



City of Marlborough Open Space and Recreation Plan 2026-2036



**This plan was prepared by the
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Mayor Arthur Vigeant appointed the Committee in 2018

Mayor J. Christian Dumais saw and approved the final document in 2026.

Editing and formatting by Donna Scalcione – many thanks to her excellent volunteer effort.

Acknowledgments: This Plan was a multi-year effort by the Open Space and Recreation Committee appointed in 2018 – due to the COVID Pandemic and staffing shortage the project stalled in 2020-2024 and resumed in fall 2024 spring 2025 to finalize the document that had been drafted and almost finished in 2020. Thank you to this team for sticking with it and producing a forward-thinking plan

With Gratitude,
Priscilla Ryder
Conservation/Sustainability Officer

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Section 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“The environment is where we all meet.
where we all have a mutual interest.
it is the one thing all of us share “*

Lady Bird Johnson

Marlborough is a City of seven hills and many valleys filled with streams and parks and forested areas with views from hilltops and across water bodies. The City is home to many including a very diverse population of humans and wildlife. It has a rich history from Native American hunting and summer grounds, Revolutionary War travelers, heart of shoe factories and apple orchards, and now a bustling vibrant economically and culturally diverse City. Its geographic location and solid infrastructure combined with its many parks, open space and natural resources creates a wonderful community in which to live, work and play. Every ten years we are asked to revisit this Open Space and Recreation Plan and update it, so it is reflective of the City’s current needs for protecting natural resources that sustain the City, and provide parks, open space, and community recreational amenities which keep our residents, businesses and visitors happy and healthy. **Only by envisioning the future and planning for it, and protecting the places that make Marlborough special, can the City achieve these goals.** This plan provides the City government and its citizens with the analysis and recommendations needed to achieve this vision.

The primary goals of this Open Space and Recreation Plan are to preserve the unique natural resources and character of the City, to provide adequate indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities for the community and to educate citizens about the important benefits of natural resources, for human health, healthy wildlife and working within a changing climate.

This 2026-2036 Open Space and Recreation plan provides the inventory, history, needs analysis and action plan for the community to implement these goals over the next ten years.

The plan includes:

- A summary of achievements of the 2011-2018 Open Space Plan
- An overview of the City's cultural history, population characteristics, growth, and development patterns
- An environmental inventory of the community's natural resources, scenic features, water resources, plants, and wildlife

- An inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest. Included are maps of all City, state and private land used for recreation and conservation, as well as undeveloped parcels to provide a visual reference to illustrate which land remains undeveloped in the City
- An analysis of conservation and recreation needs within the City, including management, planning needs and acquisition recommendations, to protect natural resources, and provide adequate open space and recreational facilities for a diverse and growing population
- List of goals and objectives with a 10-year action plan

Major recommendations provided in this plan 2026-2036 plan include:

Recreation:

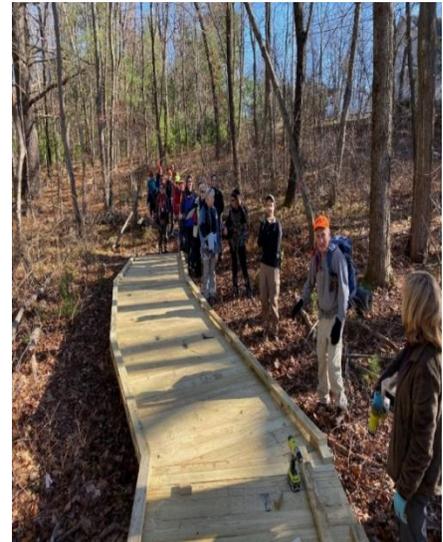
- Development of an additional major recreational facility at the old Bolton/Hudson Street Landfill. (Similar to the much used and loved Ghiloni Park) (completed in 2025)
- Add parks to neighborhoods that don't have play areas or open space within walking distance.
- Aggressively pursue state and/or private grant funds for improvements to recreation facilities
- Expand recreational park areas and make improvements to existing parks including field upgrades, parking lot improvements, building shade structures, planting trees, adding lighting, and improving playground equipment. A few items on this long list are:
 - Build a shade pavilion at Ghiloni Park, Farrell Pool, and Ward Park
 - Correct grading issues at Ghiloni Park Fields, Richer School Baseball Field, and Byrne Field
 - Stevens Park Lower Baseball Field overall upgrades to field, batting cages, snack shack etc.
 - Install MUSCO lighting system at various fields including High School track, Ghiloni Park, and Kelleher Field
 - Renovate the stands at Kelleher Field and High School Track



Kayakers on Ft. Meadow Reservoir – photo by MEDC

Conservation:

- Acquire undeveloped parcels of land including
 - South Street swamp and Shoestring Hill 80 acres
 - remaining open parcels around Ft. Meadow Reservoir-
 - Red Spring Rd. Parcel -10 acres
 - Landlocked parcel next to The Grove – 3+ acres, and
 - Parcel between ARRT and Blaiswood Ave. – 21 Acres
 - Robin Hill St. property and surrounding parcel protection
 - Tree Farm on Berlin Rd.
 - Remaining farmland on South St.- encourage farmland protection
 - Property along Sheep Falls Brook and Flagg Brook
 - Property along North Branch Brook
 - smaller parcels adjacent to already protected parcels and parcels that provide natural links between existing City owned and protected lands. and



[Hike along the Panther Trail -Boundary Street boardwalk- photo by volunteer](#)

- Property along stream and wildlife corridors as highlighted by dashed lines on Map #5 and the parcels in orange on Map #7
- Help preserve the remaining farms in the community
- Aggressively pursue state and/or private grant funds for improvements to and acquisition of land for open space and for creating open space links and trails.
- Continue habitat restoration efforts at the Desert Natural Area Pitch Pine Scrub Oak forest.
- Habitat management and improvement on all conservation properties.

Community amenities:

- Open dog park where residents can run dogs off leash. (this was constructed in 2025)
- Invest in green spaces and improve aesthetics and community health by planting trees, removing invasive vines to preserve existing trees and planting shade and heritage trees along roadways and in public spaces, maintaining a green infrastructure- for shade and stormwater management- to make the City more resilient in the changing climate.
- Look for areas in downtown and high-density areas to find areas where pocket parks and adding trees and greenspace to improve the health of these neighborhoods. (look at tax title properties to see if any are amenable to this type of conversion)
- Continue to Engage community residents and businesses in preserving and maintaining open space, recreation, and natural resource areas throughout the City.
- Continue to add sidewalks and walking trail links to destinations to make the City more walkable/bikeable and reduce reliance on cars.
- Set a goal to preserve half the City’s land area with tree canopy and native vegetation whether public or private, to sustain all life and be more resilient to a changing climate. Balance

development with open space protection with each new project approved.

- Establish a dark sky requirement for the city to protect wildlife.
- Continue to improve trail connectivity within City and with bordering communities and the region – such as Central Mass Rail Line in Sudbury and future aqueduct trails to Framingham.
- Promoting all our recreation, conservation and natural resources features so residents understand what is available for their use and enjoyment in Marlborough.

The City successfully achieved many of the goals in the 2011-2018 plan including upgrading the recreational facilities at Memorial Beach, and splashpads and improved parking at Ghiloni Park. The City gained 22 additional miles of trail as part of the 33+ mile intra-community Boroughs Loop Trail and the 26.2-mile Panther trails, made huge improvements to conservation land trails and acquired 145.22 more acres of conservation land. The City can be very proud of a plan well implemented.

However, the development pressures on the last remaining parcels of land within the City will be ever stronger as population increases, demand for housing soars, and existing open space becomes more profitable to develop. Development outpaced protection since 2011 with 256 acres of land that was of conservation interest being lost. It will be up to the Mayor, City Council, City boards, committees, and residents to push for the protection of these last remaining parcels and corridors. Their protection as outlined in this plan will ensure that future generations can enjoy a life with clean lakes, clean drinking water, abundant wildlife, wooded and paved trails for passive recreation and adequate opportunities for active recreation. In addition, it is critical for the City to manage these open spaces and recreational facilities for future generations and ensure proper funding to maintain these incredible resources. By attaining the goals recommended in this plan, Marlborough will be a community that will be known for protecting the environment and the personal health of its citizens by protecting natural resources and providing access to healthy recreational opportunities for all.

*The trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective.
Exactly how they do this, we don't yet know.
But what we see is the power of unity.
What happens to one happens to us all.
We can starve together or feast together.”*
Kimmerer

The challenge over the next ten years will be to ensure that the City plans ahead and saves those parcels of land that are important to the character of the community. Keeping hills undeveloped and ensuring that every neighborhood has a piece of tree-filled open space or recreational park land nearby to find peace and quiet, a place to walk and recreation areas to play, exercise and coexist with the natural world.

Section 2

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

Marlborough's popularity among both homeowners and businesses continues to grow, due in large part to its many amenities such as its acres of open space, its bike path and its excellent recreation facilities and programs. The City is also making good strides at being energy efficient and planting trees to provide shade in our changing climate. This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) reflects Marlborough's desire to preserve the City's open spaces, by creating more passive and active recreation opportunities while still increasing its hospitality toward sustainable businesses and residents wishing to locate here. The challenge to create this balance today is greater than ever, as open land is fast disappearing to development. This plan provides recommendations to meet this challenge and preserve the very character that makes Marlborough such a great place to live, work and play.

The Marlborough Recreation Department and Conservation Commission, along with the Department of Public Works, play key roles in maintaining the City's open spaces, recreation facilities and walking trails.

The Recreation Department serves the community's program needs by offering both passive and active leisure activities throughout the four-season calendar year. Marlborough has over 30 recreational facilities, which include various grass and turf sports fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, pickleball courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, tracks, walking trails, outdoor wading pools, splash pads, Skate Park, boat launch and lake swimming at Memorial Beach.

Program opportunities exist for residents and youth of all ages. The department's goals are to deliver cultural, environmental, social, physical, and educational programs and to ensure that these quality activities offer a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. Corresponding fees and charges that support these activities are fixed at levels that provide access to residents from all socio-economic backgrounds, while provisions for scholarships are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The Conservation Commission manages 14 properties and over 50 + miles of trails within the City, including 26.2 miles of the City-wide Panther Trail, a portion of which is 17 miles of the 4-community 33+ mile Boroughs Loop Trail, and manages a community garden. The Commission also, through its wetland permitting process, protects streams, lakes and ponds and certifies vernal pools to ensure protection of these natural resources from adverse development. These wetland and open space resources are the heart, lungs and veins that support a healthy environment and are important to

wildlife and to human health alike.

The Department of Public Works does the maintenance on all parks and Rail Trail and helps the Marlborough trails committee as needed for trail upkeep. The DPW plays a critical role in maintaining good water quality through roadway and drainage management throughout the City. Street trees which make up our urban forest are also under the care, planting and protection of the DPW, which is a huge natural infrastructure to the city, providing shading, cooling and wind breaks, stormwater infiltration and sequestering carbon.

This document takes an inventory of the existing open space, recreation, and natural resources currently available in the City. The plan then looks to the future and seeks to evaluate our current and future needs. The final section of the plan provides a realistic 10-year action plan with specific actions and tasks necessary in order to meet these goals.



Autumn colors along the Reservoir Trail- volunteer photo

The plan includes:

- A summary of achievements of the 2011-2018 Open Space Plan.
- An overview of the City's cultural history, population characteristics, growth, and development patterns.
- An environmental inventory of the community's natural resources, scenic features, water resources, plants, and wildlife.
- An inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest. Included are maps of all City, state and private land used for recreation and conservation, as well as undeveloped parcels to provide a visual reference which illustrates which land remains undeveloped in the City.
- An analysis of conservation and recreation needs within the City, including management, planning needs and acquisition recommendations, to protect natural resources, and provide adequate open space and recreational facilities for a diverse and growing population.

- List of goals and objectives with a detailed 10-year action plan.

Achievements of 2011-2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan

The successes of the 2011-2018 OSRP are many and are summarized below. The Mayor, City Council, Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, along with other boards and commissions and citizens groups, made great headway in achieving many of the goals set out in the 2011-2018 OSRP. Below is a list of these noteworthy achievements which formed the platform on which to build this current plan.

Recreation Successes:

➤ **Memorial Beach**

- constructed new parking lot
- upgraded bathroom facilities and beach house
- installed new playground equipment, constructed basketball court
- implemented walking trail through facility off season
- new fencing around property, updated picnic grounds, and installed handicap parking lot spaces

➤ **Ghiloni Park**

- installed new splash pad with over 20 water features, pump room with automatic chemical monitoring system, added additional concrete pad, and new fencing
- rehabilitated Vietnam Vets field.
- rehabilitated the parking lot and roadway through the Ghiloni Park Complex and added trees
- installed new dek hockey court

➤ **Ward Park renovation**

- upgraded existing field and track, designed new tennis, volleyball, basketball, and Pickleball courts
- installed new playground
- revamped existing parking lot, new fencing, bocce courts and horseshoe pits
- constructed new bathroom and concession facility
- created walking trails through the park
- installed new lighting system

➤ **Marlborough High School**

- Red Field - installed a new synthetic turf softball field and dugouts along with new lighting system
- Bauks Baseball Field - installed new synthetic multi-purpose turf field, new lighting system, dugouts, bullpens, batting cage, stands, created new handicap parking lot, and mounted new scoreboard
- Tennis courts resurfaced

➤ **Whitcomb School**

- constructed new synthetic multi-purpose field
- new bathrooms and concession facility, new press box

- stadium seating for 500 people
- new four lane track
- installed new scoreboard and audio system
- revamped existing softball field to a new baseball facility with batting cages
- installed new lighting system at both fields
- new fencing surrounding facility and installed new road with improvements to existing parking lot
- **Williams Street Baseball Fields:** laser graded fields, upgraded irrigation system, rehabilitated infields and built new pavilion
- **Kelleher Field:** upgraded bathrooms and locker rooms and added new electrical wiring system
- **John Street Playground:** installed new playground equipment and fencing
- **Korean Vets Field:** updated parking area to a formal parking lot
- **Stevens Park:** transformed existing baseball field into new softball facility
- **Marlborough Recreation Department:** new website using RecDesk recreational software
- **Stevens Park:** new Splash Pad, bathroom facility, and courts
- **Byrne Field:** updating field drainage system
- **Jericho Hill:** created walking trail through woods to hilltop
- **Web site updates and Facebook presence:** has improved efficiency and accessibility to programs



Ghiloni Park recreation facility 2024 Aerial – by MEC

Conservation Successes:

- Land acquisition: total new acres protected since 2011 = 145.22 Acres (with 256 acres of land lost in that same period)
- 26 Parcels of Land are enrolled in 61A and 61B status, so the City has right of first refusal for these parcels
- 33+ Miles Boroughs Loop Trail (4 communities) constructed and opened in 2019.
- Lake Williams Trail construction between Courthouse and Lizotte Dr., and around lake 2018

- Community Garden established on Stow Road
- Desert Natural Area acquired all landlocked parcels which protects whole area
- State Div. of Fish and Wildlife acquired and protected the 52 Acres of Flagg Swamp
- Desert Natural Area – habitat restoration -2014 prescribed burn to improve Pitch-Pine scrub oak forest (a globally rare habitat)
- 26.2-mile Panther trail connecting Marlborough Open spaces opened in 2022
- Added a native pollination preservation garden at Ghiloni Park in 2022

*"I go to nature to be soothed and healed,
and to have my senses put in tune once more."*

John Burroughs

Historic Successes:

- Museum in the Streets® was created giving passers by a short history lesson of the area
- Hometown hero banners
- Mural on South Bolton Street highlighting the City's history
- Mural installed at Memorial Beach showcasing a historical photo of Fort Meadow
- Mural installed on South Bolton St. wall to share history of area.

Community achievements:

- **Complete streets** - established policy to include sidewalks and bike lanes and accessibility when improving roadways which has resulted in bike lanes and sidewalk improvements whenever roadways are reconstructed where feasible
- **Municipal Vulnerability Plan "MVP" done in 2019** and provides City with planning for a changing climate, more rain, more drought, more heat more cold- evaluating infrastructure, landscapes, emergency shelters for heating and cooling, making sure we can adapt. So far have received grants to update ordinance to accommodate resiliency and planted trees in heat island areas
- **Tree City USA** – Marlborough now has a Tree City USA status
- **Green Communities** – continue to be a green community (2010 established), reducing carbon emissions with electric vehicles and more efficient buildings, and solar power generation on 4 schools
- **Lake Williams Floating Boardwalk and Gazebo**- Constructed and open in 2024 is a regional destination
- **Assabet River Rail Trail:** parking lot renovation and trail access at Jefferson Street and new bathroom facilities at Lincoln and Highland Streets as part of the ALTA development.

Natural Resource, Wetlands and Water Quality

Improvements:

- The Conservation Commission increased the no disturbance wetland **buffer zone to 30'** from the edge of wetlands, which will improve water quality and wildlife corridors with this added land protection.
- The DPW **moved the snow dump** from the DPW yard to the old landfill to improve water quality in the Sudbury Reservoir.
- Major upgrades to **Easterly and Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant** - Sewage wastewater is cleaned to a very high standard set by EPA and DEP before being discharged into the Assabet River (Westerly) or Hager Pond/Hop Brook (Easterly) improving water quality to these two water bodies and downstream.



The Challenges for the 2026-2036 plan:

The City has taken important steps in its effort to protect its natural resources, however the next ten years will be even more critical to preserving the character of this City. **Managing natural resources, water supply, wildlife habitat and open areas for passive recreation will also be a challenge as more pressure is placed on the use and demands of these resources.** During the 2020-2022 COVID-19 pandemic, we saw increased use of all our outdoor facilities, fields, playgrounds, and trails. However, providing adequate recreation facilities both active and passive throughout the City with an ever-changing population both in age and culture provides additional challenges. **Balancing development and preserving open space and adequate recreation of this growing City will be the goal.** This plan outlines the steps needed to ensure that the City's character and the quality of life enjoyed today is protected while still allowing mindful development. Only by *envisioning the future and planning for it*, can the City achieve these goals. If the land is not city or state owned and is in private hands it is not protected and can be developed. This plan provides the City government and its citizens with the analysis and recommendations needed to achieve this vision and protect what is important.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Mayor Arthur Vigeant appointed the Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSC) members in 2018. These members represent the City Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Department of Public Works, Girl and Boy Scouts, Marlborough Economic Development Corp (MEDC), Historic Commission, and Residents of the City, all who have expressed a genuine interest in addressing the City's open space and recreation needs. (List of participants can be found on page 2) The Committee met 17 times from 2018-2024 - with a four-year hiatus during Covid 2020-2024 resuming again in 2024 with two additional meetings to update and finalize the plan. The process and final plan were completed under the leadership of Mayor J. Christian Dumas in 2026.

In August 2018 the OSRC created an “Open Space and Recreation Survey Marlborough MA” on the Survey Monkey platform and then distributed the link to the survey on the City Conservation Commission and Recreation Dept. websites and on the main City of Marlborough web site. Notification regarding the availability of the survey was given through the OSC members to 44 separate civic associates, clubs, neighborhood organizations, boards and commissions and business groups as well as a news article in the local papers. Residents were asked to take the survey on-line and could also send them in paper form to be entered into the computer 571 people responded to the survey. Unfortunately, with the more than 6 years hiatus due to COVID and staffing issues these results are too outdated to be valid in this document. However, the results of this survey did provide input from many groups and allowed the OSRP committee to establish a list of current needs and goals, compiled an inventory of all City parcels not yet developed and prepared this draft plan for public review. In order to capture input from all local residents and businesses and be sure this plan reflects the current 2025 needs, and the needs anticipated in the next 10 years, an extensive outreach program with the draft plan was performed in March/April of 2025.

A list of the public meeting held in March/April 2025 are included in appendix D. These meetings allowed the public to review the draft document and provide comment. The public was notified of the availability of the draft report through social media, news releases to the local media, civic organizations and the library and email blasts within all these groups.

C. Enhanced outreach and Public Participation

In order to reach the Environmental Justice (EJ) community additional notifications to Various groups who serve the EJ community were notified including the Boys and Girls Club, several area churches, the Human Services groups, the list of the groups and a summary of these meetings are included in Appendix D.

Presentations were made to:

- Disabilities commission

- Conservation Commission & Historic Commission

- City Council & Planning Board

- Recreation Commission/ Boys and Girls Club/ All Sports Organizations

- Library Trustees

- Lyons Club

- Chamber of commerce/Rotary/MEDC

- Public meeting at Library – outreach provided to general public, churches including the very active Hispanic and Brazilian churches ABBA, Metro, Bethel Presbyterian- were all invited.

- St. Stevens church

The draft report was posted to the City web site for review and the public hearing held with the City Council was recorded and posted on the city web page as well. Specific comments were provided both at the meeting and in writing and online which are included in Appendix D. These comments where appropriate were incorporated into the plan. The goal of the Open Space Committee was to prepare a plan that best reflects the diverse views and needs of Marlborough's residents and establishes guidelines and recommendations to meet those needs.

Section 3

COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

The City of Marlborough is located 17 miles east of Worcester and 25 miles west of Boston, along the western most perimeter of Middlesex County. The Framingham-Marlborough region is known as the MetroWest area. It is located at the intersection of Route I-495, I-290 and Route 20. The MetroWest area includes some of the wealthiest communities in the Commonwealth. The region has a higher per capita income, and a higher assessed valuation per capita than the state as a whole. Within the region, Marlborough, Framingham, and Natick are the most industrialized communities, with the highest percentage of their tax base coming from commercial and industrial uses.

The region contains many regional parks including such natural attractions as Callahan State Park, the Bay Circuit Trail, Sudbury Reservoir, the Assabet River, the Desert/Memorial Forest/Hop Brook Reservation Conservation Land, the 2000 acres of Assabet River Wildlife Refuge and parks owned and/or managed by the Audubon Society, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Native Plant Trust, and other groups. The headwaters of the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers are located in the area and flow to become the Concord River. The newest addition being the 33-mile Boroughs Loop Trail through the 4 “Borough” communities- Marlborough, Southborough, Westborough and Northborough.

*"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth
find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts."*

Rachel Carson

The region also boasts numerous reservoirs, lakes, and streams. These water resources include: the Sudbury Reservoir, which extends into Southborough and is a back-up water supply to the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority managed by the State Department of Conservation Recreation; Millham Reservoir/Lake Williams the City's backup water supply; Ft. Meadow Reservoir which extends into Hudson and is a shared recreation lake; and the headwaters of the Hop Brook Stream system which begins in Marlborough, and flows through Sudbury on its way to the Sudbury River. Hop Brook flows beside the world-renowned Wayside Inn Historic Site and "The Little Red Schoolhouse" in Sudbury.

The regional planning agency, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, has two plans: “Metrofuture” which plans to 2030 and MetroCommons which plans to 2050; these are the official regional plans for Greater Boston and include goals and objectives as well as detailed implementation strategies for accomplishing these goals. These plans can be found at <https://www.mapc.org/get-involved/metrofuture-our-regional-plan/>. Many of the goals set out in this regional plan are reflected in the goals and objectives

sections of this report for the City of Marlborough, specifically focusing on population and job growth in developed areas, meeting the housing needs of the region's residents, building healthy, safe, and engaged communities, creating globally-competitive regional economy, providing efficient transportation, and protecting open spaces and natural resources in general.

1. Regional Collaborations

Marlborough is fortunate to be nestled among communities who also have abundant natural resources. The City has been working cooperatively with all its neighbors and state and local agencies and groups to enhance these regional resources. These regional treasures include **Callahan State Park** which has been expanded within the City with the addition of 35 Acres acquisition as a joint effort between the state DCR, Sudbury Valley Trustees and the City. Efforts in Framingham and Southborough have also expanded open spaces in this Greater Callahan Greenway vision begun in 2000.

The Sudbury Reservoir supplies water to the MWRA as a backup source for most of the Boston Region. The State Department of Conservation Recreation is charged with the management of this reservoir and has released the "Sudbury and Foss Reservoir Watershed 2022 Public Access Plan Update". This plan now allows for hunting and public access trails around the reservoir. However, to protect this water source, dogs and in-water use activities including boating or swimming-access are prohibited as this is a public water supply. There are potential future links along the old aqueduct into the town of Framingham from Marlborough. These regional linear links in the future will likely be important recreational resources. Opening the Sudbury Reservoir to public access must be carefully balanced with protection of this water resource as outlined in the plans noted above. Therefore, access to this property should be considered a privilege, not a right and must be used for passive recreation. This public access plan can be found at the following link: [Sudbury and Foss Reservoirs Watershed 2022 Public Access Plan Update \(mass.gov\)](#)-

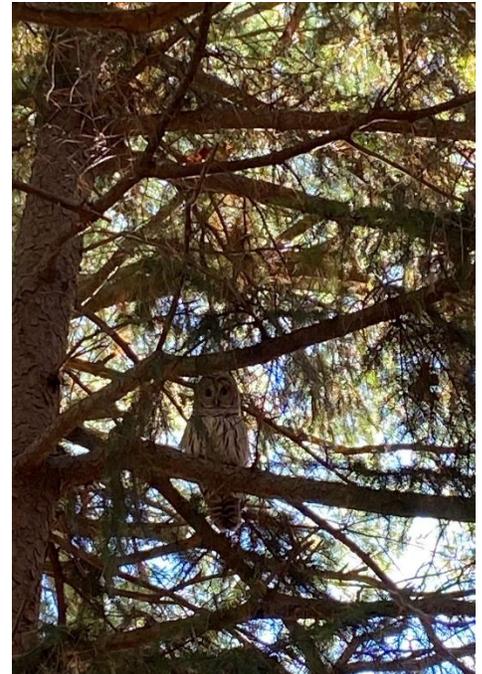
Traversing through both Callahan State Park and the Sudbury Reservoir is the regional **Bay Circuit Trail** which is a 230 mile trail, which starts and ends at the ocean from Newburyport to Kingston with its outer most bow passing through Marlborough at the Sudbury Reservoir [The Bay Circuit's Story Map | Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway](#)

In addition, **MetroWest Knox Trail Heritage Corridor** has been established in this region. The Trail comes east through Weston, Wayland, Framingham, Southborough, and up Rt. 85 and along Rt. 20 West in Marlborough then west through Northborough and beyond. This historic trail runs from Boston Harbor to Ft. Ticonderoga, NY. The Knox trail is marked throughout its route and has historic significance as the route used in the Revolutionary War to bring important artillery from Ft. Ticonderoga to fight the Redcoats in Boston. As we improve roadways along this route the City should be sure, where feasible, to promote this historic "automobile trail route" as a history to our past.

The Assabet River has become a great destination for paddlers with two canoe launch locations in Marlborough and multiple locations throughout the other communities. OARS Inc, the regional SuAsCo watershed organization, provides great maps and water trail suggested trips for those who wish to

explore this natural wonder. OARS and its many community partners have successfully changed the river from an eye sore to a regional recreational destination. [OARS \(oars3rivers.org\)](https://oars3rivers.org) **River map guide found here:** [Assabet-River-Recreation-Guide.pdf](#)

The Desert Natural Area, Memorial Forest, Hop Brook Marsh, referred to as ‘The Desert/Memorial Forest’, combine 600+ contiguous acres of forest, streams, and open meadowland. In 1995, the City, working with the State Forest, managed by the Department of Conservation Recreation; the Memorial Forest, owned and managed by the Sudbury Valley Trustees and a smaller piece owned by The Greater Federation of Women’s Clubs; and The Hop Brook Marsh owned and managed by the Sudbury Conservation Commission produced a joint management plan for the coordinated protection of the 600+ acres of The Desert/Memorial Forest. This land abuts 2,000 acres of US Division of Fish and Wildlife Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (ARNWR). The refuge is open to the public for passive recreation and hunting with a permit. A visitor center was opened to the public in the fall of 2010. All five landowners along with staff at the ARNWR continue to work together to ensure that both these large areas are managed jointly for wildlife habitat protection and biodiversity and that recreation opportunities are well thought out to allow access but also ensure habitat protection. The Desert is home to a rare pitch-pine scrub oak unique habitat.



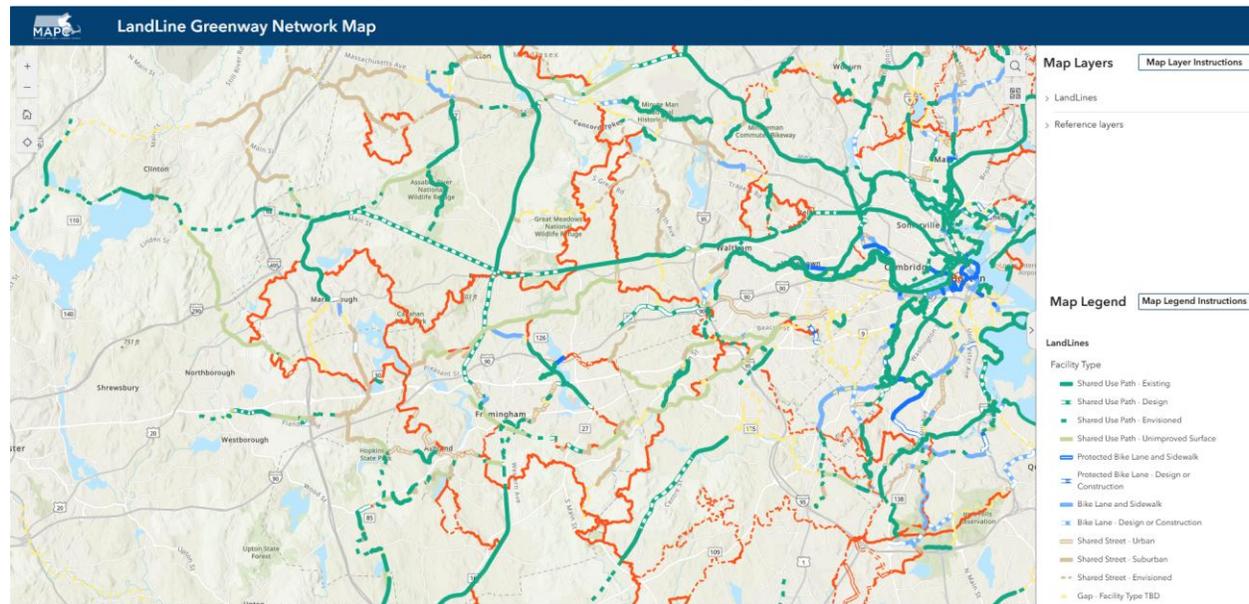
[Barred owl along a trail](#)

The Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) and Mass Central Rail Trail and beyond- The Assabet River Rail Trail’s 5.6-mile section from Marlborough through Hudson was completed in 2005, and as of August 2018, a 3.6-mile section was completed that runs through Maynard and Acton. As of 2026 there is still a gap in Stow to connect Hudson to Maynard. The open sections are well used by many bikers, walkers, roller-bladers, strollers, runners, joggers, and commuters. The entire trail, which, when completed, will be a 12-mile trail, will travel from the center of Marlborough to the South Acton train station, running through Hudson, Stow, and Maynard. This linear park connects town centers, schools, recreational fields, and conservation land. A second abandoned railroad, which runs through this region, is now under active planning and construction and is called the Mass Central Rail Trail – Wayside, running from Waltham to Berlin, crossing the ARRT in Hudson and between Sudbury and Hudson on the northern boundary of the city along the Desert Natural Area boundary. Both trails will bring much needed alternative transportation as well as a much-anticipated recreational facility. [Mass Central Rail Trail - Wayside | Mass.gov.](#)

Boroughs Loop Trail - This regional trail linking many of these trails together is 33+ miles through the four “boroughs” (Marlborough, Southborough, Westborough, and Northborough) which opened in 2019 just before the COVID 19 pandemic and has been getting tremendous use. It links trails, bike paths and sidewalks together to make one large continuous loop and ties into many of the regional assets mentioned above. <https://arcg.is/0Xerzi>

MAPC Regional Trail Connection Planning-

The state regional Planning agency MAPC has produced a REGIONAL GREENWAY MAP found here: <https://mapc.ma/landlinemap>. This map shows the other linear park/ trail connections in our region. As envisioned for biking/walking on a paved bikeway the vision is that one day a resident from Marlborough will be able to bike/walk on the Assabet River Rail Trail to the Mass Central Rail Trail and from there either to Boston, or the Bruce Freeman Trail in Sudbury north to Lowell or South to Ashland. Several aqueducts in the area may provide walking connections from Marlborough to Framingham to Wellesley along the aqueduct in the future. The map link provides the vision and updates on status and completion of these trail connection plans. As these regional connections are made, they provide residents and visitors of the city more options to explore and get outdoors closer to home.



[LandLine 2.0](#) Oct. 2024 map

2. Regional Water Supply Resources

As noted above the Sudbury Reservoir which extends from Marlborough into Southborough and Framingham is a backup water supply for these communities and the MWRA water supply system. The protection of this reservoir for open space recreation, wildlife habitat protection and most importantly water supply is a delicate balancing act. Since future water demand throughout the region is expected to increase, the potential for future use of this reservoir as a primary water supply in the next 50 years exists. Therefore, every effort to keep this future use in mind as the City is developed will be critical for regional protection. Half of the City streets drain to this reservoir. Therefore, improving stormwater quality and managing stormwater runoff to this area will be critical to protecting the reservoir water quality.

The town of Hudson has several drinking water wells that are located near the northwest boundary of Marlborough. The wellhead Zone II is along Donald Lynch Blvd in Marlborough and Brigham St. in Hudson; this area is zoned Limited Industrial in Marlborough. If development is proposed near this zone the Town of Hudson will be asked to review the plans to ensure protection of its wells. In addition, a Zone II well protection area, on the Marlborough Hudson town line on Concord Road, extends into

Marlborough and will need similar protection. Any future development in any of these areas must be sensitive to these water supply resource areas. These areas are shown on Map #4

B. History of the Community

Marlborough with its hills and many wetland valleys was home to many Native American tribes including the Pawtucket, Massachusetts Nipmuc and Agawam tribes. Over the years these tribes overlapped and called the area now known as Marlborough home. Ft. Meadow Reservoir was once a meadow with a productive stream and was a favored summer area for many tribes. Massachusetts translates to the “Many Hills Place” by the native American tribes and describes well Marlborough’s 7 major hills. (*History from John A. Bigelow Dec. 19, 1968*)

In the Colonial era, Marlborough was a favored stop along the Boston Post Road, which still serves as the City's major thoroughfare (U.S. Route 20). Taverns and inns dotted the route, ready to service travelers from Boston whose horses needed their first watering along their journey.

*"The natural world is the greatest source of excitement.
the greatest source of visual beauty.
the greatest source of intellectual interest.
It is the greatest source of so much in life
that makes life worth living."*

Sir David Attenborough:

From its earliest days Marlborough’s rolling hills accommodated the largest production of apple orchards in New England. Before the introduction of the numerous varieties of eating apples, Marlborough’s cider mills supplied New England with a healthy source of drink especially throughout the winter months. Cider was considered a purer drink than water during colonial times. The apple industry lasted well into the turn of the 20th century with its last Apple Blossom Festival held in the 1930’s.

The Sudbury Reservoir was flooded in 1890’s to supply clean drinking water to the Boston region. It remains a backup water supply for the MWRA system.

At the time of the Civil War, Marlborough was said to be the fourth-largest manufacturer of shoes in the nation. Business boomed as local factories produced boots for Union troops. Craftsmen and fortune-seekers flocked here from Italy and Ireland, but the largest single immigrant group came from the French-speaking provinces of Canada. The influence of the French-Canadians lives on in the names of places: French Hill, Versailles Street, and the convent of the Sisters of Saint Chretienne. With no source of river waterpower, Marlborough’s shoe entrepreneurs were the first to introduce electrical power in the manufacture of shoes.

Marlborough also became home of one of the nation’s first electric streetcar lines in the 1860’s. In-town

streetcars allowed the downtown shoe factories to thrive by transporting laborers cheaply from their homes to their work. Railroads also linked Marlborough with Boston, Worcester, and Fitchburg. The Fitchburg line continued up into Montreal; the Boston and Worcester lines reached out to Hartford and New York City.

Buses started to replace streetcars in the 1920s and over the ensuing thirty years, the shoe factories began closing their doors, moving south toward cheaper labor and more favorable climates. By the 1960s, Marlborough was a blue-collar community down on its luck; it finally tore up the final streetcar tracks that had survived World War II reclamation efforts. The heyday of agriculture and the heyday of shoe manufacture were over.

But a new era was dawning. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts was finishing Interstate 495, a piece of President Eisenhower's national highway system which, through political pressures, was brought through Marlborough's west side. Community leaders took the unusual step of zoning acres of former apple orchards along the highway as industrial land and bringing in water and sewer lines. Marlborough did not have to wait long to renew itself.

In the early 1980's when, tired of the traffic congestion along "America's Technology Highway" (Route 128) in Waltham and Woburn, computer and technology companies like Raytheon Corporation, Digital Equipment Corporation, Stratus Computer, and Apple began buying and building on Marlborough's west side. Easy interstate access to all of New England's largest cities also caught the attention of major hotel chains such as Best Western, Quality Suites and the Marriott. As of this writing, Marlborough still holds the distinction of supplying the greater region with a number of hotel rooms second only to Boston itself.

The building boom in 1990's saw a tremendous increase in commercial and business development in the southwest industrial park, including the development of the Solomon Pond Mall complex. By 2002 plans were on the books to develop all but one of these last remaining large parcels within this industrial park area. The completion of the long awaited 495 interchange onto Crane Meadow Rd. encouraged this boom and alleviated traffic congestion, for the time being, on the Rte. 20 corridor.

Today, Marlborough has a diverse economic base, including large companies such as Ken's foods, DuPont, Raytheon, Cytiva, Boston Scientific, Quest Diagnostics, Sartorius and Moderna to name a few, offering 10 hotels, over 100 restaurants, retail buildings, a large-scale convention center, the world's largest indoor skating facility and New England's largest entertainment facility. This diverse economic base provides a wide range of employment in various industries, and in companies of all sizes looking for varying skillsets.

Marlborough's Downtown businesses are returning to an era of both increased housing and increased retail and mixed-use development. Main Street boasts a vibrant mixture of the City's growth. With a Museum in the Streets[®] historical walking tour downtown, the early history of Marlborough's pre-colonial times down through 3 centuries of change and growth points to a clean and efficient future.

C. Population Characteristics

Population trends - The City's population has grown since the 2010 census from 39,000 to 41,793 as tabulated by the 2020 census, showing steady growth. The diversity of the population has changed tremendously since 2010 as shown in the comparison between the 2011 Environmental Justice Community Maps and the 2021 Environmental Justice Community maps. A much larger percentage of the population is now Brazilian, Hispanic and other (see Map #11)

The change in the population and demographic pointed to a changing population that required the Open Space Committee to determine if the open space and recreation needs had changed as well.

https://data.census.gov/profile/Marlborough_City,_Massachusetts?g=160XX00US2538715

Since the 2010 census, the population has grown by 3,294 people. The following chart illustrates the City's population by age categories and usual needed facilities for these age groups to help better understand the City's needs.

AGE	TOTAL #PERSONS	TYPE OF RECREATION USES NEEDED	***
Infant toddler up to 4 years	3,126	Parks and recreation space - tot lots should be distributed evenly throughout the City	
Child to young adult 5-19	6,278	Parks and recreation space should be distributed evenly throughout the City	
Adult 20-44	15,123	Active recreation, walking, biking, passive recreation	
Middle Age 45-64	10,840	Active recreation, walking biking, passive recreation	
Elderly 65+	6,426	Easily accessible open space, indoor facilities, passive recreation easily accessed	

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

D. Growth and Development Patterns

1. Patterns and Trends

The City of Marlborough is a business-friendly community with many assets attractive to new and expanding industries: a central location with easy highway access to all of New England's major cities, excellent infrastructure designed specifically to attract new industry, a skilled labor force, diverse housing stock, and still some limited future development potential. The City has capitalized on its natural assets through pro-development policies.

Given this trend for continued growth and the pressure on land development which is anticipated to continue to be strong, the Open Space and Recreation Committee felt the urgency to identify the key parcels of undeveloped land within the City and provide a plan to protect the parcels which provide important value to the Community whether for open space and recreation, water supply protection, or aesthetic value.

These parcels and their values are discussed further in Sections 4 and 7. The next ten years will determine what the future character of the Community will be. Some large tracts of undeveloped land will soon have development pressure, and it is only by ensuring that some or all of this land is protected that the City will preserve the quality of life now enjoyed by its residences. Specific steps and actions are discussed further in sections 4,7, 8 and 9.

2. Infrastructure

a. Transportation

In the 1960's and 1970's, community leaders enacted new zoning regulations and began building water and sewer facilities designed to encourage industrial development in the southwest corner of the City bounded by Route 20 on the north and Interstate I-495 on the east. With easy access to the interstate, development has occurred in this area including industrial businesses and multi-housing units as well. Interstate I-495 could be considered Marlborough's greatest transportation asset. With three existing interchanges, I-495 provides easy access to Marlborough's industrial parks from major cities throughout New England. By car, Marlborough is located approximately an hour from Hartford, Providence, and Manchester/Nashua. The drive to downtown Boston is 40 minutes, to Worcester is 20 minutes. If a company requires proximity to suppliers or customers throughout the northeast, or access to air, sea or rail transportation in a suburban setting, Marlborough always ranks very high in the site selection process.

Route 20, the City's major east-west artery, is zoned for business its entire length with smaller pockets west of Route 85 zoned Limited Industry. Route 20 has seen increases in traffic congestion in the past years, and future development along this corridor will need to consider the impacts of the current zoning. Route 20 East was recently re-zoned to the Wayside District by the Marlborough City Council with help from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Marlborough Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). These changes expect to bring a positive economic impact to the Route 20 East corridor, by fostering smart growth, and increased pedestrian access by inter-parcel connectivity.

In addition to the highway system the City has a small public bus system which transports people to Framingham and the commuter rail system as well as to local destinations such as the Mall and downtown Marlborough. Furthermore, the City launched a Commuter Shuttle service in collaboration with the MEDC in 2019, geared towards transporting employees of Marlborough companies to and from the Southborough Commuter Rail Train Station.

As the City works towards becoming a greener community, bike lanes, additional sidewalks and additional walking school bus routes will provide greener alternatives. Over the years the Walking School bus program (also known as the Safe Walk to Schools) has been able to enlist 1,000 kids to walk to school rather than taking the bus or being driven in a car. These alternative modes will help to make Marlborough residents healthier and protect the environment. The Walking School Bus/ Safe Routes to School program is supported by the schools and is dependent on parent participation; some years see more engagement than others. In Fall 2025 the schools will be reducing school buses, and more students will need to walk/bike/drive to school. The superintendent is working with Safe Routes to help

develop safe walking zones. Moving forward, additional sidewalks would be needed in addition to clearly marked crosswalks.

b. Water Supply System

Marlborough's drinking water comes from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The MWRA supply originates at Quabbin Reservoir in western Massachusetts. Water flows through a series of aqueducts and open channels to Wachusett Reservoir and then flows through more aqueducts and open channels to the Walnut Hill treatment facility on the southwest corner of Marlborough before being pumped directly into the City's distribution system.

Unfortunately, in 2016 the State DEP required that the Millham Reservoir be taken offline due to the high levels of sodium in the water that were above the EPA's safe range. The City has now switched to a 100% use of MWRA water until the foreseeable future. Lake Williams is connected to Millham Reservoir by Millham Brook. In the past an intake at Millham Reservoir pumped water to the City's adjacent treatment plant, which filtered and treated the water before distributing it to the community. The City is currently determining what the future status of this water body and its watershed should be. Given the uncertain future and weather pattern changes due to climate change, it would be prudent to protect this area as a backup water supply and keep it protected should future generations need to use this source in 25 to 50 years.

Over 98% of the City is serviced by municipal water. Only a few private drinking water wells remain in use throughout the City. Water service is thus available to all but a few residents. The City's average daily water usage is 4.02 MGD (2023) with a maximum of 6.5 MGD is the estimated daily pumping in 2025. The EOEa build out analysis indicates that at full build out the City will need 7.4 million gallons/day, which is just above the City's current allocated capacity. For ecological reasons as well as economic reasons, the wise use and protection of our local water sources will thus be important to the City's future planning efforts.

Protecting watershed land around Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir has been and will continue to be important to the future of Marlborough. Protection can be through outright acquisition and ownership, or through regulations to ensure new and redeveloped area work to improve stormwater quality for this area. See map #4 showing this watershed, shown as watershed zone 3. Exploring recreational uses of this resource must consider the protection of this back up water source first and foremost.

c. Sewer Service

The City provides its own sewer services through two sewer treatment plants. The westerly plant, which services most of the western section of the City, discharges to the Assabet River. The second plant is located on the eastern side of the City and discharges into the Hop Brook system which flows into Hager Pond and the Hop Brook pond system in Sudbury to the Sudbury River. The City treats an average of 8.4 million gallons of sewerage per day.

Sewer service is extended to all industrial areas and all but 10% of residences. The City's master schedule is to sewer all non-sewered areas within the next 9-10 years. With the availability of sewer service to

almost all parts of the City, soil limitations for septic systems are no longer a building constraint, thus placing added pressure for development on the more marginal parcels which in the past were not suitable for septic systems due to ledge or poor soils that couldn't accommodate septic system.

d. Other Assets

Further, enhancing the facilities with which projects can be built in Marlborough is the City's form of government. Staff professionals, working with elected boards and commissions, are given the responsibility for ensuring that development occurs in an orderly fashion. Zoning changes and special permits are approved by the City Council and Planning Board, each of which meets twice a month. A pro-development attitude is evidenced through other means as well.

- In May 1994, the City received designation by the State Economic Assistance Coordinating Council as part of regional Economic Target Area. This designation permits the City to participate in the State's Economic Development Incentive Program, offering packages of state and local tax incentives to qualified businesses. The Marlborough region was among the first areas so designated. This has been used to qualify for tax incentive programs- also known as tax increment financing (TIF). This program phases in property taxes and qualifies the companies for state investment tax, allows businesses to stay or come into Marlborough and thus increase employment opportunities for the region.
- Since 2019 the City has been awarded multiple MassWorks Infrastructure Grants to support revitalization efforts. These grants have funded reconstruction projects such as Main St, the Lincoln Street corridor from Highland to Bolton, and the portion of Route 20 west where the Apex Center of New England is located. The MassWorks Infrastructure Grant program is intended to provide funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities for projects that benefit housing production, private development, and job growth in the Commonwealth.
- The City has a history of working closely with the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce. Ongoing collaborative efforts include municipal financial support for the Chamber's Transportation Management Association (reduces transportation needs) and development of a package of marketing materials.
- The 495 MetroWest Partnership is a regional collaborative of representative governments and businesses from Boxboro to Franklin along the I-495 highway corridor. The group looks at infrastructure sewer/water/permitting and economic development. Since its inception this group has played a key role in promoting regional planning ideas.
- Marlborough Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) was established in 2007 and is "the state chartered economic development arm of the City of Marlborough and represents a public-private partnership for planning. It works with municipal and private investors to foster economic development, job growth and community revitalization and expansion in the City..." The MEDC Toolbox provides financial resources to small business owners and entrepreneurs to help them start up, expand, or improve their businesses. The toolbox program helps "defray

cost through gap financing, tax reimbursements, rental assistance beautification grants, and amenities funding” (Quotes taken from <http://marlboroughedc.com/>)

- 43D Priority Development Sites: Marlborough has several approved Priority Development Sites in the City. These sites offer expedited permitting within 180 days of a business’ application. Companies at these sites will also benefit from Tax Increment Financing, strategic location in relation to major cities in New England, state-of-the-art infrastructure, pro-business community, City amenities, and strong support for an Investment Tax Credit application.

- Successful planning items over the past years have included:
 - The City Shuttle Bus service to provides transportation for residents of Marlborough between the Southborough train station, Apex Center of New England, and Marlborough Hills
 - Redevelopment of French Hill and Lincoln Street
 - In addition, some much needed changes to ordinances to help improve efficiency and focus new developments and redevelopments to meet higher standards, for example improved landscaping, stormwater management, to bring some continuity to and upgrade the look of the City as well as to address climate change, have been tackled.
 - The Museum in the Street’s® Markers were installed to showcase the City’s vibrant History. Marlborough is the first community in Massachusetts to implement such a program.
 - The City has worked with MEDC and MAPC to proactively rezone the downtown area, a section of French Hill, Route 20 East, and the Donald Lynch Blvd corridor to encourage smart growth and development.

The Ch. 40B state regulations allow the development of affordable housing if the community has not reached its 10% required quota of affordable housing. Over the past 10 years the City has been able to meet its 10% affordable housing quota, with the actual percentage in 2025 being 10.70%. If the City falls below its 10% allocation, then it will be once again vulnerable to 40B challenges. The continued threat of 40B projects in locations where the Community had not zoned for housing development will continue to put pressure on the community for the foreseeable future. It is advisable for the City to keep pace with its affordable housing needs as developments are approved so that the City stays ahead of the 10% requirement.

Marlborough's desire to attract and keep commercial development has long been established. However, in order to preserve our community character, it is time to balance this longstanding pro-development attitude with attention to the City's diminishing open space and recreational resources.

As development continues apace, the pressure on the City's wastewater disposal system, school system and remaining open space and wildlife habitats will continue to build. It is important to identify and set aside those areas that are important to our community from an ecological, recreational, scenic, or water resources standpoint before they are lost forever.

3. Long-term Growth and Development Patterns

a. Industrial Development

The City of Marlborough has experienced a significant amount of industrial development over the past decade with scores of new companies moving to or expanding with the City on a regular basis. Notable developments include the redevelopment of the former 109-acre Hewlett Packard site which is now a bustling commercial site including a hotel, daycare center, an apartment complex all while being home to Cytiva, Quest Diagnostics offices. In addition, the City saw the construction and integration of a 500,000 SF new development including 2 hotels, several restaurants, an office building, and a 175,000 SF entertainment building named the Apex Center of New England.

b. Changing Housing Stock

Census and housing data paint a similar picture of the City's population. Residents are becoming relatively more affluent and better educated, and new housing construction is primarily at the higher end of the market. Although apartments abound, the new affordable housing stock is still quite expensive and does not prevent some of the problematic increase in overcrowded housing, especially with the increased immigrant population.

c. Local Zoning Ordinances

Marlborough's development has been guided by the City's zoning and local ordinances. The zoning map is included in the plan and shown as **Map # 2**. Below are the local ordinances which guide development within the City:

The City has made some changes in zoning regulations over the years. These changes reflect a stronger commitment by the City to be sure that development not only be sensitive to but also enhance, the environmental, scenic, and aesthetic qualities of the community. The following regulatory and zoning guidelines remain in place and are helping staff maintain this balance. These regulations are in the process of being updated in 2026 to include climate resilient means and methods to ensure the City is planning for future climate changes.

- Water Supply Protection District:
- Open Space Development Ordinance: (zoning) (also known as cluster zoning)
- Site Plan Review
- Zoning Landscape and Lot Coverage Ordinances
- Scenic Roads
- Floodplain and Wetlands Protection District
- State Regulations 310 CMR 10:00 and Local 30' wetland setback policy
- Historic Districts

- Stormwater Management Ordinance and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Ordinance.

All of these regulations have helped to steer development to be more sensitive to the environment and settings on which they are being built. Additional measures are still needed to improve environmental quality, ensure that the building stock is more energy efficient and built to provide better walking and biking modes of transportation as well as recreational opportunities. These are discussed in more detail in the needs and analysis Section 7 and under the Goals and Objectives Section 8 and 9.

Section 4

ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS



Building a bridge behind the Meadows along the Panther Trail- photo by trail volunteers

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Marlborough's topography is dominated by a series of hills separated by three distinct drainage basins, which include five large surface water impoundments. There are 15 hills in the community that range in height from 395 to 590 feet above sea level. The City's three water supply tanks are located on three of the more prominent hills: Sligo Hill (elevation 590), Fairmount Hill (elevation 538), and Spoon Hill (elevation 487); these three hills are visible landmarks.

Marlborough's lowest elevations occur at the easterly and westerly ends of the community. On the east side, Hop Brook leaves Marlborough at elevation 217 and flows into the town of Sudbury to Gristmill Pond. This pond is the headwater to the Old Gristmill located off Wayside Inn Road. On the west, the Assabet River flows out of the northwest corner of the City into the town of Berlin then Hudson at elevation 210.

The hills of the community have slopes averaging 10% in grade and their base areas cover approximately 10% of the City's 22.2 total square miles. Portions of many of the City's hills do have slopes exceeding 15%. The remainder of the community is typically flatter in grade with several large areas of wetlands.

Soils in Marlborough are also typical of many communities in central Massachusetts. The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service has surveyed and mapped soils throughout the City and has identified over 70 different types of soils with the Charlton, Canton and Paxton groups dominating. These loamy, sandy soil types and the hill exposures in the southwest quadrant combined to provide excellent conditions for farming and agriculture during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, several of the hills are also drumlins which contain glacial till with a high content of clay, making some of these hills difficult to develop, however with newer technologies, these hills even with their difficult soils are being developed.

Large gravel and sand deposits can be found in those areas adjacent to the Assabet River and Sudbury Reservoir as well as in the extreme northeast corner of the City known as "The Desert". Throughout the City there are several major wetlands with their inherent organic soil types including Flagg Swamp, Crane Meadow, Howe Pond, and the areas abutting Sudbury Reservoir in the vicinity of Farm Road, Broadmeadow Street and Parmenter Street. These wetlands, slopes and hills are shown on **Map #3**.

Because the City has 95% sewer service throughout, soil type and landscape features have not been a deterrent to development. Even some hills with extremely difficult silty soils and slopes, have been developed, which 30 years ago may not have been tackled. *The only land features protected from development are the wetlands, and land already placed under protection, which is why a plan to protect the remaining land features that give the City its character is so important.* The soils map for the City can be found at the following web link. http://nesoil.com/soil_survey_of_middlesex_county.htm. These maps are full of detail. **Map #12** shows the major surficial geology features for the City.

B. Landscape Character

The center of the City is predominantly built out and urban. As one moves away from the center the subdivisions of suburban homes become more and more spread apart and are separated by the hills with a few open agricultural fields and forested woodlands interspersed among the subdivisions.

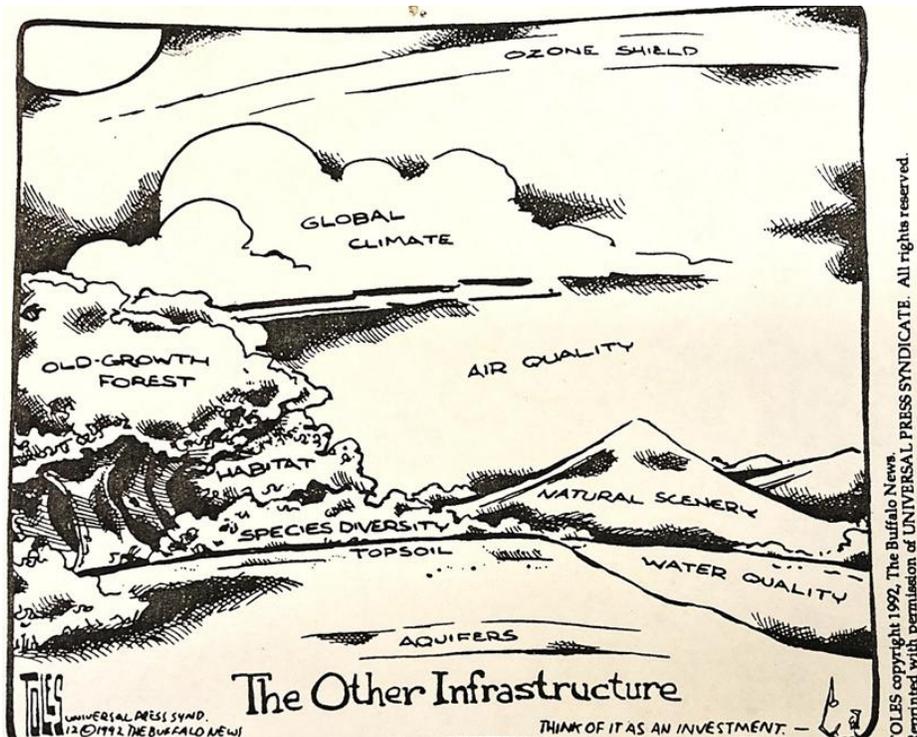
*The Earth will not continue to offer its harvest,
except with faithful stewardship.
We cannot say we love the land
and then take steps to destroy it
for use by future generations.*

John Paul

Marlborough's hills are the community's most predominant geographic feature. The hills provide significant scenic value, whether they are appreciated from a distance or serving as a location for viewing other areas within and outside of the City. The last remaining farmlands on Berlin Rd., South St., and Robin Hill St. provide visual open spaces that contribute a sense of space and country. Remnants of the once-abundant old apple orchards have all disappeared and have been converted into residential subdivisions and office parks. Preserving these hills and fields in whole or in part will help preserve some

of this beauty and history.

Only a few hills remain undeveloped, these are: one side of Shoestring Hill, a portion of West Hill, which is now a Christmas tree farm; a portion of Addition Hill, and Indian Hill. However, with continued development pressure these too may soon be slated for development. Over the past 20 years several prominent hills were developed including Crane Hill (The Campus at Marlborough), Wheeler Hill (JPI), Hager Hill (off Crowley Dr), a portion of Indian Hill (Target) which are no longer available for protection. However, Mt. Ward and Jericho Hill, a portion of Indian Hill and a small portion of West Hill are now protected by the City for conservation and recreation purposes and provide important views and vistas to the surrounding developed landscape.



C. Water Resources

1. Surface Water

Marlborough is fortunate to have no less than five large surface water impoundments within its limits, all serve distinct and different primary functions as well as provide secondary recreational and open space benefits. Millham Reservoir and Lake Williams, totaling 150 acres, serve as the City's two back up drinking water supplies.) Because these are backup water supplies fishing and boating are NOT allowed at this time. Fort Meadow Reservoir, which covers 290 acres, is the City's only active recreational water body, providing swimming, boating and fishing opportunities. A portion of the State Department of Conservation Recreation (DCR) Sudbury Reservoir extends into Marlborough on the southeast corner and serves as a backup drinking water supply for Marlborough and the Boston area. This area provides hiking and shoreline fishing opportunities. Hager Pond, located on the east side of the community, is a privately owned body of water covering 24 acres and is the backdrop for the historic Wayside Country Store.

Other important water resources are the City's many rivers and streams, including twelve main streams. The largest of these is the Assabet River, which flows through the northwest portion of the City. This Class B river has long been a favorite of local canoeists and fishermen, both upstream and downstream of the flood control facility known as Tyler Dam. Two boat access points along the river below the Tyler Dam at Robin Hill St. and on Donald Lynch Blvd are now in use. All the City's major streams are shown on **Map #4**. Some streams are prominent in the landscape while others are barely visible hidden behind homes and development.

2. Flood Hazard Areas

The 2014 FEMA flood map information will be incorporated into the City's Floodplain and Wetland Protection District ordinance map when that is updated in 2026. The high flood hazard areas lie along the major tributaries. Along many of the significant streams a 50' or 30' set back requirement has been instituted through this zoning ordinance to eliminate building close to streams that have flooding potential. The FEMA maps are now available online through FEMA's website and the City of Marlborough Public Works GIS map webpage. Over the past few years with the intense rainstorms we have had, local flooding due to undersized infrastructure has been the problem. The current drainage systems are designed for the 25-year storm events, and we had events in 2023 that exceeded the 25-year storm on a regular basis. This is a relatively new problem that will need to be studied in each watershed of the City to determine how to plan for and upgrade existing infrastructure to withstand ongoing and increasingly intense storms. The city has tracked and confirmed that more intense storms, with larger rainfall amounts in shorter amounts of time are occurring and the infrastructure is not equipped to handle these storm events.



The Desert in Winter- photo by Karin Paquin
Map # 4.

3. Wetlands

Marlborough has many small wetlands and several large areas of wetlands including the Crane Meadow, Flagg Swamp, Howe Pond, South Street swamp and large parcels of land abutting the Sudbury Reservoir off Farm Road and Broadmeadow Road, large areas along Millham Brook and Millham Reservoir, and pristine very biodiverse wetlands in the Desert Natural Area.

Wetlands are important resources to the community wildlife. Wetlands have long been recognized as resources, which help attenuate storm water flows and improve water quality, as well as provide important wildlife habitat. The City's Conservation Commission through the state's Wetland Protection Act manages protection and The preservation of these areas. The City's major wetlands areas are shown on

4. Surface Water Recharge Areas and Aquifers

Beginning in 1974, the City took the first steps to protect its surface water supplies by acquiring over 200

acres of land abutting Millham Reservoir. This land was originally acquired for expansion of the reservoir itself; however, the cost to develop it for this purpose was later judged to outweigh the benefit of a very marginal estimated increase in supply. The land has remained undeveloped in order to protect the reservoir water quality. At this time passive recreational use only on designated trails is permitted due to water supply regulations.

In 1992, the City also acquired 122 acres of land immediately adjacent to Millham Reservoir when it purchased a portion of the property owned by Hillside School. Public access only on designated trails is permitted due to state and federal water supply regulations.

In 1997 the City Council passed the Water Supply Protection District Ordinance which limits and controls development within the watersheds of Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir by prohibiting and/or limiting certain uses of these properties. It also requires a 50 foot non-developable buffer zones along wetlands, streams, and rivers within the watershed. The watershed boundary is shown on the enclosed **Map #4** as watershed area #3.

Although Marlborough does not have any public local groundwater well supplies, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has identified several locations as areas with “high potential for aquifer locations”. Despite several studies which investigated the feasibility of developing certain of these areas as municipal drinking water supplies, no site has been found to provide both adequate volume and water quality to meet municipal drinking water standards. Since these areas have been determined through studies not to be significant for drinking water supplies, they have never been mapped on City resource maps.

Along the northern border the town of Hudson has two drinking water wells. The protected areas around these wells extend into the City limits. Any development in these areas should honor the protection of these water sources and consultation from the Town of Hudson should be solicited. These wellhead protection and Zone II areas are shown on Map #4

The City is divided into six major watersheds, which are also shown on **Map # 4** and include Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir watershed; Sudbury Reservoir watershed and Wachusett open channel; Ft. Meadow Reservoir watershed and Ft. Meadow Brook; and the Hop Brook watershed. The Millham Reservoir, Ft. Meadow Reservoir and Hop Brook systems drain north and are all part of the Assabet River watershed, whereas the remaining watersheds drain south and east into the Sudbury River watershed.

D. Vegetation

Marlborough has some significantly large woodland areas remaining, despite the community's explosive development from the 1960's to 2025. These wooded areas, which include the watersheds to the Millham and Sudbury reservoirs, two state forests, and numerous conservation lands including The Desert, Cider Knoll, Mt. Ward, Jericho Hill, Holts Grove, Felton Conservation land and a state forest, have been preserved through the efforts of both the community and state.

Between 1997 and 2025, 600+ acres of open space previously identified as land of conservation value were lost to development. These lost properties between the last OSRP from 2011 to 2025 included 256 acres, as shown in red on Map #7. The remaining large tracts of forested lands not currently protected are on north side of Robin Hill St. in the northwest corner of the City, South St. Swamp, West Hill and Shoestring Hill, along with several pieces of farmland. These are among the largest tracts of woodland and field areas remaining. These properties are shown in orange on **Map #7**. Only 145.22 acres were added to open space between 2011-2025, revealing that development is out pacing open space protection.

Oaks, maples, ash, beech, birch, poplar and other tree species common to the Central Massachusetts region dominate woodlands in the City. Pockets of white and red pines are present along the Millham Reservoir, state forest and Sudbury Reservoir areas. Many of these red pine stands were planted for timber use as part of early 1900's watershed management practices. The red pine is now suffering from the infestation of red pine scale (*Matsucoccus resinosae*) and diplodia blight (*Diplodia pinea*).

Increasingly invasive species such as bittersweet vines, porcelain berry, glossy buckthorn, Japanese knot weed, burning bush, garlic mustard and other non-native vines, shrubs and trees are changing the vegetated landscape in the City. The Conservation Commission is working with a regional group called Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (SuAsCo CISMA) to help identify, share resources, and apply for grants to help control invasive species in areas where such invasions will cause harm to the existing landscape. This is seen as an ongoing problem that will need more attention and funding over time.

As part of the City landscape, the City does maintain street trees/ public shade trees and has a scenic road ordinance which protects the scenic value of 22 streets throughout the City. The City has 185 miles of roadway. On an average year the City plants 50+ trees to replace those that are dying or damaged. 200-300 street trees a year are trimmed and maintained for good health and for safety. The City is currently a member of the Tree City USA program. Trees are an important feature of our City landscape, important to urban streetscapes and important to keeping sidewalks and streets cool during the warm summer months. Trees are also known to mitigate against wind chill in the winter and help infiltrate rainwater back into the ground. Trees in our parks are also taken care of. Unfortunately, several of our large beach trees at Lake Williams that have stood next to the courthouse for hundreds of years, have succumbed to the beech leaf disease. In addition, the City has a larch tree in an old historic cemetery that has been listed as a heritage tree.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Marlborough's many water bodies, wetlands and woodlands provide substantial environs for fish and wildlife. The Open Space and Recreation Committee identified nine large areas within the City that currently provide substantial wildlife habitat. Some of these are privately owned, some are in public ownership and others are a mixture of the two. These areas are shown on **Map# 5** and are listed below: The numbers correspond to the numbers representing these areas on Map # 5 Wildlife Habitat Areas and Corridors.

# General Location of Wildlife Habitat Area on Map #5	Ownership	Type of Habitat
1. Desert	Public/non-profit	Scrub Oak, Pitch Pine and Red Pine Forest, ponds marshes and pristine cold water streams/fisheries
2. Mt. Ward/ Ghiloni Park	Private Public	Mixed woods/wetland/streams/open field at treatment plant/recreational fields
3. Sudbury Reservoir/ Callahan State Park	Public	Open water/marshes/pine & deciduous forest
4. Millham Reservoir/ Howe Pond	Public	Open water/streams/marshes/pine and deciduous forest
5. Millham Brook	Private	Stream, woodland, wetland/marsh
6. Flagg Swamp to Ft. Meadow	Private/public -water stream	Large marsh, deciduous forest, pristine cold
7. South St. Swamp	Private/public	Two hills, large marsh, stream, pond, deciduous forest, vernal pools large 80 acre open space
8. Jericho Hill	Public	Open field, wooded area, stream and perched wetland at top
9. Assabet River Corridor	Private	Large marshes, deciduous forest, pristine cold-water stream
10. Cider Knoll/Mello Farm	Public	Stream, rocky outcrops, pond, wetland open field
11. Holts Grove/Stevens St. Red Spring Road	Private/public	Streams, woodland, wetlands
12. West Hill Rd/Berlin Rd.	Private	Hill, tree farm mixed woods
13. North Branch of Millham Brook	Public/private	Pond, stream, woodland connection
14. Sheep Falls Brook/ Flagg Brook	Private	Stream corridor, open woodland old field to cold-water fishery

These areas represent the last contiguous combinations of woodland, lakes, streams, fields and swamps in the community. Those properties, which remain in private ownership, should be considered priority parcels in the City for acquisitions and/or preservation of the wildlife and greenway corridors, if they are to be developed.

The local land trust, Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) and the Metrowest Collaborative have prioritized parcels that have a regional significance; most of these overlap with the City's priorities listed in section 7 and are highlighted in section 5's inventory of high priority parcels. Working together with SVT and the State, the City has been able to work on land acquisitions that none of us could have done independently. **Map #5** reflects the state and SVT priority parcels as well, highlighted in pink and green on this map.

The following wildlife inventory is not exhaustive and simply illustrates the diversity of wildlife and wildlife habitats within the community. Species diversity is greatest in areas where combinations of habitats occur and where tracts of land are contiguous and large. The wildlife observed are those common to the central part of the state.

1. Wildlife Inventory

Mammals: The largest known wildlife species inhabiting Marlborough is the white tail deer, although there have been periodic sightings of bear and moose on rare occasions; it is not likely that they are breeding here. Deer have been spotted throughout every portion of the City with the possible exception of the central business district. As development continues in the City these animals are being forced to those protected areas of forested land. The healthy deer population has also given rise to the migration of coyote that now inhabit much of the Millham Reservoir watershed, Cider Knoll, and the Desert area. Bobcat have also been sighted.

Other mammals indigenous to the community include red tail fox, woodchuck, raccoon, skunk, gray squirrel, chipmunk, red squirrel, bats, porcupine, fisher cats (in the weasel family), river otter, cottontail rabbit and an abundance of beaver.

Fish: Marlborough's rivers, streams and reservoirs provide suitable habitat for a number of fish species and ample opportunity for open water and ice fishing (when weather permits). The community's previously mentioned surface water impoundments contain pickerel, large and small-mouth bass, and in certain tributaries native brook trout. In fact, Marlborough lays claim to two of only three cold water streams in Central Massachusetts. The beavers have made some radical changes to both these streams, but native brook trout are still thriving in both.

Birds: The City's diverse habitats are home to a wide variety of common bird species and include: Cardinal, mourning dove, downy woodpecker, nuthatch, tufted titmouse, English sparrow, house wren, Baltimore Oriole, barred and barn owls, chickadee, mockingbird, purple finch, robin, goldfinch, flicker, blue-jay, wild turkey, grouse, pheasant, woodcock, oven bird, cat bird, rufous-sided towhee and cuckoo

all of which have been observed in Marlborough. Warblers migrate through the City in their spring and fall migrations. Ducks and water birds include Great Blue Heron, pied-billed grebe, cormorants, mute swans, Canada geese, ruddy duck, buffleheads, common mergansers, mallards, wood ducks have all been seen living or migrating through at many of the City's lakes and ponds. Many hawk varieties, including red-tailed and broad-winged hawks, are common sightings. More recently there were sightings of a pair of bald eagles fishing at Ft. Meadow Reservoir, Lake Williams, Hager Pond, and Sudbury Reservoir. A nesting pair(s) may have found home in the region. At one of the City's larger conservation areas the reclusive goshawk has been seen nesting over the years. The whip-poor-will, once common at the Desert Natural area, may return after habitat is restored in this area

2. Corridors for Wildlife Migration

As shown on **Map #5**, the wildlife corridors follow the parcels of undeveloped contiguous land and streams. These corridors should be preserved in their entirety wherever possible to help maintain a healthy diversity of wildlife species. Where full protection is not feasible, developments should be designed to allow some portion of the corridor to exist undisturbed. Roads and development tend to inhibit migration of smaller mammals and amphibians, which are either prevented from migrating due to these barriers or are killed enroute. The more natural the corridor, the more likely the corridor can serve as a wildlife travel way for many species.

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program, through their aerial photography, have identified 80+ potential vernal pools. **Vernal pools** are habitat to species that use these temporary pools for breeding, including wood frogs, mole salamanders, and fairy shrimp, to name a few. Of these potential vernal pools identified by the state more than 20 have been certified, and the remainder need to be investigated to determine if they are certifiable vernal pools. With greater development pressures, these important pools, which are not always protected under the Wetlands Protection Act, will be lost and their importance to biodiversity within the area will also be gone forever. A map of these vernal pool and potential vernal pool locations is shown on **Map # 5** with a blue asterisk.

3. Rare or Endangered Species

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program has identified two areas in the City as a protected habitat for endangered species. To protect that species from exploitation, the Committee has chosen to provide only the general location, which includes an area of land off Hayes Memorial Dr., and a portion of the Desert Natural Area. These areas receive additional protection through the state NHES program.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

1. Scenic Resources

Marlborough is fortunate to have many scenic locations and several areas of regionally unique environments. Areas in Marlborough that are "noteworthy" from a scenic quality perspective are the landscapes around Sudbury Reservoir, Millham Reservoir and the Assabet River. Many other locations throughout the City provide wonderful views and perspectives due to their elevation, open water and open fields. These scenic areas comprise both publicly and privately-owned properties (see Map #3

Landscape features). These locations with their respective viewshed are listed below:

Location	Viewshed	Ownership	
1.	Jericho Hill	Sudbury Reservoir looking northwest	public
2.	Farm Hill	Sudbury Reservoir looking south	private
3.	Spoon hill	Wachusett Mt. looking northwest	private
4.	Addition Hill	Ft. Meadow Reservoir looking north	private
5.	Fairmount Hill	Points west of Marlborough	private
6.	Sligo Hill	Points west of Marlborough	public
7.	Lake Williams	From Rt. 20 and Williams St.	public
8.	Hager Pond	From Rt. 20 wayside country store	private
9.	Sudbury Reservoir	From Farm Rd. and Sherman Rd.	public
10.	Mt. Ward	From Rt. 20 up the hill	public
11.	South Street	Overlooking Shoestring Hill & farms	private
12.	West Hill	Houde’s Tree farm- view to the west	private

Other scenic areas include the 22 scenic roads designated under the scenic road ordinance. All of these roads are somewhat narrow, tree-lined, and many still have remnants of stonewalls, providing a scenic drive and country feel. The trees and stonewalls along these designated roads are protected by the Scenic Road Act and may not be removed without a public hearing with the Planning Board and Tree Warden. (See list in Appendix E and shown on Map 3)



Pond at Cider Knoll Aerial View 2024 – by MEDC

Unique geological features can be found in these distinctive environments including the outwash plains which created Sudbury Reservoir and Callahan State Park, Lake Williams, Millham Reservoir and the Desert Conservation Land. The wetlands, hills and stone outcrops that create nice features at the Cider Knoll and Ghiloni Park areas. And the glaciers which created the drumlins of Jericho Hill, Shoestring Hill, Indian Hill and several others throughout the City and which are discussed in more detail in Section 7. In addition, the City has 14 conservation areas and 24 recreation facilities and 2 watershed areas that provide scenic views of fields, hills, lakes, and woods as well. Connecting many of these open space and recreation facilities is the City-wide Panther trail and the 4 community Boroughs Loops trails.

*"In every walk with nature,
one receives far more than he seeks."*

John Muir

2. Cultural, Historic and Archeological

Boston Post Road (Route 20) is part of the historic road network from Boston to the Connecticut River. This route in Marlborough in the 1800's was lined by apple orchards and dairy farms, which, along with shoe factories, were the primary commercial operations in the City. Most of these farms have been replaced by businesses, residential developments, and office parks.



Photo 1939 farms and fields surrounded lake Williams- City GIS Maps

Lake Williams is the only true natural lake in the City (listed as a "Great Pond" by the state) and historically was a focal point for recreation. Before the settlers used this lake, it was a gathering place for Native Americans. However, since Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir are still considered potential drinking water sources, limited recreational use is permitted including, walking hiking and birding, and as posted.

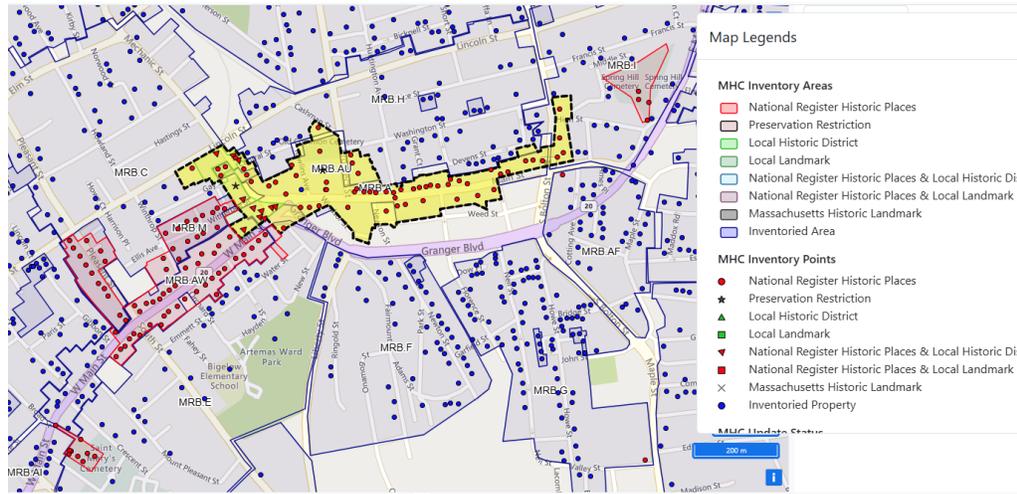
Two historic districts have been established in the downtown area of the City. The first was established in 1996 as recommended by the Historic Commission and is a very small Local Historic District known as Monument Square, which includes the area around the monument near the main library on Main St. up Mechanic St. to Lincoln St. This district was established under the local historic district provisions MGL Ch. 40C, The Historic Districts Act. The second district is the Marlborough Center National Register district, which includes Main St. from the library to the old, now renovated fire station office building. The Historic Commission has also compiled an inventory of all historic properties within the City. All historic properties including houses, cemeteries, and landscapes have been documented and inventoried. The inventory is thorough and provides important documentation of these historic sites, however there are no rules or ordinances local or state, which currently provide protection to any of these structures. The hope is that as people realize the historic values of these properties, they may be more willing to help protect them. Historic structures help to provide a sense of history to any community and lend their character to the community. The successful Museum in the Streets® program developed in 2018 does bring the rich history of the City to those who visit and walk through the City's downtown.



In 2003-2009 the Historic Commission worked with volunteers to inventory all the headstones within the historic cemeteries in the City. This data is now stored with the Historic Commission.

The State Department of Conservation and Recreation manages the land around Sudbury Reservoir. Walker Brook, one of the headwater streams which feeds the reservoir flows through the historic filter beds used in the 1800's to clean the water from horse manure runoff from the center of the city. This unique facility provides much history to the communities' regional past and present role as a backup water supply. This should be added to history tours or walking areas and should be discussed with the state DCR.

Due to local small business efforts in 2012, downtown Marlborough was recognized as a Cultural District in Massachusetts - one of only 14 districts awarded this distinction during the first year of the Mass Cultural Council (MCC) Cultural Districts Initiative.



From State: [MACRIS Maps](#)

3. Area of Critical Environmental Concern - The City does not have any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern as identified by the state.

G. Environmental Challenges

Marlborough's environmental problems are typical of most communities in Massachusetts. Over the years, the City has dealt with several hazardous waste issues including gasoline and oil releases from gasoline stations and other storage facilities and accidental spills. Environmental concerns such as storm water and wastewater discharge, erosion control and air quality are dealt with on a case-by-case basis through the community's Board of Health, Fire Department, Conservation and site plan review process. However, the biggest challenge the city and state face are the changing climate and the impacts of larger storms, droughts, forest fires, flooding, excessive heat all of which stress the human infrastructure and natural systems we all depend on.

Loss of Open Space, including woodland and farmland, creates higher density of wildlife closer to our neighborhoods. This over the years will become a greater challenge, as animals such as coyotes and other animals become better adapted to these human neighborhoods. We expect more frequent conflicts with coyotes, deer, raccoons, skunks, possums, and other shyer creatures such as fisher cats that will adapt over time to humans as their habitats are reduced in size. Keeping undeveloped corridors between larger open spaces can serve to connect areas where these animals can travel. Education to residents about the best ways to live with wildlife will be an important step towards helping to balance these conflicts as well as encouraging the purchase of open spaces and corridors for protection.

In addition, as development continues there is less open space for humans, so a formula for ensuring enough open space per person in the city needs to be developed to ensure that the city maintains is high standards of a great place to live, work and play.

Climate Change: As Marlborough becomes a greener community with more energy efficient homes, alternative environmentally friendly energy sources, improved conservation of water, fuel use and recycling rates, it will also be friendlier to the overall environment. However, climate change is predicting bigger and more severe storm events, more drought, more stress on plants and animals, more days of extreme heat and cold, more stress on existing water, sewer, drainage and utility infrastructure. Ensuring that development going forward, and redevelopment of existing properties is built in a way that will be more resilient to these changes. Items such as infiltrating more stormwater into the ground, having more trees on all developments to cool the land and provide habitat, and balancing development with open space protection on and off property. Being aware of what is to come and planning ahead, will make Marlborough able to bounce back faster when these events occur. Efforts are underway in 2026 to update zoning codes and regulations to help ensure new development and redevelopment is built to adapt to the changing climate. Ongoing and periodic ordinance review should be established to ensure building and developments are keeping current with changes observed and anticipated. i.e. changes in flooded areas over time.

Light Pollution:

Light pollution is the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light that causes serious environmental consequences for humans, wildlife, and our climate. Components of light pollution include:

- Glare - excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort
- Skyglow - brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas
- Light trespass - light falling where it is not intended or needed

- Clutter - bright, confusing, and excessive groupings of light sources

Light pollution is a side effect of industrial civilization. Its sources include building exterior and interior lighting, advertising, commercial properties, offices, factories, streetlights, and illuminated sporting venues. The fact is that much outdoor lighting used at night is inefficient, overly bright, poorly targeted, improperly shielded, and, in many cases, completely unnecessary. This light, and the electricity used to create it, is being wasted by spilling it into the sky, rather than focusing it on the actual objects and areas that people want illuminated. - DarkSky.org.

To improve the health of the city both human and wildlife passing an ordinance that provides guidance on how the city can address light pollution for private new developments, redevelopments and municipal projects. And educate the public about the need to reduce light pollution, will go a long way in protecting the health of the city.

Hazardous waste sites: Although the state is responsible for oversight of hazardous waste spills and chemical releases and cleanup procedures on all waste sites and accidental releases, some oversight and review by the local Conservation Commission and Fire Dept. to ensure that the cleanups do not lag forever is helpful in ensuring full cleanup of these areas and identifying sensitive receptors that the state may not be aware of. This is an ongoing task.

Old Landfill: Another area of environmental concern in the past has been the former site of the City's sanitary landfill on Hudson Street. In 2025 the landfill was properly capped and sealed to ensure it meets today's capping standards and prevents leachate from leaving the site. Fort Meadow Reservoir abuts the landfill to the north and would be immediately impacted by a leachate release or soil erosion. Keeping the landfill cap free of large trees is also important to maintain the integrity of the clay cap that encapsulates the landfill. The reuse of the landfill with playing fields is in progress too. Creating open fields free of trees in the capped areas that are not part of the playing fields and recreation facility could be managed as natural meadows to provide habitat to butterflies, dragon flies and many bird species that need open fields would be another habitat improvement and amenity to this area. (The field and parking areas will be completed and opened in spring 2026)

Ft. Meadow Reservoir: In 1999, most of the street drainage off Bolton St. was diverted into the detention basin at the base of the old landfill. This has allowed for the water to be filtered before discharging into Ft. Meadow Reservoir. As is evidenced by the annual sand removal at this detention basin this basin has captured a large amount of street sand and road runoff which historically had accumulated in front of the City's boathouse on Reservoir St. Ongoing diligence in cleaning catch basins around the lake and educating residents within the Ft. Meadow Reservoir watershed has been put in place and must continue in order to ensure the long-term good health of the lake. In 1999, Eurasian Water milfoil was discovered in Ft. Meadow Reservoir; in 2016 Fanwort was discovered. These invasive, non-native weeds can have a devastating effect on the ecological balance of the lake as well as the recreational value. Other communities throughout New England have grappled with ways of controlling this weed, which left uncontrolled will overtake a lake within a matter of a few years. Over the past 20+ years the City has hired consultants to do lake herbicide treatment to control the weeds. Continued diligence identifying weed growth in the lake and following up with appropriate controls will be critical in keeping the weed growth in the lake under control. (see section 7 for more details on needs)

Assabet River & Hop Brook: The Assabet River and Hop Brook systems are both experiencing excessive growth of weeds, known as eutrophication, which has been an issue for years. Improvements and upgrades to the City's two wastewater treatment facilities over the past 8 years have improved the water quality significantly. However, residual nutrients in the sediments as well as large amounts of untreated urban runoff from roadways continue to contribute excessive nutrients to these two rivers. In addition, both rivers have their natural flow altered by man-made dams which impede the natural flushing of nutrients within these impoundments. The City will need to continue to work with the watershed association OARS, the Sudbury Hop Book Protection Association and adjacent communities and the State DEP and Federal EPA in years to come to ensure ongoing improvement and protection of both river systems.

Millham Reservoir and Lake Williams: Although the City is now served by the Quabbin Reservoir MWRA system, with excellent water, Millham Reservoir and Lake Williams are still considered as potential future drinking water sources or back up water supply and are still protected to ensure clean water. As a key recreational resource for the City as well, ensuring clean water will be essential for both wildlife and human enjoyment. Several threats to these water bodies are Rte. 20 stormwater runs directly into the lake along the shores of Lake Williams. Currently there are little or no drainage controls within this stretch of roadway, which is managed by the state MDOT. Such structures if installed, could help control a spill from any number of petroleum, industrial chemicals, or auto-accident spills. A priority should be the redesign of this section of the roadway to improve the drainage system including emergency spill containment facilities. These measures will help mitigate water quality impacts from Rte. 20 into the lake. In addition, more education to all residences and businesses within the watershed needs to be provided to ensure that no one is dumping illegal substances, including lawn fertilizers and car oil down the storm drain system of this watershed, and throughout the City.

Hager Pond- This privately owned pond has been identified as having a dam that is very old and in disrepair and in danger of collapsing. As discussed in section 7 this dam is in need of attention to either repair or remove it to prevent downstream damage to Rte. 20 and the historic Wayside Inn and Grist Mill in Sudbury. The City in 2025-2026 is working with the landowners to seek funding and a study to advance the repair or removal of this dam. Funding is being sought from state DCR, EOEEA, and federal FEMA funds.

Stormwater, Erosion and Sedimentation controls: In 2009 the City Council passed the Stormwater Management Ordinance which is instrumental in helping control erosion throughout the City not just projects adjacent to wetlands. This ordinance ensures better oversight of all construction projects and ongoing maintenance of stormwater system controls on both public and private properties. All sediment that enters a drainage system has the potential to impact the water quality of our streams and ponds. The cumulative impact of sedimentation from many small projects, can over time have a devastating effect on a wetland resource area, causing lakes and ponds to become wet marshes rather than open water areas. To keep our ponds and streams pristine the diligent enforcement and follow through of this ordinance continues to be critical to helping improve the quality of the City's rivers, streams and ponds. Ongoing education of the public is performed through the MS4 permit and with storm drain markers on

catch basins, reminding folks that only clean water should enter the drain. Updating this ordinance to meet the changing climate needs will have to occur within the next ten years, including updating data used to determine flooding areas and storm events, allowing for porous pavement to reduce runoff, etc.

Chronic Flooding: All streams and tributaries in the City flow either to the Sudbury or Assabet River watersheds (see **map # 4**). As such there are only a few areas in the City where chronic flooding occurs either because of the river overflowing its banks, as occurs along the Assabet River at Boundary Street, or in situations where the development has outpaced the drainage system which is now inadequate. With the increase in storm volumes and intensity as a result of climate change, the City is beginning to see more flooding. In recent year flooding from our undersized drainage systems coupled with intense storm event has occurred at: the intersection of Glen Street and Millham Brook, Farm Rd. and Helen Dr., Farm Rd. and Mowry Brook, Phelps St. and Royce Rd., and Maple Street near the South Street Brook. With the changing climate we can expect more local flooding in streets and homes because there is more water than can be conveyed.

Forestry issues: The City manages several large tracts of forested property including the Millham Reservoir watershed land, Lake Williams Watershed land, Desert Natural Area conservation land, and Mt. Ward and adjacent Cemetery land. The City has developed a Forest Stewardship Plan for the Desert Natural Area and is in the process of discussing plans for the City’s watershed land as well. These stewardship plans inventory the resources and provide recommendations on how to best manage for the desired need- wildlife, watershed protection, forest health, fire prevention etc. These plans can be found in the City Conservation Office or DPW Forestry and Parks

The recent scare of Asian Long Horn Beetle infestations in Worcester and the Emerald Ash Borer and winter moth infestations, the Red-Pine Bark beetle, and most recently the spotted lanternfly found in other parts of Massachusetts, have put both the Conservation and DPW Parks Dept. Tree Warden on the alert to watch for these pests. The incursion of non-native invasive plants such as oriental bittersweet vines, glossy buckthorn and phragmites has also created new tasks and projects for staff and volunteers alike to help maintain the City parks and open spaces free of these invaders that are choking trees and displacing native plants. As noted above, the City is participating in a regional effort to work on early detection and eradication of these pest and plant invaders, in hopes to keep them at bay and find logical cost-effective ways to identify where efforts can be made to help control these invasives.



Japanese Knotweed

Multiflora Rose

Oriental Bittersweet

The City is also talking to DCR about their State Forest and State Watershed Land to ensure that the management of these properties is in keeping with the adjacent City-owned properties.

Environmental Equity: The Committee looked at the Environmental Justice (EJ) Community maps for the City of Marlborough included as **Map #11**. The majority of our recreation facilities fall within the EJ community. These parks, open spaces and recreation facilities are within walking distance (5–10-minute walks from the EJ communities as shown on the EJ map #11. The location of these recreation and conservation facilities is superimposed on the EJ map for easy reference on **Map #11 and Map #14**.

Wildlife Habitat: Over the years wildlife concerns arise, whether it is the decline in monarch butterflies which prompted the planting of more milkweed, or the need to know where vernal pools are located so they can be protected. Or the current issue in 2025 is the rat infestation in the center of the city and the use of rodenticides which are having a detrimental effect on our hawks and foxes and other wildlife which then eat the poisoned rats. Constantly keeping a tab on the natural world and adjusting rules, and ordinances within the city to balance the needs of humans and protection of wildlife will be an ongoing education. This is similar to invasive nonnative plant removal to restore important native habitats.

Section 5

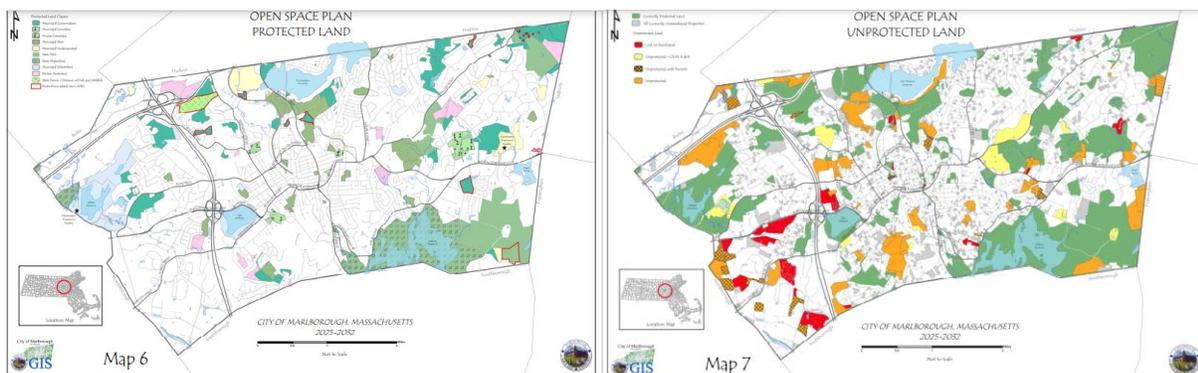
INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATIONAL INTEREST

This environmental inventory provided the basis for evaluating the needs analysis discussed in section 7.

The open space inventory was compiled into two maps and corresponding spreadsheets which are found in appendix A. The first map, **Map # 6 titled Open Space Plan-Protected Land**, identifies all land which has already been protected either by state, local or private entities. These are parcels, which are legally protected by state and or federal statute and therefore cannot easily be subject to adverse development. All park and conservation lands are considered permanently protected open space. We have also included watershed land and land managed by the DPW and schools to show other City-owned land that is city owned and has a specific use designation. Each parcel is labeled on the map by a color/symbol and on the spreadsheet with its assessors Map and Parcel and the corresponding information on each parcel is provided on the “Protected Land*” spreadsheeting Appendix A1.

*Note that a full title search on all these parcels was not done; deeds were checked in most cases to see how they were acquired and for what purpose. Further investigation will be needed to confirm the level of protection, but in general these parcels are being managed for the purpose listed on the spreadsheet, and from our initial deed search are protected as noted on the following “protected land” spread sheet.

The second map, **Map #7 titled Open Space Plan – Unprotected Land**, identifies all land which is undeveloped as of the writing of this plan, or parcels of partially developed land which is significant to open space protection either on its own or as it provides a link or connection to adjoining protected or unprotected parcels of conservation or recreation interest. Again, each parcel is labeled and the corresponding data on each parcel is provided on the “Unprotected Land” spreadsheet in Appendix A2..



Large maps are found in the Map file on the Conservation Web page under Open Space and Recreation Plan 2026-2036: at this link: [Open Space Plan | Marlborough, MA](#)

Both maps contain a legend identifying the parcel types by color as follows:

Map 6

Protected Land

Protected Land Classes

-  Municipal Conservation
-  Municipal Cemetery
-  Private Cemetery
-  Municipal Park
-  Municipal Unprotected
-  State Park
-  State Watershed
-  Municipal Watershed
-  Private Protected
-  State Forest / Division of Fish and Wildlife
-  Protections added since 2010

Map 7

Unprotected Land

Classes

-  Lost or Developed
-  Unprotected - Ch 61 A & B
-  Unprotected with Permits
-  Unprotected
-  Currently Protected Land
-  All Currently Undeveloped Properties

There are a few parcels of land, which, through the inventory gathering process, were found to be municipal parcels (shown Municipal unprotected- Map 6) for which no City department has ever

officially been designated to manage the property, and other cases where one department is managing land when in fact the acquisition and deed indicated that another department was the historic “recipient”. These parcels are labeled in the spread sheet or unprotected lands as: Municipal unprotected and Manager- undesignated. A dialogue with City land manager departments and then a recommendation to the City Council to vote to designate parcels for specific purposes should be done to clarify the records and ensure that the best use of these parcels is provided. On parcels that have a low degree of protection designation, the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department should review these parcels and make recommendations to the City council to protect these parcels in perpetuity for either Conservation or Park land, if there is a desire

Please find on the Maps at the end of this document and the corresponding spreadsheets in Appendix A- A1 “Unprotected Parcels” and A2. “Protected Parcels” which shows this information that correspond to the parcels identified on maps # 6 & 7

Both inventory sheets contain a blank column on the right-hand side which is intended to be used to note when parcels change hands, are developed or acquired. The Committee charged with overseeing the implementation of this plan including at the very least the Conservation Officer and Recreation Director should keep a running tally on the status of these properties. This will be useful when the plan is updated in ten years.

The spreadsheet inventory which corresponds to these two maps is shown in Appendix A

A1: Map 6- For the protected parcels the information provided in the spreadsheet is as follows:

Location	Map and parcel	acres	Current use	condition	public access/handi-capped accessible	Recreation potential	how acquired
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In Summary this inventory displays that the protected land in the city totals: 5,967 acres
 Conservation- 662 acres
 Recreation/Parkland/ school fields 2,968
 Cemetery... 111 acres
 Municipal Watershed land 480 acres
 Municipal various management -290 acres
 Private protected ... 88 acres
 State Park and Forest ... 663 acres
 State Sudbury Watershed land ...705 acres

A2: Map 7 The Unprotected Parcel information provided in the spreadsheet is as follows

Map and Parcel	Street Address	Acres	Designation on map
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These are shown in various colors on the map as noted above and help visually display these parcels that are yet undeveloped.

Section 6

COMMUNITY VISION

A. Description of Process

This update OSRP builds on the goals identified in the 2011-2018 OSRP and was completed by the Open Space and Recreation Committee using the community survey results, the State SCORP, input from the Conservation, Historic and Recreation Commissions and information gathered anecdotally by all the Committee members and public workshops done when the draft was completed. The process we used, and the public comments and survey are all outlined in “section 2. Introduction, on pages 13-14 of this report. In addition, past OSRP and other city planning, and historic documents were reviewed. This process informed the analysis of needs section 7 which then translated into this vision and the following 8 goals for this OSRP.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Community Vision Statement:

- ❖ **Preserve and enhance Marlborough’s unique community identity and character and sustain a healthy community**
 - **By protecting open space**
 - **Preserving scenic, cultural and historic features and**
 - **Implementing thoughtful planning strategies for both the built and natural environment**

- ❖ **Maintain, protect and improve the quality of Marlborough’s critical natural resources including ground and surface waters, wildlife and diverse habitats for current and future generations.**

- ❖ **Maintain, improve and expand on public and private recreational opportunities for folks of all abilities and ages, for now and for the future.**

- ❖ **Protect more open space parcels large and small in the City, for humans, wildlife and a balanced ecosystem.**

- ❖ **Connect open space and recreational resources within the city and other towns in our region through walking and biking trails that allow everyone easy access to nature while promoting intact wildlife corridors and natural systems.**

The eight overall goals recommended to meet the vision for the plan are as follows:

EIGHT GOALS

- 1. Create an action plan with measurable results and a process to promote and review progress. Provide public progress reports.**
- 2. Protect and enhance the City's natural resources- air, water, land, and provide connectivity among them for both people and other living things for current and future generations.**
- 3. Protect the biodiversity of local plants and animals while maximizing passive recreation for people, where feasible, for current and future generations.**
- 4. Provide quality recreational facilities and adequate recreational opportunities for all City residents, including diverse populations and ensure it is encompassing diversity of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and languages. For all areas of City for both passive and active recreation.**
- 5. Preserve the character, historic, and cultural resource of the community.**
- 6. Promote and develop regional open space and recreational opportunities, especially through the connectivity of walking and biking trail systems.**
- 7. Engage and educate community citizens in preserving and maintaining open space, recreation and natural resource areas throughout the City to promote a healthy environment for humans and wildlife alike, and in doing so help curb climate change.**
- 8. Promote the public and private recreational resources and events the city boasts, including private skating rinks, Apex Center, Labor Day parade, food and music festivals, to name a few. These are a source of community pride, entertainment and fun that the city offers.**

Section 7

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC) generated the following analysis of needs from the results of the 2018 survey and information gathered from the various boards and committees represented on the Open Space and Recreation Committee. The public presentation workshops that were held in March & April of 2025 generated many comments and good input as well. This section summarizes the major open space, and recreation needs as identified by the 2018 survey and community input. Because the survey was outdated by the time this plan was finalized in 2025 and didn't capture needs discovered from 2019-2025, the additional input was gathered during the public review process helped identify the needs of the community. The public outreach and participation process used is outlined above in Section 2 "Planning Process and Public Participation" and all comments provided are included in appendix D.

A. Summary of Survey and outreach Workshop results

What did the 2018 survey tell us?: More open space, more trails an indoor pool and a dog park were items that came out high on the list of things residents of Marlborough are looking for to improve the city's open space and recreation facilities. 571 people responded to the survey, the majority of whom have lived in Marlborough for more than 10 years. Here are some of the highlights from the survey.

- Majority of people are satisfied with the quality of life in Marlborough
- The top two types of facilities missing were a dog park and a large indoor swimming pool. Other honorable mentions were walking and biking trails, more soccer fields, disc golf and better maintenance of the facilities the city already has.
- The majority of people said there was adequate open space however when asked what was missing, people noted that there needed to be more open space, more trails more places to walk and hike and more areas to protect wildlife. There were quite a few comments from people discouraged with all the development and not saving enough open space.
- Overall people feel safe in the city's parks and conservation land
- Most people were not aware of how lakes and streams are protected in the city
- On the question about whether the residents are satisfied with what the city is doing to protect open spaces, landscapes and historic buildings the majority were generally satisfied, but offered suggestions about protecting more open spaces, historic buildings, the armory and Shoestring Hill were all noted as being of importance to some.
- When asked about tax dollars being spent on open space and recreation 50% said to spend more to buy open space to protect it from development. 39% said to spend more money to upgrade or expand recreation facilities with 18% and 10% saying the current spending is the right amount on both recreation and open space respectively. Only 4% and 2% said the city is

spending too much money on recreation and open space respectively, with 15% saying they did not know.

- The facilities getting the most visits (pre-COVID) were Ghiloni Park, neighborhood playgrounds and all sports fields. Memorial beach and Ward Park also got high visitation points. The Assabet River Rail Trail and Lake Williams with the new floating boardwalk overall are among the most visited facilities. Although it appears that all properties are visited and used, many comments about facilities we needed which the city already offers, brought us to conclude that the city needs to do a better job at educating residents about all the wonderful facilities the city does have. Many respondents said they didn't know we had as many facilities and open areas as listed.

2025 Draft Plan outreach/Workshop Results:

A list of the public meeting held in March/April 2025 are included in appendix D as well as the comments provided. These meetings allowed the public to review the draft document and provide comment. The public was notified of the availability of the draft report through social media, news releases to the local media, civic organizations and the library and email blasts within all these groups.

In order to reach the Environmental Justice (EJ) community additional notifications to Various groups who serve the EJ community were notified including the Boys and Girls Club, several area churches, the Human Services groups and presentations were made to various committees and civic organizations and the public. (see section 2, b. above for the details. All the comments were incorporated into this final document.

In general, the comments were positive and provided good suggestions on things that had been missed including: The need to control light pollution to protect habitat; The addition of trails on the maps that were missed; editorial comments and corrections; addition of items to the maps such as scenic roads; recommendations from the Disabilities Commission on project improvements; addition of historic commission suggestions on historic preservation items which were incorporated. It also revealed that many people in attendance at all these workshops had no idea what resources the city has for recreation and conservation and were pleased to learn about all the fabulous things the city has to offer, which emphasized the need for better education and advertising of what the city already offers. Many great discussions came out of the workshops and new ideas were generated on what to include. All the comments are provided in appendix D, and all were incorporated in some form in this document.

B. Summary of Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2024-2029 (SCORP)

The State provides the following state-wide goals to be met by state and local municipalities as the states vision for its open space needs. The state asks communities to review these goals and to include them in the community planning process as well. When funding from the federal and state government is involved, they are looking to fund projects that meet these goals going forward. The state goals are:

Goal 1. Improve Access to Beaches and Other Water-based Recreation Facilities

Objectives:

1. Prioritize the acquisition of land that will increase access to freshwater or ocean beaches

2. Support park development projects that involve water-based recreation, such as water spray parks, pools, kayak/canoe launch areas, fishing, etc.
3. Support the acquisition of land that will protect water supply and also be open for recreation.

Goal 2. Support Trail Projects

Objectives:

1. Acquire land that will facilitate trail connections to local parks and recreation areas, as well as connect and/or complete existing trail networks
2. Acquire land that will create new opportunities for trails or walking paths, particularly in Environmental Justice Census blocks
3. Construct trails on previously acquired land that are accessible to people with disabilities.



Volunteers build a kiosk

Goal 3. Create and Renovate Neighborhood Parks, Especially to Benefit the Underserved

Objectives:

1. Prioritize funding neighborhood parks in Environmental Justice Census tracts, especially new parks
2. Continue to promote park design as a tool for climate change resilience
3. Support the development of neighborhood park-type amenities, such as water spray parks, dog parks, community gardens
4. Add to the network of parks that provide space for community gatherings, such as farmers' markets and community festivals.

Goal 4. Create Opportunities, especially for the Underserved, to Enjoy Protected Natural Areas

Objectives:

1. Make previously acquired natural areas, whether they be municipally owned conservation areas or state-owned parks or wildlife management areas, more accessible by creating campsites, kayak/canoe launches, trailheads, overlooks, and turnouts, etc. with attention paid towards amenities that accommodate people with disabilities
2. Acquire new blocks of land with preference to those parcels that are designated as an Urban Area by the 2020 US Census, in Environmental Justice Census blocks, or the trailhead is within a half mile of a transit stop
3. Acquire land mapped as Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscape, and Local and Regional Components in BioMap where habitat-compatible public access can be accommodated.

In reviewing the SCORP-2024-2029 it was reassuring to see that many of the goals and objectives outlined as the State goals are also being addressed in the needs analysis and recommendations being made in this Open Space and Recreation Plan for Marlborough. The City has stepped up to the plate on maintaining trails and developing interconnected trail systems as well as maintaining our parks and conservation land and establishing land stewards and resource education programs. Over the past years the City has upgraded all its playgrounds, so they are ADA accessible, and have new and improved equipment to meet the needs of the City's diverse population including those with disabilities. (See appendix D for full report) We have developed an inter- and intra- community trail system within our EJ

neighborhoods and connections with neighboring towns. We have acquired and recommend acquiring land to protect water supplies, natural habitats and natural landscapes. This plan addresses most of the recommendations identified in the SCORP as noted in the needs assessment below and the action plan outlined in Section 9.

C. Summary of Natural Resource Protection Needs

Marlborough's Natural Resource Protection needs can be separated into three general categories.

1. water resources
2. wildlife habitat protection
3. trails and greenway corridor enhancements

These categories are detailed below.

1. Water Resource Protection

Rivers, streams, lakes and ponds throughout the City are facing the threat of pollution as the community becomes increasingly urbanized. Several streams are still pristine, with water sufficiently cool and clean to support native brook trout. Listed below are each of the major water resources in the community with their corresponding water quality problems and recommended actions to protect its water quality

Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit.

Edward Abbey

Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir

Lake Williams drains into Millham Reservoir through Millham Brook and is back up water source for the City, This wetland system is a valuable resource for both human and wildlife alike. The huge steps taken to protect this watershed in the past have been the acquisition of several large tracts of land adjoining Millham Reservoir for watershed protection; however, there is still significant potential for contamination of both reservoirs from continued development within the watershed draining into these water bodies. The development of impervious surfaces and landscaped areas, and accidents on existing roadways can all pose threats. The following additional protections for these critical areas should be implemented.

The Water Supply Protection District (WSPD) ordinance, passed in 1997, provides some restrictions to new development and redevelopment of existing lots within this watershed area. Over time as areas are developed and redeveloped, systems to improve water quality from parking lot runoff and roadway runoff are required to be installed. The recommendation is to ensure full enforcement and better education of this ordinance to ensure long term improvements within the watershed. Some key features of the ordinance are as follows:

- Elimination of all direct untreated discharges of stormwater runoff to the reservoirs and their main tributaries

- Reduces the impervious area allowed within each zoning district
- Prohibits uses that are hazardous or pose potential hazards to the water quality
- Requires a 50-foot no disturbance buffer zone along all wetland areas
- Requires the use of best management practices and maintenance schedules as outlined in the State Stormwater Management Policy for all new stormwater discharges and the local Marlborough Stormwater Ordinance

In addition to the implementation and enforcement of the WSPD and Marlborough Stormwater Ordinance the following items also need to be addressed in order to have better control over the long-term water quality of both reservoirs (potential future water supplies).

- Request from the Mass. Highway Dept. a reduction of road salt on sections of Rt. 20 and I-495 that drain into this watershed. When road improvements are proposed for either highway, improvements to the stormwater drainage system that would improve water quality must also be requested and required.
- In 2008 a strip of land between Rte. 20 abutting Lake Williams and Old Lakeside Ave was acquired for watershed protection purposes and to improve the appearance of this entrance way to the City from I-495. Now with the ownership of this parcel the City can work with the Highway Department in the DOT to institute improvements to the stormwater drainage system. Currently if there were to be an accident at this location along Rte. 20 all drainage would drain directly into Lake Williams causing the City to shut down this section of the lake. A containment system within the roadway which can capture contaminants before they enter the Lake would be very helpful in the long-term plan for protecting this interconnected lake system and in-lake aquatic habitat. This is a high priority item.
- Acquire or protect in some way the agricultural fields on Williams St; these also drain directly into the Millham Brook system.
- Ensure that the Marlborough Fish and Game property remains in open space status; if this is to change the acquisition or protection in some way of this property will be a high priority for watershed protection purposes.

Sudbury Reservoir

Sudbury Reservoir is a backup drinking water supply for the metropolitan Boston area. The land is controlled by the Department of Conservation Recreation (DCR) (formerly MDC), and the water is managed by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Recommendations to help support the protection of this water resource area are as follows:

- Continue to work with local nurseries and golf courses to encourage the use of Integrated Pest Management as part of their lawn maintenance practices.
- The stream carrying the most water from the center City was identified as Walker Brook. The pipe outlet at Florence St. flows with some force during large storm events carrying plastic bags, lots of sand and other debris through the brook system and finally into the reservoir. An inspection of this watershed to determine if there are any nature based or infrastructure systems to install or best practices to implement to improve water quality is recommended.

- Work with DCR to develop a preliminary design of modifications that can be made to the Marlborough filter beds to re-use them for detention and settling to improve water quality. Other alternatives besides simple removal of sand and soil may also be available, but cost will be a major consideration. Maintenance considerations should also be a key to preliminary design considerations.
- Work with DCR to remove the accumulated sand at the Walker St. culvert which enters the filter bed system. Over the years this area has filled in considerably and should be removed for water quality as well as flood capacity reasons.
- When upgrading roadways within the watershed, the City and Highway Dept. of MassDOT will need to implement best management practices for stormwater management on these roadways.
- Institute reduced road salt practices throughout the Sudbury Watershed area.
- Acquire or protect with easements, properties within the Sudbury Reservoir Watershed including Gulbankian Fields (encourage ongoing open field use, encourage application into Ch. 61A property status for long term protection) and South Street Swamp and Shoestring Hill

Ft. Meadow Reservoir

Ft. Meadow Reservoir is Marlborough's only public recreational water body which still has very clean water and is a great recreational asset to the City. As with other water bodies in an urbanized area it experiences elevated levels of nutrients and solids loading throughout the year due to numerous streets drains that discharge directly into the lake. This increased nutrient loading unfortunately helps to feed the growth of weeds which has been a problem over the past 20 years. A short history of the problems and solutions follows.

In 2022 the new homeowners' association was required by the Board of Health to connect all the homes on Red Spring Rd. to the City sewer system through a private collection pipe, which was completed in 2023. Now all the homes on this roadway are served by City sewer and nutrient loading from the septic systems are no longer a concern.

In early 2000 the City hired a consulting firm to study the lake weed problem. In 2002 the lake was treated for the first time in many years, with an herbicide called Reward (active ingredient diquat) to control the invasive non-native plant called Eurasian Water milfoil. Since then, spot treatments with Reward have been done throughout the lake to help keep the non-native weeds in check. Treatment was performed in 2005, 2006, a more widespread treatment was done in 2008. In 2008 during the weed survey, in addition to Eurasian Water milfoil being detected, a new invader, Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), was also detected. By fall of 2010 the spread of Fanwort was even more prominent in the northern basin along the Hudson border. Since 2010 the City has had annual treatments of the lake to control both Eurasian Water milfoils and Fanwort, at a cost averaging \$17,000-20,000 per year just to keep it in check. Because any treatment cannot remove all pieces of invasive plants, and because these plant particles and seeds are transported by boats and birds, ongoing monitoring and spot treatment of invasive weeds will be an ongoing management need of the lake. Annual funding is essential. Spot treatments are much less expensive than lake wide treatments and ecologically healthier for the lake.

During the winter drawdowns, the City's DPW has been able to remove large amounts of street sand

which had deposited at the end of the storm drains in the lake. There are 18 discharge points into the lake. This is a very important step to helping remove sediments and nutrients from the lake and has been very successful. It is done when weather conditions permit during the winter drawdown period of Oct.-Feb. every year or every other year depending on the lake conditions. This program should continue.

Recommendations for ongoing protection of Ft. Meadow Reservoir are:

- Replace storm drain markers and provide door hanger / or online notification program around the Ft. Meadow Watershed to continue the education effort.
- Work with DPW to continue the debris removal program at the end of all storm drains discharging into the lake during the lake drawdowns.
- Make sure ongoing monitoring of weeds continues annually. The Conservation Commission and Ft. Meadow Commission should continue to work together. Treatment at early stages of weed growth is much cheaper. It is recommended that the City continue to contract with a consultant for multiple year contracts in order to have some continuity on monitoring this program. If a dedicated volunteer group can take over monitoring and reporting, that would be a great addition to the consultants that are hired. This will help with early detection and prompt treatment as needed.
- Educational fliers should be sent, and workshops should be held for lake owners and landowners within the watershed to educate landowners about “lake-friendly” lawn care, tree and buffer planting and land use practices.
- Continue the ongoing education at the boat launch to all boat launch users about cleaning boats and watercraft before entering and upon leaving the boat launch area, to prevent re-infestation of weeds into the lake is necessary. Boat launch staff must be educated every summer and be diligent about weed education and removal. And the water hose at the boat launch area on Reservoir St. should remain in working order.
- Acquire the remaining parcels of land surrounding Ft. Meadow Reservoir for passive recreation and watershed protection purposes: Red Spring Rd. property (remaining 10 acres not developed between Worster Dr. and Cullinane Dr.) and the parcel next to The Grove which is land locked, and the property owned by Boston Scientific between the ARRT bike path and the end of Blaiswood Ave

Hager Pond

This privately-owned pond serves as the backdrop for the historic Wayside Inn Country Store. Like Sudbury Reservoir and Fort Meadow Reservoir, Hager Pond experiences elevated nutrient and solids loading due to surface water runoff from Rt. 20, adjacent impervious areas and less so from the discharge from the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant (which has an excellent treatment system now), just upstream. The Hager Pond dam is now on the state’s High Hazard dams due to its poor and failing conditions. Failure of the dam would provide significant damage downstream to Rte. 20 and the ponds and mill at the historic Wayside Inn in Sudbury. During the summer months, excessive algal blooms and weed growth become a problem.

The following recommendations were made for Hager Pond.

- When improvements are finalized to Rte. 20, the storm drains discharging into Hager Pond should be retrofitted or replaced with larger sumps and oil separator units so that runoff water can be treated before being discharged into Hager Pond. (This is underway in 2025.)

- Work with landowners the state and FEMA to hire a consultant to prepare a feasibility study to investigate how and whether to repair the failing dam, now on the state Office of Dam Safety high hazard dam list (2025)
- Investigate funding sources for either dam repair or removal to make the dam area safe. (2024-2025 seek funding from FEMA and MA DCR Dam and Seawall program)

Small Ponds

There are several small ponds throughout the City, which deserve mention: Cider Knoll Pond, Muddy Pond, and Howe Pond. All are quite clean and contain abundant wildlife. Any new drainage discharges to any of these ponds should be carefully sited to ensure that they are kept clean. In addition, all existing discharges should be identified and inspected to ensure that there is no sediment buildup from street drainage. This will extend the life of these wetlands and limit the speed at which eutrophication (excess growth of weeds due to nutrient loading over time) occurs.

Once again, it is critical that all efforts be made to implement appropriate best management practices to control erosion and stormwater runoff before, during and after construction as outlined in the City's Stormwater Ordinance to protect these ponds.

Major Brooks and Streams and Wetlands

The streams throughout the City serve as an important resource for wildlife habitat, a source of water for Marlborough's recreational bodies of water, and the principal means of replenishing the community's backup drinking water supplies. As with other wetland resource areas, brooks and streams are immediately impacted when inadequate steps are taken to prevent construction-related pollution. These systems are also affected by releases of hazardous materials, especially when they are directly connected to closed drainage systems, and trash dumping. The City should work on raising awareness in the community about the importance of brooks and streams to wildlife, recreation, flood control and backup water supply. The City has taken steps to help protect all of our waterways, these include the stormwater ordinance; the stream teams to evaluate all the streams in the City (to be reactivated in the coming years), and volunteers installing storm drain markers.

The City's stream teams (2007-20010) were able to visually survey almost all the streams in Marlborough to check on their health. A copy of the reports is found at the City's Conservation Commissions webpage under Stream Team Reports, in menu items also found at:

(http://www.marlboroughma.gov/Gen/MarlboroughMA_ConCommisn/StreamTeamReports.)

Each report has a list of action items to be reviewed and addressed to solve the listed problems; these are found at the end of each report.

It is therefore recommended that:

- To gage the health of the City's stream system, additional stream team surveys should be conducted every 15-20 years, to gauge the stream health and this time to gauge the impact of the extreme storms we have had and the health and condition of culverts and any damage visible from these past storm events.

The importance of bordering vegetated wetlands as well as other resource areas listed in the state Wetland Protection Act regulations has long been recognized in the Commonwealth. All too often,

however, non-permitted encroachments occur when areas adjacent to these wetlands are developed. Strict adherence by builders to local permits from the Conservation Commission and the state's regulations is critical to maintaining the integrity of these areas. As more and more marginal lots are developed, the encroachment into wetland areas has become more apparent.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Ongoing monitoring of construction projects and education to all landowners throughout the City of Marlborough will be an important step in the long-term protection of wetlands.
- It is recommended that educational materials continue to be distributed to all households and businesses regarding stormwater drainage protection to protect our local brooks and streams, as is required in the MS4 EPA permit.
- Seek passage of a local Wetland Protection Ordinance to provide better protection to our rivers, streams, wetlands, and vernal pools resources (currently marginally protected under WPA) within the City.
- Acquire and or protect as appropriate undeveloped parcels of land adjacent to streams ponds and wetlands to better protect these resources.
- Conservation Commission should continue to strictly enforce the 30' no disturb wetland buffer zone policy within the City as over time this protects a large area of the City's natural waterways for wildlife and sustains important wildlife corridors.



2. Wildlife Habitat Protection

As stated in section four of this Open Space and Recreation Plan, nine areas within the City have been identified as valuable wildlife habitat. Each area supports a diversity of wildlife because of their size, landscape characteristic and/or location.

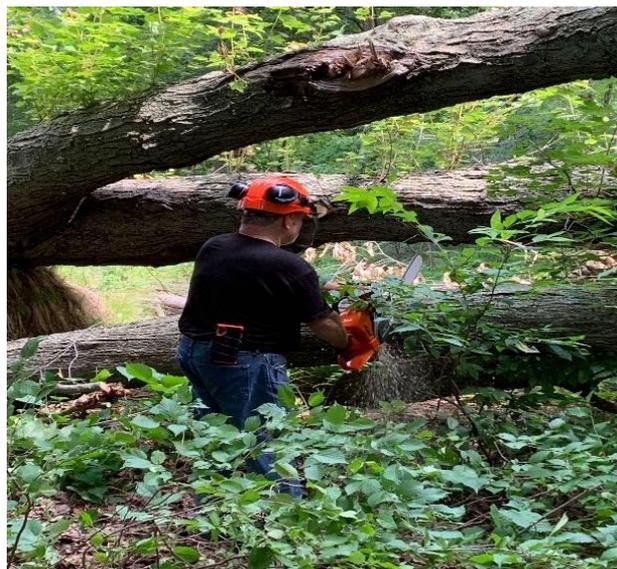
These areas are listed below and are shown on map #5 titled Bio Map and Wildlife Corridors. (The numbers correspond to the numbers on the plan)

	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>
1.	Desert	Public
2.	Mt. Ward/Ghiloni Park	Public
3.	Sudbury Reservoir/Callahan St. Pk.	Public
4.	Millham Reservoir	Public
5.	Millham Brook/Glen St.	Private
6.	Flagg Swamp/ Ft. Meadow Reservoir	Private/Public
7.	South St. Brook/ Swamp	Private
8.	Jericho & Shoestring Hill Private	Private/public
9.	Assabet River Corridor	Private
10.	Cider Knoll/Mello Farm	Public
11.	Holts Grove/Stevens St. / Red Spring Rd.	Public/Private
12.	West Hill	Private
13.	Howe Pond	Public
14.	Sheep falls Brooks to Flagg Brook	Private

These areas represent the last vestiges of contiguous combinations of woodland, lakes, streams, fields and swamps in the community.

We recommend that

- those properties, which remain in private ownership within these areas and are not protected from development by wetlands or other regulations, should be considered priority parcels in the City for acquisition or conservation restrictions. (See Map #10 and Section 9 for a list of top priority parcels.)
- The city continues to do vernal pool inventories and protection and install bird boxes for habitat improvement.
- Continue to manage invasive plant on parks and conservation land to improve biodiversity.



Volunteer Clearing a large trail obstruction- photo Karin Paquin

3. Trails and Greenway Corridor Enhancement

The Open Space and Recreation Committee identified several corridors of land with potential for interconnecting trail systems and greenway corridors. These greenway wildlife corridors are shown on map # 5 and trails are shown on Map # 8. These corridors benefit both humans and wildlife. Green corridors are well-suited to hiking trails used by walkers, mountain bikers (where appropriate), birders, and other kinds of passive recreational users. These areas are also important to the many species of wildlife that use them to travel between different habitat areas.

The following recommendations were made:

- The map of potential trails and greenway corridors is a useful planning tool for City officials, boards, and commissions. Using both maps those with oversight over development in the City can direct that development away from greenway corridors and into less sensitive areas.
- The City should consider acquisition of parcels within the greenway corridor, where no other alternatives exist for preservation. This plan should also be consulted when open space developments are proposed to ensure the open space can also serve as a wildlife corridor.
- The creation of the Panther Trail and Boroughs loop trail illustrated on Map #8 is a huge asset to the City. Going forward, the vision is to ensure that anyone in the City is only a 10-minute walk to the nearest trail link and can walk around the entire community. More trail connections need to be made to make this a reality.
- Investigate the ability to put a trail system around the Millham Reservoir and its surrounding woods area, in addition to the Panther trail. This needs to be carefully balanced to consider future water supply needs and recreation needs and impacts.
- Continue to work with DCR to improve the existing trail system through the DCR filter bed land adjacent to Sudbury Reservoir and to manage this land to enhance wildlife as well. Continue the ongoing MOA with DCR which allows the Marlborough Trails Committee (under Conservation Commission) to maintain the trail system around the reservoir.
- Work on the creation of an annual marathon run of the Panther Trail to generate interest in the trail system.

Trail systems for recreation and transportation purposes are outlined in more detail below in the community needs section both under recreation and conservation.

D. Summary of Community Needs:

This section is divided into three parts and reviews the current needs of

1. Parks and Recreation.
2. Conservation
3. Community needs

1. Parks and Recreation

Marlborough has 22 public recreational facilities. These include softball, baseball, soccer, field hockey,

and football fields, tennis courts, outdoor wading/shallow pools, lake swimming, basketball courts, track, a winter sledding slope, skate park, half pipe, and playgrounds, pickleball courts, dek hockey court, volleyball court. (Shown on map#6), A list of all facilities and amenities are found in Appendix B

Now, the City can boast having a top notch very well run, well maintained and well managed recreation facilities and programs. As listed in the introduction, the Recreation Dept. was able to make almost all the improvements to the recreational facilities listed in the 2011-2018 plan.

Building on the success of our last open space plan, comments from the survey and feedback from the public and Recreation Commission and staff, the following recommendations for the next ten year for facility improvements and new project to improve the diverse recreational offerings of the City:

Projects

- Development of a park/recreational facility at the old Hudson Street Landfill (will open spring 2026)
- Develop and expand existing recreational park areas and identify those areas that need improvements such as field upgrades, parking lot improvements, building shade structures, planting trees, and improving playground equipment
- Add parks to neighborhoods that don't have play areas within walking distance
- Aggressively pursue state and/or private grant funds for improvements to recreation facilities
- Construct a new wading pool at Ward Park to replace the existing wading pool
- Construct a new wading pool at Hildreth School to replace the existing wading pool
- Finding space to construct a Frisbee Golf Course

Specific needs for each park:

Bauks Field (Marlborough High School)

- Immediate repairs needed at two locations (pitchers' mound and batter's box)
- Padding at backstop to be replaced
- Replacement of turf

Byrne Field

- Fix Drainage issue by parking lot
 - Playground at Byrne Field
 - Netting behind the soccer goals at Byrne Field

Demers Field (Marlborough High School)

- Replacement of turf field

Farrell Fields

- Front field drainage issues-needs to be regraded, and drainage added
- Fix Drainage issues from Hildreth Street onto field

Ghiloni Park

- Rehab DiAntonio softball field (drainage issues)
- Musco lighting for softball and soccer fields
- Gate at exercise equipment at gravel path

- Gravel path to be paved
- Lower soccer field behind building-drainage issues-add loam
- Install a Pavilion

Kelleher Field

- Replace visitor side bleachers
- Musco lighting
- Replace or a better detail for concrete pillars around field
- Fix Driveway and sidewalk alignment

Noble Field (Marlborough Middle School)

- Replacement of turf and resurfacing of track at Noble Field

Stevens Park

- Drainage issue
- Infield mix issue
- Netting surrounding field needs to be replaced
- Rebuild Mound
- Home Plate needs to be remolded
- Complete Infield Removal and Rebuild

Vital Track and Field (Marlborough High School)

- Request replacement of existing field with turf
- Stadium style bleachers (2 additional) or seating within slope areas
- New Scoreboard
- Musco lighting for field
- 12x16 building to store turf maintenance equipment and material
- Bathroom and concessions building

Williams Street Baseball Field Complex

Martinangelo Field

- Put existing lighting on Musco System
- Retaining wall, (135' Wall) 1st Baseline
- Removal of dead pine trees behind 1st base dugout
- Fencing for top of new wall

Leduc Field

- Infield reconstruction
- Fencing repair & replace (when needed) existing
- Batting Cage Area (double cages & platform)
- New dugouts with roofs and drainage
- 5 row premium aisle & risers' bleachers (25' W 72 Seats). Quantity: 2
- Put existing lighting on Musco System

Langelier

- Fix Drainage issues
- Put existing lighting on Musco System

Ward Park

- Pavilion or shade structures at Ward Park for the Ward Park Pickleball group
-

Indoor Swimming Pool - A long term wish list (perhaps beyond this 10-year plan) which gets honorable mention and should remain on the list is the installation of an indoor swimming pool facility and indoor recreation facility for winter months or very hot summer days.

*I took a walk in the woods
and came out taller than the trees.*

Henry David Thoreau

1. Management Plan Success: The DPW Forestry Parks and Cemetery Division has developed a comprehensive management plan for all fields and recreation facilities. This included standards for field maintenance and a schedule for resting fields. This long-term management planning has been successful in allowing all fields to be used and has improved the health and playtime on all the fields.

In addition to field management, the parking issues at most of the parks, especially Ghiloni park have been addressed. This has been achieved through scheduling systems to avoid traffic problems. The sanitary facilities at all major recreation areas have also been upgraded and are working properly.

Current management needs: Ongoing Maintenance—as with all City facilities the need to provide ongoing maintenance is critical. These activities must be funded and supported to ensure that the City provides the normal maintenance and upkeep of playgrounds and athletic fields, so as not to incur costly repairs in the future and to keep these facilities safe for use.

2. Education/Programs Success: The recreation department offers a wide range of programs for all ages and abilities. From traditional sports programs and swimming lessons to dance, fencing, CPR certifications, etc. In addition, the recreation department runs and sponsors summer concert series and Saturday morning discovery series for all ages. The City Recreation website contains all the program information, field use information and summer programs offered. It also provides links to all their facilities, location and information about special events.

These programs can be found on the recreational link here: _

<https://mrd.recdesk.com/Community/Program> <https://mrd.recdesk.com/Community/Facility>
and are attached in Appendix B

Parks Clean-Up Day Success: All sports groups are required as part of their use permits to participate in cleaning up the fields they use. Individual leagues establish a parks cleanup-day with their participants at the beginning of each season. This is a big help to the city.

Assabet River Rail Trail Success: The Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) opened in 2005 continues to provide recreation and an alternative mode of transportation for commuters to Hudson. The Assabet River Rail Trail begins in Marlborough on Main St. to Lincoln/Highland Streets and will, when completed, continue for 12 miles to South Acton at an existing commuter rail station. As of 2025 The Marlborough

to Hudson and Maynard to Acton sections are completed, but the section in Stow to connect Hudson and Maynard is still in the planning stage. ARRT Inc. and MEDC were instrumental in putting together a bench and bike rack donation program which has added these great amenities to the trail. The trail begins in an Environmental Justice neighborhood in the center of the City. With the new ALTA Lincoln/Mechanic St. apartment complex in Marlborough, the addition of a parking lot off Jefferson St. and a bathroom facility on Lincoln St., will be further amenities to the trail (completed in 2025).

AART Current needs:

- Care and management of this linear park should be given to the Recreation Department and the DPW for management and maintenance. Currently, because it has not been formally designated to any particular department for oversight, the City council has oversight. Having the recreation Dept. in charge of this linear trail will allow for a defined process of management
- DPW should continue to maintain the trail and Boston Scientific is required to maintain the section between Fitchburg St. and Boston Scientific Way.
- Pavement of this 20-year-old trail surface should be evaluated to determine when re-pavement will be needed and when it should be added to the capital plan for future
- The City should continue to work with MEDC and the ARRT Inc. volunteer group to continue to support and improve this linear park and work to see the connection is made through Stow as envisioned.
- ARRT Inc. volunteer group also is promoting “Trail of Flowers” all along the ARRT corridor and encouraging businesses and homeowners to plant flowers along the trail so there is beauty all year long. Link here: [Trail of Flowers - Assabet River Rail Trail, Flowers](#); Encourage these plantings to be native to advance the native pollinator program outlined in this report.

3. Recreation Department Solutions to Reach All Socio-Economic Backgrounds

Affordable Access to Programs and Facilities:

The Marlborough Recreation Department offers scholarships or financial assistance for children and adults to participate in camps, classes, and events. This helps ensure that financial constraints do not prevent residents from benefiting from recreational opportunities. This includes free or low-cost sports programs, classes, and free access to Memorial Beach, the city wading pools, splash pads, and free rentals of canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards at the Hixson Boat Launch.

Inclusive and Diverse Programming:

The Marlborough Recreation Departments strives to design programs that cater to a wide range of interests and abilities, cultural activities that reflect the community’s diversity, and programs specifically aimed at seniors and youth. This inclusivity helps bring together people from different backgrounds.

Community Building and Social Inclusion:

By helping organize events, festivals, and community gatherings such as Movies in the Park, Summer Concert Series, Family Fun Day Festival, Farmers Market, Horrible Parade, Labor Day Parade, and Home for the Holidays it fosters social cohesion and community spirit within our city. These activities provide opportunities for residents to interact, build relationships, and strengthen community bonds, regardless of socio-economic status.

Health and Wellness Initiatives:

The Marlborough Recreation Department promotes physical and mental health through fitness classes,

creative workshops, access to parks, aquatic facilities, fields, playgrounds, and walking / hiking trails. These initiatives are particularly important for low-income residents who may have limited access to fitness facilities or daycare resources. By offering these services, it helps provide equitable opportunities for all residents to enjoy the benefits of recreation, while also encouraging healthier and more connected communities.

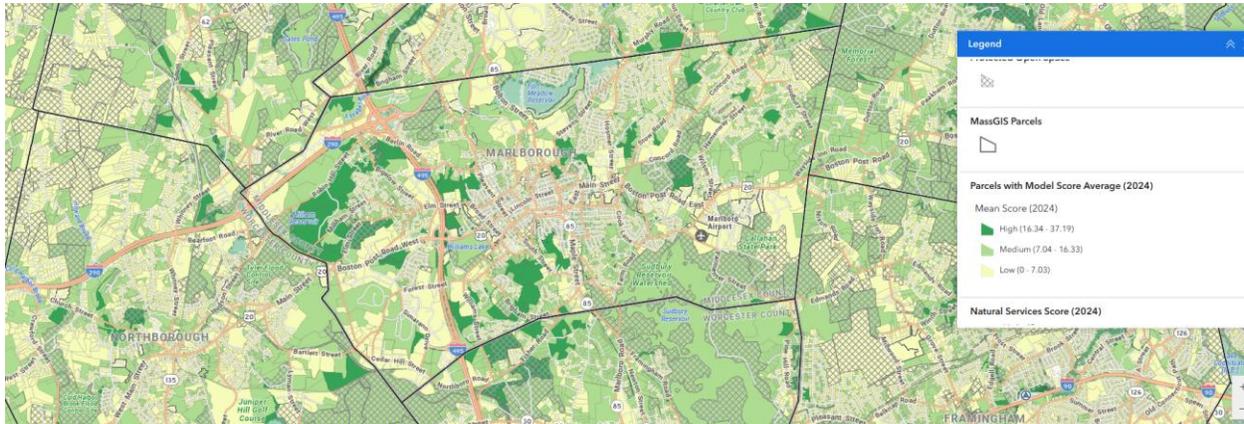
In summary, there have been many improvements to our recreation facilities and program which has made a big difference in serving the residence of Marlborough. Following through on the recommendations above (upgrading the existing facilities and building a few additional facilities) will continue to provide Marlborough with a top-notch recreation program and continue to add to a high quality of life to the residents and continue to make Marlborough a great place to live.

2. CONSERVATION

The Conservation Commission manages 14 large areas and many small parcels of land in the City shown on Map # 6. The City is also lucky to have other large state and non-profit owned parks and forest land for use by the residents of Marlborough and adjacent communities. Additional acquisitions to protect wildlife areas and corridors and provide adequate open spaces and passive recreation facilities for this growing community are essential to protecting the current quality of life.

The 1989 passage of the Open Space Development ordinance has protected over 140 acres of land at no cost to the City. To date, the Planning Board, which regulates the Open Space Development Ordinance, works with the Conservation Commission to identify the best portions of the property for open space and future trails when reviewing these proposals with developers.

The regional Land Trust Sudbury Valley Trustees also has a tool to help communities identify parcels of land that have regional as well as local significance for protection. They have identified four key components – Natural services, habitat for biodiversity, community connections and farmland – to help prioritize parcels of importance to the health of this watershed. We used this tool called: MCA "Land Protection Prioritization Mapping Tool". By comparing the properties on this map with the properties identified in orange on Map #7 we note that many of the parcels identified as still undeveloped and unprotected are also shown on this regional map of these properties.



<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ec5bc08e09483497744951cf51e575>

In view of Marlborough's continuing growth, it is essential that the City protect its priority list of parcels, including areas shown on the Wildlife Habitat Map #5 and the remaining undeveloped land shown on Map #7 which includes these regionally significant properties as well. The Conservation Commission and the Open Space and Recreation Committee have identified the following priority parcels for future protection (in whole or in part):

- the remaining parcels around Ft. Meadow Reservoir, by the Grove and Red Spring Rd. and at the end of Blaiswood Ave (owned by Boston Scientific)
- South St. Swamp and Shoestring hill
- Robin Hill St. undeveloped parcels and protection of Hillside School Land
- Tree Farm on Berlin Rd.
- Remaining farmland on South St.- encourage farmland protection
- Property along Sheep Falls Brook and Flagg Brook and North Branch of Millham Brook
- Property along stream and wildlife corridors as highlighted by dashed lines and pink parcels on Map #5 and parcels in orange on Map #7

The City's toolbox for land conservation should include appropriate use of open space development plans, conservation restrictions, and outright fee purchase. There are a number of methods the City should look into to seek funding for such protection; these include: State grants, budgeted funds established by Mayor and City Council, and private public partnerships, to name a few. Nearby communities have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) which allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund to raise money through a surcharge up to 3% of the real estate tax levy for open space protection, historic preservation and affordable housing. (this was considered in the past but there was no appetite for an additional tax on resident's real estate taxes at that time). In the 1990's during the building boom the city has set aside a % of all building permit fees and placed them into an Open Space account to generate funds for land protection projects. However, for reasons we could not find this process was discontinued. This % from building permits set aside for open space could be an option the Mayor and City Council could consider again to help balance development pressure with land protection and create the balance the city needs to remain viable and healthy both ecologically and for human needs.

The full or partial acquisition of the last remaining parcels under Ch. 61A (agricultural use) should be a

priority (shown in yellow on map #7). Marlborough was once known for its many apple orchards and dairy farms. Sadly, only four farms remain of that agricultural legacy. The Open Space and Recreation Committee recommends that the City work to keep these farms in continuing agricultural use, or if that is not possible, as protected open space. The City is strongly encouraged to find a way to keep these farms active, as they contribute greatly to Marlborough's scenic landscape and are important in providing local produce, and with a changing climate provide some source of local produce to make the community more resilient too! As an example MDAR provides resources connecting young farmers with farmland and other resources found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/beginning-farmer-resources#land-and-land-access> .

In 2016 E.O. Wilson wrote a book called [Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life](#). In that book was a promise: if we protect half the Earth's land and sea and manage sufficient habitat to safeguard the bulk of biodiversity, living Earth can continue to breathe.

*[Half-Earth](#) aims to solve a problem, what Wilson calls "the next big thing." **The problem we need to turn our attention to beyond the changing climate is the loss of the very fabric of our planet, the loss of biodiversity.***

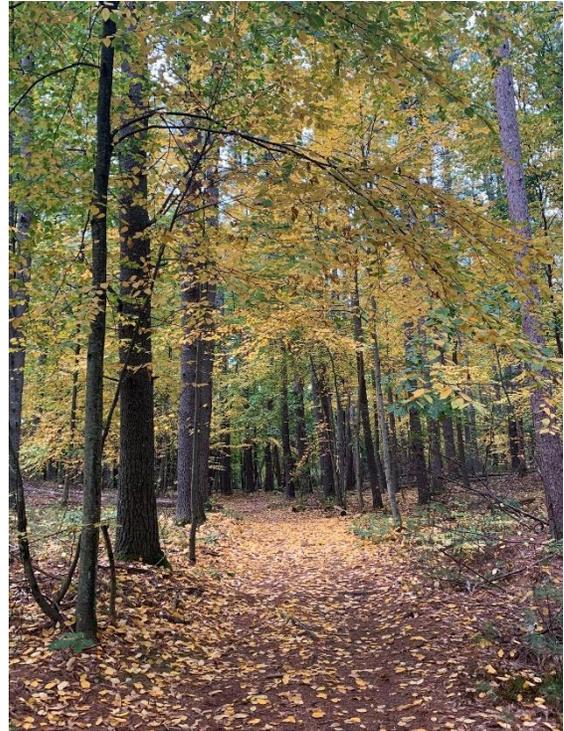
Of the areas noted on the Wildlife Habitat and Greenway Corridor Map, (map #5) the following items of conservation interest are noted to provide a better understanding of their importance within the natural community and recommendations on how each area can be better protected and what are the current needs.

a. **The Desert:** The main work on this 600 + acre property in Marlborough and Sudbury is to continue to work together with the Sudbury Conservation Commissions, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Federation of Women's Clubs, and the DCR Dept. of Forests and Parks to coordinate the management of this property and maximize its biodiversity and recreation values. This is a rare habitat containing pitch pine scrub oak forest which is a fire dependent habitat. Ongoing management of this unique resource through prescribed burns will continue to support the rare species that frequent this habitat type unique to the world.

b. **The Mt. Ward/Ghiloni Park area:** The acquisition of Mt. Ward and land next to Evergreen Cemetery has protected a scenic vista, preserved a wooded landscape, and provided a buffer between the City's Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Sudbury Valley Estates subdivision. This area has an abundance of wildlife and provides a trailhead off Rte. 20. which connects the Indian Hill conservation area and the Mt. Ward trail system along the Panther trail.

Current Need:

- The acquisition of the small abutting undeveloped parcels within this area should be protected through well-planned open space developments, conservation restrictions, easements, or fee.



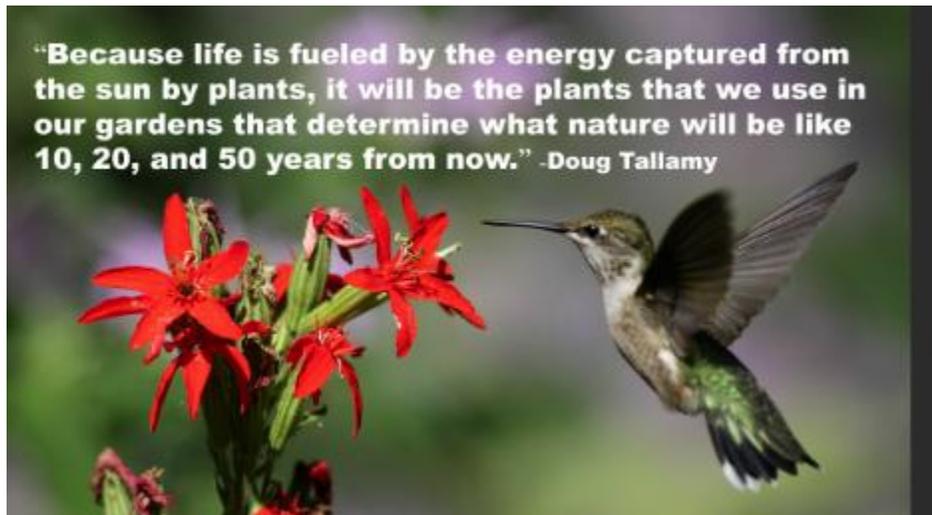
Autumn in the Desert – photo Karin Paquin

c. **Assabet River area:** Development continues along the Assabet River corridor in Marlborough behind land on Donald Lynch Boulevard. This area is zoned for business and has the necessary infrastructure to support planned growth and was rezoned in 2024 to include multifamily housing as well as business use.

Current need: Because the river is such a significant recreational and scenic resource, the Open Space and Recreation Committee recommends that:

- development proposals incorporate a greenway corridor along the river that allows for walking trails and/or protects the scenic view from the river for boaters. This corridor should be protected through a conservation restriction, deed restriction, or other easement or agreement. This will be much used if housing is allowed in this district in the future.
- The Hillside School property on the north side of Robin Hill Street and southeast of the Assabet River should also be considered for conservation restrictions. This area is one of the few remaining roadway corridors within the City having a rural scenic appearance. Some type of long-term protection agreement on the Hillside School property should be sought to benefit both the City and the school and the river.

d. **Flagg Swamp/ Ft. Meadow Reservoir area:** Flagg swamp is the headwaters to Ft. Meadow Reservoir. Flagg Brook is one of the few brooks in the City containing native brook trout due to the cool and clean nature of this stream. **Protection of this large wetland and its stream systems is extremely important to the protection of water quality within Ft. Meadow Reservoir.** Over the years this recreational lake has experienced invasive weed growth. If non-point sources of pollution are not controlled, the water quality of the lake may be jeopardized.



Current needs:

- The protection of all parcels within this area should be a priority either through acquisition or well-planned open space development and conservation restrictions.
- Abutting The Grove on the other side of the lake is a parcel which is land locked next to the lake and behind Walmart. This parcel should also be protected in perpetuity to help protect the lake. The town of Hudson may acquire land just north of this, so a larger open space north of The Grove will enhance the wildlife protection of this area.
- The land at the end of Blaiswood Avenue, currently owned by Boston Scientific, has important value to water quality protection and cooling of the lake. It should be protecting in full or in part through acquisition, CR, or other restriction if developed. As a cold-water fishery, cold groundwater from this site will be critical to protection of this resource.

e. **Sudbury Reservoir/Callahan State Park & Indian Hill:** Sudbury Reservoir and Callahan State Park provide hundreds of acres to the City's open space. These two parks are part of the Bay Circuit Trail, which is a nearly continuous trail of green space, which loops 200-230 miles from Plum Island on the North Shore, southwest around Boston and then down to Duxbury on the South Shore. Connections from Indian Hill also provide residents with another access point to these properties.

Current need:

- Finalize an MOA with DCR to manage trails through the Sudbury Reservoir Property and through Callahan State Park. Continue to work with DCR on maintaining these trails and improve access to this valuable resource.
- Work with Indian Hill Condominiums to improve trail access to Callahan State Park across trail

easement.

- Continue to work with Mass Parks for All – Friends of Callahan State Park group for regional trail improvements and coordination with City trails.

f. Holts Grove/Stevens Street: With the protection of additional acres around Holts Grove from the Water's Edge Development, there remains one large undeveloped portion of this maze of properties along Red Spring Rd. that needs protection in some form, CR, acquisition, or cooperative protection plan.

Current need:

- A portion of the last remaining undeveloped land on Red Spring Rd. is of high priority for protection, to provide protection to the lake from further development in the watershed, as well as providing much-needed open space in this densely developed portion of the community. Only the portion which is not developed into house lots is of interest to the City.
- The parcel owned by the city on Stevens St. next to the cemetery is to be managed by the Recreation Dept. but is used for other uses. The use of this property should be evaluated, defined and protected as park land, or conservation land, or other city recreation use.

g. Millham Brook/Glen/Millham Reservoir Street: The section of Millham Brook, which flows from Lake Williams to Rt. 20, will need to be addressed to protect the water quality of Millham Reservoir.

Current need:

- Since this water corridor is also prone to flooding, ways to improve flood storage or nature-based stormwater solutions should be considered.
- A discussion with the water department at DPW should be held to determine if a legal trail system can be made around Millham Reservoir as a recreational amenity without compromising water quality. The area is quite beautiful and would provide another beautiful area for citizens to enjoy. In addition, allowed uses usually deter illegal uses, which could be a benefit.
- Water quality in this corridor should be reviewed with each new development to ensure it is meeting the highest water quality standards.

h. South St. Swamp: The South St. Swamp itself is currently protected under the Wetlands Protection Act MGL 131 s.40 & 4A, therefore, the swamp itself already receives protection and would not be a priority acquisition. However, the full 80 acres north of Shoestring Hill and South St. Swamp has not yet been developed and would provide a buffer and open space area for residents and would preserve a large area of the City to help combat climate change, provide important wildlife habitat and continue to improve water quality to the Sudbury Reservoir a backup water source. Its steep slopes and glacial till silty soils have precluded development in the past, but as development pressure on all lands continues, these large tracts of land may someday be developed.

Current need:

- Protection of Shoestring hill and South Street swamp in whole or in part is recommended with an eye to how it can connect to Jericho Hill and South St. and Ward Park.
- Protect this area as a large continuous parcel for climate change, wildlife corridor, and an important conservation/passive recreational area for our ever-growing City.
- Protect this 80-acre parcel to protect the Sudbury Reservoir Watershed, seek assistance from regional land trusts, DCR and MWRA as it is in their interest also to protect this land for water quality.

i. **Howe Pond:** Howe Pond and the land surrounding it was purchased for watershed protection and conservation purposes and should remain a protected area. However, the pond offers wildlife viewing opportunities. Additional land has been acquired around it for open space purposes. A trail from Bigelow St. to Berlin Rd. is part of the City's Panther/and Borough's loop trail which runs through this property and provides great wildlife viewing.

Current need:

- Continued maintenance of this trail and invasive plant management in this area to preserve the unique habitat of Howe Pond.
- Continue to monitor for beaver activity to ensure sewer main manholes remain above water level.
- Look at ways to connect the property to the school at end of Lock Dr. for their outdoor exploration.

j. **All water ways** - Since, waterways and water bodies are the life giving feature to our landscape, reestablishing the stream team monitoring program in 2027 to evaluate all our waterways and water bodies as was done in 2020.

Current need:

- Establish a new stream team to monitor streams
- While doing a visual observation of these areas, this monitoring could include water quality testing for salt or other parameters as is feasible. Contact OARS to learn about their water quality monitoring program and learn from them.

3. Community Needs:

The OSRC looked at the community as a whole and not just its conservation and recreation parts exclusively. The goal of making the City a more livable, healthier, environmentally balanced and walkable community lead the committee to add this section on community connections which includes a number of initiatives from trails, community gardens and native pollinator gardens, to walking school buses which are all described in more below and within this document. Some are established, some are ideas ready to be implemented, and some are just ideas to pursue:

- A. Intercommunity trail systems:** A goal established by the OSRC was to ensure that every resident of the community could, within a 10-minute walk from their homes, find a connection to a park, open space or trail system. This idea builds on the **Boroughs Loop trail** and **Panther**

trail that were opened 2019 and 2022 respectively. The Marlborough Trails Committee under the wing of the Conservation Commission have been constructing and maintaining this trail network (now 50+ miles) and build on reasonable connections to this trail.

Current need:

- Ongoing maintenance needs to be a priority for City trails to remain enjoyable and safe.
- **Sidewalk Connections** - Throughout the City, there are locations where adding one sidewalk or small connections to existing sidewalks will help provide walking access from neighborhoods to recreation and conservation areas and enhancing Marlborough’s walkability. Figure 1 below illustrates how a short section of sidewalk on Concord Rd. will allow several large neighborhoods that have sidewalks to connect to Ghiloni Park recreation area by means of a walking path. Currently Concord Road is narrow and does not provide for safe walking passage, especially for children or parents with baby strollers. The OSRC recommends exploring the City sidewalk map to find other areas where a short section of sidewalk could open up a huge area for safer walking connections.



Figure 1 - blue streets have sidewalks green street Concord Rd does not.

B. Complete Streets Program – in 2015 the City adopted the Complete Streets program which requires the City to review all street projects to include sidewalks, bike lanes and make connections to encourage pedestrian and bike friendly roadways where feasible. This policy has helped guide the City to a more pedestrian friendly landscape; where feasible all roadway reconstruction projects have added sidewalks, bike lanes and accessible accommodations at crosswalks where the City had the land to accommodate this. These efforts should continue.

Many state grants require these accommodations as well.



Figure 2

- C. Mountain Bike Trail Map:** The OSRC discussed a proposed mountain bike trail to connect Callahan State Park with the Desert Conservation Land. This trail is still to be mapped but could include existing sewer lines on land the City owns and manages as well as some roadways and other conservation trail connections. One such idea is between Rte. 20 and Mt. Ward entrance on Langelier Ln, but trail improvements would be needed to accommodate mountain bikes.
- D. Walking trails through industrial and office parks:** During the lunch hour there are many people walking and jogging along Forest St., Crane Meadow Rd.; Cedar Hill St; Ames St., Nickerson Rd. and Hayes Memorial Drive. Additional sidewalks and trail connections to the current Panther trail loop should be planned over time so both residents and business owners and their employees have a nice place to walk and jog. Connections to the nearest trails should always be a goal when the city is reviewing new or redeveloped properties.
- E. Healthy Schools Program:** Over the years the Healthy Schools program has developed the Safe Routes to School Walking School Bus program. This program allows parents to put their kids in the walking school bus line rather than driving to school. More than 1000 students have participated over the years. **Maps #8 & #10** illustrates the walking school bus routes used. With changes in school bus availability in 2025-2026 more of these routes will be developed in coming years as more students will be walking to school. These alternative modes will help to make Marlborough residents healthier and protect the environment. The walking school bus is dependent on parent participation, some years are more engaged than others, but this should be encouraged

Current need:

- The OSRC recommends that the City through the schools and healthy schools program look at all connections to schools to ensure that there are sidewalks and where feasible provide additional connections through neighborhoods. Transportation Improvement Program funding can be made available to build connections as needed as well. A map of these potential connections should be generated to help plan for the future.
- Create path connection from Rte. 20 to Kane School and Phelps St. (to be funded by 339 Boston Post Rd. project- 2025-2026).



F. Community Gardens: One City community garden at the Mello Family Meadow/ Cider Knoll property on Stow Rd. was opened up in 2012 and is very active and fully subscribed. Additional community gardens closer to the center of the City and on the western side of the City would provide gardening opportunities for many who might not be able to travel to the Stow Rd. location. The private owners of Spring Hill Farm on Broadmeadow Rd. have also provided opportunities for gardening for residents as a private offering.

Current need:

- The OSRC recommends that several locations be pursued, funding found and that community gardens be set up for the benefit and use of its citizens. Several of the condominium and apartment complexes provide this amenity to their residents, but there are many more that do not. This would be a great asset to the community and will be pursued. Possible locations to consider are:
 - a. Stevens St. Land
 - b. Schools or parks

G. Dog Park: Dog owners expressed much interest in establishing a dog park in the city. One was built at Ghiloni Park at end of 2024 and will be opened once a friend's group is identified who can help manage the dog park as has been done successfully in other communities.

Current need:

- The need for a City dog park has been identified. A community group of interested residents is being assembled to be the friends' group for the park, as other successful dog parks in other communities based their success on the friends' group which sets rules and collectively enforces them. (as of January 2026, this has been achieved)

In 2016 E.O. Wilson wrote a book called [Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life](#). In that book was a promise: if we protect half the Earth's land and sea and manage sufficient habitat to safeguard the bulk of [biodiversity](#), living Earth can continue to breathe.

*[Half-Earth](#) aims to solve a problem, what Wilson calls "the next big thing." **The problem we need to turn our attention to beyond the changing climate is the loss of the very fabric of our planet, the loss of biodiversity.***

H. Habitat improvement and Native Plants/Pollinator protection: To ensure that ½ the land (whether public or private) in Marlborough has habitat to support native birds, bugs, animals and natural functions and to ensure that all new developments are "returning some land" to its more natural native plant environment to both become more ecologically balanced and more resilient to climate changes the following should be done.

Current needs:

- Form a native pollinator review and implementation committee who can help build native pollinator gardens on city property, encourage residents to convert lawn areas to productive pollinator habitat, and to review and encourage native plantings on all new developments
- Develop language to be incorporated into the city's Site Plan and Landscaping ordinances to encourage native pollinator landscapes.
- Determine funding sources to promote new "native habitat areas".
- Establish on-going maintenance protocols for city and private properties to reduce herbicide and pesticide use. Including roadside spraying.
- Encourage large private properties with large lawn areas to convert some of these expansive areas to native plant meadows, or native trees to help sustain wildlife and pollinators, while still providing aesthetically pleasing green spaces on their properties.
- Here is a link to some great websites for information [MCA Native Pollinator Taskforce \(Bumble Bee Project\) | Sudbury Valley Trustees](#) ;
- Consider adding a sensory pollinator garden with smell and texture for those with reduced or lost senses.

I. Urban Tree Canopy Preservation and Development/ Street Tree Program improvement:

Trees provide such an important infrastructure to our world and to our city. They provide oxygen, convert carbon dioxide, capture carbon, infiltrate water, create shade and cooling, improve human health, provide habitat to numerous birds, insects, and all types of animals which help to keep our city ecologically balanced. One suggested measure to ensure "equitable nature access" for all living things within a city is to adopt a policy similar to the 3-30-300 rule used in Denmark which is illustrated here.

The **3-30-300 rule** offers benchmarks for cities to promote equitable nature access. It dictates that individuals should see 3 trees from their dwelling, have 30 % tree canopy in their neighborhood, and live within 300 m (1000 Ft) of a high-quality green space.

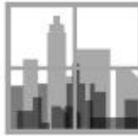
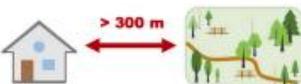
3	 Trees visible \geq 3	 Trees visible $<$ 3
30	 Canopy coverage \geq 30%	 Canopy coverage $<$ 30%
300	 From green space \leq 300 m	 From green space $>$ 300 m
	Met	Not met

Fig. 1. 3-30-300 recommends that everyone should be able to see at least 3 trees from their residence, workplace, or place of learning; have at least 30 % tree canopy cover in their neighborhood; and live within 300-m of a high-quality public green space (at least 0.5 ha in size) (Konijnendijk, 2021).

By instituting a similar guidance or requirement for all new and redeveloped properties and encouraging existing homeowners and large business landowners to do the same, the city can begin to reach this healthy city living criteria.

Current need:

- Establish a tree/ native plantings committee to help guide this initiative and develop regulations.
- Develop a city-wide tree inventory for street and public trees and develop a plan to maintain, replace and add trees to create canopies over all streets and in parks and playgrounds.
- Work with Tree Warden to ensure all street trees that are dead or dying are replaced.
- Advocate for street tree and pollinator planting funding through grant opportunities, civic organizations, City budget etc. to install new plantings and maintain older plantings.
- Establish city ordinance to ensure all new developments are meeting new planting requirements.

j. Historic and Cultural Resource protection and education-

The Historic Commission should identify important historic landscapes and develop a plan to enhance those historic landscapes and protect historic properties within the city.

Current need:

- Develop review and protection regulations for older historic properties that can guide the building department
- Investigate funding opportunities to improve and enhance historic structures and features in the city
- Preserve old farm/agricultural fields and these are “historic landscapes” which lend history to the community.
- Explore stonewall protections
- Create Historic “driving map” similar to the Museum in the Streets® to show off the history of the city.

k. Overall Open Space Protection

As the city continues to grow and become more populated, the city must plan and establish criteria to set aside land for protection in relation to the size of the development. By planning to set aside open space each time a development is approved, the city will ensure that the quality of life for its residents remains high, and the city continues to be a place people want to live, work and play. The quality-of-life open spaces provide is hugely important to helping the city adapt to a changing climate. Open spaces as outlined throughout this document, provides clean air, filtering water, reducing flooding, returning water to the ground, cooling areas by 10 degrees, provide wind breaks during storm events, protect wildlife habitat for shelter and food, i human health improves with open spaces whether just looking at it or walking through it- these are but of few of the many natural services open spaces provide to our world.

Current need:

- OSR committee working with MEDC and other departments needs to propose criteria to maintain the building/development and open space protection balance, whether set aside of land by the developer or transfer development rights or propose ordinance changes, or other means or combination of methods.
- Work to protect the parcels of land that are important to the city health and prosperity (as outlined in other parts of this document)
- OSR committee presents proposal to Mayor and City Council to develop standards, regulations, ordinances or rules needed to accomplish this land protection

By planning to set aside open space each time a development is approved, the city will ensure that the city continues to be a healthy, enjoyable and desirable place people want to live, work and play.

E. Management Needs, Potential Change in Use:

One of the greatest achievements made since 2011 has been better management of recreation and conservation facilities and providing high quality recreation programs to the community. However, more

management and signage are needed for conservation lands and more education to residents about recreation and conservation resources that exist and are available is need. The following section identifies the management needs for both these departments to improve the services they provide to the City.

1. Recreation Facilities Management:

As noted above the greatest achievement made over the past years has been the better management of the City's recreation facilities. The current and successful management practices for all recreation facilities have included:

1. Better turf management rotating and resting fields for a season to rejuvenate them
2. Purchasing new and better equipment for more effective management
3. Staff training on best turf management practices
4. Establishing maintenance schedules for all fields
5. Enlisting local neighborhood/ sports groups in the planning, maintenance and management of these facilities where appropriate.
6. Ensuring all playground equipment has some handicapped accessibility options.
7. Field areas that don't need to be mowed regularly can be managed for "native habitat meadows" in order to improve pollinator habitat. (done at Jericho Hill)
8. It is recommended by the OSRP to work with Recreation Dept. to see if any of the other City's recreation land edges or areas would be conducive to small low maintenance native habitat meadow plantings.

It was agreed that these management practices and procedures should be continued and documented to ensure that the positive results that have been achieved thus far are not lost as staff or administrations change.

Finally, the Open Space and Recreation Committee recommends that the Recreation Department continue to develop programs which encourage citizens of all age groups, socioeconomic groups and abilities to make use of the community's many facilities and resources. The current program offerings cover many age groups and serve the community well. The Recreation Department should continue to evaluate needs as population demographics change and continue to add new programs and adjust facilities to accommodate those needs. A list of the programs offered can be found in appendix B.



Doug Tallamy

2. Conservation Land Management:

Eight large and prominent parcels of land have been acquired and developed over the years for conservation purposes. These are the Felton Conservation Land, the Holts Grove parcel, the Desert Conservation Land, Cider Knoll, Mt. Ward, The Grove, Indian Hill, and the City/state forest next to Ghiloni Park. Six additional properties managed by DPW, Recreation, DCR and private restrictions also now have trails on them with an agreement between these entities and the Conservation Commission these include: Lake Williams (DPW), Jericho Hill (Recreation), Sheep Falls Brook (Boston Scientific), Sudbury Reservoir (DCR), Howe Pond (DPW), and Millham Reservoir (DPW). These properties all have trails and are actively managed throughout the year by the Marlborough Trails Committee. Bringing the total number of properties with trails to 14. During the summer months interns are hired whose sole responsibility is to manage the City's conservation land. The practice of hiring summer interns should continue since trail maintenance demands are very high during the summer months. Brochures, trail maps and kiosks, with rules and regulations, have been placed at all conservation lands within these trail networks. These will continue to be updated as new trail connections are provided and as new parcels are acquired, and trail systems developed.

Parking facilities are available at all the conservation lands. In some cases, it is a formal parking lot created, in other cases parking is provided on a roadway or a cul-de-sac. As new parcels are acquired, trail connections and parking areas will be constructed/ defined.

The trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective.

Exactly how they do this, we don't yet know.

But what we see is the power of unity.

What happens to one happens to us all.

We can starve together or feast together.

-Robin Wall Kimmerer-

The Conservation Commission has formed an active volunteer network called the “Marlborough Trails Committee” which organizes monthly trail maintenance workdays as well as monthly guided walks This promotes the wonderful natural resource assets and encourages local citizens to become better stewards of these natural areas. This OSRP recommends this be continued.

A local farmer mows the fields of the Felton Conservation Land under a license agreement. Eagle Scout candidates have built many of the Commission’s trails, kiosks, bridges, and benches for conservation lands. These volunteer efforts should continue as they are extremely valuable to providing safe trails for citizen use. All these volunteers provide invaluable service to Marlborough and should be recognized and commended on the Conservation social media and webpages.

A management plan and stewardship committee has already been developed for The Desert Conservation land. This is a unique effort in that the management of this area is a cooperative effort between the town of Sudbury, City of Marlborough, Federation of Women's Clubs, the Sudbury Valley Trustees, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Recreation (DCR). This group continues to meet annually to discuss management issues as they arise and ensures that problems are addressed promptly. The unique pitch pine scrub oak forest also garners state Natural Heritage and Endangered Species attention, as they encourage this cooperative management strategy for habitat protection.

Several parcels of land identified through the inventory process as owned by the City have never been assigned for management purposes to any particular department. These parcels are identified as municipal "other" in the inventory matrix in chapter 5 and should be designated to a particular City department for management. This will ensure that all City-owned land is accounted for and being managed appropriately. These parcels are shown as "Municipal unprotected on map #6"; some are assigned managers, and some are not.

If these management recommendations are implemented the City's residents will be better served and conservation land better protected.

3. Handicapped Access Inventory - ADA- Section 504 Self-Evaluation

The ADA self-evaluation was performed for all recreation and conservation facilities in the city. Below is a brief summary of the conservation and recreation properties, noting any areas where improvements are needed and the importance of making more comfortable and safer properties, trails and programs for handicapped residents and visitors. It also includes information on the City's administrative and employment practices. A meeting was held with the Marlborough Disabilities Commission during drafting of the project to review the OSRP. Overall, the Commission noted that better surfaces, not bark mulch, at playgrounds would make our playgrounds more accessible. They also assessed the Lake Williams Boardwalk and provided recommendations on improvements to that facility, so it is more accessible. Several recommendations which came from the evaluation of the facilities were listed in the report which is available through the Recreation or Conservation departments.

ADA Self-Evaluation Information for the Recreation Department

The mission of the Recreation Department is to provide affordable quality recreational opportunities and safe recreational programs and facilities for all its residents and school children. Over the past 10 years all playgrounds have been upgraded to include accessibility for handicapped residents including transition platforms for play equipment, in; most cases handicapped swings and height appropriate facilities have been added. In addition, both recreation buildings, the one at Concord Road and the other at Jericho Hill on Brigham Street, have been upgraded to be accessible to the public, with access walkways. Jericho hill building has an elevator to access the second floor. An accessible parking and walkway area was added to Memorial beach with an access ramp to the water. Some upgrades to playgrounds ground treatment are recommended to make them more accessible.

Overall, however, the City Recreation Department and DPW Forestry, Parks and Cemetery department have done an amazing job getting all the playground equipment and facilities up to ADA standards. All new playgrounds or upgrades to existing facilities must meet the current standards for accessibility.

ADA Self-Evaluation Information for the Conservation Department

All conservation lands have natural woods trails which follow the natural terrain. Some have bridges to cross wetlands or boardwalks to get over wet marshy areas. Some have small steps to provide access up slopes. Most have gravel parking lots leading to trails. Only The Grove was designed specifically to be handicapped accessible. The ten-year action plan recommends investigating the City's trail system to determine if some of the City's conservation land trails could be made to be more handicapped accessible and user friendly to all age groups and abilities.

Section 8

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Create an action plan with measurable results and a process to promote and review progress. Provide public progress reports.

Goal 2: Protect and enhance the City's natural resources- air, water, land, and provide connectivity among them for both people and other living things for current and future generations.

Objectives:

- A. Preserve and protect the City's back up drinking water supplies through the proper management of Lake Williams, Millham Reservoir, and Sudbury Reservoir and their respective watersheds.
- B. Preserve and protect watersheds to wetland and water resource areas including rivers, streams, and ponds.
- C. Preserve and protect wildlife, wildlife habitats and corridors and maintain and enhance biodiversity.
- D. Preserve and protect other natural areas particularly those of unique features-hilly topography, scenic meadows, wetlands, wooded areas.
- E. Acquire, expand, and enhance existing and new open space lands with related easements and conservation restrictions.
- F. Provide educational materials, signage, workshops for the public and schools to help protect and enhance our Natural Resources as identified in A, B, C and D above.
- G. Preserve and protect the air quality of our City by developing a policy to buy hybrid vehicles, strictly enforce no-idling laws, promote tree planting and other measures to improve air quality.
- H. Continue to connect walking trails and bike trails with open spaces and shops/services to provide non-motorized means of transportation.

Goal 3: Protect the biodiversity of local plants and animals while maximizing passive recreation for people, where feasible, for current and future generations.

Objectives

- A. Promote, develop, and update management plans for all conservation land and land with conservation restrictions including maintenance schedules. These plans must include an inventory of habitat areas and invasive plant species.
- B. Develop land management plans for all recreational lands to determine if the non-active recreation portions of these parcels can help to promote and protect biodiversity.
- C. Review all City owned land to determine if any or some portion of the properties may have value for biodiversity and manage it accordingly.

Goal 4: Provide quality recreational facilities and adequate recreational opportunities for all City

residents, including diverse populations and ensure it is encompassing diversity of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and languages. For all areas of City for both passive and active recreation.

Objectives

- A. Continue to implement and update management plans for all active recreational facilities including maintenance schedules. (Including field resting.)
- B. Ensure that programs provided by the City give opportunities for all age groups and abilities, including handicap accessibility as feasible. Recreation programs should be available for all age groups from toddlers to seniors.
- C. Promote, develop, and update management plans for all conservation land and land with Conservation Restrictions including maintenance schedules. This plan must include inventories of habitat areas, invasive species inventories, trail use/maintenance issues and when trails need to be fixed or retired.
- D. Take advantage of funding programs for acquisition and adequate maintenance of recreational facilities and open space parcels. Expand recreational facilities and conservation land as needed to meet community needs.
- E. Develop an intra-community trail system to link all open spaces and recreation lands together.
- F. Continue to develop and connect with intercommunity trail systems to take advantage of shared resources in neighboring communities.
- G. Establish a responsive system for ongoing community feedback about trash, graffiti, and other issues at any city facilities and open spaces.
- H. Assure all-City residents have ready access to open space, recreation and natural areas.
- I. Respond to the expressed public preferences by providing a greater variety and expansion of recreational and shared community facilities.

Goal 5: Preserve the character, historic, and cultural resources of the community.

Objectives

- A. Develop a City-wide plan for encouraging agricultural and open space use of land.
- B. Preservation and enhancement of local historic landscapes, especially those that complement local historic structures, and preserve natural landscapes to protect the viewshed from and to those historic structures.
- C. Provide a funding source to help promote land acquisition, historic preservation and the development of recreation facilities.

Goal 6: Promote and develop regional open space and recreational opportunities, especially through the connectivity of walking and biking trail systems.

Objectives

- A. Work with adjacent communities to understand their open space and recreation needs and coordinate the purchase and development of conservation and recreation land acquisitions, trails and recreational facilities as appropriate.
- B. Promote the development of regional bicycle/pedestrian paths for transportation and recreation

purposes.

C. Continue to work with state agencies, local land trusts, and adjacent communities to create corridors, expand and protect parks, forest, and conservation land and facilities in the City and on the municipal boundaries.

Goal 7: Engage and educate community citizens in preserving and maintaining open space, recreation and natural resource areas throughout the City to promote a healthy environment for humans and wildlife alike, and in doing so help curb climate change.

Objectives

- A. Provide educational materials to help educate citizens about open spaces and recreation resources.



On a hike together

- B. Promote neighborhood involvement and responsibility by creating a stewardship program.
- C. Engage schools, public and private, youth groups and scouts, in knowing about our biodiversity, natural history, and human history of the City.
- D. Promote and enforce carry-in carry-out policy.
- E. Continue to support the Marlborough Trails Committee (who do all trail maintenance- for 50 miles of trails within the city)

Goal 8: Promote the public and private recreational resources and events including private skating rinks, Apex Center, Labor Day parade, food and music festivals, to name a few. These are a source of community pride, entertainment and fun for the City.

Objectives:

- A: Initiate collaborations with local industries and businesses around shared planning and use of recreational and public space opportunities for people who work in the city in addition to those who reside here.
- B. Promote private recreation opportunities to city residents

Section 9

TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The following is a list of actions necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the Open Space and Recreation Plan outlined in section 8. All of these items have been described in depth throughout this document, especially in section 7. Map #10 is a visual illustration of the key action items of this 10-year action plan. The first part is a summary of the 10-Year Action Plan highlights at a quick glance. The chart that follows outlines all the individual actions that need to be taken to meet the goals and objectives listed in section 8.

10 Year Action Plan Highlights - Below are the highlights of the action plan chart for easy reference. Details on each of these are found within the chart below.

Conservation:

Priority parcels to protect in whole or in part- including the use of conservation restrictions, open space developments, agricultural preservation restrictions, and other methods::

- South Street Swamp and Shoestring Hill
 - Property abutting Ft. Meadow Reservoir next to The Grove
 - Boston Scientific parcel abutting Ft. Meadow Reservoir and Blaiswood Ave
 - Remaining parcel on Red Spring Rd.
 - Private parcels north of Robin Hill Street
 - Parcels along North Branch brook and Millham Brook (off Elm St.) for watershed protection and wildlife corridor.
 - Mauro parcel on Hemenway St. (under Ch. 61A)
 - Boston Scientific Parcels on the South side of ARRT path.
 - Evaluate all Ch. 61 & 61A parcels annually
- All farms—the goal is to keep these farms working-
 - Riano Farm – South St.
 - Houde Tree Farm- Berlin Rd.
 - Gulbankian fields

Priority actions:

- Make Conservation land more accessible:
 - Investigate ways to make more accessible trails on other parcels similar to The Grove.
 - Better advertise and let residents know about open space opportunities to explore

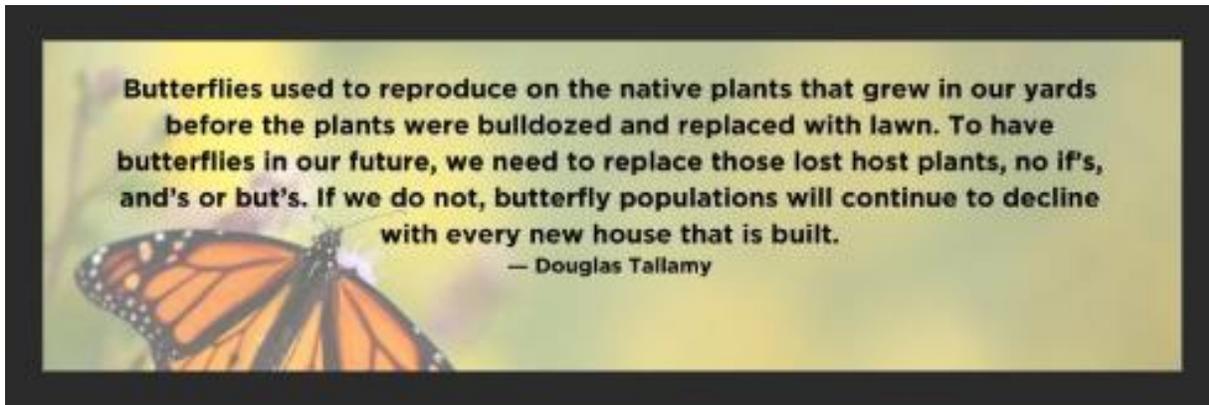
Recreation:

Priority projects-

- Development of a park/recreational facility at the old Hudson Street Landfill (opening spring 2026)
- Develop and expand existing recreational park areas and identify those areas that need improvements such as field upgrades, parking lot improvements, building shade structures, planting trees, and improving playground equipment
- Add parks to neighborhoods that don't have play areas within walking distance
- Aggressively pursue state and/or private grant funds for improvements to recreation facilities
- Construct a new wading pool at Ward Park to replace the existing wading pool
- Construct a new wading pool at Hildreth School to replace the existing wading pool
- Finding space to construct a Frisbee Golf

Other Community projects

- Community Gardens- possible locations to look into:
 - Look into Downtown location.
 - Look into a location on the west side of the city.
- Making the city more walkable-
 - Improve Walking School bus routes
 - Continue to make more connections with bike path trails and sidewalks to downtown and other destinations.
 - Walking and jogging trails through campuses of the industrial park area to make that more attractive to workers and to interconnect so workers don't have to walk on streets.
 - Explore idea of Trails around DCR filter beds & signage
 - Complete Streets map to be produced for sidewalk locations/ on road biking / develop bike lane map for future roadway improvements. This will be helpful for future bike rental/share facilities)
- Look at existing municipal land to see if it can ALSO be managed to provide trails, or wildlife habitat (no acquisition cost to the city) i.e.:
 - Trails along utility line – sewer and water takings that connect neighborhoods and parks
- Water Quality Improvement Projects.
 - Stream Team volunteers – survey all streams in 2027-2030- include water quality testing if funding permits.
 - Continue to replace missing Storm drain markers with volunteers- scouts
 - Continue Stormwater (MS4) education projects
- Stewardship
 - Continue to support Marlborough Trails Committees
 - Develop Marlborough Trail Committee webpage
 - Add long range trails to All Trails and other frequently used apps and social media outlets.



Goal 1

Create an action plan with measurable results and a process to promote and review progress. Provide public progress reports

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Establish an ongoing Open Space and Recreation Committee that can meet four times a year to review progress of implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Subcommittees can be formed to advance certain tasks. Membership must include a representative from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic Commission, Recreation Commission, DPW and citizen representation.	May 2026 establish committee.	\$ none	
2. Open Space and Recreation Committee should review the task list quarterly and adjust timetables as needed to keep the plan on task and ensure implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set firm timelines by end of 2026 	Committee should meet 4x/year to assess progress on the plan	\$ none	
3. Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan	2031 by staff and committee and if possible, a consultant	\$ city budget for consultant	
2. Provide Map #6, 7 & 10 to City Council, Site Plan Review, Planning Board, Conservation Commission,	OSRC to provide map 2026 once	City budget	

Recreation Department, Dept. of Public Works, and MEDC to be used in reviewing plans and when doing long range planning projects within the city to ensure, where feasible, that wildlife corridors and open space and recreation links are protected.	plan is final. OSRC ongoing review of all projects		
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Goal 2

Protect and enhance the city's natural resources- air, water, land, and provide connectivity among them for both people and other living things for current and future generations.

Goal 2, Objective A: Preserve and protect the City's back up drinking water supplies through the proper management of Lake Williams, Millham Reservoir, and Sudbury Reservoir and their respective watersheds.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>Millham Reservoir/Lake Williams 1.Acquire parcels, conservation easements and/or ongoing protection of parcels within the watershed of Millham Reservoir and Lake Williams to ensure greater protection of this backup water supply.</p> <p>a. Marlborough Fish and Game – ensure ongoing open space status- ensure it remains in 61B or is protected in some way. Continue to check in periodically with them.</p> <p>b. Agricultural fields on Williams St. – Jackson Farm</p>	2026 and ongoing.	City funds, state grants, mitigation/ public private partnership or as part of open space development	
<p>2.The city DPW and Conservation Commission must work with Mass Highway/DOT to institute a reduced road salt use policy within:</p> <p>a. The I-495 and Rte. 20 highway sections, which drain to the Lake Williams and Millham Reservoir watersheds.</p>	<p>2026 <i>send inquiry to Mass Highway</i></p> <p>2027 have policy in place and follow up with Mass Highway on implementation.</p>	\$ None	

<p>b. Sudbury Reservoir area c. through out the city to protect all waterways and wetlands, ponds and lakes – set up monitoring program</p>	<p>Conservation Commission work with DPW to monitor salt</p>		
<p>3. The city DPW and Conservation Commission must work with MassDOT to develop a treatment and containment system along the section of Rte. 20 that abuts Lake Williams from Williams St. to the I-495 interchange, to ensure that any spills or accidents on Rte. 20 can be contained before entering Lake Williams.</p>	<p>Discussions with Mass Highway Work on design and funding in 2026</p>	<p>State and city funds</p>	
<p>4. Sudbury Reservoir Acquire properties and/or conservation easements and work on ongoing protection of land within the Sudbury Reservoir watershed for protection of this back up water supply. a. All large remaining parcels within this watershed are highlighted on Map #7 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gulbankian fields- encourage ongoing open field use under Ch. 61A ● South Street Swamp & Shoestring Hill ● 458 Farm Rd. 84-103 ● Conservation Restriction on City Land map 108-2 to DCR for Easements and to preserve for Open Space, 11 Acers. </p>	<p>2026 and ongoing</p>	<p>City funds, state grants, open space developments and/or public private partnerships, Conservation and Legal staff time</p>	
<p>5. Reactivate the filter beds on Walker St. to help filter out urban runoff before entering Sudbury Reservoir.</p>	<p>DPW and Con Com. will continue discussions with DCR. 2027</p>	<p>City funds, state grants and state funding</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop plans and work with state DCR. b. Develop monitoring program. c. Seek funding to implement plan. d. Implement Plan 			
<p>6. Strongly encourage developers to design subdivisions using the city's open space development ordinance within the drinking water watersheds to save more open space, reduce runoff and improve water quality.</p>	<p>2026 – ongoing Conservation Commission and Planning Board.</p>	<p>\$ None</p>	

Goal 2, Objective B: Preserve and protect watersheds to all wetland and water resource areas including rivers, streams, and ponds.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>Ft. Meadow</p> <p>1. Acquire or protect with restrictions the remaining parcels of land surrounding Ft. Meadow Reservoir for passive recreation and watershed protection purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Red Spring Rd. Property – 10 acre remaining acres near Holts Grove b. Parcel next to The Grove which is land locked. c. parcel at end of Blaiswood Ave next to landfill and bike path owned by Boston Scientific d. Acquire or protect with easement other available open space parcels or portions of parcels as appropriate to protect water quality. (Parcels shown in orange on Map #7) 	<p>2026 Inquire as to status.</p> <p>Provide maps to Planning board and city council and Con. Com</p>	<p>City funds; state grants; public/private partnerships</p>	
<p>3. Continue to have the DPW remove sand/debris from storm drain outlets in the lake during times of winter drawdown of the lake. Continue</p>	<p>2026 and ongoing.</p>	<p>City budget</p>	

catch basins cleaning around the lake support <u>annual</u> cleaning.			
<p>4. Continue to update and mark all storm drains and distribute information annually around the lake in the weed treatment or drawdown notices.</p> <p>a. Set up a system with storm drain cleaner contract to require installation of storm drain markers where they are missing.</p> <p>b. Continue to include educational information in water bills or other city-wide distribution annually.</p> <p>c. continue to notify residents and businesses through the MS4 EPA permit as required.</p>	2026 ongoing Conservation and DPW will work on this ongoing implementation	City budget for materials	
<p>5. Ongoing education at the boat launch to all launch users about cleaning boats before entering and upon leaving the boat launch area to prevent re-infestation of weeds into the lake. Boat launch staff must be educated every summer and be diligent about weed education and removal.</p>	Recreation Commission Con Com and DPW working with Ft. Meadow Commission.	City budget summer interns	
<p>6. Ongoing fliers and workshops should be held for lake owners and landowners throughout the city to educate landowners about “lake & stream Friendly” lawn care and land use practices.</p>	Ft. Meadow Commission, Conservation Commission, DPW	Staff time city budget	
<p>7. Ongoing annual monitoring and treatment as needed of invasive nonnative weed growth in Ft. Meadow Reservoir. Gaps in monitoring could result in huge costs if invasives are not dealt with quickly.</p>	Ongoing – Ft. Meadow Commission	City budget- Ft. Meadow Commission	
<p>Hager Pond</p> <p>8. The city should address the algae and weed problems in the Hager Pond and downstream Hop Brook Pond System by looking at a holistic view of the stream system. This should include:</p>	DPW & MHD/DOT/ FEMA	Private and state funding	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure MassDOT does maintenance of drainage along Rte. 20. b. Work with abutters and state to repair/ remove the dam to preserve the pond OR remove the dam and return the pond to a meadow. d. Investigate grants for dam repair/removal. 	<p>Discussions with abutters</p> <p>City Council and elected officials aware of this potential emergency</p>		
<p>Small ponds, streams, brooks, and wetlands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Stream Team volunteers to revisit streams in 2027 to update stream and water body status. 10. Expand Invasive Plant Species Removal Volunteer groups (weed warriors) to protect native plant growth. 	<p>2027-2028 Conservation Officer Organize volunteers; ask local business to supply identifying T-shirts</p>	<p>none</p>	
<p>11 Continue to fund and support DPW programs for cleaning and removing silt, street sand, fallen leaves and branches when obstructing flow within streams throughout the city.</p>	<p>Mayor, City Council provide funds- DPW to remove silt and street sand.</p>	<p>City budget</p>	
<p>12 Seek passage of a local Wetlands Protection Ordinance / or updated policy which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a larger protected buffer zone around wetlands. b. Protect vernal pool habitats and upland surrounding these pools. c. Provide greater protection to wetlands beyond that provided by the state Wetlands Protection Act. d. Provide greater resilience for the changing climate, 	<p>Conservation commission, working with Planning Board and City Council</p>	<p>none</p>	
<p>13. Ongoing monitoring of construction projects, and education to all landowners throughout the city of Marlborough</p>	<p>Ongoing MS4 permit requires</p>	<p>city budget</p>	

about stormwater and wetlands protection will be an important step in the long-term protection of wetlands.	this education		
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Goal 2, Objective C: Preserve and protect wildlife, wildlife habitats and corridors and maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
Protect through conservation restrictions, open space development planning and/or fee acquisition parcels of open space located within the wildlife habitat areas and corridors shown on Map #5 & 7,	Ongoing – Planning board, Con. Com and City Council	City funds, state grants, public private partnership	
<p>3. Work with local groups to improve habitat areas where appropriate:</p> <p>a. Install bluebird boxes and have them maintained in February in the city open fields at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Old landfill on Bolton St*. ● the capped landfill at the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant. * ● Ghiloni Park track* ● Felton Conservation Land* ● Cider Knoll/Mellow Farm field* ● Jericho Hill ● Along ARRT where there are open fields <p>b. Locate other areas throughout the city on private and public land to determine what types and where additional bird boxes can be installed to improve bird habitat. Encourage homeowners, school programs, scout groups, garden clubs, and retirement communities</p>	2026 ongoing Scouts and School programs, garden clubs and other civic groups have installed bird boxes in many of these areas*. Ongoing maintenance and replacement are key to success.	\$ None	

<p>etc. to install bird boxes as well.</p> <p>c. Explore areas where native pollinator plants can be added, i.e. along the ARRT corridor and similar locations.</p>			
<p>5. Vernal pool inventory and certification</p> <p>a. Work with volunteers and school groups to identify and certify vernal pools.</p> <p>b. Provide educational programs for children and adults about vernal pool protection.</p> <p>c. Once certified, determine program for regular monitoring.</p>	<p>2026 – on going</p> <p>With scouts, volunteers, summer interns and school programs. Certify 2-3 vernal pools per year until complete</p>	<p>\$ None</p>	
<p>5. Invasive species removal on city park and conservation lands.</p> <p>a. Control invasive non-native plant species on city conservation and recreation property.</p> <p>b. Educate and encourage residents to control and remove invasive species on their properties as well. Participate in Weed Warrior program offered by the MetroWest Conservation Alliance (check SVT website) .</p> <p>c. Continue use of goats to remove invasive plants and poison ivy in hard to manage areas.</p>	<p>2026 coordinate and expand existing volunteer groups to help with invasive species removal to preserve existing habitats, do education programs for garden clubs, sports groups and other organizations that should be educated.</p>	<p>City budget</p>	
<p>6. Seek to encourage underground utilities to help protect street trees and protect against damage during storms. By creating a developer funded account to convert existing above ground utility areas to underground.</p>	<p>Planning Board, City Council, Conservation</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>7. Establish a dark sky ordinance to ensure all new developments and redevelopments – both private and municipal are designed to reduce light pollution . (Follow examples of other communities that have established these rules)</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Citizen groups, City Council</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	

Goal 2, Objective D: Preserve and protect other natural areas particularly those of unique features-hilly topography, scenic meadows, wetlands, wooded areas.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Develop a plan for the protection of hilltops and other areas, which provide vistas and scenic views. Development of these areas should consider the impact both from the view out as well as the view in from other hills or roadways. These hilltops and scenic areas are listed in section 4 of the document. These locations are shown on map # 3 and should be provided to the City Council and Planning Board.	2026 provide map to city council and planning board. 2026 ongoing review of projects to ensure protection.	\$ None	
2. Develop a plan for the protection of existing fields and farms, which provide scenic views throughout the city. Work with farmers and current landowners to see how to protect these scenic views. Riano farm, Houde Tree Farm, Felton Conservation Land, Gulbankians fields on Broadmeadow Rd.; Hillside School on Robin Hill St.	2026 distribute a map to the City Council and Planning Board, begin discussions with landowners. Conservation Commission maintain Felton Fields.		
3. Find a location in Marlborough where you can view Boston and add it to the Map#3.			

Goal 2, Objective E: Acquire, expand, and enhance existing and new open space lands and related easements and conservation restrictions.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Work with developers in the preliminary stages of design for all projects to identify appropriate areas for open space protection.	2026 ongoing Conservation, Engineering and MEDC	\$ None	

<p>2. Develop a priority plan for the acquisition or protection through restrictions and or easements of significant parcels of open space, which should be protected, for open space or recreation land. The plan should include acquisitions, conservation restrictions, public/private partnerships etc. Use Map 7 Unprotected parcels and section 5 list of parcels.</p> <p>a. Have the Mayor send a letter to landowners of significant parcels to request status of property.</p> <p>b. Work with regional land trust SVT on prioritization process</p> <p>c. Based on these responses, develop priority target parcels for consideration.</p>	<p>2026 send letters. 2026 make priority list. Work with Regional land trust SVT on prioritization process. Ongoing seek funding for protection program as needed.</p>	<p>\$ None (staff time)</p>	
<p>3. OSR committee needs to propose criteria to work from to maintain the balance between development and open space, whether set aside of land by the developer or transfer development rights or other means or combination of methods.</p> <p>4. Work to protect the parcels of land that are important to the city health and prosperity.</p> <p>5. OSR committee presents proposal to Mayor and City Council to develop standards, regulations, ordinances or rules needed to accomplish this land protection</p>	<p>City council, MEDC, Mayor, Planning Board</p>		

Goal 2, Objective F: Provide educational materials, signage, workshops for the public and schools to help in the protection and enhancement of our Natural Resources as identified in A, B, C and D above.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Continue to update and develop public education programs aimed at publicizing important wildlife habitats and how they can be protected and how humans and wildlife can coexist. Get information from Mass. Fish and Wildlife and distribute as needed on city website, and social media pages, to newspapers, schools, and library. Include this information on the kiosk at the trailheads and post on city web site and on Facebook. And on walks with trails committee,</p>	<p>Summer 2026 ongoing update kiosks Provide articles to newspaper & Facebook posts four times a year.</p>	<p>\$ None-staff time</p>	
<p>2. Encourage and provide education on lawn care maintenance by residents, municipal and businesses to use less water/ less fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticide use. Encourage use of organic alternatives. Promote integrated pest management and encourage the reduction or elimination of chemicals, and hazardous materials from being stored on the premises or used in processing. Work with MS4 communities and use existing educational programs such as: “Think Blue”; work with school and scout groups and social media “<u>Moto</u>: clean water starts at home”.</p> <p>3. Do outreach to Home Depot, Monick Supply and Trombetta as feasible to do education on organic yard care.</p>	<p>2026 Conservation/ DPW Engineering and Water Division & Fort Meadow Commission.</p>	<p>State/private grants</p>	
<p>4. The city is now a Tree City USA city. Ensure continued enrollment. With climate change and hotter summers predicted, increasing trees,</p>	<p>2026 Work with Tree Warden and find volunteers interested in tree inventory</p>	<p>\$ None-staff time May be able to use UEP Grad</p>	

<p>and planting new trees is paramount to a livable city.</p> <p>a. Do an inventory of street trees to develop a database for a street tree replacement program. And an inventory of unusual and champion trees. (See Goal 2 objective G. 4 below)</p> <p>b. Consider a program similar to 3-30-300 rule for number of trees needed within the city for a healthy community. See page 75- of plan for explanation.</p> <p>c. Work to reline streets with trees, especially along Pleasant St.</p>		<p>students for field project to do inventory or other volunteer group.</p>	
<p>5. Revise Planning Board and Site plan Review regulations and ordinances (and other regulations if needed) to promote tree saving methods and requiring the planting of more trees and shrubs, with native varieties. Work with City Council and Mayor on passage of updated ordinance.</p>	<p>2027 - Conservation Officer, City Engineer, Planning Board; Mayor & City Council</p>	<p>Staff time city budget, state grants.</p>	
<p>6. On properties with large lawns, encourage them to naturalize their lawns into a more climate resilient wildflower/ native pollinator meadow, needing less maintenance and little or no watering.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a map of facilities with large lawns. 2. contact large companies with lawns and approach them with information about water saving and naturalizing information. Encourage “wild fields” rather than manicured lawns. 3. Find/develop brochure about “wild fields” post on website. 4. Develop a rewards/recognition system for companies – have MEDC promote them in their newsletter. 5. Work with the Garden Club to increase awareness and access to native plants for local gardeners. 	<p>2026 develop a brochure to promote “wild fields”</p> <p>Conservation Commission provide Do newspaper and TV informational about the need to change to naturalized landscaping</p> <p>2026-2030 follow up with these companies Conservation/ DPW</p> <p>Conservation</p>	<p>\$ None</p>	

7.Continue to explore other innovative methods for reducing water use and improve biodiversity throughout the city.	2026 ongoing work with water dept. Conservation Commission and Garden Clubs	\$ None	
8.Educate residents about Rodenticide use and impacts to birds and wildlife. Encourage other means of control	2026 Work with Board of Health/ Conservation Commission		
9.Work with local civic groups such as Lions Club to seek help with tree planting or matching funds, as this is something these groups are interested in.	Conservation/DPW/civic organizations	Staff time	
10. Work with city projects and roadway projects to ensure only clean loam and fill is used when stabilizing roadsides or constructing projects to ensure non-native invasive plants are not present in the loam and require ongoing monitoring for invasive plants. The city should lead the way on making sure not to spread nonnative invasive plants. Since control costs time and money.	DPW/ Conservation / contract language	Staff time	

Goal 2, Objective G. Preserve and protect the air quality of our city by developing a policy to buy low emissions vehicles, strictly enforce no-idling laws, and promote tree planting and other measures to improve air quality.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Green Communities status requires the community to buy low emissions vehicles as energy efficient “work horse” vehicles at DPW become available they should be purchased.	2026 This is ongoing and required as a green community	\$ None	
2. Enforce no-idling laws- ensure signage is current and visible	2026 ongoing work with Police and School Depts. to ensure signs are still visible	City budget	
3. Promote tree planting See Goal 2, F. 4 for details	2026 OSRC work with DPW and City Council on budgeting tree planting and	City budget	

	replacement		
4. Continue funding complete streets program. Which Promote walkable / bikeable community -create walking trails and walking connections to schools, shopping etc. Promote – walking school bus program; encourage other walking to workplaces etc.	2026 work with City Engineer get periodic updates on progress and projects.;	State grants. City/school staff time	
5. Have an annual Bike Rodeo for informational purposes, to encourage bike riding, to distribute rehabilitated bikes, and to repair bikes.	Recreation Dept	None	
6. Create a bike route map for the city- identifying current bike lanes and future planned bike lanes.	DPW GIS Map	Staff time	

Goal 2, Objective H. Continue to connect walking trails and bike trails with open spaces and shops/services to provide non-motorized means of transportation.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Review map #8 of Intercommunity trail links a. Prioritize easily implemented trails and connections on city owned land and begin construction. b. Identify other connections that need easements etc. prioritize list and begin investigating feasibility and acquiring connections. Both natural woods trails, and sidewalk connections c. Build new trail connections.	2026 - ongoing Conservation Staff and Trails Committee along with Legal dept.	State trails grant; private public partnership; staff time; mass trails grants	
2. Continue to work with ARRT Inc. and abutting communities to promote the ARRT connection through Stow -so the trail from Marlborough reaches the Acton Train Station.	2026 ongoing Conservation Officer work with ARRT Inc. and steering committee	\$ None Staff time	
3. Work with walking school bus program to ensure that easy connections can be made to help connect neighborhoods to schools with walking trails, sidewalks etc. Create GIS map of walking school	Healthy Schools Program; GIS	\$ None Staff time; State DLT technical assistance	

bus routes and keep updated annually as needed			
4. Millham Reservoir watershed land. Investigate the ability to add passive recreation walking and skiing trails around this reservoir watershed.	Conservation and OSRC work with DPW. 2026-2027	\$ staff time,	
5. Lake Williams watershed land. Continue to monitor and upgrade the walking trail around Lake Williams and the floating boardwalk. Balancing water quality requirements – which come first, with recreational enjoyment (a secondary benefit of this watershed)	DPW / Conservation ongoing	Staff time	
6. Add additional parking lots near Lake Williams to accommodate the visitors who use the boardwalk (since the courthouse parking is off limits)	DPW 2026-2026	City budget/grant funding	
7. Plan for resurfacing of all or sections of the ARRT as needed – a few sections need replacement.	DPW- 2030	City Budget / Mass Trails Grant	
8. Work on getting a bike rental program back in the city to promote biking.	2026 MEDC, Recreation	Staff time	
9. Add additional amenities to ARRT such as additional benches to accommodate those less able; look into hand rails on Jefferson St. parking lot access ramp.	Recreation/ DPW/ civic organizations	donations	

Goal 3

Protect the biodiversity of local plants and animals while maximizing passive recreation for people, where feasible, for current and future generations.

Goal 3, Objectives A: Promote, develop, and update management plans for all conservation land and land with conservation restrictions including maintenance schedules. These plans must include an inventory of habitat areas and invasive plant species.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Continue to keep and update management plans for all conservation land and any new	Begin summer 2026	\$ None Summer interns,	

<p>acquisitions, include inspection schedules. Seek assistance from graduate students, volunteers, interns, to prepare these plans and to do the inventory.</p> <p>The Grove- update Holts Grove-update Cider Knoll/Mellow Farm- update Felton Conservation Land-update Mt. Ward-update Ghiloni Park/State forest-update The Desert-update Sheep falls Brook – create. Lake Williams – create. Jericho Hill- update Flagg swamp – create Howe Pond – create Millham Reservoir – create (DPW)</p> <p>a. Management plans must include issues such as: beaver management, invasive species inventory and removal program. Where mountain biking is allowed include, trail use restrictions in spring or muddy weather to protect trails from damage.</p> <p>b. Inventory of plant and animals of the area (see Betty Wrights 2009-2010 inventory of the Desert as an example)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field mowing and maintenance ● Invasive plant inventory and removal ● Determine best practices for dealing with native invasive species such as poison ivy which impact recreational trail use. ● Trail maintenance and bridge repairs ● Boundary sign markings ● Establish rules for mountain biking, (i.e., no use during muddy seasons spring etc. coordinate with bike clubs) ● Dog Control “pooper scooper” enforcement ● Other land management enforcement 	<p>Conservation and the Trails Committee and summer interns continue to update and create inventories for each property</p>	<p>Volunteer staff</p>	
<p>2. City owned undesignated parcels</p> <p>a. Where parcel is in city ownership, but has not been formally</p>	<p>Conservation Officer to provide list to Mayor/ City</p>	<p>\$ None Staff Time</p>	

<p>designated for any specific use or management make the following designations:</p> <p>ARRT - Recreation / DPW EWWTP – back wet property 61-16 Off Sudbury St. 36-12 Off Kings Grant Rd. 44-104 Off Parmenter Rd. 108-2 abuts Callahan Off Hemenway St. 22-6</p> <p>b. For each parcel noted above, have the City Council formally designate both its use and the department responsible for managing the property. Record whatever is necessary to protect that property for future.</p>	<p>Council in 2026 for review.</p>		
<p>3. Develop and maintain a management plan for all land under Conservation Restrictions and include an inspection schedule: 12 CR parcels are listed as PP on spreadsheet in section 5 and shown in pink on map Boundaries shall be inspected at least once every 5 years to ensure no encroachments have occurred or more often as the CR requires.</p>	<p>Fall 2026 develop overall plan and schedule. Conservation Commission</p>	<p>\$ None Staff Time Interns</p>	
<p>4. Make sure field management on conservation land is done in such a way as to increase biodiversity.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission on going</p>	<p>\$ None Staff and volunteers</p>	
<p>5. Continue to work with Marlborough Trails Committee, DPW to ensure that conservation land parking areas are in good condition, trash is collected, and areas are open in winter after snowstorms to encourage winter activities snowshoeing, skiing etc.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission- and DPW</p>	<p>\$ None Staff and Volunteer time</p>	

Goal 3, Objective: B Develop land management plans for all recreational lands to determine if the non-active recreation portions of these parcels can help to promote and protect biodiversity.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Review all recreation and city owned land parcels to determine if non-recreation used portions can be managed to promote and protect biodiversity. Use Map #6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create native pollinator gardens – low maintenance- where feasible along edges of recreation areas. b. Invasive plant removal to improve tree and habitat health. c. Fields not used for recreation can be managed to encourage meadows and support wildlife habitat. Such as Jericho Hill d. Add trees where shade is needed around field edges for spectators and work with DPW to ensure no conflicts with tree vs. field maintenance. e. Consider edible and sensory gardens as well where feasible and maintainable. 	<p>2026 work with recreation department and DPW to develop this plan. OSRC</p>	<p>\$None, staff time</p>	

Goal 3, Objective C: Review all city owned land and large tracts private land to determine if any or some portion of the properties may have value for biodiversity and manage it accordingly.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Review all city owned land to	2026 work with GIS	\$ None	

<p>determine if any or some portion of the properties may have value for biodiversity and manage it accordingly. Use map #6 check the “municipal other” properties.</p> <p>a. removes invasive vines and plants.</p> <p>b. Promote good tree health.</p> <p>c. adds more trees or meadows</p> <p>d. Determine if different management strategies will improve diversity, i.e., less mowing, time of year mowing etc.</p> <p>e. determines if land has other nature-based values to protect (flood control, stormwater improvement, heat reduction etc.) and work to promote those values.</p> <p>e. Continue use of goats for poison ivy and other invasive plant removal</p>	<p>maps to identify these parcels. OSRC. And DPW to determine best management practices.</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	
<p>2. Encourage large companies/developments to grow wild meadows in their corporate landscapes to promote butterflies and insect eating birds) encourage bird box installation etc. (See goal 2 Obj. F.6 above)</p>	<p>2026 OSRC</p>	<p>\$ None Staff time</p>	<p>...</p>

Goal 4

Provide quality recreational facilities and adequate recreational opportunities for all city residents, including diverse populations and ensure it is encompassing diversity of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and languages. For all areas of the city for both passive and active recreation.

Goal 4, Objectives A: Continue to implement and update management plans for all active recreational facilities including maintenance schedules.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. The Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works will continue to maintenance of all recreational facilities throughout the city with field rotation etc.</p>	<p>2026 Recreation department ongoing</p>	<p>\$ None, Staff time</p>	

<p>2. Continue to require sports groups to clean up the fields they use. In addition, continue to use the Annual Project Clean Sweep as part of a park’s cleanup day in the spring of each year that encourages community-wide participation in the upkeep of our public recreational facilities.</p>	<p>2026 ongoing annually- Recreation Dept.</p>	<p>\$ None volunteer time</p>	
<p>3. Have City Council and Mayor convey maintenance and management of the Assabet River Rail Trail to the Recreation Department for management and DPW for maintenance of this linear park. (Same as item Goal 3.A. 2 above)</p>	<p>2026 Recreation Department. work with Legal department on language</p>	<p>\$ None, staff time</p>	
<p>4. Determine a plan for the Stevens St. land managed by Recreation and implement the plan. Could be considered for walking trail, historic park connection to the cemetery, (map 57-parcel 361)</p>	<p>2026 Recreation Department</p>	<p>\$ None Staff time</p>	
<p>5. Indoor pool and gym facility should be explored. Recreation Department should look into the feasibility and cost of constructing such a facility</p>	<p>2026 Recreation Department</p>	<p>\$ None Staff time;</p>	
<p>6. Dog Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish volunteer dog park committee to oversee management of dog park ○ Construct Ghiloni Park completed in 2024 but not yet opened ○ Evaluate park every 6 months until 2027 to ensure it’s working smoothly. As needed after that. 	<p>2026 – Recreation Dept. / DPW Engineering / Mayors office</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Completed in 2025</p>

Goal 4, Objective B. Ensure that programs provided by the city give opportunities for all age groups and abilities, including handicap accessibility as feasible. Recreation programs should be available for all age groups from toddlers to seniors.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Work with Disabilities Commission to evaluate and improve access to recreation and conservation facilities where not already accessible.	2026 Disabilities Commission, DPW Parks, Conservation	State grants, city funds, private public partnership	
2. Continue to provide programs for all ages through the recreation department: A. toddlers B. school age C. adults D. Seniors 65+ (Bus trips, Bird watching, hikes etc., e. Programs for those with behavioral disorders/mental health	Recreation Dept. and Senior Center coordinate offerings Coordinate with providers of behavioral health, including residential and day programs, in city	City budget	
3. Work to make at least one or more Conservation trails within the city handicapped accessible for some portion of the trail. Including but not limited to mobility, sight or hearing impairments. a. Ghiloni Park b. The Grove c. Others as resources and needs allow.	2026 Conservation Commission with City Commission on Disabilities	City budget, grants, volunteers	
4. Hold a marathon on the Panther Trail annually to help promote this unique trail and its use as a training ground for marathon runners and other runners who enjoy woods running	Work with local running clubs to promote this trail	Conservation and Recreation Staff time	

Goal 4, Objective C: Promote, develop, and update management plans for all conservation land and land with Conservation Restrictions including maintenance schedules. This plan must include inventories of habitat areas, invasive species inventories. Trail use/maintenance issues and when trails need to be fixed or retired. (Similar to Goal 3-A 1-5)

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Continue to update maps of the city’s conservation and recreation facilities, as well as state parklands to inform the public of these resources and their locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Post on web site – update annually b. Publish in newspaper – annually. c. Publish through other social media outlets – annually d. explore possibility of adding the city trails, Panther and BLT to public mobile apps such as All Trails. 	<p>Conservation & Rec. Depts.</p>	<p>\$ None staff time</p>	
<p>2. Where appropriate, and provided that public safety is not jeopardized, the conservation commission shall continue to allow hunting at the Desert Conservation Land which is the only large tracts of city-owned conservation land in order to better manage wildlife populations. This shall be reviewed annually by the Conservation Commission to ensure no use conflicts have occurred and that the area continues to be safe for multiple uses. Other state property including Sudbury Reservoir, Lower Pleasant St. and State Forests do allow hunting – ensuring these areas are posted each year is also a needed task.</p>	<p>August of Each year, Conservation Commission</p>	<p>\$ None Staff and commission time</p>	
<p>3. Hire summer interns to manage conservation land, maintain trails and provide interpretive programs to provide information about the natural habitat values and to</p>	<p>Conservation Commission Annually</p>	<p>City Budget- Mayor’s intern program</p>	

encourage appropriate use of conservation land.			
4. Continue and support the Marlborough volunteer Trails Committee who manage all our trails and trail infrastructure and lead walks.	Annually began with formation of Trail Committee in May 2021- this is ongoing. Conservation, continue to support volunteers.	\$ None City staff	
8. Update management plan for each of the 9 conservation land areas. (See Goal 3 A-1 above for plan details)	2026 Conservation Commission will do one plan a year	\$ None Staff time and volunteer time	
9. Explore areas where mountain biking can occur while still protecting habitat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the Mountain bike community in improving these trails Create mountain bike trail rules. Create a map of established mountain bike trail 	Conservation and recreation dept.	Staff time/volunteer time	

Goal 4, Objective D. Take advantage of funding programs for acquisition and adequate maintenance of recreational facilities and open space parcels. Expand recreational facilities and conservation areas as needed to meet community needs.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
Development of a park/recreational facility at the old Hudson Street Landfill	2026 Recreation Department set priorities and timeline for these facility needs and determine a budget for each.	State grants; city funds; private/public partnership	Field and parking lot complete 2026
Develop and expand existing recreational park areas and identify those areas that need improvements such as field upgrades, parking lot improvements, building shade structures, planting trees, and	“	“	

improving playground equipment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add parks to neighborhoods that don't have play areas within walking distance 	“	“	
<p>Aggressively pursue state and/or private grant funds for improvements to recreation facilities.</p> <p>Work with local businesses to partnership on project and “adopt” a space or facility to help with upkeep.</p>	“	“	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a new wading pool at Ward Park to replace the existing wading pool 	“	“	
Construct a new wading pool at Hildreth School to replace the existing wading pool	“	“	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding space to construct a Frisbee Golf Course - create 9- or 18-hole- 	“	“	
<p>Bauks Field (Marlborough High School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate repairs needed at two locations (pitchers' mound and batter's box) • Padding at backstop to be replaced • Replacement of turf 	“	“	
<p>Byrne Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix Drainage issue by parking lot <p>Demers Field (Marlborough High School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of turf field 	“	“	
<p>Farrell Fields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front field drainage issues- needs to be regraded, and drainage added • Fix Drainage issues from Hildreth Street onto field 	“	“	
<p>Ghiloni Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehab DiAntonio softball 	“	“	

<p>field (drainage issues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musco lighting for softball and soccer fields • Gate at exercise equipment at gravel path • Gravel path to be paved • Lower soccer field behind building-drainage issues-add loam • Install a Pavilion 			
<p>Kelleher Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace visitor side bleachers • Musco lighting • Replace or a better detail for concrete pillars around field • Fix Driveway and sidewalk alignment 	“	“	
<p>Noble Field (Marlborough Middle School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of turf and resurfacing of track at Noble Field 	“	“	
<p>Stevens Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage issue • Infield mix issue • Netting surrounding field needs to be replaced • Rebuild Mound • Home Plate needs to be remolded • Complete Infield Removal and Rebuild 	“	“	
<p>Vital Track and Field (Marlborough High School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request replacement of existing field with turf • Stadium style bleachers (2 additional) or seating within slope areas • New Scoreboard • Musco lighting for field • 12x16 building to store turf maintenance equipment and material • Bathroom and concessions building 	“	“	

<p>Williams Street Baseball Field Complex Martinangelo Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put existing lighting on Musco System Retaining wall, (135' Wall) 1st Baseline Removal of dead pine trees behind 1st base dugout Fencing for top of new wall <p>Leduc Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infield reconstruction Fencing repair & replace (when needed) existing Batting Cage Area (double cages & platform) New dugouts with roofs and drainage 5 row premium aisle & risers bleachers (25' W 72 Seats). Quantity: 2 Put existing lighting on Musco System <p>Langelier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fix Drainage issues Put existing lighting on Musco System 	<p>“</p>	<p>“</p>	
<p>2. Dog park- id group who wants to manage and maintain- create Citizen advisory board</p>			
<p>9, Develop Recreation Facility with indoor Olympic size swimming pool and gymnasium</p>	<p>2065 seek location</p> <p>2028-2030 design and build Recreation, DPW, city council, Planning board</p>	<p>State grants, city funds, partnerships</p>	
<p>10. The Recreation Department, Conservation Commission, DPW and MEDC and CDA should aggressively pursue state and or private funding for improvements to recreation facilities and</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>\$ None staff time</p>	

acquisition of land for open space. a. Compile list of available grants b. Pursue funding as appropriate			
11.Create carefully crafted/public Private partnership opportunities to carry out the goals of the open space plan i.e., with sports groups; schools; private organization; corporations and businesses.	OSRC and Recreation Department	\$ None Staff time	
11. Work with local land trusts to help in the acquisition of key parcels as needed. (i.e., Sudbury Valley Trustees, The Trustees of Reservations, Trust for Public Lands.)	Conservation Commission; Recreation Department	\$ None Staff time	
12.Develop two additional community gardens so that all residents have access- ideally one in central and one in western part of city.	2026 locate areas 2027-2030 build gardens Conservation Commission	City Budget, volunteer project	.

Goal 4, Objective E. Participate in and develop an intercommunity trail system to link all open spaces and recreation lands together. (Overlaps with Goal 2, Obj. H above)

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Have OSRC and Trails Committee continue to look for places for trail connections from roadways to parks and conservation land. a. Establish where acquisitions or easements will be needed b. Determine areas where sidewalks will be needed. c. Determine priorities for trail connection to development d. Have the walkable routes subcommittee review progress and keep progress going on these trail links (See Goal 2, H-1)	OSRC, Conservation Commission and Recreation Commission Review progress annually	\$ None, Staff and volunteer time	

<p>2. Create trail network at the DCR filter beds and spillway</p> <p>3. next to Sudbury Reservoir – work with DCR</p>	<p>Conservation Commission and DCR</p>	<p>\$ None, staff time & volunteer</p>	
<p>4. Check all city lands to see if any trail connections and walking trails can be made through it. – sewer lines, utility easements etc.</p>	<p>OSRC, Conservation Commission and DPW</p>	<p>\$ None, Staff time</p>	
<p>5. Create a map that can be distributed to the City Council and Planning Board and other departments so that as projects are developed this plan is accessible for consultation.</p>	<p>OSRC and Conservation Commission</p>	<p>\$ none, staff time</p>	

Goal 4, Objective F. Continue to develop and connect with intra-community trail systems to take advantage of shared resources in neighboring communities.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>4. Continue to work with adjacent communities on connecting trail systems including with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Desert Conservation Area/Memorial Forest/ Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge- Sudbury, SVT, State Forest, ARNWR and Federation of Women’s Clubs, Mass Central Rail trail ○ Walnut Hill – Southborough, Westborough, Northborough ○ Boundary St. Northborough ○ Parmenter Rd. Callahan State Park ○ Framingham trails ○ Bay Circuit Trail 	<p>OSRC; Conservation Commission; City Planner</p>	<p>\$ None Staff time</p>	

Goal 4, Objective G. Establish a responsive system for ongoing community feedback about trash, graffiti, and other issues at any of the city facilities and open spaces.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Graffiti: Work with the police department to determine when this occurs and what the pattern is and pursue options to curtail this activity.</p>	<p>2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation and</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	

	Police Dept.		
2. Trash/litter: Determine where this is occurring and add trash cans where possible or signage and some enforcement where it is not. 3. Determine if a litter control program should be implemented with volunteers (in addition to the annual Clean Sweep program)	2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation and Police Dept.		
4. Be aware of “used needle” use in areas and work with Police Dept. to address.	2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation and Police Dept.		
5. Provide dog poop bag dispensers and waste bins in areas where dog poop is a problem and notify animal control officer where there are off leash dog issues.	2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation		
6. See /click fix/commonwealth connect- continue to use for all city parks and conservation properties	DPW Continue		
7. Set up systems to Recycle bottles and cans on city properties an athletic fields/events.	2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation/ DPW		
8. Education to get people to recycle and properly dispose of trash on city properties.	2026 – ongoing OSRC, Conservation Recreation and DPW		

Goal 4, Objective H. Assure that people in all sections of the city have ready access to open space, recreation, and natural areas.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
Look at maps and identify areas where there are no parks, playgrounds or trails within a 10-minute walk to a property. a. Use map 14 for this task. b. As properties become available in	OSRP, Conservation and Recreation Staff 2026 start- ongoing	City staff City or state funds	

<p>the mapped areas (found in a.), seek to capture them to create a park or playground. Or small pocket parks – i.e. on Main St. or other more densely populated areas. Look for areas in downtown and high-density areas to find areas where adding pocket parks, trees and greenspace will improve the health of these neighborhoods. (look at tax title properties to see if any are amenable to this type of conversion)</p>			
<p>Educate people about access and opportunities to use open space and recreation facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recreation department continue to post on web page and social media. b. Conservation Commission establish trails committee web page, and continue to hold trail walks & improve signage 	<p>Conservation Commission/ Recreation Dept.</p>		

Goal 4, objective I. Respond to the expressed public preferences by providing a greater variety and expansion of recreational and shared community facilities.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>Continue to respond to new trends in recreational needs i.e. pickleball, deck hockey, and other trending sports as they become popular and determine if it is something the city should provide. As well as needs such as shade structures due to changing climate.</p>	<p><i>OSRP Committee / recreation dept.</i></p>		
<p>Continue to respond to new trends in conservation land needs i.e. climate adaptation requirements, management for invasive plants and insects, trail needs of different populations.</p>	<p><i>OSRP Committee</i></p>		
<p>Continued education- Work with Library to provide ongoing education on Climate Change adaptation.</p>	<p><i>Work with groups and OSRP Committee to establish</i></p>		
<p>Dog park- a</p>	<p>2026- Recreation Dept.</p>		<p>complete</p>

b. Get a local citizens “friends” group to agree to run the park. c. Work with friends’ group to maintain the park and enforce rules.	/ volunteer citizens		
Swimming pool a. Investigate a location for a recreation center to include a swimming pool. b. seek funding for such a facility c. build the facility	2028- Recreation Dept.		
Frisbee Golf a. Investigate a location for a course b. build the course	2027- Recreation Dept.		
Community gardens a. look for locations for additional community gardens – in downtown and west of the city. b. seek funding and volunteer help to build a garden with a fence.	2027- Conservation Commission/ Scout and civic organizations	Grants, staff time	

Goal 5

Preserve the character, historic, and cultural resources of the community.

Goal 5, Objective A. Develop a city-wide plan for encouraging agricultural and open space use of land.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Develop and implement strategies to preserve remaining agricultural areas for that use. This may include creation of a business plan to increase agricultural sales in Marlborough and/or other funding mechanisms available for protection of private agricultural land. The last remaining farms are Riano’s Farm, Houdes Tree Farm, Gulbankian fields, and few other Ch. 61A parcels found on Map #7 and in Section 5 of the plan.	2026- OSRC- Conservation Commission, City Planner; Planning Board, SVT	Staff time	
2. Contact landowners to begin dialogue about the importance of these farms to the city’s landscape.	OSRC/Conservatio n Commission/ Planning Board,	Staff time	
3. Annually update Ch. 61 and 61A parcels with assessors office.	Conservation commission staff	Staff time	

Goal 5, Objective B: Preservation and enhancement of local historic landscapes, especially those that complement local historic structures, and preserve natural landscapes to protect the viewshed from and to those historic structures.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. The OSRC should work with the Historic Commission to identify sites deemed to have importance because of their historic landscapes and develop a plan to enhance those historic landscapes- views to and views away.</p>	<p>2026 ongoing OSRC committee begin discussions this section with Historic Commission</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>2. The Rice Homestead is now owned by the Marlborough Historic Society and should be preserved in some fashion, at its current site or moved. The land is not owned by the society.</p>	<p>2026 Historic Commission/ Historic Society and OSRC</p>	<p>State/ federal grants; public private partnership</p>	
<p>3. Develop review and protection regulations or older historic properties that can guide the Building Department * establish a policy or ordinance to accomplish this goal. *this list shall be provided to the building department and consulted whenever a demolition permits or construction project is proposed on or near these structures. *Recommendations from the Building Commissioner consultation with the Historic Commission should be provided to see if any preservation could be obtained.</p>	<p>2026 Historic Commission</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>4. An inventory of historic structures was completed by the historic commission; This list shall be further refined so the building department can reference it.</p> <p>a. Historic Commission shall create this list of protected properties b. Historic Commission shall</p>	<p>2026 Ongoing- Historic Commission, OSRP committee</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	

distribute the list to the Building Dept, Planning Board c. This shall be updated annually.			
6. Provide a map GIS layer showing the historic sites within the city for easy reference by the building department, Planning Board and City Council and	2026-ongoing Historic Commission/ DPW GIS	Volunteer Staff time	
10. Explore stone wall protection within properties – a. Identified on GIS maps b. Local ordinance to encourage protection c. Review and enforcement by Historic Commission/ Planning Board	Historic Commission/ planning board		
8.To follow the Museum in the Streets® success, a driving map of historic places in the city could be developed.	Historic Commission		
9.Historic Roads Initiative – 1. Install Scenic roads signage on all routes in the city	DPW for signage.	City budget. There are some federal programs available but that seems unlikely to continue.	This is an important issue in the preservation of the historic character of our more rural areas. It's the type of thing that once changes are made they can't easily be brought back to original condition.
10. Historic Roads Initiative – 2. Provide education materials (mailing) about the importance of maintaining the scenic character of the street to residents living on scenic roads.	Historical commission and the mayor's office for the education part.	Grant or general fund	I'd like to see this material distributed via USPS as

			well as digitally. Maybe including the infographic in the tax bills of the properties located on scenic routes.
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Goal 5, Objective C: Provide a funding source to help promote land acquisition, historic preservation, and the development of recreation facilities.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>The city should investigate use of innovative municipal mechanisms to raise funds such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community Preservation Act (CPA) real estate tax, b. Designated voluntary contributions on tax bills, land banking etc. c. Pursue % of building permits set aside for this purpose d. any other innovative funding mechanisms private/public partnerships that may become available. <p>(Similar to goal 4, obj. D. 8 above)</p>	2026 ongoing Historic Commission / City Council/ MEDC	Staff Time Meals tax is used for fields and recreation facilities	

Goal 6

Promote and develop regional open space and recreational opportunities, especially through the connectivity of walking and biking trail systems.

Goal 6, Objective A. Work with adjacent communities to understand their open space and recreation needs and coordinate the purchase and development of conservation and recreation land acquisitions, trails, and recreational facilities as appropriate.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
	2026 ongoing	Staff	

<p>1.Inventory contiguous open space and recreation facilities on the city’s borders and communicate Marlborough’s intentions with the bordering communities,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Friends of Callahan Group- Mass Parks for All - Sudbury, Framingham, and Southborough b. Upper Assabet River -Hudson, Berlin, Northborough, Westborough c. Walnut Hill- SVT, Northborough, Southborough d. The Desert- Sudbury, Hudson/ARNWR and/or Friends of Woodlands and Waters group. 	<p>Conservation/other communities</p>	<p>time</p>	
<p>2. Identify allowed uses in open space parcels within the region (i.e., where mountain biking, horseback riding, dirt-bike riding, swimming, etc. is allowed) and encourage appropriate public use of these areas through civic group presentations and social media releases.</p>	<p>2026 Conservation Commission</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>3. Promote regional recreational complexes, which the city can share, use of: Fields at filter beds, link recreational facilities together where feasible.</p>	<p>Conservation & regional groups & SVT</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>4.Work with DCR on several park improvement/management items. Sudbury Reservoir – carry in carry out items- especially for fishermen trash. Sudbury Reservoir filter beds trail system construction and maintenance Spillway safety fencing and trail access (from Walker Brook Pond)</p>	<p>2026-ongoing Conservation/ DCR</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	
<p>5. Continue working with abutting communities and state agencies: Framingham Con. Com & Planning, Sudbury Con.Com. and Sudbury Valley Trustees (regional land trust) Work with DCR on land protection projects in the Greater Callahan area and Sudbury Reservoir.</p>	<p>2026 ongoing.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	

Goal 6, Objective B. Promote the development of regional bicycle/pedestrian paths for transportation and recreation purposes.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Support the conversion of regional abandoned railroads into bicycle or walking paths. Assabet River Rail Trail – Marlborough to South Acton- support the planning and construction of the remaining sections through Stow.</p> <p>a. Central Mass line- Waltham to Berlin- crosses just north of Marlborough Sudbury town line at Desert Conservation land.</p> <p>b. Connection to Sudbury Train Station with bike friendly access to Marlborough Center.</p> <p>c. Central Mass Line will connect in Sudbury to the Bruce Freeman – (north-south) rail trail</p>	<p>City Planner, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, City Council, Mayor</p>	<p>\$ none Staff time</p>	

Goal 6, Objective C. Continue to work with state agencies, local land trusts, and adjacent communities to create corridors, expand and protect parks, forest, and conservation land and facilities in the city and on the municipal boundaries. (Similar to Goal 4 Obj. F)

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1. Continue to work with state Department of Conservation Recreation, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and Sudbury Conservation Commission, Greater Federation of Women’s Club and Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge on the Management of the Desert/Memorial Forest Natural Area unique pitch pine scrub oak habitat.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>2. Continue to work with the state Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to manage the Sudbury Reservoir and Callahan State Park.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Staff & volunteer time</p>	

3. Continue to work with the town of Hudson on the lake management of Ft. Meadow Reservoir and adjacent adjoining properties.	Ongoing Conservation Commission/ Ft. Meadow Commission	Staff time	
4.Continue to work with the MWRA, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Southborough, and Northborough trail connections in the southwest corner – Wachusett Aqueduct/ Cedar Swamp / Borough’s trail	Ongoing	Staff time	

Goal 7

Engage community citizens in preserving and maintaining open space, recreation, and natural resource areas throughout the city to promote a healthy environment for human and wildlife alike and in doing so curb climate change.

Goal 7, Objective A: Provide educational materials to help educate citizens about open spaces and recreation resources.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
<p>1.Develop displays for public information on Conservation and Park land facilities. Display at: Library Schools City Hall Recreation Department Lake Williams (interpretive signage was added in 2025) Senior Center</p> <p>Add electronic info and social media and other outlets for information sharing i.e. All Trails.</p>	Conservation Commission; GIS office;	Staff time	
2.Create better interactive map system on city website for recreation and conservation land facilities Update annually	Conservation Commission and Recreation Department	Staff & volunteer time	
3.Develop an adopt a park stewardship program (similar to the adopt a space program) task for recreation, with outreach to abutting neighborhoods, similar to Friends of Callahan State Park – Mass Parks for All model	Recreation Department/ DPW		

4.Determine best ways to let residence know about all recreation and conservation facilities –explore different outreach methods.	OSR Committee brainstorm	Staff and volunteers	
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Goal 7, Objective B: Promote neighborhood & citizen involvement and responsibility by creating a land stewardship program.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1.Create a city web site where people can sign up to volunteer for city projects. And provide links to schools too- Schools: Marlborough, AMSA, Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School etc. as well as Senior Center and other civic organizations.	Conservation Commission, DPW; Recreation Department;	Staff time	
2.Expand programs for volunteers to help with the following tasks on both conservation and park and recreation lands: Invasive species removal Garlic mustard pull Bittersweet removal. Trail maintenance and stewardship Litter cleanup	Conservation Commission/ Recreation Commission/ Volunteers	Staff time	
Continue using goats for “mowing” invasive and poison ivy and hard to reach areas.	DPW	Funding for goats from general fund	

Goal 7, Objective C: Engage schools, youth groups and scouts, in knowing about our biodiversity, natural history, and human history of the city.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1.Promote Biodiversity days for the city and through schools.	OSRC and Conservation Commission work with biologists and School curriculum teachers	Staff time	
3.Hold conservation land walks for kids	Conservation	Volunteer	

and families - Monthly Promote through: Library Recreation dept. Con. Com. Trails Committee Other outreach groups	Commission; Trails Committee and volunteers	time	
Develop Fact Sheets about Marlborough's conservation efforts add to web page and share with teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed maps/ watershed demonstrations (Framingham has large tabletop stormwater watershed model they are willing to lend) Wildlife corridors and wildlife sighted Pollinator Gardens and bugs Unique habitats and introductions to unique places in the city Non-native invasive plant identification and control to preserve native habitats 	Conservation Commission with curriculum teachers	Staff & volunteer time	

Goal 7, Objective D: Promote and enforce carry in carry out policy.

Action Item	Schedule/ Responsible Department	Potential Funding Source	Comment
1. Carry in Carry out policy on all conservation lands where feasible. Trash barrels are placed at most entrances for easy cleanup and disposal but not internal to site.	Conservation Commission; Recreation Department	Staff time	
2. Encourage all athletic fields and school events to reduce water bottle disposal at sports events- encourage recycling and bringing reusable containers Provide water stations to refill reusable containers at: Parks Schools Research other communities on who is	Work with DPW to set up recycling system. Also work with Sustainability Committee to meet this goal	Staff time Grants, private donations	

being successful with this and why/how.			
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Goal 7, Objective E: Marlborough trails Committee

The trails committee established in May 2021, should continue to: Build and maintain trails. Lead trail walks Keep signage and kiosks updated. Educate others about trails Remove invasive plants	Con Com, volunteers	none	
Create a trails committee web page so interested citizens can participate and volunteer or join for a walk. Keep this updated annually	Conservation commission and Trails Committee members		

Goal 8

Promote the public and private recreational resources and events the city boasts, including private skating rinks, Apex Center, Labor Day parade, food and music festivals, to name a few. These are a source of community pride, entertainment and fun that the city offers..

Goal 8 objective A: Initiate collaborations with local industries and businesses around shared planning and use of recreational and public space opportunities for people who work in the city in addition to those who reside here.

MEDC/ Recreation Department/ Conservation Commission should continue to be ambassadors to the city and promote its recreational assets	Ongoing OSRC	none	
Chamber of Commerce share OSRP with the Chamber and note where collaboration and opportunities can overlap. I.e., Hotels and industrial parks can promote trail connections near their facilities, with links to both public and private recreational resources.	Ongoing OSRC	none	
When projects are being developed look for opportunities for shared recreational spaces or connectivity to shared spaces such as trails and parks.	Ongoing, OSRC, city council, planning board, site plan review committee	none	

Goal 8 Objective B. Promote private recreation opportunities to city residents

<p>Until the city has its own pool facility Pool facilities, initiate programs at private facilities: at the Wayside Athletic Club; Hotels, and other where residents can go off season when Memorial Beach is closed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>Advertise, promote all assets and activities the city has on city’s web site – similar to one stop for DCR – searchable for activities Hiking, swimming, sports, skating, swimming, boating etc.</p>	<p>OSRC, Recreation/ Conservation</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	
<p>Promote or direct residents to other private recreation facilities including: Navin Skating Rink Four Kicks Wayside Racket Club Apex Center – bowling and other sports New England Sports Center – Skating</p>	<p>MEDC/ Recreation/ Conservation</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	

Section 10

PUBLIC COMMENTS

We held 10 public meetings with various groups in the city and culminated these meetings with a public meeting at the library to gather input.

Meetings were held with the following groups on the following dates:

Commission on Disabilities -3-3-2025

Conservation Commission/ Historic Commission 3-20-2025

Planning Board 3-24-2025

Library Trustees- 4-1-2025

City Council – Open Space Committee 4-7-2025

MEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club – 4-8-2025

Recreation Commission and Sports Groups - 4-9-2025

Lions Club 4-23-2025

Public organizations Marlborough library - 4-29-2025

St. Stevens Church – 6-18-25

Comments from each of these meetings were compiled and can be found in Appendix D

Extensive outreach to the Brazilian community through their churches was provided to invite them to the meeting at the library. A few attended, but not as many as we had hoped.

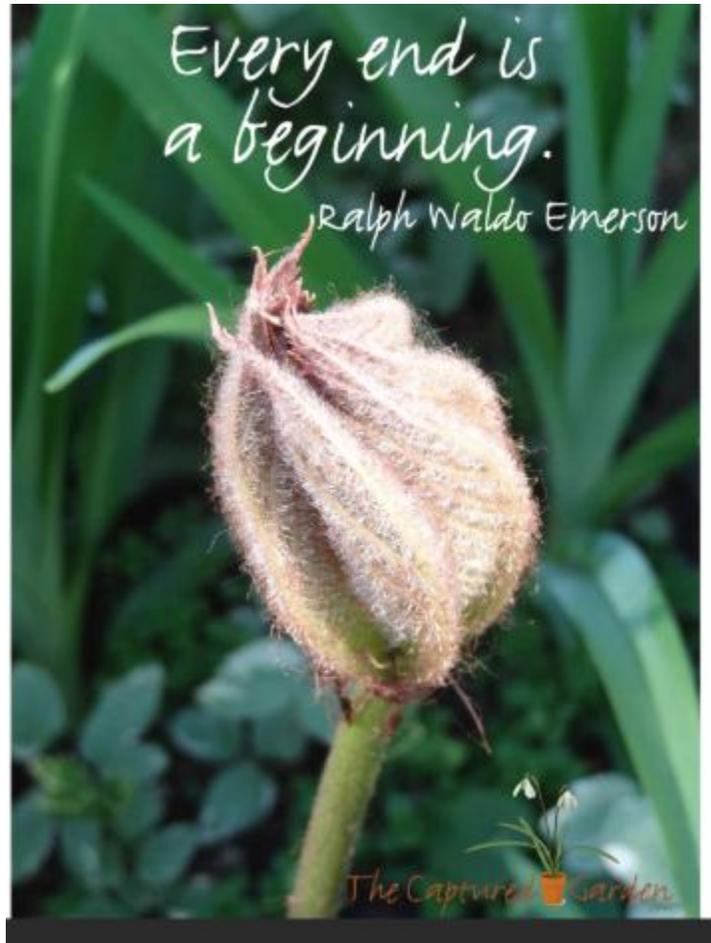
All these comments were reviewed and where feasible addressed and incorporated within the document.

Section 11

REFERENCES

Documents used and referenced to create this document are as follows:

1. Marlborough 2011-2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan
2. Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023 Submitted to the National Park Service by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs [Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023](#)
3. SVT and MetroWest Collaborative mapping tool created to help communities prioritize parcels of Value - nature services, habitat, community conservation and farmland. [Conservation in the SuAsCo Story Map](#).
4. Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook; Commonwealth of Massachusetts. – March 2025 Revision
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-space-and-recreation-plan-workbook/download> DCS Open Space Plan Workbook.



**LET'S BEGIN NOW TO NURTURE THE SEEDS PLANTED IN THIS PLAN AND WATCH THEM GROW
TO CREATE A HEALTHY, LIVABLE AND ENJOYABLE MARLBOROUGH
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME!**

PLEASE LET US BEGIN