CITY *of* GARDNER

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Conservation, Open Space & Recreation: Key Pieces in the Puzzle of A Healthy, Vibrant Community

Gardner, Massachusetts

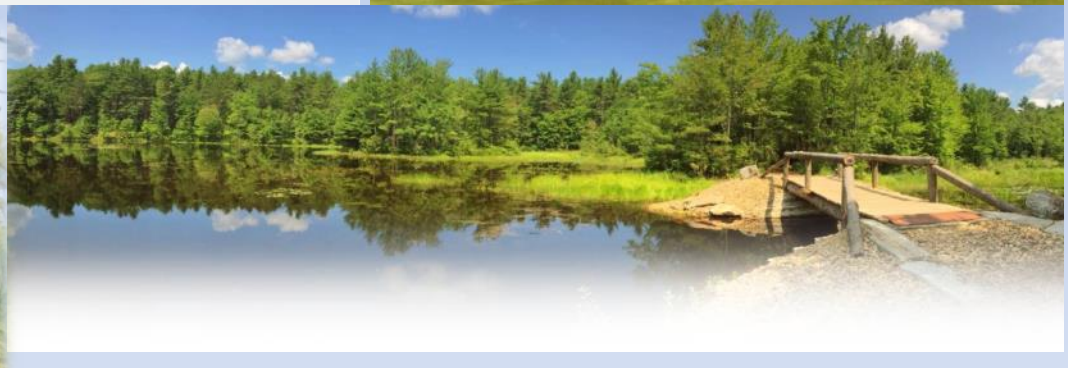
Jeffrey D. Legros, Conservation & Planning Agent

Mayor Mark P. Hawke, City of Gardner

Presentation Overview

- Community Setting
  - Regional Context & Demographics
- Natural Resources and Landscapes
  - Bailey Brook Landscape
- Conservation & Open Space Lands
  - Existing Open Space
  - Outdoor Recreation
- Gardner's Parks & Playgrounds
- PARC Grant
  - Bailey Brook Open Space Park

GARDNER
MASSACHUSETTS



Conservation, Recreation, Trails, Open Space,
History, Culture, Heritage....
Explore Gardner

Population Characteristics and Community Dynamics

- Population - ~20,000
- Education & Housing
- Income & Poverty
- Environmental Justice
- Begin to identify needs and goals

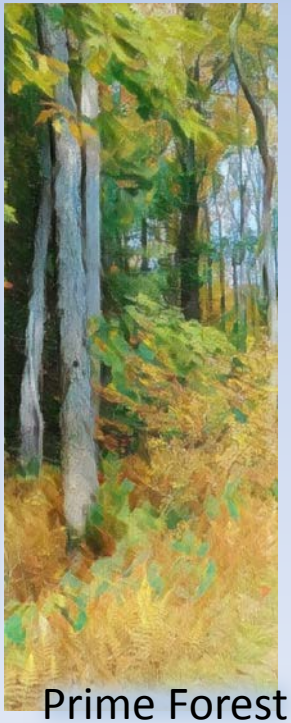
Natural and Scenic Resources

Wetland, Riverine, and Open-water Aquatic

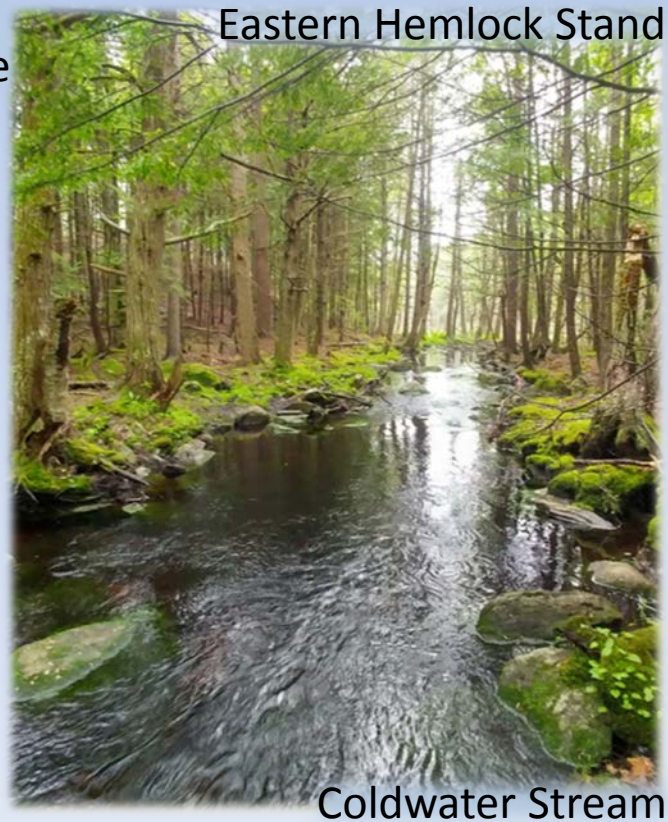
Open Field
Prime Agriculture

Wildflowers

Spruce-Fir Boreal Swamp, Shrub Swamp, Emergent Marsh, and Wet Meadow



Prime Forest



Eastern Hemlock Stand

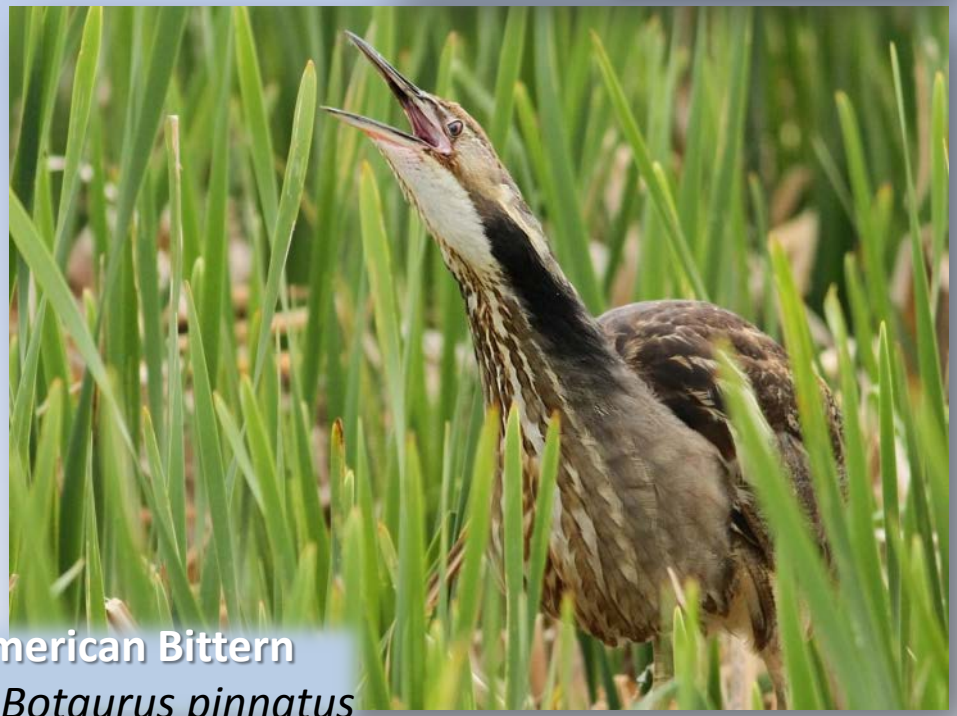
Coldwater Stream

Fish, Wildlife & Insects

Brook Trout
salvelinus fontinalis

Ski-tipped Emerald
Somatochlora elongata

Wood Turtle
Glyptemys insculpta



American Bittern
Botaurus pinnatus

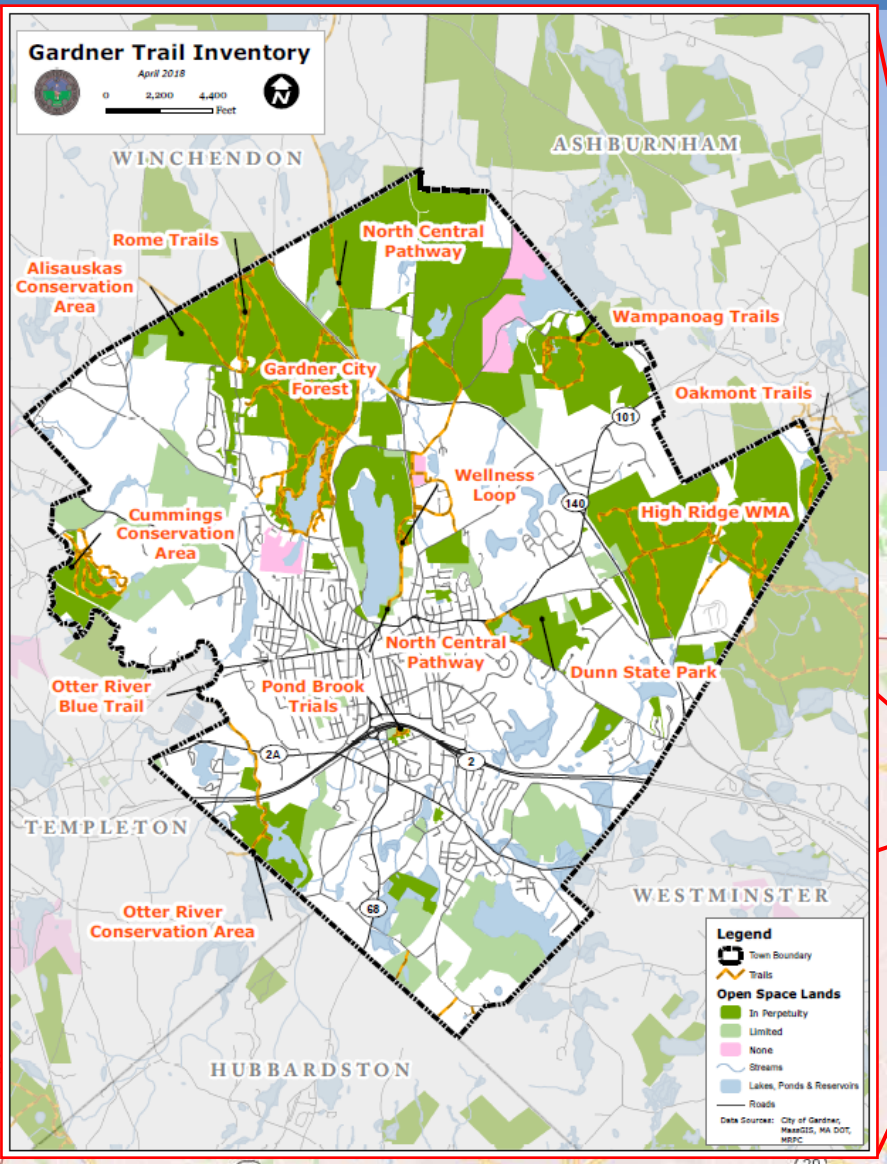
Fish, Wildlife & Insects

Screech Owl © Sandra Taylor

Blue heron with speared fish © Norman Beauregard

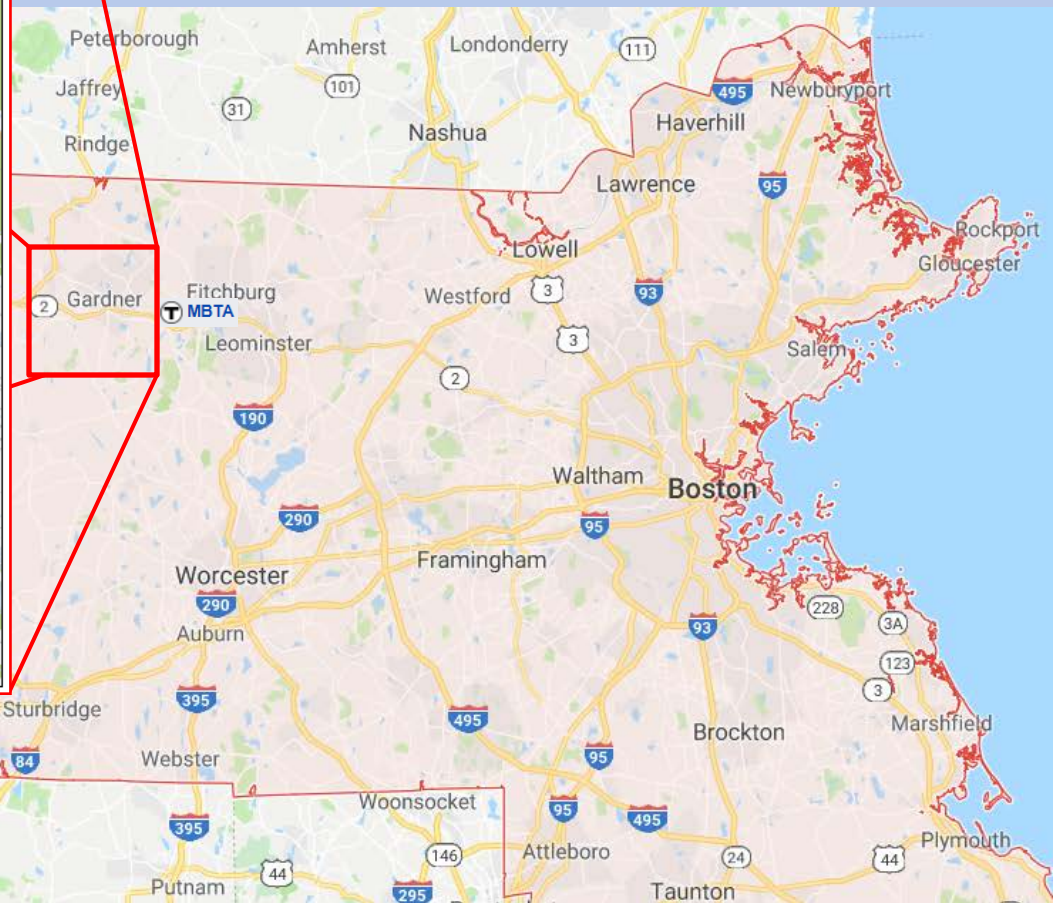
Dragonfly on flight © Norman Beauregard

Wood duck © Sandra Taylor



CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS



Alisauskas Conservation Area

Alisauskas Field – Autumn Mowing

<u>224 +/- Acres</u>

- **Bailey Brook**

- **Prime Forest**
- **Prime Agriculture**
- **Ecological Integrity & Biological Diversity**
- **Hiking**
- **Hunting & Fishing**

Alisauskas Field – Summer Flowers

Bailey Brook Conservation Area & Open Space Park

Bailey Brook Conservation Area

Bailey Brook

120 +/- Acres:
84-acre Conservation Area;
36-acre Open Space Park

- **Bailey Brook Cold-water Fish Habitat**
- **Forest, Wetland, and Open Space**
- **Outdoor Recreation**
- **Proposed Future Park & Playground**
- **1-mile Loop Trail Walking Path**

Bailey Brook Park Land

Otter River Conservation Area

150 +/- Acres

- **Unique Wetlands**
- **Wildlife Viewing**
- **Canoeing & Kayaking**
- **Hiking**
- **Hunting & Fishing**
- **Blue Trail**
- **Ecological Integrity & Biological Diversity**

Straus Marsh Early-Spring

Straus Marsh-Early Autumn

Straus Marsh Mid-Summer

Cummings Conservation Area

Otter River Blue Trail

<u>120 +/- Acres</u>

- **Otter River Blue Trail**
- **Prime Agriculture**
- **Canoeing & Kayaking**
- **Hiking**
- **Hunting & Fishing**

Otter River Blue Trail Take-Out & Portage Trail

Perley Brook Reservoir Loop Trail

Crystal Lake Community Forest
Wellness Path & Nature Trail

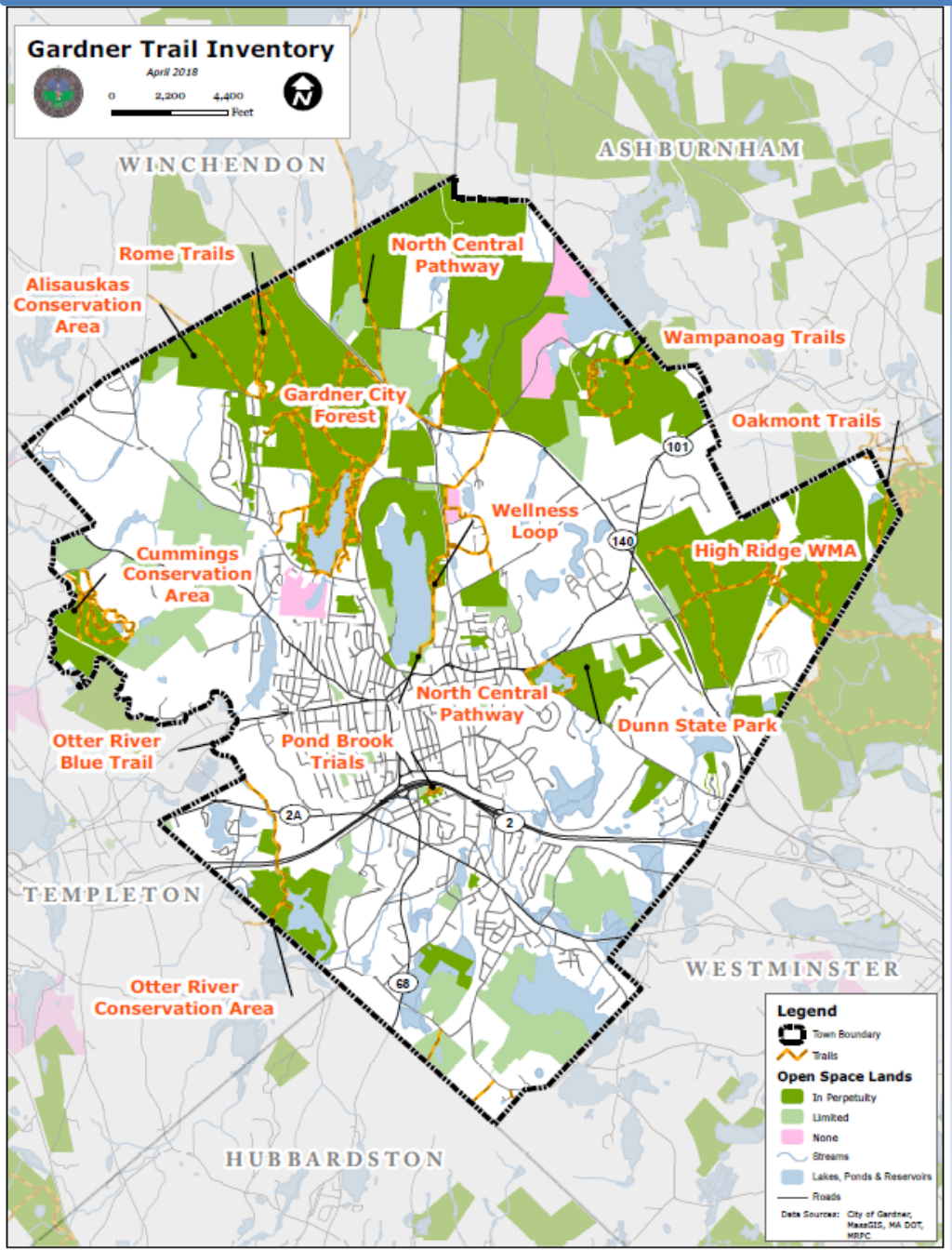
City Forest

Gardner Municipal Golf Course

Dunn Pond State Recreation Area

Crystal Lake Reservoir

OUTDOOR RECREATION



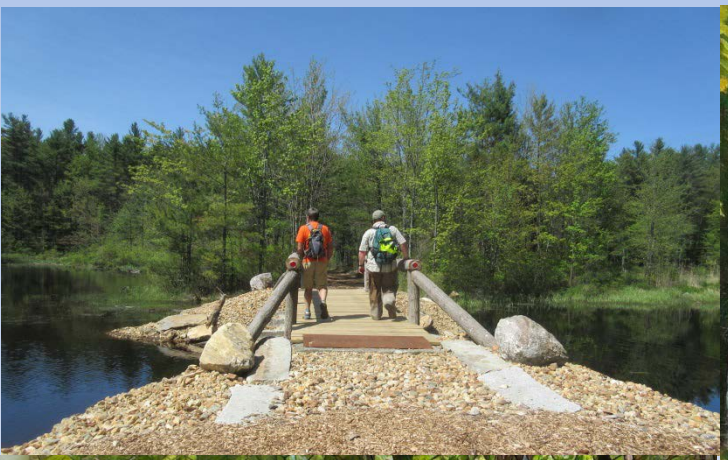
Recreational Trails

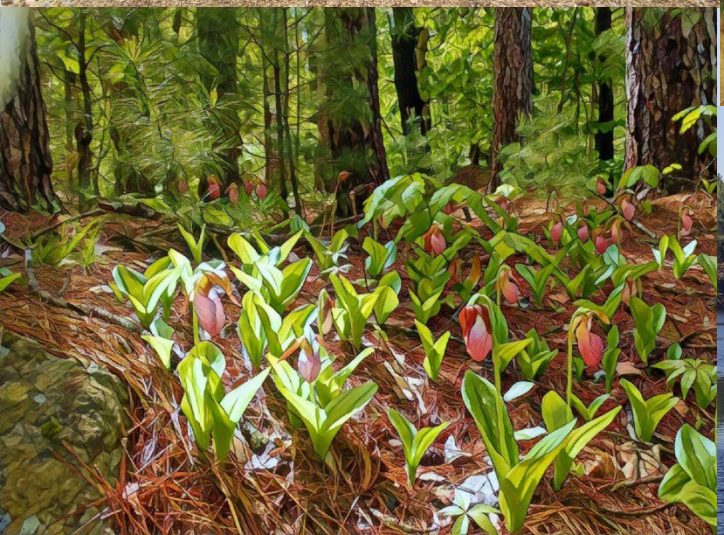
GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Perley Brook Loop Trail
- City Forest Trails
- Otter River Trails & Blue Trail
- Cummings Trails
- Alisauskas Trails
- Dunn Pond Trail
- Rome Trails

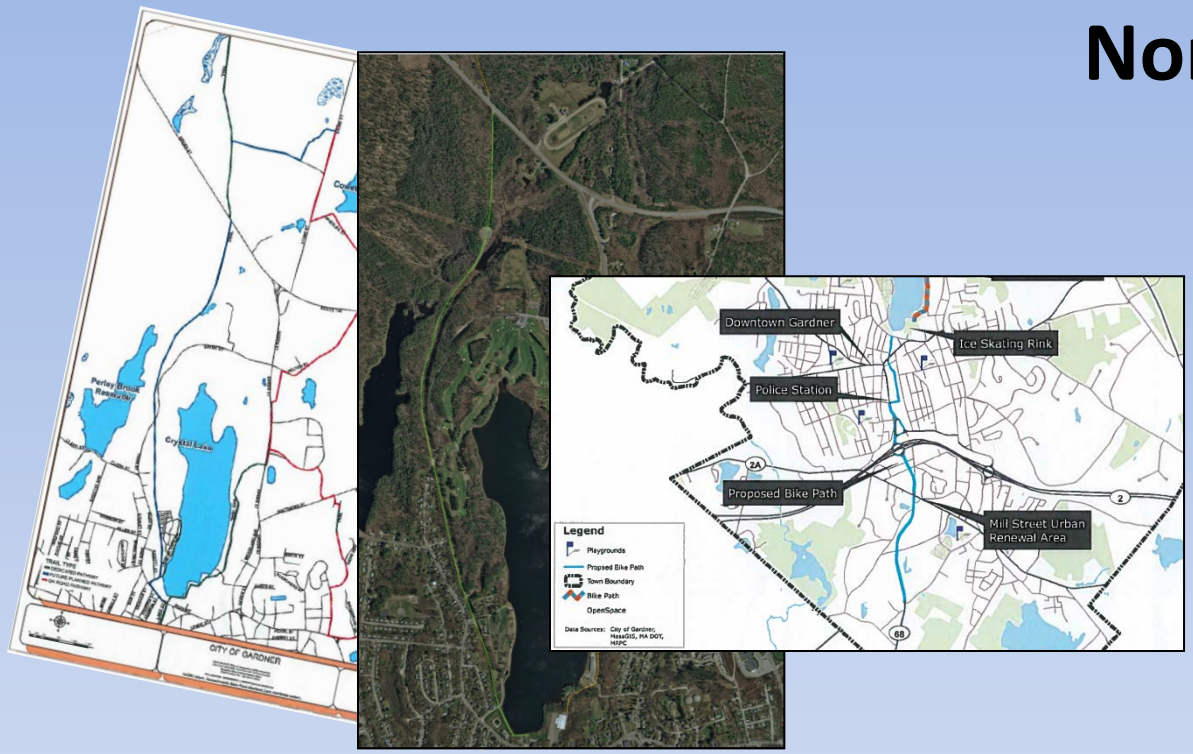
Perley Brook Loop Trail

CLARK STREET & EATON STREET, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS





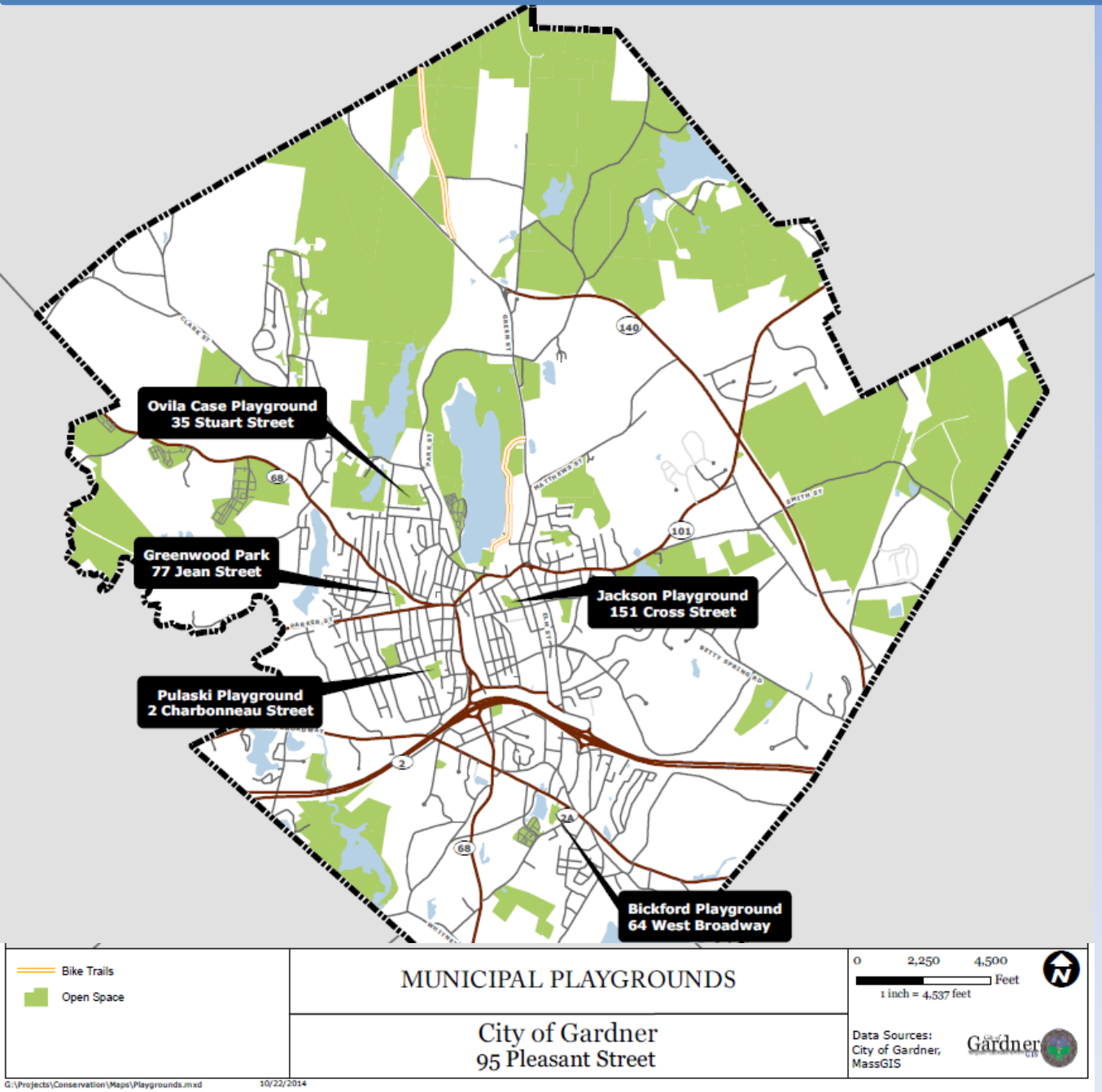
- 2-Mile Loop
- Scenic Vistas
- Fishing Access
- Wildlife Observation
- Trail Connections



North Central Pathway

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Gardner to Winchendon
- Dunn Pond Spur
- Downtown and South Gardner
- Scenic Vistas of Crystal Lake
- Biking, Walking, Jogging



Parks & Playgrounds

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Bickford Playground
- Greenwood Park
- Greenwood Pool & Splash Park
- Jackson Playground
- Ovila Case Playground
- Pulaski Playground & Dog Park

Bickford Playground

64 WEST BROADWAY, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Baseball/Softball
- Basketball Court
- Open Grass Field
- Volleyball
- Walking Track

Greenwood Park

77 JEAN STREET, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Baseball/Softball
- Basketball Court
- Open Grass Field
- Playground
- Multipurpose Path

Greenwood Pool & Splash Park

69 PARK STREET, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Public Swim
- Swim Lessons
- Open Grass Field
- Facility Rental
- Special Events

Jackson Playground & Skate Park

151 CROSS STREET, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Baseball/Softball
- Basketball Courts
- Playground & Tot Play Area
- Skatepark
- Multipurpose Path

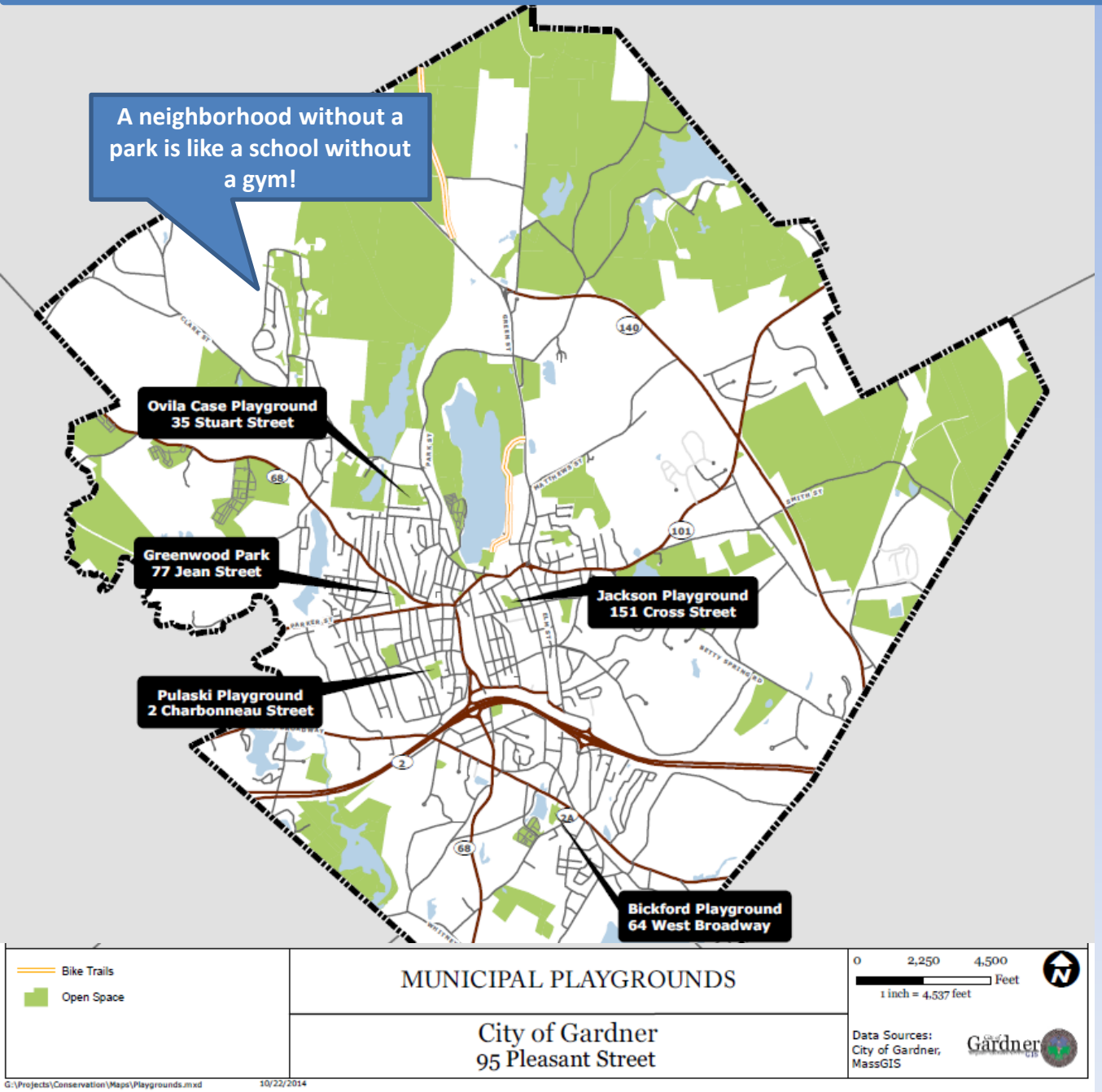
Ovila Case Playground

35 STUART STREET, GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

- Baseball/Softball
- Tennis Court
- Wooden Playground
- Picnic Area
- Walking Track

Recreational Amenities

Parks & Playgrounds



Parks & Playgrounds

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

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- Jackson Playground
- Ovila Case Playground
- Pulaski Playground
- Bailey Brook Park?

Mapping and Prioritizing Parcel Resiliency (MAPPR)

Mass Audubon

Gardner

***Balanced Model**

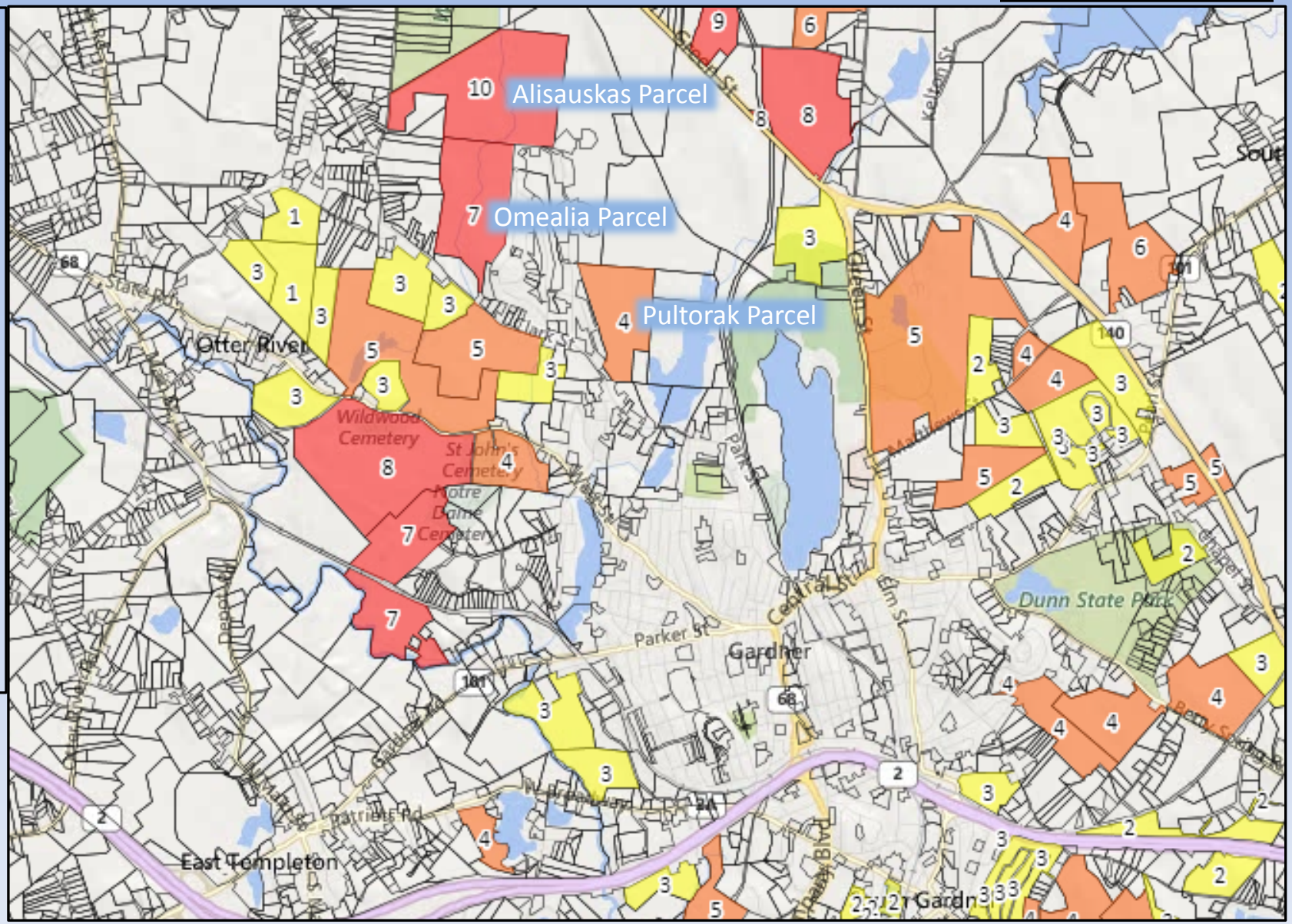
Assigned Values:

- ❑ Resilient
- ❑ Critical Linkages
- ❑ BioMap2 Core Hab
- ❑ BioMap2 CNL
- ❑ Prime Farmland
- ❑ Adjacent Protection
- ❑ UnderRep Settings

Filter: 20 ac

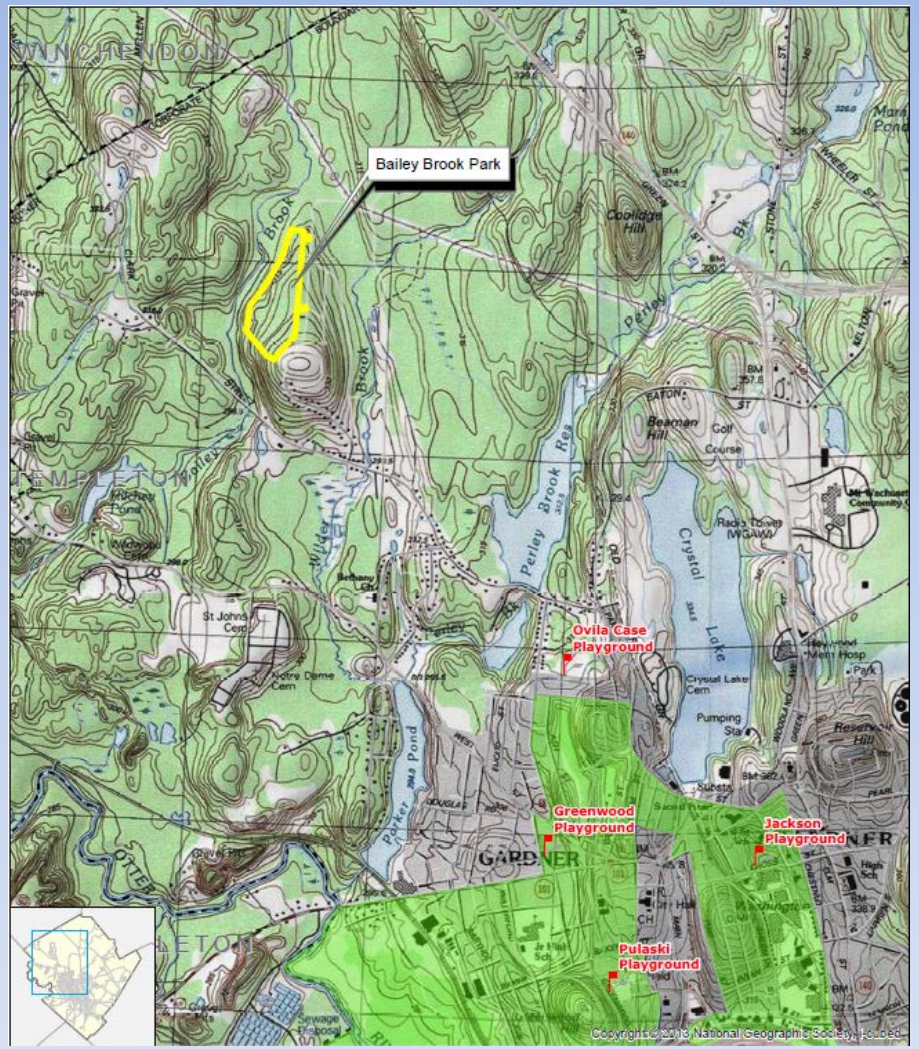
Priority

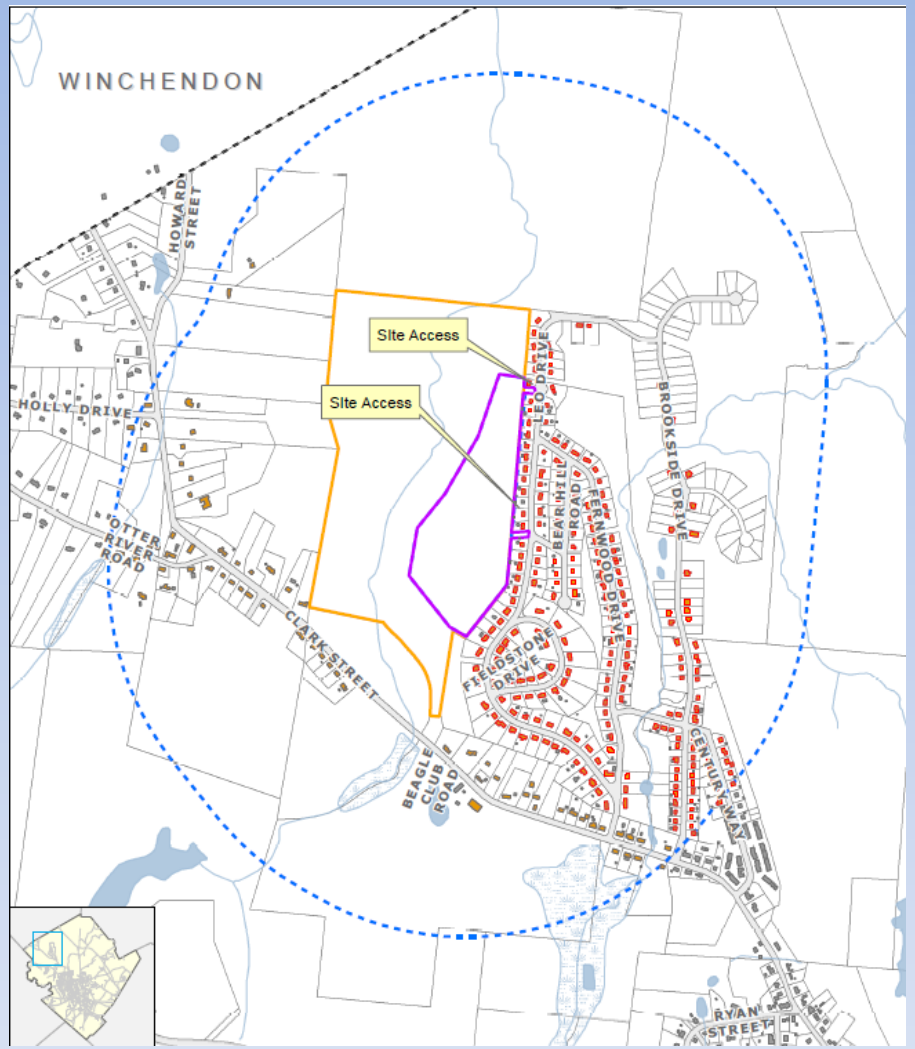
- High
- Med
- Low



www.massaudubon.org/mappr

Bailey Brook Conservation Area & Open Space Park





Justification, Community Need, and Open Space and Recreation Plan Vision

Sidewalk and Trail Improvements…

Protect Additional Open Space…

Provide a dog-friendly open space…

Conduct a Public Shade Tree Inventory…

Create a multipurpose park in West Gardner…

Promote use & stewardship of natural resources…

Improve access to lakes, rivers, and ponds…

Action Plan

Implementing your Open Space and Recreation Plan

...Mass Complete Streets Program

...Acquisitions of Bailey Brook Parcels

.... Dog Park at Lepkowski Field

...Tree City USA Designation

... Bailey Brook Open Space Park Acquisition

...Crystal Lake Community Forest & Wellness Area

...Kendall Pond Boat Launch Fishing & Swimming Dock

Bailey Brook Conservation Area & Open Space Park

Bailey Brook Conservation Area

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Bailey Brook Park Land

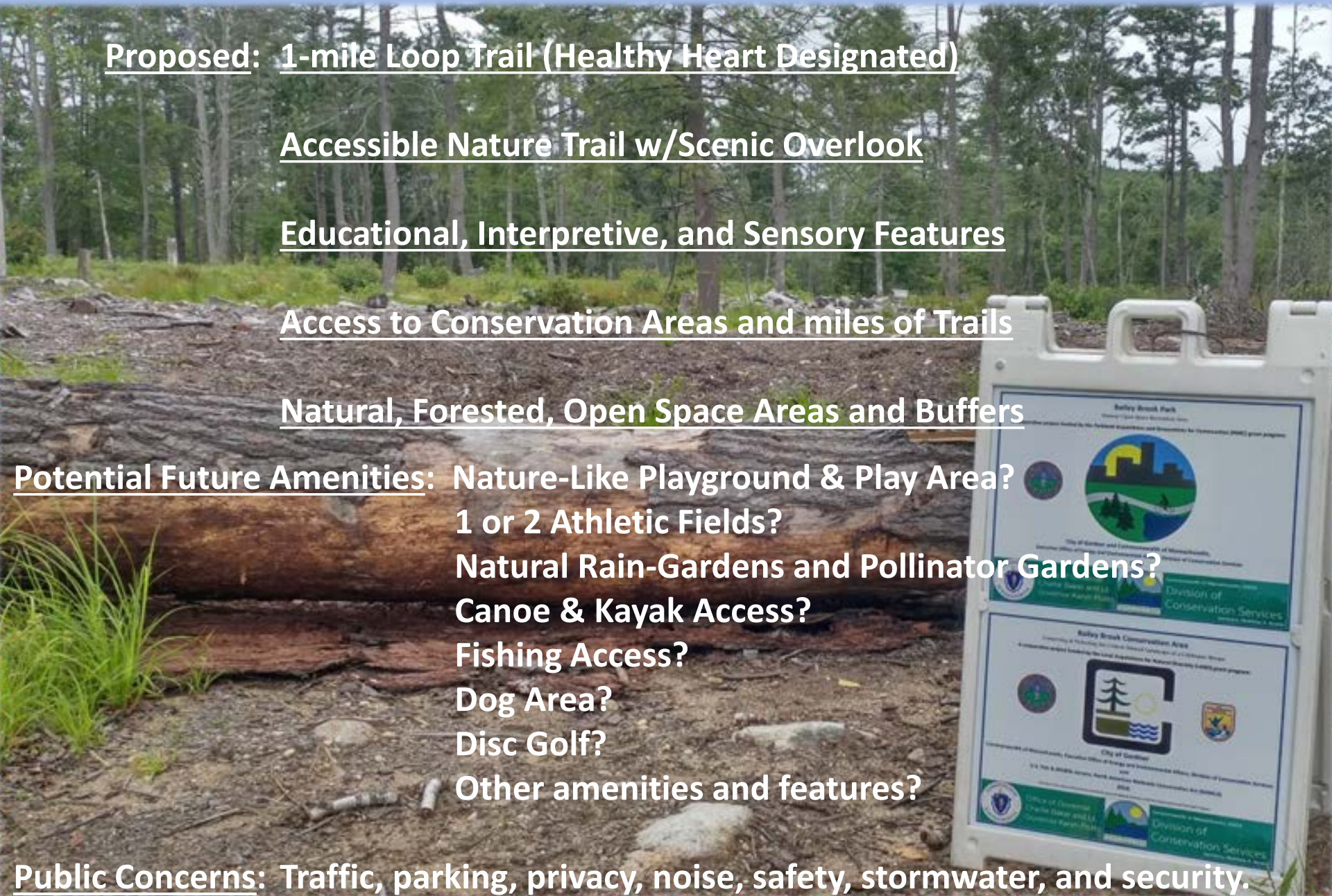
Bailey Brook Open Space Park: PARC Grant *2020 - 2021*

Year 1 (2020): Design

Year 2 (2021): Site Preparation & Access

Years 3-5: Park Development (Pending Additional Grant Funds)

Bailey Brook Open Space Park: Design & Site Work



Proposed: 1-mile Loop Trail (Healthy Heart Designated)

Accessible Nature Trail w/Scenic Overlook

Educational, Interpretive, and Sensory Features

Access to Conservation Areas and miles of Trails

Natural, Forested, Open Space Areas and Buffers

Potential Future Amenities: Nature-Like Playground & Play Area?
1 or 2 Athletic Fields?
Natural Rain-Gardens and Pollinator Gardens?
Canoe & Kayak Access?
Fishing Access?
Dog Area?
Disc Golf?
Other amenities and features?

Public Concerns: Traffic, parking, privacy, noise, safety, stormwater, and security.

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

...committed to making Massachusetts the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Division of Conservation Services

PARC

LAND