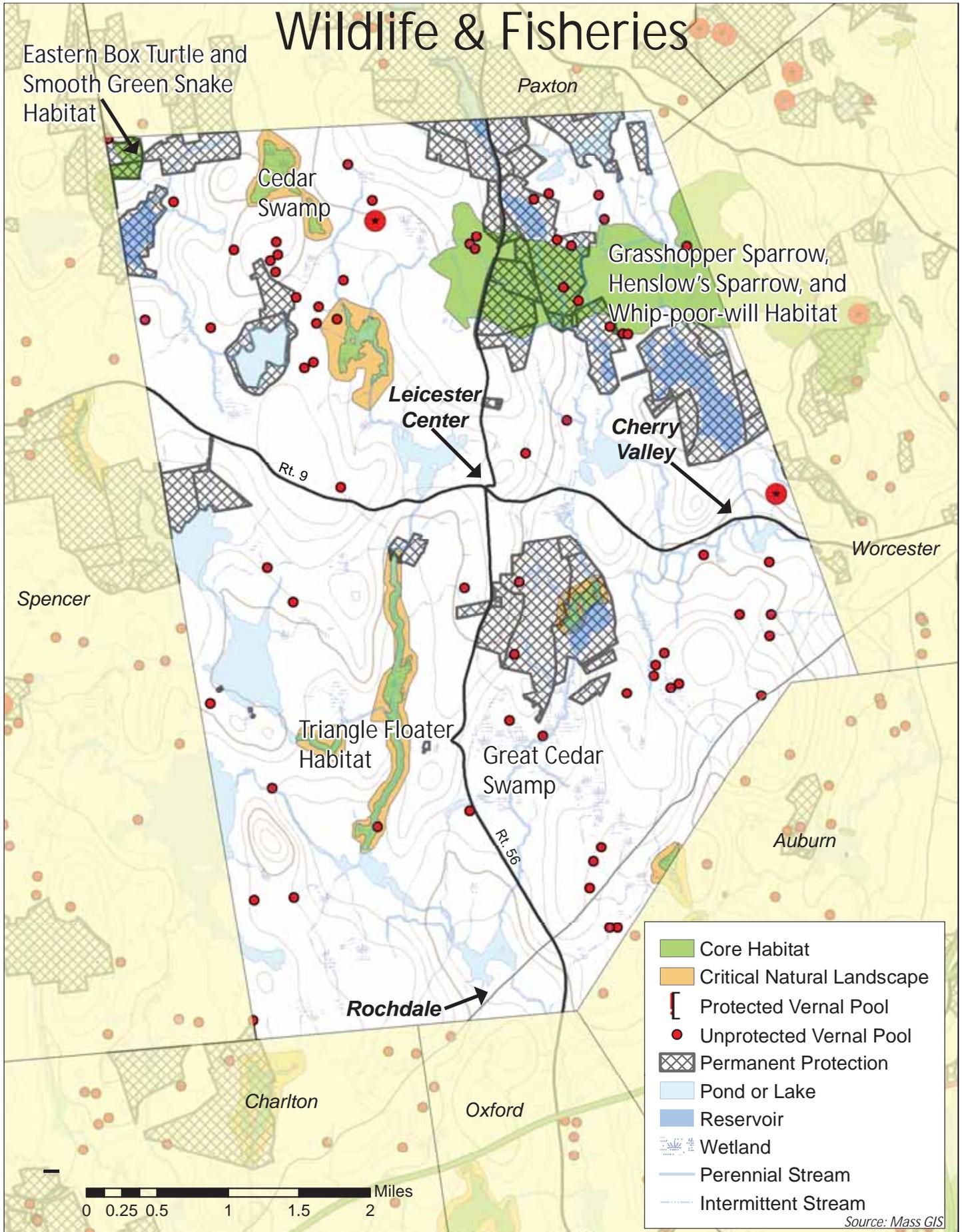
Vegetation Forested Lands



- Forest Stewardship Program
- Interior Forest
- State and Local Important Forest
- Other Forest
- Other Land Use Type
- Permanent Protection
- Pond or Lake
- Reservoir
- Wetland
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream

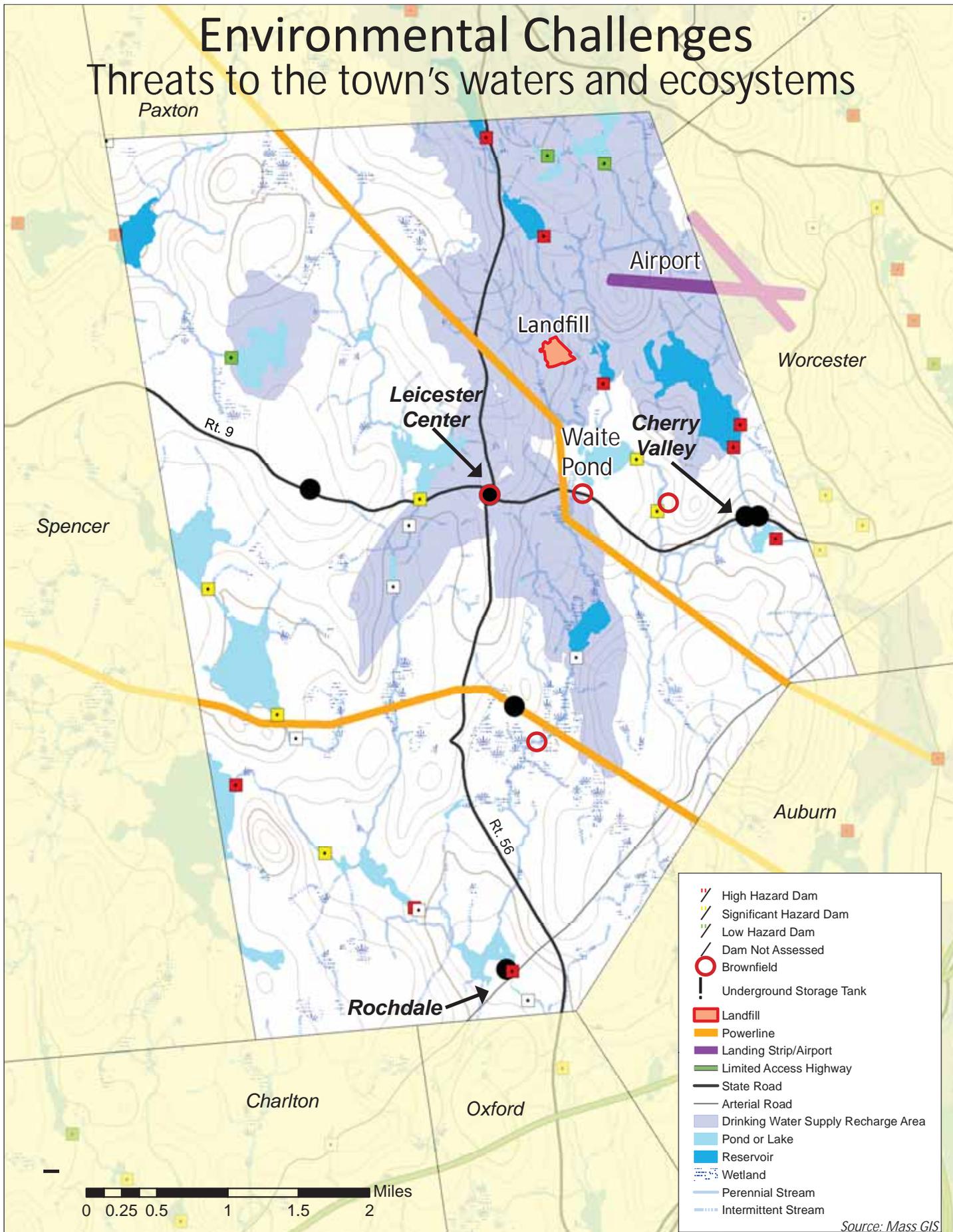
Source: Mass GIS

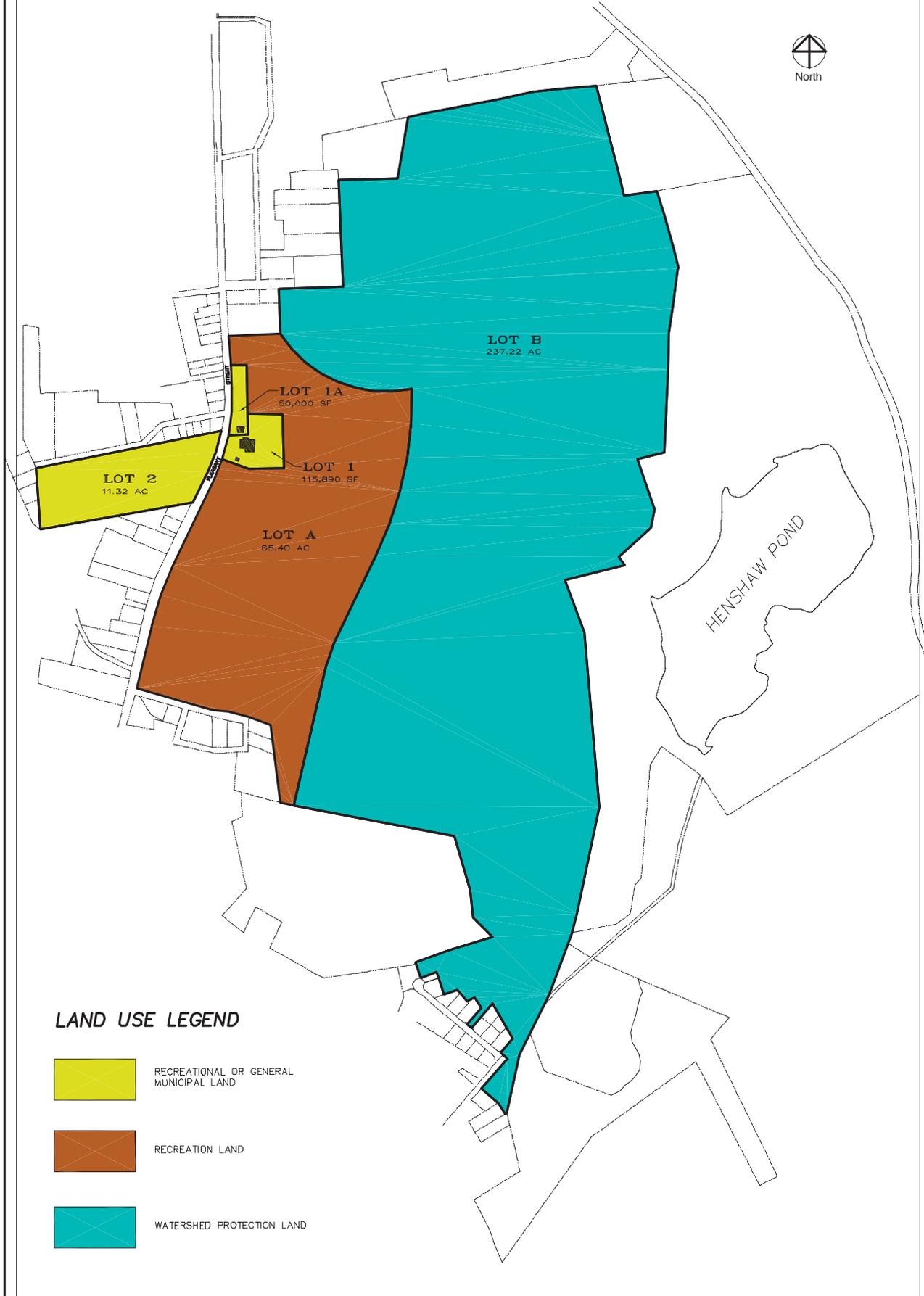
Wildlife & Fisheries



Environmental Challenges

Threats to the town's waters and ecosystems





LAND USE LEGEND



RECREATIONAL OR GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAND



RECREATION LAND



WATERSHED PROTECTION LAND

APPENDICES

A. 2014 Open Space & Recreation Survey.....	A1
B. Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest.....	A18
C. Public Comments.....	A30
D. ADA Access Self-Evaluation.....	A37

Appendix A:
2014 Open Space &
Recreation Survey

Leicester Open Space and Recreation Planning Survey

This survey is being conducted as part of the Open Space and Recreation Plan in order to understand the needs, concerns, and visions of Leicester's residents regarding open space and recreational facilities. A complete Open Space and Recreation Plan guides the town in decision making as regards rural community planning, working landscapes, environmental conservation, and recreation opportunities. Please complete a survey to share your ideas in planning for the landscape of Leicester's future.

If you have access to a computer, please help us by submitting your survey online at: tinyurl.com/LeicesterOSRPSurvey2014. Paper surveys may be turned in to the Leicester Town Clerk's Office in Town Hall, or mailed to: Leicester Planning Board, 3 Washburn Square, Leicester, MA 01524

Survey submissions are limited to current Leicester residents. Please complete and submit your survey by Monday, February 17 at 10pm. Completed surveys will not be accepted after this date and time. Please complete only one survey per resident. Paper surveys should be delivered to the Leicester Town Clerk's Office at 3 Washburn Square, Leicester, MA 01524. Specific questions regarding this survey can be referred to LeicesterOSRP@csl.d.edu

Do you feel there is a need to protect open space and recreation opportunities in Leicester? (Open space includes - but is not limited to - open fields, active agriculture fields, forests, plantations, parks, recreation facilities, trails, greenways, beaches, water access, watersheds, historic resources, and scenic vistas.) Yes No

In your opinion, how important are the following characteristics of Leicester's rural environment?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not So Important	Not Important
Clean air					
Clean water					
Dark skies					
Quiet nights					
Nature preserves					
Working landscape (farms, orchards, timber)					
Historic Preservation					
Passive recreation (walking, hiking, etc.)					
Parks					
Active recreation (football, soccer, basketball, etc.)					
Water access (swimming, fishing, boating)					
Low density housing					
Affordable housing					

In your opinion, what are the top five (5) conservation issues for Leicester?

Only choose five, and please rank your choices accordingly with 1 being of highest priority:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open space for recreation use | <input type="checkbox"/> Water access | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open space for scenic value | <input type="checkbox"/> Working Farmland | <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings of historic interest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Forests | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic/Archaeological Sites |

Other:

In your opinion, what are the top three (3) reasons you think Leicester should protect its open spaces and natural areas.

Only choose three, and please rank your choices accordingly with 1 being of highest priority.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To protect wildlife habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> To maintain the character of the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To protect wetlands | <input type="checkbox"/> To potentially raise property values |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To protect the Town's surface and groundwater resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

In your opinion, what are the three (3) greatest threats to open space in Leicester?

Only choose three, and please rank your choices accordingly with 1 being of highest priority.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential development | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicular traffic/congestion | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic stress to the farming community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial development | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of recreational opportunities (incl. water access) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial development | <input type="checkbox"/> Rising property taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution (incl. noise and light pollution) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreclosures/Abandoned Lots | <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed local economy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

What initiatives do you feel are worth considering in preserving Leicester's open space and rural character?

- Dark skies - limiting light pollution
- Quiet nights - limiting noise pollution
- Clean water - protecting water supply
- Farmland incentives - preserving working farms
- Working forests - preserving working forests
- Nature sanctuaries - preserving natural areas
- Food security - preserving local food production (i.e. local farms, local value-added products, local wild food habitats)
- Green infrastructure - implementing conservation projects that mitigate environmental impacts such as erosion and flooding
- Green development - requiring any new development to set aside natural areas
- Smart growth - restricting new development to already developed areas
- Public transportation - increasing the range and services of public transportation
- Greenways - connecting open space with natural corridors
- Partnering communities - partnering with neighboring communities on open space initiatives
- Eco-tourism - tourism based upon the preservation of open space
- Environmental justice - giving special attention to environmental issues within low-income neighborhoods
- Other:

I live in close proximity to the following landscape features:			
	10 minute walk	10 minute drive	Neither
Public lands			
Open fields			
Active agricultural fields			
Forest or woodlands			
Managed forest or woodlands			
Orchards			
Water access (i.e. beaches, boat launch, etc.)			
Wetlands or bogs			
Lakes or ponds			
Rivers or streams			
Hunting grounds			
Wild foods (i.e. wild apple trees, berry patches, mushroom logs, etc.)			
Parks - with equipment and facilities (i.e. playgrounds, pavilions, picnic tables, benches, bathrooms, etc.)			
Parks - without equipment or facilities			
Active recreation facilities (i.e. sports fields, baseball back-stops, basketball hoops, soccer nets, etc.)			
Trails			
Greenways			
New development			
Abandoned buildings			
Abandoned machinery			
Point source pollution			

For each of the following resources, please indicate how frequently you use the facility for recreation.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually	Do Not Use
Becker College facilities						
Burncoat Park						
Community Fields						
Hillcrest						
Leicester High School						
Lyons Park						
Memorial School						
Mid State Trail						
Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area						
Rochdale Park						
Russell Memorial/Little League Field						
Town Common						
Towtaid Park						

Describe any recreational facilities and/or open space you would like to see developed/expanded in town.

Would you be willing to pay higher taxes or user fees for the maintenance of public recreation areas in town?

Yes Yes - but only if the town were to adopt the Community Preservation Act
 No that matches funds for open space and recreation.

I would support the Town in acquiring land (and water access) in the following ways:

- Yes No Direct Town purchase of land using tax revenues
- Yes No Direct Town purchase of development rights (whereas a private land owner may sell their right to develop their land to the Town, but the land owner retains ownership of the property)
- Yes No Direct Town purchase of land using state or federal grants
- Yes No Direct Town purchase of land development rights using state or federal grants (whereas a private land owners may sell their right to develop their land to the Town, but the land owner retains ownership of the property)
- Yes No Acceptance of donated land
- Yes No Acceptance of donated development rights
- Yes No Zoning changes for open space protection

In my opinion, open space in Leicester would be best served in conjunction with open space efforts in the following communities.

- Direct neighboring communities
- Regional communities
- Communities that share resources with the Town
- Watershed communities
- Foodshed communities (i.e. communities that share in local or regional agriculture and food production)

Which of the following activities best describes your use of open space in Leicester and its surrounding communities?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Rarely	Never	Not Available
ATV/ORV/Snowmobiling							
Baseball/Softball							
Basketball							
Bicycling							
Boating (motor boat)							
Bowling							
Camping/Backpacking							
Canoeing/Kayaking/Tubing							
Cross-country skiing							
Field sports (i.e. football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, cheer-leading, ultimate frisbee, etc.)							
Fishing/Ice fishing							
Foraging/Primitive skills							
Frisbee golf							
Gardening							
Golf							
Hiking/Snowshoeing							
Horseback riding							
Hunting/Target practice							
Ice Hockey/Ice skating							
Mountain biking							
Paintball							
Picnicking							
Running/Cross-country running							
Sight seeing/Birding/Nature photography							
Skateboarding/In-line skating							
Sledding							
Swimming (indoors)							
Swimming (outdoors)							
Tennis							
Track and field							
Volleyball							
Walking/Dog-walking							

Other:

Are you in favor of a town trail system?
Yes No If your answer is no, please explain:

What places should a town trail system connect?

Parks and active recreation facilities	Villages and Town center
Conservation lands	Stores
Hunting and foraging lands	Public transportation hubs
Abandoned corridors	Developed trailheads
Schools	Private lands
Churches	Other:

What is your favorite place in Leicester?

What general area of town best describes where you live?
If the best option is "other" then please give a general discription of location.

Leicester Cherry Valley Rochdale Greenville
 Other:

How many years (combined and totaled) have you lived in Leicester?

Less than one year
 1-5 years
 6-10 years
 10-20 years
 More than 20 years

How much land do you (or your family) own in Leicester?

Don't own/I rent
 Less than 2 acres
 2-5 acres
 6-15 acres
 16-50 acres
 51-100 acres
 Over 100 acres

What is your age?

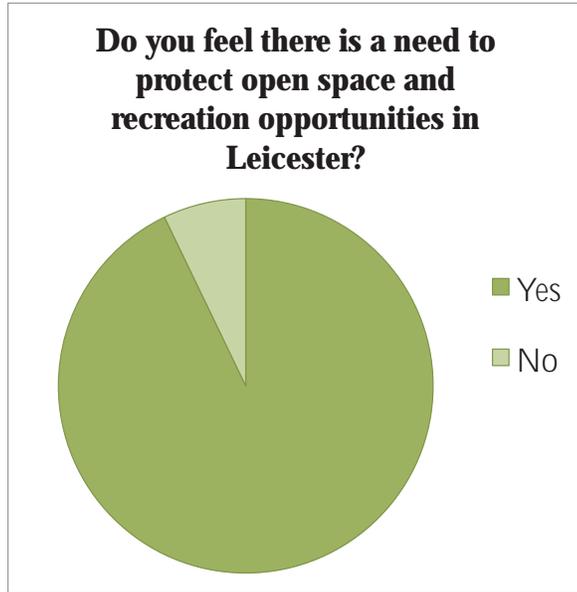
Under 18
 18-24
 25-44
 45-64
 65 or over

How do you identify your gender?

Male
 Female
 Other

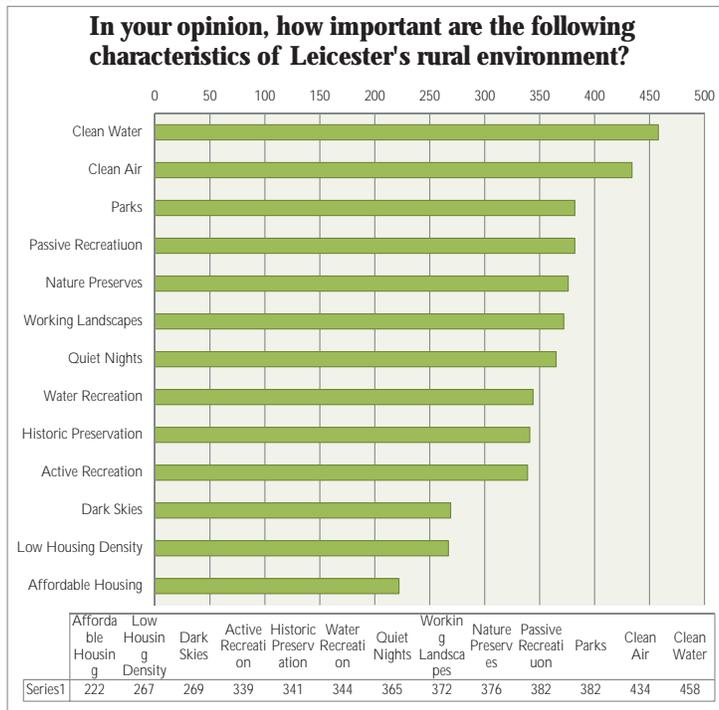
1. Do you feel there is a need to protect open space and recreation opportunities in Leicester?

Yes	104
No	8
Total Answer	112
No Answer	9



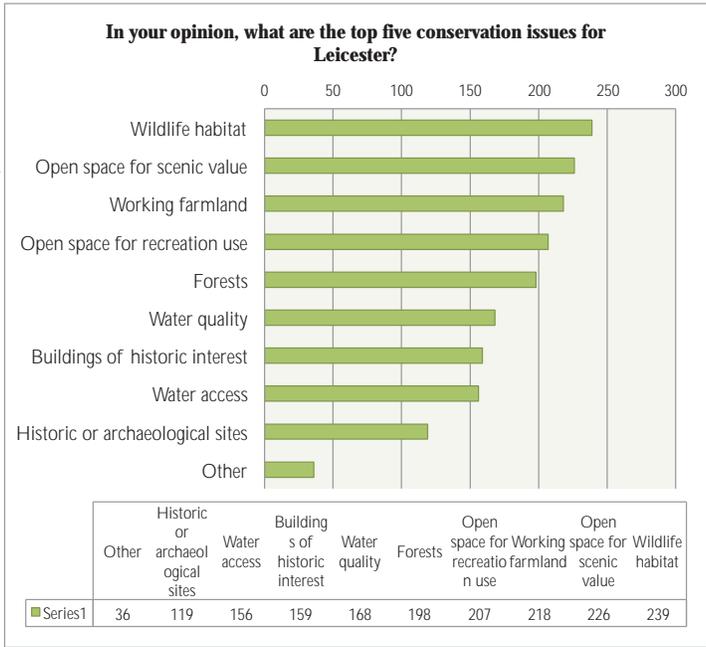
2. In your opinion, how important are the following characteristics of Leicester's rural environment?

Clean Water	458
Clean Air	434
Parks	382
Passive Recreation	382
Nature Preserves	376
Working Landscapes	372
Quiet Nights	365
Water Recreation	344
Historic Preservation	341
Active Recreation	339
Dark Skies	269
Low Housing Density	267
Affordable Housing	222



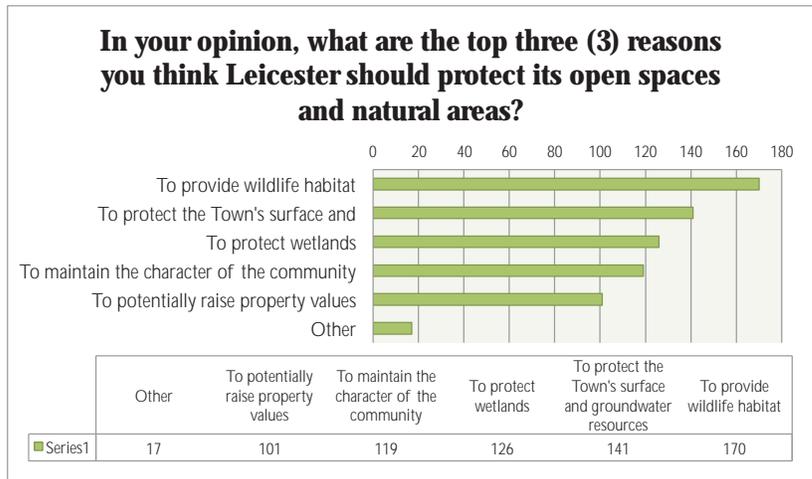
3. In your opinion, what are the top 5 conservation issues for Leicester?

- Total
- 239 Wildlife habitat
 - 226 Open space for scenic value
 - 218 Working farmland
 - 207 Open space for recreation use
 - 198 Forests
 - 168 Water quality
 - 159 Buildings of historic interest
 - 156 Water access
 - 119 Historic or archaeological sites
 - 36 Other



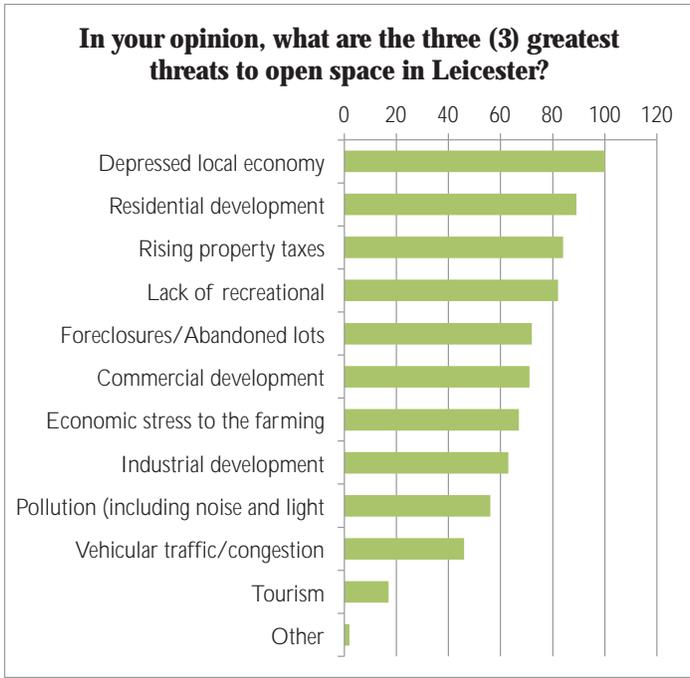
4. In your opinion, what are the top three reasons you think Leicester should protect its open spaces and natural areas.

- To provide wildlife habitat 170
- To protect the Town's surface and groundwater resources 141
- To protect wetlands 126
- To maintain the character of the community 119
- To potentially raise property values 101
- Other 17

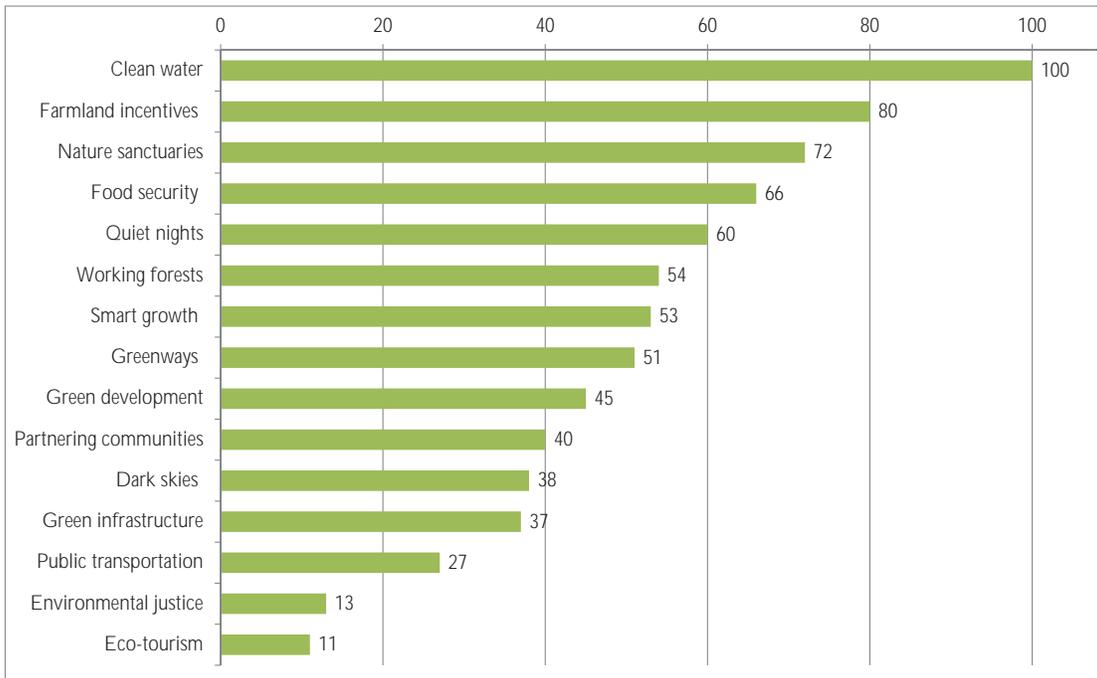


5. In your opinion, what are the three (3) greatest threats to open space in Leicester?

Summary	Total
Depressed local economy	100
Residential development	89
Rising property taxes	84
Pollution (including water access)	82
Foreclosures/Abandoned lots	72
Commercial development	71
Economic stress to the farming community	67
Industrial development	63
Pollution (including noise and light pollution)	56
Vehicular traffic/congestion	46
Tourism	17
Other	2



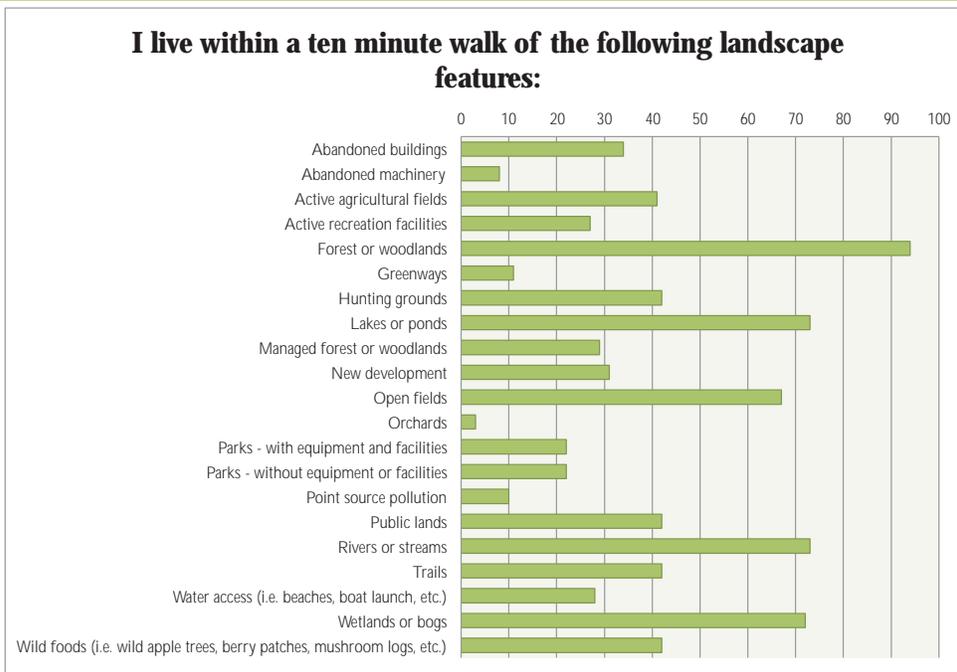
6. What initiatives do you feel are worth considering in preserving Leicester's open space and rural character?



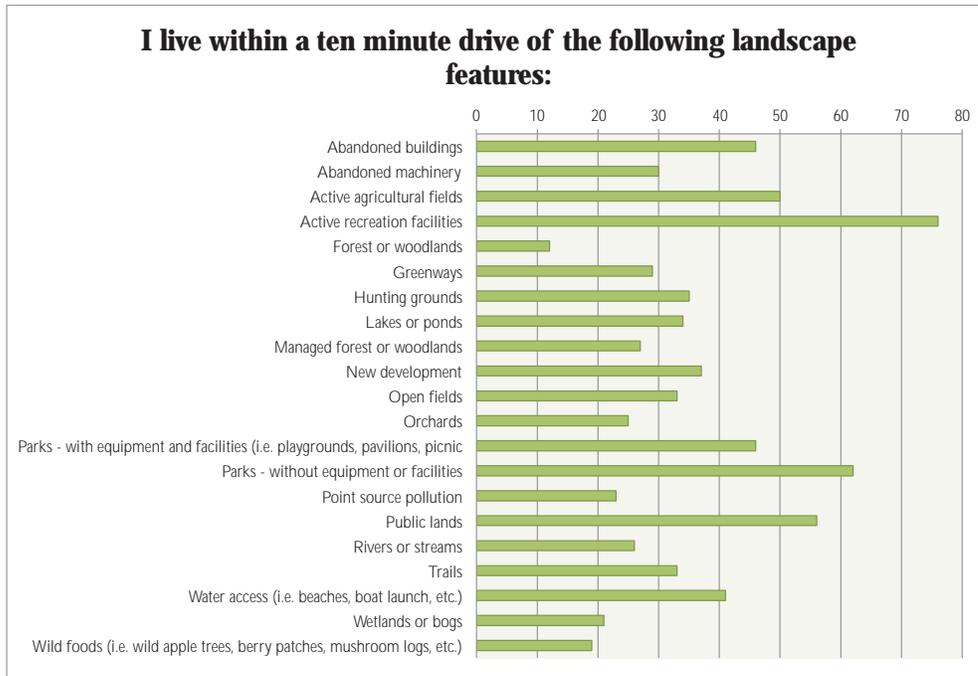
7. I live in close proximity to the following landscape features pg. 1

Walk (10min.)	Drive (10min)	Neither	
42	56		13 Public lands
67	33		10 Open fields
41	50		16 Active agricultural fields
94	12		7 Forest or woodlands
29	27		42 Managed forest or woodlands
3	25		75 Orchards
28	41		41 Water access (i.e. beaches, boat launch, etc.)
72	21		13 Wetlands or bogs
73	34		6 Lakes or ponds
73	26		11 Rivers or streams
42	35		33 Hunting grounds
42	19		44 Wild foods (i.e. wild apple trees, berry patches, mushroom logs, etc.)
22	46		41 Parks - with equipment and facilities
22	62		27 Parks - without equipment or facilities
27	76		8 Active recreation facilities
42	33		37 Trails
11	29		60 Greenways
31	37		36 New development
34	46		28 Abandoned buildings
8	30		61 Abandoned machinery
10	23		59 Point source pollution

7. I live in close proximity to the following landscape features pg. 2



7. I live in close proximity to the following landscape features pg. 3



8. For each of the following resources, please indicate how frequently you use the facility for recreation

Do not use	Use yearly	Use monthly	Use seasonally	Use weekly	Use daily	
92	7	0	11	0	0	0 Becker College facilities
90	4	0	14	1	0	0 Burncoat Park
74	5	4	27	0	0	0 Community Fields
78	3	1	21	5	3	3 Hillcrest
73	10	2	22	0	4	4 Leicester High School
101	3	1	4	1	0	0 Lyons Park
85	3	2	15	2	2	2 Memorial School
70	7	8	25	2	0	0 Mid State Trail
81	5	3	20	0	0	0 Moose Hill Wildlife Management Area
70	9	6	21	2	3	3 Rochdale Park
93	2	1	12	0	0	0 Russell Memorial/Little League Field
25	15	9	59	4	0	0 Town Common
94	7	2	4	1	0	0 Towtaid Park

9. Describe any recreational facilities and/or open space you would like to see developed/expanded in town.

A detailed explanation to the town what is going on with Hillcrest and what is the LONG TERM plan?

A dog park would be great.

A town beach.

Again, there is no recreational program for the kids during the summer.

As a dog-walker in Rochdale Park, I have passed by the "volleyball court" twice a day every day since it has been constructed. I have NEVER seen it used besides by a couple of kids playing in the sand - it's also great at growing weeds. Yet there are resources used to rake the sand to make it look good and there are plenty of folks who have dogs running around off-leash, against the town laws. Since there are no fenced dog park areas in any nearby town, it would be a great use of that wasted space to fence the 4th side in to allow a place for the dogs to play.

Burncoat Park - beach access, playing field, tree sapling farm, connected trails to Burncoat Wildlife Sanctuary and Sibley Farm

Burncoat Park and Rochdale Park

Burncoat Park for public swimming

I believe there should be fishing allowed on all Worcester reservoirs by a permit basis. Fees would help in the cleaning and maintenance. On other town ponds, there should be motor restrictions. Visit Brooks Pond in Spencer. It is peaceful and serene.

I didn't know there were that many parks or facilities!

I would like to see the High school have proper athletic fields to give the athlete's a chance to develop to their fullest potential. The track is downright dangerous to run on and athletes are running on it all the time. The football field is an atrocity. The football field can be used for Field Hockey, Lacrosse, and soccer as well as football. It could serve as a community gathering place and we can expand on our town pride. Which in turn would make people want to contribute to the betterment of the town.

I would like to see the parks maintained properly. We live in the Rochdale section of town. There is one park within walking distance of my home. The park offers young children exactly 3 swings to use, 2 of which are broken. There is no other play equipment at the park. The children in my home are under school-aged and we have found very little for them within our community. For any recreational needs we are forced to use surrounding towns. We are considering moving to a different town for this reason.

I would love to see the center of town (where the old gas station is, and some of the homes are abandoned along Pleasant St.) redeveloped! Our center of town has abandoned property!

I would very much like to see a dog park and would be willing to serve on a committee for such.

it seems like the schools always get more tax money so no added taxes please/they need to learn how to budget/have the state teach them.

It would be nice to see Burncoat Park used again as a Town beach and for development of sports fields, as long as the hiking trails are still accessible.

Leicester town beach for recreation use: cookouts, pick-nicks, fishing, boating, swimming. Other area could be open up for hunting, hiking or other recreation.

MOOSE HILL

none

Rochdale Park and the Little League complex.

9. Describe any recreational facilities and/or open space you would like to see developed/expanded in town.

Rochdale park beach and play yard equipment. The swings need some TLC and We really miss not being able to use the beach for swimming and picnics. We used to take our rakes down and clean but it just got so overgrown the ducks/ geese have taken over the area now. It is a beautiful spot where many people have enjoyed in the past and we sure do miss it. It has become a popular dog park if you will by many residents and out of towners.

Snowmobile access

Some of the areas above are unknown to me, for example, Towtaid Park, so perhaps more publicity would be in order

Summer Recreating

Summer Recreating

Swimming Lessons, Tennis Lessons. Golf Lessons

The kids need more fields - soccer, baseball/softball, etc. Perhaps develop the 5th hole at Hillcrest and then create another hole for golf. The current parks need work - and bathroom facilities. Maybe some playground equip for little kids. Our school fields are embarrassing...the worst in the league.

the old cooper farm, top of denny hill, between Auburn & Stafford st.

This is the correct spelling for Lions Park

Town Beach

Town Beach

Used to use many of the community fields when children were younger - I would like to know more about Moose Hill. I live near the lakes but can't swim in any of them as there is no public beach.

walking trails, agricultural land, forested land, improved sidewalks on existing roads

walking/biking trails (thinking along the lines of "rail trails")

We have hardly anything in the way of true conversation land/nature preserves. More land should be set aside for this. It would help raise property values as well as providing a healthier space for both wildlife and for water quality. I would like to see the Burncoat Pond access maintained and open to non-motorized boating (or small electric motors only) for a fee.

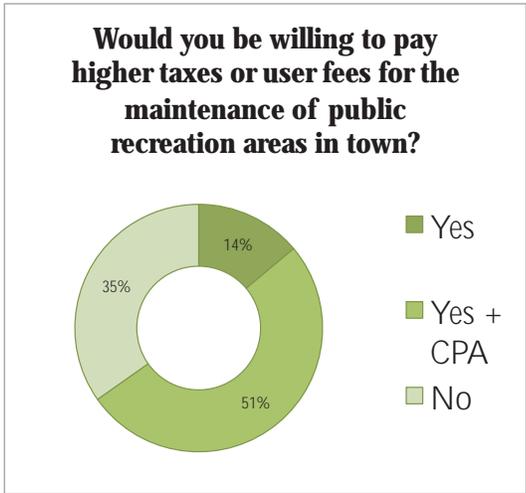
We live down the street from a little park in Cherry Valley. It is at the end of Church Street and Towtaid. It has some swing sets and such, a tennis court, and a basketball court. I would like to see us invest some time/money in both upkeeping this area, and replacing old structures. Good amount of families around our neighborhood use this area, and it looks like all we do is cut the grass around it, with little to no upkeep.

When the town bought Hillcrest we were told that a part of it would be used for a soccer field - especially for the girls teams. My girls are all grown up and we still have no facilities for girls soccer teams.

Would love to see a town beach or swimming facility. Central rec areas such as soccer fields as well. Town park.. Town really needs to pass zoning bylaws that would preserve New England feel. Hold business owners to maintaining bylaws. Rip down closed gas station in center of town- been there 10 years and it is a absolute embarrassment that this is allowed in one area that visitors see day in day out. Cherry valley area coming in from Worcester as well. You should be able to distinctly tell when you are leaving Worcester and entering beautiful Leicester. We need to demand more of our state reps who do nothing for Leicester.

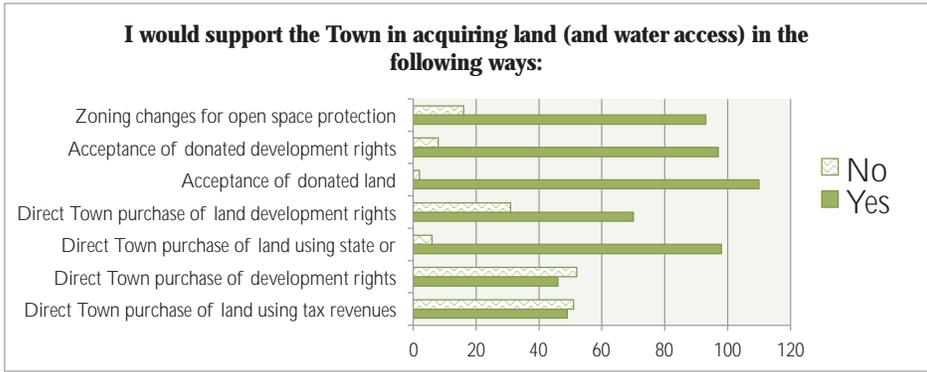
10. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes or user fees for the maintenance of public recreation areas in town?

Answer	Count
Yes	16
Yes + CPA	59
No	40



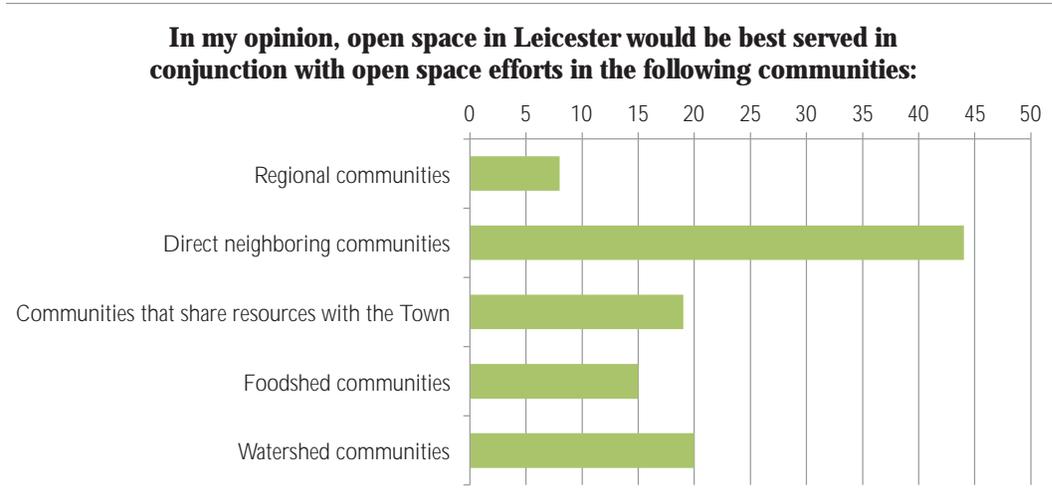
11. I would support the Town in acquiring land (and water access) in the following ways

	Direct Town purchase of land using tax revenues	Direct Town purchase of development rights	Direct Town purchase of land using state or federal grants	Direct Town purchase of land development rights using state or federal grants	Acceptance of donated land	Acceptance of donated development rights	Zoning changes for open space protection
Yes	49	46	98	70	110	97	93
No	51	52	6	31	2	8	16



12. In my opinion, open space in Leicester would be best served in conjunction with open space efforts in the following communities.

- 8 Regional communities
- 44 Direct neighboring communities
- 19 Communities that share resources with the Town
- 15 Foodshed communities
- 20 Watershed communities



13. Which of the following activities best describes your use of open space in Leicester and its surrounding communities?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Rarely	Never	Not available
ATV/ORV/Snowmobiling	0	0	1	19	5	71	8
Baseball/Softball	1	0	0	23	11	65	4
Basketball	1	1	0	14	11	68	4
Bicycling	2	4	6	40	10	41	2
Boating (motor boat)	2	2	0	25	2	63	9
Bowling	1	3	2	7	24	46	21
Camping/Backpacking	0	1	2	30	6	48	19
Canoeing/Kayaking/Tubing	2	3	1	32	9	44	14
Cross-country skiing	1	2	0	23	8	58	13
Field sports	1	2	1	30	9	51	10
Fishing/Ice fishing	1	3	4	35	5	48	9
Foraging/Primitive skills	1	0	4	12	8	62	13
Frisbee golf	1	5	2	9	7	64	13
Gardening	7	4	4	62	2	24	5
Golf	1	6	2	30	9	44	13
Hiking/Snowshoeing	4	10	5	40	7	30	10
Horseback riding	1	2	1	5	3	67	22
Hunting/Target practice	1	4	1	14	6	60	17
Ice Hockey/Ice skating	0	3	0	28	8	50	15
Mountain biking	0	4	2	20	10	50	17
Paintball	0	0	1	2	2	79	18
Picnicking	0	1	6	40	12	36	8
Running/Cross-country running	3	2	2	14	8	59	13
Sight seeing/Birding/Nature photography	10	6	11	26	14	29	10
Skateboarding/In-line skating	0	1	1	6	4	72	17
Sledding	0	0	1	40	14	40	10
Swimming (indoors)	2	1	1	7	9	49	33
Swimming (outdoors)	0	3	3	44	8	32	16
Tennis	0	1	3	21	8	57	15
Track and field	0	0	1	11	3	71	15
Volleyball	0	0	0	7	10	68	16
Walking/Dog-walking	39	13	11	17	7	14	6

14. Are you in favor of a town trail system?

Yes 105
No 8

What places should a town trail system connect?

- 88 Conservation lands
- 79 Parks and active recreation facilities
- 78 Developed trailheads
- 45 Abandoned corridors
- 36 Villages and Town center
- 26 Hunting and foraging lands
- 22 Schools
- 16 Private lands
- 10 Public transportation hubs
- 9 Stores
- 9 Churches

15. What is your favorite place in Leicester?

Only 66 out of 121 respondents answered this question

221 Auburn St & surrounds !!

All along Route 56 North, including Town Common and the area overlooking the airport.

Ballard Hill private land: trails, open fields, forest.

Breezy Garden Farm Center

Burncoat Pond

Burncoat Park and the trail system that connects to the Audubon Society lands, Mid-State trail system and the Sibley Farm area in Spencer.

Burncoat Pond

Burncoat Pond

Cedar Meadow Lake

Center of Town

Common

concerts on the common and my backyard (lake Sargent)

Coopers Hilltop Farm and the Drive-in, Soojians farm stand would have made this list too if they were still open. Breezy Bend is lovely as well.

dunkin doughnuts

greenville pond

Greenville Pond - and it's a huge mess every year with pond lilies - impossible to use in the summer.

Henshaw Street - Henshaw Pond to Cooper's Farm

Henshaw Street near Cooper's Farm. Beautiful open areas and views and thankfully, close to home.

Hillcrest CC

I don't have one.

I don't have one.

Leicester Common

Marshall Street Disc Golf

Moose Hill Reservoir Area northwest corner

My back yard

MY HOME

15. What is your favorite place in Leicester?

my house, not really a lot of places in the town to brag about. - areas that make me want to go to.

my land

My own yard, and the Rochdale Village / Greenville Village area. Also like the new Audubon trails Burncoat to Spencer.

My yard. Public Library

Old town beach area near the Spencer border.

Reservoir

Rochdale park and I used to love to go to Burncoat park

Rochdale Park could be very nice if cleaned up (water and land) and more added to the park to make it family friendly - clean up the drugs in the area. I hear the old beach was nice, once upon a time. It would be nice if it was cleaned up and made into a nice family area again, with beach and park area, walking trails, etc. I think that is prime area to look at restoring.

Rochdale Pond and Rochdale Park area

Rte 56 by the airport--you can see many varieties of wildlife.

Smith Pond

Snowmobile Trail

the common

the common

The concerts-on-the-common in summer.

the open space at Brezzy Bend.

The Recycling Center and the Library

The trail network from Rte. 56 to Lynde Brook Reservoir.

The trails across from "Nazareth" great for hiking/walking year round.

Town Common

15. What is your favorite place in Leicester?

Town Common

Town Common

Town Common

Town Common, Ballard Hill, Greenville Pond

Town Common - All activities held there

town common henshaw pond brook

Used to be the town beach. Nothing now.

Walking on trails surrounding the reservoirs, Lynde Brook, Moose Hill.

We don't have a lot to be proud of with regard to open space or recreational facilities. I am a life long resident and would be happy to pay more taxes to help improve this area. I do golf at Hillcrest, but if I had to choose, it would probably be Cooper's farm.

We walk daily in the woods behind Hillcrest Country Club. (All year long)

Wooded trails around Moose Hill, Watson and Bond Sts.

Woods

16. What general area of town best describes where you live?

Location	count	%
Leicester - town center	39	35%
Rochdale	29	26%
Cherry Valley	20	18%
Greenville	8	7%
Burncoat/Cedar Meadow	6	5%
West	5	4%
Northwest	2	2%
Hillcrest area	1	1%
North	1	1%
Northeast	1	1%
Other	1	1%
Total	113	

17. How many years (combined and have you lived in Leicester?

	count	%
More than 20 years	70	61%
11 - 20 years	22	19%
6 - 10 years	14	12%
1 - 5 years	8	7%
Total	114	

18. How much land do you (or your family) own in Leicester?

	count	%
Don't own/I rent	5	4%
Less than 2 acres	81	70%
2-5 acres	20	17%
6-15 acres	3	3%
16-50 acres	3	3%
51-100 acres	2	2%
Over 100 acres	1	1%
Total	115	

19. What is your age?

	count	%
25 - 44	20	17%
45 - 64	63	55%
65 or older	32	28%
Total	115	

20. How do you identify your gender?

	count	%
Female	60	53%
Male	53	46%
Other	1	1%
Total	114	

Appendix B: Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest

A. Private Recreation Lands	A19
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5. Non-Profit Recreation Lands.....	A29

A. Private Recreation Lands (Passive and Active)

1. Chapter 61 Properties

Chapter 61 (Forestry) Properties

Map	Location	Acres
46-C2	699 Henshaw Street	7.76
42-B1	89 Parker Street	38.04
39-A6	Memorial Drive	41.20
14-A4	Mulberry Street	23.95
14-A4.2	12 Mulberry Street	1.86
14-A4.3	10 Mulberry Street	1.86
14-A4.5	208 Chapel Street	1.86
44-A7	94-102 Huntton Memorial Hig	29.00
1-C2	Whittemore Street	92.00
9-B5	Bond Street	96.88
2-A2	Whittemore Street	93.27
2-A1.9	Whittemore Street	0.65
9-B6.4	Bond Street	1.01
9-B6.5	Bond Street	34.72
9-B6.6	Bond Street	1.50
40-A10	Charles Street	10.26
40-A11	Charles Street	14.83
41-A14.1	Charles Street	1.27
40-A9	Pine Street	28.00
27-C1.3	84 Burncoat Lane	5.97
27-C1.2	82 Burncoat Lane	5.84
32-A15	Auburn Street	9.00
32-A4	Henshaw Street	29.5
32-A4.2	Henshaw Street	9.61
2-D2	51 Hemlock Street	50.47
2-D3.5	43 Hemlock Street	1.33
41-B2	471 Pine Street	25.85
45-B7	Wilson Street	21.00
45-B8	Wilson Street	23.00
43-C9	Rear Pleasant Street	37.99
2-D1	75 Hemlock Street	34.60
TOTAL		774.08

Chapter 61A (Agriculture) Properties

Map	Location	Acres
12A-A1	Washburn Street	6.31
16-A5	Whittemore Street	8.00
16-A1.2	69 Whittemore Street	97.70
31-B23	360 Henshaw Street	22.00
17-A6	Main Street	9.32
10-C2	1832 Main Street	145.00
10-C5	Bond Street	7.01
49-B10.1	7 Parker Street	5.60
10-B14	1896 Main Street	13.88
10-B13	1894 Main Street	6.28
16-A1	Whittemore Street	98.00
11-B4	140 Whittemore Street	16.40
11-A4.1	Whittemore Street	5.38
49-C1	164 Charles Street	12.00
49-C6	Charlton Street	3.00
47-A4	Charlton Street	42.00
10-A1	15 Bond Street	42.76
10-B1	Bond Street	5.41
10-C3	Bond Street	1.00
38-A6	124 Green Street	57.40
1-A4	505 Moose Hill Road	11.86
1-A5	Moose Hill Road	1.00
1-A4.2	Moose Hill Road	7.44
45-A4	Henshaw Street	14.85
44-B1	Henshaw Street	43.00
44-B5	115 Huntton Memorial Highw	3.97
45-A3	515 Henshaw Street	71.98
44-A10	110 Huntton Memorial Highw	1.07
44-B2	Henshaw Street	10.12
45-A8	515 Henshaw Street	31.63
37-D2	Clark Street	35.90
36-A6	Henshaw Street	8.60
6-C2	Marshall Street	7.00
47-A30	70 Craig Street	69.77
45-A1	423 Henshaw Street	10.00
46-B4	700 Henshaw	6.00
46-B5	Henshaw St	10.00
43-A3	Green St	30.00
TOTAL		978.64

Chapter 61B (Recreation) Properties

Map	Location	Acres
42-B1	89 Parker Street	24.00
5-A4	55 Marshall Street	22.00
33-A6	100 Tobin Road	86.00
5-A3.1	103 Marshall Street	18.74
5-A2	Mulberry Street	1.28
17-B9	Main Street	56.78
19A-B6	Overlook Drive	0.037
19-A7	1430 Main Street	163.31
39-B1	Huntton Memorial Highway	42.51
37-B1	King Street	29.70
TOTAL		444.36

TOTAL CHAPTER 61, 61A, 61B 2,197.08

2. Forest Plan Properties

Plan #	Beginning Year	Replan Year	Acres
151-7782	2007	N/A	51.8
017-1401	1995	2005	3
151-1290	2000	N/A	64.2
151-202	1995	2005	44
151-581	2005	N/A	27.25
151-581	2005	N/A	20.97
228-518	2003	N/A	64.31
151-1290	2000	N/A	33.34
348-1636	2002	N/A	106.32
151-8038	2008	N/A	11.8
Total			426.99

3. Private Properties - Other

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning	CR or APR?
9	B7	Leicester Rod & Gun Club	19	None	1015	Whittemore	Leicester Rod & Gun Club	Leicester Rod & Gun Club	36	Passive	Limited	SA	No
17	B9	Leicester Country Club	56.78	None		Main	Leicester Country Club LLC	Leicester Country Club LLC	805	Active	Limited	HB1	No
19	A7	Leicester Country Club	164.687	None	1430	Main	Leicester Country Club LLC	Leicester Country Club LLC	318	Active	Limited	HB1	No
19	B6	Leicester Country Club	0.037	None		Overlook	Leicester Country Club LLC	Leicester Country Club LLC	805	Active	Limited	R2	No
19	A19	Leicester Country Club	1.25	None		Lake Sargent	Leicester Country Club LLC	Leicester Country Club LLC	132	Active	Limited	SA	No
20	A1	J.E. Russell Park	24	Limited			Becker College	Becker College	942	Active	Full Public Access	R2	No
27	D6	Green Mountain Club Inc	6.25	None	345	Rawson	Green Mountain Club Inc	Green Mountain Club Inc	958	Active	Full Public Access	SA	No
28B	A9	Cedar Meadow Pond Beach	0.225	Limited	55	Lake View	Community Beach and Park	unknown	951	Passive	Limited	SA	No
28B	A23	Cedar Meadow Pond Beach	0.098	Limited	13	Lake View	Community Beach and Park	unknown	951	Passive	Limited	SA	No
Total			272.00										

B. PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARCELS

1. Town-Owned Conservation and Recreation Parcels

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Current Use	Condition	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning	Grant Used to Purchase
30	A1.1	Hillcrest Country Club*	305.294	Perpetuity	325	Pleasant	Town of Leicester	Board of Selectmen	931	Nine-hole golf course with clubhouse, walking trails	Good. Clubhouse repairs needed.	Some potential for athletic fields if holes on west site of Pleasant Street are relocated.	Full Public Access	SA	Land and Water Conservation Fund
18	A1	Burncoat Park	61.72	Perpetuity		Town Beach	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	930	Limited current use. Periodic use for softball.	Fair - significant vandalism	Town Beach. Potential for additional athletic fields (soccer & softball)	Full Public Access	HB1	Self Help
18	A2	Burncoat Park	53.51	Perpetuity	12	Town Beach	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	930	Walking/hiking trails. Beach closed.			Full Public Access	HB1	Self Help
18	A3	Burncoat Park: town beach	1.64	Perpetuity		Main	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	930				Full Public Access	SA	Self Help
23D	B19	Towtoid Park	4.5	Limited		Olney	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	931	Basketball court, tennis court & playground equipment	Good	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	R2	N/A
23D	B21	Towtoid Park: 2008 addition	15.45	Limited		Auburn	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	958	Walking trails/passive recreation	Good	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	R2	N/A-tax title property
46	A3	Rochdale Park	8	Limited	1040	Stafford	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	958	2 baseball fields, basketball court, volleyball court, and skatepark	Very good	Continued use of existing facilities; potential for water-related activities	Full Public Access	R2/SA	N/A
21B	A1	Community Field	8.25	Limited	22	Waite	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	930	Athletic field for soccer & football	Good	Continued use of existing facilities; field improvements	Full Public Access	B	Unknown Federal Grant 1935
21	A3	Little League Field (Russell Memorial Field)		Limited		Main	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission		Baseball & softball fields, plus concession stand	Good	Continued use of existing facilities. Improve accessibility	Full Public Access	B	N/A

20A	C1	Town Common	2.3	Limited	Washburn Square	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission	930	Community events (concerts, Harvest Fair), passive recreation	Very good	Potential for additional community events	Full Public Access	R2	N/A
23A	A32	Leicester Lions Park (Cherry Valley School Lot)	0.844	Limited	252 Main Street	Town of Leicester	Parks & Recreation Commission		passive recreation (memorial park)	Very good	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	B	N/A
24	C8	Willow Hill Road Conservation Area	3	Perpetuity	Willow Hill	Town of Leicester	Conservation Commission	932	Passive recreation (no improvements to property)	Excellent	Passive recreation (walking)	Limited Public Access	SA	N/A

* Acreage split in different categories of use: 232.25 Watershed Protection; 65.41 Recreation; 2.67 Recreation or General Municipal

2. Other Town-Owned properties with Recreation or Conservation Potential

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
15	A14	Middle School	20.44	Limited	70	Winslow	Town of Leicester	School Department	934	baseball field, tennis courts, indoor basketball court	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	R2
15	A19.1	Primary & High School	24.54	Limited	170	Paxton	Town of Leicester	School Department	934	football field, outdoor track, indoor basketball court, playground, soccer field	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	SA
39	A7	Memorial School	28	Limited	11	Memorial	Town of Leicester	School Department	934	softball field, soccer fields, tennis courts, play area	Continued use of existing facilities	Full Public Access	R1
23D	B20	Cherry Valley Cemetery	3	Limited	10	Towtoid	Town of Leicester	Department of Public Works	953	Cemetery	Passive	Full Public Access	R2
3A	A2	Elliott Cemetery	7.01	Limited	327	Marshall	Town of Leicester	Department of Public Works	953	Cemetery	Passive	No Public Access	R1

3. State-Owned Wildlife Management Lands

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
1	A2	Moose Hill WMA	23.22	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	911	Passive	Full Public Access	SA
1	A3	Moose Hill WMA	15	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	911	Passive	Full Public Access	SA
1	B2	Moose Hill WMA	0.344	Perpetuity		Pryor	Commonwealth of Massachusetts		901	N/A	Full Public Access	SA
1	C1	Moose Hill WMA	73.25	Perpetuity		Whittemore	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	911	Passive	Full Public Access	SA
1	C3	Moose Hill WMA	35.65	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	901	Passive	Full Public Access	SA
9	B1	Moose Hill WMA	33	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	901	Passive	Full Public Access	SA
			Total Acres									
			157.24									

4. Water Resource Management Lands: Public (State & Municipal) and Private Water Districts

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
27	B6	Burncoat Pond	87	Unknown		Burncoat Pond	Burncoat Pond Watershed District	Burncoat Pond Watershed District	938	N/A	None	SA
28	A12	Cedar Meadow Lake Watershed District	142	Unknown		Charles	Cedar Meadow Lake Watershed District	Cedar Meadow Lake Watershed District	938	N/A	None	SA
24	A2	Leicester Water Supply District	149	Perpetuity	148	Henshaw	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
31	A3	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	0.184	Perpetuity		Peter Salem	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R1

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
31	B1.1	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	9.4	Perpetuity		Henshaw	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
31	B11.7	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	15.6	Perpetuity		Autumn	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
31	B28	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	8	Perpetuity		Henshaw	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
23A	A43.1	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	0.344	Perpetuity		Rear Main	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R2
23A	A44.1	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	1	Perpetuity		Rear Main	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R2
37A	A5	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	0.241	Perpetuity		King	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
37A	E4	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	0.17	Perpetuity			Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	990	N/A	Limited	
24	A1	Cherry Valley & Rochdale Water District	13.26	Perpetuity		Henshaw	Cherry Valley Water District	Cherry Valley Water District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
3	B1	Worcester Water Supply	38.76	Perpetuity		Elm	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
3	B2	Worcester Water Supply	1.3	Perpetuity		Elm	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
3	C1	Worcester Water Supply	9	Perpetuity		Paxton	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
4	A2	Worcester Water Supply	22.39	Perpetuity		Elm	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
14	A5	Worcester Water Supply	6.15	Perpetuity		Chapel	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
4	B3	Worcester Water Supply	22.34	Perpetuity		Marshall	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
4	B4	Worcester Water Supply	1	Perpetuity		Marshall	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
6	A2	Worcester Water Supply	27.64	Perpetuity		Paxton	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
6	B1	Worcester Water Supply	11.95	Perpetuity		Paxton	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
6	C1	Worcester Water Supply	186.4	Perpetuity		Mannville	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
12	A3	Worcester Water Supply	52	Perpetuity		Washburn	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
12	B2	Worcester Water Supply	71.9	Perpetuity		Paxton	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
12	D1	Worcester Water Supply	1	Perpetuity		Paxton	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
13	A2	Worcester Water Supply	89.5	Perpetuity		Mulberry	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
13	A6	Worcester Water Supply	6.4	Perpetuity		Mannville	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
14	A1	Worcester Water Supply	20.2	Perpetuity		Sylvester	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
14	A2	Worcester Water Supply	247	Perpetuity	175	Reservoir	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
14	A6	Worcester Water Supply	6.72	Perpetuity		Chapel	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
22	C1	Worcester Water Supply	23	Perpetuity		Reservoir	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
22	C2.1	Worcester Water Supply	15.852	Perpetuity		Reservoir	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
22A	C12	Worcester Water Supply	25.57	Perpetuity		Pine	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
22A	C6	Worcester Water Supply	1.84	Perpetuity		Woodland	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
3	A2	Worcester Water Supply	63	Perpetuity		Marshall	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
12	C1	Worcester Water Supply	49.65	Perpetuity		Earle	City of Worcester	Worcester Department of Public Works	980	N/A	Limited	SA
9	A1.1	Moose Hill Reservoir	1.99	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Water Resources Commission	901	N/A	Limited	SA
9	B1.1	Moose Hill Reservoir	10.12	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Water Resources Commission	901	N/A	Limited	SA
9	B2.1	Moose Hill Reservoir	27.29	Perpetuity		Moose Hill	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Water Resources Commission	901	N/A	Limited	SA
46B	L7		0.185	Perpetuity		Stafford	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Department of Public Works	919	N/A	Limited	B
29A	D1.1	Hillcrest Sewer District	0.033	Perpetuity	229A	Pine	Hillcrest Sewer District	Hillcrest Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
30A	A27.1	Hillcrest Sewer District	0.01	Perpetuity		Sterling	Hillcrest Sewer District	Hillcrest Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
30B	H2.1	Hillcrest Sewer District	0.01	Perpetuity	84	Laurelwood	Hillcrest Sewer District	Hillcrest Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
39	A8	Hillcrest Water District	2.56	Perpetuity		Pleasant	Hillcrest Water District	Hillcrest Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
39	A9	Hillcrest Water District	0.595	Perpetuity	13	Lehigh	Hillcrest Water District	Hillcrest Water District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
26A	B3	Leicester Water Supply District	0.624	Perpetuity		Blueberry	Leicester Water Supply	Leicester Water Supply	990	N/A	Limited	BR-1

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
26B	B4.3	Leicester Water Supply District	1.435	Perpetuity		Rear Rawsone	Leicester Water Supply	Leicester Water Supply	990	N/A	Limited	R2
15	A19.2	Leicester Water Supply District	4.33	Perpetuity	180	Paxton	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
15	A19.3	Leicester Water Supply District	1.02	Perpetuity		Paxton	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
15	A20	Leicester Water Supply District	0.769	Perpetuity	180	Paxton	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
18	A5.2	Leicester Water Supply District	0.304	Perpetuity	1739	Main	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	HB1
22	A1	Leicester Water Supply District	0.337	Perpetuity		Pine	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
22	A9	Leicester Water Supply District	7.5	Perpetuity	120	Chapel	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	
26	A1	Leicester Water Supply District	14.6	Perpetuity		Rawson	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
26	A2	Leicester Water Supply District	15.79	Perpetuity	124	Pine	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
12A	G4	Leicester Water Supply District	2.3	Perpetuity		Whittemore	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
12A	H3	Leicester Water Supply District	0.723	Perpetuity		Lincoln	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
12A	J1	Leicester Water Supply District	1.53	Perpetuity		Whittemore	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
12A	K1	Leicester Water Supply District	0.422	Perpetuity		Whittemore	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	SA
19A	A2	Leicester Water Supply District	1.25	Perpetuity	1360	Main	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	HB1
21A	A48.1	Leicester Water Supply District	0.701	Perpetuity		Mannville	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	R2
26B	B4.2	Leicester Water Supply District	2.19	Perpetuity		Rawson	Leicester Water Supply District	Leicester Water Supply District	990	N/A	Limited	R2
41A	A12	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	0.298	Perpetuity	23	Fairview	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	938	N/A	None	SA
41A	A30	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	0.13	Perpetuity	59	Fairview	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	938	N/A	None	SA
41A	E5	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	0.23	Perpetuity		Kent	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	Meadow Lake Association, Inc	938	N/A	None	

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning
43	B3.1	Oxford Rochdale Water District	0.058	Perpetuity		Clark	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
37A	B1	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	0.515	Perpetuity	447	Pleasant	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
38A	A36	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	0.293	Perpetuity	14	Park	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	Oxford Rochdale Sewer District	990	N/A	Limited	R1
41	C3	Stiles Lake Water District	51.4	Perpetuity		Parker	Stiles Lake Water District	Stiles Lake Water District	938	N/A	Limited	SA
48	B5	Stiles Lake Water District	21.8	Perpetuity		part of Stiles Reservoir	Stiles Lake Water District	Stiles Lake Water District	988	N/A	Limited	SA
10	B3.1	Spencer Pump House	0.257	Perpetuity	87	Watson	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	981	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C10	Spencer Water Supply	10	Perpetuity		Bond	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C11	Spencer Water Supply	60.35	Perpetuity		Bond	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C4	Spencer Water Supply	66.1	Perpetuity		Bond	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C7	Spencer Water Supply	42.4	Perpetuity		Whittemore	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C8	Spencer Water Supply	21.34	Perpetuity		Bond	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
10	C9	Spencer Water Supply	12.2	Perpetuity		Bond	Town of Spencer	Spencer Water Department	980	N/A	Limited	SA
			Total									
			1812.75									

5. Non-Profit Recreation Lands (Passive and Active)

MAP	Parcel	Description	Acres	Protection	#	Street	Owner	Manager	Land Use Code	Recreation Potential	Public Access	Zoning	Grant Used to Purchase	CR or APR?
4	A6	Southwick Pond Area	53.54	Perpetuity (CR recorded Book 13092/346)		Crystal	Greater Worcester Land Trust, Inc.	Greater Worcester Land Trust, Inc.	950	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	CR
4	A4.5	Southwick Pond Area (Southwick Brook)	4.6	Perpetuity (CR recorded Book 45956/194)	86	Marshall	Greater Worcester Land Trust	Greater Worcester Land Trust Paxton Conservation Commission & Greater Worcester Land Trust	950	Passive	Limited	SA	Conservation Partnership	CR
4	A7	Muir Meadows (adjacent to Southwick Pond)	2.5 in Leicester (total 56.72)	Perpetuity (CR recorded Book 49249/135)		Crystal	City of Worcester	Greater Worcester Land Trust	980	Passive	Limited	SA	Drinking Water Supply Grant (DCR)	CR
12	C11	Cooke Property	11.84	Perpetuity		Paxton	Greater Worcester Land Trust	Greater Worcester Land Trust	132	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No*
15	A21	Cooke Property	15.42	Perpetuity		Paxton	Greater Worcester Land Trust	Greater Worcester Land Trust	132	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No*
38A	A24	Dawn Acres Park	1.43	Limited		King	Dawn Acres Improvement Associated Inc.	Dawn Acres Improvement Associated Inc.	132	Passive	Limited	R1	N/A	No
41	B7	Camp Wind in the Pines	16.58	Limited		Parker	YWCA	YWCA	951	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No
41	C4	Camp Wind in the Pines	2.31	Limited		Parker	YWCA	YWCA	951	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No
41	C2	Camp Wind in the Pines	10.87	Limited	89	Parker	YWCA	YWCA	951	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No
42	B2.3	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	1.85	Limited	43	Parker	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	130	Passive	Limited		N/A	No
48	B2	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	52.2	Limited	211	Baldwin	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	951	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No
48	B2.4	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	1.84	Limited	45	Parker	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	130	Passive	Limited		N/A	No
49	A1	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	42	Limited		Hammond	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	Montachusett Girl Scout Council	951	Passive	Limited	SA	N/A	No

* Currently owned and permanently protected by Greater Worcester Land Trust. A Conservation Restriction, to be held by the Common Ground Land Trust, is pending.

Appendix C: Public Comments



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

Deval Patrick
GOVERNOR

Maeve Vallely Bartlett
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181

December 31, 2014

Michelle Buck
Planning Board
3 Washburn Square
Leicester, MA 01524-1333

RECEIVED
JAN 07 2015
LEICESTER PLANNING BOARD

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Buck:

Thank you for submitting the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan for Leicester to this office for review and compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan requirements. This plan was particularly thorough and has been conditionally approved through December 2021. Conditional approval will allow the town to participate in DCS grant rounds through December 2021, and a grant award may be offered to the town. However, no final grant payments will be made until the plan is completed.

Once the following items are addressed, your plan will receive final approval:

1. Fisheries and Wildlife – a general inventory of the town's fisheries and wildlife is needed.
2. Environmental Challenges – please add sections on landfills, erosion, chronic flooding, and sedimentation.
3. Section 5 – this section should begin with an explanation of what the word protected means. The table that lists town-owned conservation and recreation properties must be expanded and include columns on current use and recreation potential (you have to specifically list what could be added at a facility). Also, a list Conservation Restrictions in the town should be added.
4. Analysis of Needs – the needs of special groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities, should be added.

Please contact me at (617) 626-1171 or melissa.cryan@state.ma.us if you have any questions or concerns, and I look forward to reviewing your final plan.

Sincerely,

Melissa Cryan
Grants Manager



Town of Leicester

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL, 3 WASHBURN SQUARE, LEICESTER MA 01524

Tel: (508) 892-7000

FAX: (508) 892-7070

www.leicesterma.org

November 13, 2014

Ms. Melissa Cryan
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02117

Re: Town of Leicester Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

Please accept this correspondence as formal support from the Leicester Board of Selectmen for the recently completed Leicester Open Space and Recreation Plan. We respectfully request you assist us in adopting this plan so we may get to work on addressing the open space and recreation needs of the Town of Leicester.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Forsberg Garza, Assistant to the Town Administrator, at 508-892-7000 or garzak@leicesterma.org.

Best,

Thomas E. Buckley, III.
Chair, Leicester Board of Selectmen



**TOWN OF LEICESTER
PLANNING BOARD
3 Washburn Square
LEICESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, 01524-1333**

Phone: 508-892-7019
FAX: 508-892-7070

10 November 2014

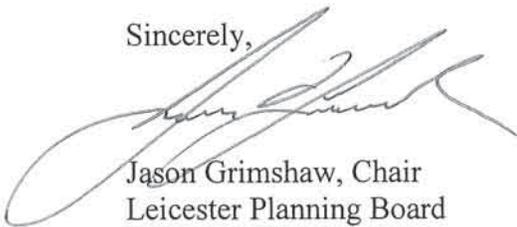
Melissa Cryan
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Leicester 2014 Open Space & Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan:

It was with great pleasure the Leicester Planning Board received and reviewed the Open Space and Recreation Plan at its meeting of 5 November 2014. The dedication of all involved in the process was evident. Specifically, the Board was happy to see the level of widespread involvement in the plan's conception, from not only elected and appointed board members, but private citizens as well. Additionally, the level of public interest was impressive and indicative of the important relationship between planning and the future of Leicester. Despite limited staffing and financial resources, many action items have been successfully addressed including the following; the Right-To-Farm Bylaw, the Local Wetland Bylaw, the Open Space Residential Design Bylaw, and the Stormwater Management Bylaw. Additionally, the five goals identified by citizens and refined through the process remain top priorities for the Planning Board. With this in mind, the Board is pleased to support the Open Space and Recreation Plan and thanks the committee for its hard work.

Sincerely,



Jason Grimshaw, Chair
Leicester Planning Board

cc: Michelle Buck, Town Planner

October 16, 2014

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

Dear Ms. Cryan;

RE: Town of Leicester 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is writing this letter in support of the Town of Leicester and its recently revised and updated 2014 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Town and its Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee with the guidance of the Conway School and Town Planner and the participation of over a hundred survey respondents, attendees of the public meetings, and other nonprofit recreation and conservation organizations are to be commended for their hard work putting this Plan together.

The authors have done a very thorough job and the final document appears compliant with the standards for such plans as promulgated by your office. Leicester has recognized the need to protect open space and the desire to maintain a healthy community with a rural and historic character. The town's leaders have participated in the CMRPC's Central-13 Prioritization Project and have noted there, as they have in this plan, that farms, and forests, are a key part of the Town's open space as such deserve preservation, resources to sustain them. Additionally the plan recognized "a pattern of slow decline in Leicester's parks and recreational spaces" and has identified action items to creatively address this matter.

Leicester's Open Space and Recreation Plan provides the Town with the specific guidance and action steps needed to accomplish its goals and objectives. Maybe most importantly, Leicester plans to continually gauge public opinion and to develop a natural resources campaign. Leicester's has many unique resources that are destination for tourists and others from around the state and region. It is a challenge to plan for the protection of the open spaces and the management of the resources in an era of declining municipal budgets.

The Town of Leicester will be well served by having a State-approved, up-to-date Plan in order to plan for its recreation facilities and programs, as well as to preserve and protect its valuable open spaces and natural resources.

Please consider this letter to be a demonstration of CMRPC's support for the Plan and the process used to develop it. We find Leicester's Plan to be fully consistent with CMRPC's Regional Open Space and Recreation Plan as well as the conservation priorities outlined in our 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts and its 2004 Update.

Sincerely,



Trish Settles, AICP
Principal Planner

Cc: Michelle Buck

Buck, Michelle

From: Carol Harley <susurrising@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 26, 2014 5:15 PM
To: Buck, Michelle
Subject: Open Space Plan comment

Hi,
I just want to convey a hearty "thank you" to you and to everyone who worked on this very thorough and carefully articulated document. It is wonderful to have such a Plan to serve as a reference and to guide the future of Open Space prioritization and discussions in Leicester! Great work!
-Carol

Buck, Michelle

From: parke207@charter.net
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2014 5:27 PM
To: Buck, Michelle
Subject: Comments on the Open Space Plan

Here are some additions or clarifications which I think need to be added to the report:

In the section where you mention the 2 dams which the town owns; clarify the names of both lakes and say that there is a small piece of town owned land on Greenville Pond which has the potential for fishing and non-motorized boat access.

Something that was mentioned at the first public input gathering, was the lack of access for families to take their children fishing. I would like to see that addressed as a goal. Perhaps for the Recreation comm. to make a survey of where legal access points might be and to make those known to the public.

I would like to see the problem of the invasive lake weed on Greenville Pond mentioned. I know that you don't want the report to sound negative, but there must be problems made known so that they can be addressed by the community.

You have mentioned some sites in the town which are owned and managed by Greater Worcester Land Trust; but you did not mention the Cooke Forest off of Paxton Street (down the high lines, behind the Carey Hill development). Did Colin ask you not to highlight this yet? or are you not aware that this will be accessible recreation land?

These points have been on my mind. I need to go back and reread some of it – to see if I missed anything.
Thanks

Jan Parke
parke207@charter.net

Appendix D:
ADA Access Self-
Evaluation

Town of Leicester ADA Self-Evaluation Report

Part I: Administrative Requirements

1. Designation of ADA Coordinator

The ADA Coordinator for the Town of Leicester is Kristen Forsberg-Garza, Assistant to the Town Administrator (see attached appointment memo dated August 11, 2014).

2. Grievance Procedures

Grievance procedures were adopted by the Board of Selectmen on September 10, 2007 (copy attached).

3. Public Notification Requirements

The Town of Leicester publicly posts that the Town does not discriminate on the basis of disability. (copy of notice attached).

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

The Town of Leicester has worked with the Disability Commission in development of the 2011 ADA Assessment Report. The Disability Commission also reviewed and commented on this Open Space Plan (see comment letter dated September 23, 2014).

Part II: Program Accessibility

In 2011, with funding from the Community Development Block Grant program, a comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Transition Plan was prepared by Community Opportunities Group, Inc. and Kessler McGuinness & Associates for the Town of Leicester. This report included an evaluation of all Town-owned facilities, including Town-owned parks and recreational facilities. The relevant pages from the 2011 report are attached. Although this report is three years old, the information contained in the report remains current. Unfortunately, the Town has had limited funding availability to implement the recommendations of this plan related to parks and recreation areas. (Leicester recently was awarded a CDBG grant for design of an elevator in Town Hall.) The Town's Commission on Disabilities was re-activated in 2011 and meets regularly; in November 2014, the Town adopted the provisions of MGL Chapter 40, Section 8J (11/18/2014STM, Article 8).

One Town-owned conservation area, the Willow Road Conservation Area, was not included in the 2011 report. This is three (3) acre parcel that was donated to the Town by the National Wildlife Federation Endowment, Inc. The parcel contains woods and wetlands, and is bisected by a National Grid Utility Easement. There are no parking spaces, trails, or other amenities at this site to evaluate for ADA accessibility.

Part III: Employment Practices

The Town of Leicester's employment practices are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to Recruitment, Personnel Actions, Leave Administration, Training, Tests, Medical Exams/Questionnaires, Social & Recreational Programs, Fringe Benefits, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and Wage & Salary Administration. See attached memo from the ADA Coordinator dated September 29, 2014.

g:\town planners office\open space plan\2014 os plan update\ada report\summary sheet.docx



Town of Leicester

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL, 3 WASHBURN SQUARE • Leicester, MA 01524

Tel: (508) 892-7000

FAX: (508) 892-7070

www.leicesterma.org

IN ACCORDANCE WITH MASS GENERAL LAWS, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN HAS THIS 11th DAY OF AUGUST, 2014 APPOINTED THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL(S):

NAME	DATE SWORN IN	TOWN CLERK INITIALS
1. <u>Kristen Forsberg Barza</u>	<u>6/26/14</u>	<u>OKP</u>
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
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11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____
13. _____	_____	_____

TO THE OFFICE OF: ADA coordinator

FOR THE TERM OF: 8/11/14 - 6/30/15

**YOU MUST BE SWORN IN BY THE TOWN CLERK
PRIOR TO SERVING THE TOWN.**

Please visit the Town Clerk's Office at your earliest convenience during normal business hours

Monday-Wednesday-Thursday from 8am-5pm

Tuesday from 8am-7pm

Closed Fridays

FAIR EMPLOYMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Applicants to and employees of private employers with 6 or more employees, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor organizations are protected under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151B from discrimination on the following bases:

RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, SEX, GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENETIC INFORMATION, ANCESTRY, MILITARY SERVICE

M.G.L. c. 151B protects applicants and employees from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, benefits, training, classification and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin (including language proficiency), age (if you are 40 years old or older), sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, sexual orientation, genetic information, ancestry, and military service. Religious discrimination includes failing to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious practices where the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship.

HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. *The law also prohibits harassment based on the protected classes set forth above.*

MATERNITY LEAVE

The law requires employers to grant a female employee who has completed an initial probationary period and has given 2 weeks' notice, at least eight (8) weeks of paid or unpaid leave for the purpose of childbirth, adoption of a child under 18, or adoption of a child under 23 years old if the child is mentally or physically disabled.

DISABILITY

M.G.L. c. 151B prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, a record of disability or perceived disability, in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, benefits, training, classification and other aspects of employment. Disability discrimination may include failing to reasonably accommodate an otherwise qualified person with a disability.

INQUIRIES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY ADMISSION

Employers may not refuse to hire or terminate an employee for failing to furnish information regarding his/her admission to a facility for the care and treatment of mentally ill persons. An employment application may not seek information about an applicant's admission to such a facility.

CRIMINAL HISTORY INQUIRIES

The law prohibits employers from asking applicants on an initial employment application for any criminal background information unless an exemption by statute or regulation exists. For additional prohibitions, see MCAD Fact Sheet on Criminal Offender Record Information at www.mcad.gov.

RETALIATION

It is illegal to retaliate against any person because s/he has opposed any discriminatory practices or because s/he has filed a complaint, testified, or assisted in any proceeding before the Commission. It is also illegal to aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce any act forbidden under M.G.L. c. 151B, or attempt to do so.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you should immediately file a charge of discrimination with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, www.mcad.gov, at one of the offices below. *An agreement with your employer to arbitrate your discrimination claim(s) does not bar you from filing a charge of discrimination.*

Boston Office One Ashburton Place Room 601 Boston, MA 02108 (617) 994-6000 (617) 994-6196 TTY for all offices	Springfield Office 436 Dwight St. Room 220 Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 739-2145	Worcester Office Worcester City Hall 445 Main Street Room 101 Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 799-8010	New Bedford Office 800 Purchase Street Room 501 New Bedford, MA 02740 (508) 990-2390
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TOWN OF LEICESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL, 3 WASHBURN SQUARE • LEICESTER, MA 01524

Tel.: (508) 892-7000
FAX: (508) 892-7070
www.ci.leicester.ma.us

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 25, 2007

TO: Michelle Buck, Town Planner

FROM: Susan LeChasseur, Adm. Asst. 
Office of the Board of Selectmen

SUBJ: ADA Compliance

Per your request dated 8/28/07, the Board of Selectmen reviewed a sample ADA grievance procedure. At their meeting held 9/10/07, the Selectmen voted to adopt the attached **ADA GRIEVANCE POLICY** on behalf of the Town of Leicester.

Additionally, the Board voted to appoint our Inspector of Buildings, Jeffrey Taylor, as the Town's **ADA COORDINATOR**, effective immediately, term to expire annually on June 30th. We have attached herein a copy of the appointment forms.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

RECEIVED

SEP 26 2007

LEICESTER PLANNING BOARD

ADA GRIEVANCE POLICY

For the General Public

EQUAL ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

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

STEP 1:

The Town Administrator will be available to meet with citizens and employees during business hours.

When a complaint, grievance, request for program policy interpretation or clarification is received either in writing or through a meeting or telephone call, every effort will be made to create a record regarding the name, address, and telephone number of the person making the complaint, grievance, program policy interpretation or clarification. If the person desires to remain anonymous, he or she may.

A complaint, grievance, request for program policy interpretation or clarification will be responded to within ten (10) working days (if the person making the complaint is identified) in a format that is sensitive to the needs of the recipient, (i.e. verbally, enlarged type face, etc).

Copies of the complaint, grievance, or request for program policy interpretation or clarification and response will be forwarded to the appropriate town agency (i.e. park commission, conservation commission). If the grievance is not resolved at this level it will be progressed to the next level.

STEP 2:

A written grievance will be submitted to the Town Administrator. Assistance in writing the grievance will be available to all individuals. All written grievances will be responded to within ten (10) working days by the Town Administrator in a format that is sensitive to the needs of the recipient (i.e. verbally, enlarged type face, etc). If the grievance is not resolved at this level it will be progressed to the next level.

STEP 3:

If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, citizens will be Informed of the opportunity to meet and speak with the Board of Selectmen, with whom local authority for final grievance resolution lies.

Adopted by Board of Selectmen on 9/10/07

RECEIVED

SEP 24 2014

LEICESTER PLANNING BOARD

September 23, 2014

Michelle Buck
Planner, Town of Leicester
3 Washburn Square
Leicester, MA 01524

Re: Open Space and Recreation ADA Assessment

Dear Ms. Buck:

Thank you for including the Leicester Commission on Disabilities in your assessment of the town's various recreational facilities. As you know the town underwent an ADA audit in 2011 that resulted in a comprehensive report that identified accessibility deficiencies throughout town owned properties. Although there are compliance issues in some of the newest buildings in town I understand that your scope involves only the recreational and open space areas in town. Without digression into the verbosity of the federal laws that govern the universal accessibility of all public and municipal spaces it should be said that Leicester has identified non-compliance areas and is now moving forward with instituting measures to provide barrier-free accommodations. From an advocates standpoint these corrections cannot come soon enough and are, as a matter of law, almost twenty years in violation of the American with Disabilities Act. As you may know this law considers non-compliance and inaccessibility discriminatory and a violation of an individual's civil rights.

After the town's self-assessment was completed and publically presented the then ADA Committee sought to find remedy to these deficiencies through meetings with every department. A lot of focus was placed on the facilities at town hall and the school buildings and rightfully so, however these buildings do not take precedent over any other entity. Although every municipal space is considered a priority for accessibility perhaps open and/or recreational space slightly edges out some of the architectural structures. By definition, open spaces are meant to be utilized by every demographic of the town's population whereas other departments are more divisive because of the specialized nature of their discipline or charge. In short, open and recreational space probably appeals to the largest population of folks across all socio-economic demographics and by default encompasses a greater overall majority of the

population. If one was to prioritize a schedule that affords greater universal accessibility throughout a population such a schedule would emphasize that that which has the most influence or corrective action would be the priority. In this case corrections to the lack of accessibility to the town's various recreational/open spaces would in fact have the greatest impact if they were made accessible. In other words, more of the population would benefit from accessibility improvements made at the various recreational/open space venues across the town then perhaps town hall.

I must add that the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, Tom Hopkins, has brought to my attention that Russell Memorial Park, a relatively new facility, has fallen flat in terms of accessibility. I do not disagree with his assessment. I am not sure how some of the facilities built on this parcel were approved except for a few winks and nods. The Commission on Disabilities purview is dictated by state and federal law and has concluded that winks and nods cannot be any part of providing universal accessibility or lack thereof. The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board provides for variances and plan review to ensure that accessibility requirements are met statewide.

The areas that are used the most and by the greatest diversity of the public should be the facilities that are focused on. You possibly have a better understanding of the demographics and use of the various open spaces but a short list that I would consider is the town common, Waite Street Recreational Fields and of course Russell Memorial Park.

To date the only hint of improvements to the recreational and open space areas was a plan developed to revamp the town common. I believe that renderings were completed but fell short of any full scale engineering analysis or plans.

Again, thank you for including the Commission on Disabilities in your discussion about the open spaces of Leicester. If I can be of any other assistance please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Reinke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Reinke

Town of Leicester Commission on Disabilities, Chair

Cc: Kevin Mizikar, Town Administrator



Town of Leicester

ADA Audit Report



The entire ADA Report is not included in this Appendix to the 2014 Open Space & Recreation Plan. Only Pages related to Leicester's Parks and Recreational Facilities are included.

August 15, 2011

Town of Leicester, MA

As part of the development of the Town of Leicester's (the Town) *ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan*, KMA performed an accessibility survey of the public areas of the Town's facilities. The purpose of this report is to:

1. Discuss the Town's pro-active barrier removal obligations under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
2. Provide our findings regarding the principal existing architectural elements that may present barriers to individuals with disabilities in accessing the programs and services of the Town.

Program Accessibility

The Town has a regulatory obligation to insure that it does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the provision of municipal programs and services. The ADA does not necessarily require that all of its facilities be made fully accessible. Rather it requires that all of the Town's programs and services, "when viewed in their entirety" are accessible. The law provides public entities with some flexibility in how this standard can be met. Both structural and nonstructural methods of providing "program access" can be used.

The Town is required to perform a Self Evaluation to determine the barriers that exist to its programs and services. Then it must develop and implement a plan to remove the barriers. The only limit to the Town's obligation is if an action will result in a fundamental alteration to the program or service or create undue administrative or financial burdens.

Existing Conditions

The facility surveys identified numerous non-compliant existing conditions. Some facilities had significant accessibility issues including steps at the building entrance, no accessible route between floors and parking spaces or paths-of-travel with excessive slopes. Facility reports include a barrier statement, a generic mitigation and an estimated cost for barrier removal. Costs are intended for capital planning purposes only. Where a generic mitigation will not provide an adequate solution, the statement "additional study required" is used and an estimated cost is assigned as a place holder. Below are the estimated barrier removal costs for providing *architectural access* to each facility:

Facility	\$
Leicester Memorial School	364,350
Leicester Middle School	63,200
Leicester Primary School	49,900
Leicester High School	65,900
Fire Station Headquarters	63,750
Cherry Valley Fire Station	62,000
Rochdale Fire Station	62,000
Police Station	9,975
Library	434,340
Town Hall	373,500
Council on Aging/Senior Center	62,200
Highway Department	1,950
Office of Veteran Services	20,200
Russell Memorial Park	49,000

Facility	\$
School Department Central Office	57,000
Greenville Library (historic museum)	4,500
Recycling Center	2,000
Hillcrest Golf Course and Clubhouse	59,450
Elliot Cemetery	3,500
Rochdale Park	3,500
Towtaid Park	2,750
Lion's Park	1,700
Waite Street Recreational Fields	64,050
Burncoat Park and Fields	4,750
Burncoat Beach	NA
Town Common and Gazebo	14,500
Sidewalks and Curb Ramps	20,000

The total estimated cost of barrier removal for all facilities surveyed is: \$1,919,965.00. The actual cost of barrier removal will depend upon the strategies adopted by the Town to provide *program access*.

completed for the Country Club's buildings and parking area identifies several modifications necessary to bring the facility into compliance. (See Appendix A)

Leicester Parks, Playgrounds & Fields

Parks & Recreation Committee

The Leicester Parks & Recreation Committee is a volunteer board charged with the management of several town fields, parks, and playgrounds as well as the coordination of various recreational programs and cultural activities. According to the Committee's self-assessment survey, between 300 and 500 people participate in its programs each year. While the Committee does advertise its programs in multiple media so that individuals with visual, speech, or hearing impairments can learn of its services independently, it does not currently offer programs in an integrated setting appropriate to the needs of people with disabilities and it does not sponsor any programs specifically designed for people with disabilities. The Committee notes that auxiliary aids such as TDD or TTY, audio tapes, or sign language interpreters could be provided depending on the program offered but are not currently available.

The Committee recently oversaw the repair and upgrade of the baseball field at Rochdale Park and the installation of a volleyball court and playground equipment at Towtaid Park. In 2002 and 2004, the town completed Master Plans for Rochdale Park and Towtaid Park, respectively. These studies included recommendations related to ADA compliance for access to recreational fields and equipment as well as to historic and natural features. In 2007, the town completed an ADA Facility Inventory for each of its recreational facilities.

Leicester Public Schools
High School, 170 Paxton Street
Middle School, 170 Paxton Street
Memorial School, 11 Memorial Drive
Primary School, 170 Paxton Street

Leicester School Department

The School Department serves approximately 1,850 students in grades Pre-K through grade 12 in four separate school buildings: two elementary schools (Pre-K to grade 2 and grades 3-5), one middle school, and one high school.

The Leicester School Department is funded through local revenue, school choice, and federal and state grants. Since the School Department receives federal funds, it is subject to both ADA and Section 504 requirements. Due to long-standing special education requirements, public schools throughout the Commonwealth tend to have many systems and procedures in place to accommodate people with disabilities. According to the self-assessment questionnaire submitted by the Leicester School Superintendent, the town's schools provide special education and 504 services to accommodate people with disabilities. For example, the schools have installed carpeting in specific classrooms to reduce ambient noise for students with Cochlear implants.

RUSSELL MEMORIAL PARK



The Russell Memorial Park, located at 90 South Main Street, is recreational facility behind The Leicester Police Station. There are three baseball fields as well as concession stands and other ancillary facilities.

1. **Issue:** There are no striped parking locations. There is no striped access aisle at accessible parking. Parking signage is able to be obscured by a parked vehicle.

Recommendation: Stripe accessible pavement markings. Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$750



2. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to playing fields. Paths are not firm stable or slip-resistant.

Recommendation: Install an asphalt path to both sides of the baseball fields

Est. Cost: \$2,500



3. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to bleachers. There is no integrated wheelchair seating at bleachers.

Recommendation: Install asphalt path to bleachers and level asphalt pas adjacent to bleachers.

Est. Cost: 3 x \$250 = \$750



4. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to dugouts. Change in level between path and seating area is >1/2"

Recommendation: Install ramps at entrance to dugouts.

Est. Cost: 3 x \$1,000 = \$3,000



5. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to the concession stand. Transaction counter is >36" AFF.

Recommendation: Install an asphalt path to the concession stand and lower a portion of the transaction counter.

Est. Cost: \$2,000



6. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to press box.

Recommendation: Provide a platform lift to the press box.

Est. Cost: \$40,000

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$49,000



HILLCREST GOLF COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE



Hillcrest Golf Course and Clubhouse, located at 325 Pleasant Street, is a golfing facility including a golf course, pro shop and clubhouse. The golf course has holes on either side of Pleasant Street.

1. **Issue:** Accessible parking spaces do not have signage at the head of each space.

Recommendation: Provide post-mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$250



2. **Issue:** Path from parking to the Pro Shop is cracked and uneven. Cross-slope is >2%.

Recommendation: Resurface area of parking lot.

Est. Cost: \$5,000



3. **Issue:** Gravel path to the Pro Shop is not firm, stable or slip-resistant.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path from parking to pro-shop.

Est. Cost: \$1,000



4. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to entrance of pro shop. There is a 4" step to entrance landing. Entrance threshold is 5".

Recommendation: Install a ramp to entrance.

Est. Cost: \$12,000



5. **Issue:** Door hardware at entrance to pro shop requires pinching, tight grasping and twisting.

Recommendation: replace with lever hardware.

Est. Cost: \$100



6. **Issue:** Transaction counter in the Pro Shop does not have a portion of the counter 36" high & 36" wide.

Recommendation: Provide an auxiliary counter or folding shelf.

Est. Cost: \$1,500



7. **Issue:** Path from the Pro Shop to the golf cart area is not firm, stable or slip-resistant.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path from parking to pro-shop.

Est. Cost: \$1,000



8. **Issue:** Curb transition at club house is >8.3%. Transition at top and bottom is abrupt and uneven.

Recommendation: Install a new curb ramp.

Est. Cost: \$2,000



9. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to performance area in clubhouse

Recommendation: Install a ramp.

Est. Cost: \$8,000



10. **Issue:** There is accessible route to patio area.

Recommendation: Install a ramp

Est. Cost: \$4,000



11. **Issue:** Door hardware requires twisting, tight grasping and twisting to operate.

Recommendation: Replace knobs with lever hardware.

Est. Cost: 5 x \$100 = \$500



12. **Issue:** There is no portion of the bar 34" high and 60" wide.

Recommendation: Lower portion of bar.

Est. Cost: \$3,000



13. **Issue:** Toilet room signage does not have tactile and Braille lettering. Signage is not mounted on the latch side of the door.

Recommendation: Install tactile and Braille signage

Est. Cost: 2 x \$50 = \$100



14. **Issue:** Stall in women's toilet room is not accessible. Toilet clearance is <59" deep (@53".) There is no rear grab bar, side grab bar is <42". Flush valve is on the wrong side of the toilet. Stall door requires pinching, tight grasping and twisting. Coat hook is mounted >54" high.

Recommendation: Provide an accessible stall.

Est. Cost: \$10,000



15. **Issue:** Women's room lavatory does not provide 27" high knee clearance. Faucets require pinching tight grasping and twisting. Lavatory pipes are not insulated or recessed. Mirror is mounted >40" high.

Recommendation: Remove lavatory apron. Insulate lavatory pipes. Replace twist faucets with lever faucets. Relocate mirror.

Est. Cost: \$7,500



16. **Issue:** Side grab bar in men's toilet room extends <54" out from back wall. Toilet paper dispenser interferes with the use of the side grab bar.

Recommendation: Reposition grab bar and dispenser.

Est. Cost: \$500



17. **Issue:** Lavatory pipes in men's toilet room are not recessed or insulated. Paper towel dispenser is mounted >54" high.

Recommendation: Insulate pipes and relocate dispenser.

Est. Cost: \$500



18. **Issue:** There is no lowered urinal, 17" high.

Recommendation: Lower urinal.

Est. Cost: \$1,500



19. **Issue:** There are no detectable warnings where golf course route crosses pleasant street.

Recommendation: Provide detectable warnings.

Est. Cost: 2 x \$500 = \$1,000



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$59,450

ROCHDALE PARK



The Rochdale Park, located at 1050 Stafford Street, is a recreational park including baseball fields as well as a skate park, basketball and tennis courts. There is one public entrance and parking lot along Stafford Street.

1. **Issue:** Parking access aisle is not marked so as to discourage parking. Parking signage is able to be obscured by parked vehicles and does not contain the words "van accessible."

Recommendation: Restripe access aisle. Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$500



2. **Issue:** Accessible parking is not dispersed across parking locations. There is no accessible parking at entrance to skate park and tennis courts.

Recommendation: Restripe pavement markings. Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$500



3. **Issue:** There is no accessible path of travel to baseball field.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path to baseball field.

Est. Cost: \$2,500



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$3,500

TOWTAID PARK



The Towtaid Park, located on Olney Street, is a recreational park, basketball courts and a playground. There is one public entrance along Olney Street.

1. **Issue:** There is no van accessible parking. There are no striped access aisles. Parking signage does not contain the words "van accessible." Surface of parking space is cracked and uneven.

Recommendation: Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$750



2. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to playing area.

Recommendation: Install an asphalt path.

Est. Cost: \$2,000



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$2,750

LION'S PARK



The Lion's Park, located at Bottomly Ave, is a recreational park. There is one public entrance along Bottomly Ave and informal parking.

1. **Issue:** There is no accessible parking.

Recommendation: Restripe and resurface parking spaces.
Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$750



2. **Issue:** Path from sidewalk to park is abrupt and has a change in level >1/2"

Recommendation: Repair asphalt path.

Est. Cost: \$200



3. **Issue:** Bricks are loose. Surface of path is uneven and unstable. Water collects along surface of path.

Recommendation: Replace bricks.

Est. Cost: \$750



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$1,700

WAITE STREET RECREATIONAL FIELDS



The Waite Street Recreational Fields, located at 20 Waite Street, is a recreational park including football and soccer fields. There is one public entrance along Waite Street.

1. **Issue:** There is no van accessible parking. Access aisle is <8' wide (@5'). Signage is able to be obscured by parked vehicles and does not contain the words "van accessible". Parking spaces are not level.

Recommendation: Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$750



2. **Issue:** There is no accessible path to the concession stand.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path from parking to concession stand.

Est. Cost: \$500



3. **Issue:** Transaction area does not have a portion of the counter 36" wide and 36" AFF.

Recommendation: Provide an auxiliary counter or folding shelf.

Est. Cost: \$300



4. **Issue:** There is no accessible path of travel to playing fields and spectator areas.

Recommendation: Install a paved path to spectator area and playing fields.

Est. Cost: \$2,500

5. **Issue:** There is no accessible path of travel to press box.

Recommendation: Install a platform lift.

Est. Cost: \$60,000



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$64,050

BURNCOAT FIELDS AND BEACH



The Burncoat Parks and Fields and Burncoat Beach, located along Town Beach Road, is a recreational park including a baseball field, basketball court and town beach. The park is currently not open to the public.

1. **Issue:** There are no designated accessible parking locations.

Recommendation: Provide level parking space with post mounted signage.

Est. Cost: \$750



2. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to the basketball court.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path to the basketball court.

Est. Cost: \$2,500



3. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to the baseball fields.

Recommendation: Provide a paved path to the baseball field.

Est. Cost: \$1,500



4. **Issue:** There is no accessible route of travel to beach.

Recommendation: No action necessary as beach is no longer open to the public.

Est. Cost: N/A



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$4,750

TOWN COMMON & GAZEBO



The Town Common and Gazebo, located at Washburn Square is a recreational and community gathering space adjacent to the Town Hall. There is access to the park along North Main Street, Paxton Street and Washburn Square.

1. **Issue:** Path to North Main Street has a slope >5%.

Recommendation: Additional study required.

Est. Cost: \$10,000



2. **Issue:** Surface of paths is cracked and uneven. There are changes in level >1/2". Water is able to collect on surface of path.

Recommendation: Resurface asphalt paths

Est. Cost: \$1,000



3. **Issue:** There is no accessible route to the gazebo.

Recommendation: Provide an asphalt path and ramp.

Est. Cost: \$3,500



TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$14,500

Leicester ADA Transition Plan

Preliminary Implementation Schedule (12/31/2011) - Sections Related to Recreational Facilities Shown on following pages (see highlighted text)

<u>Exterior</u>	Architectural	Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Resurface and widen asphalt path at entrance door.		\$500		
	Architectural	Resurface asphalt path to entrance.		\$500		
<u>Interior</u>	Architectural	Replace knobs with lever hardware.		2 x \$100 = \$200		

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES						
<u>Programmatic</u>	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Exterior</u>	Architectural	No accessible path of travel (exterior or interior) to office. Additional study required		\$20,000		
<u>Interior</u>	Architectural	Replace existing door hardware with lever hardware		\$200		

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
RUSSELL MEMORIAL PARK						
<u>Programmatic</u>	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Exterior</u>	Architectural	Stripe accessible pavement markings. Add new post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Install an asphalt path to both sides of the baseball fields		\$2,500		
	Architectural	Install asphalt path to bleachers and level asphalt pas adjacent to bleachers.		3 x \$250 = \$750		
	Architectural	Install ramps at entrance to dugouts.		3 x \$1,000 = \$3,000		
	Architectural	Install an asphalt path to the concession stand and lower a portion of the transaction counter.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Provide a platform lift to the press box.		\$40,000		
<u>Interior</u>			N/A			

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT OFFICES						
<u>Programmatic</u>	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town; School Department	N/A	N/A	N/A

Exterior	Architectural	Provide a ramp to entrance.		\$36,000		
	Architectural	Regrade and restripe a portion of the parking lot and provide signage.		\$7,500		
Interior	Architectural	Provide an auxiliary counter or folding shelf		\$1,500		
	Architectural	Install an accessible bathroom.		\$12,000		

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
GREENVILLE LIBRARY (historic museum)						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	There is no public parking or public sidewalks within close proximity to the library. Additional study required.		\$2,500		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path along route to library.		\$1,500		
	Architectural	Regrade path to meet stoop.		\$300		
Interior	Architectural	Replace door hardware.		2 x \$100 = \$200		

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
RECYCLING CENTER						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Regrade or relocated parking stall. Restripe pavement markings. Add "van accessible signage."		\$1,000		
	architectural	Repair surface of pavement.		\$1,000		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
HILLCREST GOLF COURSE						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Provide post-mounted signage at accessible parking spaces.		\$250		
	Architectural	Resurface area of parking lot.		\$5,000		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path from parking to pro-shop.		\$1,000		
	Architectural	Install a ramp to entrance.		\$12,000		

	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp at club house.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Install a ramp to patio area.		\$4,000		
	architectural	Provide detectable warnings where golf course route crosses Pleasant Street.		2 x \$500 = \$1,000		
<u>Interior</u>	Architectural	Replace existing door hardware with lever hardware.		\$100		
	Architectural	Provide an auxiliary counter or folding shelf at Transaction counter in the Pro Shop		\$1,500		
	Architectural	Install a ramp to performance area in clubhouse.		\$8,000		
	Architectural	Replace knobs with lever hardware.		5 x \$100 = \$500		
	Architectural	Lower portion of bar.		\$3,000		
	Architectural	Install tactile and Braille signage at toilet rooms.		2 x \$50 = \$100		
	Architectural	Provide an accessible stall in women's toilet room.		\$10,000		
	Architectural	Remove lavatory apron. Insulate lavatory pipes. Replace twist faucets with lever faucets. Relocate mirror.		\$7,500		
	Architectural	Reposition grab bar and dispenser in men's toilet room.		\$500		
	Architectural	Insulate pipes and relocate dispenser in men's toilet room.		\$500		
	Architectural	Lower urinal in men's toilet room.		\$1,500		

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
ELLIOT CEMETERY						
<u>Programmatic</u>	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Exterior</u>	Architectural	There is no public parking or public sidewalks within close proximity to the burial ground. Recommendation: Additional study required.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path from street to burial ground.		\$1,500		
<u>Interior</u>		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
ROCHDALE PARK						
<u>Programmatic</u>	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Exterior</u>	Architectural	Restripe access aisle. Add new post mounted signage.		\$500		

	Architectural	Restripe pavement markings. Add new post mounted signage.		\$500		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path to baseball field.		\$2,500		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
TOWTAID PARK						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Install an asphalt path to play area.		\$2,000		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
LION'S PARK						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Repair asphalt path from sidewalk to park.		\$200		
	Architectural	Replace bricks in path.		\$750		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
WAITE STREET RECREATIONAL FIELDS						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Restripe and resurface parking spaces. Add new post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path from parking to concession stand.		\$500		
	Architectural	Provide an auxiliary counter or folding shelf at transaction area.		\$300		
	Architectural	Install a paved path to spectator area and playing fields.		\$2,500		
	Architectural	Install a platform lift to press box.		\$60,000		

Interior		N/A				
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Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
BURNCOAT FIELDS AND BEACH						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Provide level parking space with post mounted signage.		\$750		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path to the basketball court.		\$2,500		
	Architectural	Provide a paved path to the baseball field.		\$1,500		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
TOWN COMMON AND GAZEBO						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Path to North Main Street has a slope >5%. Additional study required.		\$10,000		
	Architectural	Resurface asphalt paths		\$1,000		
	Architectural	Provide an asphalt path and ramp.		\$3,500		
Interior		N/A				

Location	Barrier Type	Suggested Action(s)	Responsibility	Cost Est.*	Priority	Timeframe
SIDEWALKS AND CURB RAMPS (throughout Town)						
Programmatic	Operational	Prioritize actions following development of municipal policies and procedures	Commission on Disabilities; Town	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exterior	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp at Town Common.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp where pedestrian route crosses curb outside Town Hall.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Repair sidewalk at the intersection of Market Street and Main Street.		\$1,000		
	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp at crosswalk on Paxton Street.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp on Paxton Street near Town Hall.		\$2,000		
	Architectural	Install a new curb ramp on Paxton Street near Town Hall where it does not align with crosswalk.		\$2,000		



Town of Leicester
OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
Town Hall, 3 Washburn Square
Leicester, Massachusetts 01524-1333
Phone: (508) 892-7000 Fax: (508) 892-7070
www.leicesterma.org

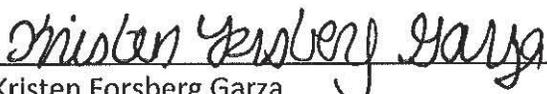
September 29, 2014

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

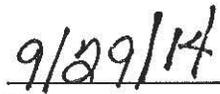
FROM: KRISTEN FORSBERG GARZA, ADA COORDINATOR
ASSISTANT TO THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT: ADA COORDINATOR STATEMENT FOR OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Town of Leicester's employment practices are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act with respect to Personnel Actions, Leave Administration, Training, Tests, Medical Exams/Questionnaires, Social and Recreational Programs, Fringe Benefits, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and Wage and Salary Administration.



Kristen Forsberg Garza
ADA Coordinator and Assistant to the Town Administrator



Date

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SEP 30 2014

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