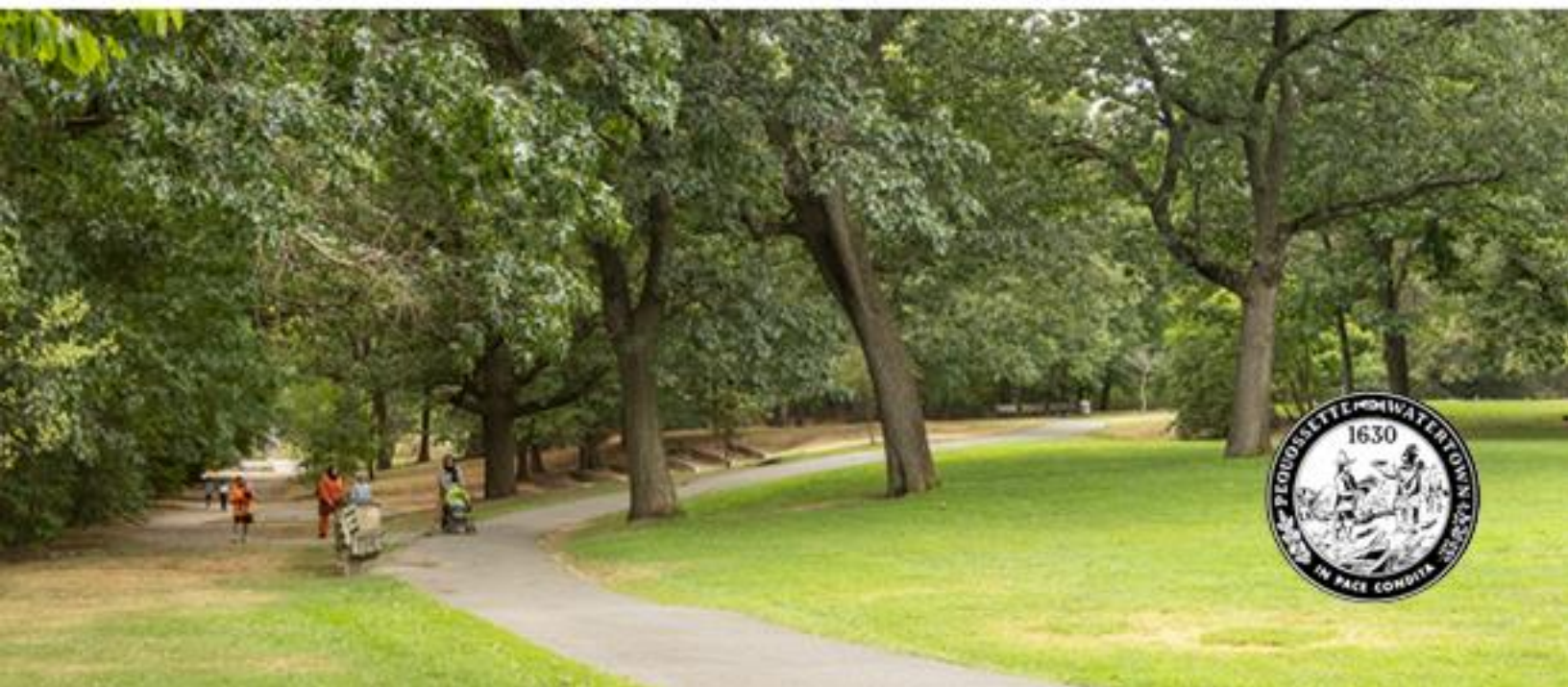




# City of Watertown Open Space & Recreation Plan 2023-2030



# Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan

## 2023-2030

Prepared by:



Cover photos by Natalie Nigito Photography

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## SECTION 1. PLAN SUMMARY

The Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is a tool used by the City in conjunction with other policy documents to meet its overall vision to provide high-quality, accessible parks, recreation, and open spaces that meet the needs of residents and the environment. The City's natural areas, open spaces, and recreation resources provide the community with many environmental, economic, and social and public health benefits that impact overall quality of life. It is important to ensure they are managed sustainably, and the OSRP is the basis for that objective.

### *Benefits of Natural Areas, Open Spaces, and Recreation Resources*

#### **Environmental Benefits**

- Decrease impervious surfaces.
- Create wildlife habitat.
- Absorb air pollution and reduce air temperatures.

#### **Economic Benefits**

- Reduce heating and cooling costs.
- Increase property values.

#### **Social & Public Health Benefits**

- Provide spaces to gather as a community.
- Provide spaces to be active and healthy.
- Give opportunities to be in nature to improve mental health.
- Make our city more beautiful.

The OSRP includes inventories of Watertown's parks, public spaces, and environmental resources and a snapshot of their condition. An evaluation of these resources helped identify community needs and the challenges to meet those needs. Critical to planning for these resources is public engagement to understand community needs and the direction it wants the City to pursue. During the update of the OSRP, the City was also updating its Comprehensive Plan, which provides longer-term direction for Watertown's future, 10 to 20 years. Because the development of both documents required hearing from the community, public outreach efforts were combined to be efficient and make the best use of residents' time while they were engaged.

Based evaluation of the environmental inventories, public input, and other engagement with City staff and stakeholders, the following were identified as Watertown's overall challenges and needs for its open space and recreation resources:

#### Natural Resource Protection Needs

- Building and maintaining the urban tree canopy.
- Managing stormwater and improving the quality of the City's water resources.
- Managing invasive species in City parks and open spaces.

#### Community Needs

- Expanding what is offered and amenities provided at existing recreational facilities to meet community needs, where possible.
- Understanding trends for new facilities, activities, and programming.
- Building and connecting safe walking and biking networks city-wide to access public open spaces and recreation areas.
- Ensuring the needs of all city residents are met, including people with disabilities, older residents, and youth.

- Ensuring equitable access to parks, open spaces, and recreation areas by all residents, particularly the City’s environmental justice neighborhoods.

#### Management Needs

- Using infill and redevelopment projects as opportunities to create new public spaces and parks.
- Ensuring that City parks and open spaces are well maintained and managed with sustainable funding and staffing.
- Coordinating with the State to ensure its resources within the city are meeting the needs of residents.
- Meeting the challenges of climate change and building resilience through the City’s natural areas, open spaces, and parks.

The OSRP Action Plan lays out strategies over the next seven years to meet these needs. It is structured around four major goals and associated objectives.

Goal 1. Create a network of high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces that is accessible to all Watertown residents.

Goal 2. Maintain and enhance existing recreation facilities and programs and create new opportunities to meet evolving community interests and needs.

Goal 3. Protect and enhance natural resources to retain their important functions and values and help Watertown adapt to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

Goal 4. Maintain partnerships and public awareness in support Watertown’s open space and recreational resources.

Finally, many of the strategies in Action Plan support parallel efforts by the City that also plan for the future of its environmental resources, open spaces, and recreational areas. It is important to recognize, as the OSRP does, how all these policy documents must work together to achieve common goals. These documents include:

- Watertown Comprehensive Plan (concurrently being updated)
- Watertown Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2018)
- MVP Program, Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report (2020)
- Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report (2021)
- Resilient Watertown: Climate & Energy Plan (2022)
- FY 2022 Community Preservation Act Program Update (2022)

## SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

### A. Statement of Purpose

Watertown's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is the foundational policy document for the City's activities around open space and recreational resources, serving as a guide to direct the stewardship actions of City departments, boards, and other bodies. Through research and analysis of open space and recreation needs and past accomplishments, this plan:

- Describes Watertown's approach and philosophy to managing its inventory of open space and recreation resources and related programs.
- Documents Watertown's existing open space and recreation resources inventory and identifies opportunities to expand public and private green spaces.
- Provides updated information as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts guidelines for OSRPs.
- Establishes Watertown's short- and long-term open space and recreation goals, objectives, and priorities.

This OSRP guides Watertown's open space and recreation resource management during a sustained period of growth. In the past two decades, significant development has occurred around the Arsenal and Pleasant Street corridors and commercial and mixed use redevelopments have become increasingly common. The relationship between development and open space and recreation were frequent topics during the planning and public participation processes and present both opportunities and challenges for Watertown. In particular, this OSRP includes a focus on expanding a network of both publicly owned and publicly accessible but privately-owned open space and recreation resources.

### B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Public participation in the OSRP planning process is important to ensure the plan is relevant to the community's changing needs, raise public awareness about open space and recreation resources and issues, and garner community support for the plan's implementation. The City worked to encourage diverse opportunities for public engagement throughout the planning process to provide meaningful avenues for participation to all community members.

#### 1. Public Engagement

The public engagement process for the OSRP occurred concurrently to the City's update to its Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan presents a long-range vision for the city with a 20-year planning horizon and touches broadly on topics associated with open space and recreational resources. A core focus of the Comprehensive Plan is on integrating sustainability and resilience within and across the traditional plan elements, a focus repeated in the OSRP. The City used the public engagement process of the Comprehensive Plan and supplemented with additional targeted surveys, questions, and interviews to understand more specific needs for open space, recreational opportunities, and natural resources protection relevant to the OSRP. Doing so limited potentially duplicative efforts and use of resources, confusing messaging, and the number of meetings the public would need to participate in to be heard. Drafting the OSRP concurrently to the Comprehensive Plan also encouraged additional contextual conversations with the public about how the Comprehensive Plan elements affect and relate to open



space and recreation (e.g., transportation element and discussions of mobility across walking and biking networks, land use element and discussions of urban design that can facilitate publicly accessible spaces).

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, an online, interactive map was open to public comment from May 2 to September 2, 2022. The map allowed participants to “drop” pins and leave comments related to opportunities and challenges at specific areas within Watertown. A total of 44 map comments related to open space and recreation were collected, and more participants interacted with these comments by up- or down-voting different ideas.

The City held an in-person and online visioning forum on May 19, 2022. The in-person forum was held at the Hosmer School. After a short introduction, attendees participated in facilitated small groups to talk about opportunities and challenges related to open space and recreation, among other Comprehensive Plan topics. A community survey focusing on visioning and needs was also administered as another online complement to the visioning forum. Approximately 75 people participated in-person and online at the visioning forum, and over 200 people responded to the community survey.

The Recreation Department hosted an informational session on the OSRP at its monthly Recreation Open Forum on June 7, 2022. This session was videotaped and made available on the Comprehensive Plan website. The session provides a brief overview of the purpose of the OSRP and future opportunities for engagement.

Between June 10 and June 30, 2022, City staff led four one-hour walks and a bike ride through different areas of Watertown, including several of its prominent open space and recreation resources. This “walk and ride” series allowed participants to interact directly with City staff and discuss their ideas for improvements.

On September 9, 2022, members of the Comprehensive and OSRP planning team were interviewed by Watertown Cable Access Corp. (WCA-TV), a local television news station. The planning team used this interview to talk about the importance of both plans and upcoming opportunities for public participation.

An OSRP-specific survey was administered from September 23-30, 2022. This survey focused specifically on actions the City could undertake to better meet community open space and recreation needs. Over 170 people responded to the OSRP-specific survey.

The City held two identical in-person open houses on September 20 and September 29, 2022, to discuss draft Comprehensive Plan goals and preliminary strategies. After a short presentation (which was also broadcasted live online), attendees rotated between topic stations to talk with the planning team and others, provide feedback, and ask questions. An open space and recreation station focused on identifying top community needs and soliciting feedback on preliminary strategy directions, including where a strategy could be implemented. The open houses were held at the Watertown Middle School and Watertown Free Public Library. The in-person open houses were supplemented with an interactive virtual open house. Virtual attendees were able to view and respond to the same materials as in-person attendees. The virtual open house ran through September.

Finally, an open house was held on March 9, 2023, at the Watertown Public Library to present final strategies for the Comprehensive Plan and OSRP. After a short presentation that was also streamed live, participants visited topic stations to review and prioritize strategies. One station focused on open space

and recreation resources for both the Comprehensive Plan and OSRP. A virtual open house ran through March 24, 2023.

Announcements for all public engagement events were distributed and posted electronically as well as paper copies posted in City buildings and on municipal bulletin boards.

A compilation of community engagement input is found in Appendix A.

## 2. City Departments, Boards, and Other Bodies

Interviews were conducted with numerous municipal department staff, boards, and committees to understand how different departments support the OSRP goals and objectives, and what additional support could be provided. Interviewees also reviewed which actions from the 2015 OSRP were completed, which are still in progress, and what new actions could be included in the future.

The following were part of the interview process:

- Department of Community Development and Planning
- Council on Aging/Senior Center
- Recreation Department
- Department of Public Works
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- Community Preservation Committee Chair
- Conservation Commission Chair

## 3. Recent City Plans and Initiatives

This OSRP builds on and supports the work of a number of completed and ongoing planning initiatives that relate to open space and recreation resources. These initiatives include the following:

- Watertown Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2018)
- MVP Program, Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report (2020)
- Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report (2021)
- Resilient Watertown: Climate & Energy Plan (2022)
- Draft FY 2022 Community Preservation Act Program Update (2022)
- Watertown Comprehensive Plan (concurrently being updated)

These plans are referenced in support of the findings of the Analysis of Needs (Section 7), as well as in the development of strategies outlined in the Action Plan (Section 9).

## C. Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation

Watertown used targeted outreach as part of the OSRP update to ensure that it incorporated the needs of all residents, particularly those often underrepresented in community planning projects.

The Environmental Justice Policy, established by the Commonwealth's Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs, aims to address inequities of environmental impacts on low-income populations and communities with a large minority population. Many times, these populations have limited access to

open space and recreational facilities or “environmental assets.” Using various indicators, these populations are known as Environmental Justice Populations (EJ Populations).

The Commonwealth identifies Environmental Justice (EJ) communities using ACS data, where U.S. Census Blocks meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. The annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income,
2. Minorities comprise 40% or more of the population,
3. 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency, or
4. Minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.

Watertown has 20 EJ communities based on a combination of minority population, annual median household income, and English language isolation characteristics (Map 3-2). Eighteen EJ communities qualify based on minority population characteristics, one based on minority population and income characteristics, and one based on income and English language isolation characteristics. For more information, see **Section 3.C. Population Characteristics**.

The following targeted outreach efforts were completed to ensure that residents in EJ communities had the opportunity to participate in the OSRP update process:

- Outreach associated with the OSRP was done in conjunction with the City’s update of its Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan update had two residents who spoke Spanish and Portuguese. They volunteered during the public events to be available if needed to help with interpreting materials and discussion.
- Announcements of public events were included in Watertown Public School District newsletters, which are translated into several languages.
- Flyers for public events were posted city-wide, particularly in municipal buildings in EJ neighborhoods.
- Staff at the Library and Boys and Girls Club who were multilingual spoke to patrons and members to spread the word about public events in languages other than English, as needed.
- Both public workshops in September 2022 were held in EJ communities, the Watertown Public Library and Watertown Middle School.
- The open house in March 2023 was held in an EJ community at the Watertown Public Library.
- Simultaneous online presentations were held along with the in-person workshops and open house. Additional online opportunities for engagement were used as well, including the interactive online map and virtual open house.

## D. Accomplishments

Watertown has accomplished much of what it intended to do as guided by the 2015 OSRP. These accomplishments include:

- Watertown residents voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2016, which levies a 2% property tax surcharge on all real estate property tax bill to raise funds for open space and

recreation, community housing, and historic preservation projects. Watertown generates approximately \$2 million annually for the CPA fund.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, a rehabilitation project for Irving Park was one of two projects selected for the first distribution of CPA funding.<sup>2</sup>

- Significantly advancing the Watertown Community Path, a 1.75-mile east to west multiuse path that provides an important linkage between the Charles River Greenway and Watertown-Cambridge Greenway through the city center. The City is working on completing the path by segment and has secured funding to support outstanding design needs and future construction for the remaining three segments, referred to as Sections 2, 3, and 6. The final path segment is anticipated to begin in 2024.
- Finalized design of a connector through Arsenal Park between the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and Charles River Greenway. Construction is planned for 2023.
- Finalized the design and developed the former incinerator site. The site, now part of Filippello Park, has a dog park and picnic area and is adjacent to an updated parking area with a basketball and futsal court on the capped area of the former landfill.



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<sup>1</sup> 2021-2025 CPA 5-Year Plan

<sup>2</sup> CPA FY22 Update



## SECTION 3. COMMUNITY SETTING

### A. Regional Context

The City of Watertown is part of the Greater Boston urban area in eastern Massachusetts. It occupies 4.1 square miles, or 2,624 acres, and has more than four miles of direct frontage along the Charles River. Watertown is part of Middlesex County; its neighboring communities are Belmont, Cambridge, Boston, Newton, and Waltham (Map 3-1). Watertown Square is the city center and sits at the intersection of a number of commercial and transportation corridors and the first colonial bridge crossing of the Charles River.

#### 1. Regional Transportation Networks

Two regional roadways travel through the city: U.S. Route 20 from west to east (Main Street and North Beacon Street) and MA Route 16 (Mt. Auburn Street) from northeast to southwest. These roadways provide local access to Interstate 90 (Mass Pike), Interstate 93, and Interstate 95. Arsenal Street is also a significant east-west link from Boston to Watertown Square. No singular road provides north-south access, forcing travelers to navigate between main arterials. Most roadways in Watertown are local streets. This concentrates automobile traffic onto main arterials, adds traffic pressure on collector roads, and often requires circuitous routing.

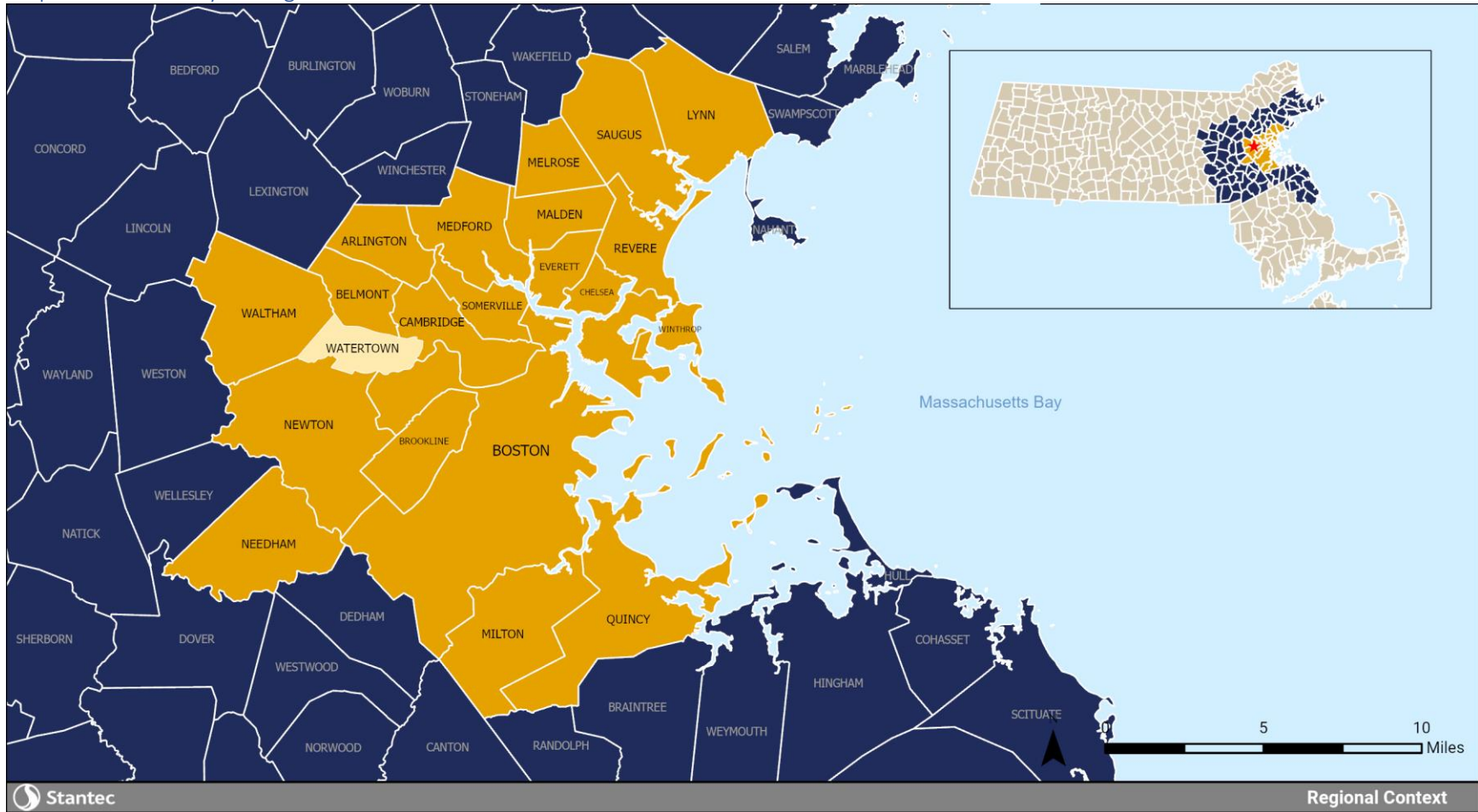
The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) provides nine fixed bus routes that pass through Watertown, with eight going through either Watertown Square or the Watertown Transit Yard at Water Street/Nonantum Road on the southerly side of the Charles River. These routes provide access to the MBTA Red Line and commuter rail system and to Boston, Cambridge, Waltham, Belmont, and Newton.

Pedestrians and bicyclists also have the option to use several local off-road shared use paths that connect to regional networks. The Watertown Community Path is a partially complete path that runs east to west and connects to both the Charles River Greenway and Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. The Charles River Greenway is a regional, 20-mile path that follows the Charles River between the Charles River Dam in Boston to Waltham city center. The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway connects from School Street and Arsenal Park (near the Charles River) to Fresh Pond and Alewife in Cambridge close to the 10-mile Minuteman Bikeway to the north, a regional path that traverses Arlington and Lexington and ends near Bedford Center.

#### 2. Regional Open Space and Recreational Resources

Watertown's open space and recreational resources are linked to regional networks. The Charles River, Watertown's premier natural feature, links communities along the river ecologically and recreationally. The Charles River Reservation, owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), includes over 20 miles of shared use paths that link Watertown to other communities and regional trail networks. The reservation includes most of the riverbank and adjacent land in Watertown.

Map 3-1. Community Setting



-  Watertown
-  MAPC Inner-Core Community (ICC)
-  Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Communities
-  Non-MAPC Communities

Source: MassGIS  
 April 2022  
 Regional Context  
 Watertown, MA



Watertown's open space crosses municipal boundaries to the east into Cambridge and to the west into Waltham with two publicly accessible sites. The 175-acre Mount Auburn Cemetery, a regional and historic landmark, is primarily located within Watertown with a portion in Cambridge. Approximately 164 acres of the cemetery are in Watertown, making it the largest contiguous open space in the city and a significant habitat corridor between the two communities. The Gore Estate to the west is partially in Watertown and Waltham, with a total of 50 acres.

The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway is a shared use path that extends from Fresh Pond in Cambridge to the School Streets intersection in Watertown, with a short spur ending at Arsenal St across from the Arsenal Park access drive. DCR owns and manages the approximately 1.25-mile long Watertown section of the greenway. The greenway provides an alternative route for bicyclists and pedestrians to major shopping, transit, and recreation destinations in both communities, and links to other trails, including the Minuteman Bikeway in Cambridge (a 10-mile shared use trail that runs from Cambridge to Bedford).

### 3. Regional Planning Efforts

Watertown is a member of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), a regional planning agency that serves 101 towns and cities in Greater Boston. The City actively participates in MAPC planning activities, including the Inner Core Committee (which consists of representatives from 21 cities and towns within the metropolitan Boston area). Because the Inner Core communities are many of the most urbanized and populous within the MAPC planning area, Inner Core communities deal with a host of unique challenges, including the provision of open space and recreational opportunities within a diverse and densely populated subregion. Given the complexity of issues facing these communities, the Inner Core Committee emerged as a forum through which issues of mutual concern could be explored and joint and cooperative action fostered.

The City is situated within the Mystic River and Charles River watersheds and participates in collaboratives for both. It is a member of the Resilient Mystic Collaborative, a partnership between 20 communities within the Mystic River Watershed, facilitated by the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). MyRWA works to protect the Mystic River area and sponsors a variety of water quality monitoring programs and offers educational and outreach opportunities throughout the year. Watertown is also active in the Charles River Climate Compact, a partnership between 24 communities within the Charles River Watershed. This compact is facilitated by the Charles River Watershed Association, which focuses on protection, restoration, and enhancement efforts within the watershed.

## B. History of the Community

Prior to its establishment by English settlers, Watertown was inhabited by the Pequotsette Indians (a sub-tribe of the Massachusett), who had an established network of settlements along the Charles River. The Massachusetts Bay Colony sent settlers to the area in May 1630, and Watertown was officially founded later that year. The new town was initially centered further east in what is now a part of Cambridge, but the center of commerce was shifted to modern-day Watertown Square and was strategically located at what was then the most inland navigable point along the Charles River from Boston Harbor at the end of the tidal river. The location allowed for the first bridge adjacent to a natural ford that provided a land connection between the other recently established centers, including Boston and Cambridge, and the colonial frontier. Accounts of the area describe the abundance of bass, salmon, and herring making their way to and from the sea to spawn. Watertown's early boundaries included the towns of Weston,

Waltham, and Lincoln, which all became their own towns prior to the Revolutionary War, as well as portions of Belmont and Cambridge. Watertown played an important political role during the Revolutionary War; the Massachusetts Provincial Congress (1774-1780), which governed the Province of Massachusetts Bay until a state constitution was adopted in 1780, met at the Edmund Fowle House.<sup>3</sup> Watertown also hosted the Massachusetts General Court and Boston town meetings during that city's siege.

Watertown evolved as an active industrial community after the Revolutionary War, building on earlier industrial activity. One of the earliest examples of manufacturing and milling activity is Mayhew Mill, a grist mill dam built in 1634 (the first dam on the Charles River) that was operational for over two hundred years. Damming the Charles River became commonplace by the early 1800s—Mayhew Mill was only the first of 43 industrial mills on the lower Charles River—and the dams provided hydropower and transportation for various industries, including cotton weavers and sail makers.<sup>4</sup>



*Aerial view of Watertown Arsenal, 1939. Photo credit: National Archives at Boston*

The U.S. Army Arsenal was founded in Watertown in 1816 to support the nation's need for munitions manufacturing and at the height of its operations before World War I, employed over 1,600 people across its more than 80-acre campus. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, rail transportation via the Fitchburg Railroad's Watertown Branch spurred more industrial growth; major industrial companies including the Stanley Steamer Automobile Company and the Hood Rubber Company opened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Demand for housing grew apace with industry and reflects Watertown's earlier socioeconomic landscape. Larger homes and lots in the northern and northwestern parts of Watertown give way to higher density, urban development in the southern and eastern areas where factories once operated.

Most freight service ended in the 1960s (Newlyweds Bakery maintained freight into the 1990s), and many of Watertown's industries began to close in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century. The departure of industry, including the U.S. Army Materials Technology Laboratory in 1995, left a number of industrial and manufacturing buildings available for redevelopment, especially along the Arsenal Street and Pleasant Street Corridors. Industry and population growth left a less desirable legacy along the Charles River.

<sup>3</sup> [http://historicalsocietyofwatertownma.org/HSW/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53](http://historicalsocietyofwatertownma.org/HSW/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/charlesriver/history-human-impacts-charles-river>.



Pollution from industrial and human wastes greatly impaired water quality and dams altered the river’s natural hydrology and ecology. Although most of Watertown’s heavy industries are now gone, the City continues to address stormwater pollution runoff, improper household sewer tie-ins, and isolated spills in recognition of the river’s value as an environmental and recreational asset. Additionally, DCR is making improvements to the Charles River Reservation land to enhance open space and recreational opportunities for local and regional residents and visitors.

## C. Population Characteristics

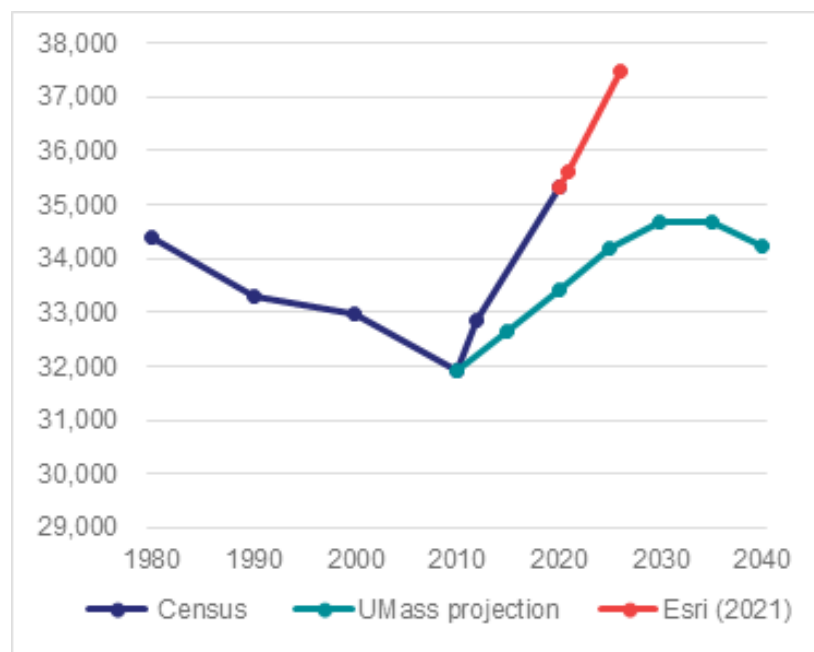
Understanding Watertown’s population characteristics and recent trends is essential so the City can maximize the appropriate use of its open space and recreational resources and plan for future community needs. The following discussion provides a summary of current statistics related to population demographics and analyzes how Watertown’s open space planning can respond to those data.

### 1. Population Characteristics

#### *Current and Projected Population*

Watertown’s population has been growing since 2010. In 2020, Watertown’s population was 35,329 (2020 U.S. Census).<sup>5</sup> This is a 10.7% increase from the 2010 U.S. Census, which reported a population of 31,915. Projects developed by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) forecast the total population more conservatively, estimating that population will peak in 2030 before gradually declining toward 2040 (Figure 3.1). Already, the 2020 estimate of Watertown’s population is larger than the UMDI and MAPC projection for 2030 (34,663). The population projection for 2040

Figure 3.1. Population Projections for Watertown through 2040



Source: Watertown Comprehensive Plan Baseline Assessment, 2022

(34,216) represents a decrease of about -3.2% from 2020. The City’s Watertown Comprehensive Plan also references projections made by Esri, a private company. Esri calculated its own five-year forecasts (2021-2026) and predicted that Watertown’s population will continue to grow at the current rate of roughly 1%

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing, the most current data for Watertown’s demographic profile is the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Data 2020 and available Census 2020 data. These ACS data will be the basis of analysis for the purpose of Section 3.

per year. However, new housing projects in Watertown are all redevelopment projects. Thus, it is likely that the City’s population will fluctuate over time depending on the market.

### Population Density

Watertown is a densely populated community covering approximately 4.1 square miles. According to the 2020 ACS, Watertown’s total population is 35,329, making its population density about 8,940 people per square mile. This presents challenges for finding new spaces for open space and recreational opportunities in Watertown. Compared to surrounding communities, Watertown is in the middle range (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Population Density of Watertown and Neighboring Communities

Town	Population	Population Density
Belmont	27,295	5,872.5
Boston	675,647	13,976.8
Cambridge	118,403	18,519.5
Newton	88,923	4,987.9
Waltham	65,218	5,117.8
Watertown	35,329	8,835.29

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

### Current and Projected Age Distribution

As shown in Table 3.2, age groups that increased from 2010 to 2020 were school age children (19 years and younger), adults 25-34, 35-44, and 60-74 years. This information may indicate an increase in young families moving into Watertown. Adults 20-24 years decreased significantly from 2010 to 2020.

Table 3.2. Change in Age Groups as a Percent of Total Population, 2010 to 2020

Age Group	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Under 10	2,965	3,358	13.3%
10-19	1,976	2,333	15.3%
20-24	2,264	1,588	-42.6%
25-34	6,448	7,670	15.9%
35-44	4,475	5,724	21.8%
45-59	7,199	6,289	-14.5%
60-74	3,636	6,306	42.3%
75 and older	2,628	2,481	-5.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

Available projection data over the next 20 years shows significant declines for several age groups: young children (10 years and younger), adults 20-24, and adults 25-34 (Table 3.3). Adults 35-59 years are also forecasted to decline. Watertown’s population of older residents (60 years and older) is projected to significantly increase.

Table 3.3. Population Projections by Age Group

Age Group	ACS 2010	ACS 2020	Projection 2030	Projection 2040	% Change 2010-2040
Under 10	2,965	3,358	2,460	2,424	-22.3%
10-19	1,976	2,333	2,803	2,332	15.3%
20-24	2,264	1,588	2,158	1,573	-43.9%
25-34	6,448	7,670	5,379	5,840	-10.4%
35-59	11,674	12,013	11,813	11,045	-5.7%
60-74	3,636	6,306	6,427	6,614	45.0%
75 and older	2,628	2,481	3,623	4,388	40.1%
Total Population	31,591	35,749	34,663	34,216	7.7%

Source: MassDOT Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans, 2018

However, as noted earlier, these projections from UMDI and MAPC have underestimated overall population growth, and in turn, a similar underestimation is seen with the student population. Projections done by Watertown Public Schools do not anticipate a decline in students. In 2022, it reported a significant increase in students at Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary Schools, particularly at the kindergarten level, and Watertown High School.<sup>6</sup>

### Residents with Disabilities

In 2020, about 4,401 Watertown residents (12.3% of the population) had mobility and/or self-care limitations. Of the 4,401 individuals with a disability, approximately 48.1% are 65 years and older.

### Racial and Linguistic Diversity

Nearly all residents identify as one race, with 78.3% of Watertown’s population in 2020 identifying as white and 21.7% identifying as another race or more than one race (Table 3.4). Across all categories, 2.0% identify as Hispanic or Latino. The city is becoming increasingly diverse, with non-white population groups experiencing large growth between 2010 and 2020. As of 2020, Watertown’s residents of color identify primarily as Asian (12.2%, mostly Asian Indian and Chinese), Black or African American (3.0%), or two or more races (4.3%). In comparison, people of color account for 32.9% of Middlesex County and 37.3% of the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area’s (MSA) total population, respectively. The fastest growing subgroup in Watertown is American Indian and Alaska Native (2,075.0%), but the Asian, Some other race, and Two or more races subgroups all experienced beyond 100.0% growth as well.

Table 3.4. Racial Identity of Watertown Residents

	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
One Race	31,026	34,222	10.3%
White	27,659	27,977	1.1%
Black or African American	919	1,074	16.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	4	87	2,075.0%
Asian	2,072	4,363	110.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	22	0	-100.0%

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.watertownmanews.com/2022/09/20/watertown-schools-see-influx-of-students-at-elementary-high-school-levels/>

	2010	2020	% Change 2010-2020
Some other race	350	721	106.0%
Two or more races	565	1,527	170.3%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,649	2,588	56.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

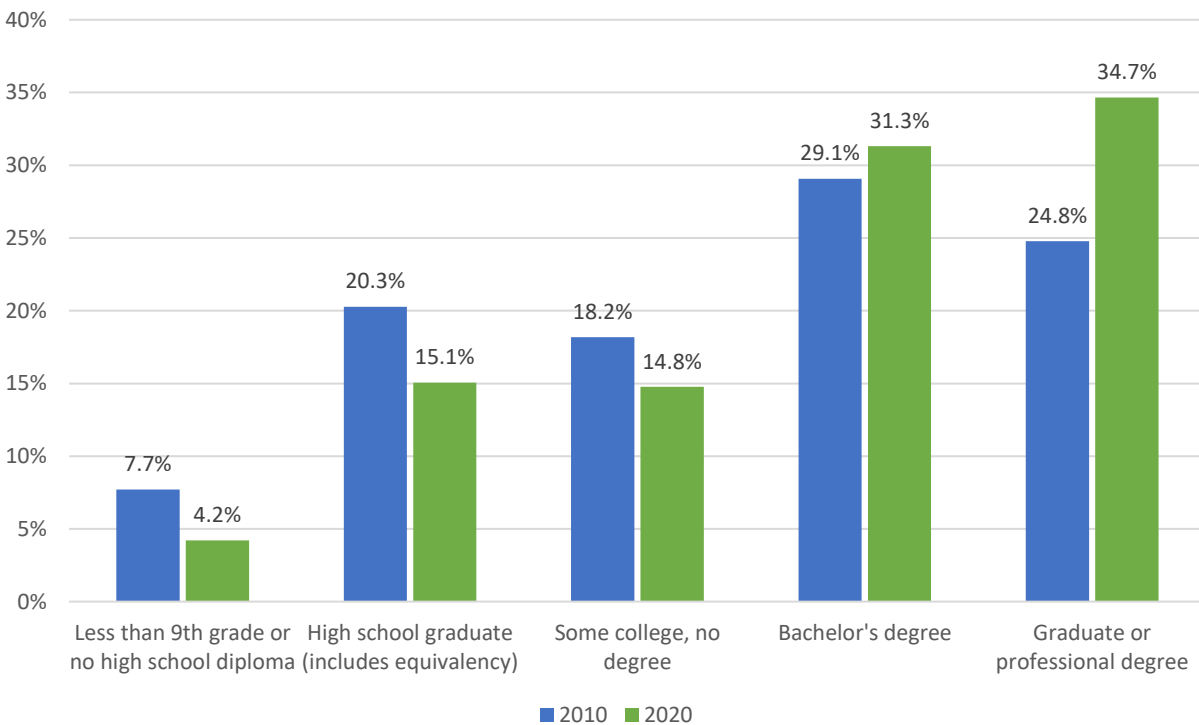
While Watertown may have limited racial and ethnic diversity compared to some of its neighboring communities, the city is home to a significant foreign-born population. Approximately 23.2% of Watertown’s residents have immigrated to the U.S. from some other part of the globe, and more than half immigrated from Asia. Past waves of immigration saw Irish, Canadian, Italian, and Armenian immigrants settling in Watertown; today, Watertown’s racial and ethnic heritage is evident with numerous community centers, churches, and markets with European and Asian origins.

Data show that 67.4% of households speak English only at home. For households that are not English only households, 18.5% identify as speaking other Indo-European languages, 7.2% speaking Asian and Pacific Island languages, and 4.2% speaking Spanish.

## 2. Educational Attainment

Watertown is a well-educated community. In 2020, 66.0% of residents 25 years and older had a bachelor’s degree or higher, an increase of 43.0% from 2010 (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Educational Attainment of Watertown Residents 25 Years and Older



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020



### 3. Household Characteristics

Table 3.5 indicates that Watertown’s households are aging. The total number of households with one or more people 65 years and over increased 44.8% between 2010 to 2020. Additionally, the total number of households with a householder 65 years and over living alone grew by 61.8%. While the total number of households with one or more people under 18 years also increased, the subgroup’s share of total households (approximately 22%) remained relatively stable from 2010 to 2020.

Table 3.5. Select Household Characteristics, 2010 and 2020

	2010	2020	% Change, 2010-2020
Total households	14,300	16,142	12.9%
Average household size	2.2	2.2	0
Households with one or more people under 18 years	3,097	3,588	15.9%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	3,314	4,799	44.8%
Householder living alone	4,806	5,347	11.3%
65 years and over	1,373	2,221	61.8%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

Projections from UMDI and MAPC anticipate an additional 2,743 household units in Watertown by 2040. While this is a significant increase, the projection suggests a slightly lower rate of growth than the estimated change from the 2010 ACS to the 2020 ACS. Therefore, as noted earlier, the UMDI and MAPC projections prepared in 2018 may be underestimating growth.

### 4. Household Income

Median household income in Watertown was \$100,434 in 2020, a \$12,295 increase from 2010 (Table 3.6). Figure 3.3 shows the changes in income brackets by household. Approximately 50.2% of all Watertown households had a household income over \$100,000 in 2020.

In 2020, 6.9% of Watertown’s households lived below the poverty level. Approximately 2.4% of households received Social Security income in 2020, and a combined 15.6% received Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income, or SNAP assistance for food purchases. The poverty rate for those under 18 is 5.7% and the poverty rate for those 65 and older is 8.2%.

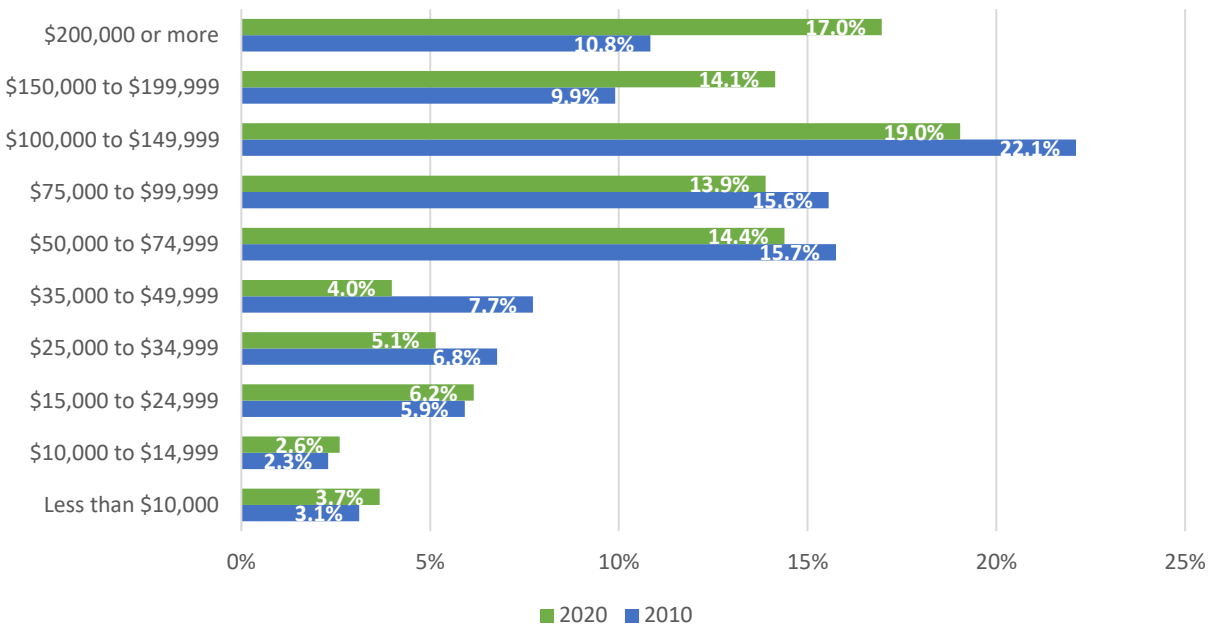
Table 3.6. Change in Median Household Income (2010-2020)

	2010 (2010 dollars)	2010 (2020 dollars*)	2020	% Change 2010-2020 (2020 dollars*)
<b>Watertown</b>	\$74,081	\$88,139	\$100,434	13.9%

\* Based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation calculator

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

Figure 3.3. Income Brackets by Household, 2010 and 2020



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

## 5. Employment Characteristics

### *Employers in the City*

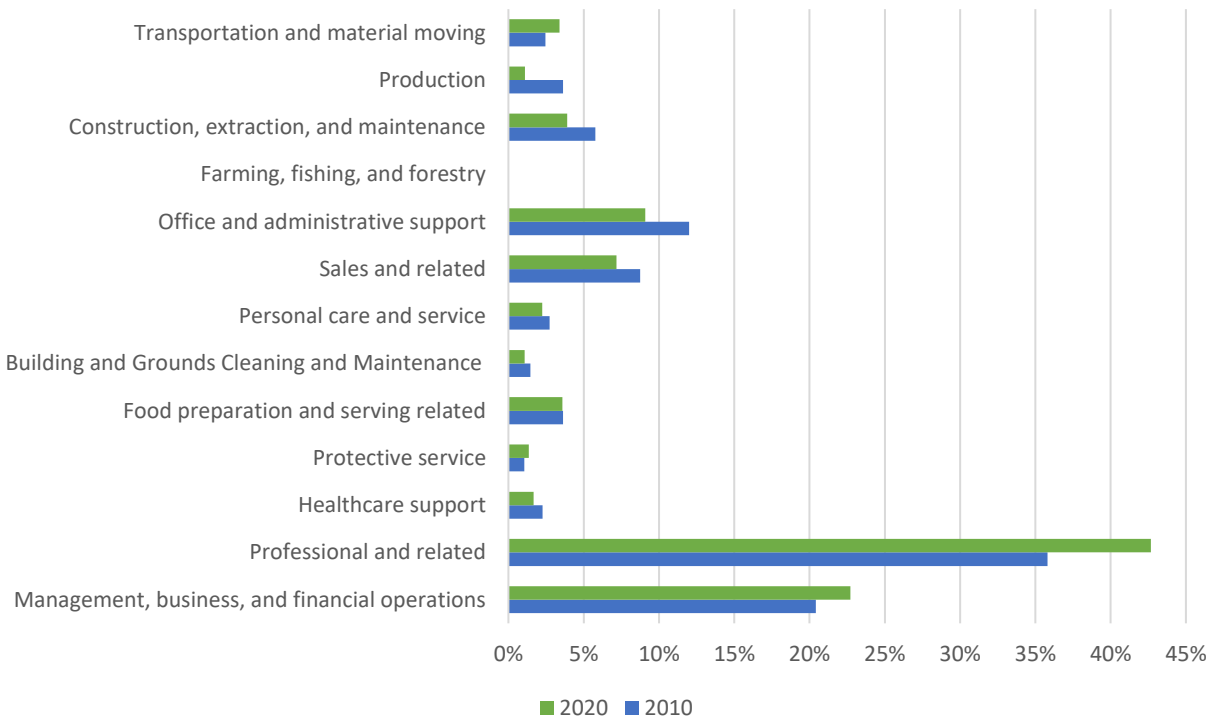
Watertown’s Comprehensive Plan Baseline Assessment indicates that the city’s employment base is at an unusually fluid time. The overall job numbers suggest a growing employment base disrupted by COVID in 2020 and then stabilizing just below pre-COVID levels. Employment rose from 20,243 in 2015 to 23,216 in 2019, fell in 2020, and averaged 22,780 over the first five months of 2022. The overall numbers, however, hide a significant shift in job composition. Over the last three years, the City lost two of its largest employers (Tufts Associated Health Plans and Edassist/Bright Horizons). In that same time, it has gained new office/lab employers, including SQZ Biotechnologies at Arsenal Yards, tenants at the LINX facility, and Arranta Bio on Pleasant Street.

### *Employment of Residents*

The MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Department reports that the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) of Watertown residents for May 2022 was 2.6%, compared to 3.4% in the Commonwealth. Most jobs held by residents were in the health care and social assistance; professional and technical services; other services, except public administration; and retail trade industries (Figure 3.4).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/MunicipalEmploymentData/LmiTown?A=000093>.

Figure 3.4. Employment of Watertown Residents 16 Years and Older, 2010 and 2020



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2020

## 6. Environmental Justice Populations

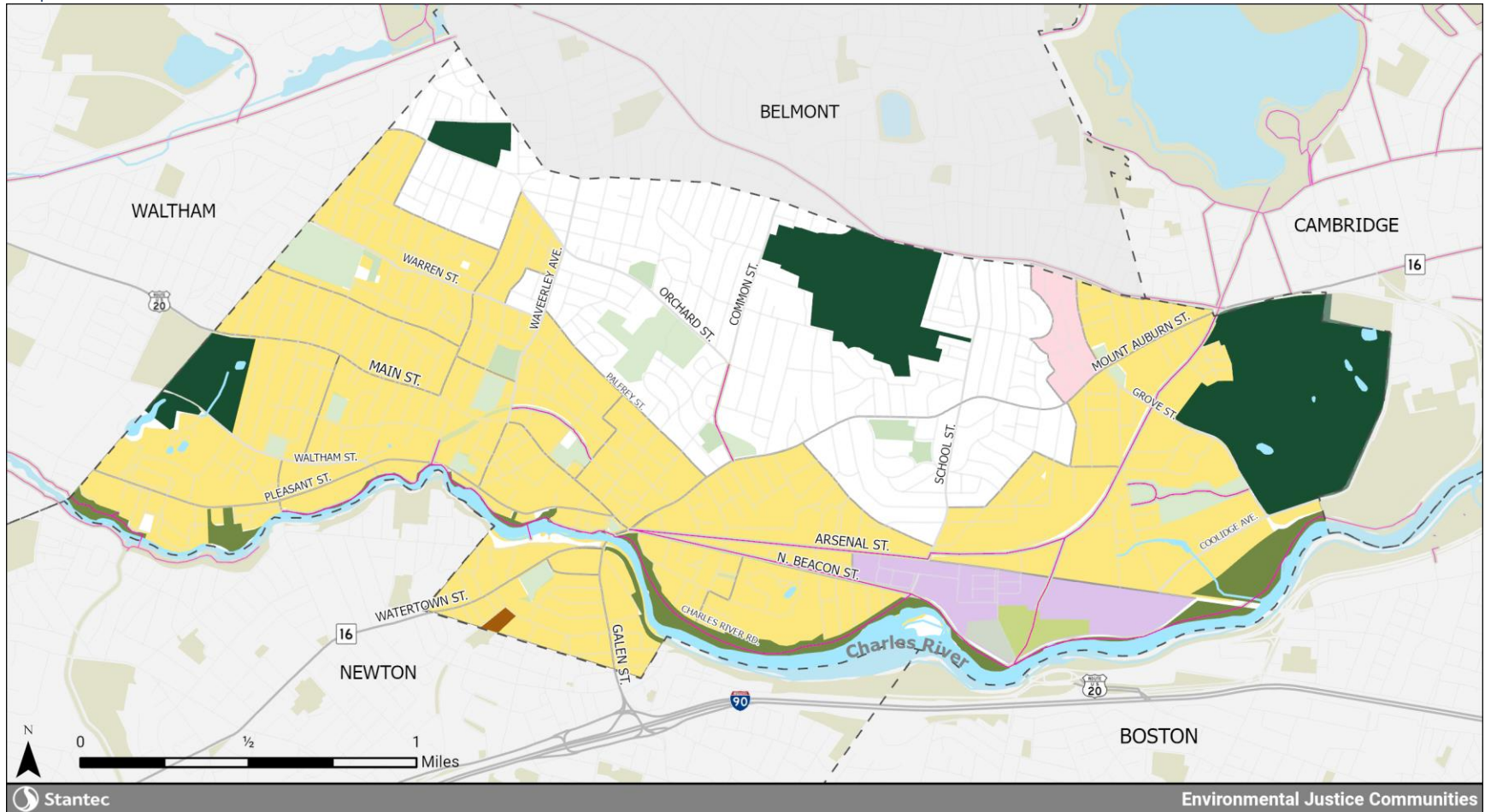
As discussed in Section 2 Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation, the Commonwealth identifies Environmental Justice (EJ) communities using ACS data, where U.S. Census Block Groups meet one or more of the following criteria<sup>8</sup>:

1. The annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income,
2. Minorities comprise 40% or more of the population,
3. 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency, or
4. Minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.

Of Watertown’s 30 block groups, 20 are designated as EJ communities based on minority population, annual median household income, and English language isolation characteristics (Map 3-2). Eighteen EJ communities qualify based on minority population characteristics, one based on minority population and income characteristics, and one based on income and English language isolation characteristics.

<sup>8</sup> Environmental Justice populations are defined at the Block Group level, which is a geographical unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Block groups typically consist of 600 to 3,000 people. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts> for more information.

Map 3-2. Environmental Justice Communities



**Legend**

- - - Town Boundaries
- Major Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Minor Streets

- Highways
- Multiuse Paths
- Surface Water

**EJ Criteria**

- Minority
- Minority & Income
- Income and English Isolation

**Open Spaces & Recreation Areas in Watertown by Ownership**

- State
- City of Watertown
- Other Local Governments
- Private
- Care and Custody of Watertown Conservation Commission
- Other Open Spaces & Recreation Areas

Source: MassGIS  
 July 2023  
 Environmental Justice  
 Communities  
 Watertown, MA



## D. Development Patterns and Trends

### 1. Patterns and Trends

Historically, the changes in Watertown land use in the second half of the 20th century were characterized by a steady transition from industrial and agricultural land to residential and predominantly commercial spaces. Today, only 0.9% of the land available for development is vacant (Table 3.7). Given the small amount of vacant land, it is unlikely that major changes in land use patterns will occur; rather, redevelopment can occur intermittently.

Residential uses make up half of the land use area in Watertown (Map 3-3). Single-family residential (19.7%) and two-and-three family homes (18.6%) account for the largest amount of land. The second largest land uses include cemeteries, charitable organizations, and religious institutions (13.9%).

While residential areas are generally well served and have access to open space and recreational resources, two of Watertown's three largest active recreation facilities are located in the southeast area of the city. The location of these resources drives utilization of smaller neighborhood parks and increases the importance of creating walking and biking linkages to these sites to increase access from all parts of the city.

Table 3.7. Existing Land Use

Land Use	Acres	% of Total
Residential single family	417	19.7%
Residential 2-3 units	392	18.6%
Residential 4+ units	74	3.4%
Condominium	177	8.4%
Mixed Use	180	8.4%
Commercial <sup>9</sup>	174	8.1%
Research and Development	60	2.8%
Industrial, Warehouse, Distribution	94	4.4%
Commonwealth and DCR	76	3.5%
Municipal	155	7.2%
Cemeteries, Charitable Organizations, Religious	293	13.9%
Vacant Land	20	0.9%
Total Land Available for Development <sup>10</sup>	2,112	

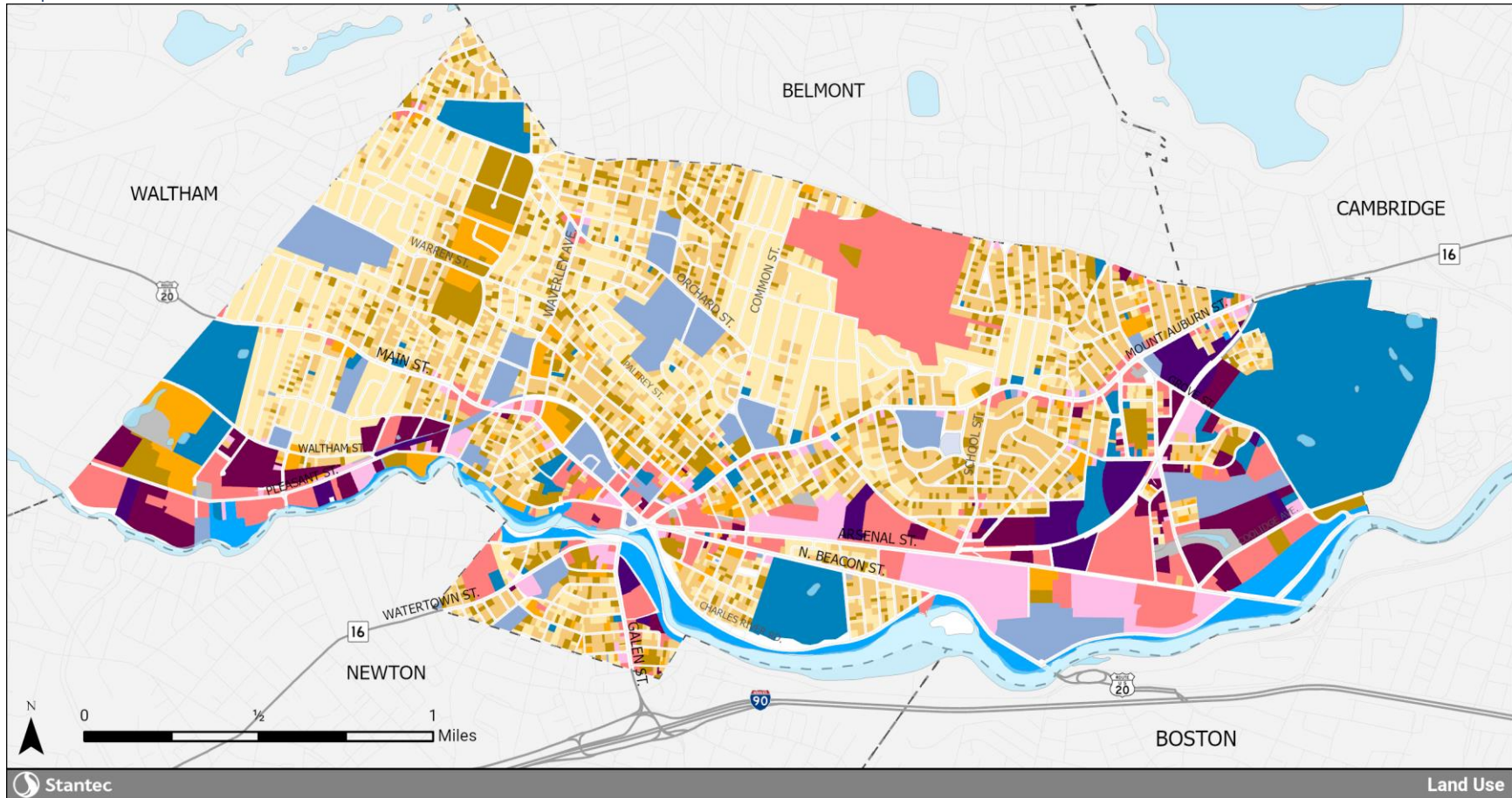
Source: Watertown City Assessor records, 2022

<sup>9</sup> Oakley Country Club is classified as commercial with an open space exemption. The country club is 88 acres, or approximately 50% of total commercial land area.

<sup>10</sup> This excludes rights-of-way and water areas (approximately 527 acres).



Map 3-3. Current Land Use



**Legend**

- |                            |                    |                                    |                                                     |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Residential: Single Family | Residential: Condo | Research and Development           | Municipal                                           |
| Residential: 2-3 Units     | Mixed Use          | Industrial, Warehouse, and Storage | Cemeteries, Charitable Organizations, and Religious |
| Residential: 4+ Units      | Commercial         | State                              | Vacant Land                                         |

Source: MassGIS  
November 2022  
Land Use  
Watertown, MA



Watertown has experienced significant investment in the past two decades along the Arsenal Street and Pleasant Street corridors. The city's 2015 Comprehensive Plan identified the Arsenal Street and Pleasant Street corridors as areas to "transform;" Watertown Square, Coolidge Square, Main Street, and Galen Street as areas to "enhance;" and mainly residential neighborhoods as areas to "preserve." In recent years, development has shifted from mainly residential to more commercial and mixed-use redevelopments. Demand for space that supports the life science industry, including pharmaceutical and biomedical technology businesses, has significantly increased the amount of commercial development, including the conversion of outdated office buildings into research facilities and laboratory spaces.

Because land is limited in Watertown, the City encourages developers to design publicly available space within their projects to serve as amenities for both the building occupants and the surrounding neighborhoods. Such negotiations are largely taking place on a case-by-case basis, but certain zoning districts have minimum requirements for publicly accessible open space as well.

## 2. Infrastructure

### *Transportation*

#### Streets and Roads

Approximately 86% of Watertown's roads have sidewalks on at least one side. Mobility and access within the city are perceived as good; however, accessing regional routes and north-south connections can be difficult due to the direction of major arterials and complexity of the local street network.

The City has undertaken numerous plans, site studies, and projects to improve multi-modality and bike and pedestrian safety across its road network. The Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee advocates for bicycle and pedestrian safety and improvements, assists with planning initiatives, and provides public education. The *Bicycle Transportation Plan*, adopted in 2003, is an early example of Watertown's focus on improving bicycle accommodations on and at key routes and destinations and establishing a bike network. The *Bicycle Parking Plan for Watertown*, updated in 2007, inventoried existing conditions and made recommendations for bike parking improvements in high demand areas.

The City adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2017, establishing a set of implementation strategies to guide transportation planning. The City, working with Alta Planning, completed a *Complete Streets Prioritization Plan* in 2018, which involved extensive public engagement to solicit initial ideas for Complete Streets project and resulted in a list of 24 recommended projects for prioritize for implementation. Complete Streets projects have since involved the following work:

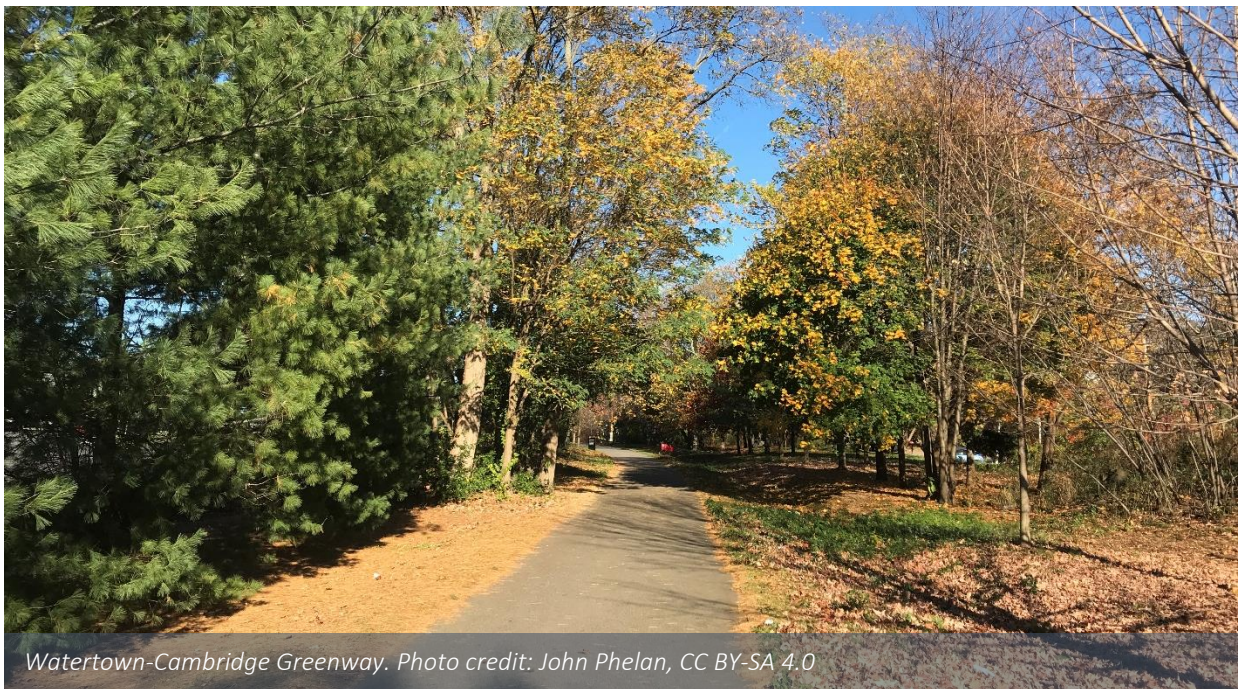
- The City received \$289,000 from MassDOT in 2020 to complete four prioritized projects involving installing raised crosswalks, crosswalk improvements, and widening a portion of the multi-use Watertown Community Path.
- The City received funding from MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program in Spring 2021 to implement pedestrian safety and ADA compliance improvements at three intersections and add a BlueBike bicycle sharing station.
- The City's Fall 2021 projects involve accessibility and safety improvements at Knowles Delta and pedestrian safety improvements at Casey Park.
- MassDOT allocated \$12.2 million in its 2007 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to fund the redesign and construction of Mount Auburn Street, an approximately two-mile arterial



that connects Watertown Square to Cambridge. The City is redesigning the corridor as a Complete Street that will improve safety and efficiency for all users. Depending on STIP's funding schedule, construction could begin as soon as Fall 2023.<sup>11</sup>

More recently, Watertown adopted the *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report* to continue previous work done under the Complete Streets umbrella and advance a comprehensive plan for a bicycle and pedestrian network. Several multi-use and bike paths in Watertown provide internal and regional connections, although these are primarily east-west connections<sup>12</sup>:

- The Charles River Greenway (also known as the Dr. Paul Dudley White Bike Path and Charles River Path and Charles River Greenway) runs along both shores of the Charles River in a 14-mile loop from the top of the Charles River basin to Watertown Square. DCR's Urban Parks Division is responsible for maintaining the path. A notable drawback of the Dudley White Bike Path is its inconsistent width, which can compromise the safety of its users.
- The Watertown Community Path is a partially built multi-use path. Approximately 1.75 miles in length, along Arsenal Street, along Taylor St and Baptist Walk, through the municipal parking lots and Saltonstall Park, through Linear Park, and connecting to the Charles River on Pleasant Street at Howard Street. It is planned to be an off-road shared-use path in most locations.
- The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway is a 1.25-mile off-road shared path that extends from Fresh Pond in Cambridge to School Street in Watertown. Completed in Spring 2022, the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway connects to a larger network of off-road paths that consists of the Charles River Path System, the Minuteman Bikeway, the Alewife Greenway, and the Mystic River Reservation.<sup>13</sup>



Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. Photo credit: John Phelan, CC BY-SA 4.0

<sup>11</sup> <https://mountauburnstreet.com/project-background>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/4e4fa729-ecd0-4a2a-9066-8f36dcb6a561?cache=1800#page=14>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/projects/transportation/watertowncambridgegreenway>.

### Bus Service

The MBTA operates nine routes in Watertown. It has a major bus terminal in Watertown within walking distance of the Charles River Reservation. Bus routes include those destined for Cambridge (Harvard and Central Square), Newton (Newton Centre), Dedham (Dedham Mall), Waltham, and Boston (Kenmore Station and downtown). Watertown's bus routes provide access to regional public transportation options (e.g., MBTA's commuter rail and subway lines) that are not present within Watertown.

### *Public Water Supply*

Watertown receives 100% of its water supply from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The City's water distribution system has approximately 80 miles of distribution mains. The Department of Public Works (DPW) Water Division is responsible for regular maintenance and infrastructure upgrades to ensure safe and efficient delivery of drinking water to Watertown's residents and businesses. The Division maintains a backflow and cross connection prevention program and routinely replaces infrastructure in coordination with road reconstruction projects.<sup>14</sup>

### *Public Sewer*

The MWRA also provides sewer service to Watertown. Sewage is gravity-fed and discharged into MRWA's sewerage system for treatment at its Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. DPW's Sewer and Drain Division is responsible for inspecting, operating, and maintaining the 78 miles of sewer lines and 8,000 residential sewer connections in the city.

The Division maintains an inflow and infiltration program to detect and prevent the introduction of groundwater and stormwater into the municipal sewer system due to leaks and improper connections. Inflow refers to stormwater runoff that is not being captured by other means (ex. green stormwater infrastructure) and enters the sewer system via connections such as storm drains, sump pumps, and gutters. Infiltration refers to groundwater that is introduced to the sewer system via damaged joints and pipes. Reducing inflow and infiltration directly reduces the volume of discharges from Watertown's sewer system into MRWA's system and thus the amount the city is charged for treatment costs. Aging infrastructure is generally the cause of inflow and infiltration; in Watertown, most sewer lines are over 50 years old, and some are over 100 years old.<sup>15</sup>

### *Stormwater*

Watertown has a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which discharges untreated stormwater flows directly to the Charles River via over 30 stormwater outfalls. DPW's Water & Sewer Division is responsible for maintaining the system's storm drain lines and catch basins, including cleaning catch basins and overseeing street sweeping. As part of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II stormwater regulations, the City is required to take steps to reduce the environmental impacts of stormwater pollution. In addition to its regular maintenance activities, the City provides public education programming, has established a Stormwater Advisory Committee to work with the DPW on stormwater management issues, and adopted ordinances for stormwater management and erosion control and the prohibition of illicit discharges to the MS4.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mwra.com/annual/waterreport/2020results/metro/watertown.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.watertowndpw.org/785/Illicit-Discharge-Detection-Elimination->.

Watertown has pursued opportunities to implement green infrastructure to reduce stormwater pollution and improve local water quality. As of April 2022, Watertown has implemented approximately 30 green infrastructure projects in the community, including two underground infiltration systems at Watertown Square. The Stormwater Advisory Committee and DPW continue to advocate for the City's use of green infrastructure to mitigate stormwater runoff and improve local water quality.



The City also works with neighboring communities and other partners within the Charles River watershed to address water quality through stormwater management. In 2015, Watertown was one of five municipalities in the Commonwealth selected by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to receive a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Section 604(b) grant to conduct a watershed pollution assessment and plan for water quality improvement actions. For its part, the City identified target areas for green infrastructure, developed a list of potential high priority sites for future investments, and provided public education programming. Additionally, 30% designs for bioretention basins (commonly referred to as rain gardens) were developed for two sites: the DPW parking lot and Hosmer School.

In 2016, Watertown received funding from MassDEP's Section 319 Non-Point Source Pollution grant program. Working collaboratively with the Charles River Watershed Association, the City redesigned Edenfield Avenue as a "Green Street," resulting in a street design that visibly incorporates stormwater management into the right of way. Construction work coincided with a routine road resurfacing project. Four tree trenches and seven bioretention systems were installed to capture and infiltrate stormwater runoff, thereby reducing the volume of stormwater discharges into the Charles River.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Long-term Development Patterns

The long-term development patterns of Watertown are well established by current uses. Land use regulatory policy now centers mostly around the redevelopment of existing sites, which is articulated in the City's Comprehensive Plan. It considers all aspects of physical development (transportation, housing, commercial activity, public facilities, etc.) as well as possible zoning changes and impacts on natural resources and open space.

#### *Watertown Zoning and Local Regulations Governing Land Uses*

Land use in Watertown is regulated by the City's Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. Many uses and structures either predate Watertown's first zoning ordinance in 1937 or existed legally before the

<sup>16</sup> <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/91e6af1d-1ccc-4bbc-83d6-0b37cf838a05>.



underlying zoning was later changed. These “preexisting nonconforming” uses and structures create anomalies within districts.

There are currently 21 zoning districts (Map 3-4):

**Base Zoning Districts**

Residential Single Family (S-10 and S-6)  
Residential Two-Family (T)  
Residential Single Family Conversion (SC)  
Residential Multi-Family (R.75)  
Residential Multi-Family (R1.2)  
Cluster Residential (CR)  
Open Space and Conservancy (OSC)

Neighborhood Business (NB)  
Limited Business (LB)  
Central Business (CB)  
Industrial 1 (I-1)  
Industrial 2 (I-2)  
Industrial 3 (I-3)

Regional Mixed Use District (RMUD)  
Pleasant Street Corridor District (PSCD)

The City also has five overlay districts that establish performance standards for specific types of development or redevelopment.

**Overlay Zoning Districts**

Assisted Living Overlay District (ALOD)  
Arsenal Overlay Development District (AODD)  
Religious/School Building Overlay District (R/SOD)

Limited Redevelopment District (RD)  
Revitalization Overlay (RO)

In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard mapping of Watertown is incorporated into the City’s Zoning Ordinance in order to limit development in flood-prone areas.

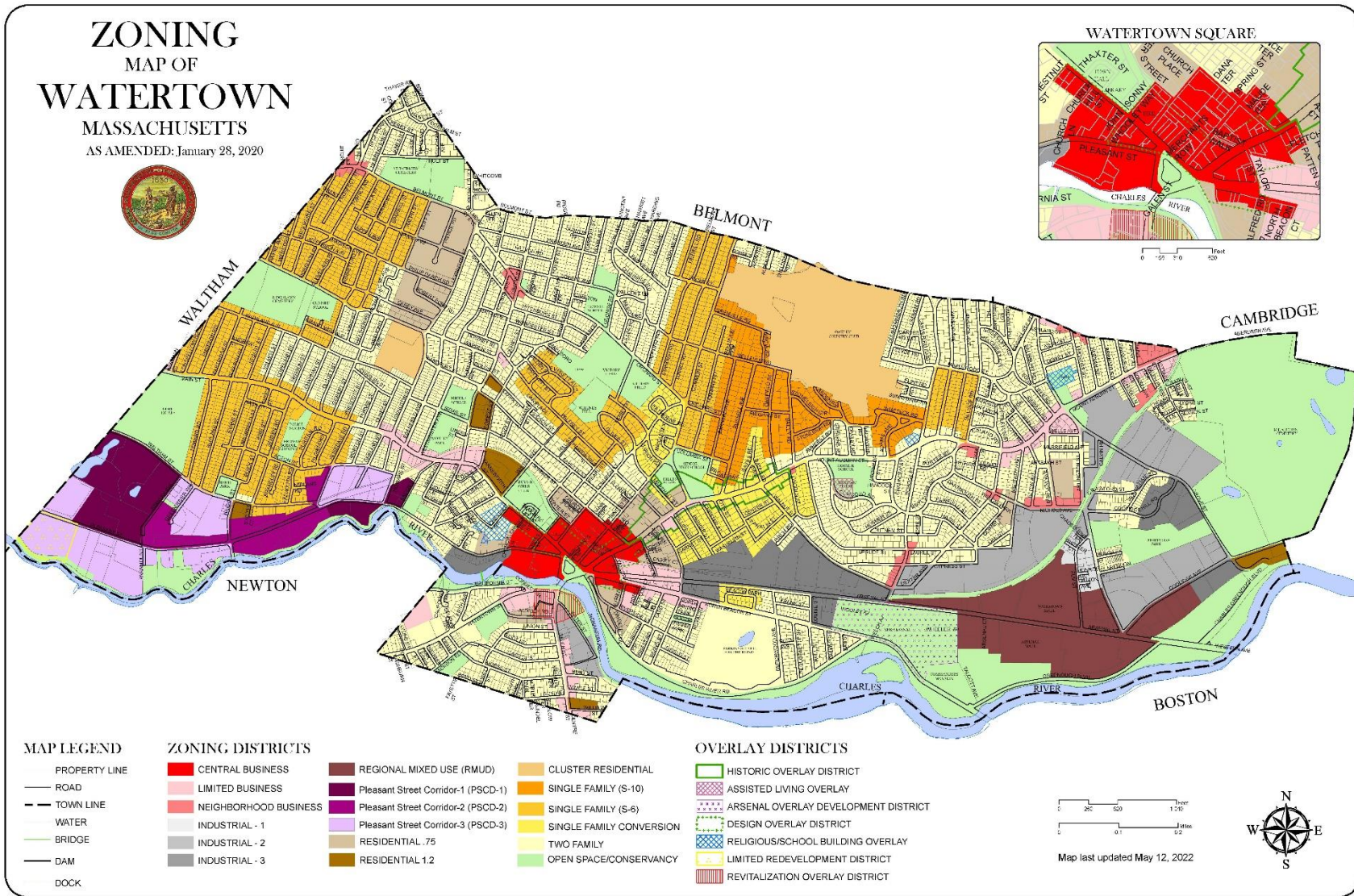
*Scheduled and Proposed Development Projects*

In the last 10 years, demand for laboratories, research facilities, and other spaces to support the life science industry has resulted in the redevelopment and conversion of outdated office buildings in the city. As of mid-2022, there are six major projects (five lab/office) in some stage of the public review process. These proposals currently represent an estimated one million square feet of commercial development and almost 150 new housing units. These projects represent opportunities to incorporate green space and public amenities.

*Build-out Analysis*

A build-out analysis for Watertown has not been conducted in several years, however, Watertown has less than 1% of land vacant so new development projects are typically the redevelopment of an existing developed area, as noted above. The Watertown Commercial Development and Housing Nexus Study (2022) estimates that approximately 2.6 million square feet of new commercial development will occur over the next ten years. Projected commercial development is associated with a need for an additional 360 new housing units.

Map 3-4. Watertown Zoning



## SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Like most communities in the Boston Metropolitan Region, Watertown is located in an area known geologically as the “Boston Basin.” The basin is a faulted and folded terrain that extends northeasterly to Massachusetts Bay and is characterized by Proterozoic Age rock formations, Cambridge Argillite, and Roxbury Conglomerate. The Cambridge Argillite, which has been intruded by igneous dikes and interbedded with volcanic ash from the Brighton Volcanic Complex and basaltic dikes of varying age. The Cambridge Argillite underpins the majority of Watertown.

Watertown’s elevations range from less than 10 feet along the banks of the Charles River to 220 feet near the Oakley Country Club. Spruce Street Hill, Strawberry Hill (Meeting House Hill), and Coolidge Hill are prominent hills that provide excellent views of the Charles River basin and the Boston skyline to the east. These hills are drumlins, which are made up of large mound of glacial till (clay and rock) that were formed when glaciers reshaped the landscape 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. The massive weight of the glaciers pushed much of the land in coastal areas below sea level as they moved across New England.

Watertown's general topography has remained stable since the glaciers and subsequent sea-level changes occurred approximately eleven thousand years ago. However, human activity has had a significant impact on the post-glacial landscape. Dams were built along the Charles River in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century to harness waterpower for burgeoning industrial activity, changing the course and character of the river, which slowed its flow but also contributed to water quality issues.<sup>17</sup> Large wetlands that used to provide natural flood buffers or stormwater filtration are no longer present, as much of the wetland soil along the Charles River was filled and built on during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A significant band of wetlands remains at the DCR Charles River Reservation land. Paving, filling, and grading are examples of human-made land modifications for dense residential and commercial development and transportation networks. Only areas where the slope is too steep to grade or the substrate is too difficult to manipulate, such as Whitney Hill, have remained unchanged from the original post-glacial topography.

Watertown's surficial geology is primarily made up of deposits left behind by the last ice age's glaciers, upland sedimentation, and post-glacial sea-level changes. Most of the City is now "urban land complex" (bituminous or concrete pavement) and loamy sand (Map 4-1). The Gore Estate, located at the west end of city, is the only remnant of a once-thriving agricultural community supported by alluvial soils (now filled and developed) along the Charles River's banks.

### B. Landscape Character

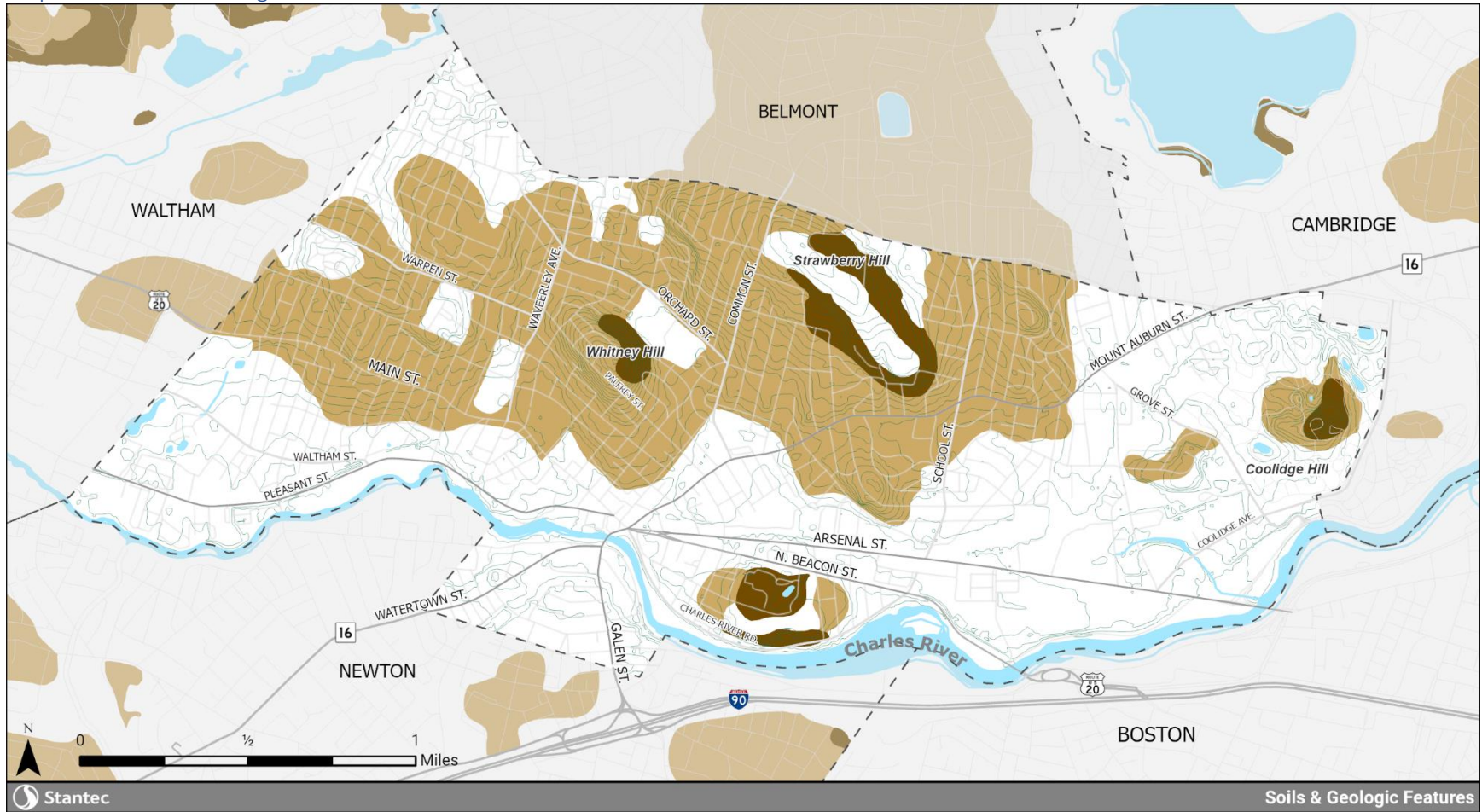
The landscape of Watertown is distinguished by its dense suburban and urban setting. However, among the developed neighborhoods, there are several scenic features. The Charles River, which winds along the city's southern boundary, is the most significant resource. The DCR Charles River Reservation along the river provides scenic vistas and access to valuable natural resources for pedestrians and bicyclists. Several prominent hills, such as Mt. Auburn Cemetery's hill and tower (136 feet) and Coolidge Hill, offer views of

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.crwa.org/charles-river.html>.



Map 4-1. Soils and Geologic Features



**Legend**

- - - Town Boundaries
- Major Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Minor Streets

- Highways
- 10-ft Contour Lines
- Surface Water

**Steep Slopes**

- Greater than 8% to Less or Equal to 15%
- Greater than 15% to Less or Equal to 25%

Source: MassGIS  
 February 2023  
 Soils & Geologic Features  
 Communities  
 Watertown, MA



the Boston skyline. Furthermore, at its highest point, Palfrey Street provides semi-urban views of the hills and valleys to the south and west towards Newton and Waltham, while the Oakley Country Club also offers excellent views of Boston.

## C. Water Resources

With the exception of a narrow strip along the City's northern boundary in the Mystic River Watershed, Watertown is entirely within the Lower Charles River Watershed (Map 4-2). The Charles River forms most of Watertown's southern boundary and is an important part of the city's quality open space and connects to Watertown's rich waterfront industrial history. Besides the river, surface water features are limited to nine small ponds, all of which are privately owned. There are three ponds on the grounds of Mount Auburn Cemetery, which is open to the public. Sawin's Pond, Williams Pond, and the pond at the Perkins School are not publicly accessible. The upper portion of Walker Pond adjacent to the residential development off Waltham Street is accessible and an adjacent kettle pond is not. The Gore Estate has a perched wetland that has some pond like features.

Although Watertown now receives all of its public drinking water supply from the MWRA, groundwater was used for drinking water and agricultural irrigation purposes historically and there are still a few wells on private property. For example, artesian springs near Whitney Hill were historically used to irrigate pear and apple groves along Orchard Street. Most natural springs were incorporated into the municipal storm drainage system long ago and no citywide mapping of these springs exists. As Watertown does not depend on groundwater for its public drinking water supply, the City does not conduct systematic groundwater testing. The extent to which groundwater has been affected by land use changes or industrial and residential pollution over the past several centuries is not fully understood. Significant contamination was discovered on the former U.S. Army Arsenal campus, prompting its designation (now lifted) as a federal Superfund site.

Fresh Pond, located north of Watertown, is part of the City of Cambridge's drinking water supply system.<sup>18</sup> Zone B and C Surface Water Protection Zones associated with Fresh Pond extend into northeastern Watertown and are subject to the Commonwealth's drinking water regulations.

Watertown's wetlands are protected under the City's Wetlands Protection ordinance. Most of the City's wetlands lack a natural riparian buffer. The City mandates a 50-foot no-build zone around the wetland resource area and a 150-foot buffer zone in which activity is regulated by the Conservation Commission (Map 4-2). The 150-foot buffer zone used by the City is more protective than the 100-foot buffer zone established by the Commonwealth in the Wetland Protection Act. Land within 200 feet of Watertown's rivers and streams are also subject to the Commonwealth's wetland regulations.<sup>19</sup> Watertown's wetland areas are associated with its surface water resources, including Walker Pond and another unnamed pond on the western edge of the city, and Sawins Pond in East Watertown. On Sunrise Island in the Charles River and on the border of Watertown and Boston at the North Beacon Street Bridge, two isolated and small areas of wetland connected with the Charles River have been identified.

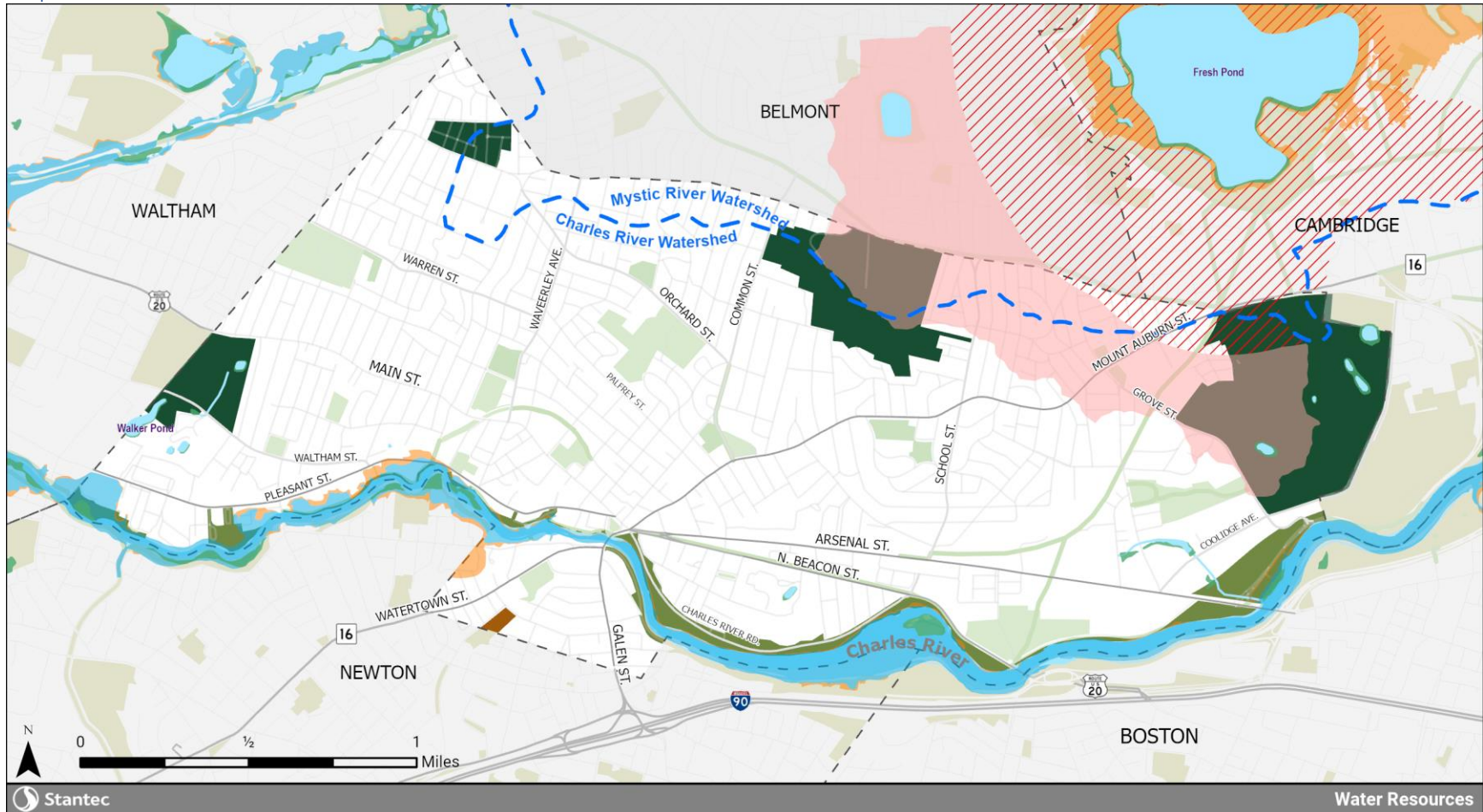
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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cambridgema.gov/water/freshpondreservation>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/guides/rivers-protection-act-questions-answers>.



Map 4-2. Water Resources



**Legend**

- - - Town Boundaries
- Major Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Minor Streets

- Highways
- Surface Water
- Wetland (100 - 200ft) Buffer

Open Spaces & Recreation Areas in Watertown by Ownership

- State
- City of Watertown
- Other Local Governments
- Private
- Other Open Spaces & Recreation Areas

Flood Zone Designation

- 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
- 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding
- Surface Water Protection Zones
- Zone B
- Zone C

Source: MassGIS  
February 2023  
Water Resources  
Communities  
Watertown, MA



FEMA updated its flood hazard mapping of Watertown in 2010 and it was adopted by the city shortly thereafter (Map 4-2). The majority of the city's documented 100-year flood plain is located along the Charles River near the southern city boundary, primarily west of the Watertown Dam, and includes several development sites between Bacon Street and Paramount Place. The 11-acre Stop & Shop at the western end of Pleasant Street, for example, is entirely within the 100-year floodplain. However, except for the open space along Greenough Boulevard north of Arsenal Street, the eastern section of the Charles River is contained within its banks.

The Charles River is one of Watertown's major open space and recreation assets. EPA's Clean Charles River Initiative, an expansive water quality improvement program, has sought to make the river fishable and swimmable since 1995. Efforts by watershed municipalities and the MWRA have been extremely successful at reducing bacterial sources of pollution from sewage discharges and sewage-contaminated stormwater. Today the river "is safe for recreational boating virtually all of the time, and safe for swimming 70% of the time."<sup>20</sup> Municipalities in the Lower Basin segment of the Charles River (from Watertown to Boston) and the MWRA have "eliminated in excess of 48,000 gallons of sewage-contaminated stormwater flowing into the River per day since 2004," and "reduced [Combined Sewer Overflows] by 99.5%."<sup>21</sup>

Nutrient sources of pollution are an ongoing issue, with phosphorus overloads identified as the main driver of harmful algal blooms in the Charles River during warmer months. Meeting the EPA's goal of reducing "phosphorus discharges to the lower Charles by 54% percent" requires municipalities to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff entering the river.<sup>22</sup> Watertown's MS4-related stormwater discharges are already regulated by the EPA and MassDEP. In addition to its stormwater regulations and green infrastructure projects, the City has a number of residential programs. Residents can upgrade their paved planting strips, purchase discounted rain barrels, and request street trees to help reduce stormwater runoff from their properties.

Recreational opportunities along the Charles River include the multi-use Charles River Greenway and the numerous open spaces, parks and playgrounds, and other recreational facilities along the path. The Greenway and many of these recreational amenities are owned and operated by DCR. There are no formal public boat ramps in Watertown, although private boat access is provided through several yacht and rowing facilities in the area and at a DCR boat ramp in Brighton.

## D. Vegetation

Watertown is largely urbanized with few large tracts of woodlands and species associated with forested areas. The majority of the original forests were cleared for agriculture or pastures a long time ago. Remnants of Watertown's original forests remain in isolated areas such as the Oakley Country Club. Several oak trees thought to date back to the colonial area are present on the property. Contiguous tracts of woodland vegetation are largely limited to the Charles River basin on DCR land and to Whitney Hill Park, an approximately 6.1-acre forested area. There are no rare, threatened, or endangered plant species within Watertown. Plant species found in Watertown include:

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/charlesriver/charles-river-initiative>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/charlesriver/environmental-challenges-charles-river>.

- Common hardwoods: red maple, white oak, beech, hickory, birch, and black oak.
- Common softwoods: eastern white pine and hemlock.
- Common herbaceous plants: vervain, goldenrod, asters, and joe pye weed.
- Common invasive species: Norway maple, buckthorn, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, euonymus, and black swallow-wort.
- Other: numerous fern species have been noted near the forest floor as well as large cattail stands towards the far western and eastern borders of the city.

Mount Auburn Cemetery was founded in 1831 as the nation’s first garden cemetery. The public is free to explore the cemetery’s 175-acres (151.1 acres in Watertown), and numerous groups interested in the cemetery’s wildlife and flora visit each year. Since the 1990s, the Mount Auburn Cemetery has worked to increase plant diversity in response to pests and changing climate conditions.<sup>23</sup> In 2019, the cemetery’s Plant Collections Analysis counted 2,335 different known taxa, a 33% increase from its previous 2009 analysis.<sup>24</sup> The cemetery is also home to three potential vernal pools.<sup>25</sup>

The trees seen today in Watertown's yards, streets, and parks are the result of plantings or natural pollination of species over time, with the exception of isolated areas. Some neighborhoods also have a few stands of native trees, such as a group of large Silver Maples near Harrington and Sycamore Streets. Watertown last completed a citywide inventory of its public street trees in 2014. According to the inventory, the most common trees and shrubs in residential neighborhoods are Norwood maple, sugar maple, Callery pear, honey locus, Japanese tree lilac, red maple, American sycamore, sweetgum, green ash, and small-leaved linden.

Street tree maintenance is conducted by DPW’s Forestry Division, with the City’s Tree Warden enforcing the Commonwealth’s Public Shade Tree Law and helping with public education efforts. The median life span of an urban tree is approximately ten years, requiring the city to constantly manage and replace trees in its urban forest. The tree inventory is used to forecast and coordinate tree replacement, requests, and maintenance, as well as identify trends that may affect the long-term health of the City’s urban forest. Watertown has also expanded efforts to foster greater diversity of species, in part to reduce the effects of pests. According to Watertown’s 2008 tree inventory, however, 41% of trees were Norway maple, and 57% of all trees were from the maple genus.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the city has



*Silver maple in autumn. Photo credit: Famartin, CC BY-SA 4.0*

<sup>23</sup> <https://mountauburn.org/biodiversity-in-the-plant-collections/>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-nhesp-potential-vernal-pools>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/9af12a4a-3d13-4dea-b996-b8fba2e44c81>.



determined that the mix of tree species in the community has been negatively affected by the amount of road salt applied during winter weather. Watertown began updating its tree inventory in October 2022. The results of the tree inventory will be geolocated, allowing the City to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to track the location of empty planting locations, existing trees, and individual tree characteristics. The City will also be able to use the GIS data to map tree distribution and inform future planting initiatives.

## E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Watertown is located in the Boston ecoregion, which is comprised of a number of low hills and outlying, suburban towns. As Watertown is a mostly developed community, few parcels of land large enough to serve as robust habitat for wildlife remains. Remaining large natural and semi-natural areas are the Charles River corridor, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Gore Estate, and Whitney Hill Park. The entirety of the Watertown section of the Charles River and its banks is Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) Core Habitat, which supports the long-term persistence of rare species and other state Species of Conservation Concern, biodiversity, and intact ecosystems.<sup>27</sup> The river corridor is also categorized as a Critical Natural Landscape, an intact landscape that can “support ecological processes and disturbance regimes, and a wide array of species and habitats over long time frames.”<sup>28</sup> In addition to the Charles River, other smaller, linear open spaces like the Watertown Linear Park and the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway serve as wildlife corridors and facilitate wildlife movement and connections to other regional resources, including Fresh Pond in Cambridge.

There are no certified vernal pools in Watertown. Five potential vernal pools are located in Watertown, including three in the Mount Auburn Cemetery, but they are not verified by the NHESP and thus are not protected by the Commonwealth’s Wetlands Protection Act regulations.<sup>29</sup> Under the City’s Wetlands Protection ordinance, the Conservation Commission reviews all activities within a 150-foot buffer zone around wetland resources, including activities around the three potential vernal pools.

The upstream segment of the Charles River, before the Watertown Dam in particular, contains a variety of wetland types and dense vegetation that offers valuable wildlife habitat and opportunities for passive recreation (e.g., nature- and wildlife-watching areas). The Charles River itself is the site of a significant alewife and blueback herring fish run, as well as smaller smelt and shad runs. The Watertown Dam includes a fish ladder to facilitate fish passage; however, this and earlier versions of the dam prevented passage and negatively affected fish populations, including those that are no longer present (e.g., salmon). Additional species—including yellow perch, American eel, and banded sunfish—are present upstream of the Watertown Dam. Reptile and amphibian populations in Watertown include:

Milk snakes	Garter snakes	Snapping turtles
Painted turtles	Red-backed salamanders	Wood frogs
Bullfrogs	Green frogs	Spring peepers
American toads		

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<sup>27</sup> [http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town\\_core/Watertown.pdf](http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town_core/Watertown.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-nhesp-potential-vernal-pools>.

A diverse population of year-round and migrant birds are also present in the Charles River corridor area and wooded spaces like Whitney Hill and Mt Auburn Cemetery. The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is the only species on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List that has been observed in Watertown; it is listed as Threatened.<sup>30</sup> Common migrant bird species include:

Eastern phoebe	Red-eyed vireo	Pine warbler
Northern oriole	Great crested flycatcher	Tree swallow
Rose-breasted grosbeak	Scarlet tanager	Wood thrush
Eastern wood peewee	American goldfinch	

Common year-round bird species include:

Ring-necked pheasants	Mourning doves	Eastern screech owls
Great horned owls	Downy woodpeckers	Blue jay
Hairy woodpeckers	American crows	White-breasted nuthatches
Cedar waxwings	House finches	House sparrows

Watertown is home to typical New England mammal populations. Mammal species include:

Coyotes	Mink	Red fox
Muskrats	Eastern gray squirrel	Red squirrel
Raccoon	Striped skunk	Woodchuck
Eastern cottontail rabbit	Eastern chipmunk	Northern short-tailed shrew
Meadow vole	Field mouse	Opossum
Little brown bat		



*Great horned owl (left) and Red fox (right). Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>.

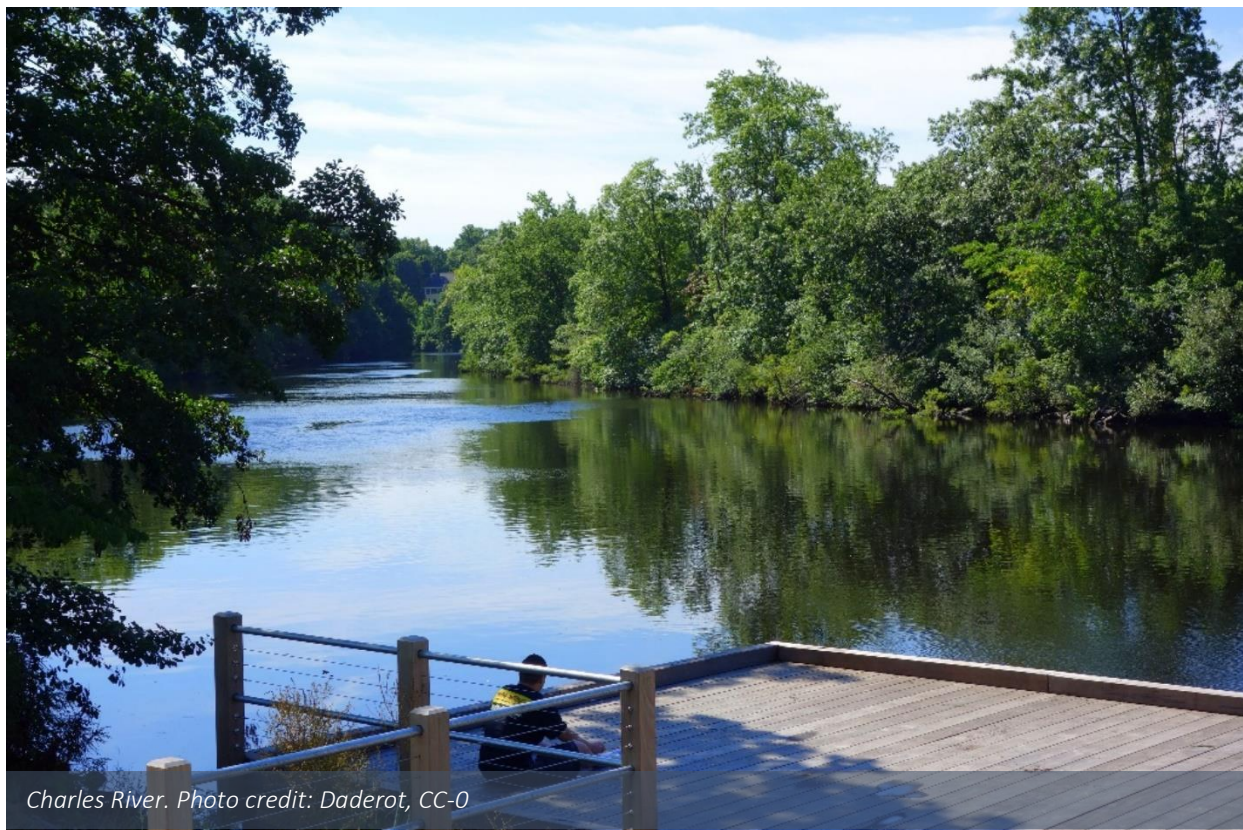


## F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Although Watertown does not have any DCR designated Scenic Landscapes, the city does have several landscape features that provide scenic escapes from the built environment (Map 4-3). For example, drumlins in Mt. Auburn Cemetery and other hills such as Strawberry Hill and Whitney Hill provide views of the Charles River Valley and the Boston skyline.

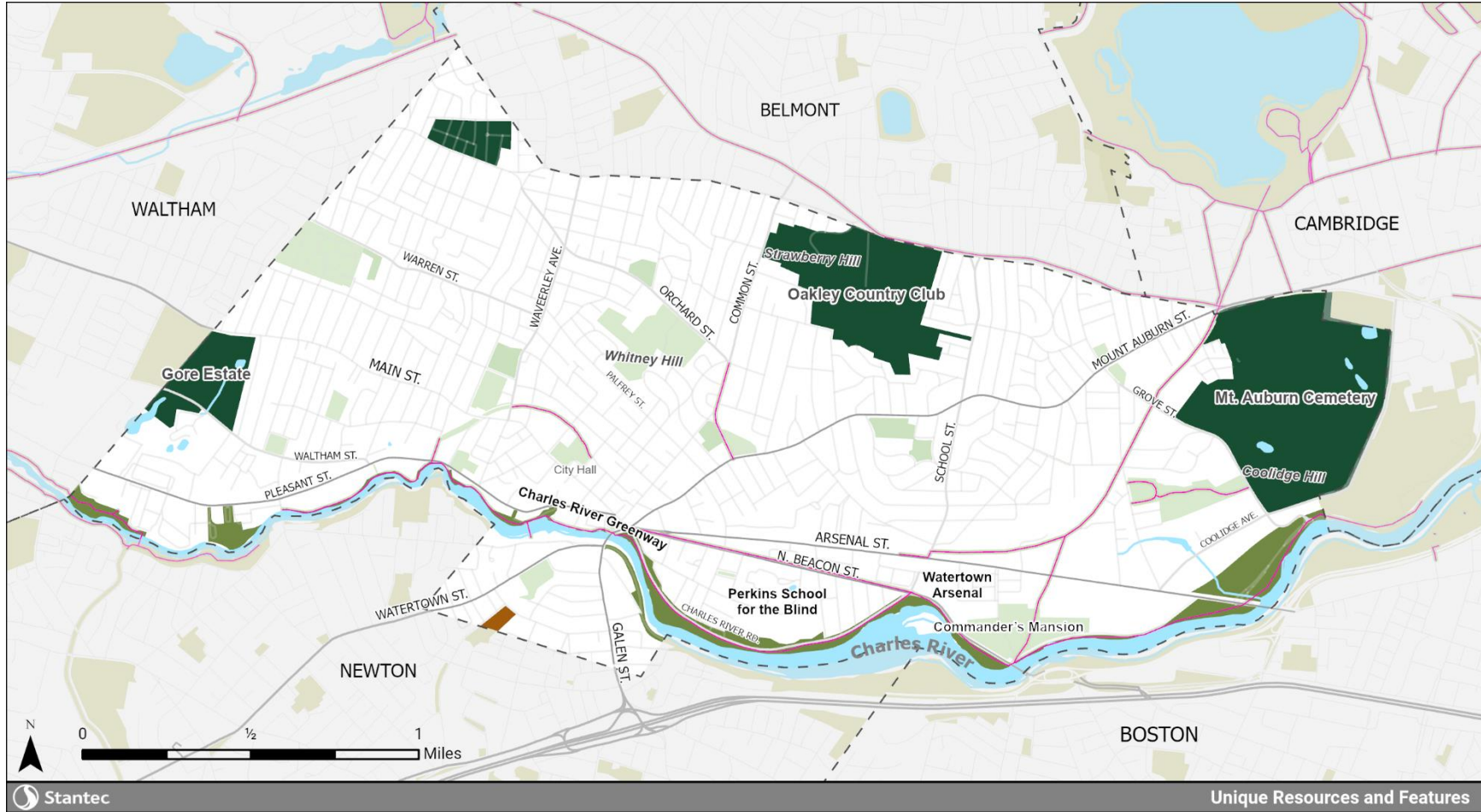
The Charles River, a regional waterway as well as a historic, environmental, and recreational resource, is Watertown's primary scenic resource. With over four miles of riparian corridor within Watertown, which is entirely within the DCR's Charles River Reservation, the river not only provides unparalleled recreational opportunities but also connects to many iconic cultural landmarks along its route, including the Watertown Arsenal, the Perkins School campus, Watertown Square landing, and the Aetna Mill complex. The Charles River Greenway, which extends into Boston, passes through Watertown's relatively natural riverbanks. Many areas east of the Watertown Dam provide pedestrians and bicyclists with intermittent views of downtown and the river, whereas the river greenway west of the dam offers a similar scenic quality with more variety.

Aside from the Charles River, three privately owned but regionally recognized landscapes are entirely or partially within Watertown's boundaries: The Gore Estate, Oakley Country Club, and Mount Auburn Cemetery. By providing scenery and habitat, retaining the ecological benefits of open land, and stimulating air circulation, these large tracts of open land help balance local environmental health in this relatively dense community.



*Charles River. Photo credit: Daderot, CC-0*

Map 4-3. Unique Resources and Features



**Legend**

- - - Town Boundaries
- Major Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Minor Streets

- Multiuse Paths
- Community Paths
- Surface Water

*Open Space & Recreation Areas in Watertown by Ownership*

- State
- City of Watertown
- Other Local Governments
- Private
- Other Open Space & Recreation

Source: MassGIS  
February 2023  
Unique Resources and Features  
Watertown, MA



## G. Environmental Challenges

Environmental challenges that relate to open space and recreation include climate change, flooding, water quality pollutants, hazardous materials, invasive species, and environmental justice.

### 1. Impacts of Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Changing climate conditions, such as shifting and more extreme precipitation and temperature patterns, will exacerbate and complicate efforts to address the City’s overall environmental challenges. As identified in its Community Resilience Building Workshop in 2020, intense storms, flooding, drought, and heat waves are Watertown’s primary hazards. These can cause negative impacts to human health; stress wildlife and the natural environment; and damage critical facilities, infrastructure, homes, and businesses.

Enhancing natural systems, adding more open space and green space, and minimizing the impacts of development on the natural environment can all help increase resiliency to natural hazards and climate change. Watertown recognizes that climate change is the most pressing issue of these times. *Resilient Watertown: A Climate & Energy Plan* presents a unified vision to reduce contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resiliency. It highlights the importance of Watertown’s natural assets and green space and outlines strategies that protect and enhance forest and open space parcels; protect, enhance, and diversify the tree canopy; and minimize quantity and improve quality of stormwater runoff.

### 2. Flooding

Riverine flooding associated with extreme weather is an issue in Watertown, with more frequent flooding occurring along the Charles River basin and adjacent low-lying areas as well as upstream of the Watertown Dam. Former industrial and potentially contaminated land is also within the floodplain. As Watertown looks to redevelop these sites, the City must consider environmental remediation and flood mitigations strategies.

Basement flooding from groundwater also occurs at several locations across the community, and urban flooding attributable to poor drainage can occur after prolonged rainfall and extreme weather. In addition to flood-prone areas associated with riverine flooding from the Charles River, locally identified areas of flooding include:

#### **Groundwater Flooding**

Cuniff Elementary School  
Watertown High School  
Watertown Police Department Headquarters  
Rutland Street residences

#### **Urban Flooding**

Arlington Street and Keith Street

### 3. Sedimentation and Erosion

Water pollution resulting from combined sewer overflows, urban stormwater runoff, and other sources of surface water pollution that cause sedimentation in the Charles River.

### 4. Water Quality and Impaired Waterbodies

The Charles River watershed encompasses the majority of Watertown, and the Charles River forms most of the community’s southern boundary. Improved water quality in recent years has led to an increase in



water-based recreation activities along the river, including rowing, sailing, canoeing, and fishing. However, this section of the river is not yet clean enough for swimming. As of 2020, the Charles River in Watertown earned a B- overall grade from the EPA. Monthly sampling through the Clean Charles River Initiative indicates that the Charles River Lower Basin had a 71.2% compliance rate with the Commonwealth's bacterial water quality standards for swimming and boating in 2020.<sup>31</sup> The Charles River Watershed Association collects this data from its sampling sites, four of which are along Watertown's stretch of the river.

Under the Massachusetts Water Quality Management Program, the Charles River is classified as a Class B water, designated as suitable for supporting aquatic life, recreational uses such as swimming and boating, and fish consumption. However, the river's water quality is not meeting the standards for these uses and is therefore classified as "impaired" or "threatened" for one or more of these uses, requiring the state to calculate total maximum daily loads (TMDLs).<sup>32</sup> Impairments requiring a TMDL include but are not limited to high fecal coliform bacteria counts, total phosphorus, dissolved oxygen levels, and nutrient/eutrophication biological indicators. Excessive aquatic weed growth (e.g., Eurasian water milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and water chestnut) is also a problem.

Combined sewer overflows, upstream pollution and urban stormwater runoff have been identified as sources of surface water pollution, with stormwater runoff a particularly large source of pollution. These issues also result in sedimentation in the Charles River. As such, it is critical to continue reinforcing stormwater management throughout the city to continue to improve and enhance water quality in the Charles River. Stormwater management best practices are used by the City for current and proposed municipal infrastructure projects and private development. Watertown also participates in regional coalitions of watershed communities (in the Charles River and Mystic River watersheds) to discuss impacts throughout the watersheds and protect local water quality.

Two small tributaries to the Charles River, known locally as Sawins Brook and Laundry Brook, also have impairments. Both are impaired for high fecal coliform bacteria counts, and Laundry Brook has additional impairments, including those for total phosphorus, total suspended solids, and turbidity levels.

## 5. Landfills, Hazardous Waste, and Brownfield Sites

There are no active landfills in Watertown. The middle and easterly portion of Filippello (Domenick) Park in East Watertown is a former dump and incinerator site but that portion of the site was capped and incorporated into the park.

Addressing hazardous waste and brownfield sites is one of Watertown's most pressing environmental challenges. As of April 22, 2022, MassDEP has recorded 372 incidents or sites of reportable oil and hazardous materials releases in Watertown. The majority of these sites are closed. Watertown has 51 sites with Activity and Use Limitation (AUL), indicating that some land uses are still restricted or prohibited at these locations until completion of the site remediation efforts. Contamination at Sawins and Williams Ponds is included in this list. Most of these locations are in historically industrial and commercial corridors such as Pleasant Street, Mt. Auburn Street, and Arsenal Street. They are typically

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/charlesriver/charles-river-initiative>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/doc/final-massachusetts-integrated-list-of-waters-for-the-clean-water-act-20182020-reporting-cycle/download>.

former industrial uses or gas stations with underground storage tanks in various stages of assessment and cleanup.

## 6. Invasive Species

Non-native invasive plant species, particularly Norway maple, buckthorn, garlic mustard, euonymus, Japanese knotweed, and bittersweet vines, are a problem, especially within DCR properties. The presence of invasive species along the Charles River could impact the ecological quality of riverfront open space and recreational resources. Currently, volunteers from the Charles River Conservancy and other organizations manage invasive species on DCR land in Watertown, but their efforts are dependent on the number of volunteers that attend scheduled events in preselected areas. The low diversity in Watertown's urban forest also makes it vulnerable to infestations of invasive pests such as the woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer (both present and impacting tree canopy), and the Asian long-horned beetle, which, while not observed in Watertown, caused widespread damage to hardwood trees in other Massachusetts communities.<sup>33</sup>

## 7. Forestry

Maintaining a healthy urban forest can be a challenge in urban streetscapes due to the lack of root zone growing space, compacted soils, and interactions with motor vehicles and utilities. Much of Watertown's urban forest consists of non-native Norway maples planted after the 1938 and 1954 Hurricanes that are now reaching the end of their lives. While this is an opportunity to plant native species, the loss of many of the City's mature trees also reduces the urban forest's overall shading, cooling, noise and air pollution mitigation, and stormwater management capacity.

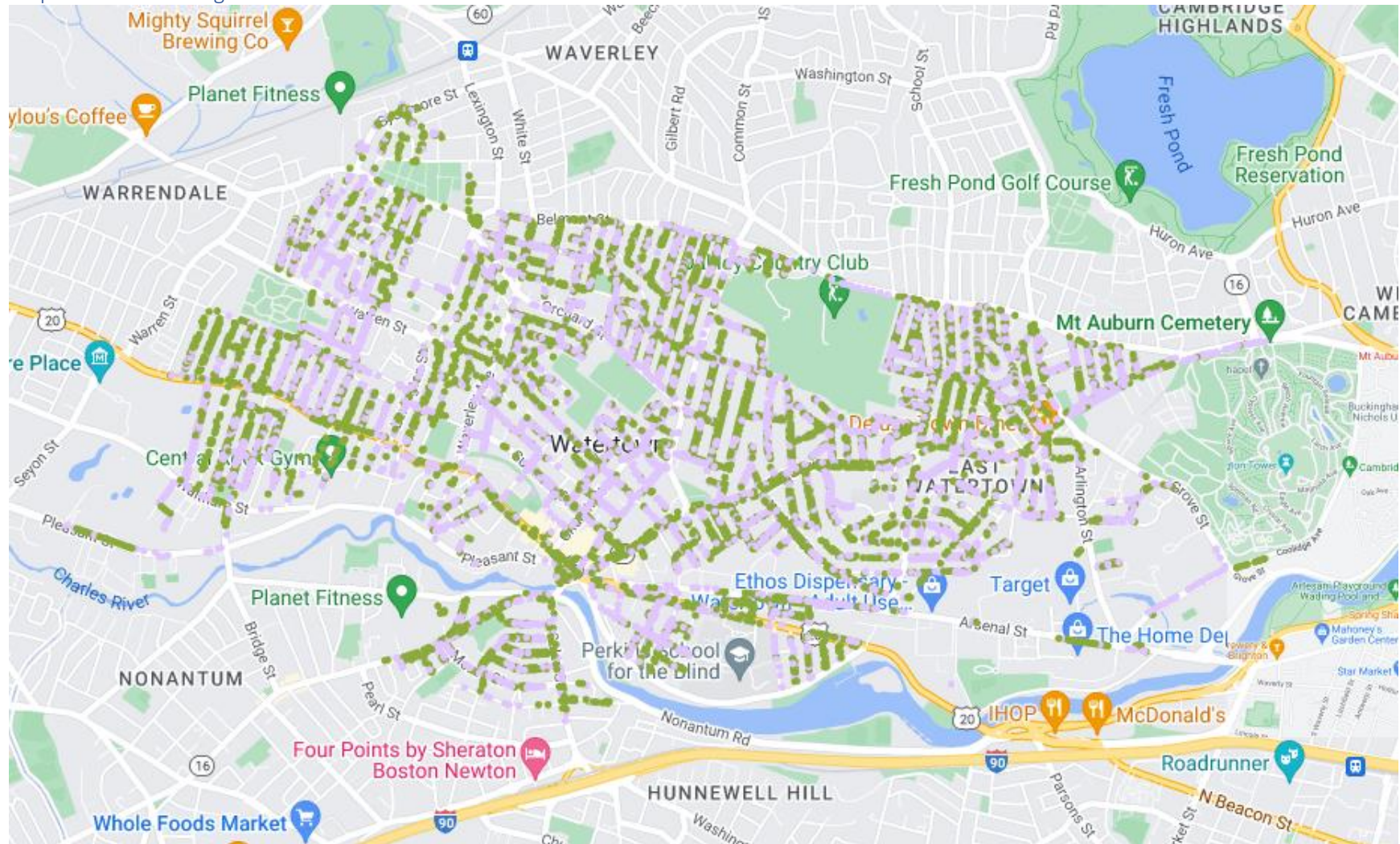
Watertown established its tree planting program in the early 1990s. Over the years, increased funding expanded the program and tree plantings are now evaluated by species and diversity, site suitability, and longevity. The overall goal of the tree planting program is to create an urban forest that is diverse, with no single species exceeding 10% of the total species diversity to ward off large losses of canopy from pest infestations and extreme weather. Watertown's urban forest management is overseen by its Tree Warden. Current activities are focused on planting trees that will be resilient to climate change and increase overall species diversity, such as Kentucky coffee tree and hackberry, and planting in areas with less canopy coverage (Map 4-4). The Tree Warden also runs a bareroot planting program, in which homeowners receive trees for planting on their properties at the City's expense. During the 2021 program, the City offered swamp white oak and serviceberry plantings to homeowners.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/the-threat/asian-longhorned-beetle/asian-longhorned-beetle>.



Map 4-4. Tree Plantings in Watertown



Note: Green circles denote occupied tree planting sites and light purple circles denote empty tree planting sites.

Source: Trees for Watertown. Retrieved 11/7/2022 from <https://www.opentreeemap.org/watertownma/map/?z=14/42.3697/-71.1762>.

The non-profit American Forests, which is dedicated to the protection and restoration of forests, has calculated Tree Equity Scores (TES) for urbanized areas. TES is a measure of how well tree canopy coverage is allocated equitably in cities given climate, demographic, and socioeconomic data.<sup>34</sup> Watertown’s overall TES is 69 out of 100. Block groups with lower TES are primarily concentrated along the Arsenal Street Corridor and in West Watertown. On average, Watertown’s neighboring communities have a TES of 86. Increasing Watertown’s TES to 86 would require approximately 18,100 trees, or a 10% increase in total tree canopy coverage.<sup>35</sup>

## 8. Development Impacts

Watertown is a built-out community. As such, impacts of development on the natural environment are associated with existing land uses and stormwater runoff. Land use policy articulated in the City’s Comprehensive Plan considers all aspects of physical development (transportation, housing, commercial activity, public facilities, etc.) and minimizing its impacts on natural resources and open space. Additionally, as noted earlier, the Watertown Stormwater Advisory Committee advocates for the use of green infrastructure to reduce stormwater pollution and improve local water quality. The City has implemented several projects throughout the community.

Looking forward, future development is focused on redevelopment. The City encourages developers to design publicly available space within their projects to serve as amenities for both the building occupants and the surrounding neighborhoods. Such negotiations are largely taking place on a case-by-case basis, but certain zoning districts have minimum requirements for publicly accessible open space as well.

## 9. Environmental Justice and Open Space and Recreation Inequities

Watertown’s 20 Environmental Justice (EJ) communities are concentrated in west, south, and east Watertown (Map 3-2). All EJ communities are within 0.25 miles of a City-owned open space and recreation area. Of Watertown’s largest, premier facilities—the Victory Field Complex, Arsenal Park, and Filippello Park—two are located in an EJ community and provide access to unique amenities, including splash pads, charcoal grills, and gazebos. However, neither Victory Field Complex or Whitney Hill Park (the City’s only conservation property until the recent acquisition of Walker Pond) are within an EJ community.

Increasing opportunities in EJ areas are planned. Of Watertown’s 20 EJ communities, 17 are within 0.25 miles of an existing or planned shared-use path. The three EJ communities without access to a shared-use path, located in Watertown’s northwest quadrant, will gain access to a future path being developed by Waltham and Belmont along the Fitchburg MBTA rail corridor. Waltham will be constructing a portion of the path from Beaver Street west along Waverly Oaks. Watertown’s residents are vulnerable to the heat island effect, which is a phenomenon where urban, highly impervious landscapes absorb and reflect heat more than greener areas, resulting in urban “islands” or pockets of higher temperatures.<sup>36</sup> The City conducted an urban heat island assessment as part of a larger equity-based community greening program in 2021. The study found that areas with less tree canopy coverage and more buildings are typically 2 to 4° F warmer than the City’s average ambient air temperature, with greener areas cooler than average. As a result, residents who live and work in more urbanized areas of the city experience “hotter” hot days.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.treeequityscore.org/methodology/>

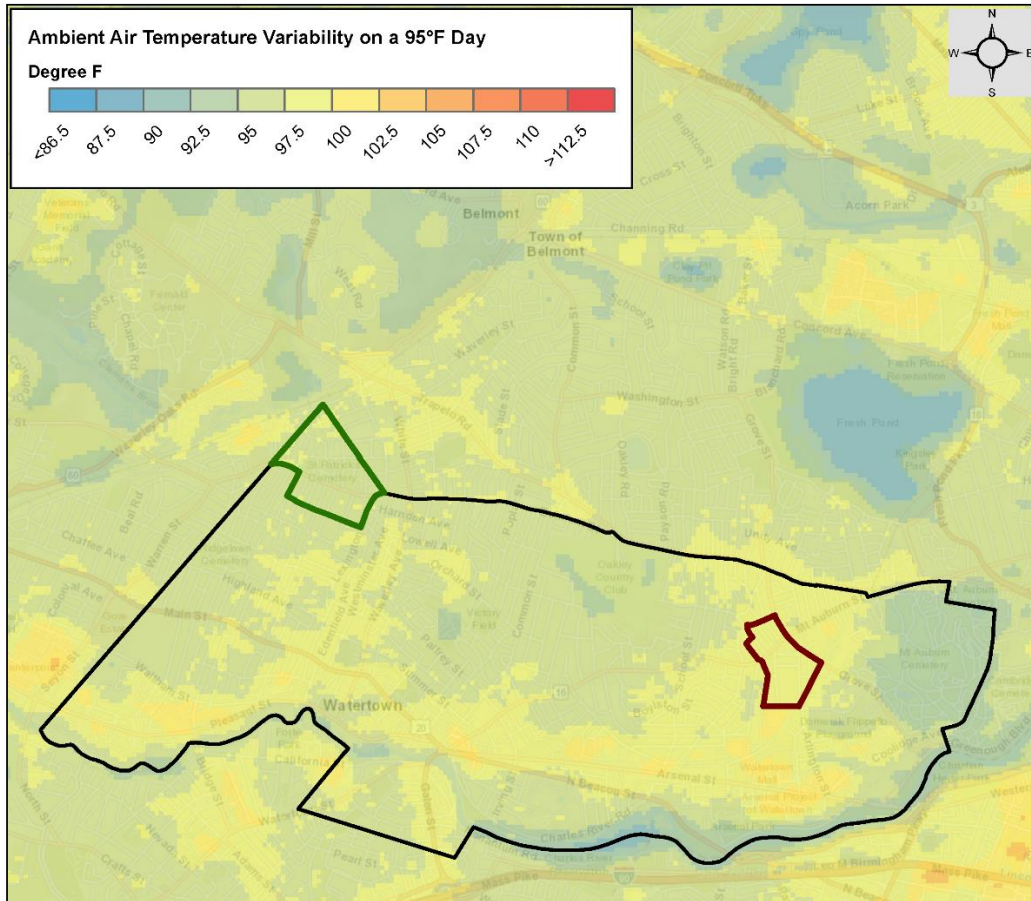
<sup>35</sup> <https://www.treeequityscore.org/reports/place/watertown-ma/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands>.



Figure 4.1 shows ambient air temperature variations across the city on a 95° F day, with yellow-green and yellow areas experiencing more heat due to the urban heat island effect. Large recreation areas, such as the Mt. Auburn Cemetery, the Oakley Country Club, Whitney Hill Park, the Gore Estate, and the Charles River Greenway, are associated with cooler ambient air temperatures.

Figure 4.1. Ambient Air Temperature Variability on a 95° F Day.



Source: Memorandum to Laurel Schwab, AICP, Senior Environmental Planner; Matthew Shuman, PE, City Engineer from Steve Roy; Rupsa Roy, PhD.; Caroline Passalacqua, EIT; Weston & Sampson. Date: December 20, 2021. Subject: Equity-Based Community Green Program Task 1.5—Urban Heat Island Assessment.

## SECTION 5. INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Broadly defined, “open space” for the OSRP refers to conservation, forested, recreation, or agricultural land. It includes areas protected for ecological importance, corridor parks and greenways, amenities such as parks and green buffers along roadways, and any open areas owned by an agency or organization dedicated to recreation and conservation. This definition is intended to be all-encompassing to recognize and identify undeveloped land with conservation or recreation interests. Activities in open spaces can be described as passive recreation (e.g., walking, hiking, and birdwatching). The term “recreation” is also used in the OSRP to highlight specific facilities used for active recreation, such as athletic courts and fields and playgrounds.

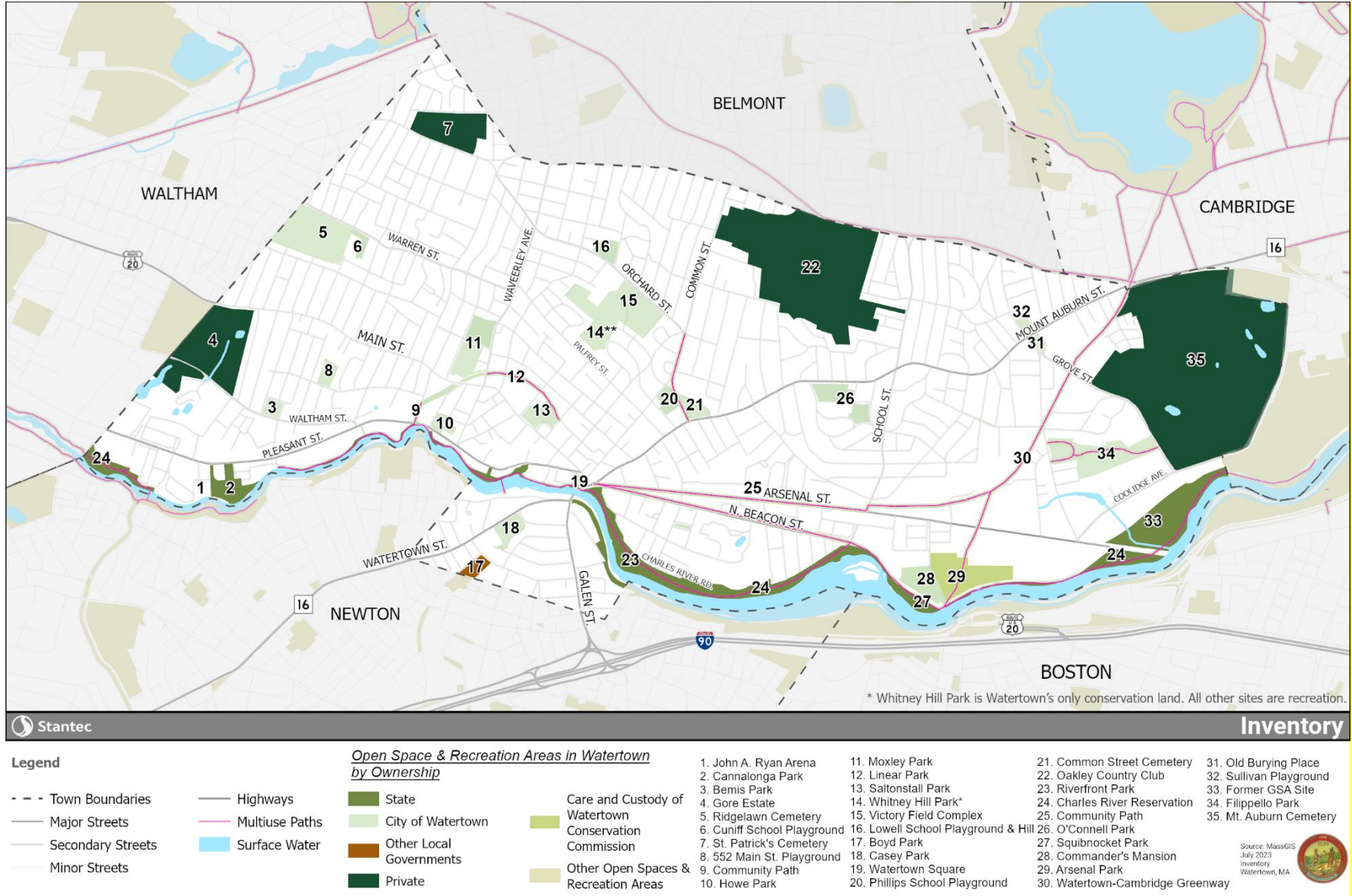
With this in mind, Watertown’s open space and recreational areas provide important social, economic, and environmental benefits. They contribute to the wellbeing of residents with opportunities to play, socialize, and exercise. In a dense, urban landscape like Watertown, private open space associated with a residence is limited, and these resources also provide access to needed green spaces. Strong evidence shows that contact with the natural world improves both physical and psychological health and people practice healthier lifestyles when they have access to parks. The provision of green space in urban areas provides substantial environmental benefits as well. Trees reduce air and water pollution, help to keep cities cooler, and help manage stormwater runoff and erosion. City parks also produce important social and community development benefits, creating gathering places for all ages. They are also tied to broader economic development, with resource availability an important quality of life consideration for companies choosing where to locate their facilities (and a potential workforce).

Map 5-1 shows the public and private open space and recreational areas in Watertown. There are 190 acres of publicly owned open space and recreational land in Watertown, of which a third is held by DCR.<sup>37</sup> An additional 292 acres is held privately, including the Mount Auburn Cemetery (open to the public), Oakley Country Club, Gore Estate, and private developments like Arsenal Yards (open to the public). A complete inventory of public and private resources is found in Appendix B and a more detailed discussion is provided in the sections below.

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<sup>37</sup> This number does not include linear parks and multiuse paths, including those within resources. Watertown has 4 miles of linear parks and multiuse paths (2.75 miles of which are owned by the City) in addition to those within Whitney Hill Park and DCR’s Charles River Reservation.

Map 5-1. Open Space and Recreational Resources in Watertown





## A. City Properties

Open space and recreational resources owned and managed by the City and include parks, playgrounds, and municipal cemeteries. The City also maintains “deltas,” or small islands that serve as memorials or beautification elements along busy corridors.

The City’s open space and recreation resources have varying degrees of protection from development. At present, four City resources—Arsenal Park, Filippello Park, Saltonstall Park, and Whitney Hill—are protected in perpetuity from development by Article 97 due to the use of acquisition and/or improvement funds provided by what was previously known as the Urban Self-Help program and Land and Water Conservation funds, respectively. The remaining open space and recreation parcels are zoned as Open Space Conservation (OSC); while development is restricted by the current OSC zoning, they are not protected from future zoning changes that would permit development.

A full listing of the City’s open space and recreational resources is provided in Table 5.1, followed by more detailed discussion of opportunities available at each site, recent improvements, and other information. Additional details on each resource and planned improvements are provided in **Appendix B**.

Table 5.1. City-Owned Open Space and Recreational Resources

Resource	Acres/ Miles	Amenities	Condition	Public Access	Protection Status
552 Main St Playground	2.4 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball/street hockey court</li> <li>• Bicycle racks</li> <li>• Hopscotch court</li> <li>• Four square court</li> <li>• Gazebo</li> <li>• T-ball, baseball-softball diamond</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> </ul>	Excellent	Open	Dedicated park land
Arsenal Park	13.7 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphitheater</li> <li>• Basketball court with bleachers and side court benches</li> <li>• Bicycle rack</li> <li>• Charcoal grills</li> <li>• Pavilions</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> <li>• Skate park</li> <li>• Softball diamond with bleachers</li> <li>• Soccer field with benches</li> <li>• Spray pad with benches</li> <li>• Tennis courts with side benches</li> <li>• Water fountain</li> </ul>	Poor	Open	In perpetuity (Article 97)

Resource	Acres/ Miles	Amenities	Condition	Public Access	Protection Status
Bemis Park	1.9 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court with side benches</li> <li>• Batting tunnel</li> <li>• Benches</li> <li>• Little League baseball diamond</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Street hockey court with side benches</li> <li>• Tot lot</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	OSC Zoning District
Casey Park	4.2 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball courts with side benches</li> <li>• Bicycle rack</li> <li>• Four square court</li> <li>• Hopscotch court</li> <li>• Little League baseball diamond with bleachers</li> <li>• Multipurpose rink with bleachers and side benches</li> <li>• Lights at field and courts</li> <li>• Tennis court with side benches</li> <li>• Tot lot</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Water fountain</li> </ul>	Good	Open	OSC Zoning District
Commander's Mansion	7.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event space and mansion</li> <li>• Walking paths</li> </ul>	Good	Open	OSC Zoning District
Community Path	1.25 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking/biking path</li> </ul>	Good	Open	Easements, City ROW, or within Parks
Cunniff School Playground	1 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Small oval field</li> <li>• Tot lot</li> </ul>	Excellent	Open, with limits during school hours	OSC Zoning District
Filippello Park	16.9 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Batting tunnel</li> <li>• Bicycle racks</li> <li>• Charcoal grills</li> <li>• Dog park with benches</li> <li>• Gazebo</li> <li>• Futsal court</li> <li>• Hard court lighting</li> <li>• Pavilions</li> <li>• Pickleball court</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Rain garden</li> <li>• Restroom</li> <li>• Softball diamond with bleachers</li> <li>• Soccer fields</li> <li>• Spray pad with benches</li> <li>• Tot lot with benches</li> <li>• Water fountain</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	In perpetuity (Article 97)

Resource	Acres/ Miles	Amenities	Condition	Public Access	Protection Status
How Park	2.18 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Bicycle racks</li> <li>• Dog park with rain guard and benches</li> <li>• Open field</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> </ul>	Good	Open	OSC Zoning District
Irving Park	.33 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benches (proposed)</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	OSC Zoning District
John A. Ryan Arena	2.08 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice hockey arena</li> </ul>	Good	Open	OSC Zoning District
Linear Park	1.5 acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking/biking path</li> </ul>	Good	Open	Dedicated park land
Lowell School Playground	3.7acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court with side benches</li> <li>• Batting tunnel</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Softball diamond bleachers</li> <li>• Tot lot</li> <li>• Water fountain</li> </ul>	Fair	Open, with limits during school hours	OSC Zoning District
Lowell School Hill	3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground (being replaced in 2023)</li> <li>• Open field</li> </ul>	Good	Open, with limits during school hours	OSC Zoning District
Moxley Park	4.9 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball diamond (not in use until 2027)</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Batting tunnel (not in use until 2027)</li> <li>• Bicycle rack</li> <li>• Court surface lighting</li> <li>• Field bleachers (not in use until 2027)</li> <li>• Fieldhouse</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Restroom</li> <li>• Tennis courts</li> <li>• Tot lot with benches</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	OSC Zoning District
O'Connell Park	4.7 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Multipurpose court</li> <li>• Multipurpose fields (in progress)</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	OSC Zoning District
Phillips School Playground	0.5 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground with benches</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	OSC Zoning District
Saltonstall Park	5.3 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court with side bleachers</li> <li>• Court lights</li> <li>• Field bleachers</li> <li>• Field lights</li> <li>• Little League baseball diamond</li> <li>• Memorial benches</li> <li>• Tot lot with benches</li> </ul>	Good	Open	In perpetuity (Article 97)

Resource	Acres/ Miles	Amenities	Condition	Public Access	Protection Status
Sullivan Playground	1.2 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Bicycle rack</li> <li>• Field bleachers</li> <li>• Little League baseball diamond</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Playground with benches</li> <li>• Water fountain</li> </ul>	Good	Open	OSC Zoning District
Victory Field Complex	11.1 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball diamond (artificial turf) with bleachers</li> <li>• Basketball court with side benches</li> <li>• Bicycle racks</li> <li>• Fieldhouse</li> <li>• Hard court lighting</li> <li>• Multiuse field (artificial turf) with lights and bleachers</li> <li>• Multiuse field, oval (grass, inside track)</li> <li>• Scoreboards</li> <li>• Tot lot with benches</li> <li>• Picnic tables</li> <li>• Press box</li> <li>• Tennis courts, some striped for use as Pickleball courts, with side benches and bleachers</li> <li>• Ticket booths</li> <li>• Track and field facility with benches and bleachers</li> <li>• Water fountains</li> </ul>	Fair (artificial turf); fair (grass turf); tennis and basketball courts (poor); track (poor)	Open	OSC Zoning District
Walker Pond	6.67 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	Poor	Not open to the public currently	OSC Zoning District
Whitney Hill Park	10.26 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking paths</li> </ul>	Fair	Open	In perpetuity (Article 97)



## 1. Parks and Playgrounds

### 552 Main Street Playground

The 552 Main Street Playground is a neighborhood park on 2.4 acres located behind the Watertown Police Department. The site has a tee-ball diamond used for youth baseball and softball located within a larger natural grass field. The 552 Main Street Playground also has a multiuse court used for both basketball and street hockey. The actual playground structure is suited for children aged 5-12 years old and includes built-in four square and hopscotch lines. Additional amenities include a gazebo, rain garden, and bicycle racks. While there are no restrooms on site, visitors can use the facilities at the Police Department building.

#### 552 Main Street Playground Amenities

Multiuse court:	1
Ballfield:	1
Bench/bleacher:	2
Gazebo:	1
Playground/tot lot:	1
Picnic table:	2
Four square court:	1
Hopscotch court:	1
Bicycle rack:	3





## Arsenal Park

Arsenal Park is a large, multipurpose park located to the south of Arsenal Yards along Arsenal Street and north of the Charles River/Little Greenough Boulevard in a portion of the former U.S. Arsenal site. At 13.7 acres, Arsenal Park is one of the largest and most popular parks in the city and has a regional draw and is utilized by residents citywide. Slightly over half of the park is devoted to active recreation, and the remainder is space for passive recreation. The park is contiguous with the publicly accessible green space at Arsenal Yards and additional publicly accessible green space is planned for the Arsenal on Charles private development abutting the Commander’s Mansion located directly to the west of the park.

Arsenal Park has a variety of amenities, including a softball diamond, soccer fields, basketball courts, and tennis courts. All fields are natural grass. Some of the park’s more unique amenities include a skate park, splash pad, and community garden. The park is frequently used for youth baseball, softball, and soccer as well as adult softball. The Watertown High School cross country team also uses the park’s running course. Arsenal Park is a popular venue for outdoor grilling and has two pavilions, 18 picnic tables and 11 charcoal grills available that can be reserved for community use for a small fee. Users can also reserve the softball and athletic fields for group outings and celebrations. Restroom facilities and parking is available on site.

### Arsenal Park Amenities

Ballfield:	1
Bench/bleacher:	25
Playground/tot lot:	1
Picnic table:	18
Soccer field:	2
Splash pad:	1
Basketball court:	2
Skate park:	1
Amphitheater:	1
Tennis court:	3
Bicycle rack:	1
Pavilions:	2
Charcoal grill:	11



Arsenal Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography

Arsenal Park is in the process of substantial renovations starting in 2020. This update takes into consideration the regional context of the park as a destination and provides a missing link to connect the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and Charles River Greenway. The Arsenal Park updated master plan was adopted in 2018 with implementation broken into two phases. Phase A, with construction in 2020-2022, included the eastern portion of the park. The improvements included:

- New gateway nonvehicular entrance at the northeast.
- New southeast multi-use path connection.
- Sloped lawn area.
- Flat lawn area.
- Promontory.
- Picnic area under trees within a bosque with a pavilion to provide flexible space for picnicking, events, or to serve as a covered performance area for the sloped lawn area (pavilion not constructed as of January, 2023).

Phase B includes renovations to the western portion of the park and are planned to go to bid in the summer of 2023. Planned improvements include the following:

- New accessible playground.
- Expanded splash pad.
- Modified and accessible parking lot.
- Rebuilt circulator paths around the central ball field, linking to the north-south multi-use path connector that will run from the southwest gateway to the main entrance and connect to the east-west promenade and eastern circulator (partially built as part of Phase A) from the main entrance to the northeast gateway and to the southeast pedestrian gateway.
- Renovated sport courts including three tennis courts and two basketball courts.
- New picnic pavilion.
- Preserved existing pavilions.
- Renovated bathrooms
- New skate park.
- Relocated and accessible community garden.

### *Bemis Park*

Bemis Park is a small 1.9-acre neighborhood park. The baseball diamond is frequently used for youth baseball and softball, and the park also features an outdoor street hockey court, basketball court, and tot lot playground. Benches and bleachers throughout the park provide seating and viewing areas. Recent improvements in 2016 installed baseball batting tunnels and resurfaced the park’s hard courts. Routine maintenance of the ballfield (e.g., releveling, resodding, etc.) was completed in 2017. The park does not have on-site parking, but street parking is available. Potential improvements planned for Fiscal Year 2024 include design and renovation of playground equipment and hard court surfaces as well as the installation of a spray park.

<b>Bemis Park Amenities</b>	
Ballfield:	1
Basketball court:	1
Batting tunnel:	1
Bench/bleacher:	9
Street hockey court:	1
Playground/tot lot:	1
Picnic table(s):	1



## Casey Park

Casey Park is a neighborhood park located south of the Charles River adjacent to Watertown Street and the former Parker School. The 4.2-acre park is highly utilized by surrounding residents and for youth baseball and softball due to its visibility, convenience, and variety of amenities. Amenities include basketball and tennis courts, and a playground with a small tot lot area. Several additional amenities serve multiple purposes, with required coordination for overlapping demand. The natural grass field can be used for soccer and football and is also a popular wintertime sledding destination. The multipurpose rink is used for street hockey, box lacrosse, and other activities during warmer weather and is converted to an ice rink during the winter. The courts, multipurpose rink, and ballfield have lighting for evening usage. Renovations are planned in 2023 for the baseball section of the park.

Casey Park is named in honor of Warrant Officer James Casey, a Watertown resident and member of the U.S. Army who was killed in action during the Vietnam War.

### Casey Park Amenities

Basketball court:	2
Ballfield:	1
Multipurpose rink:	1
Tennis court:	2
Four square court:	3
Hopscotch court:	3
Playground/tot lot:	1
Bench/bleacher:	15.5
Bicycle rack:	1
Picnic table:	3
Court and field lights	



Casey Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography

## Commander's Mansion

The Commander's Mansion is a historic building that was originally built as the U.S. Arsenal commander's quarters in the 1860s. It includes the portion of "Talcott Avenue" along the east, adjacent to Arsenal Park, and the site hosts public and private events within the mansion, within a large seasonal tent adjacent to



the southern portion of the building, and on the grounds around in the upper portion of the site, and within the grape arbor. The grounds contain a large amount of passive open space and walking paths that are accessible to the public. The Commander’s Mansion was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the federal government’s official list of properties that are significant in American history and deemed worthy of preservation, in 1976 due to its architectural and military significance.

### *Cunniff School Playground*

The Cunniff School Playground, at 0.5 acres, is a small neighborhood park at Cunniff Elementary School. Public use of the site is restricted during school hours, as the park doubles as play facilities for the school. The playground was overhauled as part of the reconstruction of Cunniff Elementary School, which finished in 2021. The site now features a modern playground and tot lot and rain gardens. The school grounds, including an oval-shaped natural grass lawn, were finalized in 2022. Reconstruction required reconfiguring of recreation elements on the site, which ultimately resulted in a reconfiguration and downsizing of the field as compared to its pre-2021 size to accommodate a larger school building footprint.

#### **Cunniff School Playground**

##### **Amenities**

Playground/tot lot:	2
Basketball court:	½
Open field:	1



*Cunniff School Playground. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography*

## Filippello Park

Filippello Park was expanded in the 1980s following the closure of a former Town landfill. The park expanded in 2004 after the demolition of the former Town incinerator and now stretches from Grove Street to Arlington Street. Filippello Park’s paved paths offer an off-street alternative for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling through the area, and the park is conveniently located near other open space and recreation resources. The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway is located off Arlington Street to the west and the Mount Auburn Cemetery bounds Grove Street to the east. The Charles River Reservation and Arsenal Park are also located slightly further south of the park. This central location near other resources makes Filippello Park a destination for users of the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and a potential connection point to other resources (currently, there is not a formal connection).

At 16.9 acres, Filippello Park is the largest park in Watertown and attracts users from across the city. The park’s many courts and fields are heavily used by youth and adult sports groups, and the park is a popular spot for picnics and gatherings, including birthday parties. Specific amenities include a softball diamond, sports field, basketball court, pickleball court, futsal court, splash pad, playground, and tot lot. Filippello Park is a popular venue for outdoor grilling and has two pavilions, 14 picnic tables, and eight charcoal grills available that can be reserved for community use for a small fee. Restroom and parking facilities are provided on site.

There have been a number of recent improvements at Filippello Park. In 2016, the tot lot was resurfaced and benches around the park were repaired and replaced. In 2017, a major renovation focused on refurbishing and replacing the park’s walkways and parking lot (partially to address settling associated with its location atop the former landfill), renovating the electrical control box, and repainting the main pavilion. A design for a dog park was also completed. In 2018, the renovation of the Grove Street Entrance was completed and included new picnic facilities and

### Filippello Park Amenities

Ballfield:	1	Futsal court:	1
Batting tunnel:	1	Pickleball court:	1
Benches/bleachers:	47	Bicycle rack:	3
Playground/tot lot:	2	Pavilions:	2
Picnic table:	14	Gazebo:	2
Score boards:	3	Charcoal grill:	8
Soccer field:	2	Dog park:	2
Softball field:	1	Restrooms:	1
Splash pad:	1	Field and court lights	
Basketball court:	1		



Filippello Park. Photo credit: Natalie, Nigito Photography



courts and installation of the dog park. The dog park is the larger of two city owned dog parks in Watertown and is extremely popular. It includes a separate section dedicated for small dogs. In 2019, a drinking water fountain for the dog park was installed. In 2021, LED lights and a scoreboard and batting tunnel for the ballfield were installed. Dark sky compliant lighting was installed at the park’s multiuse fields in 2021.

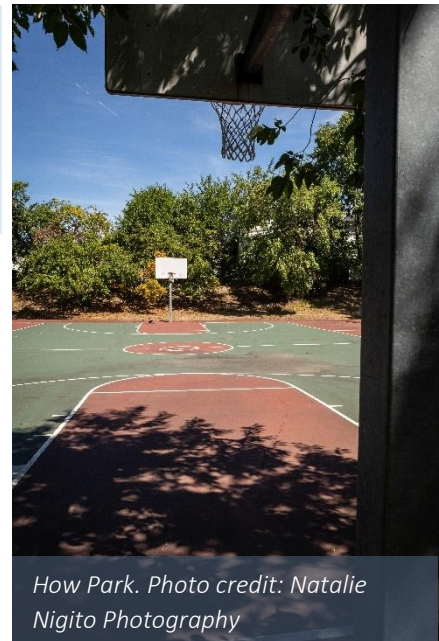
Several planned improvements will expand and rehabilitate the park’s amenities. The splash pad is anticipated to be replaced in 2022. The City has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Buckingham Browne & Nichols School. Under the terms of the MOU, the school installed two multiuse turf fields on the parcel it acquired on Grove Street directly abutting Filippello Park and allows public access outside of the hours of school use. The school will also have access to the fields at Filippello Park. Additional parking was also added, and a fieldhouse is planned at the Buckingham Browne & Nichols School parcel with cross site pedestrian path connections.

Filippello Park is named in honor of Private Domenick Filippello, a Watertown resident and member of the U.S. Army who killed in action during World War I.

### How Park

How Park is a small neighborhood park in western Watertown. The 2.18-acre site has a basketball court, tot lot, and multiuse natural grass field. The field is small and sloping, precluding it from programmed field sports; however, it is frequently used for informal play and activities. A dog park was installed on site in 2014; this is the smaller of Watertown’s two dog parks. In 2018, the dog park surface was updated and an accessible entryway and new sidewalk at the park’s entrance were installed. Offsite parking is available in the surrounding neighborhood.

How Park Amenities	
Playground/tot lot:	1
Bench/bleacher:	7
Multipurpose field:	1
Basketball court:	1
Dog park:	1



How Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography

### Irving Park

Irving Park is a small oval-shaped grassed area off of Irving Street near North Beacon Street, about one third of an acre. In 2022, CPA funds were awarded to DPW to renovate the park with a new central gathering area with seating and lighting as well as reseeding the grass area and installing new trees and plants. These improvements will be enhanced with new sidewalks and curbing through DPW.

### Lowell School Playground

The Lowell School Playground is 3.7 acres located in northern Watertown. Public use of portions of the site are restricted during school hours to accommodate school use. Amenities are located to the north of the school and include a softball diamond, batting tunnel, playground, and basketball court. The softball diamond is heavily used for youth baseball and softball as well as for the Watertown High School Junior Varsity and Watertown

Lowell School Playground Amenities	
Playground/tot lot:	1
Bench/bleacher:	7
Basketball court:	1
Batting tunnel:	1

Middle School Softball teams. The renovation of the Lowell School began in early 2022, which includes renovations associated with the playground and Lowell Hill (see below) and are anticipated to be done before the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. The parking area and the playground will be resurfaced in 2023 as part of these renovations.

### Lowell School Hill

Lowell School Hill is a 3.2 acres site in front of Lowell School and slopes toward the George and Orchard Streets intersection. As noted above, Lowell School is undergoing renovations, and will include the addition of an outdoor gathering space, learning garden, and new playground on the hill. The remaining portions of the hill will remain as a sloping and flexible open space for informal play and passive use.

#### Lowell School Hill Amenities

Playground/tot lot:	1
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### Moxley Park

Moxley Park is a highly utilized neighborhood park and serves as a major field sport resource for Watertown. The park is 4.9 acres and located directly across Bemis Street from Watertown Middle School. Moxley Park has a basketball court, tennis courts, and playground. Its ballfield, fieldhouse, and batting tunnel are heavily used for youth and adult baseball. The Watertown High School Junior Varsity and Freshman Baseball teams and the Watertown Middle School Baseball and Soccer teams also use the facilities.

#### Moxley Park Amenities

Basketball court:	1
Tennis court:	2
Ballfield:	1
Batting tunnel:	1
Bench/bleacher:	12
Playground/tot lot:	1
Fieldhouse:	1
Bicycle rack:	1
Restrooms:	1

The City plans to construct a new high school at its existing site. To accommodate reconstruction, school facilities will be temporarily relocated to Moxley Park. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2023 and is for completion by the 2026-2027 school year. It is unknown how long returning the field portion of Moxley Park to recreational use will take following the completion of the new Watertown High School. Moxley Park's tennis and courts, which will be unaffected by the relocation of school facilities, will be renovated in the spring of 2023 to create a multipurpose rink, basketball court, and tennis court and will include new LED court lighting. The affected portions of Moxley Park will be rebuilt with a 90-foot baseball diamond to include a protective netting system along the first base line, backstop, batting tunnel, bullpen, batting tunnel, and dugouts. The Watertown Community Path is planned to extend along the southeastern edge of the park and options are being considered for creating an extension of the Community Path into Moxley Park.

The park is named in honor of Private First Class Richard S. Moxley, a Watertown resident and member of the U.S. Marines who was killed in action during the Vietnam War.





## O’Connell Park

O’Connell Park is a 4.7-acre neighborhood park and serves as a field sport resource for several local teams. The park abuts the Hosmer Elementary School, which is one of three local elementary schools recently reconstructed. The new Hosmer Elementary School building opened in February 2022. In addition to general community use, O’Connell Park is also used by the Hosmer Elementary School for recess and physical education classes, meaning public use is restricted during school hours.

### O’Connell Park Amenities

Playground/tot lot	1
Playground benches	2
Soft turf play area	1
Basketball court	1
Courtside ledge seating	1

Several amenities were added to O’Connell Park during the Hosmer Elementary School construction period. The park now has two new playground areas, a basketball court, and a multipurpose court. Planned improvements in 2023 include a multipurpose field that will accommodate two softball and youth baseball diamonds. A batting tunnel, scoreboard, dugouts, permanent bathroom facility, and storage unit will also be added.

O’Connell Park is named in honor of Captain Richard P. O’Connell, who was killed in action during the Korean War.



### Phillips School Playground

The Phillips School Playground is a small, half-acre recreation site at the Watertown Public Schools building. The site has a playground and small, grassy areas. The playground is used by the Phillips School Special Education program and is not open for public use. This site also has passive open space on the shared grounds of the Senior Center, which shares the parking lot as well.

#### Phillips School Playground Amenities

Playground/tot lot:	1
Bench/bleacher:	2

### Saltonstall Park

Saltonstall Park is a 5.3-acre neighborhood park that includes athletic recreation areas, a central passive grass area with walking routes, and a memorial plaza. Due to its central location and proximity to City Hall, the park also functions as an active community space and hosts community programming throughout the year, including memorial events and concerts. Since 2019 a weekly farmers' market runs from June to October at the park. Saltonstall Park is heavily used for a variety sports and casual recreation activities; youth soccer, baseball, and softball frequently make use of its facilities. The ballfield has LED lighting for evening sports activities. The Boys & Girls Club at Whites Avenue abuts the park. In 2017, the electrical control box was renovated. In 2019, new benches were installed at the memorial plaza, and in 2022, improvements to the memorial plaza surface were completed. LED lighting upgrades for the field and court, playground equipment replacement, and playground resurfacing is planned for 2023. The City is planning an upgrade to the grassy area and also plans to install a permanent gazebo/pavilion in Saltonstall Park in 2024.

#### Saltonstall Park Amenities

Basketball court:	1
Bench/bleacher:	10
Ballfield:	1
Playground/tot lot:	1
Field and court lights	



Saltonstall Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography

## Sullivan Park

At 1.2 acres, Sullivan Park is a small neighborhood park located in eastern Watertown. The park has a multipurpose natural grass field, playground, and basketball court. The park's baseball diamond is frequently used for youth baseball and softball activities. In 2019, the ballfield underwent routine maintenance, including releveling, resodding, and putting down new clay. The basketball court was resurfaced in 2022. A playground redesign and equipment upgrade, surface replacement, and walking lighting installation is created two separate play areas, one as a tot lot and one for older children.

### Sullivan Park Amenities

Basketball court:	1
Ballfield:	1
Bicycle rack:	1
Picnic table:	3
Playground/tot lot:	2
Bench/bleacher:	3

Sullivan Park is named for Lieutenant Paul J. Sullivan, who worked for the Watertown Recreation Department and taught and coached at multiple schools in the area. He was killed in action during the Vietnam War. In 2018, a memorial for Lt. Sullivan was dedicated at the park. The memorial includes a paver walkway, monument, and solar lit flagpole.

## Victory Field Complex

The Victory Field Complex is Watertown's premier and most extensive sports and recreational facility. The entire site is 11.1 acres and was dedicated in 1922, celebrating 100 years in 2022. As a large, centrally located multiuse

### Victory Field Complex Amenities

Basketball court:	1	Fieldhouse:	1
Ballfield:	1	Picnic table:	5
Multiuse field:	2	Bench/bleacher:	15
Tennis court:	5	Bicycle rack:	5
Pickleball court:	10	Track & field:	1
Playground/tot lot:	1	Score boards:	3
Field and court lighting			

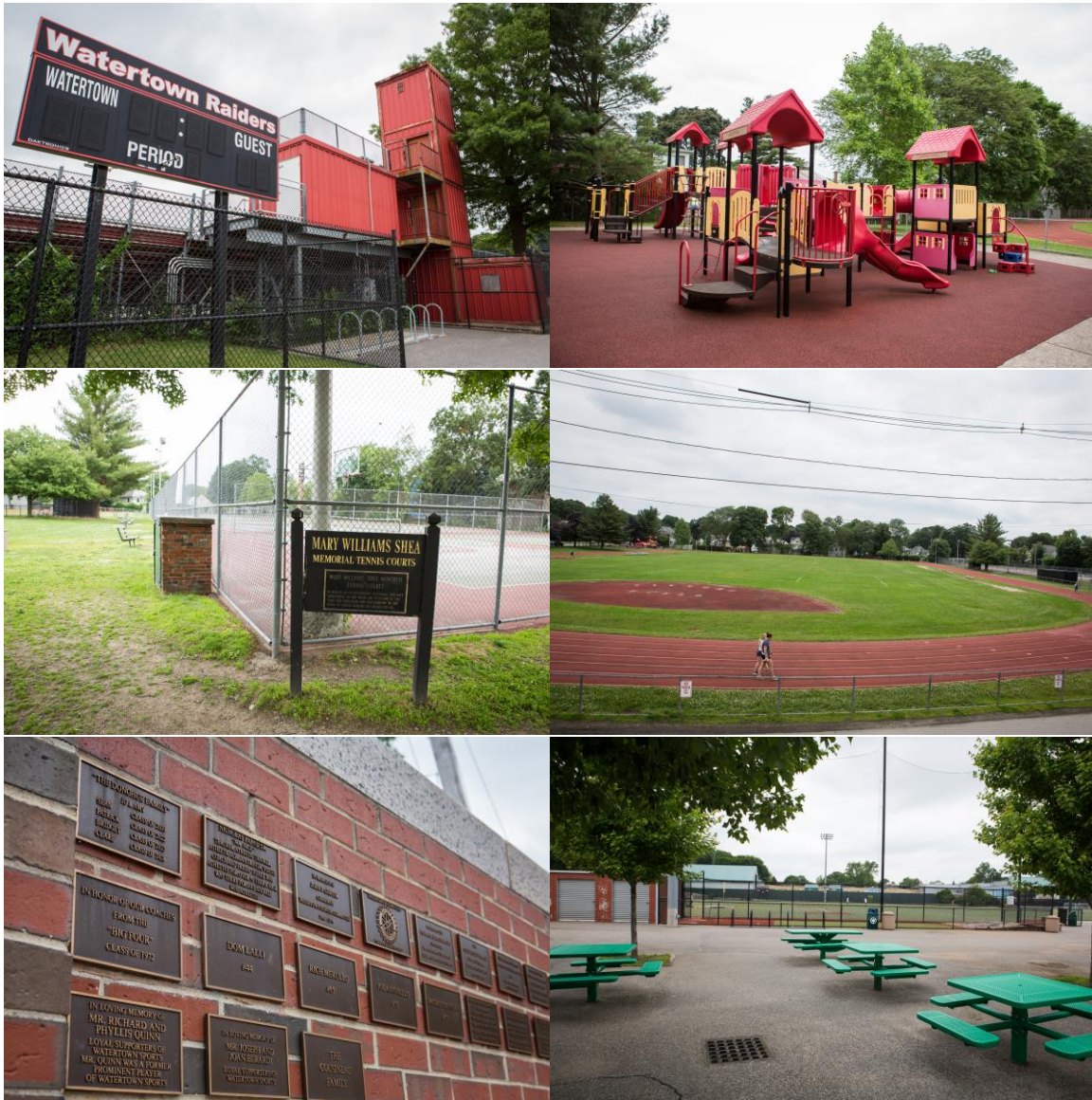
complex, the Victory Field Complex attracts users from across the city and is the home of Watertown High School's athletic programs. The complex is in constant use by the School Department, the Recreation Department, and various youth and adult organizations and sports leagues. Community events such as the Watertown High School graduation and charity walkathons also take place at the complex.

The Victory Field Complex's main stadium facility is Victory Field. The field was last renovated in 2013 and includes a 160,000 square foot multiuse artificial turf surface designed for optimal playability in all weather conditions. Uses and field linings at Victory Field are largely dictated by sports season, with football, soccer, and field hockey taking priority in the fall and baseball and lacrosse taking priority in the spring. The facility is open for informal recreation by Watertown residents as well. In addition to the multiuse field, Victory Field also boasts two dugouts, two bullpens, and a batting tunnel for baseball and softball uses. To accommodate sports games and practices, the field also has bleachers, a press box, scoreboards, storage areas, and ticket booths. The fieldhouse is also at Victory Field and includes a coaches' office, sports medicine room, concession stand, locker rooms, and public bathrooms.

The other half of the Victory Field Complex consists of a track and field and courts. Depending on the season, the multiuse natural grass field is typically lined for lacrosse, field hockey, and/or soccer use. The track is a standard size 400-meter broken-back track. The discuss pad and long jump, high jump, pole vault, and shot-put areas accommodate a range of track and field athletic events. Five tennis courts and a basketball court are located adjacent to the track and field. A tot lot is located adjacent to the track at Orchard Street. The tennis and basketball courts are lighted to extend their hours of usability. This half of



the Victory Field Complex accommodates the high school and middle school track and field programs and tennis program. It also serves as a secondary field for sports games and practices. The track is used extensively by residents of all ages and interests. Adjacent to the track along Orchard Street is a heavily used playground and tot lot.



*Victory Field Complex. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography*

As a highly utilized site for formal and informal recreation, the Victory Field Complex’s amenities are in various conditions. Phased renovations to the complex have been in progress over the last decade. In 2019, funding was approved for Phase 2 designs (with Phase 1 being the 2011 renovation of Victory Field) for improvements to the multiuse natural grass field and track and field lighting. A future Phase 3 is intended to include renovations to the fieldhouse, press box, and elevator, with designs currently underway. Separately, installation of a lacrosse ball wall and replacement of the Victory Field artificial turf surface is planned for Fiscal Year 2023.

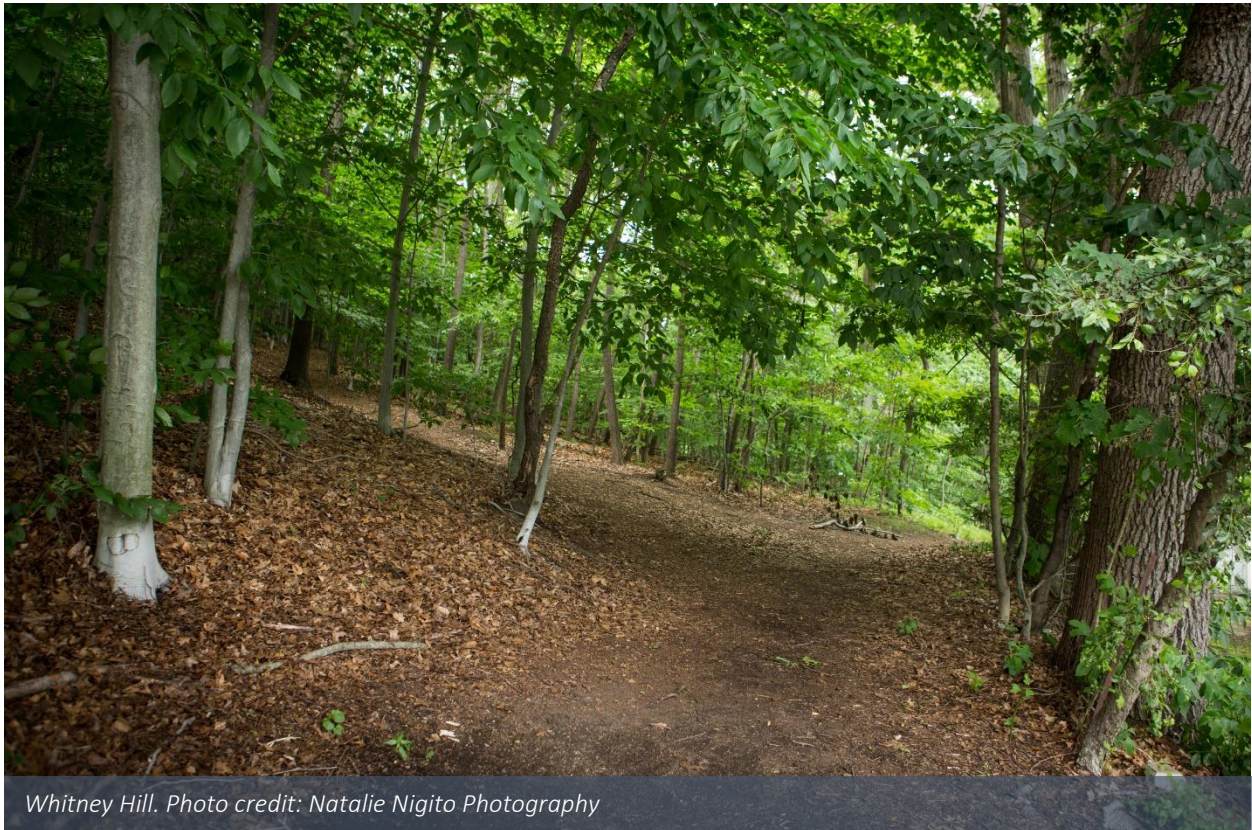


## 2. Conservation and Natural Areas

The City has no Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, but does have two natural areas.

### *Whitney Hill Park*

Whitney Hill Park is a citywide park located adjacent to the Victory Field Complex. At 10.26 acres, Whitney Hill Park is one of the city's largest parks and is the only naturally wooded site. The park features several unpaved footpaths that wind through the grounds and provide opportunities for passive recreation activities like walking and birdwatching. Whitney Hill, a 400-foot glacial drumlin, features views of the surrounding area.



### *Walker Pond*

In 2022, the City acquired the Walker Pond property. In addition to being able to conserve the wetlands and other natural features on the site, the property has the potential to provide for expanded public open space and recreational opportunities in the city. It is located south of Waltham Street and north of Pleasant Street (with primary vehicular access from Pleasant St on a private way know as Manly Way) at the Watertown-Waltham border. The two-acre pond is one of the largest in Watertown and is surrounded by limited vegetation and steep sloping banks. In total, there are approximately five acres of undeveloped land around the pond. Public access is not currently allowed, and the pond is surrounded by a security fence. The status of the soil and water quality is not known because it was previously part of a larger, former industrial site leased by Raytheon Technologies from the Gore Estate.

A portion of the site has a remnant of the former Raytheon parking lots. Adjacent sites include two smaller ponds, a private elementary school, and several residential apartment complexes. The site to the north with the apartment complex, includes the upper portion of the pond, which is accessible through a Planning Board and Conservation Commission approved site development, that includes an open space restriction, small playground, dog park, and a loop path around the northern third of Walker Pond that is built to the property line to allow for future access from the south). That site also has an undisturbed natural area with an archeological preservation area restriction (Robert Murray Farmstead Complex) which was part of the former Gore Estate land south of Waltham Street.

### 3. Multiuse Paths and Greenways

#### Community Path

The Community Path is a partially completed multiuse path in Watertown. The preferred route roughly follows a former railroad right-of-way and will be approximately 1.75 miles in length when completed. The path will provide pedestrians and bicyclists a protected, off-street route through Watertown. Connections include an improvement of the existing Linear Park and Saltonstall Park near the municipal parking lot and to the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway at the east end (School Street), with design and construction planned by path segment:

- Section 1: Along the north side of Arsenal Street from DCR’s Watertown-Cambridge Greenway at School Street to Arsenal Street at Irving Street is fully constructed and in use.
- Section 2: Along Arsenal Street from Irving Street to Taylor Street, and Taylor Street to and across Mt. Auburn Street. Design is substantially complete, and construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2023. The City received a \$250,000 state grant in 2021 to support construction of this section with the remaining funds from the City and development mitigation.
- Section 3: From Mt. Auburn Street along Baptist Walk (across from Taylor) through the municipal parking lots behind the commercial district and municipal buildings to Saltonstall and Linear Park. This section runs just north of the Library at the rear of the businesses along Main Street in Watertown Square and has a chosen preferred route with a contract in place to finalize the design. Funding has been identified for final design and construction in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Construction could begin in 2024.
- Section 4: Saltonstall and Linear Park behind City Hall near Winter Street to Waverley Avenue is fully constructed and in use.



Marker at Arlington Street. Photo credit: emeraldnetwork.info



- Section 5: Just west of Waverley Avenue adjacent to Moxley Field, to Main Street and the Main Street crossing, which is intended to be implemented as part of the temporary high school project.
- Section 6: Main Street near Bacon Street through the former rail ROW is funded through developer contributions and City funds with construction started fall 2022 and planned to proceed spring 2023.
- Section 7: From Howard Street at the former rail ROW to DCR's Charles River Greenway is constructed and in use.

### Linear Park

Linear Park is a linear park within a former rail right of way that is situated between Waverly Avenue to the west and Whites Avenue to the east. The park has a main access point with a raised table connecting it to Saltonstall Park from on the east, and to the linear park extension to Casey Park to the west. The greenway has a number of trees. There is a mid-block access at Forest St to the north, and an unimproved access at this location to the south. A mural along the White Avenue to Waverly Avenue segment was painted by local high school students as an initial implementation strategy of developing the Watertown Community Path and was the first modern public art installation in Watertown. In 2018, City Council approved funds for upgrading and installing new lighting to extend the park's usable hours and increase user comfort. The City plans to install sculpture pads throughout the park along the community path to enable future public art installations.

## 4. Indoor Facilities

### John A. Ryan Arena

The John A. Ryan Arena is located in western Watertown and abuts the Charles River Reservation. The ice rink, which was built in 1972, is a National Hockey League sized skating rink owned and operated by the City. The mission of the arena is the provide residents of all ages the opportunity to practice and participate in the ice sports of their choice. The venue is highly utilized and is the home rink for many local and area youth, adult, and collegiate hockey programs, including those hailing from Watertown, Belmont, Waltham, and Newton. The Watertown High School Boys and Girls Hockey teams and the Newton South and Newton North High School Boys Varsity Hockey team all skate from the John A. Ryan Arena. The arena can seat 1,250 spectators in its heated stands and warm viewing rooms, and skaters can make use of the eight locker rooms and hot showers. The arena also features a concession stand. Skate rentals are available, and users can also rent out the ice rink for events such as birthday parties.



*John A. Ryan Arena. Photo credit: John Phelan, CC BY-SA 4.0*

In 2016, funding for a new scoreboard and emergency exit improvements was approved. Substantial energy efficiency upgrades to the arena’s boilers, heaters, and lights were completed in 2017. New rink and emergency exit doors were also installed in 2017. Several internal doors were replaced in 2018 and 2019.

## 5. Cemeteries

The City has one active cemetery and two non-active cemeteries, which in total comprise 21.3 acres of land (Table 5.2). The Department of Public Works Cemetery Division is responsible for their daily operation and handles approximately 120 internments annually. The Old Burying Place and Common Street Cemetery are listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to their local historical significance. In addition to their function as resting places, Watertown’s cemeteries are places for quiet reflection and appreciation of the historical landscape. Ridgelawn and Common Street Cemeteries also offer some paved paths for visitors.

Table 5.2. Cemeteries in Watertown

Resource	Acres
Old Burying Place (Arlington Street Cemetery)	1.24
Common Street Cemetery	2.5
Ridgelawn Cemetery	17.58

## 6. Deltas

Watertown has seven deltas that amount to approximately 2.4 acres of open space. Watertown’s deltas typically serve as memorials or beautification elements along busy transit corridors and feature sitting areas. Community Preservations funds were requested in 2022 for major renovations at Irving Park.

Table 5.3. Deltas in Watertown

Resource	Acres*	Amenities
Carver Road Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Columbus Delta (Watertown Square)	0.69	Sitting areas
Storer Delta	0.25	N/A
Knowles Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Shattuck Road Delta	0.25	N/A
School and Belmont Streets Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Templeton Parkway Delta	0.25	N/A

\* Acreage is approximate



## B. State and Other Municipal Properties

Public open spaces also include properties owned by the state and other municipalities. These properties are listed in Table 5.4 and described below.

Table 5.4. State and Other Municipal Properties

Resource	Owner	Acres/Miles	Amenities	Public Access
Boyd Park (partial)	City of Newton	2.6 acres in Watertown (4.8 acres total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multipurpose natural grass fields</li> <li>• Athletic courts (in Newton)</li> <li>• Playground/tot lot (in Newton)</li> </ul>	Open
Charles River Reservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannalonga Park</li> <li>• Riverfront Park</li> <li>• Squibnocket Park</li> <li>• Little Greenough and Greenough Greenway</li> <li>• Paul Dudley White Bike Path</li> </ul>	State	54.2 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk/bike path</li> <li>• Athletic courts</li> <li>• Multipurpose natural grass fields</li> <li>• Playground/tot lot</li> </ul>	Open
Dealtry Pool	State	5 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor swimming pool</li> <li>• Spray/Splash pad</li> <li>• Restrooms and changing rooms</li> </ul>	Open (seasonal)
Watertown-Cambridge Greenway (partial)	State	1.25 miles in Watertown (2 miles total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk/bike path</li> </ul>	Open

### 1. Multi-Municipal Property

#### *Boyd Park*

Boyd Park runs across the Watertown-Newton boundary and is owned and operated by the City of Newton. Of the park’s total 4.8 acres, 2.6 are in Watertown. The park is used by the Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School in Newton. The rectangular natural grass field accommodates two junior ballfields and a soccer field. The park also has a full basketball court, playground, and tot lot. Parking is provided on site and at the school’s parking lot.

### 2. State Properties

#### *Charles River Reservation*

The Charles River Reservation extends approximately 20 miles along the Charles River from Boston to its western suburbs with a total of approximately 54.2 acres within Watertown. This regional resource is owned and managed by DCR and offers riverfront recreation opportunities and features an abundance of trails, playgrounds, sports fields, boat ramps, and picnic areas as it winds along the Charles River. The reservations' trail system is a series of multiuse paths along much of the river. The lower portion is known as the Paul Dudley White Bike Path which runs on both sides of the river from Boston and

Cambridge to Watertown Square and the Galen Street Bridge. The Upper Charles River Greenway is a much more recent addition with continued expansion to complete the network on both sides of the river within Watertown, Newton, and Waltham and beyond. Often, the parks and paths are referenced as the Charles River Greenway by users. Nearly all of Watertown’s four-mile portion of the lower and upper Charles River Reservation are improved and have some type of access to the Charles River. The Charles River Reservation has a number of prominent parks, features, various amenities and opportunities for active and passive recreation in Watertown.

### [Blue Heron Bridge](#)

Starting with the Blue Heron Bridge at the west of Watertown’s portion of the greenway, this amenity and meeting place provides a convenient river crossing. This iconic structure plays a critical role connecting the north (Watertown) and south (Newton) side of the upper reservation on a nonvehicular bridge and waypoint. Often, people meet here to watch the flowing river in a natural setting.

### [Cannalonga Park](#)

Slightly downstream on Pleasant Street is Sgt. Thomas Cannalonga Memorial Park, located adjacent to the City’s John A. Ryan Arena. The park is dedicated to Sgt. Thomas J. Cannalonga, the first Italian American from Watertown killed in action during World War II. The park has four tennis courts that were repainted in 2022 with additional striping for 8 pickleball courts (heavily used), two bocce courts with lighting, a pavilion, and park benches and picnic tables. A paved pathway connects winds its way through the site from the west at the rink to the east at Pleasant St. At this point, Pleasant Street provides the only access to the east to connect to the rest of the greenway. The site also has two parking areas with recent handicap access improvements. the westerly parking area is heavily used by users of the city rink.



*Cannalonga Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography*



## Dealtry Pool

Along the upper basin pathway off of Pleasant Street, the Clarence W. Dealtry Memorial Swimming Pool located just upstream of Watertown Dam. Dealtry Pool outdoor swimming facility provides excellent views of the river. The pool is open seasonally during the summer and is extremely popular and is free and open to all. Dealtry Pool has a lap pool and splash pad, as well as indoor lockers, restrooms, and showers and lifeguards are on duty. Parking is available on site at the corner of Pleasant Street across from Church Lane, and the pool is also accessible via the Charles River Greenway.

## Riverfront Park

Riverfront Park is the section of the reservation that includes Charles River Road and is located downstream of the Galen Street Bridge to the Watertown Yacht Club at Charles River Road and North Beacon Street. Watertown Landing, which includes an accessible platform dock, is closest to Galen Street Bridge and Watertown Square. Riverfront Park is well-known for the Braille Trail, a 0.25-mile trail built and designed in coordination between the Perkins School for the Blind, DCR, the City, and local organizations. The Braille Trail opened in 2015 and has accessibility features for sight-impaired visitors, including braille signage and educational stations. Aside from this new path, improvements also added lookout decks, benches, and a sensory garden. Two basketball courts and the Farren Playground, a tot lot, are also located in this section of Riverfront Park and are being updated as part of phase two of a renovation plan. Recent improvements include riverbank erosion control interventions in Fall/Winter 2021 and sidewalk and street crossing improvements in Spring 2022, along with significant plantings and path work started in 2021/22 and expected to be completed in 2023.





### Squibnocket Park and Sunrise Island

Squibnocket Park is located to the south of North Beacon Street near 'little' Greenough Boulevard. This park was used as a waste area for the U.S. Army Arsenal and was remediated, capped and lined as necessary, and given back to the State for passive recreation use. The park is a large natural grass area with scattered trees and a grove along the river used mostly for informal active and passive recreation. It offers excellent views of the Charles River and Sunrise Island (Watertown's only island) and has a natural path that follows the riverbank along Sunrise Island to the Watertown Yacht Club fence line where a volunteer group built steps to connect the path to North Beacon Street.

### Greenough Boulevard and Little Greenough

Greenough Boulevard extends from the north side of North Beacon Street and Squibnocket Park to Arsenal Street and then continues on past Watertown's eastern edge into Cambridge. The main Boulevard hugs the Charles River and was once a four-lane road that left little room for pedestrians and bicyclists. A seven-year planning, design, and construction initiative began in 2012 for a road diet, new pathways, and stormwater management best management practices. The project was completed in 2019 and now offers a separated and paved mile-long multiuse path along the river. Little Greenough is considered a portion of the Greenough Boulevard portion of the Charles Reservation, but this small portion is separated from the rest of Greenough and is located between Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street. This portion of the greenway has two parking areas on the east end and west end and offers handicap accessible spaces. This area is more heavily used for bicycling, running and walking as a portion of a popular loop using both sides of the river and the bridge crossings. There is an elevated view of the Charles along a former seawall used by the Arsenal for cargo boats on the west end and to the east there is direct grade level access to the river near the parking area. While there are no formal boat ramps, residents can use Little Greenough as a boat put-in point to the Charles River.

### *Former GSA Site*

The former General Services Administration's (GSA) site is in the southern part of the city, between Arsenal Street and the inland side Greenough Boulevard near the Charles River. This 13-acre parcel, which the Army once used for equipment storage and the burning of waste, was one of the more contaminated parcels in the area. Cleanup of this site was completed and DCR has taken ownership of the property. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to provide regular reports on the status of the cap, the constructed wetland, and the drainage of the site into the Charles River. The intended use is limited passive recreation for nature enjoyment with a goal to build a network of walking trails and limited public access to protect the wetland plantings and natural habitat.

### *Watertown-Cambridge Greenway*

The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway is a 1.25-mile off road shared path that extends from Fresh Pond in Cambridge to the Arlington Street and School Street intersection in Watertown. DCR owns and manages the Watertown section of the Greenway. Completed in Spring 2022, the greenway is designed to provide an alternative route for bicyclists and pedestrians between the west and urban centers in Arlington, Cambridge, and Boston. The greenway connects to major shopping, transit, and recreation destinations, including Watertown Mall, the Alewife MBTA Station, Fresh Pond Reservation, and Mystic River Reservation. The greenway connects to other trails, including the Watertown Community Path and

Minuteman Bike Path in Cambridge. A planned connector linking the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and Charles River Greenway through Arsenal Park is anticipated to begin construction in 2023.

### 3. Nonprofit Properties

The Gore Estate is the only open space and recreation resource owned by a nonprofit in Watertown. It is owned and managed by the Gore Place Society. Despite its singularity, the resource is larger than all city owned resources and significantly adds to the open space in Watertown.



This 31-acre site extends along the City’s western border with Waltham between Main Street and Waltham Street and is currently used for limited agriculture, events, and educational purposes. The estate dates back to 1786 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970. The Federal-style Gore Mansion sits on a hilltop towards the northern edge of the site in Waltham, and the farmhouse, which is older, is within Watertown. AS of 2023, new timber framed barns are being built to replace a series of older outbuildings used for the farm and its animals. A small, straightened stream flows through the site from north to south and is culverted at the northern and southern portions of the parcel. ADA-compliant walkways provide access to the farm areas, which currently have chickens and sheep on-site. Public access is allowed on the grounds, but tours and some events are paid entry. Further development of the site is limited and restricted by wetlands regulations and the site’s historic nature.

### C. Private Properties

Private properties with publicly available open spaces are listed in Table 5.5 and described briefly below. These properties have varying restrictions on use and public access and represent a significant amount of open space and recreation area in Watertown. While private open space is limited in access, large amounts of green space still provide public and wildlife benefits.

The City does not have any Chapter 61 or 61A land, or any conservation restrictions on private land; however, the Oakley Country Club is the single Chapter 61B property in Watertown.

Table 5.5. Private Open Space and Recreation Resources in Watertown

Resource	Intended/Current Use	Public Access
Mount Auburn Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemetery</li> <li>• Educational</li> <li>• Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open
Oakley Country Club (Ch 61B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic &amp; active recreation</li> </ul>	Not open to the public (members only)
Sawins Pond/Brook and Williams Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	Not open to the public
St. Patrick’s Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemetery</li> <li>• Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open

### *Mount Auburn Cemetery*

Mount Auburn Cemetery was founded in 1831 as the nation’s first garden cemetery. The 175-acre cemetery extends into a small portion of Cambridge, with 151.1 acres in Watertown, making it the City’s largest contiguous open space. The public is free to explore the cemetery’s grounds, and numerous groups interested in the cemetery’s wildlife and flora visit each year on the extensive network of paths, trails, and roadways. The cemetery’s paved pathways and roadways provide ample opportunities for walking. The site is also a designated arboretum, includes several ponds, and provides significant wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Bicycles are not permitted on the grounds.



*Halcyon Lake, Mount Auburn Cemetery. Photo credit: John Phelan, CC BY-SA 3.0*

### *The Oakley Country Club*

The Oakley Country Club is located in a residential area in northern Watertown and is open to paying members only. The site largely consists of a private golf course. Historically, the public was allowed to



access the site—which sits on Common Street/Strawberry Hill—for wintertime sledding; however, the club prohibited sledding on the course in 2004. The individual parcels that make up the country club were rezoned to Cluster Residential in 1989 to help limit the spread of housing units across the site and preserve a significant area for recreation, if it were to redevelop. In 2004, Oakley Country Club enrolled in the state’s Chapter 61B program, which allows for property tax reductions on land that provides public benefits to the community, in this case recreational uses. As part of the Chapter 61B program, the City also has the right of first refusal to purchase the land should the property come up for sale.

### *Sawins Pond/Brook and Williams Pond*

Along a perennial stream, Sawins Pond and Williams Pond complex is located east of the Elm Street to the north of Arsenal Street across two properties on just over six acres. The pond/stream area is surrounded by vegetation (trees, grasses, and marsh grass) and bound to the southeast by Coolidge Avenue. Currently, the site is inaccessible. The site has known water and soil contamination from previous industrial uses.

### *St. Patrick’s Cemetery*

St. Patrick’s Cemetery is a private cemetery associated with St. Patrick Parish. It is bound by Belmont and Holt Streets and open to the public.

### *Publicly Accessible Spaces Associated with Private Development*

To supplement Watertown’s inventory of publicly owned open space, the City encourages private developers to design publicly available space within their projects. These spaces can serve as an amenity for both the building occupants and the surrounding neighborhood. For example, this approach has been successful with Arsenal Yards, which incorporated a courtyard that connects the retail portion of the development to Arsenal Park. A number of these sites have permanent easements or the amenities are part of the approval for the life of the current development, with a list of current sites provided in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6. Publicly Available Open Space Associated with New Development

Development/Address	Type of Publicly Available Amenities	Public Access
66 Galen Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open (upon completion)
85 Walnut Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open (upon completion)
99 Coolidge Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open (upon completion)
130 Arsenal Street (Elan Union Market)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> <li>Community garden</li> </ul>	Open
204 Arsenal Street (Gables Arsenal Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open
330-350 Pleasant Street (Watermills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open
490 Arsenal Way (LINX)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athletic &amp; active recreation</li> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open
485 Arsenal St (Arsenal Yards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> <li>Dog park</li> </ul>	Open
Walnut Street Linear Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive recreation</li> </ul>	Open

## SECTION 6. COMMUNITY VISION

### A. Description of Process

The City engaged the community confirm its vision and goals for open space and recreational resources as part of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan update. The Watertown Comprehensive Plan provides a long-range vision for the city with a 20-year horizon. It takes a big-picture look at many quality of life issues and opportunities in Watertown, such as housing, economic development, and transportation, as well as those associated with open space and recreational resources. Because of the concurrent updates, the City used the public engagement process of the Comprehensive Plan to also understand more specific needs for open space, recreational opportunities, and natural resource protection for the OSRP. The shared public process allowed for a streamlined and effective series of engagement opportunities for in person and online participation. This integration also eliminated potentially duplicate efforts, confusing messaging, and streamlined the number of meetings for the public and allowed for a broader reach for all topic areas. **Section 2. B. Planning Process and Public Participation** describes the details of this outreach effort, with a brief overview below.

#### *Public Visioning Session*

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City held a visioning session on May 19, 2022, to kick off the Comprehensive Plan process and collect feedback on opportunities and challenges. Participants focused on broader, long-range goals and objectives. This evening forum was a hybrid event, with in-person attendance at the Hosmer School and an online presentation for virtual viewers.

#### *Online Surveys and Map*

The City administered two community surveys. The first coincided with the public visioning session and asked questions related to what was working well and what could be improved in Watertown. An online interactive map supplemented the public visioning session and visioning survey. Respondents were asked to identify areas on the interactive map in need of improvements and what those improvements were. Many provided feedback on the City's parks and public spaces. The second survey was available in September and specifically focused on open space and recreational needs.

The results of both surveys can be found in Appendix X.

#### *Public Workshops*

Two consecutive workshops were held in September to present proposed goals for the Comprehensive Plan and collect feedback on proposed direction to meet those goals. These evening workshops were held at the Watertown Middle School and Watertown Public Library, both located in Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Online presentations for both workshops were held simultaneously. A virtual open house hosted on the project website also ran from September to October.

For the Open Space and Recreation component, participants were also asked to confirm the needs identified through the process and to prioritize what needs should be addressed first. Participants were also asked to identify specific locations where a particular strategy or action could be implemented in the City.

A summary of the feedback received can be found in Appendix A.

## B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The City's overarching goal for open space and recreation is:

*Ensure high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces that meet the needs of residents and the environment and encourage active and passive use.*

To achieve this, the City will:

**Provide access to high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces:** Watertown will continuously strive to create a network of connected and diverse open space and recreation resources that are suitable for a range of ages, abilities, and interests. As a built-out community, Watertown acknowledges that it must act strategically to create new open space and recreation resources.

**Support the environmental benefits of parks and open spaces:** Watertown is working to improve local environmental quality and build resilience to climate change impacts such as increasing temperatures and flooding. Watertown will work to preserve, enhance, and expand its natural resources and ensure environmental benefits are equitably distributed across the entire community.

**Ensure sustainable management of these resources:** Watertown will maintain a high level of interdepartmental coordination and provide communication with residents about timely maintenance of and upgrades to existing facilities and amenities, so they evolve to meet community needs. Watertown will continue to work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, so the Charles River Reservation and other properties owned by the commonwealth also meet community needs.



## SECTION 7. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The analysis of needs takes the environmental and resource inventories and existing conditions outlined in Sections 4 and 5 and identifies gaps to be addressed in order to meet the needs of the community. It is important to recognize that the OSRP is one of many tools the City uses to meet the needs associated with natural resources, open space, and recreational amenities. It also builds on and continues the work of concurrent and ongoing planning initiatives that support to the City’s vision for open space and recreational resources, including:

- Watertown Comprehensive Plan (concurrently being updated)
- Watertown Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2018)
- MVP Program, Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report (2020)
- Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report (2021)
- Resilient Watertown: Climate & Energy Plan (2022)
- FY 2022 Community Preservation Act Program Update (2022)

This analysis summarizes gaps and unmet needs, how the City is working to meet these challenges and additional solutions and implementation strategies. It is divided into three sections:

- Resource Protection Needs
- Community Needs
- Management Needs and Potential Change of Use

A common theme throughout this plan is the limited land available to create new open spaces and outdoor recreational opportunities. Increased redevelopment of private properties, including commercial and new residential development, puts added pressure on existing natural resources, public spaces, and recreational areas. The City has to balance demand to ensure a continued high quality of life for Watertown residents.

### A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Protecting the natural environment has multiple benefits, such as preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitat, improving water quality, and mitigating the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. This section focuses on protecting and improving the environmental health and integrity of Watertown’s natural resources on public and private lands. Watertown can do this through a variety of approaches including property acquisition, local regulations and policies, and conservation efforts by community groups and non-profits, among others. The following summarizes the greatest needs for protecting and enhancing the City’s natural areas and some recent efforts to address gaps and build on opportunities.

#### 1. Urban Tree Canopy

The “urban tree canopy” is the overhead vegetated cover provided by trees throughout the community on public and private property. Maintaining a healthy and well-distributed urban tree canopy is recognized as an important factor in improving public health and overall wellness. The presence of trees, for example, can reduce stress for those living or recreating nearby. Other social, economic, and environmental benefits of urban tree canopies include:

- Reduce surface water runoff and soil erosion

- Mitigate urban heat island effects and cool the air
- Absorb air pollution, including carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
- Reduce surface water wind speeds
- Minimize noise
- Create wildlife habitat
- Enhance property values

During the public engagement process, the community overwhelmingly indicated they want the City to preserve and add to the urban tree canopy on both public and private property. The importance of trees and the overall need to green Watertown was also cited in Community Preservation Plan 5-Year Action Plan (2021-2025) and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program workshop held in 2020. The City has also incorporated the need to strengthen its urban tree canopy into its planning, most recently in its 2022 *Resilient Watertown: Climate & Energy Plan (Resilient Watertown)*.<sup>38</sup>

The Watertown Department of Public Works Forestry Division, under the direction of the Tree Warden, is responsible for planting and maintaining public shade trees, such as those planted along street rights-of-way and in public parks. In 2018, only 49% of available public tree sites in Watertown were planted. The City has a target of 75% of sites planted by 2030, and 100% of sites planted by 2050. *Resilient Watertown* adds to this, setting a goal of 23% tree canopy coverage by 2030 and 27% by 2050, up from 20.9% in 2016. Maintaining appropriate staffing, routine training (e.g., on GIS data usage and maintenance), and updates to current practices (e.g., rewriting the City’s tree planting contract) will be important to achieve these goals and for the overall management of Watertown’s public shade trees and overall urban tree canopy in the long term.

Watertown conducted a city-wide tree inventory in 2008 (partially maintained) and is completely updating it in October 2022. The outcome will include geographic information systems (GIS) data that can be linked to other spatial databases to allow for more frequent updates, sharing of tree- and planting



site-specific attributes, and better visualization of Watertown’s tree canopy. This tool can help prioritize tree plantings in areas of the City that need it most. Because increasing the tree canopy is a priority in *Resilient Watertown*, the Tree Warden has increased discretion to decide where to plant trees, which is a substantial change from previous years in which plantings were initiated through a request-based system only. Now the City can target specific areas in need and complete a planting program holistically, rather than site by site. A key consideration for future plantings is selecting tree species that increase the overall

<sup>38</sup> <https://resilient.watertown-ma.gov/category/natural-resources>.

diversity of the canopy and are adaptable to current and future climate conditions, particularly in an urban environment.

To reach the city-wide goals of increasing the tree canopy, private property owners also play an important part. The Watertown Tree Warden and others note that education is an important piece in helping private property owners and developers understand that trees are more a benefit than a nuisance. In addition to encouraging more planting, appropriate maintenance and management practices and the types of tree species planted are important topics for the city to consider. The City has several efforts to build on. In March 2021, Watertown advocates held a citywide “Trees and Climate Change” symposium, and presentations are easily accessible on the *Resilient Watertown* website.

The City plans to continue to build on its successes in public education and existing relationships with local organizations. To increase plantings at private homes, the City recently introduced a bare-root planting program in the 2021-2022 planting season that had requests beyond the capacity of the program within weeks of initiation. Residents could receive swamp white oak and serviceberry trees for free from the City for private plantings.

## 2. Stormwater Runoff and Water Quality

Urban stormwater runoff is a major source of pollution in Watertown’s waterways. In Watertown, approximately 57% of the land area is impervious, generating a large amount of stormwater runoff from rainfall and snow melt that carries chemicals, litter, and sediments directly into local wetlands, ponds, streams, and the Charles River. Stormwater management to improve local surface water quality centers around two objectives:

- Reduce the amount of runoff that flows directly from impervious surfaces into wetlands and other surface waterbodies like the Charles River and area ponds.
- Where runoff is generated, use designed features to remove a large percentage of the pollution in the runoff before it drains into wetlands and surface waters.

Nature-based solutions (NBS), also referred to as “green stormwater infrastructure,” incorporates features like plants and landscape design to manage, store, and filter stormwater before it enters waterways. NBS can replace and complement existing “gray infrastructure” like storm drains and outfalls. As discussed in Section 3, Watertown has a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which discharges untreated stormwater flows directly to the Charles River. Capturing stormwater with NBS before it enters the MS4 allows for filtration of pollutants and reduces the volume of stormwater that gray infrastructure must manage during storm events, reducing the likelihood of flooding due to a lack of capacity. NBS are implementable at multiple scales and complement related community interests in increasing tree canopy coverage, greening the city, and reducing climate hazards like flooding. Well-designed NBS installations can beautify sites and neighborhoods and provide opportunities for public education.





*Green infrastructure/NBS on Common Street. Photo credit: Horsley Witten Group*

Watertown residents already recognize the benefits of green infrastructure practices, with a majority of respondents supporting such installations during the *Resilient Watertown* public engagement process. The City is targeting Watertown’s open space and recreation sites for NBS demonstration projects, making them a lynchpin in a community-wide network of green infrastructure. NBS at open space and recreation sites can range from rain barrels for use in community gardens to rain gardens with pollinator plantings and from green parking elements like permeable pavement and bioswales to tree plantings along walking and biking paths.

### 3. Invasive Species

The presence of invasive species can directly affect Watertown’s ability to maintain high quality open space and recreational resources. Invasive species are transplants into local ecosystems and often outcompete native species due to a lack of natural predators or controls, allowing for substantial proliferation. Climate change can facilitate the arrival and establishment of an increasing number of invasive species, including:

- New species enter regions and may become invasive due to more favorable climate conditions.
- Extreme weather events and climate change can stress ecosystems, leaving them less resilient to new pressures from invasive species.
- Species hierarchies in ecosystems can change in response to climate change, leading to new dominant species that may have invasive tendencies.

Invasive plant species are an issue along the Charles River, especially within Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) properties and can reduce the vitality and functioning of some of Watertown’s most heavily visited ecosystems. Site-specific management plans for vulnerable resources can guide long-term maintenance and invasive species control strategies. Continued partnerships with property owners and volunteer groups that help maintain resources will be important to proactively manage and control the spread of invasive plant species. Several well-known invasive pests, such as the Asian long-



*Tree damaged by emerald ash borer. Photo credit: MA DCR*

horned beetle, emerald ash borer (already in Watertown), wooly adelgid, and spongy moth, have devastated urban tree canopies in other Massachusetts communities and could become threats in Watertown. Canopies with low tree species diversity and many target tree species provide abundant food and habitat for invasive species. As such, increasing overall tree species diversity will improve the resilience of Watertown’s urban tree canopy to invasive pests.

Whitney Hill Park is the City’s only naturally wooded park space. Community members that visit Whitney Hill Park love the opportunity for quiet, peaceful, passive recreation and appreciate the walking trails and beautiful trees. In response to a 2013 resolution of the Watertown City Council, the Conservation Commission prepares annual reports documenting its maintenance and educational activities at the park. The Commission’s 2021 Annual Report, submitted in February 2022, calls for the development of a stewardship plan to guide long-term management of the resource and provide for site-specific strategies to address priorities (e.g., invasive species, interpretative signage and education needs, climate change adaptation).

## B. Summary of Community Needs

This section focuses on the needs of residents to experience nature and have access to active recreational opportunities in their daily lives. For recreation, determining long-term needs is nuanced. Historically, communities have relied on the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards, developed in 1996, to assess how well they provide recreation opportunities to residents. Recognizing that no two communities are alike given their unique sizes, locations, and resident needs, NRPA shifted away from standards in 2019 and established its NRPA Park Metrics.<sup>39</sup> Data points are collected annually via surveys from recreation agencies across the U.S. and compiled as benchmarks for jurisdictions based on population size and density. Benchmarks are presented as medians and a range of performance, noting the lower quartile (lowest 25%) and upper quartile (highest 25%) by jurisdictional size. Metrics include benchmarks for park facilities (e.g., residents per park, recreational facility per 1,000 residents, etc.), programming (e.g., type of activity, targeted age group), staffing (e.g., full time and part time), and budgets (e.g., annual operating expenditures per capita, etc.), among others. From these metrics, communities can see how they compare to their peer communities and identify best practices.

NRPA and other planning professions stress that metrics are one tool to determine the need for recreational facilities and programming.<sup>40</sup> A jurisdiction must also consider the socioeconomic conditions of its residents, like income, age, race, ethnicity, and cultural preferences, among others. Section 3 of this OSRP provides data to understand who lives in Watertown and identifies several key takeaways: Watertown is a growing city, has many young children and older residents, is increasingly diverse, and has a number of EJ communities where its more vulnerable residents live. Surveys, workshops, and other public engagement activities allow residents to express their needs directly to the City. This input is compiled in this section to summarize the types of recreational and open space opportunities and amenities residents would like to see in Watertown.

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<sup>39</sup> National Recreation and Park Association Park Metrics. Available at <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/>.

<sup>40</sup> American Planning Association PAS Memo: Alternatives for Determining Park and Recreation Level of Service. May/June 2016. Available at <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/PASMEMO-2016-05-06.pdf>.

## 1. Park and Recreation Facilities and Programming

According to the 2022 NRPA Park Metrics, agencies serving similarly sized communities to Watertown (between 20,000 and 49,000 residents) have a median of 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Watertown has 5.4 acres of publicly owned (municipal and state) parkland per 1,000 residents, placing it in the second quartile of similarly sized communities.<sup>41</sup> When compared to communities with similar population densities, Watertown is slightly closer to the median 7.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.<sup>42</sup>

Table 7.1 highlights selected NRPA metrics as examples of potential baseline comparisons. Considering how some resources in Watertown are multipurpose, some resources may overlap in their types, even if not necessarily classified as so. Watertown is in line with or outperforming its peer communities in supplying certain types of facilities, however, community engagement helps confirm whether this baseline is appropriate or should be adjusted with local context. For instance, the City received multiple comments that residents want more dog parks and pickleball courts despite the NRPA metric indicating Watertown is outperforming its peer communities in these categories. Therefore, the City should continue to focus on how to increase these facilities.

Table 7.1. NRPA Selected Metrics of Peer Communities Compared to Watertown.

Type of Facility	Median No. of Residents per Facility: Population 20,000 – 49,000	No. Facilities in Watertown	Avg. No. of Residents per Facility in Watertown (35,329)	Performance Compared to Peers
Basketball courts	6,839	16.5	2,141	Above target
Diamond fields: baseball, adults	19,000	2	17,666	Above target
Diamond fields: baseball, youth	4,858	5	7,066	Below target
Diamond fields: softball, youth	8,509	3	11,776	Below target
Dog park	28,000	2	17,665	Above target
Rectangular fields: multipurpose	7,674	2	17,665	Below target
Rectangular fields: soccer, youth	5,011	4	8,832	Below target
Tennis courts	5,000	16	2,208	Above target
Pickleball courts	8,143	11	3,212	Above target
Playgrounds	3,111	19	1,859	Above target

Source: 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review

The NRPA metrics also indicate that Watertown has a comparatively lower supply of field sports facilities than its peers, reflecting the city’s constrained land area. As a result, the City’s parks need to accommodate a lot in a small amount of space. To do this, Watertown has been working to increase the flexibility of its spaces and introduce multipurpose facilities that can transition between seasons (e.g., from a street hockey rink during warmer months to an outdoor ice hockey rink during colder months) and

<sup>41</sup> In addition to City-owned resources, this includes state-owned resources such as the Charles River Reservation. This number does not include linear parks and multiuse paths, including those located within resources.

<sup>42</sup> Note that Watertown has a significantly higher population density than the minimum population density for this peer community group. Watertown’s population density is 8,596 people per square mile, but this peer community group includes all jurisdictions with a population density of over 2,500 people per square mile.



sports (e.g., a dual purpose basketball and street hockey court). The City also pursues opportunities to increase public access to private passive and active recreation sites, such as through its MOU with the Buckingham Browne & Nichols School.

Another metric the City uses to understand community needs is the ability of resident to access resources. One way to measure this is determining how many residents are within a 10-minute walk of a park. Nationally, approximately 55% of people live within a 10-minute walk of a park.<sup>43</sup> In Watertown, 99% of residents live within that distance, with no large discrepancies in access between different population groups, including the City’s Environmental Justice neighborhoods.<sup>44</sup> Map 7-1 depicts walking distances to publicly accessible open space and recreation areas (including those not owned by Watertown). While access is robust, residents have noted the desire for more diverse types of park facilities they can walk to, specifically smaller, pocket parks in their neighborhoods. These types of spaces can also serve multiple benefits, such as reducing air temperatures with shade trees and creating community gathering spaces.

## 2. New Resources, Amenities, and Opportunities

Residents enjoy and appreciate existing recreational amenities around Watertown, such as scenic views and walking/biking opportunities along the Charles River Path, picnic areas at Arsenal Park, and family-friendly programming like the Watertown Farmers Market in Saltonstall Park. Watertown has recently implemented a number of improvements to its recreational facilities, such as equipment replacement, aesthetic improvements, and amenity expansions. Reconstruction of the City’s elementary schools has also resulted in new, modern playgrounds and play spaces, although some now occupy smaller footprints. Several planning initiatives related to citywide bike and pedestrian infrastructure have increased connectivity to and between open space and recreation sites and residential areas.

However, given its urban environment, open space and outdoor recreational resources are limited in Watertown. With recent large-scale redevelopment projects happening in the City, residents are concerned about impacts to quality of life, including natural resources and the need for more green, open spaces. Residents are looking for the City to expand its offerings and cater to a wider range of users and interests. Community feedback overwhelmingly expressed a desire for more green open space and recreation resources “anywhere and everywhere,” a sentiment that is also reflected in findings and recommendations from previous plans.

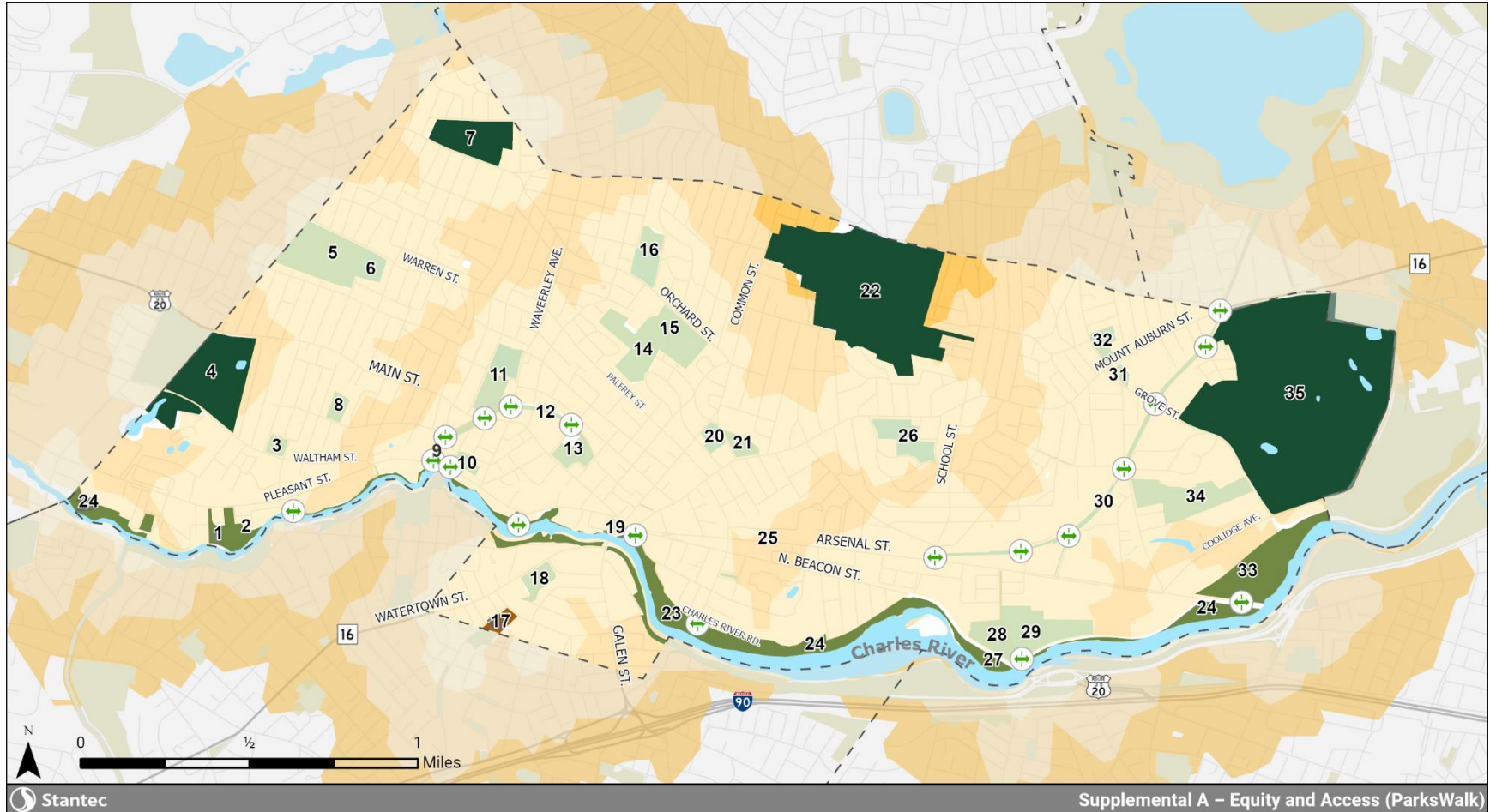
The biggest challenge for Watertown is finding space for new amenities. Vacant, open land is limited. This requires the City to be creative with existing parks and public spaces and look for new opportunities as sites are redeveloped around the city. Many community members suggested partnering with or encouraging private businesses to offer programming or hold community events within the open spaces that are created on their properties. Small neighborhood parks or pocket parks can also be an opportunity to expand the network. Residents are supportive of this approach, especially in underserved areas of the city.

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.tpl.org/city/watertown-town-massachusetts>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Map 7-1. Equity and Access



**Legend**

*Walkshed from Open Space & Recreation Areas in Watertown\**

- 10 - 15 minute walk
- 5 - 10 minute walk
- > 5 minute walk

*Open Spaces & Recreation Area Ownership in Watertown*

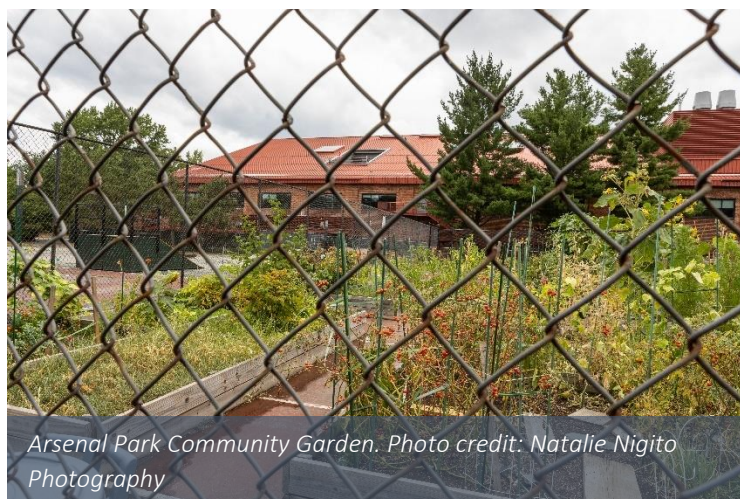
- State
- City of Watertown
- Private
- Other Open Spaces & Recreation Areas
- Trail access points

- |                               |                                     |                                  |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. John A. Ryan Arena         | 11. Moxley Park                     | 21. Common Street Cemetery       | 31. Old Burying Place   |
| 2. Cannaloga Park             | 12. Linear Park                     | 22. Oakley Country Club          | 32. Sullivan Playground |
| 3. Bemis Park                 | 13. Saltonstall Park                | 23. Riverfront Park              | 33. DCR Owned Land      |
| 4. Gore Estate                | 14. Whitney Hill Park               | 24. Charles River Reservation    | 34. Filippello Park     |
| 5. Ridgelawn Cemetery         | 15. Victory Field Complex           | 25. Community Path (Section 1)   | 35. Mt. Auburn Cemetery |
| 6. Cuniff School Playground   | 16. Lowell School Playground & Hill | 26. O'Connell Park               |                         |
| 7. St. Patrick's Cemetery     | 17. Boyd Park                       | 27. Squibnocket Park             |                         |
| 8. 552 Main St. Playground    | 18. Casey Park                      | 28. Commander's Mansion          |                         |
| 9. Community Path (Section 7) | 19. Watertown Square                | 29. Arsenal Park                 |                         |
| 10. How Park                  | 20. Phillips School Playground      | 30. Watertown-Cambridge Greenway |                         |

\* Note: Walksheds from resources located outside of City limits are not shown on this map.



Residents are also looking for specific facilities and amenities that respond to emerging recreation interests such as pickleball and futsal. Other commonly requested new resources include dog parks and splash pads (as new spaces or integrated within existing spaces). More community gardens are also desired, and expanding the gardens at local schools is suggested to offer students opportunities to learn about growing food as well as at existing parks. The elementary schools have incorporated learning gardens as part of outdoor ‘classrooms’ to facilitate this, and the district is looking at options for expanding this to the middle school and the high school, where smaller garden spaces are currently maintained.



Watertown residents also identified the desire for new or updated amenities at existing parks to encourage social interaction (e.g., sitting areas, grills), increase user comfort (e.g., bathrooms, benches and street furniture, shade), and provide more flexible space (open, unprogrammed areas). Many of these amenities can also connect to other community needs, including accessibility, natural resource protection and enhancement, and climate change resilience. For example, benches along a trail provide a resting spot for those with limited mobility. Adding shaded areas at parks and along roadways increases the tree canopy and mitigates the urban heat island effect.

Finally, improving the public’s awareness of the City’s open space and recreation areas and their offerings is an opportunity to connect users to existing and new amenities and programming. Updating and installing signage, including educational signage or historical markers, could improve user orientation and increase user awareness of the benefits of certain installations (like a rain garden).

### 3. Safe Walking and Biking Paths and Connections

Many residents walk and bike for recreation and exercise but also use Watertown’s walking and biking network to commute to work or school and do every-day errands. As the network of walking and biking paths grows, residents emphasize the need for continued safety improvements and connections between the network and neighborhood destinations, including parks and recreational areas. Community feedback is representative of findings from previous reports, including the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Report. Opportunities could include the following:

- Improve, maintain, and expand pedestrian infrastructure on existing pathways and roads to increase safety. New and improved pedestrian infrastructure may include, for example, level sidewalks, bump-outs, traffic islands, and crosswalks at busy intersections and near recreation areas.
- Improve, maintain, and expand bicycling infrastructure on existing pathways and roads to increase safety. New and improved bicycling infrastructure may include, for example, separated/protected lanes and signal heads.



- Expand pedestrian and bicycling amenities to make travel more accessible to all users. Amenities may include, for example, bike parking, bike share stations (e.g., Bluebikes), and benches.
- Continue expanding walking and biking paths across Watertown and create connections between paths and neighborhood destinations, like parks and recreational areas.

Making walking and biking safer and more accessible in Watertown also supports other environmental and resilient goals of the City to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. It also increases opportunities for residents to make healthier choices to be more active and improve public health.

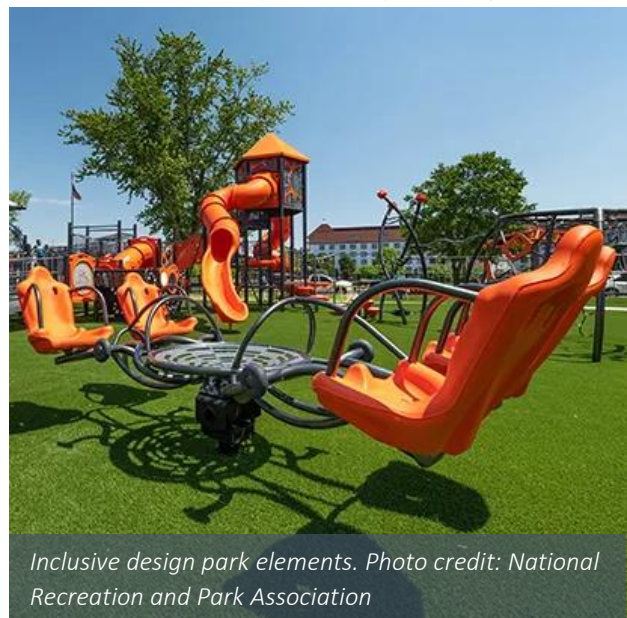
#### 4. Targeted Populations

To ensure that the City’s site updates and plans for open spaces and recreation resources is inclusive, the OSRP focuses on the needs of specific populations in the community.

##### *People with Disabilities*

Identifying and removing barriers to access City-owned open space and recreation sites and participate in available programming is an essential part of this OSRP. The Watertown Commission on Disability provides technical assistance and guidance in all matters related to disability, including assisting the City in ensuring compliance with state and federal laws; developing policies, procedures, and services affecting people with disabilities; and coordinating programs to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The following evaluations are used by the City to prioritize improvements to address accessibility barriers:

- OSRP Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (2022): Evaluation of all City-owned open space and recreation sites. The Commission on Disability was consulted during development (see Appendix C).



*Inclusive design park elements. Photo credit: National Recreation and Park Association*

Many community members have pressed for updates to playgrounds and recreation sites to make them more innovative and engaging for a range of ages, with some commenting specifically on the need for safety improvements to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The use of Universal Design standards can broaden accessibility beyond ADA requirements. The Braille Trail in the Charles River Reservation’s Riverfront Park is an example of incorporating accessibility features and collaborating with multiple partners. The Braille Trail is a result of coordination between the Perkins School for the Blind, DCR, the City of Watertown, and other local organizations and includes accessibility features for sight-impaired visitors and a sensory garden, which highlights non-visual qualities of the park.

**Universal Design** is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services, and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design.

- National Disability Authority (NDA) Centre for Excellence in Universal Design  
<https://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>

### Aging Populations

Community programs for seniors provide personal and health benefits, allowing them to stay physically and socially active. The Watertown Council on Aging (COA) was consulted to understand concerns and priorities for improvements from Watertown’s senior population. The COA offers diverse social services, programs, and activities for the City’s older residents, including health screenings, transportation, and financial assistance. Fitness programs include strength and balance, tai chi, and yoga classes and other exercise classes. The COA reserves time for seniors at the gym on a daily basis, and the COA’s walking group regularly uses the paths at the Charles River Reservation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the COA was able to transition to virtual programming and develop “at-home” classes. The COA will continue to offer hybrid options for its programs and expects that virtual programming will continue to be popular



*Bourne’s Inclusive Park serves multiple generations. Photo credit: capenews.net*

during colder and darker months. Engaging the COA and its Board will add another valuable perspective on the types of activities, spaces, and accessibility needs that the City should consider while planning for open space and recreation spaces and programming.

Watertown for All Ages advocates making

Watertown an age-friendly community. It sees a greater need for indoor and outdoor physical activity programs for older residents organized by the City through the Recreation Department, Senior Center, and the City’s Live Well Program. One of the biggest challenges for older residents is transportation to participate in programming and events.

### Youth and Teens

Many community members expressed the need for more programs and amenities that are tailored specifically to youth and teens. Watertown should continue to gauge their interests in recreational programming, both for organized sports and non-structured time for free play or access to space for

informal pick-up games. Opportunities for structured and unstructured programming allows youth and teens to foster positive social relationships with adults and other young people and explore their interests. For teens, developing appropriate spaces to recreate can help promote independence and should be supported by expanding safe walking and biking connections between neighborhood destinations and around schools. Community members commented on the connection between recreation programming, life skills, and future engagement with the city; for example, teens may get their first jobs through a lifeguarding program or want to stay in Watertown as adults due to the strong civic connection fostered earlier in life.

Several community organizations can be important partners in developing programs and amenities for youth and teens. The Wayside Youth & Family Support Network, Watertown Free Public Library, and Watertown Boys & Girls Club already offer important support services—including those beyond recreation—for youth and teens and could be more directly engaged in future planning for open space and recreation needs.

## 5. Environmental Justice and Equity

Achieving equity in open space and recreation planning requires Watertown to ensure all residents have access to a healthy environment, open space, and recreational amenities and opportunities, especially for populations that have been historically underserved and/or burdened with the impacts of land use decisions that produce adverse environmental impacts. [Map 3-2](#) shows Watertown’s EJ communities as defined by the Massachusetts EJ Policy (areas with high concentrations of lower income, racial minority, and/or language isolated individuals). Watertown has undertaken further planning funded through the MVP Action Grant program to supplement these EJ areas by identifying additional populations and areas that may be climate-vulnerable, including:

- Areas with high concentrations of renters, seniors, or low-income residents.
- Areas with low tree canopy coverage.
- Areas with high impervious surface coverage.
- Areas of flood hazard, including those identified through local sources of knowledge.
- Areas impacted by the urban heat island effect.

Based on the spatial interaction between population characteristics and climate-vulnerability, Watertown identified priority areas for equity-based community greening ([Figure 7.1](#)). In coordination with other sources of information, such as the soon-to-be-updated tree inventory and existing EJ areas, this priority mapping exercise can guide the City’s investment in areas that stand to be most disproportionately affected by climate change impacts like flooding and rising temperatures.



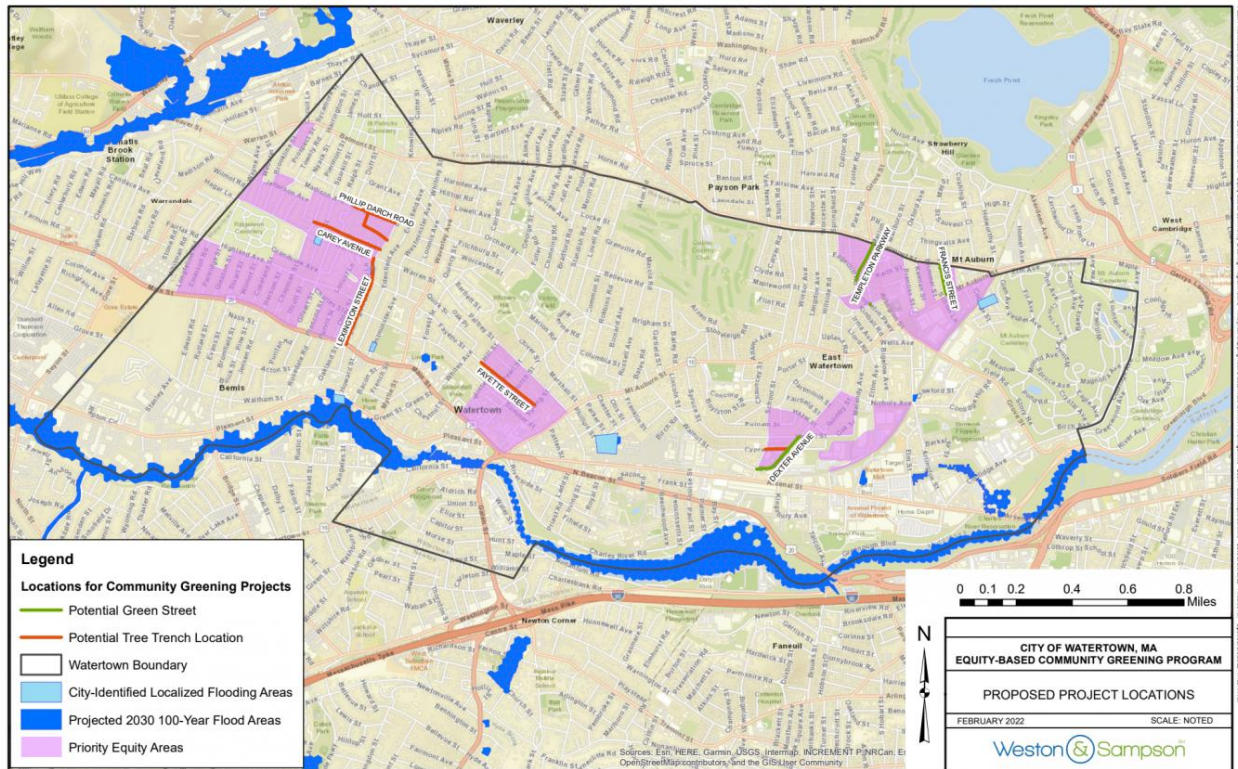


Figure 7.1. Equity-Based Community Greening Program Priority Areas and Proposed Project Locations

Open space and recreation planning should also rely on mapping of EJ and climate-vulnerable areas to inform its work. The City is committed to ensuring equitable access and geographic distribution of open space and recreation areas and to providing access to a diversity of recreation opportunities. Continued public engagement is essential to identifying emerging recreation interests, such as futsal, that would otherwise be difficult to ascertain simply by looking at regional or national trends. Again, community members expressed a desire for new recreation spaces “anywhere and everywhere.” While opportunities for adding larger sites may be limited given the densely urbanized and built-out nature of the city, Watertown should pursue creating neighborhood pocket parks, especially in underserved areas, to add to its open space and recreation network. Finally, the existence of diverse recreation programming does not equate to those programs being accessible. Watertown should consider potential hurdles to participation, such as costs, transportation, and language barriers when offering programming.

## C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

This section focuses on the needs of municipal staff and local boards and committees to manage, operate, and maintain the City’s open space and recreational resources and programming.

### 1. Infill Development and Redevelopment

Watertown has limited land available for new development; therefore, meeting the pressure of businesses wanting to locate in Watertown and addressing the need for housing, including affordable housing, are accomplished primarily through infill and redevelopment of existing buildings and sites, particularly in older industrial and commercial areas. Limited available land also puts pressure on the City to meet the demand by residents for new green open spaces and recreational facilities. To help balance

these seemingly competing needs, the City can lean on its broader resilience goals, which direct it to be more energy efficient, reduce the urban heat island effect, and work toward net-zero carbon emissions (see Climate Change and Resilience below). Incorporating meaningful and usable public green spaces and recreational amenities into these redevelopment projects creates new spaces in areas that did not have them in the first place. Integrating nature-based landscaping can have multiple benefits if designed correctly and made accessible. A shaded public space can integrate trees, a rain garden, and seating to create a gathering place for the neighborhood, increase the tree canopy, and manage excessive runoff from severe storm events. A review of local regulations and development policies and standards can identify where language can be strengthened to encourage these types of spaces.

The City should also encourage building connections to adjacent public amenities in redevelopment projects. There may also be opportunities to encourage or require pedestrian and bicycle connections, particularly in areas that fill gaps in the City’s walking and biking network or connect to adjacent recreational areas and parks.

Whether the City requires these amenities or encourages them through incentives, it must clearly articulate to the public, property owners, and decision makers why natural features are important in infill and redevelopment project design. The environmental, economic, and social benefits meet many community needs and are key in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.



## 2. Management, Improvements, Maintenance, and Upkeep of Existing Resources

Maintaining high-quality park and recreation amenities and services for all residents is a constant challenge in all communities that can be linked to available financial resources and technical assistance as well as staffing capacity.

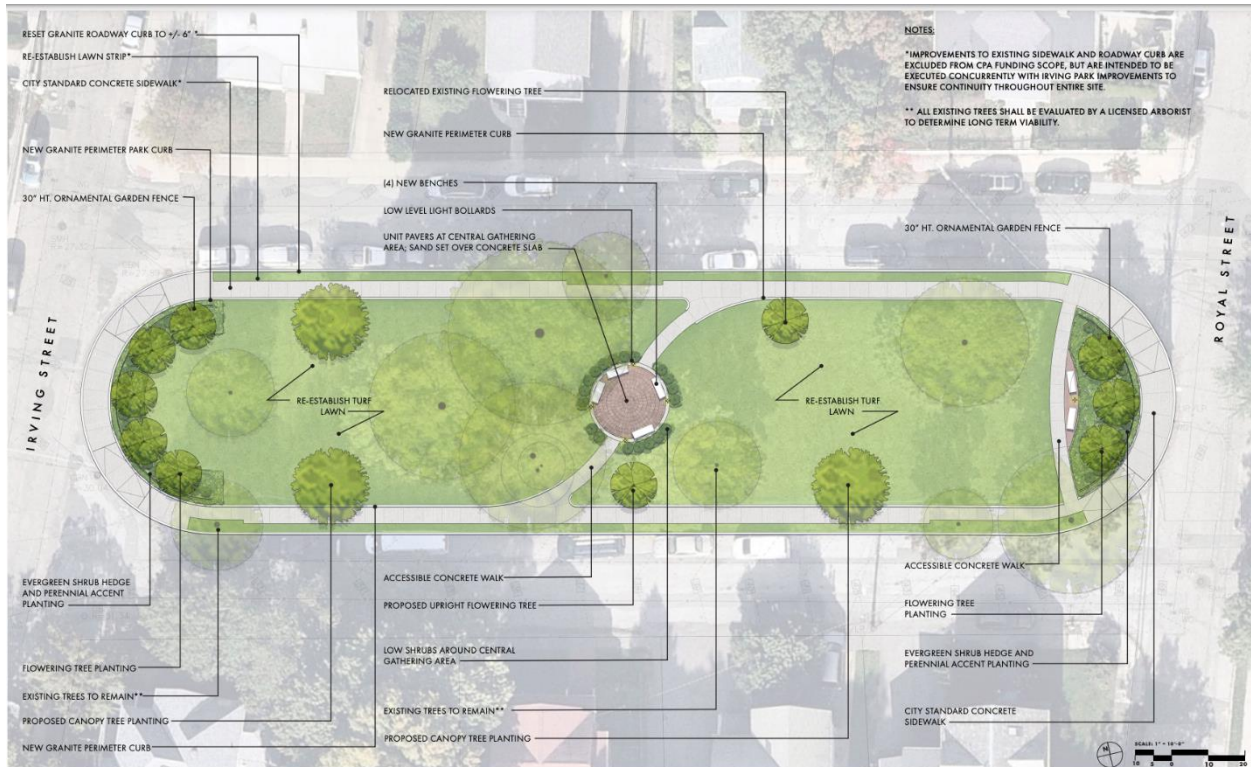
Watertown’s open space and recreational resources are diverse and require the coordination of and guidance from several departments and committees, including the Recreation Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Community Development and Planning, and Conservation Commission.



Continued coordination and communication among these groups and the broader community is required in order to ensure the needs of users are represented in all of Watertown’s planning initiatives.

The Recreation Department and Parks Division of the Department of Public Works have identified long-standing needs to upgrade and improve the City’s parks and recreation areas. A recent evaluation of the City’s playgrounds assessed the current life and safety of existing equipment, which was used to create a schedule of upgrades and replacement. Overall, Watertown has provided financial support through the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to work through these maintenance and upgrade needs. Future additions to the CIP include parks that need new irrigation systems, specifically, Filipello, Arsenal, Saltonstall, Lowell, Delta, Sullivan, Bemis, and Casey parks.

Recently, residents approved the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2016 to help the City meet historic preservation, housing, and outdoor recreational needs. While this funding source is competitive among municipal departments and community groups in Watertown, it provides another sustainable source of money for open space and recreational opportunities. Creating a comprehensive schedule of maintenance and upgrades needed throughout the City will help prioritize those areas most critical to address for safety, accessibility, and areas for new facilities. Doing so can position the Recreation Department and Parks Division in seeking CPA funding, leveraging local sources, and applying for other state and federal opportunities, as appropriate.



**IRVING PARK IMPROVEMENTS** | Consolidated Site Plan - 02.28.2022  
Watertown, MA



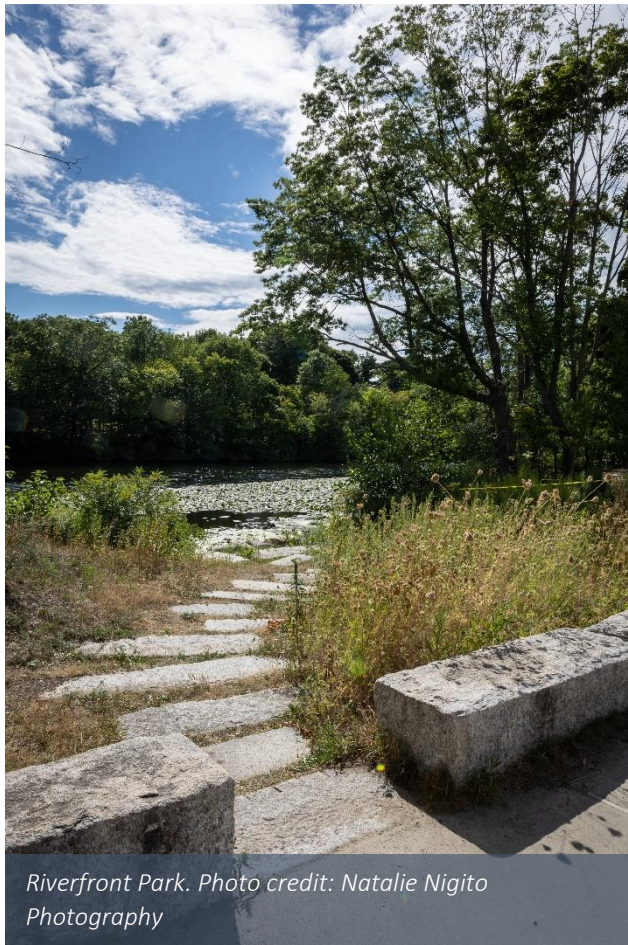
Redesign of Irving Park will be funded by CPA funds. Image credit: MDLA



### 3. Coordination with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

One of the biggest challenges for the City is working with DCR, which owns and manages several recreational areas in the City, including Cannalonga Park, Dealtry Memorial Pool, and the Charles River Reservation and Greenway. Several DCR sites, especially within the Charles River Reservation, are among those most frequently visited by Watertown residents. Improvements can be difficult to coordinate, and maintenance needs at these sites may be beyond DCR'S current capacity. Community members identified routine maintenance and trash collection needs at DCR properties and expressed a desire for these sites to serve residents all year, not just during warmer months.

DCR also holds title to the former GSA site, which is intended to be a passive recreation site with connection to the Charles River Greenway. An adjacent, privately-owned site is being redeveloped and



*Riverfront Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography*

presents additional opportunities for public access and connections along Sawin's Brook.

Communication with DCR and the capacity of its staff to move the GSA project forward is a priority for the City.

The City also continues to look for ways to increase access to the river and enable more water-based recreation. Much of this work may require close coordination with DCR, which owns and manages the Charles River Reservation. Currently, there are few boat put-in locations with the only designated location at the Watertown Dock near Charles River Road in Watertown Square. This location does not provide a low profile access or a boat ramp and boats must be carried a substantial distance to access the river from parallel parking along Charles River Road. The City will continue to remain engaged in the efforts to remove the Watertown Dam. This could provide opportunities for additional recreational opportunities and amenities.

Overall, Watertown plans to continue to look for opportunities to partner with DCR in short- and long-term planning and management initiatives.

### 4. Climate Change and Resilience

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues for the City. Watertown's natural resources provide important ecosystem services to build resilience and be adaptable to these changes, including carbon sequestration, flood and erosion control, water filtration, and cooling air temperatures. And while these systems help build resilience, the impacts of climate change can also negatively affect the quality and quantity of the services provided by these systems, making it critical for the City to strengthen its natural resources wherever possible.

*Resilient Watertown*<sup>45</sup> is the City's climate and energy plan and has identified goals and strategies to meet the needs and challenges of Watertown to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. It outlines an action plan to meet eight stated goals. Its goal for natural resources is: *By 2050, Watertown's natural assets and green space are enhanced, equitably distributed, and delivering full ecosystem benefits.* The OSRP focuses on protecting and enhancing the City's open space and recreation resources and is one tool to meet this goal and support *Resilient Watertown* action plan.

Climate change and its impacts of the City's natural resources and open spaces affects all aspects of life in Watertown. Addressing these impacts involves all municipal departments, not just those involved in open space and recreation planning. It requires coordination among municipal departments and employees, as well as the various city committees they support.

## D. Regional and State-Identified Needs

The City of Watertown's OSRP builds on and supports open space and recreation planning efforts to meet broader goals and needs in the Greater Boston region and beyond. Commonwealth-managed properties are located within the City, resources are shared by multiple municipalities, and Watertown residents benefit from the resources in neighboring communities. Many of those resources, plans, and related projects are highlighted in earlier sections of the plan.

### 1. DCR Parkways Master Plan

The *DCR Parkways Master Plan (2020)* focuses on parkways within the Boston metropolitan region to build an interconnected network of walkways and bikeways. The *Parkways Master Plan* identifies 2.1 miles of parkway within Watertown that would benefit from safety and accessibility improvements or have already been the focus of improvements. The plan highlights improvements at Greenough Boulevard, Charles River Road, North Beacon Street, and Nonantum Road. The plan also identifies additional recommendations for improvement to roadways along the Charles River Reservation. Watertown will continue to coordinate with DCR and neighboring communities as it expands its walking and biking network and implements the goals of its *Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2018)* and other guiding documents.

### 2. MAPC's MetroCommon 2050

Watertown's OSRP builds on and contributes to the success of MAPC's *MetroCommon 2050*, the Greater Boston Region's 30-year plan to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston between now and 2050. It includes 10 specific goals for the year 2050, as well as objectives that will be used to measure progress toward achieving those goals.<sup>46</sup> Watertown's OSRP goals and objectives, as well as the action plan, are consistent with the goals from *MetroCommon 2050*, including the following:

***Goal A. Getting Around the Region: Traveling around Metro Boston is safe, affordable, convenient, and enjoyable.***

This OSRP recognizes the City's concerted effort to acquire space and build partnerships with public and private entities that expand Watertown's walking and biking network. The City is committed to

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<sup>45</sup> <https://resilient.watertown-ma.gov/action-plan>

<sup>46</sup> <https://mapc.gitbook.io/metrocommon-2050-goals/>.

establishing safe connections between residential areas, parks, schools, and other destinations that serve all users. The City’s long-term vision for its walking and biking network, articulated in the *Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* (2021) and supported by this OSRP, also recognizes Watertown’s position within the regional walking and biking network and seeks to establish linkages to regional corridors as appropriate.

***Goal C. A Climate Resilient Region: Metro Boston is prepared for—and resilient to—the impacts of climate change.***

Watertown’s OSRP strongly supports protecting and strengthening natural resources to maintain their beneficial ecosystem services and increasing the use and distribution of amenities such as green infrastructure that help the City adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and natural hazards. This OSRP also recognizes the responsibility of the City to ensure all residents have access to high quality resources, including those that live in areas or are members of populations that are underserved and/or climate vulnerable. For example, this OSRP supports and incorporates previous planning that identifies priority investment areas for community-greening.  
appropriate.

***Goal F. A Healthy Environment: Greater Boston’s air, water, land, and other natural resources are clean and protected—for us and for the rest of the ecosystem.***

The underlying purpose of Watertown’s OSRP is to maintain and enhance the environmental, economic, and social benefits of the City’s natural environment and recreational resources for all.

**Goal I. Healthy and Safe Neighborhoods: We are safe, healthy, and connected to one another.**

Watertown is committed to building local capacity to support the planning, protection, management, and sustainable use of its open space and recreational resources. Watertown’s OSRP strongly supports the use of creative funding mechanisms and partnerships with public and private entities to build and maintain a thriving open space and recreation network.

### 3. Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2017 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The SCORP is a planning document that assesses the availability of recreational resources and the needs of residents throughout the Commonwealth as a way to identify gaps. It is also one method for states to meet multiple goals of the National Park Service and remain eligible for funding from the National Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). In Massachusetts, EEA administers LWCF grants to Commonwealth communities with approved OSRPs, which are considered consistent with the SCORP. Grants can be used for activities that address recreation and open space needs, including land acquisition for conservation or recreation purposes or park renovation.

The development of the latest SCORP involved an extensive public outreach process, including regional public meetings and surveys that targeted specific groups: recreation users, municipal employees, land trusts, and middle and high school students. Through the public participation process, these four outdoor recreation goals were identified for the 2017 SCORP:



1. Access for Underserved Populations
2. Support the Statewide Trails Initiative
3. Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation
4. Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks

Watertown’s OSRP incorporates similar themes in its goals as the SCORP. The City recognizes that individuals should have access to open space and recreation resources that are safe, accessible, and equitably distributed across the community. The OSRP supports the growth of Watertown’s walking and biking network to connect resources and other public space, encourage non-vehicular transit, and strengthen regional connections. As its very name implies, Watertown is characterized by the Charles River (and other water resources), which adds substantial scenic, recreational, and ecological value to the community. The OSRP reaffirms Watertown’s commitment to working locally and with regional partners to improve the quality of shared water resources to benefit water-based recreation and aquatic life. Finally, the City wants to create new recreational opportunities, including neighborhood parks, based on community preference and manage its existing resources responsibly. The City will continue to support events, programs, and other opportunities for users at neighborhood parks to recreate.

The following is an overview of the SCORP’s public outreach results organized by different users and providers of recreation spaces. This section also identifies commonalities between the SCORP and Watertown’s OSRP public engagement results and comments on how the City’s OSRP addresses specific regional needs and opportunities.

### Recreation Users and Youth

Through the SCORP surveys, most recreation users said outdoor activity was very important to them for physical fitness, mental well-being, and being close to nature. When asked why they visited a specific outdoor recreation facility, most responded that it was closest to their home. About three-quarters of survey respondents had a park or conservation area within walking or biking distance to their homes, but more than half drove to more distant locations. Lack of time was the number one reason why respondents did not visit outdoor recreation sites more frequently.

Most respondents to the survey felt that programming at a facility was somewhat or very important, particularly for seniors, young children (four to 12 years old), and teens. The most popular recreational activities respondents engaged in



*Watertown youth. Photo credit: Watertown Recreation Department*

over the past 12 months were water-based recreation (boating, swimming, etc.) and trail-based recreation (hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, etc.). Desired amenities or activities included more trails, inclusive playgrounds for young children of all abilities, and more water-based recreation.

The most popular activities for middle and high school-aged youth were team activities like soccer, lacrosse, and football. Teens also favored swimming, hiking, running/jogging, walking, and road biking. Youth and teens frequented outdoor recreation facilities closest to where they lived for fun and enjoyment, spending time with friends and family, and to be outside. Lack of time, weather, and use of the Internet were noted as primary reasons why some younger respondents did not visit facilities or participate in recreational programming. Desired amenities included more recreational sites close to home, more equipment at sites, and spaces that are “just for kids my age.”

Similar needs were expressed in Watertown. Access to a park or public open space in their neighborhood was voiced as a benefit by some residents and is a specific focus when looking at Environmental Justice communities. Many residents also expressed the need for more inclusive playgrounds for children of all ages. More diverse youth programming was also desired.

### **Municipal Employees**

Municipal land and conservation staff were asked about the types and quality of resources available to residents. Just under one-fifth of Massachusetts municipalities responded to a survey. Most responses (about one third) came from local conservation commissions followed by parks and recreation departments. More than half (69%) of respondents had part- or full-time recreation staff and 82% had part- or full-time conservation staff. The SCORP noted that this demonstrates that communities are able to provide many types of outdoor recreation facilities for their residents. Important factors to consider when determining a community’s staffing and financial capacity to provide quality resources and programming are the number of sites a community has, the types of amenities offered at each site, regular maintenance required, and the size of the sites, among other attributes.

About half of the respondents offered more than nine programs annually. Those providing fewer activities focused on those that connected children to the outdoors. Only 16% responded that they offered more than four activities per year for people with disabilities.

Since the passage of the Community Preservation Act, Watertown has maintained a local funding pool that can be used for projects that improve open space and recreational opportunities. Staffing capacity can be a challenge to providing a high level of recreational amenities and programming, and more inter-departmental coordination is needed to coordinate upkeep and maintenance. More coordination would also support planning for programming and spaces that provide inclusive opportunities for all users. Long-range planning for scheduling updates and major renovations is also needed.

### **Land Trusts**

About one-third of land trusts in the Commonwealth responded to the SCORP survey. Most cited connecting the public with nature as the most important issue for their organization, followed by connecting with local neighborhoods and schools. Popular activities on land trust properties were walking/jogging/hiking, dog walking, and nature study. The top three issues facing land trusts are trail work, conservation restriction stewardship, and acquiring new land. Invasive species are the greatest physical issue faced by land trusts. As to social issues, littering and dumping are encountered most frequently.

There are no properties or conservation restrictions in Watertown held by a land trust. However, two of Watertown’s largest private open space resources, the Gore Estate and Mt. Auburn Cemetery, are held

by private organizations with missions that incorporate themes of public education, sustainability, and historic preservation. The Gore Estate and Mt. Auburn Cemetery provide educational events and outreach to connect residents to their working/active landscapes (as a farm and cemetery respectively) and are open to the public.

Managing City-owned open spaces in Watertown falls under the purview of the Conservation Commission and the Department of Public Works. Primary issues in these areas are implementation of wetlands ordinances and other regulations, invasive species management, minimizing the use of harmful chemicals, environmental stewardship including litter cleanup, and managing disparate uses. The majority of open space in Watertown is owned by DCR and managed by their staff and volunteers. Given this ownership distribution, Watertown must continue to coordinate with DCR, advocating for the use and management of DCR properties such that they meet community needs.



*Bemis Park. Photo credit: Natalie Nigito Photography*



## SECTION 8. Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives will guide the planning for open space and recreational resources in Watertown to meet the needs of the community.

### **Goal 1. Create a network of high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces that is accessible to all Watertown residents.**

Objective 1.A. Increase land dedicated to open space and recreation, targeting areas that would enhance and leverage existing resources and meet the needs of underserved neighborhoods of the City.

Objective 1.B. Ensure private investments complement and build upon the City's open space and recreational spaces.

Objective 1.C. Support the development of safe and accessible multimodal connections between local and regional open space and recreational resources and between these resources and City neighborhoods.

### **Goal 2. Maintain and enhance existing recreation facilities and programs and create new opportunities to meet evolving community interests and needs.**

Objective 2.A. Maintain and expand recreational use of and around the Charles River.

Objective 2.B. Coordinate and plan for short- and long-term maintenance of and improvements to existing City recreational facilities.

Objective 2.C. Ensure recreational areas and programming are responsive to community needs and promote active and healthy lifestyles.

Objective 2.D. Continuously work to ensure City open space and recreational areas are accessible, safe, and welcoming for all users.

### **Goal 3. Protect and enhance natural resources to retain their important functions and values and help Watertown adapt to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.**

Objective 3.A. Expand and sustainably manage Watertown's urban forest.

Objective 3.B. Ensure that public and private investments support and enhance the resilience of the City's natural environment.

Objective 3.C. Build climate resilience in City open spaces and recreation areas.

### **Goal 4. Maintain partnerships and public awareness in support Watertown's open space and recreational resources.**

Objective 4.A. Communicate and partner with owners of public and private open space and recreation resources in the city to advocate for Watertown's recreational needs.

Objective 4.E. Raise public awareness about open space and recreation resources in Watertown.

## SECTION 9. SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Action Plan is intended to guide future planning efforts to protect natural resources, improve recreational opportunities, and make Watertown a more climate resilient community over the next seven years. It is designed to implement the goals and objectives outlined in Section 8, which provide a framework, and address the needs identified in Section 7. The Action Plan is also intended to be consistent with other local plans.

Goals are presented in order of priority, and actions are further prioritized based on a targeted completion timeframe as follows:

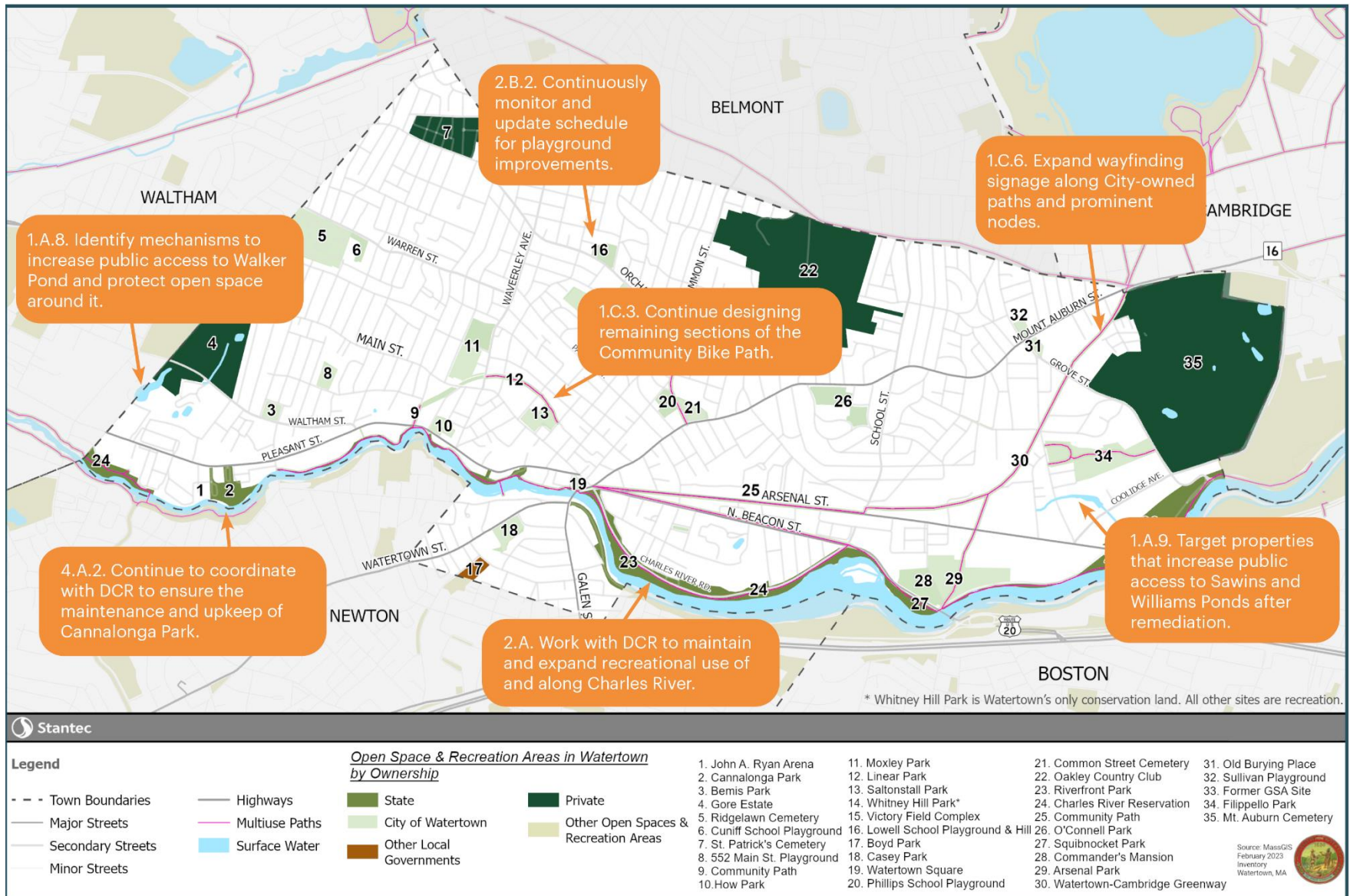
- Highest priority actions will be accomplished in the short term (2023-2025).
- Actions that meet intermediate needs will be accomplished in the mid-term (2026-2028).
- Lower priority actions will be accomplished in the long-term (2029-2030).
- Ongoing actions occur during the entire seven-year period.

While timeframes are established, it is recognized that circumstances may change and impact resource availability, which may cause actions to move up or down in priority.

Potential funding sources are also identified for each action item, ranging from available municipal budgets to applying for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds or pursuing state or federal grant opportunities. If “none” is noted, this indicates that additional funding is not needed because the action item can be accomplished under existing capacity of City departments or committees.

Implementing the Action Plan will take the coordinated effort of many City departments, boards, and committees. Municipal entities listed as “responsible parties” in the Action Plan are important to help move an action forward.

Map 9-1 provides an illustration of the Action Plan.



Map 9-1. Action Plan Map



## Action Plan

### Acronyms

COA	Council on Aging	CIP	Capital Improvement Program
COD	Commission on Disabilities	CPA	Community Preservation Act
DCDP	Department of Community Development and Planning	EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
DPW	Department of Public Works	LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
		MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
		MassDOT CS	Massachusetts Department of Transportation Complete Streets Program
		MassDOT SSS	Massachusetts Department of Transportation Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program
		MassTrails	MassTrails Grants
		MVP	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grants
		PARC	Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities

### Goal 1. Create a network of high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces that is accessible to all Watertown residents.

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 1.A. Increase land dedicated to open space and recreation, targeting areas that would enhance and leverage existing resources and meet the needs of underserved neighborhoods of the City.			
1. Establish a process to prioritize properties of interest as open space and recreational opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track ownership and availability of properties.</li> <li>Monitor state, federal, and private funding opportunities for property acquisition by the City.</li> </ul>	Short Term	None	DCDP
2. In conjunction with 1.A.1, identify potential locations for pocket parks, such as small parks with seating, community gardens, tot lots, etc. Prioritize neighborhoods identified in the City's Equity-Based Community Greening Program for these types of open space and recreation investments.	Short Term	None	DCDP

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
3. Apply for CPA funds to acquire properties of interest. Use outcomes of Actions 1.A.1 and 2 to prepare in advance, as much as practicable, to be ready for upcoming funding cycles.	Ongoing	CPA, Open Space Stabilization Fund	DCDP, Conservation, Recreation
4. Pursue public/private partnerships to increase publicly accessible open spaces and recreation amenities. Consider both public and private ownership and management of spaces.	Ongoing	CPA	DCDP, Conservation, Recreation
5. Develop a conservation restriction easement program. Develop a list of properties where easements could build public access to and connections between open space and recreational resources. Target property owners to discuss opportunities.	Short Term, Ongoing	MassTrails, CPA	Assessor, DCDP, Conservation
6. Verify permanent protection of existing public open space and recreation parcels and new City acquisitions going forward.	Ongoing	None	DCDP, City Council
7. Develop and formalize a policy to ensure that properties acquired by the City through tax default are evaluated for open space and recreation potential before resale or redevelopment.	Short Term	None	Assessor, DCDP
8. Work with landowners near Walker Pond, identify mechanisms to increase public access and expand protected open space around the pond. Actively pursue additional acquisition opportunities.	Short Term	CPA, PARC, LWCF	DCDP, Assessor, Conservation, City Attorney
9. Support landowners with remediation efforts by sharing available information on funding sources and other resources. Target properties that increase public access to Sawins and Williams Ponds after remediated, either through property acquisition, easements, or other mechanisms.	Mid Term	CPA, PARC, LWCF, MassDEP, EPA	DCDP, City Council

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 1.B. Ensure private investments complement and build upon the City's open space and recreational spaces.			
1. Continue to evaluate new options and incentives to encourage and/or require publicly accessible park space to be incorporated into new and redeveloped residential and commercial land, especially along the Arsenal and Pleasant Street corridors.	Short Term	None	DCDP
2. Coordinate with developers to create and/or enhance public access to existing adjacent or nearby open space and recreational resources and amenities. This may include easements, land dedication, or other mechanisms that allow public access.	Ongoing	None	DCDP
Objective 1.C. Support the development of safe and accessible multimodal connections between local and regional open space and recreational resources and between these resources and City neighborhoods.			
1. Continue to implement the policies and recommendations of plans and initiatives that address walking and biking safety and connectivity in and around the City's open space and recreational areas, including the City's Complete Streets policy and the Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Report (2021).	Ongoing	MassDOT CS, MassDOT SSS	Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, DCDP, DPW
2. In conjunction with Action 1.C.1, find opportunities along walking and biking pathways to add new public spaces that provide shade, seating, community gardens, and other desired amenities and features.	Ongoing	MassDOT CS, MassDOT SSS	DPW, DCDP
3. Finalize the design of the remaining sections of the Watertown Community Path with MassDOT where needed and secure needed funding for its construction. Develop a supporting, long-term maintenance program.	Short Term	MassTrails	DCDP, DPW
4. Review policies that require bike racks and other bike storage amenities, as appropriate for new development and redevelopment projects.	Short Term	None	DCDP
5. Prioritize City facilities and public spaces that lack bike racks and other bike storage amenities for new installations.	Mid Term	None	DPW, Recreation, DCDP



Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
6. Work with DCR to expand wayfinding signage along the Charles River Greenway and Watertown-Cambridge Greenway.	Mid Term	None	DCDP, Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
7. Implement the wayfinding signage program which includes locations along Watertown-owned paths and at prominent nodes.	Mid Term	MassDOT SSS	DPW, DCDP
8. Continue to engage with the Commission on Disabilities, Council on Aging, Watertown Public Schools, and other relevant stakeholders to better understand how to improve walking accessibility and safety around the City. Ensure that the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and other assessment plans used for the City's CIP reflect these needs.	Ongoing	None	DCDP, COD, DPW, School District, COA
9. Develop campaigns that educate the community about City policies that ensure walking and biking safety. These might include sidewalk snow removal, no biking on sidewalks, parking on sidewalks, and others. Prioritize areas around and connecting to open space and recreational areas.	Short Term	None	Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, Police, DCDP
10. Develop a public awareness campaign about the "Rules of the Road" for cyclists and walkers, both for on-street and multi-use paths. Consider different types of outreach methods for distribution (online, print, workshops) for diverse age groups and users.	Short Term	None	Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, Police

**Goal 2. Maintain and enhance existing recreation facilities and programs and create new opportunities to meet evolving community interests and needs.**

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 2.A. Maintain and expand recreational use of and around the Charles River.			
1. Continue to work with DCR to finalize the recommendations for the Charles River Basin Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Study. Pieces in Watertown that still need to be completed are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arsenal Street</li> <li>• 580 Pleasant Street easement west to the Blue Heron Bridge</li> <li>• Former GSA site when it is opened</li> </ul>	Long Term	DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program, MassDOT SSS	DCDP, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
2. Work with DCR about studying options for closing Charles River Road and Little Greenough Boulevard to automobile traffic. Consider options that range from permanent closure to limited closure on certain days of the week.	Short Term	MassDOT SSS	DCDP, DPW
3. Evaluate opportunities, in coordination with DCR, for canoe/kayak public access points and storage along the Charles River, including near Watertown Square and Squibnocket Park.	Mid Term	DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program, Solomon Foundation	DCDP, Recreation
4. Collaborate with the Watertown Yacht Club (WYC) and DCR to establish a publicly accessible boat launch on WYC property and provide through bicycle and pedestrian access along the length of the riverfront to reconnect the greenway corridor.	Short Term	DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program, Solomon Foundation	DCDP
5. Encourage DCR to install additional signage within the Charles River Greenway, including wayfinding/distances, educational/interpretive, and park policies/expectations information.	Mid Term	None	DCDP
6. Continue to work with private developers to create or enhance multi-use connections between their projects and the Charles River that will increase physical and visual access.	Ongoing	None	DCDP

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 2.B. Coordinate and plan for short- and long-term maintenance of and improvements to existing City recreational facilities.			
1. Identify and prioritize City recreation areas that require comprehensive management plans. Include maintenance standards and equipment replacement guidelines. Create a schedule of improvements and upgrades that corresponds with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and CPA funding cycle.	Short Term	CPA, CIP	DPW, Recreation, DCDP
2. Continuously monitor and update the City's schedule, as needed, to upgrade city playgrounds. Use available assessments, including the findings of Playground Inspections of New England (2022). Ensure the upgrade schedule corresponds with the CIP and CPA funding cycle.	Short Term	CPA, CIP	DPW, Recreation, DCDP
3. Monitor relevant NRPA Park Metrics to evaluate benchmarks for Watertown parks to plan for future recreation facilities and programming. Incorporate other indicators in planning analysis, including growing or decreasing community demand, available space at existing facilities, capacity of City departments, access to resources by residents, and availability of new spaces, among others.	Ongoing	None	Recreation, DPW, DCDP
4. Ensure that each City facilities has the necessary amenities to support the intended uses of a site, such as trash and recycling receptacles, bike racks, and benches, among others. Create a schedule of improvements and upgrades that corresponds with the Capital Improvement Program and CPA funding cycle.	Ongoing	CPA, CIP	Recreation, DPW, DCDP
5. Continue to update, add, and repair irrigation systems to the City's playing fields.	Ongoing	CIP	DPW
6. Continue to use the City's Capital Improvement Program or CPA to upgrade parks and recreational areas.	Ongoing	CIP	DPW, Recreation, DCDP
7. Coordinate with local groups, such as adult and youth sports clubs, to leverage park and field maintenance and stewardship. Establish schedules and policies to ensure organized and consistent oversight of volunteers.	Ongoing	None	Recreation, DPW



Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 3.C. Ensure recreational areas and programming are responsive to community needs and promote active and healthy lifestyles.			
1. Consider development of a multi-use, multi-generational community center, including a swimming pool, to provide a variety of activities throughout the year.	Long Term	None	Recreation, DCDP
2. Continue to support the Live Well Watertown initiatives to support and develop innovative public health and wellness programming to promote healthy choices and active living.	Ongoing	None	DCDP, Health, Recreation, COA, COD, School Dept.
3. Continue incorporating community gardens into existing parks, schools, and other public spaces, where feasible. Prioritize locations.	Ongoing	CPA	DCDP, Recreation, DPW
4. Identify new public and private property opportunities for publicly available dog-friendly spaces and/or dog parks. Build volunteer support to help maintain dog park facilities (bag dispensers, waste containers, etc.)	Mid Term	None	DPW, DCDP, Health
5. Create more flexible space and amenities at existing recreation areas to accommodate new and growing demands for splash pads and activities, such as pickleball, futsal, etc.	Mid Term	None	Recreation, DCDP, DPW
6. Ensure unprogrammed time at fields and courts to allow for some flexible time for general access, pick-up games and other unstructured neighborhood activities.	Short Term	None	Recreation
Objective. 2.D. Continuously work to ensure City open space and recreational areas are accessible, safe, and welcoming for all users.			
1. Use the ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan, along with other assessments of the City's parks and recreation facilities, to address barriers for people with disabilities at recreational facilities and from participation in programming.	Ongoing	CIP, CPA, Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program	Recreation, DPW, DCDP
2. Incorporate universal design principles in projects within parks, recreational areas, and multiuse pathways to expand opportunities and activities for all users regardless of ability.		None	Recreation, DPW

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
<p>3. Audit the City’s parks to understand perceived and real safety issues and concerns and identify strategies to remedy these issues. Engage residents and businesses for input and evaluating solutions. Solutions may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park design and access</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Park programming and events</li> <li>• Maintenance and upkeep</li> <li>• Formal and informal surveillance</li> </ul>	Mid Term	None	Recreation, DPW, Police, DCDP

**Goal 3. Protect and enhance natural resources to retain their important functions and values and help Watertown adapt to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.**

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
Objective 3.A. Expand and sustainably manage Watertown’s urban forest.			
1. Finalize and continuously maintain Watertown’s GIS Public Tree Inventory.	Short Term	None	Tree Warden, DPW
2. Develop a data management system and protocols for the GIS Public Tree Inventory to track tree removal and new tree plantings and integrate with the City’s GIS. Provide ongoing training for current and new staff to maintain the data and system, as needed.	Short Term	None	Tree Warden, DPW
3. Develop a long-range urban forestry management plan. Include a list of preferred trees, including natives and noninvasive, non-native species that are tolerant in urban environments. Implement protocols for on-going pruning, irrigation, fertilization, cabling, and other programs, as appropriate. Include the management and disposal of tree debris, including recycling options.	Short Term	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants, CPA	Tree Warden, DPW, DCDP

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
4. Maintain and update standards for installation of public street trees to ensure their health and longevity based on BMP. Integrate these standards in the urban forestry management plan.	Mid Term	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants	Tree Warden, DPW
5. Based on an analysis of the City's tree inventory (Action 3.A.1) and priorities of the Watertown's Equity-Based Community Greening Program for tree plantings, develop a planting plan and schedule to move towards the City's tree canopy goals.	Mid Term	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants, MVP	Tree Warden, GIS, DPW, Conservation
6. Develop a campaign to educate Watertown residents and businesses about the importance of trees to public health and the other benefits they provide, particularly in a more urban environment like Watertown. Include materials on how to properly care for trees, types of trees to plant, and other topics. Consider a variety of mediums, including the City's website, print materials, and public events.	Mid Term	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants	Tree Warden, Conservation
7. Identify community partners, such as Trees for Watertown, to help advocate for tree planting and long-term care of trees on private properties.	Ongoing	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants	Tree Warden, Conservation
8. Identify funding sources to support tree planting on private properties and promote opportunities to the community.	Ongoing	None	Tree Warden
9. Finalize a tree protection ordinance to protect mature trees.	Short Term	None	DCDP, Tree Warden, Conservation
<b>Objective 3.B. Ensure that public and private investments support and enhance the resilience of the City's natural environment.</b>			
1. Develop a policy that requires the use of native, drought tolerant, and pollinator-friendly vegetation appropriate for an urban environment on City landscaping projects and rights-of-way, including traffic islands.	Short Term	None	DPW
2. Require the use of native, drought tolerant, and pollinator-friendly vegetation appropriate for an urban environment in new development and redevelopment projects.	Short Term	None	DCDP

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Lead Departments
3. Identify public priorities to install nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff. Prioritize installation.	Short Term	MVP	DPW, Conservation, DCDP
4. Develop maintenance standards for green infrastructure installations on City property to ensure they function properly.	Short Term	None	DPW
5. Reevaluate the landscaped traffic island adoption program to increase its usage and impact.	Short Term	None	DPW
6. Identify public/private partnerships to support maintenance and upkeep of the City's public spaces. Develop requirements and expectations for participation and consistency.	Mid Term	None	DCDP, DPW
<b>Objective 3.C. Build climate resilience in City open spaces and recreation areas.</b>			
1. Ensure that work resulting from the OSRP aligns with the goals of city plans focused on building climate resilience. These plans include Resilient Watertown: Climate and Energy Plan, Watertown Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Watertown Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing	None	Conservation, Recreation
2. Look for opportunities to incorporate renewable energy sources in City parks and recreational areas. Consider solar panels on or as shade shelters or as covered areas over paved court areas.	Mid Term	Green Communities Grants	DCDP, DPW. Recreation

**Goal 4. Maintain partnerships and public awareness in support Watertown's open space and recreational resources.**

Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties/ Departments
<b>Objective 4.A. Communicate and partner with owners of public and private open space and recreation resources in the city to advocate for Watertown's recreational needs.</b>			
1. Encourage DCR to expand the season and extend the hours at the Dealtry Pool.	Short term	None	Recreation
2. Continue to coordinate with DCR to ensure the maintenance and upkeep of Cannalonga Park.	Ongoing	None	Recreation



Action Item	Timeline	Potential Funding Sources	Responsible Parties/ Departments
3. Continue to coordinate with DCR in the access, design, and phased development of the former GSA site and expansion of the Charles River Greenway through the site.	Ongoing	None	DCDP
4. Continue to work with the City of Newton to find opportunities for an improved bike/pedestrian crossing across the Charles River, particularly at Bridge Street.	Long Term	None	DCDP
5. Continue partnering with the Gore Estate and City of Waltham, supporting the estate as a local destination, open space, and working farm.	Ongoing	None	DCDP
<b>Objective 4.B. Raise public awareness about open space and recreation resources in Watertown.</b>			
1. Prepare an annual report on the progress of the OSRP Action Plan and include it in the City's Annual Report.	Annual	None	Conservation, Recreation, DCDP, DPW
2. Maintain the City's website with information about Watertown's open space and recreational resources, including available amenities, ADA accessibility, hours, and scheduled events.	Ongoing	None	Recreation, Conservation
3. Develop, promote, and maintain updated maps that include multiuse paths, amenities, destinations, and bike lanes within Watertown. Collaborate with neighboring communities and DCR to share resources and materials already developed. Update these materials as improvements and expansions are made.	Short Term, Ongoing	None	Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, DCDP

## SECTION 10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

See Appendix A for a compilation of community engagement input, as described in Section 2.

Letters of support are pending from the Watertown City Manager, Watertown Planning Board, and Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

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# APPENDIX A

## Summary of Public Input

**Small Group Map Exercise - Opportunities:**

*Blue sticky notes*

- increase diversity, cultured food festivals for sharing and music of different cultures
- have a cultural festival that highlights the cultures of our communities
- people focused development – encourage small gatherings of people in purposely designed gathering areas
- social infrastructure – consider ways for more interactions – like Waltham’s Moody St.
- new residents coming to new labs/life science buildings; new businesses that need to integrate to the community; public financial stability
- new housing – be more welcoming, including apartment buildings
- housing design like a little village to encourage community, diversity, interaction
- build more owner occupied housing and do not permit more rental housing
- achieve large business and housing balance
- life science jobs – connect with community
- the recent commercial development that brings in jobs is very good, helps to complement all the recent new large housing complexes
- more opportunities for creative economy – artists and organizations; more public art
- retail: small grocery, bookstore
- economic development: many people who work for the city can’t buy homes or even rent. Come up with a program that makes it more affordable for city employees
- village days where we encourage residents to patronize local businesses
- business civic investment
- preserve our small business community; improve infrastructure
- connectivity between neighbors and centers – walking, biking, local transit – reduces traffic, reduces emissions, builds relationships
- innovative use of streets for more than cars. reduce car use
- road diets/calming as community gathering spaces
- opportunities for people without cars
- redo Mt. Auburn, widen sidewalks to encourage life on street, cafes/retail shops other than food
- electric shuttle bus Pleasant St. to Watertown Square to Arsenal St.
- better bus route
- envision a new Watertown Square that is no longer just a traffic confluence!
- Watertown Square should have retail stores that attract shoppers, browsers, foot traffic etc.
- non-chain retail stores in addition to CVS
- redesign Watertown Delta to be a beautiful green oasis with long-lived specimen trees
- too much parking places behind CVS on main st., that could be another great green area or restaurant/food truck place
- more available parking, always an issue
- looking at projects through an equity lens
- Indigenous landmarks/recognition

## Watertown Visioning Forum Summary

- more playgrounds and parks not part of schools
- green space/better leverage
- tactical more trees; heat islands – especially in east end, makes more walkable
- open space – urban agriculture, pocket parks; relationship between built and natural – increase connections
- diversify our new commercial uses; CP[A] funds to acquire open space; collaborate with large land owners such as Mt. Auburn Cemetery for open space uses
- clean up/mitigate Sawia Brook area, make available to walk in
- lights at Arsenal Field dark skies friendly
- Futsal Courts
- Walker Pond could be a beautiful green space
- more programs like Project Literacy
- more community gardens
- nice tennis courts
- aging population and senior center
- no available playground/green space in this part of town
- community center and public health
- recreation: the library is at capacity. If we can expand the space we can expand the services which includes cultural recreation
- performing cultural center artist studios destination for the arts
- preserve North Branch library. create Land Bank
- abandoned building on Bigelow and parking!
- gas station on Mt. Auburn and Boylston!
- abandoned police station = library makerspace (sic), teen room, auditorium



**Small Group Map Exercise - Needs:**

*Orange sticky notes*

- mixed use wherever possible!
- reform zoning codes to permit small neighborhood shops/businesses such as farmer's markets, bookshops, cafes, etc.
- more industry → life science
- improve FAR rates for upcoming developments
- discourage more banks: no more!
- not enough small business
- asking present property owners to consider updating their properties to encourage community focused development
- more family-friendly housing everywhere
- affordable housing that increases/preserves diversity
- village days to support and build familiarity with Erid (sic) 617
- upzone economic development coordination
- jobs for those without college degrees that pay well
- upgrade and improve Watertown Square
- enhancing City Square
- for change City Square
- activate the river – public arts, festival, fun run
- little organic gathering spaces around the city – can't just rely on the squares because people must drive to them
- more street furniture and amenities for pedestrians, traffic calmery (sic) especially in residential neighborhoods
- more developed places for interactions along the river and parks, covered areas and seating
- incorporate benches and green pocket parks in dense areas of town
- example Shattuck Adams triangle (sic) that could have structures that invite people to gather
- better walking areas and bike paths in arsenal st.; better bus stops for arsenal yards
- improve traffic in Watertown; 59 (sic) – reduce travel lanes, [invest in] green space
- truly safe biking along Mt. Auburn
- Coolidge improve walkability
- safe routes for bicycling and to move about our city; safe roads for all
- safer roads; connections for adults who aren't with schools; open space – not just for sports
- discourage single use driving – bike lanes, shuttles, carpooling
- make intersections narrower – put in a park or triangle in wide intersections i.e. Putnam./Boylston St.
- easing traffic on Galen St. and Pleasant St.
- sidewalk repair and continuity – some sidewalks just end and then it is someone's grass
- road maintenance – fix Watertown square
- emphasize gateways – where are they?

## Watertown Visioning Forum Summary

- more transportation in this area, more parks and community space here too!
- community center; artist/studio/creative space
- community space
- create designated history walking trails that educate people about different eras in town, from our indigenous roots to revolution to industrial era to modern
- open green spaces for mixed recreational uses – community gardens, recreation for disabled children etc.; viable commercial activity for independent business
- more trees along big streets or median strips to beautify; educational opportunities for plumbers/electricians/carpenters – many residents in those fields
- open space – weller's park transfer of PCR. Property or Pleasant St. to city for park
- safety in parks
- no synthetic turf should ever be considered – this is keeping with a healthy lifestyle
- modify zoning to require green space not just “open space”
- more open space!
- Walker Pond restore and connect to river
- green space as part of Walker Pond development
- improved infrastructure!!!
- preserve and clean Whitney Park
- put Miracle Field in Boyd Park
- playground for older kids
- expand public library; revitalize stores; deal with old police station
- add park
- we need full-time, long term, consistent professional planning and oversight for our urban forest
- trash management – a lot of litter ends up in the river, road repairs – not only in the square but around the town
- be better
- we need to resolve the issue of the North Branch library
- reuse North Branch library playground

# Public Survey August 2022

## Q1. What more can the City do to meet community open space and recreation needs?

Choice	Responses	
a. Better and more consistent park signage.	50	29.24%
b. Better maintenance of playing fields (natural grass and artificial turf surfaces).	37	21.64%
c. Better maintenance of hard surface courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball, etc.).	37	21.64%
d. Better playground maintenance.	37	21.64%
e. Improve accessibility for people with disabilities.	55	32.16%
f. Add to the urban tree canopy.	137	80.12%
g. Address climate change threats to open spaces.	98	57.31%
h. Increase the amount of flexible park space for unstructured recreation (e.g., pick-up games), community events (e.g. concerts, movie night), or other public or business-sponsored activities (e.g. yoga or other exercise classes).	104	60.82%
i. Add small pocket parks around the community.	123	71.93%
j. Other	42	24.56%

If other please specify:

Response (presented as provided by survey taker)

We could have so many more street trees. I was driving down Brattle Street the other day and noticed what a huge difference all the old trees make to the feel. Adding more street trees will help us get that feel eventually! I would really love to have more public or business-sponsored exercise activities. I would also love for the town to offer bike tune-up and maintenance classes. Or gardening classes - maybe about drought-tolerant plants, how to make your yard more friendly to pollinators, etc.

The West Side of Watertown is completely barren of trees. It's all just asphalt and concrete. There are no shade trees, or very few left. Many street trees are horrifically pruned by NSTAR. The town needs to make planting strips wider, or consider clusters of trees in spots, perhaps to slow traffic and provide pockets of shade to our overheating streets. Watertown should invest heavily and urgently in urban forestry—check out Somerville's efforts—they have made amazing progress in a high density city. Consider one side of street trees with wider planting strips. Install curbs to protect street trees. Ticket people who pave over planting strips or remove Watertown owned green space for parking. Protect the mature trees that we do have left. Consider climate change and don't let the developers destroy existing urban forests as they expand and profit. Besides the need for investment in Watertown trees, we also need a town center that is designed for pedestrians and bikers and local shops, not just an intersection of multi land streets that provide only for cars and drivers. Invest in independent businesses.

No more competitive sports. We have enough. Please add more activities for WOMEN, children and people like my daughter (autism). The only space for differently abled is the park for the blind (that benefits only Perkins because of their large tax base).

More areas that allow for off leash dog walking

Permanent pickle ball courts and beginner lessons in pickle ball.

All playgrounds or open spaces for kids should be fenced in to keep kids with disabilities, such as Autism, safe.

Educational outreach about how to maintain trees - both street trees and those on private property.

Encouragement to plant pollinators in the space between sidewalk and road.

Avoid further gentrification and displacement of people due to increased "beautification" or green efforts.

- 
1. Track surface is showing signs of age and is uneven
  2. Need for clearer signage at Arsenal Park; unclear if picnic tables that are not under shelters can be used if available or if reservations are needed. It would be nice to have at least a few picnic tables that are available to park visitors without reservations.
  3. More community garden plots
- 

ADD COMMUNITY GARDEN SPACES  
EXTEND DEALTRY POOL SUMMER SEASON

---

I am concerned that Watertown has see move in an unusual amount of Labs in the past few years. Who is monitoring the number of Labs coming, in proportion with other businesses and services (run by local residents) that we need accessible for a healthy lifestyle in our town. Who is monitoring what is coming out of all the loud chimneys above these Lab buildings? Is there a long term strategy with this phenomenon, or is this a short sighted trend to attract investors who have money? If we want to have a healthy city and environment, we need to leave the trees and green spaces alone, nature just needs us to maintain it not destroy it and replace it with artificial and non native plants, and we need less labs. This feels like a bandaid when we can prevent the wound, and I don't endorse it.

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Improve and increase the number of splash pads around the city.

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Easier walking trails, well lit and benches along the way for the older community, especially along the river walk.

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Specifically: increase protected bike lanes and turn more parking spaces into outdoor dining. Consider that the city government should not legislate open space for everyone's private use (cars) but for people. Also, think deeply about how to reduce traffic congestion by the elimination of parking minimums that promotes denser and more walkable developments that allows for better open spaces activities. Finally, focus on crosswalk transitions that require safety improvements by engineering-for example: raised crosswalks.

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Additional public restrooms at parks

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A public kayak stand on the Charles River so more people can get out on the river and paddle around.

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Boston has several outdoor exercise parks along the Charles River. Carving out small parcels at Victory Field, Howe Park, Sullivan, Filipello Park and along our portion of the river would likely be appreciated by community members of varying ages. Moxley Field already has the

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I'd love it if Howe dog park had water and poop bags available

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Increase the number of large parks.

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Improve Watertown Square - looks so unappealing- engage local artists for ideas. Change the parking and create a more open green space, Maybe around the Charles.

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Checkout Needham's project on Great Plain Ave.

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Pass an artificial turf ban. Synthetic turf is toxic, creates heat islands hotter than asphalt, and cannot be properly disposed. No one should be playing on synthetic turf the chemicals used in artificial turf which include PFAS, Lead, and Cadmium, are connected to a wide range of human and environmental health issues. We need to educate the public and athletic directors on the reasons why AF should never be an option.

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1) Even tho it's DCR territory, Watertown should do something about the trash (mostly bottles) that's thrown into the river from the wooden decks. Please at least sponsor signage that says: "If you carry it in, carry it out. Please do not litter." Or even better, if readable to maintain by whatever organization, put garbage cans on decks.

2) please do away with the blinking colorful lights on the trees in Watertown Sq. They look outdated and tasteless. Warm white or yellowish lights would be a lot more elegant and tasteful. Heard from many people over the years that they don't like the current lights.

Thank you!

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1. More community gardens and pollinator garden spaces around the city!
  2. Better maintenance of (or better yet- an upgrade to) the skate park behind the Arsenal Yards complex. Roller skating became extremely popular throughout the pandemic, and skate areas encourage community members to start skating & attract skaters from all over to visit Watertown!
- 

More dog parks - areas where dogs can run leash-free with grass/ground cover.

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We are in need of space to skate! Whether it's a dedicated smooth area of concrete or a revamped skate park, there is currently no dedicated space. Arsenal needs a lot of work before that's actually skateable for folks on quads (four wheels!).

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Watertown pool! Belmont, Lexington and Newton all have one.

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Remove parking lots and Reduce parking minimums for new construction to facilitate the production of more green space and space for trees.

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Small pocket parks around the community are really important. There aren't enough smaller spaces for gathering. In East Watertown, for example, it's unfortunate that a ton of green space is taken up by a country club, and there are no other public parks within a short walking distance from there.

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Add water spigot to Howard ST. dog park and improve maintenance.

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Provide off-leash dog areas in parks just like Belmont does in PQ.

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lighting for walking paths  
(environmentally friendly - solar powered? movement sensor)

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I would love to see more opportunities for gardening that are cared for by members of the Watertown community (community gardening, pollinator gardens, fruit trees, etc). These might be part of existing public spaces, new pocket parks, or partnerships with private entities (developers, nonprofits, etc). Gardening in community is a powerful way to bring residents together and build a sense of shared community.

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We need large green fields to act as replacement backyards for those being lost or reduced in Sq ft. Development is swapping out soil for asphalt across the city. Condoning this trend negatively impacts ecological homeostasis for all living entities, now and for future potential. This conversion exacerbates local climate change ills- human density, heat, trees, wildlife, mental health, real estate value, vectors, invasives, disease transmission, soil microbes, etc. A continued failure to take advantage of the rare opportunities to secure large parcels of green land and to install mini groves of tall native trees (not wasting money on aesthetic pocket parks only a few use) is a failure to all of Watertown forever. Attempting to use aesthetics of diluted greenery or single-use recreational options to ameliorate the purposeful choice to sacrifice real greenspace for development is conspicuously injurious stewardship. We had compatibly poor greenspace sqft per capita stats which have only accelerated. We need to start purchasing & preserving large tracts of multi-use fields & forest or be honest about the damage of our decisions.

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Lights at Arsenal Park, a fully handicap accessible playground

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More outdoor community gathering spaces - including space for outdoor dining.

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Remove asphalt and replace with greenery. Our streets are too wide and ugly - beautification with greenery would be safer, prettier, and healthier for the planet.

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Please add garbage bins and collection along the Charles River walkways. I know this is DCR administered but can the town contribute to keeping the green spaces clean and free of garbage?

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Upgrade parks based on designs of landscape architect professionals and committing to excellence in plantings and hard scape. Be more creative in design of playgrounds and use natural materials.

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Sponsor more outdoor performances of the arts in park spaces in summer, fall, organized with Watertown arts organizations.

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Better sidewalks and street edge-to-curbs-to-green space-to-sidewalk. As a walker for recreation, exercise, wellness and building neighbor connections, I am finding the safety of our sidewalks to be in questions. As well as our roads. Many have huge potholes, no curbs or safe edging, and gravel everywhere which is easy to trip on. The "yard space" between the road and sidewalk is also questionable as many are not tended to, graded or structured. invest in a community pool that is owned and operated by Watertown -- not the MDC pool. Setting aside the MDC which is only open a few weeks a year, there were three local pools in Watertown. Two have been eliminated in Watertown (Mt. Auburn club - sold to a developer, Boston Sports Club - sold to a developer). The Boys and Girls Club is a resource for the kids but not an overall community asset. We need a community pool.

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We also need better biking infrastructure. There is inadequate bike parking and insufficient protected bike lanes. Developers should be required to put in shower facilities and enclosed bike parking to encourage bike commuting to the area.

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more trash cans.

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Add more benches made of sustainable materials to avoid deterioration & repairs. Add more signage regarding dog leash laws.

Add more signage along the Charles River, from both directions  
( near the Perkins path in Braille- wire railing. Located near the rowboat statues. Many bicycling there & not using the bike path.

---

Design is rather outdated, little shade & not inviting seating whether for socializing or recreation spectators, water fountains, trees not well maintained, Need dog-friendly spaces & waste receptacle options. Different goals if open green space vs recreation including addressing noise levels

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Add lights to the bike/walk path behind Whitney Towers Apartments toward Watertown Square. Perhaps motion sensor lights? We walk early and it's really dark there.

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Please add more trash cans in public spaces for trash, dog waste, and beyond. There is not one trash can along the Braille trail on Charles River Rd.

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Stop approving large buildings, leave the small amount of remaining open space protected.

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There should be NO new artificial turf either for either replacement purposes or new playing areas. Dangerous for children and harmful to the environment (heat islands, etc.)

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create more pollinator corridors and invest in meaningful landscaping that connect the residents to nature

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Stop making corporate, privately-owned "parks". This is putting lipstick on a biolab pig. We don't want biolabs, especially ones owned by venture capital and Wall Street Investment Firms that are buying up Watertown. WaterTOWNites got together and refused a WalMart. This is the direction we wanted not overdevelopment, horizon-blocking level 3 biolabs that are high risk, and potentially dangerous for our citizens. We do not want to be known as the animal research facilities town (Water Street biolab and many others).

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All open and recreational spaces should be reviewed for how well design comports with principles of universal design so that can be enjoyed by all users (not just bare minimum ADA accessibility).

---

Develop strategy/regulations (buffer zones?) to protect residential neighborhoods from visual/auditory/scale impacts of large developments.

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More trees and open space. Suburban, not urban.

---

Work with Oakley to decrease use of chemicals and adopt environmentally beneficial practices

---

More picnic tables and benches in the parks around town would be great.

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Some way for the general public to be aware of the availability of these spaces periodically during the year, and events or usage available.

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Allow leashed dogs to use the parks. It is beyond frustrating that there is no grass in Watertown where my children and my dog are allowed to be at the same time. Dogs are part of people's families but are only allowed to be in the dog parks, this doesn't foster a feeling of community and neighborhood friendliness

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**Q2. Are there age groups that could be better served by the open space and recreation programs and amenities in Watertown?**

Choice	Responses	
a. Youth (ages 4-12)	45	36.59%
b. Teens (ages 13-18)	56	45.53%
c. Adults aged 19-35	53	43.09%
d. Adults aged 36-59	64	52.03%
e. Adults aged 60+	76	61.79%

Please provide comments below on how these age groups could be better served:

Response (presented as provided by survey taker)

There are very few rec or city-sponsored exercise programs for adults and those that are offered usually fill up really fast. This could benefit all age groups: I would love it if the town would offer low-cost kayaking or canoeing or maybe a place for people to rent a kayak storage spot/dock (I'd get a kayak if I could keep it somewhere on the water!). I feel like we're lucky to be near the Charles but actually getting out on the water is not that accessible to most people still.

We don't want toxic cancer causing artificial turf in our town, we want real outdoor space. We want not only fields of great—we want tons of rain gardens, nature walks, bird filled parks, pollinator gardens, trees, urban wildlife learning /educational walks, many more community parks with spaces for live music, small concerts, public art displays, places with shade! All age groups will benefit from more open actual green space that is not just geared toward middle school or High School sports.

Again, when you list "Adults", this means Adult MEN who have basketball, baseball, football, hockey etc. There is a space at Casey Park for girls, it is a dilapidated cement hopskotch patch that no one uses.

Organized events at all the parks such as bicycle training (how to ride and ride safely); obstacle courses; etc.

Community exercise programs

Current activities provided by the recreation department for kids is great. Adults can find and create their own activities.

Adding a disc golf course could serve all ages

TRANSPORTATION TO PARKS AND FACILITIES

COMMUNITY GARDENS WITH RAISED BEDS

COOLING CENTER ACCESS

Recreational equipment and options for adults

For teens and preteens, more walkable streets and gathering places within walking distance of school.

Improved accessibility

Teens need constructive destination points. Seniors would benefit having more dedicated spaces to encourage fitness and socialization

Compared to neighboring communities, Watertown's parks, playgrounds, and green spaces are lacking. Check out Cambridge's parks.

Better maintained athletic fields are needed for our kids

What about Tai Chi in the park?

More spaces to play tennis, paddle tennis and pickle ball.

All age groups could be better served. Watertown in my opinion requires car usage too often for people to actually enjoy it. Even growing up here I had to sit in dark parks and hide from cops (bc parks close at night?) to hang out with my friends. We didnt and don't have places to go and things to do because this city isn't dense or walkable. the reduction of parking and introduction of density more flexible zoning could change that. It would also make it more walkable and allow for better chance encounters and increased retail. I mean, where's the nightlife? we have great biking and walkable potential to not increase DUI's.

Space to offer more activities for adults: outdoor exercrise and movies. There is a lot of stuff for kids, but we need more for adults.

Just keep up with the current rec department activities. As an adult, I don't take part in structured activities, just enjoy a walk or run in the parks/pathways.

We need more green space for walking around away from sidewalks and traffic, under shade.

Upgrades to playgrounds needed. Artificial turf should be abolished as it's terrible for climate change perspective. Planting more trees everywhere is great. How about space for a community garden?

Move skate park to a location closer to the age demographic who use it the most (middle school). Turn library's (east/west) into teen/Rec centers. Stop taking away parks/fields (see cunniff school's lack of ball field).

---

The City has made some nice improvements in the parks for children. The new rink coming to Moxley Field will be well received too. That said, the Cornelia Warren Field in Waltham was very nicely done and might serve as a template for future park improvements geared towards youth.

The outdoor exercise parks noted above might encourage more use by adults (and healthy lifestyles).

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Better jogging/walking connectivity through parks and sidewalks.

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Walking space, more activities for older adults

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Activities- ie Prospect Hill In Waltham, walking trails with more flowers and trees.

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I think we need green spaces that can be used by all ages and enjoyed by the entire community.

---

Walking spaces, more dog parks and dog friendly spaces.

---

Smaller parks for frisbee, skating, or general get together that aren't in the way of playground activity or a team sport. Need something more relaxed and accessible.

---

Rec softball leagues for adults who are new to town.

---

Accessibility, benches to stop & rest, shade trees. Getting around watertown w/any physical impairments isn't easy. Going to a park is impossible

---

Arsenal Yards has added a few items in this category, but I'd love to see more open space amenities for people in their 20s and 30s... open mics, concerts, movie nights, etc. Also, Watertown, especially East Watertown, is sorely in need of an independent, local coffee shop! One that has outdoor seating and a community feel. The closest thing is Sofra, which is amazing in its own right, but it's not exactly a "hangout" space.

---

Create smaller pocket open spaces, like meditation gardens that invite nature and people to sit and enjoy the outdoors. Also add small lot neighborhood community gardens with raised beds for growing vegetables and flowers

---

There is a gap for kids that outgrow the playground but are not traditionally athletic or into team sports (basketball, baseball etc.). We go to Beaver Brook for playing in the brook, tree climbing, bike riding, skateboarding and rollerskating around the field. There is are so many places to hike in surrounding towns - Lone Tree, BB North, Rock Meadow etc - not sure if anywhere comparable in Watertown.

---

Better playground space for kids (see, eg, the recent renovation of Glacken Playground in Cambridge as a model) and more casual space for people in their 20s and 30s to gather.

---

Possible to add another swimming pool?

Lifeguard training at Boys and Girls Club?

---

We need more public plazas in high traffic pedestrian areas like Watertown and Coolidge Squares

---

I think that all age groups are served in these programs.

---

We live in West Watertown and there is no access to any official park aside from the cemetery, which we cannot use due to dogs not being allowed even on a leash.

---

It would be wonderful to have parks better serve the needs of adults through specific facilities (more walking trails, benches and picnic tables that aren't permit-only, community garden beds) as well as programs such as yoga and exercise classes in the parks.

---

Large Multi-use recreation fields, Adult men's softball fields, Stands for portable bbq get together in fire-proofed public patio with cement seating & tables w/ chess board decoration, public trash can in targeted street locations & food trucks, community gardens, arbor w/ picnic area, wildlife supporting shrubs, large evergreen trees, living holiday decor by planting M/F American holly, mini groves of short trees, grasses for bird nesting materials, filtered water bottle refill stations, shallow heated running water bird fountains in Winter/Heatwave, convert municipal landscaping at schools & town hall to model efforts, connect our bike path to the statewide rail trail in Waltham & Cambridge, offer free classes for adults to learn to swim/bike, add backyard game equipment to Library of Things, volleyball/badminton court in summer, indoor & outdoor cornhole, shuffle board, fee-based Scuba certification in pools, remove the River dams & dedicate it back to original Native Americans, dog parks divided into big vs small dogs.

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Adult recreational play structures like D Street Park in Boston. Unstructured recreational fields, creative play structures for children and interesting structures for teens and young adults like park core.

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---

Accessibility as far as accommodating mobility issues and presenting programs that speak to the diverse languages and communities represented in Watertown. Better accessibility public transportation wose would be ideal as well

---

It is in Watertown's interest to provide safe outdoor spaces for children in the community. Teens who are engaged in recreational activities are less likely to get in trouble. Young adults are future homeowners and business owners, whom the town should be trying to attract to its amenities.

---

Many in these age groups are neighborhood walkers. Please refer to comment above. Also note that many roads do not have 4-way stops that would help with speeding and the safety of crossing those roads. Intersection of School St. and Maplewood is a prime example. Families use this intersection to get to school AND it is a prime cut through for traffic to Mt. Auburn and Grove.

---

A pool will help adults begin fitness programs and continue fitness programs as they age. More open space for activities like yoga, tai chi or partner dancing. More tree canopy on the streets and in our neighborhoods to encourage people to walk. Better maintenance of sidewalks and curb cuts so they aren't trip hazards for seniors. Residential ordinance requiring shoveling so people can safely walk year round.

---

The open spaces should be accessible by people with disabilities and should provide shady spaces to rest.

---

- 1) More public events
  - 2) Places to drink outside
  - 3) More streamlined permitting for public events
  - 4) Bike lanes, or pave Mt. Auburn street
- 

Provide more sustainable picnic benches in parks. Many seniors & others cannot afford to eat out. Having a clean, safe, place anyone can share a picnic. Picnic tables that accommodate someone in a wheelchair & needs more space. Signage to offer your bench seat to an elder or handicapped person if bench is full. Just like on a bus. Add signage take your trash with you. If trash receptacles are full, do not leave trash or receive a fine.

---

Part of it is design of facilities, part of it is programming...we have no community or rec. center and ages are mostly split, but - Swimming & tennis are great for all ages, ping-pong, bocce is very social and low impact, pickle ball continues growing in popularity (but many "surprising" injuries -warmups stretching important- and can be loud), need places for family biking & learning how to ride, yoga & tai-chi (is not fun on Art Turf). Lots of ideas, but thanks for survey.

---

See lighting comment above.

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More open space for walking

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more park and picnic benches that invite people to be outside

---

Girls and women are not served at all. Most facilities in Watertown are male oriented, and has nothing to do with age.

---

See answer above...universal design will allow all users: older residents, people with disabilities, stroller pushers, etc. to access and make use of town amenities. Having accessible parking adjacent to the open space amenity

---

Open public spaces should be accessible for those of all ages to enjoy and participate.

---

Easy and safe access to outdoor spaces esp near the elder housing bldgs in town. Most of them want to be able to walk outside but unable to as nothing is close to them to access.

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More frequent seating, good, welcoming, visible, large, signage

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There should be more options for intramural sports for kids that don't want to participate in the expensive and heavy time commitment of organized sports leagues in Watertown

---

### Q3. How do you typically get to your favorite open space and recreation spot in Watertown?

Choice	Responses	
a. Walking	90	52.33%
b. Biking	16	9.30%
c. Driving	57	33.14%
d. Public Transit	6	3.49%
e. Other	3	1.74%

If other please specify:

Response (presented as provided by survey taker)
I drive to Whitney Hill Forest.
na
sometimes I walk, sometimes I drive
both walking and bus
I don't spend time in Watertown spaces anymore because it no longer meets my family's needs, I drive out.
Depends on which. Drive and walk.
We are cycling enthusiasts and are very grateful for all the safe bikes lanes and paths. We would appreciate even more, in particular, protected bikes lanes.
biking
Used to walk & bike more, but there's not great bike connections, little shade, lots of sidewalk repairs needed often w/no curbs-green buffer, little shade, not great walk signals, too much litter, so have taken to driving much more (and lots of road construction).
While I can bike/walk a family member who has mobility challenges relies on driving and accessible parking spaces being located proximate to the amenity

Q4. Please list your TOP THREE open space and recreation areas in Watertown and what you love about them:

Response (presented as provided by survey taker)
The connector bike path from Fresh Pond down Arsenal - very convenient to my house
The river bike path - So pretty and so nice to be by the water! Just wish it was easier to get there by bike. For me, all the bike routes there have at least one street with a lot of potholes which makes me nervous to ride.
The area by Greenough Boulevard with picnic tables - I wish there were more open, shaded places in Watertown to gather with people.
Mt Auburn Cemetery: beautiful, easy to walk, quiet, many gorgeous mature trees, places to sit.
Whitney Hill Forest: surrounded by trees, quiet, interesting.
Path along the river walking west from Square: nice long walk, pretty scenery, some great mature trees, shady most of the way, sounds of river, birds; feels social because lots of people take walks there.
Beaver Brook Reservation—even though it's in Belmont, it's the only open space nearby the West side, walking along the Charles River, cannot think of a third, sadly!
Filippello park, open space and dog parks
MDC pool (not even Watertown controlled), we abutt Casey but hate the loud hockey swearing, and the pucks that fly into my backyard. Please return the hockey rink back to a tennis court OR a park for specially abled children. :)
Along the Charles River. Saltonstall(sp) park, bike path Fillepello park.
Whitney Hill Park - hiking and dog waking, love the forested area and walking trails!
philapelo arsenal
Saltonstall Park - very convenient for me, love the regular programming like concerts, faire on the square, and farmers market.
Howe Park - very convenient for me, great playground for my kids, great open space for them to run around in.
Arsenal Park - it's a drive to get there, but great place for playdates, love the playground and the splash pad.
1. Walk along the river from the dam to Bridge St and back. Most scenic, and least urban.
2. DCR path that runs behind Watertown Mall parallel to Arsenal St. Most convenient and a good basic walk
3. Filippello Park - convenient and shady.
The Charles River path provides beauty and shade. Saltonstall concerts, Faire on the Square, Mt. Auburn Cemetery for peace and beauty; Arsenal Park - Watertown arts market

---

Charles River path, great for running

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I like spaces with a lot of shade and safe for my autistic child.

---

1. The paths along the Charles (I believe these are DCR and not actually Watertown-owned, but this is hands-down my favorite outdoor recreation space in Watertown) - beautiful, close by, offer space to walk, run, sit, etc.
2. the track at Victory Field - offers an option for running or walking that's off the streets/sidewalks. Feels welcoming and open to all
3. Saltonstall Park - for the summer concerts & Farmers Market

---

I like the Greenway and Filipello Park

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Victory field, Lowell playground, walking path by the river. Nice, relaxing and easy to access.

---

Victory Field -- walking around the track

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1. Charles River path and open spaces along it because of natural setting, birds, and long continuous path good for running and bicycling
2. Victory Field -use track for running, and general feeling of a sense of community from seeing different ages and kinda of people using it
3. Squibnocket park - lots of flexible open space

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River Walk that starts by bus terminal - many reasons to love  
Dealtry Pool - love to swim - no where else to go all year  
Arsenal Park - do things with groups/ other people, Arts Market

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River walkway except in winter when too icy to walk there, filipello fields and dog park, Sullivan playground and baseball field

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Paths along river ; Mt Auburn cemetery

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Grove Street

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Braille Trail- great design, space to hang out in nature  
The river deck next to Braille trail-space to observe the nature and stretch  
The walking path along the river - beautiful nature and well maintained trails/paths with benches to take a break while walking

---

I also like the trees with lights in the square. They cheer up dull winter evenings well!

---

Casey Park - size of park, night time lighting  
Boyd park - size, unstructured space, variety of uses, trees  
Charles River greenway - walking , water views, shared use path, bridges

---

Filippello Park. multi use, diverse population using  
Little Greenough Blvd. Beautiful walks  
Rail trail. safe transportation bike/walkway, beautiful

---

Victory Field- best maintained and nicest facility

---

Victory field. Multi sports  
Fillipello waterpark  
Casey park. Multi sport

---

Walking paths along the river and behind arsenal st. River walls are pretty and peaceful but it would be nice to have better- maintained some spots to sit

---

1. Charles River walk-
2. Arsenal Park-splash pad, commander's mansion, could be great
3. Hosmer playground-age appropriate, close, new

---

I use to like going to walk along the river. I go to the Watertown public pool. I use to like the Arsenal park but the traffic to get there has become an issue.

---

Victory field - variety of things too did and synthetic turf  
Moxley - proximity and large open space  
Fillipelo - variety and walking path around field

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Charles River Greenway: so many different ways to enjoy (can walk, sit & read, watch the ducks/river), both functional as a walking/biking path between different areas as well as recreational

Saltonstall Park: lots of benches! the farmer's market and other events that happen there though not sure if that counts :) I like that there's a larger open space which allows for use by lots of people at the same time for different purposes. I also love that it's close by to a retail area (& the library!), so I'm often around there and decide to stop by for a quick visit. The linear park as well!!

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Mount Auburn Cemetery

Saltonstall Park

Whitney Hill Park

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Saltonstall Park

Filippello Park

Victory Field

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Victory Field, Saltonstall Park and Filippello

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The path by the Charles River is where I usually run. It feels insulated from car traffic and car noise and is genuinely so nice to be surrounded by nature. I unfortunately don't have two others but replicating a reduction in vehicle noise pollution and increased native vegetation with variation would be fantastic.

---

Victory complex for proximity and turf in the fall and winter. Summer on the turf is unbearably hot rendering the space useless

Casey park for the hockey rink; the new rink in closer proximity to the schools will be great

Whitney Hill for the trees giving a sense of serenity amongst the hustle of all the other parks

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Saltonstall Park; Victory Field, Filippello Park

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Victory Field: The track and I've signed up for the town's pickleball in the past

Saltonstall Park: Farmers Market and Concerts

Bike path: I can bike safely around town

---

River walk, Victory field, Saltonstall park. Good open areas and they are good places for a walk/run through or relax/hang out.

---

Whitney Hill park- nice and cool

Victory Field - my son loves the playground

Moxley Field - good playground

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Along the Charles - it has long uninterrupted stretches for walking

The park behind Arsenal Yard is very nice with lots of open areas to picnic or relax

---

Bemis park (best combo of park land). Casey park (good open fields) Lowell park (good mix of use).

---

Bemis Park, Victory Field, Ryan Arena

Both Bemis park and Victory Field are very well maintained. The addition of batting cages to these and other parks was a nice idea.

Between Watertown Youth Hockey, Learn to Skate programs and the school teams, the Ryan Arena gets a lot of use. Over all, its a great facility (the locker rooms could benefit from a cosmetic makeover).

---

Arsenal Park

Bemis Park

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Arlington has well connected paths from neighborhoods to spaces. There's no way for me to get to nice spaces without driving from Belmont St.

---

Victory field

Saltonstall

Arsenal

---

The Charles River walk in a loop between Galen and Bridge Streets -- great exercise walk

---

Walking along the River paths (This is DCR property, but it is IN Watertown)

Saltonstall Park - Summer concerts and Farmers Market

Victory Field - track.

All are walking distance from my house.

---

1. Linear Park/Community Path/ Greenway - provides safe and comfortable bike-pedestrian connections.

---



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Unfortunately not much. None are appealing except for new Arsenal. It's the same at all the parks. No flowers , no color, no activity stations, no picnic areas, no water attractions like fountains.  
Create meditation walks, zen stations , a place to breathe around beauty.

---

Whitney Woods - beautiful trees and nature.  
Saltonstall Park - Community gathering space near my home  
DCR Charles River pathway

---

Bike/walking path along river  
Gore Place  
Victory Field

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1. Mt Auburn Cemetery- beautifully kept, quiet, and great to visit every season.
  2. Saltonstall Park- lovely green space in the heart of Watertown
  3. Arsenal Community Park- great amenities for all visitors, whether it's the playground, skatepark, or admiring the garden on the tennis courts. Would love to see more renovation happen around the tennis courts/ community gardens to help those spaces thrive!
- 

Arsenal park is one of my favs because of the trees and landscape

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Whitney park, Charles river walk.

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Oakley Country Club grounds in Winter. It is beautiful.

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Fillepello park

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Victory Fields! Excellent multi-purpose area. Have done training sessions there, skate on the tennis and basketball courts, enjoy games, and can walk the track. Also excellent when entertaining family members with kids.  
Filippello (sp?) is a gorgeous area with a lot of room. Big fan, just not walking distance to my home, have to drive over. Beaver Brook as the third for a picnic spot.

---

Filipino - scooter and soccer

Cunniff - newest / best playground

Salsberry park - concerts, town events and farmers market

---

Casey park- close to home.

Bike path-feels like I'm in nature and a good walk.

Arsenal park, nice oasis and place to meet friends, but fields could be used better.

---

Charles River Path

Arsenal Park

Saltonstall Park

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Fillipello - pretty accessible, shade available

Dearth of options in the east end

---

My comment is general. Topic: Transportation is so critical to any age., and disability is so critical . Without transportation you can have Everything I open spaces. Ie: movie night let's start with Friday night fortenns, sat young adults. Sunday night for Elderly. Now without Transportation there is no way to get to movie night. So maybe use Town vehicles for Transportation . Maybe they go around and pick up thoughts that especially need ride. And also for disability persons. That need ride.

I realize these are just thoughts however they can be worked on to become a reality.

---

1. Watertown Farmers' Market — I love going to the farmers' market on Wednesdays in the summer. This is a great place to wander around, check out local vendors, and meet up with friends.
2. Watertown-Cambridge Greenway — This bike path is fantastic, and such a great way to connect Watertown to Fresh Pond and beyond.
3. Arsenal Yards

Overall, many of the parks in Watertown seem to be in desperate need of updating!

---

Charle River pathway

Gore place (not completely in watertown)

Both of these are great for walking and feeling closer to nature

Victory Field for its versatility

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Victory Field, Moxley, Saltonstall. - in walking distance.

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The newly-extended Watertown community path, Victory Field, Filippello Park. All open around the clock for use by anyone and relatively well-maintained.

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Greenway - safe paths for long walks

Filippello Park - shaded walks are a blessing in hot weather

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1. Saltonstall Park and Soldier's Monument area are wonderful for Farmers' Market, concerts, and relaxing on benches.

2. Howard St. dog park

3. Filippello Park for children-water spray and picnic area.

---

Arsenal Park is prettiest park we have an also very close to restaurants I frequent.

Filippello Park is also big and pretty and has dog park. My kids play sports there.

Charles River and other Community/Bike Paths are great ways to get around and enjoy the outdoors without having to use a car

---

I often ride my bike along the Charles River.

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Charles River walk, Saltonstall Park and Victory field area.

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PQ in Belmont because there's a great dog community and enough space for everyone (playground, soccer, baseball, dogs). I have not had many positive experiences in the Watertown dog park on Pleasant St.

Saltonstall park is nice, but too far away from West Watertown where we live.

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Victory Field: great surface for walking; nice to have tot lot nearby

River walk: nice boardwalks overlooking river

---

The River paths and Victory Field (which isn't a park, really). There's no other local parks near me.

---

Filippello Park -- very close to my house, and I enjoy the multiple playgrounds, mature shade trees, and mix of recreational uses there (dog park, playing field, playgrounds, splash pad, walking paths, etc).

Charles River Greenway -- such a beautiful trail and I love that I can use it for practical bike transportation to Newton, Waltham, and west Watertown as well as for recreation.

Watertown Greenway -- a wonderful new trail near my house that I use regularly both to walk to Fresh Pond and Cambridge and to travel to Watertown Square (typically by bike when using for transportation and by foot/stroller when using recreationally).

---

1. Victory Field - love to see citizens taking advantage of this beautiful space.

2. Saltonstall Park - love the location, center of Watertown.

3. Lowell School - front lawn - hopefully that won't change with the new construction.

---

Victory field (love the kids playground);

Saltonstall park (love the farmers market and Weds concert);

Mount Auburn cemetery

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I love everything along the river - I don't know if that counts as one long park or several! I love the length of continuous trail for walking or biking, the many access points along the way to street connections or other path connections, the beautiful range of other residents I see also enjoying the space. I don't have a kid or a dog, so I don't go to the many other parks that are more specifically designated as playgrounds or dog parks or athletic fields, but I love that the parks along the river feel welcoming to everyone, regardless of life stage or family status!

---

1)Moxley - large multi-use greenspace, used by all ages, geese resting area, connects to bike path, organized sports, natural beauty across seasons, well-attended, near students/housing/seniors/neighborhood/buses.

2)River bridges- watching wildlife interact, learning about ecology from signs, birdwatching, sunsets, viewing points w/ benches, running around surrounding paths, view of houses/streets blocked to allow nature respite, quiet wildlife sounds, etc.

3)Victory field- running track

---

Whitney Hill, Walker Pond and Arsenal Park. The opportunity for passive recreation and birdwatching at the first two and the diversity and ability to be able to barbecue at the last one.

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People on the most part are good about picking up after their dogs, but not all. People should be fined if they don't. Plus the park down the street from me (Bemis?) says no walking dogs in the park and they do anyway. I even saw a mother and daughter with a bag of bread feeding the birds that just end up shitting where the kids play ball. The same on the banks of the Charles River next to the swimming pool. Signs don't help, they ignore or cannot read.

---

Charles River path - place to bike and run separated from car traffic; nice views of the river  
Arsenal Park - community garden, shaded place to walk/sit. Would be great to add bike and pedestrian connections between Arsenal Park and Greenough Blvd river path.

Victory Field Track and tennis courts

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Victory Field - great for multiple uses including Whitney Hill

Charles River - amazing to have access to the river, but not very pretty/safe on the trails

Sadly not other options near me...

---

Saltonstall Park because it is large and well established trees and tree cover as well as large open grass fields.

Commander's Masion garden because it has well established tree canopy and delightful grape arbor feature.

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Charles River Waterfront Park

Rail Trail to Fresh Pond

Arsenal Park

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1) Squibnocket Park by the river: , I just wish more events happened there.

2) Arsenal Park has alot of growth potential as well particularly in partnership with AY & MCA and such.

The idea of getting more diverse representation of community in both spaces in age, language and cultures is an exciting prospect I hope is explored

---

Arsenal Park--near the riverfront and now, near Arsenal Yards-an outdoor area with beauty, space and potential for community gathering!

All the areas near the river...

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#1. Paul Dudley Bike Path. #2. The new bike path to fresh pond. #3. All bike paths/lanes in Watertown.

---

The river -- its shady, cool, natural habitat. People can walk, run and bike. It provides access to other activities -- canoeing, restaurants, playing fields.

Filipello Park -- it's open, shady, it invites you in. Places for families and kids in a variety of activities.

Least like: Victory Field -- dislike the landscaping around important recreation resources -- artificial turf is hot and creates a heat island, not enough trees for shade, few places to sit out of the sun. It's not a welcoming space.

Families have to drive there for their kids to play on the playground.

---

The park next to the city hall.

Fillipelo park, nice open space with shady spots and sitting. Easily accessible.

---

1) Fillepillo Park, is wonderful... but would be cool to have food vendors, or other services on the weekends there

2) the bike path from waltham - Cambridge through Watertown is a huge win

3) The pool is very nice.

---

Arsenal Park

Saltonstall Park

Charles River

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Arsenal Park near Marshall's. Great area to walk, kids play games, rent a place to picnic. Would like sustainable benches where there is ample space to place.

Tables & chairs outside the public library.

Walkway along the Charles River , starting at Watertown Square towards Perkins School. Like to see more signage about curb your dog & pick up or risk a fine.

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Charles River Greenway (great there are sections that are -supposed to. be- separate walk vs bikes), Commander's Mansion & Whitney Hill (small) provide "quiet" green where you can find some respite although these places are losing this with diminished views and higher noise levels. (Grateful for "Braille Trail"-DCR Phase improvements). Former Arsenal Park with trees, water spray pad, par course, tennis, bocce, grills - needs help/reno, and noise from lab hoods now intrude, rec. design & equipment is outdated. But these places are good for bird-wildlife, not limited to walking in a circle, use old amphitheater for reading-stretching-sitting with snack, can walk dogs, park on N Beacon with connections to Greenough & Soldier's Field & Nonantum... Arsenal Park & Victory Field for recreation, but little shade & often not available. (Would love to see tennis & bocce improved at Cannalunga Park. Wish I could use yacht club)

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Charles river reservation: unique because of the river; peaceful; trees; easily accessible;

Mt. Auburn Cemetery: diverse landscape; superbly maintained; absence of cars.

Arsenal Park: lots of potential but under-resourced.

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Beaver Brook Water Playground - for our 4 yo granddaughter when she visits.

Walk/bike paths getting to and from the river paths and Nonantum Road.

Soldier's Field Road playground, water park and walking path.

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Braille Trail --

Bike path along Pleasant St.

Little Greenough

Love being by the river.

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Areas around the river, small parks, wooded areas

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River Walk- both sides of Watertown Square. Appreciate the river itself and the tree canopies

Bemis Playground- for recreation and how it serves families

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Riverfront - great for walking dog and running

Victory Field - playing tennis - 5 tennis courts

Arsenal Park - tennis and access to the river

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Brail Trail

Stallion Park

Local Pocket Park

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Casey Park (until the hockey rink went in). Daly Pool (not maintained by Watertown). Bike / walking trail along the Charles.

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1) Library

2) Art Center

The improved accessible design allows for whole family to use the spaces (including parking and bathrooms).

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My Auburn Cemetery

Arsenal Park/ Riverway Walking Paths

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Filipello Park - good balance of nature & development and multi-use space.

Charles River near Daltry Pool - always lots of waterfowl to enjoy and scenic area. Not many people there, which is nice.

Greenborough rail trail - well maintained and lots of wildlife along the path.

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The bike path because it's relaxing to walk along the Charles and get to places in town. The new Arsenal Yards park because it allows for free to the public workout classes and a space to gather. Stanstoll Park adjacent to town hall and the library for the farmers market and large town focal point.

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Charles River, trees, open space, waterfront. Perkins School\_\_ open space, trees, pond, bushes.

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Arsenal park. It' was once secluded and very quiet. It's a place where I can think and walk around the outside world just disappears. The green field is also very versatile.

Casey park. Multi use and well lit at night.

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Charles river walking/biking path -access to water and bird watching

New Greenway bike path allows me to commute to work away from traffic

Mt. Auburn cemetery- enjoy walking at all times of year to see what's in bloom and foliage season

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We enjoy areas without play structures, courts or fields. Just safe, pretty, peaceful spaces where we may find a table or bench to enjoy wildlife and nature. River no longer feels safe.

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HS track (except for when the geese are there). Like the availability, community use, (could use a couple seats where there are none for those that need to sit more often.

Walk along the river either to the east or to the west.

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Charles River Reservation is nice and close to my house. It provides a really long space to walk

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The river.

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Saltonstall Park - great meeting place and feels like a nice town center park

Whitney Hill Park - no town officials yell at me for having my dog here

The Dock - it's a beautiful view and a nice place to fish and meet up with friends

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1. Charles river walkway. Natural settings

2. I love the mini pine forest by the boys and girls club and the large trees all in a row along Saltonstall park. It's one of the only areas with a series of large old trees

3. Little Greenough tree canopy over both sides. Beautiful place to walk in shade even on sunny days

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River path is peaceful and gorgeous

Whitney hill park feels almost like a secret.

Howe park allows me to exercise my pup

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# Watertown Comp Plan Workshops

September 20 and 29, 2022

## OSRP “Needs” Board

The needs below reflect the comments expressed by residents during the public engagement process to date. Interviews with City staff/boards and other stakeholders, socioeconomic data trends, and needs from past planning efforts and current initiatives also informed this list.

Put a dot in the space next to your TOP THREE NEEDS in the next 10 years. Are there missing needs or a need below that should be changed? Tell us on a comment card!

“Additional Comments” are sticky notes provided outside of dot voting.

NEED	NUMBER OF VOTES
<b>Urban Tree Canopy</b>	
Preserve the existing tree canopy and expand in public spaces and areas with less coverage Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand width as well and length of planting strip where trees will be planted and install permeable and structural soil on/under sidewalks near trees</li> </ul>	28
Develop strategies to minimize impacts of climate change and heat (e.g., improve species diversity) Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preference for native species (broadly defined) to support the natural ecosphere</li> <li>3-30-300 rule, every home should have 3 trees visible from doorstep, neighborhood with 30% tree canopy, and public park within 300 feet</li> </ul>	7
<b>Stormwater Runoff &amp; Water Quality</b>	
Improve water quality of ponds and Charles River	4
Implement green infrastructure/nature-based solutions to increase and enhance wetland areas and riverbank habitat and lessen flooding Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximize understanding of the importance of supporting the natural environment in Watertown</li> </ul>	9
<b>Invasive Species</b>	
Minimize impacts of invasive plant and wildlife species	2
<b>New Resources, Amenities &amp; Opportunities</b>	
Add amenities that encourage social interaction and increase user comfort (e.g., grills, bathrooms, benches)	7
Improve access to the river and water-based recreation	4
Ensure facilities/amenities reflect emerging recreation interests (e.g., pickleball, futsal)	4
Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>swimming, kayaking, and community pool</li> </ul>	
Create community gardens	8

NEED	NUMBER OF VOTES
Develop more dog-friendly spaces, including dog parks	7
Walking/Biking Paths & Connections	
Develop strategies to make the walking/biking network safer and more accessible to all users	16
Connect neighborhood parks and recreation areas	4
Environmental Justice, Equity & Targeted Populations	
Ensure equitable access and distribution of open space and recreation areas across the City	8
Increase accessibility of spaces and programs to ensure all users have the opportunity to recreate	2
Add innovative and flexible playground spaces Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somerville has movies each week at a different park. Watertown should do that.</li> </ul>	4
Engage City Boards and local organizations (e.g., Council on Aging Board, Commission on Disabilities) in planning for programming for specific target groups	5
Develop strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change in areas that will be disproportionately affected	5
Increasing Open Space & Recreation Resources	
Increase the amount of public and private open space and recreation land	15
Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize <u>green</u> space and recreation land</li> </ul>	
Management, Improvements, Maintenance & Upkeep	
Better communication with residents about concerns	9
Effective communication with DCR to ensure their properties are well maintained Additional comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCR is the state. Some may not know that.</li> <li>Better coordination with DCR; Riverside Street as example</li> </ul>	13

Other comments

- Improve summer recreation as to the swimming pool - outdated

## OSRP “Strategies” Board

Where could the below strategies be used across Watertown? If a strategy could apply everywhere, what specific locations should be prioritized first? Use a sticky note to identify WHICH open space or recreation area(s) a strategy should be used at and place it next to the strategy. Do you have a new idea for a strategy? Use a sticky note to add it to the bottom of the table!

If you have more information to provide, please use a command card to do so?

If comment is colored, unable to read/see and need to confirm what comment said (Stantec has board)

PRELIMINARY STRATEGY DIRECTIONS	WHERE IN WATERSHOULD THIS THIS STRATEGY HAPPEN?
<p>Add small pocket parks around the community, especially in areas with limited access to existing open space and recreation resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New developments should be required to build pocket parks while they are building big buildings</li> <li>• YES</li> <li>• Watertown Square!!!</li> <li>• Improve Belmont St/[Waverly] St triangle</li> <li>• Buy all land that comes up for sale and stop the biolabs</li> <li>• Yes—and ask private companies to support and maintain them (free advantages)</li> <li>• Balconies are not green space</li> <li>• Space behind Ryan Park and Sons of Italy</li> <li>• Add a park at Sterritt Lumber site vs adding another biolab behemoth building adjacent to single family homes and creating more traffic in already congested areas</li> <li>• Create pocket parks with native plants to support native ecosphere (and allow it to support us). Also, plan pocket parks to meet the 3-30-300 Rule.</li> <li>• Make Sterritt Lumber site a park. No more big buildings</li> <li>• Clean up Whitney Hill, make paths</li> <li>• Coolidge Square and Watertown Square</li> <li>• The city owns an unused parcel on Prentiss Street, would be perfect for a pocket park</li> <li>• Old library site (Warely and Orchard)</li> <li>• High priority</li> </ul>
<p>Increase the amount of flexible park space at existing resources for unstructured recreation, community events, or other public or business-sponsored activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life science campuses intersecting residential</li> <li>• Create history walking trails linked with a theme. Belmont does this</li> </ul>
<p>Address climate change threats (e.g., flooding, heat) to open space and recreation resources by adding green infrastructure/nature-based solutions, trees, and other features.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature-based solutions will need to be maintained thoughtfully, organically (no weed whack, no leaf blowing)</li> <li>• Plant wild berries in parks = free for residents to pick berries</li> <li>• Green space keep parks so no more heat</li> <li>• All over town, including residential properties</li> </ul>



PRELIMINARY STRATEGY DIRECTIONS	WHERE IN WATERSHOULD THIS THIS STRATEGY HAPPEN?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce allowable paved space for lots.</li> <li>• Create disincentives for developers taking down private property trees</li> <li>• More trees in school playgrounds, city playgrounds. It's too hot.</li> <li>• Add a real park (no playground or cemetery) to West Watertown</li> </ul>
Expand the urban tree canopy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. Look for areas where concrete can be taken out and trees put in</li> <li>• Yes! Yes! YES!</li> <li>• Everywhere and give them space to mature</li> <li>• The single most effective strategy to improve environmental quality equitably and easily is to plant trees wherever possible on private and public land</li> <li>• Plant trees where they can grow to maturity and provide shade for decades</li> <li>• Once city acquires Walker Pond, create a linked trail from Waltham St to Charles River. City has easements.</li> <li>• Need more trees</li> <li>• Trees with low allergenicity please. Pollen allergies are getting worse. Some trees cause less allergies than others.</li> <li>• Bump outs on residential streets (like Edward and Main Street) would create space for trees and would slow traffic</li> </ul>
Add new and/or expand existing amenities (e.g., community gardens, park benches, splash pads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along the bike path, Watertown-Cambridge Greenway</li> <li>• We need a community pool!!</li> <li>• Community gardens in schoolyards</li> <li>• Create a [ ] like splash pad in Belmont, garden for picnics/concerts/beer gardens</li> </ul>
Add new and/or expand existing programming (e.g., adult sports leagues, adaptive recreation programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beer, wine, music</li> <li>• Beer garden</li> <li>• Swim, kayak, canoe, bird watch</li> <li>• Create citywide pickleball league – good exercise for all ages.</li> <li>• Create themed walking trails, providing markings for each mile to ?</li> <li>• Create open space; area for outdoor dining in parking area behind CVS, B of A, etc. More trees there ... reduce amount dedicated to parking. Plant more trees, landscape ... make it more inviting</li> </ul>
Improve accessibility to resources for people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog parks—great but need water and walkway (ADA) down to fence at Howe</li> <li>• Meditative quiet “zones” reduce noise</li> <li>• What happened to bocce</li> </ul>

PRELIMINARY STRATEGY DIRECTIONS	WHERE IN WATERSHOULD THIS THIS STRATEGY HAPPEN?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks accessible in winter—plow sidewalks—don't plow in curb cuts in neighborhoods</li> <li>• [ ] community</li> </ul>
Improve maintenance of playing fields and hard surface courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tennis! Please maintain</li> <li>• Diagram [New park between Main and Pleasant Streets near intersection with Cross]</li> <li>• Plan and maintain natural turf fields</li> </ul>
Improve signage across Watertown's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is Watertown??</li> <li>• Install more signs announcing, describing historic sides, like for Schich House</li> </ul>
Update the design of open space and recreation resources to incorporate universal design concepts and other considerations that will make spaces more appealing and usable to a range of populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor concert venue like Boston clam shell</li> <li>• High priority</li> </ul>
Other (please use a sticky note)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes—and get private citizens to take care of their yards [ ] don't have to [ ]</li> <li>• Need bathrooms (even portable) at our parks which are maintained</li> <li>• Pickleball courts</li> <li>• Indoor recreational facility</li> <li>• Reduce offstreet parking to expand sidewalks for trees or bike paths</li> <li>• [ ] as a kid</li> <li>• Build programs that actually bring people together</li> <li>• More trash cans</li> <li>• Upgrade the landscaping, street furniture, and other amenities along the Linear Park</li> <li>• What are the alternatives to artificial turf? What should we do to the surfaces for playing fields?</li> <li>• Preserve walking and running path along Charles River.</li> <li>• Maintain the dog parks and add more.</li> <li>• Keep open spaces green. Less paving, concrete.</li> <li>• Buy the country club and make ? public accessible, green space and recreation for all.</li> </ul>

## Draft Plan Open House Summary - Appendix

### Public Feedback

Written feedback provided by open house participants on March 9, 2023 is recorded below. These comments were written on post-it notes and attached to the posters of goals and strategies.

#### Be a Leader on Municipal Sustainability

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 1C, 1D, 1I

Comments:

- [1D] Sponsor/utilize community engagement on [...] like Watertown Grow Garden Facebook group
- [1D] Wat. Library is hosting a series this spring, on Zoom
- Are we address Solar to decrease energy cost to residences/city buildings
- Balance cost of new green projects with value. Make hard decisions.
  - ^ Agreed Base decisions on data/ value.
- Reduce space to motor vehicles
- Should we have a better waste/recycle handling center?
- Mobility needs to be more than just bike and pedestrian. Need to look at on-demand, micro-transit. Join with NewMo [Newton’s city-sponsored ridesharing service].
- Black Earth composting is great
- Be more specific. Show how to implement strategies in the Climate and Energy Plan
- Going all electric isn’t possible in near term. Many people may move out if we are forced to do it before it’s feasible & the grids can handle EV’s & all electric houses. China + India are destroying the climate & our 4 sq mile city isn’t going to have much of an effect
- Improve water quality + regular testing

#### Enhance Character and Quality of Life

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 2B, 2A, 2H

Comments:

- [2A] MBTA law doesn’t require all new units in one single area! Please consider adding more areas for this MBTA law!!
- [2A] Fountain and benches in delta. Trees needed in delta and all nearby streets!
- [2B] And be more welcoming to ppl who don’t live there
  - ^ agree!
- [2D] Address vacant store front with variety of uses
- [2G] We should be focusing on growing our neighborhoods so they are vibrant places, not trying to erase(sic) them in amber. We are Watertown, not Weston!
- [2G] “Preserving neighborhood character” is a phrase rooted in illegal racial covenant’s from the 1900’s used to exclude people. It has no place in our town plan.
- [2G] Design Guidelines! Let’s do it this time.
- [2H] Legalize building zoning is undue burden except for safety
- [2H] Keep building height to 4 floors lower
- Move utilities underground along Arsenal Street
- Don’t overcrowd the square! Be more open!

- \$2,451 /month for studio apt., aiming for diversity? Ha Ha Fairy Tale
- Cap building height when abutting residential neighborhoods
- End the “mechanical floor” loophole
- Outside eating, beer garden
- Create plan for walking square elements – reroute traffic
- Bathrooms!! Lack of bathrooms is a barrier to many older people, It often deters people from being out and about.
- No short-term rentals, aka AirBnB's, in Watertown. We don't need businesses in residential areas with strangers coming and going
- Limit bldg height to 4 floors
- Besides “maintain” some neighborhoods need vast “improvement”
- 900k sqft of un-leased lab space. Other use?
- Expand Watertown Library, More Live music venues
- Encourage more set-back on ground floor to make it easier to passengers/ visitors/ walkers.
- To improve quality of life some enforcement of care of property especially when rental property is neglected
- Waterown neighborhoods – concern about traffic
- Add more green strips on the square sidewalk
- Increase Density. Give young folks a chance to buy into town long term
- Consider use of former police station to promote community engagement/ the arts
- Encourage renovation of historic home instead of tearing them down to make condos. Lack of single-family homes has people moving out to the burbs after they have their 2<sup>nd</sup> child
- Preserve “neighborhood character” is REAL needed, and zoning uses are protected by SJC – this is not a “NIMBY” excuse or anti-affordable housing, but quality of life and community connections
- Pg.8 – Says we asked residents what elements may be added or removed to represent their current vision of the future in Watertown. If we can only comment with post its our voices aren't being heard. We have no way of knowing what comments or summary of comments are. We have no way of knowing what ideas were listed or considered
- Pg.32 – Says need for considerations of building heights, setbacks, design character and other factors should guide substantial renovations and new construction. These standards seem to be ignored. If you look at many of these developments they are too close to the sidewalks, are too high, and lack any real character. The proposed Main St. development in the Post office block looks too modern and it's too high. It should have a design that fits into the area. Look at the character of our older buildings like the city hall and the library. Don't let the developers develop what they want to save money. They often build these buildings and then move on. They don't really care about the cities and towns afterwards. Our Planners should truly represent us and our needs and wants/
  - ^ yes!
- Pg.75 – Says city wants to transform areas such as Pleasant St Corridor, Watertown Sq, Coolidge St and Arsenal St Corridor. Ask and listen to the residents on how they want this to happen. More than likely the Planners aren't living in those areas and don't have the same ideas as the residents.

## Future Land Use Map

### Comments:

- Keep Sister's Thrift store instead of stupid (sic) lab spaces
- Green space is not enough & existing [...] = poor, small quality & poor quantity
- Build taller buildings in strategic locations like the Square & Arsenal
- Eliminate single family zoning. Allow two-families by-right everywhere!



- Make sure CB area are carefully holding more public hearing before any large projects get approved!!!
- DCR needs to take care of Charles River walkways – City to monitor
- Purchase land for permanent community gardens!
- Expand Watertown Library into the old police station
- We need to plant more trees by the roads
- We should complete the Watertown Greenway and connect with Watertown Square
- Rezone to limit biotech – we have too many eggs in one (cyclical) basket, and not enough pressure on developers to bring new housing on line
- We need more green space with park benches
- Increase height, increase density. “Preserving neighborhood character should be about ppl not buildings. So build more to allow [...]
- Pg.38 – Says evaluating regulations including zoning, permitting, licensing and parking regulations needed to ensure that city is responsive to changing needs of businesses while preserving and enhancing the character that appeals to residents, workers, visitors, and those looking to move here. We hope that you do indeed provide parking for businesses, especially in the Square so that people will visit any businesses in that area. Surrounding cities like Newton, Belmont and Waltham do and they seem to have more viable businesses that stay there if the rents don't go too high and force them out.

## Cultivate a Mix of Diverse Businesses

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 3D, 3E, 3I

Comments:

- [3A] Partnerships are critical to make these businesses part of the community
- [3A] Regulate labs for safety
- [3A] Go away!
- [3F] What is the future atmosphere along Galen St.? Not much room for safe biking or walking.
- [3H] More attention to Coolidge. Make it green blob
- [3K] CB area should be more open to general public, rather than make it too dense
- [3L] But no Arsenal Sign
- [3M] Turn parking into communal outdoor space -> Take a cue from all of our neighboring city + towns. if Belmont can do it.
- [3N] Parking minimums burden business w/ massive cost and reduce freedom
- [3N] Seasonal outdoor dining? Great idea but new construction has no setback to allow for side
- [3N] Be more considerate when reviewing on variation to improve/ expand residential driveways
- A lot of life science now we have empty buildings
- Biotech is more cyclical than we may have thought it was. We don't have to blame ourselves for what we did but we can and should, diversify going forward, and if that means changing zoning, bring it on!
- No more bio labs!
  - ^ why?
- Expand Watertown Library into the old police station.
- Diversity + industries i.e. add other than biolabs
- Building walkable business districts provides a larger customer base than driving ever will
- Encourage businesses people actually want. Bakery (bread), brewery (outdoor beergarden), toy/ book store, small boutiques, wine + cheese shop. Not more salons and dentist
- This is the area that is of most concern to me. The town should not be over taken by these labs but should stay on top of how they add to the town not detract

- Lower speed limit in residential areas to 25 MPH
- Safe streets & vision zero improve traffic by providing alternatives.
- With all the new business coming. Make sure they all are doing business legally!!
- How can you guarantee that the stewardship is not self-serving?
- Pg.3 – Says cultivate a mix of diverse businesses that strengthens our community by providing jobs, services and support for City infrastructure. We aren't seeing diverse businesses – only Biolabs/ life sciences. We need more businesses that will employ blue collar jobs for people who live in Watertown and don't have advanced science degrees. We don't want to become an elitist city.
- Pg. 31 – Says demand for life science space has significantly increased the amount of commercial development, including the conversion of outdated office buildings into life science space. Can't we attract other businesses that would create less traffic and density? Are the city planners even trying to do this? It does not seem so as the established zoning encourages this type of business to the detriment of all others.
- Pg.32 – Old sites are changing to create space for new jobs, housing and retail. It can change travel patterns or the character of streets as shorter industrial or retail buildings are replaced with taller buildings. If you talk to people in those areas, they don't agree with most of these changes. They want to maintain the existing character of residential neighborhoods with zoning and/or design changes as needed to promote quality of life.
- Pg.36 – Says good local jobs at a range of skills and salary levels, a mix of business types and uses needed. We are not seeing this in the new developments.
- Pg.38 – Says a broader array of business retention and attraction strategies are also needed to support economic vitality. Most of us agree with this though, but we don't see it happening. Are we putting all eggs in one basket with biolabs/ life science emphasis?

## Promote Safe, Efficient Multimodal Transportation Options

Strategies with most marks for "strategies you think are important": 4G, 4D, 4H, 4I

Comments:

- [4B] vision zero = more than 25mph. Roundabouts saves lives elsewhere it isn't different here lets get more roundabouts
- [4B] lower townwide speed limit
- [4D] Businesses should share their parking lots when they are closed. Why waste the space?
- [4D] Strengthen the bike-parking section current zoning rules
- [4D] Incentivize businesses to share parking
- [4D] Eliminating curbside pkg vs bike lanes – can be both
- [4D] Eliminate [winter parking] ban
- [4E] Don't fight the economics of the marketplace
- [4H] Near Term. No need to wait!
- [4H] How do you think people can take the bus in the winter if we don't plow the sidewalks?
- [4H] Too many sidewalks need maintenance or full replacement. Not enough curbs. Strips ruined snow-ice needs management
- [4J] Improve service performance – faster & more vehicles
- [4k] & snow removal for both! [reference to bus shelters and bicycle parking]
- Put new parking garages underground
- Bike Pkg Ordinance Update needs to be included in D & E – Bike-Ped Committee in process of updating
- Transportation services should cater to people with a range of mobility needs
- Get concrete about Vision Zero not just exploring but actually committing to goals & metrics
- Improve pedestrian experience. The square is a hazard to walk & commute through.

- Parking in D needs to look at zoning holistically & in terms of goals & strategic direction, esp in E too
- Vision zero – people over cars
- D – we should decrease parking by implementing MICRO-TRANSIT – shared-ride, on-demand to get people where they want to go without needing a place to park, decreasing parking, decreasing driving.
- Aging in place requires not just a suitable home, but also a range of age-friendly community assets especially transportation
- Vision Zero: safe road design & sidewalks is safer for people and cars! And supports our police by reducing burden
- Integrate parking planning across [...]
- We're losing so much parking. A huge problem for biz.
- Point E: Parking requirements (for both cars & bikes) need to be based on our goals, not [...]
- Reduce parking minimums & build out a network of protected bike lanes
- Consider rotary for Watertown Sq like similar town in GB
- Get rid of parking minimum now
- Focus on passive traffic management strategies instead of lights
- Reduce parking minimums for housing & C/I developer?
- We already have a bike/ped plan. This plan needs to advance that already adopted plan more strongly, rather than falling back on more tentative language.
- If we don't increase density & huge labs, we won't have even more traffic. We can't all ride bikes. Parents need cars, seniors need cars as do the disabled. Provide parking to help businesses as needed.
- Vision Zero: adopt "thickly settled" designation under state law, which reduces speed limit to 25mph. Our neighbor communities have done this!
- Fix our sidewalks
- Building commercial customer bases oriented towards walking/biking/T provides more customers than auto-centric development
- Micro transit (ride share vans) for on-demand mobility
- Restrict parking quantities – so much parking discourages anything except SOVs [single-occupancy vehicles], but allow overnight parking on streets except for snow emergencies
- Locate bike share stations away from street trees, to prevent foot traffic from killing the trees
- Not enough bike racks throughout City – need MORE
- H – needs to ID & fulfill needs for bike parking
- Safety + comfort = separated bike lanes
- Not just highest priority for Bike-Ped Plan. Need to look at others too!
- Public transit stops need to be shoveled/cleared in winter for both peds & cyclists
- Implementation & enforcement: I understand that this is a high-level plan, but it needs to use more forceful language and explain how it will be enforced (current enforcement is very weak)
- Align snow removal policies for sidewalk safety for older adults (seniors)
- For M -> consider privacy concerns
- Not specific enough. Buses need bus lanes and have signal priority
- By increasing walkability & biking, we encourage folks to do that, preserving parking for those who need it.
- Although there is good thinking about pedestrian & bike access, this doesn't help those who can't use those modes. Older people, disabled, kids with after school activities – they need on-demand micro-transit!
- Snow removal around schools
- We are not a large enough city to have mass transit to take us everywhere (like NYC) but we CAN arrange to have on-demand shared ride microtransit. This would serve the needs of MANY

slices of the Watertown community: elderly, those with restricted mobility, parents with small children, people who simply don't want to own a car. Since Newton has implemented this (NewMo), we could partner with them, making use of their experience.

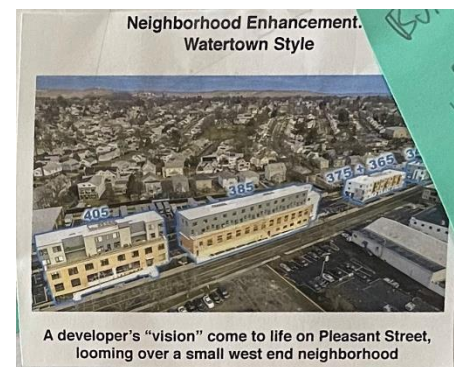
- More Blue Bikes in west Watertown
- On-demand micro transit
  - ^ x2

## Facilitate a Range of Housing

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 5B, 5F, 5A

Comments:

- [5A] Parking is a big issue
- [5B] Consider heights; limit to 4 floors.
- [5B] For ADUs to really work need flexibility on parking – slow density
- [5B] Yes on ADUs
- [5B] Missing senior housing – nowhere to downsize & aging in place doesn't acct for ten. needed services or physical special needs
- [5F] Need elderly hsg for boomers
  - ^ yes!!
- [5F] workforce ok but need senior housing, especially given our demographics
- Need more than housing near the Cuniffe Elderly Housing
- Provide resources for seniors to “age in place” with structural & physical supports.
- Affordable housing !!
- Setback from sidewalk on new construction
- Neighborhood Enhancement, Watertown Style. A developer's “vision” come to life on Pleasant Street, looming over a small west end neighborhood *[right: image attached to poster]*
  - ^ Build more of this. We need housing
- Tie new housing development to street improvements and ped safety – traffic calming esp on ‘cut through’ streets like Myrtle, Summer, Waverly, etc.
- Legalize building & cut red tape/zoning. Increase supply to make housing affordable.
- The push to bring in more and more life science industry is compromising the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity that makes Watertown such a special place
- Define “Higher Density”
- More single-families so people want and can stay with growing families
- Taller buildings with less parking so younger generation can afford to buy into town and live here long term
- Increase building heights. Allow by-right zoning across town. Reduce/eliminate parking regs. Allow ADUs. In sum, increase supply to drive down costs.
- Rezone to limit biotech – otherwise developers will not bring new housing on-line





## Ensure High-Quality Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 6B, 6F, 6C

Comments:

- [6B] GSA site!
- [6H] No more artificial turf on playing fields
- Safe sidewalks ... no parking on sidewalks + crosswalks
- Bike track
- Trash being picked up from the ground
- Include shade covering or trees over childrens playgrounds!
- Natural playscapes – not just plastic structures
- New bleachers in Saltonstall Park
- Bike repair station?
- More casual, drop-in activities for families to meet in the park
- Something like the Cornelia Warren Park in Waltham, ninja warrior style equipment for older kids + adults
- Variety of playground equipment. Don't make them all the same company
- Filipello Park needs more curb cuts onto Arlington St and more crosswalks. Great shared-use path there; shame it's so hard to get onto!
- Develop an off-leash permit program in some parks. The designated, fenced dog parks are very, very limited.
- Bathrooms at all parks and recreation facilities
- All open-space enhancements must take into consideration the mobility and often challenges of older adults

## Support Community Wellness

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 7C, 7A, 7G

Comments:

- [7C] Community gardens!
- What is the plan for the old library buildings (Orchard + Mt. Auburn). The old police station?
- Arsenal Museum?
- More murals and public art – especially in Square and parks
- Truly affordable housing
- There is a lack of public art in Watertown. It is an affordable way to bring character and beauty to the city.
  - ^ +1
- Safe sidewalks + roads is a must! Vision zero. If we want people healthy, walking to parks + shops. + no parking on sidewalks
- Watertown porch fest for local musicians and performers
- An age – friendly city takes into consideration, programs and services that support people who wish to age in place in their own community, enhancing their capacity to be fully engaged in the richness of community life.
- More live well programs
- Live well programs. We need them!

## Proactively Maintain and Improve Infrastructure and Services

Strategies with most marks for “strategies you think are important”: 8J, 8A, 8B

Comments:

- City Board Diversity should include categories such as Age, Ethnicity, NJWW
- City staff needs to be more diverse and performance reviewed
- DPW also needs the will to maintain energy efficient/ environmental facilities, not just staff.
- For D, consider privacy concerns
- Key members should be Watertown residence
- Rat mitigation town wide
- Address capacity/ needs!
- Increase diversity throughout all city depts & programs.

## Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

Goals and Objectives

Objectives with most marks for “objectives you think are important”: 3.A, 2.A, 1.B, 3.B

Comments:

- [1.A] Town should take Oakley Country Club by eminent domain
- [2.A] Boats
- [2.A] Be mindful of the environmental impact to animals as well. They live with us
- [2.A] Keep River wild! No boats, no amenities. This is not the Esplanade
- [2.C] with special attention to changing needs and challenges for people as they age
- [3.C] What is climate resilience?
- Why isn't Charles R named in a goal
- 3 – 30 – 300 trees
- More trees! more open green space!
- No more artificial fields
- Shade over playgrounds
- Reduce road width and add tree canopy
- This is a lot of “motherhood and apple pie”. What specifically will we do towards any of these goals?
- Post the schedule for use of our fields & recreation

Action Plan

- [Action Plan 1.A.9] are you kidding? Who do you think is going to remediate those ponds [Sawins and Williams Pond]
- Support access to ponds
- DCR is hard to work with. Ideas?
- The Cannalonga Park is so underused. But the parking lot is often more full.
- Connect Walker Pond to Charles River path. Restore vacant land into recreation space w/ native landscape
- Make Arsenal Street & N. Beacon St. one-way streets!!

## Comment Cards

- Housing – Med/higher density encourage w/ affordable – workforce housing incentives, require developers to improve roads & other infrastructure, use CDBG/Home other funds, LIHTC
  - Residential streets – especially high cut-through traffic (ie Myrtle, Summer, Pleasant, Waverly, etc) add traffic calming devices (raised crosswalks, stop signs, etc.) to improve ped safety.
  - More murals and public art – to reflect history and growing diversity
  - Change parking minimums
  - Vacant storefronts are a problem
  - Change zoning to allow single family buildings to multifamily – better in-fill opportunity
- 
- Wellness: fix sidewalks including overhanging vegetation/shrubs/trees (+ root bound sidewalks)
  - Prioritize affordable housing #5
  - Open space – not just playground, park, or sports fields. Gathering space for groups – walking programs to help health of citizens
  - Enforce snow removal – make landlords accountable
- 
- Most new construction apts are ugly. Like Leggos [sic].
  - We need more real affordable housing.
  - Diversity? Really? When a studio apt is \$2400/mo??
- 
1. Would it be possible to develop solar farms similar to what other towns have done somewhere?
  2. We have so many apartments being built. The new development in the square, in my opinion, would be much better to be condos. It would create more revenue for the town & more people invested in the town.
- 
- Fix the cover
  - Move date so it doesn't appear to picture a green park in the winter.

APPENDIX B  
Open Space and Recreational Resource Inventory



## DEFINITIONS

**Property:** Name of the open space site.

**Acres:** Details the site's acreage.

**Manager/Owner:** Names the agency (or agencies) charged with managing the property and the owner of the property.

**Current Use:** Lists the most common or major uses of the site and special features and facilities.

**Condition:** Provides a general description of the maintenance/usability of the site

**Public Access:** Describes general accessibility factors, use of fees, etc.

**Accessible to people with disabilities: Outcome of ADA Self Evaluation**

**Recreation Potential:** Recreational uses at the site or potential uses

**Zoning:** Indicates how the site is currently zoned by the Town.

**Protection Status:** Protected in perpetuity, limited protection, none

**Type of Grant Received:** Lists any grants received for purchase or improvement of site, as well as Art. 97 protection or conservation restrictions.

**Recent/Planned Improvements:** Includes additional information about the site, such as any changes in status currently underway and proposed capital improvements and opportunities or potential changes that could be considered on the site.

Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Resources Inventory

City-Owned Properties

Name	Ownership	Managing Agency	Acres	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	Access for People with Disabilities	Recreation Potential	Zoning
552 Main Street Playground	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	2.4	Playground, field and court athletic and recreational activities.	Excellent	Open	PENDING	Athletic courts; baseball field; picnic facilities; playground; bicycle rack; sitting areas; restrooms	OSC
Arsenal Park	City	Under the custody of the Conservation Commission. DPW manages the maintenance and Recreation manages the active use areas.	13.7	Picnics, field, court athletic and recreational activities	Poor	Open	PENDING	Athletic courts; turf fields; picnic facilities; community garden; playground, skate park; splash pad; walk/bike path; running course; restrooms	OSC
Bemis Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	1.9	General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Fair	Open	PENDING	Athletic courts; baseball field; batting cage; picnic facilities; bicycle rack; playground; hockey court; seasonal restrooms	OSC
Casey Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	4.2	General Field and court athletic and recreational activities. Skating.	Good	Open	PENDING	Baseball/Softball field; turf field; multi-purpose rink; picnic facilities; athletic courts; tot lot; playground; seasonal restrooms; sitting areas	OSC
Commander's Mansion	City	DCDP, DPW	7	Passive open space and trails, Event space and mansion	Good	Open	-		OSC
Community Path (series of multi-use paths through ROWs, City owned parks, or on private properties with agreements to allow public use for the path)	City	DCDP, DPW	1.75 miles	Walking Biking	Good	Open	PENDING	Walk/bike path	NA
Cunniff School Playground	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	1	Recess and PE classes General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Poor	Open	PENDING	Baseball field; athletic court; playground; seasonal restroom	OSC
Filippello Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	16.9	General Water park Picnics, field, court athletic and recreational activities	Fair	Open	PENDING	Athletic courts; turf fields; picnic facilities; walking path; playground, tot lot; splash pad; restrooms	OSC
How Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	2.18	General Dog park Court athletic and recreational activities	Good	Open	PENDING	Athletic court; turf field; playground; dog park	OSC
Irving Park	City	DPW	0.5	Seating	Fair	Open	-	Seating, walkways	OSC
John A. Ryan Arena	City	Recreation Dept	2.08	Athletic and recreational activities	Good	Open	PENDING	Ice hockey rink	OSC
Linear Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	1.5	General Walking Biking	Good	Open	PENDING	Walk/bike path	OSC

Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Resources Inventory

Name	Ownership	Managing Agency	Acres	Current Use	Condition	Public Access	Access for People with Disabilities	Recreation Potential	Zoning
Lowell School Playground	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	3.7	School General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Fair	Open	PENDING	Baseball field; athletic court; turf field; playground, tot lot; seasonal restrooms	OSC
Lowell Hill	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	3.2	Playground/tot lot	Good	Open	PENDING	Open field, playground	OSC
Moxley Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	4.9	School General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Fair	Open	PENDING	Baseball field; batting cage; athletic courts; turf fields; playground, tot lot; coliseum; restrooms	OSC
O'Connell Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	4.7	School General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Fair	Open	PENDING	Baseball/softball field; batting cage; athletic courts; turf fields; playground; tot lot; street hockey court; seasonal restrooms	OSC
Phillips School Playground	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	0.5	School	Fair	Open	PENDING	Playground, gardens	OSC
Saltonstall Park	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	5.3	General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Good	Open	PENDING	Athletic court; softball field; tot lot; restrooms; lighting; sitting areas	OSC
Sullivan Playground	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	1.2	General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Good	Open	PENDING	Baseball field; athletic court; turf field; playground; seasonal restrooms	OSC
Victory Field Complex	City	DPW, Recreation Dept	11.1	School General Field and court athletic and recreational activities	Artificial turf - excellent Grass field - fair	Open	PENDING	Baseball field; turf fields; picnic facilities; track and field facilities; tot lot; walking track; restrooms; field house; bike racks; concession stand; stadium seating	OSC
Walker Pond	City	DPW	6.67	None	Poor	None	None	Walking paths; passive	OSC
Whitney Hill Park	City	DPW, Conservation	10.26	Walking, passive	Fair	Open	PENDING	Walking paths; passive	OSC

Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Resources Inventory

City-Owned Properties

Name	Protection Status	Type of Grant Received	Recent/Planned Improvements
552 Main Street Playground	Dedicated park land	Our Common Backyards Program (\$200,000)	N/A
Arsenal Park	In perpetuity (Article 97)	Urban Self Help (\$1,165,730 acquisition, \$553,000 improvement)	Renovations planned 2016: Connectivity planning started for link between greenways 2017: Arsenal Park redesign process started 2018: Redesign master plan adopted 2021: Phase A on east side built and opened in 2022 2023: Phase B planned to go to bid and be constructed for the rest of the park
Bemis Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2016: Batting tunnels installed; hard courts resurfaced 2017: Ball field maintenance (releveling, resodding, etc.)
Casey Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2016: Athletic courts and lights installed 2017: Electrical control box renovation 2019: LED solar flagpole light installed
Commander's Mansion	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District and National Preservation Restriction		
Community Path (series of multi-use paths through ROWs, City owned parks, or on private properties with agreements to allow public use for the path)	Easements, City ROW, or within Parks	Portion with Housing Choice, Private contributions, and/or City General Funds	Section 1: Fully constructed and in use Section 2: Design nearly complete; construction anticipated to begin in spring 2023 Section 3: Contract in place to finalize design; construction could begin as early as 2024 Section 4: Fully constructed and in use Section 5: Paved path proposed Section 6: Construction to begin in fall 2022 Section 7: Fully constructed and in use
Cunniff School Playground	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2021: Reconstruction of school finished, and grounds being finalized in 2022
Filippello Park	In perpetuity (Article 97)	Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$463,568.23)  Stanton Foundation grant (\$225,000 for construction of dog park in 2018)	2016: Tot lot resurfaced; benches repaired & replaced 2017: Electrical control box renovation; walkway, parking lot, and pavilion lights repaired & replaced; main pavilion repainted; draft design for dog park completed 2018: Grove Street Entrance Renovation 95% complete (includes new picnic facilities, dog park, courts, etc.) 2019: Drinking water fountain for dog park installed per grant requirement 2021: LED lights, scoreboard and batting tunnel installed.
How Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2018: Dog park surface updated; accessible entryway and new sidewalk installed
Irving Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	CPA funds will be used to improve landscaping, seating and walkways in 2023.
John A. Ryan Arena	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2016: Funding for new scoreboard and replacement of emergency exit doors approved 2017: Energy efficiency upgrades to boilers, heaters, and lights; replacement of emergency exit doors completed; new rink doors installed 2018: Internal doors replaced 2019: Internal doors replaced
Linear Park	Dedicated park land	None	Sculpture pads planned to mount art installations  2018: Council approved funds for upgrade & installation of new lighting



Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Resources Inventory

Name	Protection Status	Type of Grant Received	Recent/Planned Improvements
Lowell School Playground	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	Renovations of Lowell School will include resurfacing of playground (2023)
Lowell Hill	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	Renovations of Lowell School will include resurfacing of playground (2023)
Moxley Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2022: Fields will be unavailable beginning in November 2022 to accommodate planned reconstruction of Watertown High School. Moxley Playground will reopen following the end of school construction.
O'Connell Park	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2016: Batting tunnel installed
Phillips School Playground	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	N/A
Saltonstall Park	In perpetuity (Article 97)	None	2017: Electrical control box renovation 2019: New benches installed; Farmers' Market moved to park; LED lighting upgrades
Sullivan Playground	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	2018: Paver walkway, monument, and solar lit flagpole installed 2019: Ball field maintenance (releveling, resodding, new clay) 2022: Resurfaced court
Victory Field Complex	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	Donations from community members (\$300,000)	2011: Phase 1 consisting of 160,000 sf of renovated space 2016: Tot lot resurfaced 2019: Funding approved for Phase 2 Project for improvements to track and field, playing field, athletic courts, parking area, lighting, stormwater system, etc.
Walker Pond	Open Space and Conservancy Zoning District	None	
Whitney Hill Park	In perpetuity (Article 97)	None	N/A

Appendix B: Open Space and Recreation Resources Inventory

**City Cemeteries and Deltas**

Resource	Acres	Amenities
Common Street Cemetery	2.5	Walking paths
Old Burying Place (Arlington Street Cemetery)	1.24	Historic markers
Ridelawn Cemetery	17.58	Walking paths
Carver Road Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Columbus Delta	0.69	Sitting areas
Storer Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Knowles Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Shattuck Road Delta	0.25	Passive lawn
School and Belmont Streets Delta	0.25	Sitting areas
Templeton Parkway Delta	0.25	N/A

**State and Other Municipal Properties**

Resource	Owner	Acres	Current use	Amenities	Public Access
Boyd Park (partial)	City of Newton	2.6 in Watertown (4.8 total)	Athletic & active recreation	Athletic courts, multipurpose natural grass fields, playground/tot lot	Open
Charles River Reservation Cannaloga Park Riverfront Park Squibnocket Park Little Greenough and Greenough Boulevard Paul Dudley White Bike Path	State	54.2 in Watertown (20 miles along the river)	Athletic & active recreation Passive recreation	Walk/bike path, athletic courts, multipurpose natural grass fields, playground/tot lot	Open
Dealtry Pool	State	5	Athletic & active recreation	Swimming pool, wading pool, restrooms	Open (seasonal)
Watertown-Cambridge Greenway (partial)	State	1.25 miles	Passive recreation	Walk/bike path	Open

**Nonprofit Properties**

Resource	Acres	Current Use	Public Access
Gore Estate	27 in Watertown (31 total)	Education Agriculture	Open (special events and tours may require admission fees)

**Privately Owned Open Space**

Resource	Acres	Current Use	Public Access
Mount Auburn Cemetery	164	Cemetery, educational, passive recreation	Open
Oakley County Club (Ch 61B)	80	Athletic & active recreation	Not open to the public (members only)
Sawins Pond	1.42	None	Not open to the public
Williams Pond	4.97	None	Not open to the public
St. Patrick's Cemetery	14.4	Cemetery, passive recreation	Open

**Other Accessible Privately Owned Open Space**

Development/Address	Type of Publicly Available	Public Access
66 Galen Street	Passive recreation	Open (upon completion)
85 Walnut Street	Passive recreation	Open (upon completion)
99 Coolidge Street	Passive recreation	Open (upon completion)
130 Arsenal Street (Elan Union Market)	Passive recreation	Open
204 Arsenal Street (Gables Arsenal Street)	Passive recreation	Open
330-350 Pleasant Street (Watermills)	Passive recreation	Open
490 Arsenal Way (LINX)	Athletic and active recreation, passive recreation	Open
Arsenal Yards	Passive recreation	Open
Walnut Street Linear Park	Passive recreation	Open

APPENDIX C  
ADA Self Evaluation



# City of Watertown ADA Self-Evaluation Report

DRAFT - February 23, 2023

Prepared for:

City of Watertown

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Prepared by:



Stantec Consulting, Inc.



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## Introduction

Stantec prepared this American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation on behalf of the City of Watertown. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires an ADA Self-Evaluation as a component of municipal open space and recreation plans. This evaluation was prepared in accordance with Appendix G of DCS' Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook (2008).

The ADA, enacted in 1990, states that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity (35 CFR Part 35.130(a)). An important method to ensuring compliance with this law is the ADA Self-Evaluation.

The ADA Self-Evaluation is a detailed assessment used to determine how accessible a community's conservation and recreation properties and programs are to persons with disabilities. The evaluation looks at both administrative and employment practices of the municipality, and includes a site-by-site inventory of all properties and programs under the ownership and management the local parks and recreation department and conservation commission. The Self-Evaluation identifies any issues and recommends improvements. A transition plan is developed if structural changes are recommended. The recommendations are intended to make recreation and conservation properties and programs more accessible, as well as result in more comfortable and safer areas.

The City of Watertown previously conducted an evaluation and transition plan in 2015, prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB). This assessment is part of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update being completed by Horsley Witten Group in 2022-2023. The OSRP is being done in conjunction with the City's update to its comprehensive plan being completed by Stantec.

## Part I: Administrative Requirements

### Designation of an ADA Coordinator

The ADA Coordinator for the City of Watertown is:

Gayle Shattuck  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472-4410  
617-972-6443 x12191

### Grievance Procedures

See Appendix A.

## **Public Notification Requirements**

City of Watertown employees and the public were notified that the community does not discriminate on the basis of disability. See Appendix A.

## **Participation of Individuals with Disabilities or Organizations Representing the Disabled Community**

The results of the ADA Self-Evaluation were reviewed with the Commission on Disability, as discussed in Section IV of this report.

## **Part II: Employment Practices**

The ADA Coordinator for the City of Watertown has signed a statement attesting that the City's employment practices are in compliance with the ADA. The City's recruitment policy states that the City complies with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities. The statement is attached in Appendix A.

## **Part III: Program Accessibility**

### **Facility Inventory**

In August 2022, Stantec staff assessed 17 facilities under jurisdiction of the City of Watertown's Recreation Department or the Conservation Commission, listed here:

- 552 Main Street Playground
- Arsenal Park
- Bemis Park
- Casey Park
- Cunniff School Playground
- Filippello Park
- How Park
- John A. Ryan Arena
- Linear Park
- Lowell School Playground & Hill
- Moxley Park

- O'Connell Park
- Phillips School Playground
- Saltonstall Park
- Sullivan Playground
- Victory Field Complex
- Whitney Hill Park

In addition to these sites required for the OSRP, six municipal sites with buildings that are open to the public but not under jurisdiction of the City of Watertown's Recreation Department or the Conservation Commission were assessed in February 2023:

- City Hall
- Watertown Free Public Library
- Department of Public Works facility
- Commander's Mansion
- Watertown Senior Center
- Former Parker School (acquired for use as municipal offices)

Stantec completed the *Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook* ADA Self-Evaluation worksheet for each site. Only portions relevant to each site are included in Appendix B. The entire ADA Self-Evaluation Checklist is available at the end of Appendix B.

## **552 MAIN STREET PLAYGROUND**

This park consists of walkways and facilities for baseball, basketball, playground, and picnic tables.

**2015 Assessment:** Much of the pathway exceeds 5% grade, and surrounding sidewalks are inaccessible to people with disabilities. The baseball diamond is inaccessible to people with disabilities

**2022 Assessment:** The pathway through the park includes a signposted accessible route from the parking lot to the play structures, picnic tables, and basketball court. The baseball field is located close to the accessible path but is not directly adjacent.

## **ARSENAL PARK**

This large park consists of facilities for many sports including soccer, baseball, hockey, basketball, and tennis, as well as a play structure and splash area. There are also picnic tables, structures, and grills.

**2015 Assessment:** Sidewalks between parking areas lack sufficient curb ramps, and there are no accessible parking spaces in the parking lot. Restrooms are not accessible, nor are many of the sports courts or picnic facilities. Walkways are in disrepair and are unusable by people with disabilities

**2022 Assessment:** Spectator seating for most sport facilities is inaccessible. While accessible parking spaces are marked in the parking lot, there are no curb cuts to the sidewalks near them. The sidewalks are unevenly paved with many lips and ledges. Sections of the path from the parking lot to the picnic areas have steep slopes and ledges. The entrance to the park from the parking lot is not level extending 5 ft from the door. Picnic tables and grills are accessible, but the path to reach them is not.

## **BEMIS PARK**

This park contains a baseball field, hockey court and basketball courts, as well as picnic tables and a play structure.

**2015 Assessment:** Many facilities are not located adjacent to accessible pathways, including the baseball field and its spectator seating. Entrances are not accessible, and the walkway behind the batting cages is difficult for people with disabilities to traverse.

**2022 Assessment:** Facilities including picnic tables, play structures, baseball field, and basketball courts are not connected by an accessible path of travel. There is no formal parking area for the park, but access to entrance gates from the surrounding streets and sidewalks is limited. Entrances are not paved and are too narrow for someone in a wheelchair. Ponding of water is likely at some entrances. There is an accessible portable restroom stall in the park. Picnic tables lack surrounding clear, flat turning space in a 29" radius.

## **CASEY PLAYGROUND**

This park contains basketball courts, a baseball diamond, hockey court, and play structure, as well as bench seating.

**2015 Assessment:** Access from Watertown Street is difficult for people with disabilities, and curb ramps on the sidewalk do not align with the path of travel. The basketball court is surrounded by an asphalt berm, and the baseball diamond and seating are inaccessible.

**2022 Assessment:** The Aldrich Road entrance has a gate which is inaccessible to people with disabilities. Once inside the park, an accessible path of travel links most facilities, but not the baseball field or play area near Morse Street. Although accessible parking and ramp access is provided on Morse Street, the facilities on the Aldrich Road side of the park are inaccessible from the Morse Street entrance to a person with disabilities.



## **CUNNIFF SCHOOL PLAYGROUND**

This recently renovated school playground consists of play structures used by elementary school students.

**2015 Assessment:** Playground facilities are not connected by accessible pathways, and parking is not up to required standards.

**2022 Assessment:** The recently renovated parking lot now includes fully accessible parking spaces, and an accessible path to play structures on both sides of the school building.

## **FILIPPELLO PARK**

This park contains picnic facilities, multiple play areas, basketball courts, a baseball diamond, soccer field, and sprinkler park.

**2015 Assessment:** Numerous accessibility issues, including lack of level pathways, inadequate entrances, degrading facilities, tripping hazards, and inaccessible facilities.

**2022 Assessment:** The play area and picnic facilities located closest to accessible parking sit atop a very steep slope. Most sport fields are not directly connected by accessible paths. The basketball, hockey, and tennis courts are accessible.

## **HOW PARK**

This is a hillside park that contains a basketball court and play area, as well as an open leash dog park area.

**2015 Assessment:** The basketball court at the east end of the park is not connected by any path, much less an accessible one. The play structure is accessed through a narrow gate which is likely unnecessary. The Bacon Street sidewalk is sloped and poorly maintained.

**2022 Assessment:** The basketball court remains unconnected by any path. The entrance to the playground still contains the inaccessible gate. An accessible parking space is marked on Bacon Street, but the sidewalk and space remain unevenly paved with a steep slope, and there is no curb cut allowing access to the sidewalk from the parking space.

## **LINEAR PARK**

This park, adjacent to Saltonstall Park, contains a linear multiuse path.

**2015 Assessment:** No issues noted, but curb cuts and lighting were recommended to be installed.



**2022 Assessment:** The main path of travel is accessible, without excessive variation in slope or tripping hazards. Street crossings are compliant and contain curb cuts with tactile panels.

## **LOWELL SCHOOL PLAYGROUND**

This is a playground servicing the adjacent Lowell School and contains a play area as well as baseball field and basketball court. Active construction on the Lowell School building and parking lot limited the possibility of accurate assessment of park facilities

**2015 Assessment:** Curb cuts and ramps are insufficient, and accessible parking does not meet dimensional requirements. Baseball and basketball facilities are not connected by accessible paths. Adequate turning space is not provided at entrances to the park and play structures, and surrounding sidewalks are uneven.

**2022 Assessment:** Active construction prevented accurate assessment of all facilities, but at the time of assessment no park facilities, including baseball field, basketball court, and play area, were connected to any park entrance by an accessible path. There was also no accessible parking, due to the construction site.

## **MOXLEY FIELD**

This playground and sports facility is located next to Watertown Middle School. It contains two play areas, basketball courts, and a baseball field, as well as a field house with full bathrooms.

**2015 Assessment:** The southwest entrance provides no accessible route to any park facilities, and the baseball field is not connected by any accessible path to any entrance. The tennis courts do not have their own accessible entrances, and the crossing from the Middle School is sloped. Paths from the field house to basketball courts and the west park entrance are steeply sloped.

**2022 Assessment:** Play areas are located adjacent to accessible paths, and the field house contains an accessible restroom. The baseball field remains inaccessible, and the only path from the play areas to the field house runs through the basketball and tennis courts. The path from the field house to Westminster Avenue appears improved since the 2015 assessment, and is not steeply sloped.

## **O'CONNELL PLAYGROUND**

This playground and sports facility is used by the Hosmer School. At the time of assessment, access was blocked due to construction.

**2015 Assessment:** Mt. Auburn Street sidewalks and entrances present challenges. Walkways through the park are also uneven and narrow in places. Parking lots lack accessible spaces, and the baseball field is not connected by an accessible path.

**2022 Assessment:** Construction prevented access for self-assessment.

## **SALTONSTALL PARK**

This park facility is located adjacent to City Hall and the Watertown Free Public Library. It contains a baseball field.

**2015 Assessment:** No major noncompliance issues.

**2022 Assessment:** The parking lot contains accessible spaces, but these spaces are located closer to the library, and accessing park facilities requires crossing the parking lot. Otherwise, facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

## **SULLIVAN PLAYGROUND**

This site is adjacent to the Apartments at Coolidge School, and contains a baseball field, playground, and basketball court.

**2015 Assessment:** Walkways are often too narrow and some paths have cracks and lips. Gates at entrances to the park and specific facilities are inaccessible, and the driveway to the Apartments at Coolidge School is in disrepair and too steeply sloped

**2022 Assessment:** Although there are accessible parking spaces provided in front of the Coolidge School building, they are not the closest spaces to the park entrance. Instead of a curb cut at the park entrance, there is a makeshift curb ramp made out of asphalt that appears temporary during maintenance of the driveway. Inside the park, facilities are adjacent to accessible paths, although low-hanging branches remain a concern. There is an accessible portable restroom stall in the park.

## **VICTORY FIELD**

This site is a large athletic complex used by Watertown High School. It includes a football field complex with bleacher seating, concession stand, and picnic tables, as well as a combination soccer and track-and-field complex with a full running track. There are also tennis and basketball courts, and a play structure.

**2015 Assessment:** Access to certain facilities like the field house and concession stand windows is limited. Some facilities have gates that are difficult to use for people with disabilities. Access to the play structure from the track is inaccessible, and the Orchard Street and parking lot entrances to the track are also inaccessible

**2022 Assessment:** The entrance to the track from the parking lot lacks a level surface. The football field and associated facilities offer significantly better access to people with disabilities. The play area is



connected to the rest of the site only by the running track, which is an accessible path but could be obstructed by sport activity.

## **WHITNEY HILL PARK**

This is a wooded conservation area that includes dirt hiking trails, adjacent to the Victory Field complex.

**2022 Assessment:** The only facilities at this site are the dirt hiking trails, which are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

## **Additional municipal sites:**

### **CITY HALL**

The Watertown Administration Building was built on Main Street in 1932 and serves as City Hall today. It houses municipal office space and meeting rooms, and as such is a major public destination for conducting business with the City. It is located between Saltonstall Park and the Watertown Free Public Library in Watertown Square.

**2023 Assessment:** Accessible parking for City Hall is located in the rear of the building with an accessible entrance on the northwest side of the building. This entrance is signed and has an automatic door with push button. Sidewalks to the entrance are well maintained. Access from the Main Street sidewalk must navigate a slope up from the sidewalk and back down to the side entrance along a signed path. A picnic table that is not accessible was noted in the grass near the rear parking lot.

### **WATERTOWN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The library consists of two buildings in Watertown Square, the original 1884 structure and a significant modern addition completed in 2006. It is a significant public destination as the only library in the city, and also has community meeting spaces and a café. There is a small brick-paved seating area with moveable café tables and chairs along Main Street near the front entrance.

**2023 Assessment:** The building is fully accessible from both the front (Main Street) and back (parking lot) entrances. The parking lot is located in the rear of the building and has accessible spaces closest to the entrance. The striping for the spaces and a crosswalk from the parking lot to the entrance is somewhat faded and difficult to see however. The parking lot and sidewalks to the entrance are at the same level with no ramps needed. There are a series of concrete posts about three feet tall along the flush curb between the parking lot and the entrance but they are spaced widely enough so they do not obstruct access. The entrance has an automatic door with push button and the door and handles comply with the accessibility requirements.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY**

The DPW facility on Orchard Street is open to the public for payments and inquiries during normal business hours. It is also an active construction site used by DPW vehicles. The parking lot provides overflow parking for the adjacent Victory Field complex.

**2023 Assessment:** The parking lot has accessible spaces closest to the primary entrance. The accessible pathway is wide, level, and in excellent condition. There is a secondary entrance well connected to the primary entrance by sidewalks. There is a picnic table outside this entrance which lacks a 32"-radius clear, flat turning space. The door and handles comply with the accessibility requirements.

## **COMMANDER'S MANSION**

The Commander's Mansion is a historic 1865 house originally part of the Watertown Arsenal site. It is used today as an event venue that can be rented by the public. The grounds include an outdoor event space and two walking trails.

**2023 Assessment:** Accessible parking spaces are in the rear parking lot closest to the accessible entrance which is in the front. The front entrance has a long switchback path to the accessible entrance. The paving is uneven with potential for water accumulation and too narrow for a wheelchair. There is no marked drop-off zone or signage to the accessible door at the front entrance. There is an outdoor event space behind the house that is accessible from the parking lot but more than 250' from the front accessible entrance.

There are two trails around the property, an Upper and Lower Trail, which have generally smooth natural surfaces although maintenance appears to be minimal. The upper trail ends abruptly at a retaining wall several feet above Talcott Avenue.

## **WATERTOWN SENIOR CENTER**

This facility is open to the public and provides programming and services for local seniors. It is accessible for individuals with physical disabilities.

**2023 Assessment:** The accessible parking spaces are located closest to the entrance but large cracks in the asphalt need repair. The entrance has an automatic door with push button and the door and handles comply with the accessibility requirements. There is an unmarked drop-off zone in front of the entrance.

## **FORMER PARKER SCHOOL**

This building was built as a school, reused as commercial office space, and was recently acquired by the City for use as additional municipal office space. It is adjacent to Casey Park.

**2023 Assessment:** Accessible parking spaces are located behind the building near an accessible building entrance. Each space has painted markings but no signage. An asphalt curb ramp between





spaces provides access to the sidewalk but the side slopes protrude into the parking spaces. The parking lot asphalt surface and painted lines are in need of repair. There are not enough ADA spaces based on the total number of spaces in the parking lot. There is a ramp present with rails on both sides and a landing platform that provides access to the entry. Doors and handles both meet the accessibility requirements.

## Summary of Inventory Recommendations

In this evaluation of Watertown's open space facilities, site/facility access and play area access were identified as the area most in need of improvement to ensure ADA compliant. Other recommendations are also summarized below.

### Site/Facility Access Recommendations

1. **Facility Access:** Ensure that facilities (especially baseball fields/spectator seating, which are mostly inaccessible currently) are connected by an accessible path of travel from an accessible site entrance.
2. **Access Paths:** Where possible, ensure that paths of travel from accessible site entrances are evenly paved, without excessive slopes or tripping hazards.

### Play Area Recommendations

1. **Inclusive Design:** When developing or redeveloping playgrounds or parks, consider employing inclusive design strategies to give children and adults with disabilities as meaningful a play experience as their peers. A helpful resource on inclusive play is located on the website for the National Center on Accessibility (<http://www.ncaonline.org/resources/articles/playground-universaldesign.shtml>).
2. **Play Area Access:** Several play areas are currently inaccessible to children with disabilities due to narrow entrances and gates. Consider widening entrances and altering gate design to make these facilities open to more users.

### Other Recommendations

1. **Curb Cuts:** Several parking lots for facilities lacked sufficient curb cuts or ramps to ensure site access from accessible parking spaces.
2. **Site Entrances:** Several site entrances, especially less formal "gap in the fence" entrances, lack an evenly paved surface to allow access for people using wheelchairs.

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) offers grants to remove barriers and create and improve accessible features and programmatic access for persons with disabilities. Towns and cities are eligible to

apply. More information about the grant program is available on MOD's website: [www.mass.gov/mod/adagrant](http://www.mass.gov/mod/adagrant). In addition, MOD offers training for municipal officials and staff under Title I (Employment) and Title II (State and Local Government Services) of the ADA. The training can be geared towards specific municipal departments if needed.

## **Part IV: Transition Plan**

The purpose of the Transition Plan is to establish the steps necessary to complete any modifications identified through the ADA Self-Evaluation, schedule the necessary modifications, and identify the responsible individual or entity. At a minimum, the plan should address any physical barriers at the facilities evaluated during the ADA Self-Evaluation and describe the necessary modifications to make those facilities accessible.

### **Public Input**

The development of the Transition Plan was done with input from individuals with disabilities and representatives from the disabled community. On February 15, 2023, the Watertown Commission on Disability provided input on the draft ADA Self-Evaluation Report, including the Transition Plan. Feedback on its findings and Transition Plan were documented.

### **Transition Plan**

The recommended actions to remove accessibility barriers were prioritized based on frequency of use by individuals with disabilities, frequency of use by the general public, and additional factors such as safety, complaints from citizens, and aesthetics. Public input was key to understanding these issues. Sites that currently have amenities (e.g., parking lot) were ranked with a higher priority than sites that do not currently have amenities because accessibility improvements could be easily addressed. Additionally, sites that the City currently has plans for future improvements were also ranked higher and will incorporate ADA accessibility standards.

The City developed a ranking method to prioritize the inventoried sites for addressing accessibility recommendations. The City established four categories for prioritization:

- 1: The City is currently working on or has plans to work on the site in the near future. These sites are popular and widely used with established amenities (e.g., parking lot, ball fields, play areas, trail system).
- 2: The City recognizes that improvements are needed at the site and will develop plans to address the recommendations. These sites are also popular and widely used with established amenities (e.g., parking lot, ball fields, play areas, trail system).



3: The City recognizes that improvements are needed at the site, but it does not have any plans to address recommendations at this time.

0: The site has no or extremely limited opportunities to develop amenities or improve accessibility (e.g., parking is not available and there is no space to provide it; wetlands or steep topography limit trail or access development).

Sites that received a ranking of 0-3 are reflected in the transition plan matrix. Sites in the matrix are ordered based on their priority ranking.

**Watertown Transition Plan**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Issue/Barrier</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action(s) for Barrier Removal</b>
<b>Arsenal Park</b>	Parking	No curb cuts to sidewalks near accessible parking spaces	Central parking lot	1	Install ADA-compliant curb cuts and tactile panels near accessible spaces
<b>Arsenal Park</b>	Site Access	Path from accessible entrance to facilities is unevenly paved and has steep slope	Path near northwest entrance from parking lot	1	Repave path to remove tripping hazards and improve access to facilities
<b>Arsenal Park</b>	Site Access	No accessible path to most sport fields and spectator seating	Soccer, baseball fields	1	Construct accessible pathway(s) to fields and spectator seating
<b>Arsenal Park</b>	Play Structures	Play structures do not provide an equal play experience to children with disabilities	Play structures	1	Use inclusive design strategies for improvements, including new play structures
<b>Lowell School Playground</b>	Site Access	No facilities connected by accessible path to any entrance (due to construction)	Entrance	1	Construct accessible pathway(s) during construction – interim condition

Facility	Element	Issue/Barrier	Location	Priority	Action(s) for Barrier Removal
<b>Moxley Park</b>	Site Access	Only accessible path of travel from play areas to field house runs through basketball and tennis courts	Play areas	1	Construct accessible pathway(s)
<b>Victory Field</b>	Site Access	Entrance to track from parking lot is inaccessible	Track entrance near parking lot	1	Install an ADA-compliant entrance
<b>Victory Field</b>	Site Access	No accessible path of travel from play area to rest of facility	Play area	1	Create ADA-compliant path of travel connecting facilities to track
<b>552 Main Street Playground</b>	Site Access	No accessible path of travel to baseball field or seating	Baseball field	2	Construct accessible pathway from main path to baseball facilities
<b>Bemis Park</b>	Site Access	No accessible path of travel connecting facilities	Picnic tables, play structures, baseball field, basketball courts	2	Construct accessible pathway(s) to facilities



Facility	Element	Issue/Barrier	Location	Priority	Action(s) for Barrier Removal
<b>Bemis Park</b>	Play Structures	Play structures do not provide an equal play experience to children with disabilities	Play structures	2	Use inclusive design strategies for improvements, including new play structures
<b>Bemis Park</b>	Site Access	Entrances are unpaved and too narrow for a wheelchair user	All entrances	2	Construct accessible pathway(s) from entrances
<b>Bemis Park</b>	Picnic Facilities	Picnic tables lack clear, flat turning space of at least 29" radius	Picnic Tables	2	Re-grade picnic area or move picnic area to flatter site with accessible paths
<b>Casey Playground</b>	Site Access	Aldrich Road entrance has an inaccessible gate	Aldrich Road entrance	2	Widen entrance gate and pathway.
<b>Casey Playground</b>	Site Access	Baseball field and play area near Morse Street are not connected by an accessible path	Baseball field from the Morse Street play area	2	Construct accessible pathway(s) to fields and play area

Facility	Element	Issue/Barrier	Location	Priority	Action(s) for Barrier Removal
<b>Filippello Park</b>	Site Access	Baseball and Soccer fields and spectator seating are not connected by an accessible path	Baseball field, soccer field	2	Construct accessible pathway(s) to fields and spectator seating
<b>How Park</b>	Site Access	Play area is accessed through an unnecessary narrow gate	Play Area	2	Widen entrance gate
<b>How Park</b>	Parking	No curb cut allowing sidewalk access from marked accessible space	Bacon Street	2	Install curb cut at accessible parking space
<b>Sullivan Playground</b>	Entrance	No curb cut at park entrance, only temporary asphalt ramp	Entrance	2	Work with The Apartments at Coolidge School to install curb cut at entrance
<b>How Park</b>	Site Access	Basketball court is not connected to any accessible path or entrance	Basketball court	3	Construct accessible pathway(s) to courts

Facility	Element	Issue/Barrier	Location	Priority	Action(s) for Barrier Removal
<b>Saltonstall Park</b>	Parking	Accessible parking spaces in the parking lot were located close to City Hall, so accessing park requires crossing the parking lot	Parking Lot	3	Add accessible parking space(s) near park entrance
<b>Whitney Hill Park</b>	Site Access	No facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities	Hiking Trails	3	Explore options to make areas near the entrances accessible
<b>Filippello Park</b>	Site Access	The play area and picnic facilities closest to accessible parking sit atop a steep slope	Picnic and play area near parking lot	0	Other picnic and play areas at park are connected by accessible paths.
<b>Sullivan Playground</b>	Parking	Accessible parking spaces are not closest to park entrance	Parking Lot	0	Re-locate accessible parking closest to entrance (parking owned by The Apartments at Coolidge School)
<b>Free Public Library</b>	Parking	Parking markings faded	Parking Lot	2	Repair and re-stripe

Facility	Element	Issue/Barrier	Location	Priority	Action(s) for Barrier Removal
<b>Commander's Mansion</b>	Site Access	Front path from drop-off to accessible entrance uneven, too narrow, lacks signage	Pathway	2	Repair surface, widen path, add ADA signage
<b>Commander's Mansion</b>	Site Access	Trails lack signage, not well-defined	Walking Trails	2	Add signage, improve maintenance
<b>Senior Center</b>	Parking	Surface is cracked, markings faded, signage inadequate	Parking Lot	2	Repair surface and markings, add ADA signage
<b>Former Parker School</b>	Parking	Inadequate number of accessible spaces, markings faded, signage inadequate, curb ramps protrude into parking spaces	Parking Lot	2	Repair surface and create compliant sidewalk access, add accessible spaces and ADA signage



## Appendix A

ADA Administrative Requirements



City of Watertown  
ADA Grievance Procedure

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies, or the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the City of Watertown.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discriminations, such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location date and description of the problem. Upon request, alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities.

The complaint should be submitted by the complainant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Veterans Service Officer/ADA Coordinator  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
617-972-6416 phone/617-924-0858 fax  
Email address: [pgeorge@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:pgeorge@watertown-ma.gov)

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

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

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the City Manager or his/her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the City Manager or his/her designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint. The complainant retains the opportunity to obtain relief outside of the appeals process.

All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the City Manager or his/her designee, and responses from the ADA Coordinator and City Manager or his/her designee will be kept by the City of Watertown at the City Clerk's office for at least three years.



George J. Proakis  
City Manager

CITY OF  
WATERTOWN  
*Office of the City Manager*

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6465  
[www.watertown-ma.gov](http://www.watertown-ma.gov)  
[citymgr@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:citymgr@watertown-ma.gov)

April 18, 2023

Melissa Cryan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2524

RE: Watertown's 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

I am writing to inform you that the City of Watertown's ADA/Section 504 Coordinator is Ms. Gayle M. Shattuck, Personnel Director. Ms. Shattuck is retiring at the end of April. Upon her retirement, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator will be Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Ms. Shattuck at (617) 972-6443 or Mr. George at (617) 972-6416.

Sincerely,

George Proakis  
City Manager

cc: Gayle M. Shattuck, Personnel Director  
Patrick George, Veterans' Services Officer  
Steven Magoon, Director of Community Development & Planning/Assistant City Manager



# COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Town of Watertown

Administration Building, 149 Main Street

Watertown, Massachusetts 02472-4410

Tel: (617) 972-6443 • Fax: (617) 972-6404 • TTY/TDD: (617) 923-1304

## NOTICE REQUIREMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act Title II regulations require municipalities to notify applicants, employees, participants and interested persons of their rights under the law.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

THE TOWN OF WATERTOWN DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY IN ACCESS TO OR OPERATION OF ITS PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES. THE TOWN OF WATERTOWN DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY IN APPLICATION, HIRING, AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES. THE TOWN OF WATERTOWN HAS DESIGNATED THE FOLLOWING PERSON TO COORDINATE EFFORTS TO COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS. QUESTIONS, REQUESTS FOR AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES OR MODIFICATIONS OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Gayle Shattuck, Personnel Director

Town Hall, 149 Main Street, Watertown, MA 02472

(617) 972-6443

[personnel@Watertown-ma.gov](mailto:personnel@Watertown-ma.gov)

Massachusetts Office on Disability  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108

800-322-2020 voice/TDD  
(617) 727-7440 voice/TDD  
May 2013

**Facility Inventory**

**LOCATION:**

ACTIVITY	EQUIPMENT	NOTES
Picnic Facilities	Tables & Benches	Located adjacent to accessible paths
		Access to Open Spaces
		Back and Arm Rests
		Adequate number
	Grills	Height of Cooking Surface
	Trash Cans	Located adjacent to accessible paths
	Picnic Shelters	Located adjacent to accessible paths
Located near accessible water fountains, trash can, restroom, parking, etc.		
Trails		Surface material
		Dimensions
		Rails
		Signage (for visually impaired)
Swimming Facilities	Pools	Entrance
		Location from accessible parking
		Safety features i.e. warning for visually impaired
	Beaches	Location from accessible path into water
		Handrails
		Shade provided
Play Areas (tot lots)	All Play Equipment i.e. swings, slides	Same experience provided to all
	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths Enough space between equipment for wheelchair
Game Areas: *ballfield *basketball *tennis	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths
		Berm cuts onto courts
	Equipment	Height
		Dimensions
		Spectator Seating
Boat Docks	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths Handrails
Fishing Facilities	Access Routes	Located adjacent to accessible paths
		Handrails
	Equipment	Arm Rests
		Bait Shelves
		Fish Cleaning Tables
Programming	Are special programs at your facilities accessible?	Learn-to-Swim
		Guided Hikes
		Interpretive Programs
Services and Technical Assistance		Information available in alternative formats i.e. for visually impaired
		Process to request interpretive services (i.e. sign language interpreter) for meetings



George J. Proakis  
City Manager

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April 18, 2023

Melissa Cryan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2524

RE: Watertown's 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

The City of Watertown is pleased to submit the final draft of the 2023 Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan (Plan) prepared by the Department of Community Development & Planning and their consultants Stantec and Horsley Witten Group, with support from the Conservation Commission, Planning Advisory Committee, and the Recreation Department.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Watertown, I support the effort that went into development of the 2023 plan. The updated content of this plan has been substantially vetted through a unique and engaging combined public process in conjunction with the development of Watertown's Comprehensive Plan. The substantial public input has allowed for a number of exciting open space and recreation initiatives to be identified within the seven-year action plan. The plan will be of particular value in informing the development of future Capital Improvement Programs.

It is with great pleasure that the City presents this Plan to the Division of Conservation Services and ask for your favorable consideration in approving the Plan. The City of Watertown looks forward to collaborating with Division of Conservation Services and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in accomplishing shared objectives in providing the best open space and recreation opportunities possible for the community.

Sincerely,

George Proakis  
City Manager



**LOCATION**

<b>PARKING</b>			
<i>Total Spaces</i>	<i>Required Accessible Spaces</i>		
Up to 25	1 space		
26-50	2 spaces		
51-75	3 spaces		
76-100	4 spaces		
101-150	5 spaces		
151-200	6 spaces		
201-300	7 spaces		
301-400	8 spaces		
401-500	9 spaces		
<i>Specification for Accessible Spaces</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
Accessible space located closest to accessible entrance			
Where spaces cannot be located within 200 ft of accessible entrance, drop-off area is provided within 100 ft.			
Minimum width of 13 ft includes 8 ft space plus 5 ft access aisle			
Van space – minimum of 1 van space for every accessible space, 8 ft wide plus 8 ft aisle. Alternative is to make all accessible spaces 11 ft wide with 5 ft aisle.			
Sign with international symbol of accessibility at each space or pair of spaces			
Sign minimum 5 ft, maximum 8 ft to top of sign			
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed (no cracks)			
Surface slope less than 1:20, 5%			
Curbcut to pathway from parking lot at each space or pair of spaces, if sidewalk (curb) is present			
Curbcut is a minimum width of 3 ft, excluding sloped sides, has sloped sides, all slopes not to exceed 1:12, and textured or painted yellow			
<b>RAMPS</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
Slope Maximum 1:12			
Minimum width 4 ft between handrails			
Handrails on both sides if ramp is longer than 6 ft			
Handrails at 34" and 19" from ramp surface			
Handrails extend 12" beyond top and bottom			
Handgrip oval or round			
Handgrip smooth surface			
Handgrip diameter between 1¼" and 2"			
Clearance of 1½" between wall and wall rail			
Non-slip surface			
Level platforms (4ft x 4 ft) at every 30 ft, at top, at bottom, at change of direction			

**LOCATION**

<b>SITE ACCESS, PATH OF TRAVEL, ENTRANCES</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
<b>Site Access</b>			
Accessible path of travel from passenger disembarking area and parking area to accessible entrance			
Disembarking area at accessible entrance			
Surface evenly paved or hard-packed			
No ponding of water			
<b>Path of Travel</b>			
Path does not require the use of stairs			
Path is stable, firm and slip resistant			
3 ft wide minimum			
Slope maximum 1:20 (5%) and maximum cross pitch is 2% (1:50).			
Continuous common surface, no changes in level greater than 1/2 inch			
Any objects protruding onto the pathway must be detected by a person with a visual disability using a cane			
Objects protruding more than 4" from the wall must be within 27" of the ground, or higher than 80"			
Curb on the pathway must have curb cuts at drives, parking and drop-offs			
<b>Entrances</b>			
Primary public entrances accessible to person using wheelchair, must be signed, gotten to independently, and <i>not</i> be the service entrance			
Level space extending 5 ft. from the door, interior and exterior of entrance doors			
Minimum 32" clear width opening (i.e. 36" door with standard hinge)			
At least 18" clear floor area on latch, pull side of door			
Door handle no higher than 48" and operable with a closed fist			
Vestibule is 4 ft plus the width of the door swinging into the space			
Entrance(s) on a level that makes elevators accessible			
Door mats less than 1/2" thick are securely fastened			
Door mats more than 1/2" thick are recessed			
Grates in path of travel have openings of 1/2" maximum			
Signs at non-accessible entrance(s) indicate direction to accessible entrance			
Emergency egress – alarms with flashing lights and audible signals, sufficiently lighted			

NOTES

**LOCATION**

<b>STAIRS and DOORS</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
<b>Stairs</b>			
No open risers			
Nosings not projecting			
Treads no less than 11" wide			
Handrails on both sides			
Handrails 34"-38" above tread			
Handrail extends a minimum of 1 ft beyond top and bottom riser (if no safety hazard and space permits)			
Handgrip oval or round			
Handgrip has a smooth surface			
Handgrip diameter between 1 1/4" and 1 1/2"			
1/2" clearance between wall and handrail			
<b>Doors</b>			
Minimum 32" clear opening			
At least 18" clear floor space on pull side of door			
Closing speed minimum 3 seconds to within 3" of the latch			
Maximum pressure 5 pounds interior doors			
Threshold maximum 1/2" high, beveled on both sides			
Hardware operable with a closed fist (no conventional door knobs or thumb latch devices)			
Hardware minimum 36", maximum 48" above the floor			
Clear, level floor space extends out 5 ft from both sides of the door			
Door adjacent to revolving door is accessible and unlocked			
Doors opening into hazardous area have hardware that is knurled or roughened			

NOTES

**LOCATION**

<b>RESTROOMS – also see Doors and Vestibules</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	Yes	No	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
5 ft turning space measured 12" from the floor			
<b>At least one Sink:</b>			
Clear floor space of 30" by 48" to allow a forward approach			
Mounted without pedestal or legs, height 34" to top of rim			
Extends at least 22" from the wall			
Open knee space a minimum 19" deep, 30" width, and 27" high			
Cover exposed pipes with insulation			
Faucets operable with closed fist (lever or spring activated handle)			
<b>At least one Stall:</b>			
Accessible to person using wheelchair at 60" wide by 72" deep			
Stall door is 36" wide			
Stall door swings out			
Stall door is self closing			
Stall door has a pull latch			
Lock on stall door is operable with a closed fist, and 32" above the floor			
Coat hook is 54" high			
<b>Toilet</b>			
18" from center to nearest side wall			
42" minimum clear space from center to farthest wall or fixture			
Top of seat 17"-19" above the floor			
<b>Grab Bars</b>			
On back and side wall closest to toilet			
1¼" diameter			
1½" clearance to wall			
Located 30" above and parallel to the floor			
Acid-etched or roughened surface			
42" long			
<b>Fixtures</b>			
Toilet paper dispenser is 24" above floor			
One mirror set a maximum 38" to bottom (if tilted, 42")			
Dispensers (towel, soap, etc) at least one of each a maximum 42" above the floor			

**NOTES**

**LOCATION**

<b>FLOORS, DRINKING FOUNTAINS, TELEPHONES</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
<b>Floors</b>			
Non-slip surface			
Carpeting is high-density, low pile, non-absorbent, stretched taut, securely anchored			
Corridor width minimum is 3 ft			
Objects (signs, ceiling lights, fixtures) can only protrude 4" into the path of travel from a height of 27" to 80" above the floor			
<b>Drinking Fountains</b>			
Spouts no higher than 36" from floor to outlet			
Hand operated push button or level controls			
Spouts located near front with stream of water as parallel to front as possible			
If recessed, recess a minimum 30" width, and no deeper than depth of fountain			
If no clear knee space underneath, clear floor space 30" x 48" to allow parallel approach			
<b>Telephones</b>			
Highest operating part a maximum 54" above the floor			
Access within 12" of phone, 30" high by 30" wide			
Adjustable volume control on headset so identified			
<b>SIGNS, SIGNALS, AND SWITCHES</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
<b>Switches, Controls and Signs</b>			
Switches and controls for light, heat, ventilation, windows, fire alarms, thermostats, etc, must be a minimum of 36" and a maximum of 48" above the floor for a forward reach, a maximum of 54" for a side reach			
Electrical outlets centered no lower than 18" above the floor			
Warning signals must be visual as well as audible			
<b>Signs</b>			
Mounting height must be 60" to centerline of the sign			
Within 18" of door jamb or recessed			
Letters and numbers at least 1/4" high			
Letters and numbers raised .03"			
Letters and numbers contrast with the background color			

NOTES



**LOCATION**

<b>SWIMMING POOLS – accessibility can be via ramp, lifting device, or transfer area</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	Yes	No	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
Ramp at least 34” wide with a non-slip surface extending into the shallow end, slope not exceeding 1:6 with handrails on both sides			
Lifting device			
Transfer area 18” above the path of travel and a minimum of 18” wide			
Unobstructed path of travel not less than 48” wide around pool			
Non-slip surface			

**LOCATION**

<b>SHOWER ROOMS - Showers must accommodate both wheel-in and transfer use</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	Yes	No	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
Stalls 36” by 60” minimum, with a 36” door opening			
Floors are pitched to drain the stall at the corner farthest from entrance			
Floors are non-slip surface			
Controls operate by a single lever with a pressure balance mixing valve			
Controls are located on the center wall adjacent to the hinged seat			
Shower heads attached to a flexible metal hose			
Shower heads attached to wall mounting adjustable from 42” to 72” above the floor			
Seat is hinged and padded and at least 16” deep, folds upward, securely attached to side wall, height is 18” to the top of the seat, and at least 24” long			
Soap trays without handhold features unless they can support 250 pounds			
2 grab bars are provided, one 30” and one 48” long, or one continuous L shaped bar			
Grab bars are placed horizontally at 36” above the floor line			

**LOCATION**

<b>PICNICKING</b>			
<i>Specification</i>	Yes	No	<i>Comments/Transition Notes</i>
A minimum of 5% of the total tables must be accessible with clear space under the table top not less than 30” wide and 19” deep per seating space and not less than 27” clear from the ground to the underside of the table. An additional 29” clear space (totaling 48”) must extend beyond the 19” clear space under the table to provide access			
For tables without toe clearance, the knee space under the table must be at least 28” high, 30” wide and 24” deep.			
Top of table no higher than 32” above ground			
Surface of the clear ground space under and around the table must be stable, firm and slip-resistant, and evenly graded with a maximum slope of 2% in all directions			
Accessible tables, grills and fire rings must have clear ground space of at least 36” around the perimeter			

APPENDIX D  
Letters of Support



George J. Proakis  
City Manager

CITY OF  
WATERTOWN  
*Office of the City Manager*

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6465  
[www.watertown-ma.gov](http://www.watertown-ma.gov)  
[citymgr@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:citymgr@watertown-ma.gov)

April 18, 2023

Melissa Cryan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114-2524

RE: Watertown's 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

The City of Watertown is pleased to submit the final draft of the 2023 Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan (Plan) prepared by the Department of Community Development & Planning and their consultants Stantec and Horsley Witten Group, with support from the Conservation Commission, Planning Advisory Committee, and the Recreation Department.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Watertown, I support the effort that went into development of the 2023 plan. The updated content of this plan has been substantially vetted through a unique and engaging combined public process in conjunction with the development of Watertown's Comprehensive Plan. The substantial public input has allowed for a number of exciting open space and recreation initiatives to be identified within the seven-year action plan. The plan will be of particular value in informing the development of future Capital Improvement Programs.

It is with great pleasure that the City presents this Plan to the Division of Conservation Services and ask for your favorable consideration in approving the Plan. The City of Watertown looks forward to collaborating with Division of Conservation Services and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in accomplishing shared objectives in providing the best open space and recreation opportunities possible for the community.

Sincerely,

George Proakis  
City Manager



**CITY OF WATERTOWN**  
*Department of*  
*Community Development and Planning*  
**Planning Board**

*Administration Building*  
*149 Main Street*  
*Watertown, Massachusetts 02472*  
*Phone: 617-972-6417*  
*www.watertown-ma.gov*

Board Members:  
Janet Buck, Chair  
Jason Cohen  
Payson R. Whitney, III  
Abigail Hammett

**March 22, 2023**

**Melissa Cryan**  
**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**  
**Division of Conservation Services**  
**100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900**  
**Boston, MA 02114-2524**

***RE: Watertown's 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan***

**Dear Ms. Cryan:**

As the Chair of the City of Watertown Planning Board I am pleased to present this letter in support of the 2023 Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan (the Plan). Members of the Planning Board participated throughout the public process concurrent with the development of Watertown's Comprehensive Plan. A series of public forums were held, each of which addressed Watertown's open space and recreation resources. The process was very engaging with substantial turnout. To further ensure participation, a very successful online dialogue was developed with thorough media coverage.

A lot of exciting work has been completed or is being planned within the city. New bicycle trails are being planned and built to connect the city's open space lands and recreational opportunities along the Charles River are being enhanced. Watertown is seeing redevelopment that is allowing for the implementation and support of the Watertown Community Path to connect the newly opened Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. New development along the corridor has also allowed private open space to enhance the corridor with publicly accessible open space. Together, this east-west route is providing new multi-modal connection to the park network and creating a greenway corridor for cyclists and commuters, better linking Watertown to Arlington, Cambridge, and Boston.

The content of this plan has been substantially updated through an engaging process that was successful because of the shared process that looked at many issues from

different angles and comprehensively. Thank you for your consideration and review of the Plan. As the Chair of the Planning Board, I am pleased that this important document is complete, and look forward to implementing its recommendations in concert with Watertown's Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet Buck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Janet Buck, Watertown Planning Board Chair





## SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

June 7, 2023

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

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The City of Watertown's "Open Space and Recreation Plan" was recently submitted to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for review.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires that all open space plans must be reviewed by the applicable regional planning agency. This review is advisory and only DCS has the power to approve a municipal open space plan. While your office reviews open space plans for compliance with your guidelines, MAPC reviews these plans for their attention to regional issues generally and more specifically for consistency with *MetroCommon 2050*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area.

**Consistency with MetroCommon 2050** – *MetroCommon 2050* is the official regional plan for Greater Boston, adopted in 2021 in accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law. The plan includes a series of goals and detailed strategies that will be used to measure progress towards accomplishing these goals. We encourage all communities within the MAPC region to become familiar with the plan by visiting [www.mapc.org/get-involved/metrofuture-our-regional-plan](http://www.mapc.org/get-involved/metrofuture-our-regional-plan)

We are pleased to see that the Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan directly references consistency with several *MetroCommon 2050* goals. In particular, the plan highlights the City's commitment to protect and preserve natural resources, establish safe pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, parks, and schools, and acquire additional land to expand Watertown's open space and recreation network. The plan includes a section on regional coordination and an assessment of key open space and recreational resources in surrounding communities.

**Surrounding Communities** – The OSRP highlights regional open space resources including the Charles River Reservation, the Mount Auburn Cemetery, the Gore Estate, and the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. The City actively participates in regional planning activities with neighboring communities in the Inner Core Committee subregion (which consists of representatives from 21 cities and towns within the metropolitan Boston area).



## SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The Watertown Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a great deal of specifics regarding its parks, open spaces and recreational resources, which includes an assessment of their current condition and future needs. The open space and recreational resource inventory maps are particularly detailed, as is the seven-year Action Plan. It should serve the City well as it continues its efforts to preserve open space and provide for the recreational needs of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Racicot". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Racicot  
Land Use Planning Director

cc: Gideon Schreiber, Director of Planning, City of Watertown