

# 2018 PLAN UPDATE



## Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan



**June 2018**

# Acknowledgements

This plan would not be possible without the support and leadership of many people in the Town of Stoneham. Sincere thanks to the Stoneham Open Space and recreation Plan Update Committee and Erin Wortman, Town Planner. Members of the Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee are listed in Section 3 of the plan. Funding for this project was provided by the Community Compact Best Practices Program through the Massachusetts Governor's Office and a technical assistance grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

Professional support was provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional planning agency serving the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. The following MAPC staff executed the field work, research, analysis, and writing of this Open Space and Recreation Plan, as well as the facilitation of key public meetings:

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# 1

## Plan Summary

The 2018 Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan (the Plan) updates and revises the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan approved by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. This Plan Update was prepared by the Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, with the assistance of Stoneham residents, members of Town boards, committees and staff. The Plan was put together after significant public outreach (survey, forum, Town Day booth, open house) and numerous discussions with the Committee.

Since the last plan, the Town has worked to implement many of the action steps identified in the 1997 Plan. These improvements include completing acquisition of the Stoneham portion of the Tri-Community Greenway and the initial cleanup and construction of the Greenway on this site, with final construction by MassDOT anticipated by fall 2018. Significant improvements have also been made to the AP Rounds Playground through a private fundraising effort. In addition, limited public access (boat rentals, shore fishing) are now allowed on Spot Pond within the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The town has also recently (FY2016) re-established the Recreation Department. A list of projects completed in the recent past, and ongoing, is on Page 58.

This Plan Update provides current information about the community's growth, open space and recreation needs and goals, and develops an action plan for meeting those needs.

### **Important Issues and Projects**

Based upon the input received from the public forum, the survey, Town Day, and the open house event, as well as input from town staff, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee feels that that following are the most important issues facing the town. These issues will be echoed in the Community Goals in Chapter 8 and the 7-year action Plan in Chapter 9 at the end of this document:

Completion of the Tri-Community Greenway, and connections to the remainder of town through the Complete Streets Program, is the project that resonates most with the citizens of Stoneham.

The greatest concern is the need for an increased commitment by the town to parks and playground maintenance. This has implications for the staffing of the Department of Public Works (DPW), which has direct responsibility for the maintenance of the Parks and conservation sites.

There is also an acknowledgement that the playgrounds and active recreation sites are in need of significant capital improvements, in order to provide quality recreation spaces, improve safety, and to make the sites compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The golf courses (Unicorn Golf Course and Stoneham Oaks Golf Course) and skating rink (Stoneham Arena) managed by the Open Space and Recreation Committee are intended to operate based upon user fees. In fall 2017, Town Meeting voted to allocate \$1.6 million for significant capital improvements to the Stoneham Arena indoor ice skating facility. Cooperation/collaboration with the School Department is important, as the schools provide some of the playground and sports fields, and ensure geographic equity (e.g., the only playground west of Route 28 is located at the Robin Hood School).

Large portions of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, and all of the Spot Pond Reservoir, are within the boundaries of Stoneham. A major goal of the 1997 OSRP was to obtain some access to the Spot Pond Reservoir site for recreational purposes. Some access has been allowed (e.g., shore fishing, boat rentals), but there remains a strong interest in the addition of a circumferential trail around Spot Pond.

There is little remaining undeveloped land in Stoneham, and the last farm in town has been proposed for a housing development. This has led to significant discussion related to the preservation of this site, either by acquisition or by a trade for one of the two golf courses owned and operated by the town.

There is significant interest in providing information to the community about the multitude of conservation and recreation sites within the town; web sites, maps, program flyers, and signage can be used to bring residents to enjoy the sites. Expansion of the programming to be hosted at the various park and conservation sites is an integral element of this effort.

Another topic of interest was the expansion of funding sources, and the use of volunteers and donations to improve the conservation areas and parks in town. There is interest in establishing programs to facilitate donations and volunteering, and interest in the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and other sources of revenue for parks. Discussions also pointed to the need to examine all use/maintenance agreements and related program fees with private leagues and school teams, to be sure to be able to recoup sufficient costs to maintain the parks while also allowing time for the general public to use the properties.

A final goal is the coordination and collaboration with other plans and other departments (Housing Production Plan, Complete Streets Plan implementation, potential future plans related to maintenance and programming on the Greenway, etc.), to ensure that actions proposed under the OSRP are consistent with, and support, and are not in conflict with other plans of the Town.

### **Stoneham's Open Space and Recreation Vision**

Stoneham's Open Space and Recreation Plan, developed through an inclusive public process, will guide citizens, board members, and elected officials in being purposeful in managing the playgrounds, recreation areas, and conservation sites in town, with the intent of promoting health and well-being within the community.

# 2

## Introduction

### Statement of Purpose

#### Why was this Plan Update Written?

This document will replace Stoneham's 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and will serve to guide the Town's decisions on open space and recreation activities (including spending) for the next seven years. The Plan is designed to provide a road map of open space and recreation priorities to ensure that the needs of the Stoneham community are met. Through a public process, the community's needs were identified, and goals and action steps to address those needs were developed.

This 2018 Plan Update has been compiled in accordance with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requirements and guidelines. In order to be eligible for state and federal grant aid offered through the EOAA, an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan is required.

#### What is Open Space?

Open space is land that is undeveloped, usually without buildings or structures, and that is accessible to the public. Open space is typically divided into two categories: conservation lands and recreation resources.

Conservation land is usually left in its natural state and it is often, but not always, open to the public. Conservation lands may include animal and plant habitats, water resources/aquifer protection, and other natural, historical or cultural features. Stoneham has a number of properties that fall into this category. In Stoneham's case, one of the significant conservation properties, Whip Hill Park, also includes a house that was part of the property when it was acquired.

Recreation involves activity. Active recreation activities include team sports, tennis, swimming competitively, golf, etc. taking place in or on developed facilities. Passive recreation is defined as

any activity that can be performed outdoors with a minimum disturbance to an area's natural resources. For example, hiking, picnicking, canoeing, ice-skating, cross country skiing, swimming in a natural water body, and informal sports activities on an open field are considered passive activities. Conservation lands can offer passive recreation opportunities.

This Plan will inventory both active and passive recreation areas, as well open spaces such as cemeteries that serve as historical/cultural features. The Inventory of Stoneham recreation and open space resources is in Chapter 5.

## **Planning Process and Public Participation**

The Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee is comprised of volunteers from other Stoneham Town committees and non-profit organization. The members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, and their affiliations are:

- *George Seibold – Board of Selectmen*
- *Megan Day – Conservation Commission*
- *Rachel Rennard – Conservation Commission*
- *Stephen McDonough – Open Space and Recreation Committee*
- *William Murphy – Greenway Committee*
- *Massimo Guarino – Stoneham Soccer Club*
  
- *Staff: Erin Wortman, Director of Planning and Community Development*

Note that additional assistance and input was received from the following town staff:

- *David Lizotte – Operations Engineer, Stoneham DPW*
- *Steve Angelo - Stoneham Recreation Department Director*
- *Louis M. Chiulli–Stoneham Ice Arena manager*

The Committee began meeting in January, 2017. For the past year, the Committee worked to gather, analyze, and discuss information to include in the Update. Their work was informed by the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan in conjunction with significant public input. Documents and websites used in preparation of this Plan are referenced in the relevant chapters; a list of additional reports consulted is in Chapter 11. The draft plan was delivered to Town, state and regional stakeholders for review. Formal comments on the plan are included in Chapter 11. Following completion of the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town will continue to solicit community input as it implements the action steps outlined in this Plan, as well as to monitor overall progress toward meeting the Plan's goals.

## **Public Participation**

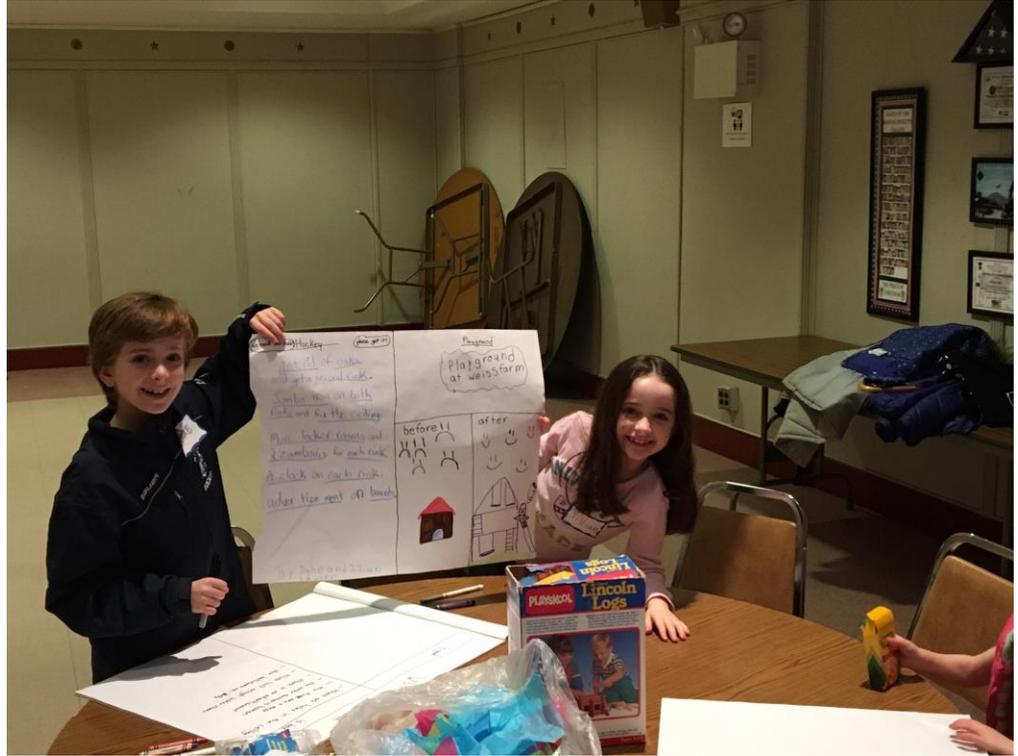
In addition to a half dozen meetings of the Committee, the public participated in the planning process through a survey, an initial public forum, at a Town Day booth, and a final open house event.

The Survey was posted for several months, was announced on the project web page and through social media, and was distributed at Town Hall and available on-line. More than 100 paper surveys were received, were input by MAPC staff and merged with the on-line responses. In total, 749 responses were received and analyzed. The results of the survey are discussed in the Analysis of Needs Section; more details on the survey are found in the Appendix to this OSRP.

The first forum, held on March 28, 2017, included small group discussions regarding goals for open space and a review of the draft open space inventory maps, a large group discussion of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities relating to open space and recreation in Stoneham, a presentation of some background information relating to open space demographics and the results (to that date) of the survey, and an opportunity to provide feedback on a draft set of goals and action statements that were developed from the previous plans and the survey results. The presentation used at the forum is included in the Appendices to this ORSP. More than 50 people participated in this evening event; in an effort to diversify the participants and bring in more young families, child-care was provided in the form of a “kid’s table” at which the children could play games, or if they chose, could provide their own Open Space feedback in the form of drawings of what they would like to see in open space or recreation in the town. The public forum was advertised through:

- an article in the local newspaper
- announcement at the selectmen’s meeting, which was broadcast and repeated on local cable television
- through social media outreach via facebook connections by members of the Stoneham OSRP Update Committee

In an effort to reach out to different groups of participants, it was decided that instead of hosting a second public forum, the Committee would instead host an information and feedback booth at Town Day, September 16, held during the day on Stoneham Town Common, and also to host a drop-in open house style feedback event from 6:00 to 9:00PM on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The goal was to make it as easy as possible for residents to provide input into the plan. The OSRP Committee booth at Town Day did not have a separate announcement, but there were numerous Town Day related news articles announcing the event. Social media was used to spread the word about the OSRP booth. The booth was also provided with a high-visibility location adjacent to the “dunk tank”, showing significant town support for the project.



PARTICIPANTS AT THE "KID'S TABLE" AT THE PUBLIC FORUM



ADULTS PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSION AT MARCH PUBLIC FORUM

## Environmental Justice Enhanced Outreach

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and other state agencies have been implementing an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy since 2002 to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. This policy was instituted because the Commonwealth realized that low to moderate income residents in densely populated older industrial areas often lack open space and recreation resources and may live near old, abandoned, and/or contaminated sites that can pose risks to public health and the environment.

Environmental justice is an integral consideration in all EEA programs, to the extent applicable and allowable by law. The Environmental Justice Executive Order No. 552 requires Secretariats to take action in promoting environmental justice. The Executive Order requires new environmental justice strategies that promote positive impacts in EJ communities.

For example, EEA has now amended the PARC and LAND program regulations to incorporate environmental justice in the award scoring system. Similarly, the Riverways and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust will work with EEA to develop systems for incorporating environmental justice as a criterion for awarding grants. The EEA also has determined to target its resources to more effectively create, restore, and maintain open spaces located in neighborhoods where EJ populations reside.

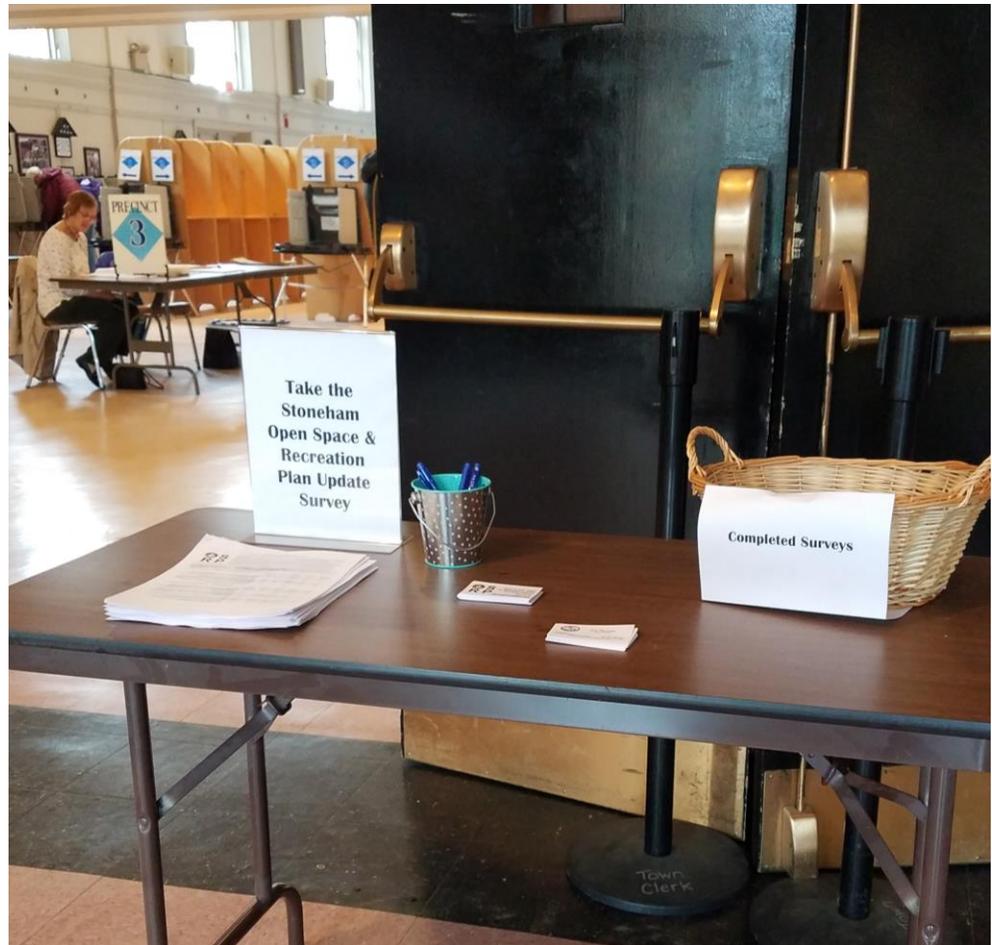
Stoneham is one of 137 communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that includes an Environmental Justice (EJ) population, as identified through analysis by MassGIS. EJ populations in Massachusetts are determined by the following criteria:

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

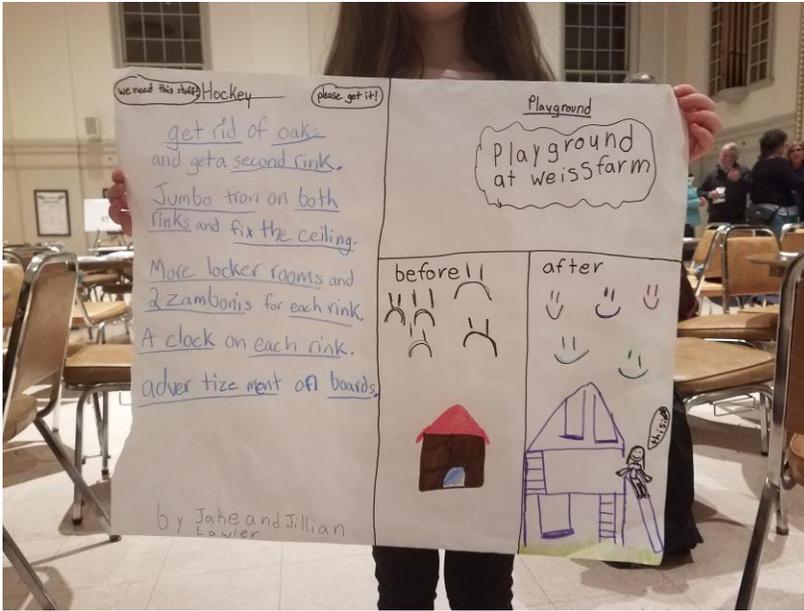
Map #2, which illustrates the EJ Populations by Census Block Group, indicates that only the southeastern portion of the town contains any EJ population. This area qualifies for EJ status under the low income classification. There are no areas of town that qualify under any other categories of EJ population.

The Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee undertook concerted efforts to ensure that their outreach would provide the maximum opportunity for all residents, including lower income residents in the EJ community, to provide input to the OSRP. Specific Environmental Justice-oriented outreach efforts included:

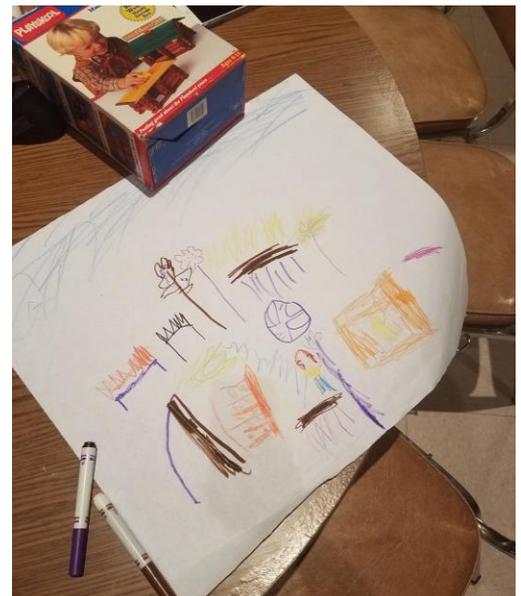
1. Making OSRP surveys available in paper form at town election (all precincts voting at Town Hall), at the Senior Center, and at the town library. In addition to the on-line survey, paper copies of the OSRP survey were made available at three



locations that the Committee thought were likely to draw from a wide demographic range. In addition, staff at the library and senior center were available to assist individuals in filling out the paper surveys. More than 100 of the total 749 completed surveys were submitted in paper form.



2. A Kid's Table/childcare at Public Forum: The OSRP Update Committee is aware that finding a babysitter can be difficult and expensive, and may prevent individuals from participating in evening meetings. The Committee therefore decided to advertise that there would be a "kid's table" at the OSRP Public Forum, so that individuals with children could have the opportunity to attend the event. The Kid's Table provided games and art supplies for the children, enabling them to be occupied during the adults' participation in the forum. As a bonus, some of the older children provided art work that represented their goals or concerns relating to Open Space in Stoneham.

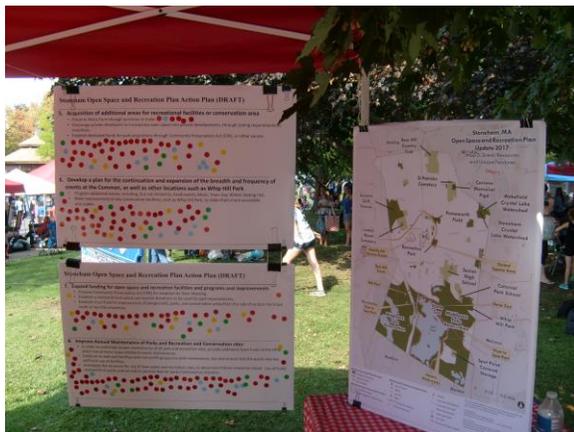


3. Bringing the OSRP Planning process to Town Day, an event at Town Common:

Town Day is an annual event in Stoneham that draws hundreds of individuals from a wide range of demographics to a free program on the Town Common. The Committee decided to use the Town Day event (September 16<sup>th</sup>) as an opportunity to solicit feedback from residents on the draft Goals and Actions. More than 115 individuals participated in the evaluation of draft action statements at



the Town Day booth. Although specific records were not collected, it was apparent that the participants at Town Day included many more families with young children, many more individuals in the 20 to 50 year age bracket, and racial diversity that more closely reflected the demographics of the town, than those who participated in the first public forum.



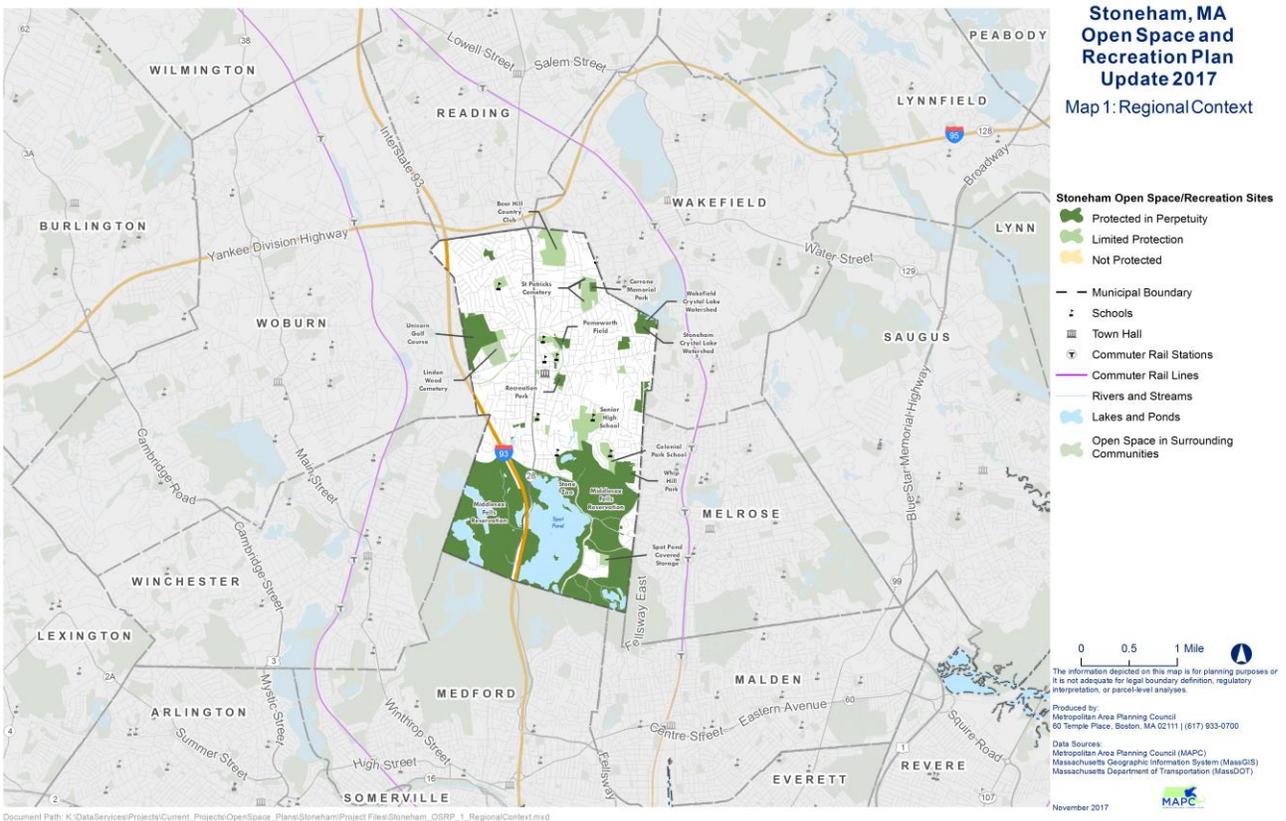
4. Hosting an Open House type of event, to allow for flexibility of schedule for participants:  
The final programmed event of the OSRP Committee was an Open House/Drop In style event that enabled individuals to stop by Town Hall anytime between 5:00PM and 8:00PM on September 26<sup>th</sup> to provide feedback on the Goals and Actions. This event, combined with the Town Day program, was designed to provide the maximum opportunity for participation in the OSRP process, including participation by those individuals who may have difficulty spending significant time at “conventional” public forums. An additional 15 individuals participated in providing feedback through this opportunity.

## Community Setting

### Regional Context

Stoneham is located 9 miles north of Boston and is bordered by Malden and Medford to the south, Melrose and Wakefield to the east, Reading to the north, and Woburn and Winchester to the west. Stoneham is included in Middlesex County and comprises 6.7 square miles, of which approximately 8% consists of water bodies, the largest of which is Spot Pond.

#### MAP 1A REGIONAL CONTEXT #1



### Regional Planning Context: MAPC and MetroFuture

Stoneham is one of 101 municipalities served by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for greater Boston. Created by an Act of the Legislature in 1963, it is

one of 13 regional planning agencies in Massachusetts. MAPC works with member communities to address issues of regional impact such as transportation, resource protection, housing and public policy.

### **North Suburban Planning Council Subregion**

The Town of Stoneham is also a member of the North Suburban Planning Council, which is one of eight MAPC subregions. The Council is comprised of Stoneham and 8 neighboring communities. This group meets regularly to discuss their common interests, as well as regional planning issues and opportunities. This is a valuable forum where Stoneham can share and learn from other communities' experiences while working with neighboring municipalities to achieve regional open space goals such as the Tri-Community Greenway, other greenway connections to adjacent communities, and continued efforts to implement a circumferential trail at Spot Pond.

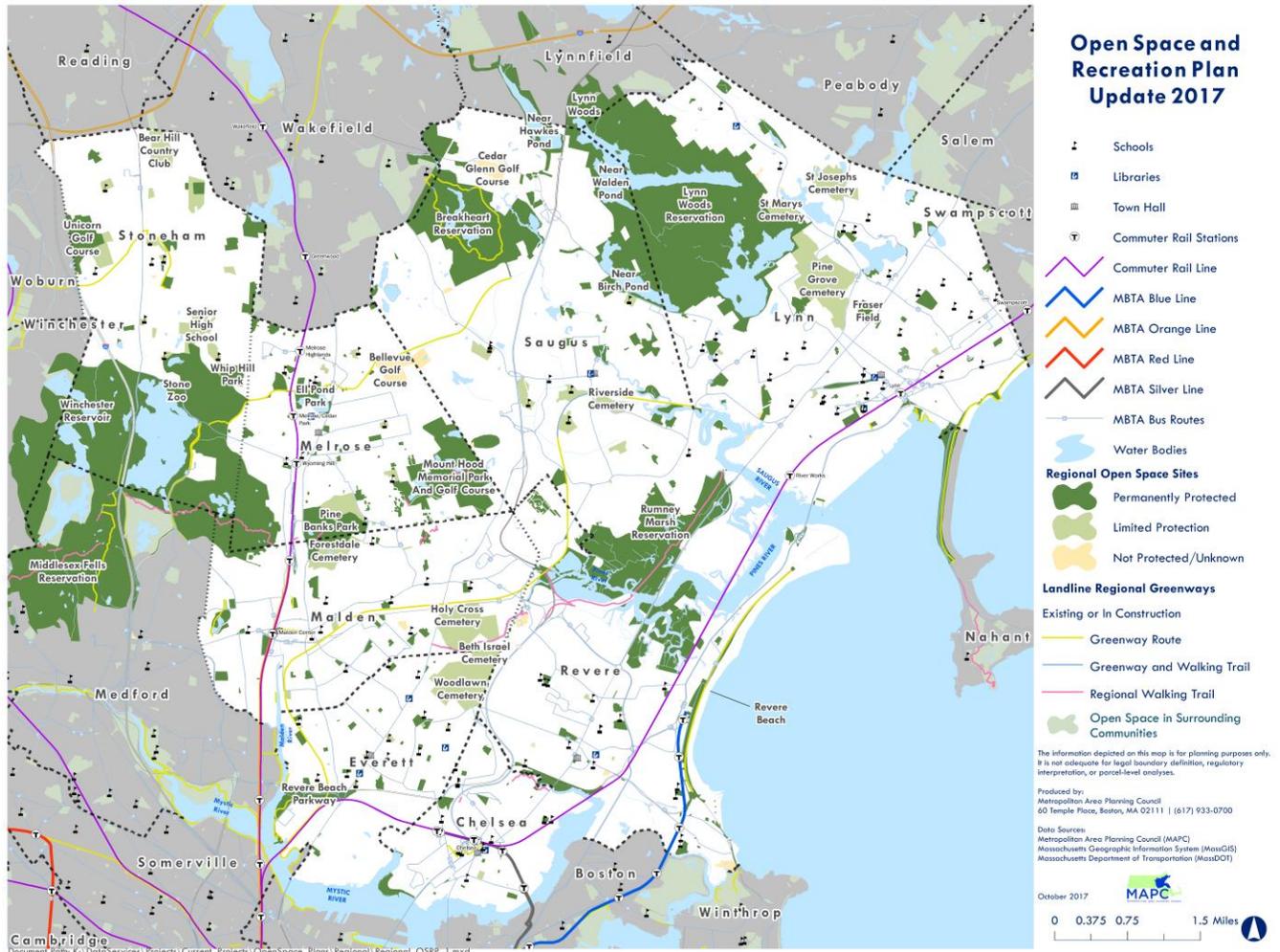
### **MetroFuture**

Metro Future is the official regional plan for Greater Boston, adopted in 2009 consistent with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law. The plan includes goals and objectives as well as thirteen detailed implementation strategies for accomplishing these goals. The complete regional plan may be viewed by visiting the website at: <http://www.metrofuture.org/>.

Among the regional initiatives Stoneham has worked on, the Tri-Community Greenway is anchored by the old Stoneham branch railroad which forms the majority of the designed route. In addition, Stoneham has, and continues to be, a strong advocate for expansion of passive recreational activities at the Middlesex Falls Reservation and Spot Pond. At the time of the 1997 OSRP, the town had a goal of opening Spot Pond for additional recreational uses; today this area is open for fishing and there are boat rentals available on the Pond. Stoneham is continuing to advocate for a Pond circumferential trail; when implemented, this trail can connect with other regional trails and eventually connect to the Mystic River Reservation and trail system.

Stoneham's regional planning context is shown on the small size map below, and also in the Appendix in a larger size.

## MAP 1B REGIONAL CONTEXT #2



As can be seen in this Stoneham Regional Context Map #2, as well as the Open Space Inventory Map (Map 7), Stoneham also has a number of Open Space Resources that extend beyond the borders of the community. The largest of these is the Middlesex Fells Reservation. As part of this OSRP Update process, several of the goals that arose from the public were related to working more closely with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, as well as abutting communities, on management of the resources that cross municipal boundaries.

## History of Stoneham

The earliest colonial era reference to Stoneham was the 1632 investigation of the area in which John Winthrop and his party came across Spot Pond and Bear Hill. Originally part of Charlestown, Stoneham became a separate township in 1725. Stoneham was initially a farming community. Small scale shoe manufacturing began in the early 1800's. In 1837, when the population of the town was just over 900 individuals, more than half of the population was engaged in the shoemaking industry. As detailed elsewhere in this report, the area east of Spot Pond, along the Spot Pond Brook, was the site of a number of mills from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>

centuries, and at one time hosted the industrial community of “Haywardville”. By the 1850’s, more than half of the industry in Stoneham was related to the shoe and leather business. Other industries such as pharmaceutical and motor manufacturing were present in the early 1900’s. The extension of the Interstate highway system, (I-93) to Stoneham in the 1960’s improved access to jobs in Boston and enabled growth of Stoneham as a more residential suburb.

Spot Pond was also a prime recreation location, prior to its establishment as a water supply reservoir.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/stoneham/then-and-now-stoneham-historical-society>  
<http://stonehamchamber.org/stoneham-history/>

The 1880's also marked the beginning of the public parks movement in Massachusetts. In 1890, the private Trustees of Public Reservations (now the Trustees of Reservations) and in 1893, the Metropolitan Park Commission (now the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation) were created to preserve lands of natural beauty and history for the enjoyment of the general public. Through the work of the Trustees and the Metropolitan Park Commission many of Massachusetts' current regional natural resources, including the Middlesex Fells Reservation, were identified and protected.

The first gift to The Trustees was the Virginia Woods, which the Tudor family donated in 1894 in memory of their daughter Virginia, making the first public piece of land within the Fells.

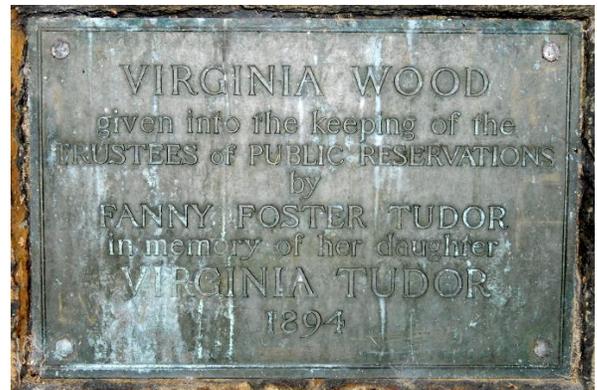


Photo credit: <http://www.northshorenature.com/middlesex-fells-reservation/>

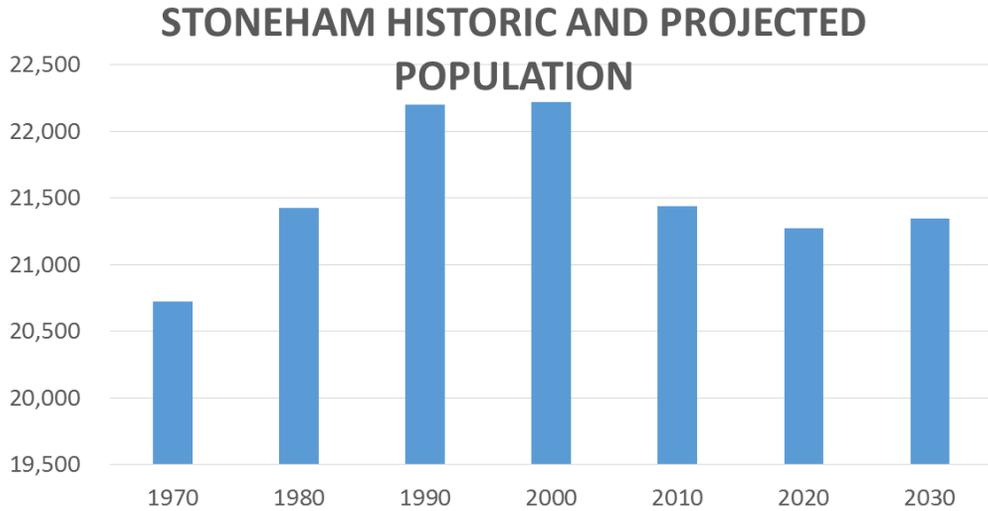
## Demographic Characteristics



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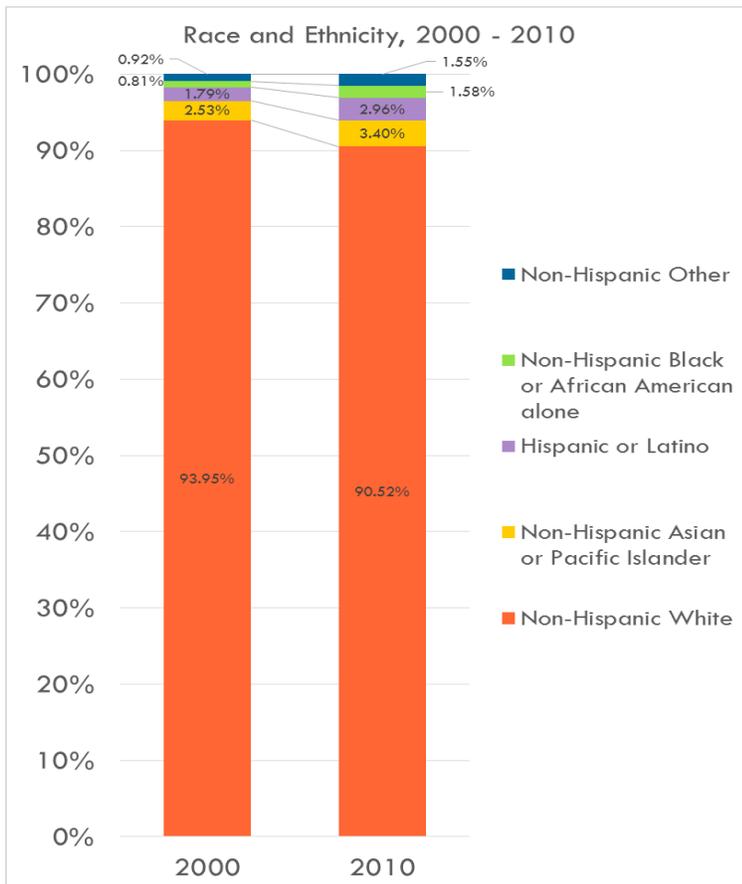
### Overall Population Characteristics

The chart below shows Stoneham’s population from 1970 to 2010, based on the US Census, along with MAPC’s projections under the Stronger Region Scenario for 2020 and 2030. As can be seen, the population of the town increased through the late 1990’s but then leveled off and began to decline. This is largely due to the decrease in household size, which was not offset by enough construction of new units to increase the total number of households. Of 10 nearby communities, only Stoneham and Melrose showed declines during this time period. The decline in population is expected to slow, and then reverse, showing a slightly increase again by 2030.



**Source:** U.S. Census; MAPC Population Projections

As can be seen in the following graph, Stoneham is becoming a slightly more diverse community, but it remains a predominantly white community. From 2000 to 2010, the percent of minority population increased from approximately 6.1% to 9.5%.



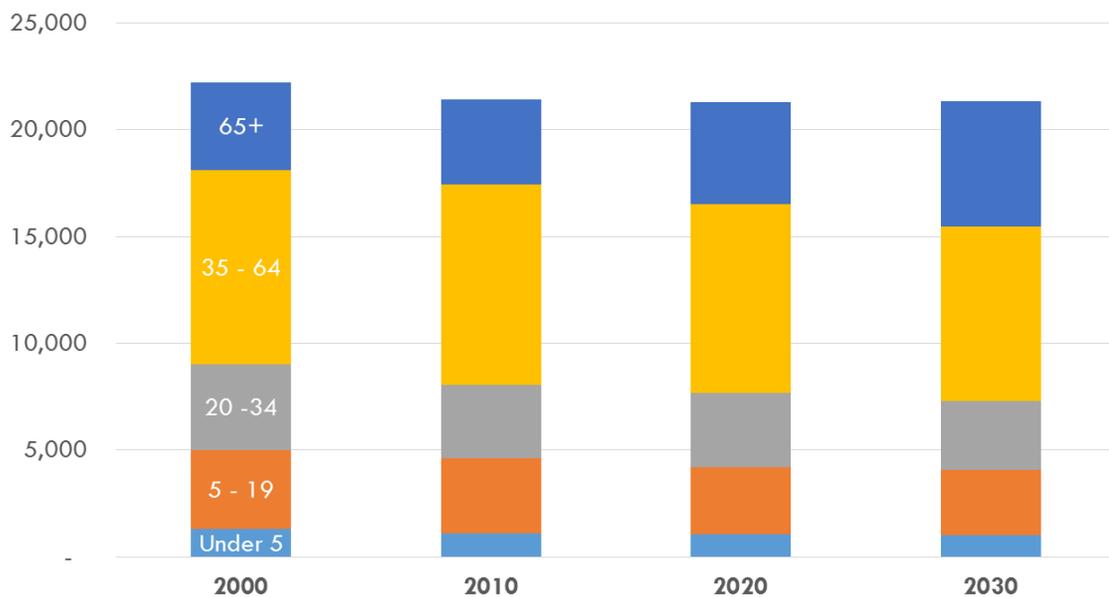
**Source:** US Census 2000, 2010



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## Age Distribution

The following table shows the trends expected within various age groups in the Town of Stoneham. This information is important in order to understand the future demand for various kinds of recreation activities and open spaces needed to serve all segments of the population. As can be seen from the data, the number of very young children (age 0 – 5) and youth (aged 5 – 19) is expected to stay relatively stable. This could indicate that there may not be a need for an increased number of playgrounds and parks for this age group (assuming that the existing number is meeting the needs of the population). However, the expected large increase in the population 65+ age group could translate into a need for more gently sloped walking trails suitable for a senior population.



Source: US Census 1990, 2000, 2010; MAPC Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections, 2014

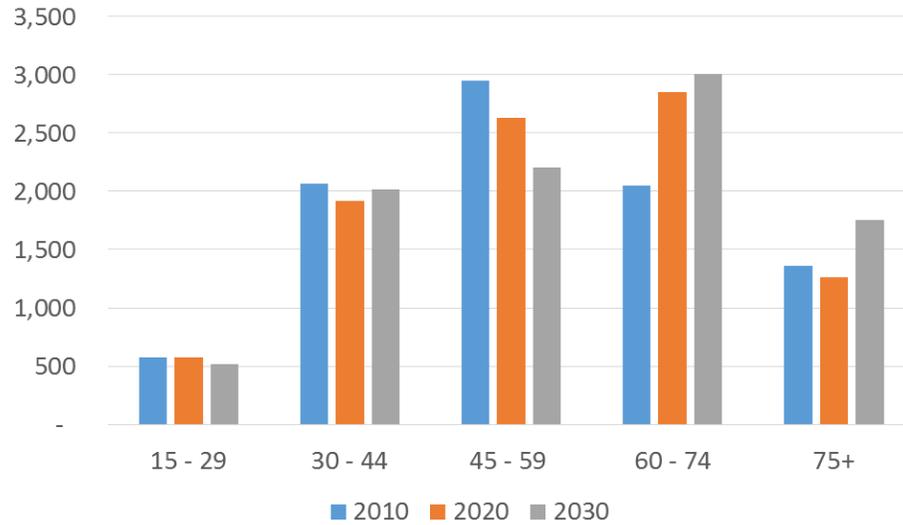


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## Households

Although the total population of Stoneham has shown a decrease, the number of households has risen in the recent past and is expected to continue in the future; a 6% increase is projected in the number of households by 2030. Household growth will outpace population growth, due to household size. The increase in the number of households is greatest in the households led by individuals over 60 years of age. This indicates a possible need for smaller units, such as apartments, versus single-family homes.

### Number of Households by Age of Householder



Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Stronger Region Projections

In 2010, 26.3% of the total of 8,994 households in town included children, for a total of 4,627 individuals 19 and under. By 2030 this is projected to decrease to 4,053, with the majority of this change in the 10-19 age group. This indicates that although there will not be an increase in demand for youth recreation space as a result of increasing youth population, any unmet current demand (e.g., types of facilities, facilities for different age groups, more equitable geographic distribution) will remain to be addressed.



### Density

Stoneham is a low density residential suburb with a density of approximately 5 people per acre. However, due to the very large expanses of open space in the southern portion of the town, the population is not spread evenly throughout the community. Approximately 37% of Stoneham is zoned for open space uses. An additional 11% of the town consists of other government owned properties, small ponds not in open space areas, roads, etc. Over 41% (1,756 acres) of Stoneham is made up of residential land uses, the vast majority of which (35%) are occupied by single family homes. Only a small portion of the town remains undeveloped and available for development or future open space, and some of this land is subject to development constraints such as wetlands or being zoned for open space.

## Jobs and Income

Stoneham has a diversified employment base, including health care, industry, retail and municipal services. Top employers in the town are shown in the chart below.

### Largest 28 Employers in Stoneham\*

Company Name	Address	Number of employees	NAICS Code	Business Category
Bear Hill Nursing Ctr	North St	100-249	6243	Rehabilitation Services
Life Care Ctr	Woodland Rd	100-249	6231	Nursing and Convalescent Homes
Stoneham High School	Franklin St	100-249	6111	Schools
A F C Doctors Exp Urgent Care	Main St	50-99	6214	Outpatient Care Centers
BJ'S Wholesale Club	Cedar St	50-99	4523	Wholesale Clubs
Brickpoint Properties	Main St # 200	50-99	9999	Real Estate property management
Center Beverage Savas Brothers	Main St	50-99	4453	Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores
Central Elementary School	Pomeworth St	50-99	6111	Schools
Clear Channel Outdoor	Maple St	50-99	5418	Advertising - Outdoor
Hallmark Health Cancer Ctr	Montvale Ave # 550	50-99	6211	Offices of Physicians
How's Work Inc	Montvale Ave # 4180	50-99	6241	Homemakers Serrvice
Lake HVAC Inc	Pleasant St	50-99	2382	Air Conditioning Contractors and Systems
Liberty Bay Credit Union	Main St	50-99	5221	Credit Union
Marshalls	Main St	50-99	4522	Department Stores
Marty's Caterers	Montvale Ave	50-99	7223	Special Food Services
Ryder	Fallon Rd	50-99	5321	Automotive Equipment Rental and Leasing

Service Master Co	Maple St	50-99	2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors
South Elementary School	Summer St	50-99	6111	Schools
Star Brite Cleaning Svc Inc	Montvale Ave # 150	50-99	5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings
Stone Zoo	Pond St	50-99	7121	Museums, Historical Sites and Similar Insitutions
Stoneham Bank A Co-Op Bank	Montvale Ave # 1	50-99	5221	Banks
Stoneham Motor Co Inc	Main St	50-99	5321	Automotive Equipment Rental and Leasing
Stoneham Police Dept	Central St	50-99	9221	Police Departments
Stoneham Town Elementary Sch	Oak St	50-99	6111	Schools
Stonehame Middle School	Central St	50-99	6111	Schools
US Post Office	Main St	50-99	4911	Post Offices
UTS of Massachusetts Inc	Richardson Ln	50-99	5413	Laboratories - Testing
Walgreens	Main St	50-99	4461	Pharmacies

\*Businesses listed in 2017 InfoGroup Data that employ more than 50 individuals

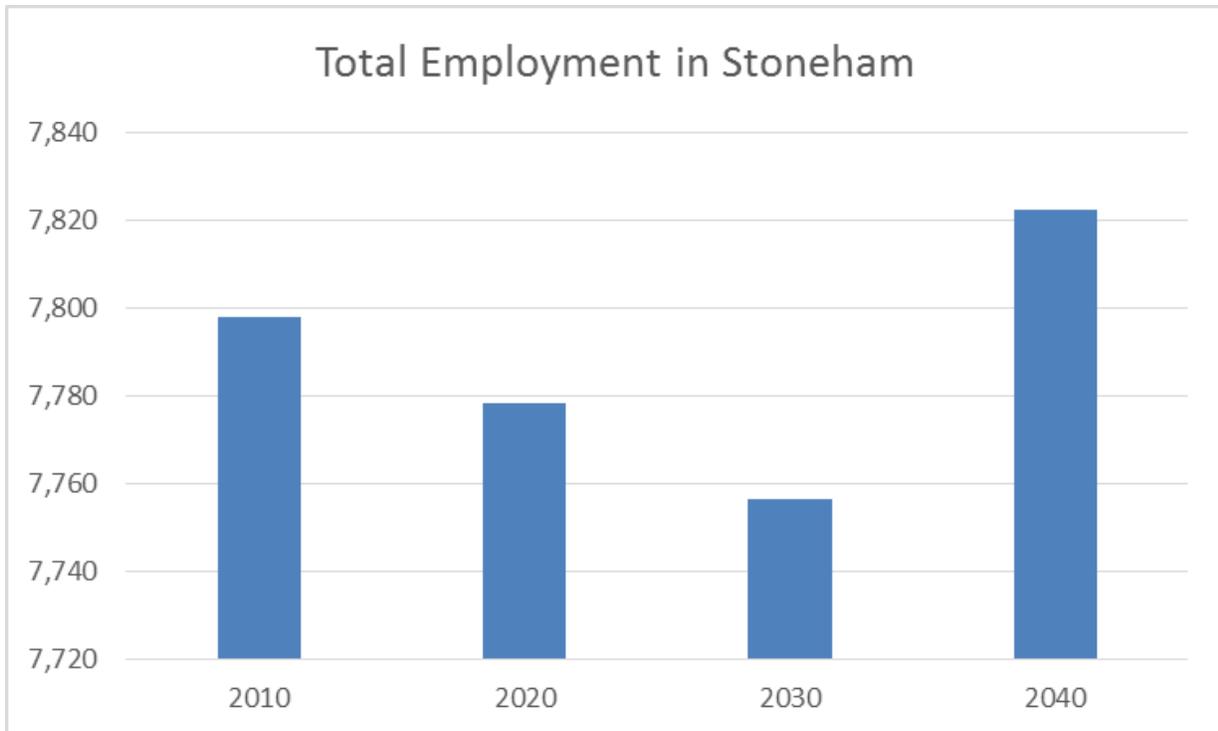
**Source:** InfoGroup Data listed on Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development website at [http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/Top\\_employer\\_list.asp?gstfips=25&areatype=05&gCountyCode=000495](http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/Top_employer_list.asp?gstfips=25&areatype=05&gCountyCode=000495)

In addition, the following chart shows that the jobs held by residents of Stoneham show a diverse range of occupations.

<b>Total Employment for All Industries</b>	<b>7403</b>	<b>%</b>
Health Care and Social Assistance	1571	21%
Retail Trade	1169	16%
Accommodation and Food Services	635	9%
Construction	595	8%
Public Administration	544	7%
Professional and Technical Services	521	7%
Educational Services	471	6%
Administrative and Waste Services	469	6%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	323	4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	232	3%
Transportation and Warehousing	193	3%
Finance and Insurance	154	2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	154	2%
Wholesale Trade	130	2%
Manufacturing	121	2%
Information	55	1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	
Mining	0	
Utilities	0	
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	

SOURCE: ES-202 DATA, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (EOLWD)

MAPC prepares employment projections for both the Regional Plan (MetroFuture) and for transportation planning purposes. The MAPC projections to 2040 are shown in the following chart and indicate a slight decline in the number of jobs in Stoneham through 2030, followed by a rebound to approximately the existing levels by 2040. This relatively consistent number of jobs is a result of changeover of companies within existing developed areas of Stoneham, but no significant growth since the commercial/industrial lands in town are largely built out.

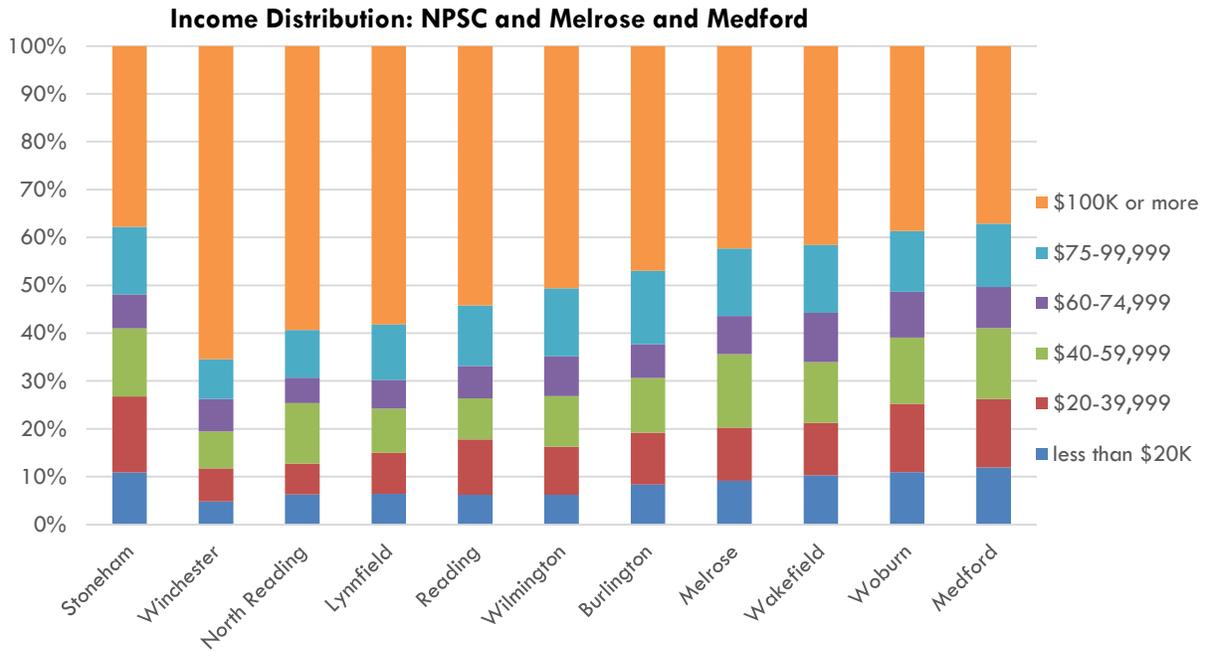


Source Boston Region Long Range Transportation Plan Projections, MAPC, 2014, InfoUSA 2010

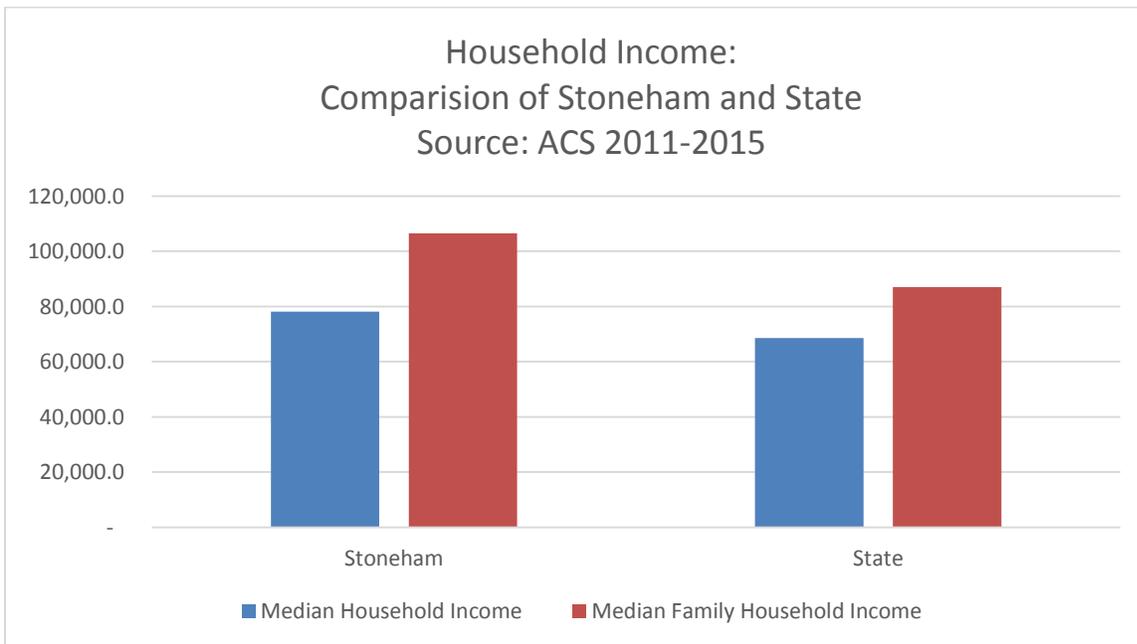
■ **Environmental Justice Population(s) Characteristics**

Of the 17 Block groups within the Town of Stoneham, only one meets the criteria of being an Environmental Justice (EJ) population. EJ populations are defined as minority or foreign born populations, or residents lacking English proficiency exceeding 25 percent of the total block group, or a household earning 65 percent or less of the statewide median household income according to the most recent US Census data. This block group meets the low-income criteria for EJ designation. Low-income criteria is met when the median household income is less than 66% of the state median income. This Block Group is comprised of 560 people, which represents 2.61% of the total municipal population.

As can be seen in the chart below, Stoneham has a higher percentage of incomes below \$40,000 than most of its neighboring communities.

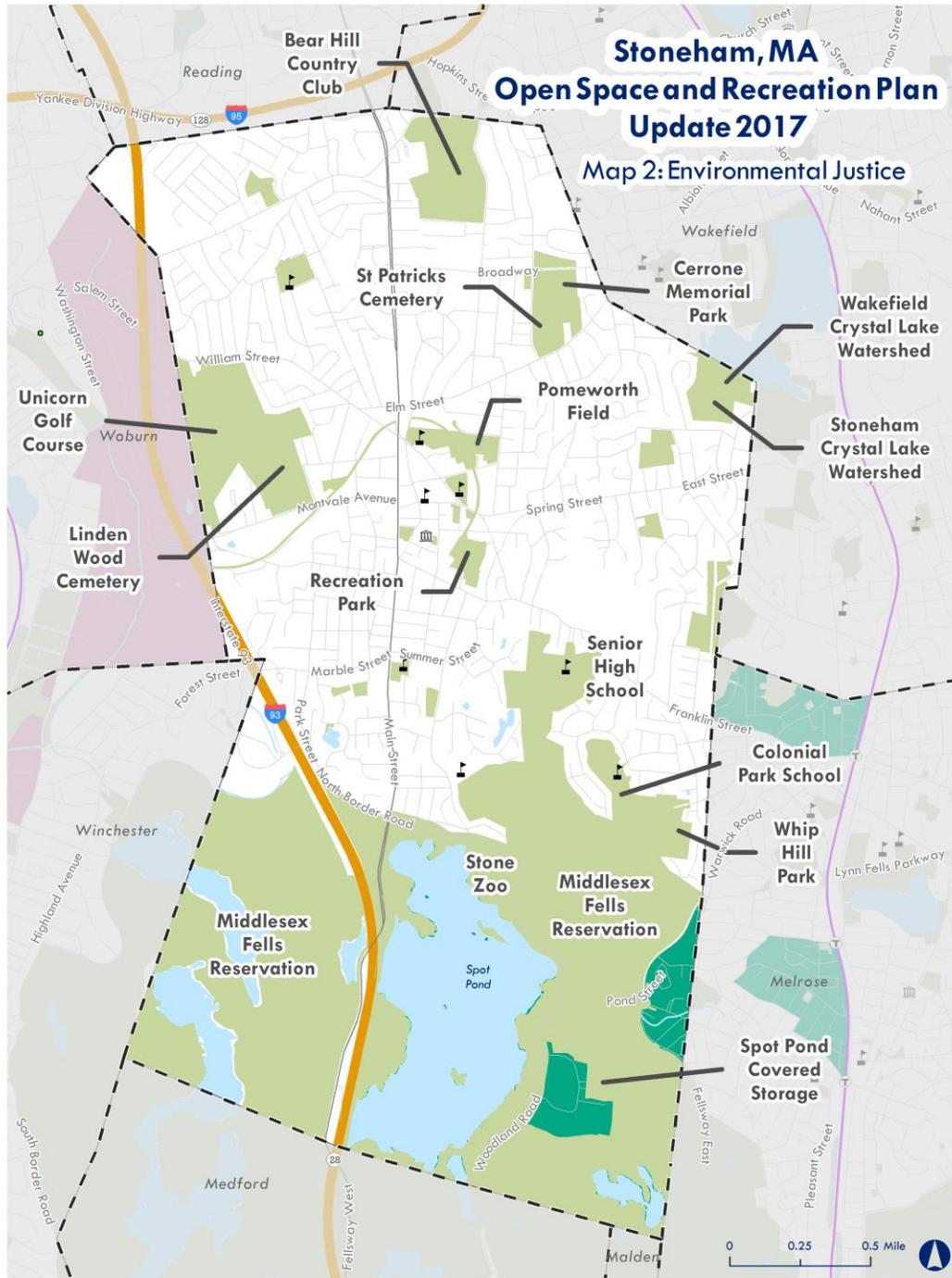


The following chart also illustrates that Stoneham has a higher median household and median family income than the state as a whole.



A small map of the Environmental Justice populations in Stoneham can be found on the following page. Larger maps are in Appendix A.

## MAP 2 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



- Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites
- Populations Meeting Environmental Justice Criteria**
- Income
- Minority Population
- Municipal Boundary
- Schools
- Town Hall
- Commuter Rail Stations
- Commuter Rail Lines
- Rivers and Streams
- Water Bodies
- Surrounding Open Space

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis.

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Data Sources:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

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## **Growth and Development Patterns**

Stoneham is a largely built-out community with little vacant land. New development occurs largely through a process of redeveloping existing land. The current pattern of land use is indicative of past trends and long-term future development patterns.

The previous discussion of Stoneham’s history includes detailed information on the town’s growth and development patterns.



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### **Infrastructure**

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#### **Transportation**

Stoneham is part of greater Boston Area, which has excellent rail, air, and highway facilities. Stoneham is situated between two interstate highways (I-93 on its western boundary and I-95 [a.k.a. Route 128] immediately north of the town line). These two routes connect Stoneham to all points in Massachusetts and beyond.

Stoneham has access to commuter rail at stations in the adjacent communities of Melrose, Wakefield, Reading, Woburn, Winchester, and Medford. The Orange Line is accessible at the Oak Grove Station in Malden; this station is accessible by car or bicycle, or by the Route 132 bus from Stoneham Center. In addition, the Route 325 express bus runs from the north end of Medford to downtown Boston.

<https://www.mbtta.com/>

Over the past several years, the town has been advancing the concept of a connected greenway trail (a.k.a. The Tri-Community Greenway) that would connect the communities of Stoneham, Woburn and Winchester. The town has constructed a portion of this paved greenway near the Middle School, and construction of the remainder (using MassDOT funds) is currently underway and is expected to be completed by fall 2018.

In 2017, the town also voted to participate in the Complete Streets program, to enhance mobility of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the town. Anticipated improvements to be made will enhance accessibility to business areas, parks, and the Greenway.

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#### **Water and Sewer Services**

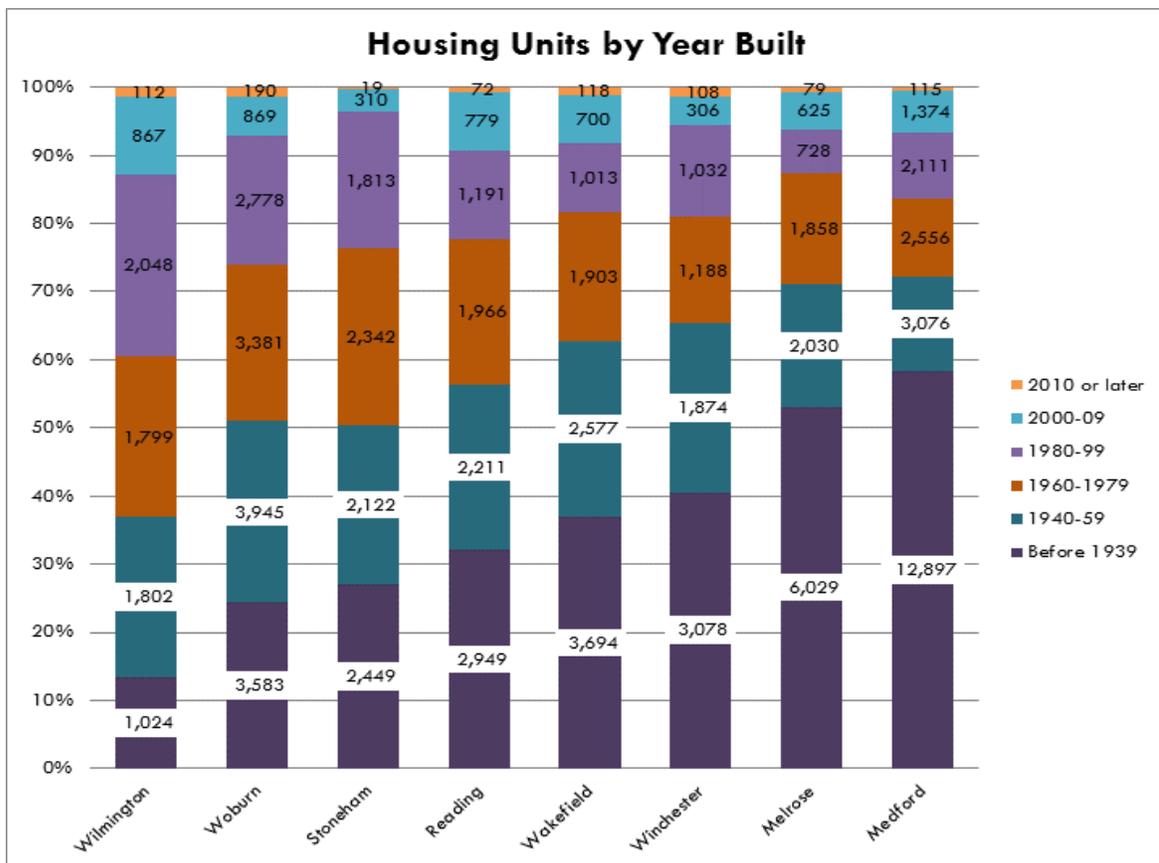
The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) provides water and sewer service to the Town of Stoneham. The availability of this critical infrastructure has allowed Stoneham to create a diversified economy along with multi-family housing.

## Patterns and Trends

By far the two dominant land uses within the Town of Stoneham are residential and open space. Over 41% (1,756 acres) of Stoneham is made up of residential land uses, the vast majority of which (35%) are occupied by single family homes. Approximately 37% of Stoneham is zoned for open space uses. An additional 11% of the town consists of other government owned properties, small ponds not in open space areas, roads, etc. Only a small portion of the town remains undeveloped and available for development or future open space, and some of this land is subject to development constraints such as wetlands or being zoned for open space.

As can be seen in the following graph, a number of nearby communities had greater percentage (and also greater number) of housing units constructed before 1939 (e.g., Stoneham at approximately 25%, versus Medford at almost 60%, Melrose over 50%, Winchester over 40%, and Wakefield over 35%). Stoneham's most rapid residential growth occurred between 1960 and 1999.

### Stoneham Area Residential units by year built



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015



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## Long Term Development Patterns

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### Land Use Controls: Zoning

Land Uses in the town are governed by the town's zoning bylaws and zoning map. Map #3 illustrates the generalized zoning map of the Town of Stoneham. This zoning also is partially the result of the land uses that were in place when zoning was established in the community.

Commercial areas include the historic downtown (along Route 28, and where some of the original factories and businesses were located on the Andover Turnpike and at the end of the Stoneham Branch railroad), as well as the auto oriented Commercial areas along Route 28 north of the town center. Offices, manufacturing and warehousing occurs along the route of the Stoneham Branch railroad, both to the west of downtown in the Montvale Avenue area, as well as near the terminus of the railroad downtown. Additional areas in this land use type are found along Interstate 93 adjacent to Woburn and Winchester. Additional smaller scale commercial is located in the neighborhoods.

The town has two additional zoning districts, the Education and the Recreation/Open Space, which govern land uses, which provide additional levels of protection to these properties, which are predominantly in public ownership, but do include some privately owned parcels. In the event that a school or a parcel of private land within either of these districts were proposed for redevelopment at some point in the future, town meeting vote would be needed to change the zoning to allow for alternative future uses of the property.

The Medical/Office/residential district is limited to the area, completely within the Middlesex Fells, which was the site of a hospital. This area is now comprised of medical offices and an assisted living/nursing home facility. Two multi-family residential developments, one consisting of 48 units and the other consisting of 261 units, were also approved in this district, and are expected to be under construction in 2018.

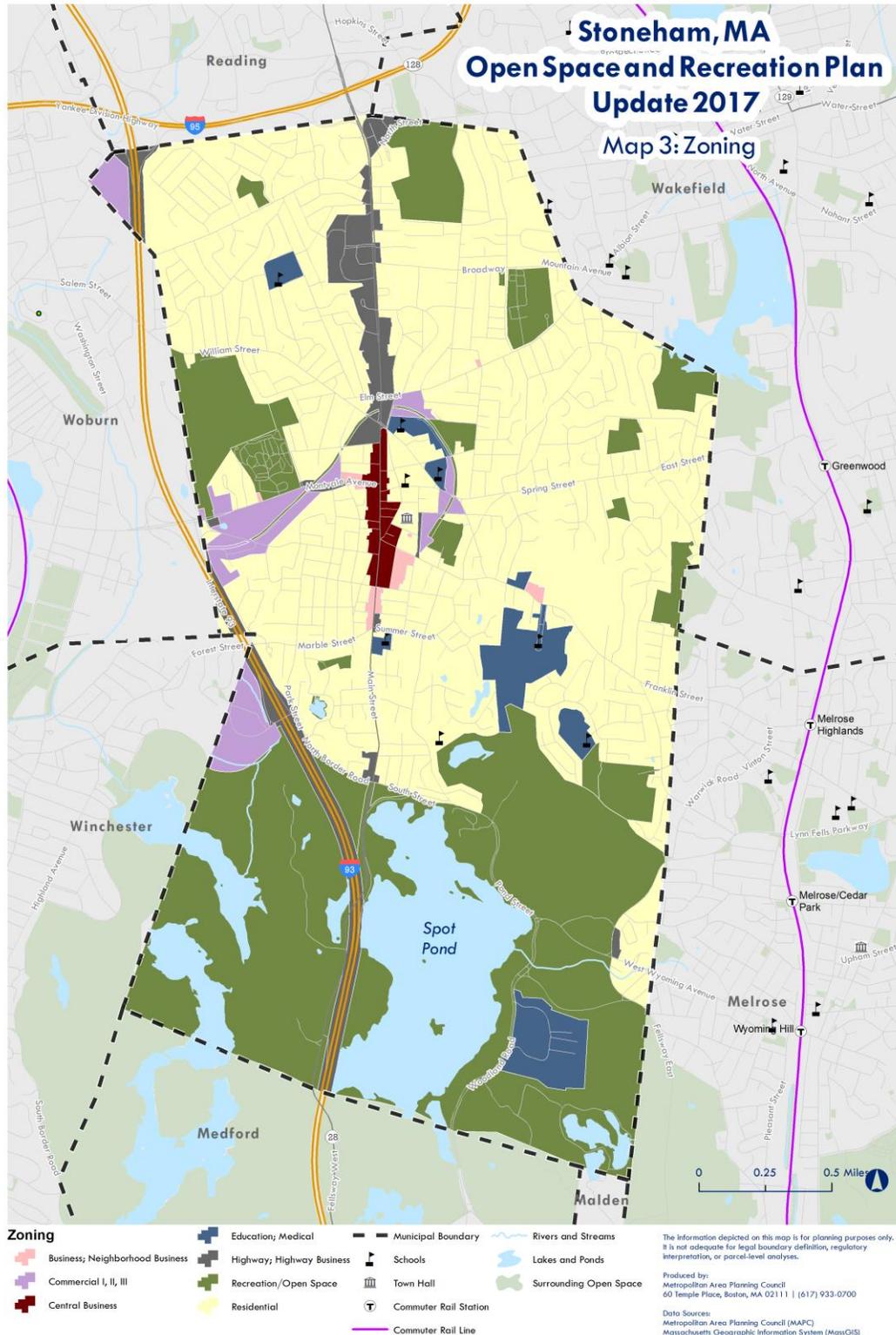
Other recent multi-family developments have occurred through redevelopment activities. The East School was converted in 2013 to 3 units as part of a plan that preserved the on-site athletic fields and playground for town use. The North School was also redeveloped in 2014 to become 11 units. A previously-developed site at 42 Pleasant Street is currently being reconstructed into 21 units near the downtown. And the new multi-family development at Fallon Road, partially occupied but still under construction, will include a total of 298 units when completed.

Although there was not a significant change to zoning since 1985 in the downtown, the new planning emphasis on this area has led to changes, including the redevelopment of 380 Main Street to include a mix of restaurant, office and retail in a new 4-story structure currently under construction.

As Stoneham becomes an even more built-out town, most development that occurs will be redevelopment of existing older or obsolete structures or land uses. Therefore, other than several large parcels of undeveloped land in Stoneham, the potential for loss of open space is negligible. In some cases, the redevelopment of properties has the potential to replace vacant or underutilized structures with sensitively-designed projects that can also include areas set aside for open space amenities.

The town should look for opportunities, and perhaps even make changes to its zoning bylaws, to enable them to work with developers to expand its open space and park inventory as redevelopment occurs.

# MAP 3 ZONING



# 4

## Environmental Inventory and Analysis

### Geology, Soils, and Topography

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#### Geology

Most of Stoneham's topography is a result of bedrock very near or at the surface. The bedrock was formed millions of years ago through volcanic action that has resulted in significant deposits of igneous rock. When a rock is formed from cooled and hardened magma, it is called an **igneous rock**. Although the types of rock in the Stoneham area are different, the sources of magma for them appears to be the same.

The distinct types of igneous rock in Stoneham include Lynn Volcanics and Dedham Granodiorite (the place name comes from the area in which it was first identified). The chemical composition of the magma, along with the rate of cooling, determines what specific type of igneous rock will form. Geologists describe the rocks formed from Lynn Volcanics as dense, fine-grained, igneous rocks composed primarily of quartz and feldspar. Looking at the Dedham Granodiorite from a regional viewpoint, geologists describe the rocks as granites, diorites and a mixture of the two granodiorites. They are medium to coarse-grained igneous rocks composed of quartz, feldspar, biotite and a variety of other minerals. The result of these ancient geological events are massive blocks of igneous and metasedimentary rock that form the bedrock of the Fells and some other areas of the Town of Stoneham. There are many sections of bedrock in the Fells that show glacial striations. At times, the glaciers would carve the rock, creating depressions that filled with water.

There are vertical walls of rock up to one half mile long, called dikes, in the Fells, oriented east to west. This "swarm" of dikes is composed of a variety of rock types. One example can be seen at Pine Hill (in Medford) along the Route I-93 road cut. Another is Bear Hill, the highest point in Stoneham, and site of the Bear Hill Tower shown on Scenic Resources and Unique Features Map #5.

Source: 1997 Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan

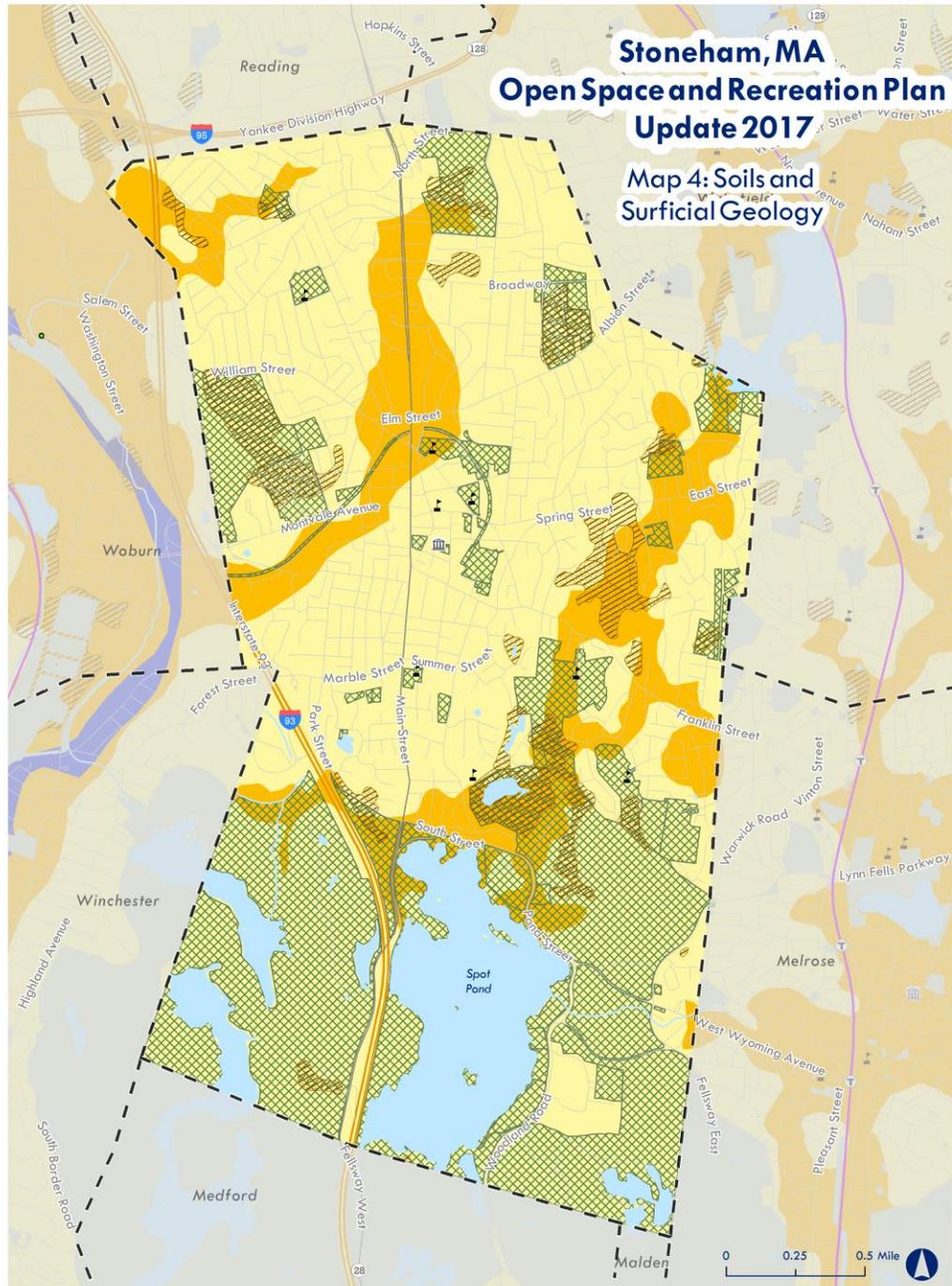


## Soils

The distribution of soil types closely parallels the topographical character of the Town of Stoneham. The uplands tend to be a mix of soils of moderate to severe slopes, in some areas with significant rock outcrops. Soils in these areas include Charlton- Urban Land Complex 3-15% slopes , Hollis Urban Land Complex 3 – 15% slopes Paxton Urban Land Complex 3 – 15% slopes, Canton-Charlton Urban Land Complex 3 – 15% slopes, Woodbridge-Urban land complex 3 - 15% slopes, and Rock Outcrop Hollis Complex 3 – 35% slopes. Wetland soils include Swansea or Freetown Muck 0 – 1% slopes, and stream valleys include Whitman fine sandy loams. As can be seen on Map #4 Soils and Surficial Geology, a few areas of town are prime agricultural soils or soils of statewide significance. Some of these soils are developed for housing or cemeteries, but other areas are found in the remaining undeveloped lands in town, including the golf courses, the remaining farm, the fields near the senior center, and a few areas of undeveloped woodlands.

Source: <https://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/gmap/>

# MAP 4 SOILS AND SURFICIAL GEOLOGY



- Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites
- Municipal Boundary
- Rivers and Streams
- Schools
- Town Hall
- Lakes and Ponds
- Surrounding Open Space
- Statewide/unique importance
- Prime Soils
- Commuter Rail Stations
- Commuter Rail Lines
- Surficial Geology (1:250,000)**
- Sand and Gravel
- Till or Bedrock
- Floodplain Alluvium

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Data Sources:  
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Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

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## Topography

The topography of Stoneham is generally rolling hills, with a number of high points from which existing or historic views were obtained. The high point in town is Bear Hill, in the Middlesex Fells Reservation, at 311 feet. Views from the tower at Bear Hill include the city of Boston to the hills of Southern New Hampshire. Nobility Hill, near the center of town, was developed in the 1800s because of the views from this location.



**BEAR HILL TOWER**



**BOSTON VIEW FROM BEAR HILL TOWER**

## Landscape Character, Scenic Resources, and Unique Environments



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### Landscape Character

Stoneham has a diversity of landscapes. The central village is a historic commercial area which retains significant structures from the mid-to-late 1800s, which the commercial areas along Route 28 north and south of the town center are comprised of “standard” highway commercial development.

The residential areas are comprised of either concentrations of historic structures from the late 1800's or early 1900's (these tend to be near the town center), or more modern residential areas (almost half of Stoneham's residential units were built between 1960 and 2000). But the most unusual landscape features found in Stoneham are the rolling hills, ponds, wetlands and woodlands of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, which comprises roughly the southern 1/3 of the town.



---

### **Scenic Resources and Unique Environments**

Stoneham contains a number of scenic resources, including such natural features as the view over Spot Pond and the panoramic views from hilltops in the Middlesex Fells, to human-influenced views over the golf courses in the community, and the enhanced views achieved from the Bear Hill Tower on the top of the highest point in the town. Map #5 shows the locations of the Scenic Views and Unique Features identified by staff and members of the public during the initial open space forum.

Other non-mapped Unique Features in Stoneham include the rock dikes located in the Middlesex Fells Reservation that are noted in the Geology section above. One of these dikes is the highest point in town, Bear Hill, which is noted on Map #5.



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### **Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resources**

The Town of Stoneham has five districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a total of 64 structures that are on the National Register (some of which are within the Historic Districts).

#### **Source:**

[http://www.wikiwand.com/en/National\\_Register\\_of\\_Historic\\_Places\\_listings\\_in\\_Stoneham,\\_Massachusetts](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Stoneham,_Massachusetts)

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### **Stoneham Sites on the National Register of Historic Places inside National Register Districts**

The Nobility Hill Historic District is located west of the center of town. The registration form for this district notes that it "is significant as the most cohesive illustration of residential development from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries". The district includes a number of historic structures built largely between the 1860's and 1920's that are examples of development, including Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles, from that time period, five of which have also been recognized by individual National Register listing.

The development of the area was promoted by its proximity to the nearby factories in the downtown, the views from the hilltop for which the district is named. And the proximity to the nearby rail station which provided easy access to Boston.

**Source:** National Register of Historic Places Registration Form United States Dept of Interior, National Park Service, accessed at [http://www.stoneham-ma.gov/sites/stonehamma/files/file/file/nobility\\_hill\\_hd.pdf](http://www.stoneham-ma.gov/sites/stonehamma/files/file/file/nobility_hill_hd.pdf)

The Central Square Historic District is located in the Stoneham's downtown business district. The registration form for this area notes that it "includes the town's largest concentration of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture", and which development was spurred by the construction of the main road between Medford and Andover (now Route 28) and the rail connection to the Boston and Lowell Railroad. Included within this district is the 1858 Italianate building at 426 Main Street (the first major industrial structure), the Dow Block, the Oddfellows building, and the Chase Block. The district also includes the library, main fire station, and Town Hall, all of which are early 1900's structures, as well as several churches dating from the early to mid-1800's.

**Source**

[http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Central\\_Square\\_Historic\\_District\\_\(Stoneham,\\_Massachusetts\)](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Central_Square_Historic_District_(Stoneham,_Massachusetts))

The Middlesex Fells Reservoirs Historic District is comprised of lands in the Middlesex Fells Reservation that includes the reservoirs, pumping stations, and gate houses which were developed by the Metropolitan District Commission starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to provide potable water for the Boston region. The most prominent landmark within the district is Spot Pond, but it also includes the man-made reservoirs at Bear Hill and the Fells Reservoirs (the latter designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm). The District also includes the Bottume House, a 19<sup>th</sup> century stone house near Spot Pond which is now used as a visitor center.

**Source:** [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Middlesex\\_Fells\\_Reservoirs\\_Historic\\_District](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Middlesex_Fells_Reservoirs_Historic_District)



**BOTTUM HOUSE VISITOR CENTER, MIDDLESEX FELLS**

The Middlesex Fells Reservation Parkways are roads within and abutting the Middlesex Fells Reservation that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fells is one of the oldest parks in the Boston metropolitan area, which began as a gift of 1,100 acres from the Trustees of Reservations to the Metropolitan Parks Commission (predecessor to the current Department of Conservation and Recreation) in 1894. The border roads were designed by landscape designer Charles Eliot. Some of these roadways are also included within the boundaries of the Fells

**Source:** [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Middlesex\\_Fells\\_Reservation\\_Parkways](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Middlesex_Fells_Reservation_Parkways)

The Spot Pond Archeological District is located in the eastern portion of the Middlesex Fells Reservation known as Virginia Woods, and encompasses a series of mill sites and along the Spot Pond Brook. The Hayward Rubber Works was located here in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and gave the name “Haywardville” to the area.

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### **Stoneham Sites on the National Register of Historic Places outside of Historic Districts**

There are 64 structures in the Town of Stoneham on the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 22 of these structures are within the Historic Districts listed above; the remainder are outside of the Districts.

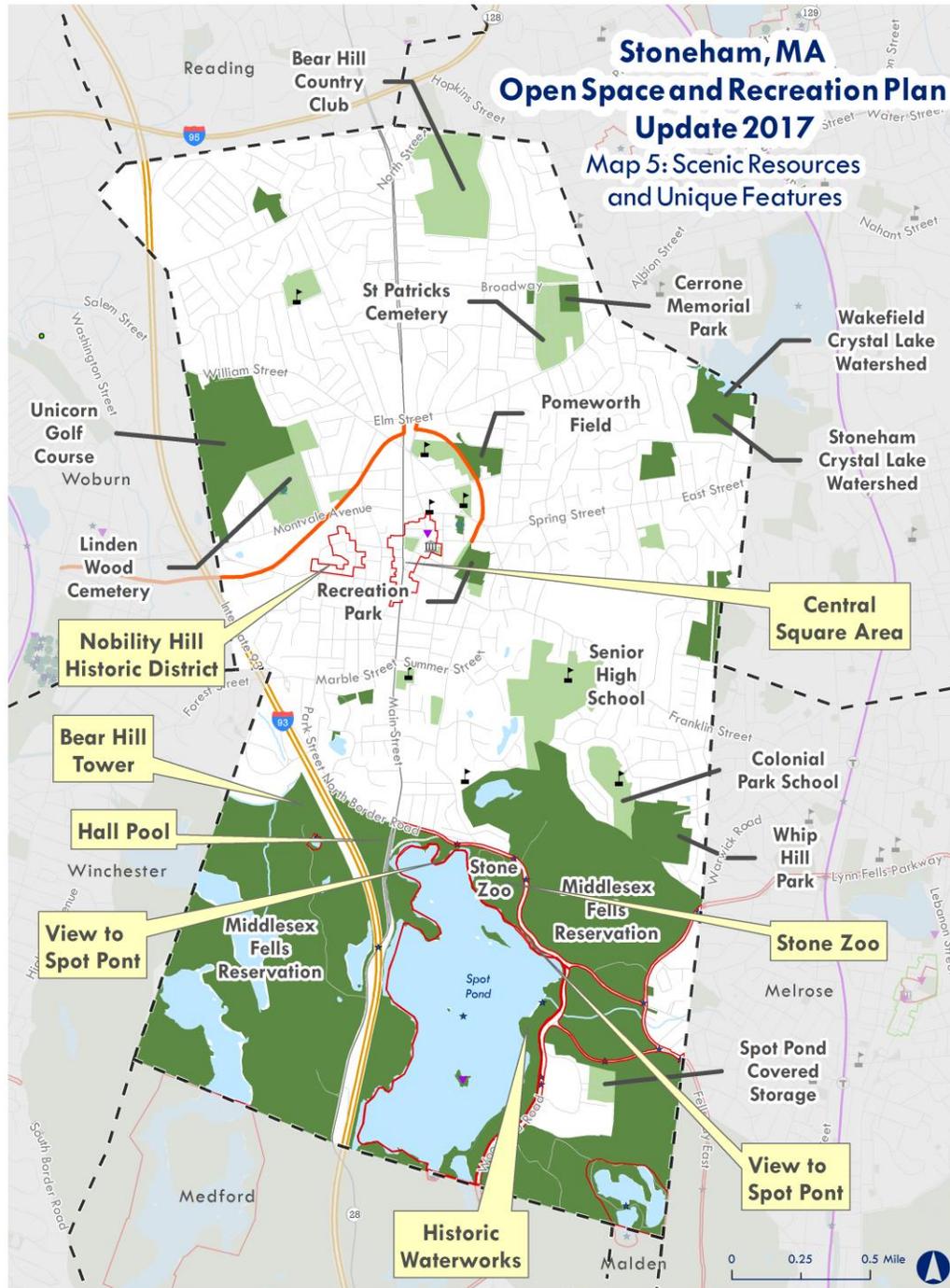
The full list of historic structures can be found at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Register\\_of\\_Historic\\_Places\\_listings\\_in\\_Stoneham,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Stoneham,_Massachusetts).

A map showing the location of all of these historic properties sites can be found at:

[https://tools.wmflabs.org/wp-world/googlmaps-proxy.php?page=https:%2F%2Ftools.wmflabs.org%2Fkmlexport%3Farticle%3DNational\\_Register\\_of\\_Historic\\_Places\\_listings\\_in\\_Stoneham,\\_Massachusetts&output=classic](https://tools.wmflabs.org/wp-world/googlmaps-proxy.php?page=https:%2F%2Ftools.wmflabs.org%2Fkmlexport%3Farticle%3DNational_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Stoneham,_Massachusetts&output=classic)

# MAP 5 SCENIC RESOURCES AND UNIQUE FEATURES



<p><b>Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Protected in Perpetuity</li> <li><span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Limited Protection</li> </ul> <p><b>MA Historical Commission Inventory Areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid green; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Local Historic District</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> National Register of Historic Places</li> </ul>	<p><b>MA Historical Commission Inventory Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">●</span> Burial Ground</li> <li><span style="color: purple;">▲</span> Object</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">★</span> Structure</li> <li><span style="color: black;">◆</span> Other</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">—</span> Tri-Community_Bikeway</li> <li><span style="color: black;">- - -</span> Municipal Boundary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: black;">■</span> Schools</li> <li><span style="color: black;">■</span> Commuter Rail Stations</li> <li><span style="color: purple;">—</span> Commuter Rail Lines</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">—</span> Rivers and Streams</li> <li><span style="color: lightblue;">—</span> Lakes and Ponds</li> <li><span style="color: black;">■</span> Town Hall</li> <li><span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Surrounding Open Space</li> </ul>	<p>The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.</p> <p>Produced by: Metropolitan Area Planning Council 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111   (617) 933-0700</p> <p>Data Sources: Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS) Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)</p> <p>November 2017</p>
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## Water Resources

The most prominent water feature in Stoneham is Spot Pond, located within the Middlesex Fells Reservation. Spot Pond was acquired for public water supply purposes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is currently managed by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) as a back-up reservoir. Spot Pond is approximately 280 acres in size and is at an elevation of 157 feet above sea level. Since being re-classified from an active reservoir, additional recreational activities have been allowed on the Pond. Fishing and boating are now allowed (although the only boats allowed are leased by a concessionaire, in order to prevent unwanted organisms being brought into the pond with private boats).

The MWRA Fells Reservoir, located in the southeastern part of town in the Middlesex Fells, and the three Reservoirs located within the Middlesex Fells which are used and managed by the Town of Winchester for water supply, do not have any public access.

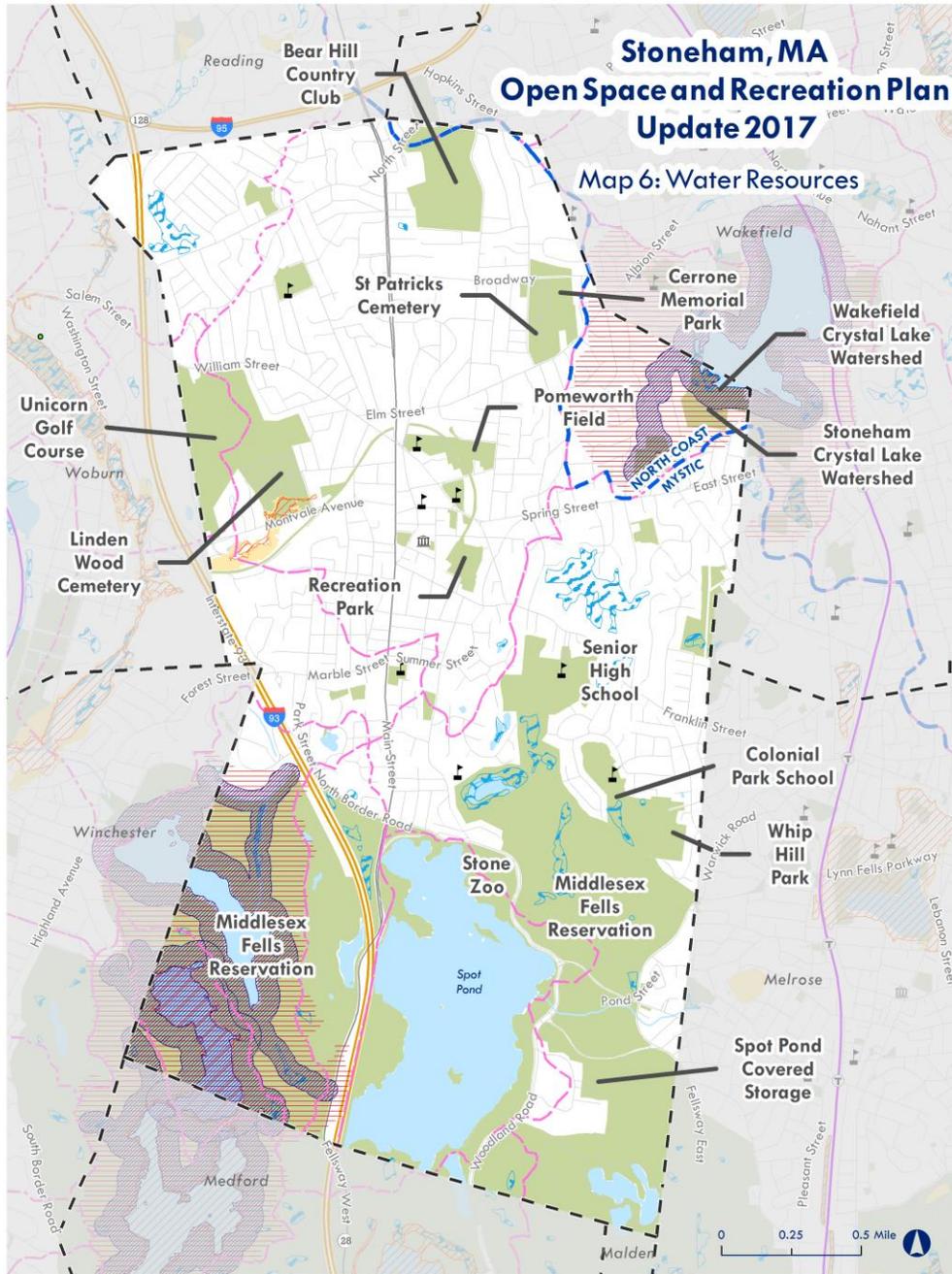
Additional small ponds such as Quarter Mile, Doleful, and Dark Hollow Ponds are located within the Fells, but do not have formal public access. Dikes Pond is located in a residential neighborhood in the southwest portion of town, and has limited publicly-owned shoreline.

Crystal Lake, located primarily in Wakefield but with a portion of the lake and the watershed lands in Stoneham, is a water supply reservoir for the Town of Wakefield. Portions of the watershed lands in Stoneham are owned by Wakefield, and other sections are owned by the Town of Stoneham. There is no formal public access to these lands as their primary use is water supply protection.

Twenty-six certified vernal pools and one-hundred-and-three potential vernal pools have been identified in the Middlesex Fells reservation.

The far northeastern portion of the Town of Stoneham is located in the North Coastal Watershed; the remainder of the town is located within the Boston Harbor Watershed. There are three sub-basins within the town that contribute to drinking water supply reservoirs. Map #6: Water Resources identifies the Zone A and Zone B areas for the Crystal Lake watershed (partially protected by conservation lands) in the northeast part of town, and the Winchester Reservoir lands in the southwest area of town (primarily in the Middlesex Fells). The other surface water supply is Spot Pond, the watershed for which is largely within the boundaries of the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

# MAP 6 WATER RESOURCES



- Wetlands
- Watersheds
- Sub-basins
- Surface Water Protection Area**
- ZONE A
- ZONE B
- Flood Zones (2014)**
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites
- Municipal Boundary
- Schools
- Town Hall
- Commuter Rail Stations
- Commuter Rail Lines
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds
- Surrounding Open Space

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Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

November 2017

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## **Flood Hazard Areas**

### **Sweetwater Brook**

The Sweetwater Brook Flood Hazard Area (with greater than 1% annual chance of flooding – aka the 100-year flood zone) is primarily within the Linden Wood Cemetery, the woodlands to the east of the cemetery (which have been purchased by the town for natural flood storage), the industrial area to the south of Montvale Avenue, and portions of Montvale Avenue itself. Additional more extensive areas of the industrial area south of Montvale Avenue are subject to a .2% annual chance of flooding (aka the 500 year flood zone).



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## **Wetlands**

Map #6 illustrates wetland areas in the Town of Stoneham, and shows that most of the remaining wetlands in town are within the bounds of existing open space areas. The major exceptions are the wetlands associated with the Weiss Farm and surrounding properties (included in this Plan as a possible future acquisition by the town), and one large wetland system in the northwest area of town, which is bounded by residential developments and by I-93.



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## **Aquifer Recharge Areas/Water Supply Protection Zones**

Map #6 illustrates the Zone A and Zone B of the surface water supplies in and abutting the Town of Stoneham. The Winchester Reservoir as well as their contribution zones are nearly entirely within the bounds of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The Zone A and Zone B for Wakefield's Crystal Lake water supply is largely developed as single-family residential, but does also include several town-owned conservation properties. Spot Pond is a back-up/emergency reservoir, and there is no Zone A or B designated; however, nearly the entire watershed of Spot Pond is within the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

There are no municipal well sites within Stoneham or nearby abutting municipalities. Therefore there are no Aquifer Protection District Zone 1 or Zone 2 designations within the town.

## **Vegetation**

The Spot Pond/Fells area is a mix of red and white oaks, white pine and hickory. Maple, ash, beech, birch, red pine, pitch pine, fir, spruce, and hemlocks make up a smaller forest component. A botanical survey completed in 2011 identified 564 native species of plants and 305 non-native species. Because of the impact on the Fells by people, including the planting of over 500,000 trees in the early 1900's, it is difficult to say whether the forest is a truly "natural" area or a modified woodland.

Within the Spot Pond/Fells are a variety of plant communities - areas where specific species of plants tend to grow - including stream banks and wetlands, upland woods with deep soils, the “fells” – areas of forest on thin soils over bedrock, and fields and old fields. Each of these habitat types has different variety of species.

The remainder of the Town of Stoneham has no significant woodlands except for Whip Hill, which borders the Middlesex Fells.

There is no hunting allowed in the Town of Stoneham or the Middlesex Fells area.

Source: <http://www.northshorenature.com/middlesex-fells-reservation/>




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### Tree Canopy

Within the southern portion of the town, the Middlesex Fells Reservation provides for extensive tree cover. In the developed portions of the town, street trees and trees on private property provide significant additional tree cover.

Stoneham has been a Tree City USA for the past 17 years. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) administers the annual Tree City USA program in Massachusetts in partnership with the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Over the past 5 years, the Stoneham Department of Public Works has planted 61 trees and has pruned more than 700 trees. However, during that same time period, more than 300 trees were removed by the DPW staff. The Goals and Actions Plan calls for a street tree inventory, and an increase in the number of trees planted annually, using town funds and donations.




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### Rare Plant Species

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program lists the following Endangered (E), Threatened (T), or Special Concern (SP) plant species in Stoneham.

List on Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern plant species in Town of Stoneham					
Town	Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA* Status	Most Recent Observation
STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Boechera missouriensis	Green Rock-cress	T	2013
STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Houstonia longifolia	Long-leaved Bluet	E	1894
STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Platanthera dilatata	Leafy White Orchis	T	Historic

STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Potamogeton vaseyi	Vasey's Pondweed	E	1883
STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Ranunculus micranthus	Tiny-flowered Buttercup	E	1895
STONEHAM	Vascular Plant	Sparganium natans	Small Bur-reed	E	1978
* MESA - Massachusetts Endangered Species Act					
Data Source:	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html</a>				

Regrettably, many of them have not been seen in over 100 years.

## Fisheries & Wildlife

By far the greatest diversity of wildlife in Stoneham is found in the Middlesex Fells Reservation. Residential areas nearest the Reservation will also see an increased diversity of species due to the proximity of the expansive wildlife habitats in the Fells. Farther afield from the Reservation, habitats are more limited and wildlife sightings will be limited to species that co-exist well with a suburban environment. Within the reservation, more than 183 species of birds have been recorded; including 27 species that are considered “in greatest need of conservation” e.g., Bald Eagle, Common Loon, and a variety of hawks and warblers. The Fells has been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Massachusetts Audubon Society for its importance as a migratory bird resting area.

Twenty-six certified vernal pools and one-hundred-and-three potential vernal pools have been identified in the Middlesex Fells reservation.

The Fells also provides habitat for a wide variety of terrestrial wildlife. Twenty-one species of mammals have been confirmed at the reservation and others are thought to reside there, including:

- Virginia Opossum
- Eastern Gray Squirrel
- Red Squirrel
- Southern Flying Squirrel
- Eastern Chipmunk
- Woodchuck
- American Beaver
- Meadow Vole
- Woodland Vole
- White-footed Deermouse
- Eastern Cottontail
- Little Brown Myotis
- Bobcat

- Coyote
- Gray Fox
- Red Fox
- Fisher
- Long-tailed weasel
- American Mink
- Striped Skunk
- Raccoon
- White-tailed Deer

Confirmed reptiles and amphibians include:

- Snapping Turtle
- Northern Painted Turtle
- North American Racer
- Milksnake
- Northern Watersnake
- Eastern Ribbonsnake
- Common Gartersnake
- Spotted Salamander
- Eastern Newt
- Redback Salamander
- American Toad
- Spring Peeper
- American Bullfrog
- Green Frog
- Pickerel Frog
- Wood Frog

It is worth noting that none of the snake species at the Fells are venomous.

In addition, seventy-one species of butterflies and one-hundred-and-twenty-four species of moth have been identified at the Fells.

**Source:** <http://www.northshorenature.com/middlesex-fells-reservation/>

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### **Wildlife Habitat Corridors**

The Middlesex Fells Reservation in the town of Stoneham is part of an extensive system of open space that is located in Stoneham, Medford Winchester, Melrose and Malden. Regional Context Map 1B illustrates how this large block of open space interacts with other open space in the area. Although there is not a full connectivity of protected open spaces, the intermediate wetlands, a few

undeveloped parcels, and street trees in developed areas provide connection across the short distances to the Pine Banks Park and Mount Hood Park to the east in Melrose.

The Tri-Community Greenway, which runs from Stoneham west into Woburn, provides a narrow, linear, but continuous connection between several open spaces, parks and cemeteries in these two communities.

For wildlife that can fly, short areas of developed lands between undeveloped open spaces are more easily crossed than it is for terrestrial wildlife. In this case, the distances are not large between many of the open spaces to the east (including the Rumney Marshes) to the northeast (including Breakheart Reservation and the Lynn Woods, and to the west (including Horn Pond and the Mystic Lakes Reservation).

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### Rare Animal Species

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has listed the following Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern species in Stoneham:

List on Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern animal species in Town of Stoneham					
Town	Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA* Status	Most Recent Observation
STONEHAM	Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	1903
STONEHAM	Beetle	<i>Cicindela purpurea</i>	Cow Path Tiger Beetle	SC	1986
STONEHAM	Butterfly/Moth	<i>Eacles imperialis</i>	Imperial Moth	T	Historic
* MESA - Massachusetts Endangered Species Act					
Data Source:	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html">http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/town-species-viewer.html</a>				

## **Environmental Challenges**

### **Brownfields**

As with any community with substantial commercial and industrial development, Stoneham has a number of hazardous waste disposal sites. Hazardous waste is considered to be any human-created or modified substance released into the environment that constitutes a present or potential threat to public health and safety, to plants and animals, and to the quality and quantity of the local drinking water supply. Hazardous wastes can be solid, semi-solid, liquid, or gaseous in nature. These wastes pose a threat when improperly stored, used, transported, disposed of, treated, or mismanaged.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup has identified 149 hazardous waste sites in Stoneham in various stages of assessment and cleanup. MassDEP has files for each site regarding their contamination and associated remediation; the files can be viewed online through the Reportable Release Lookup Database. The listed sites are those that may contain potentially contaminated soil, water, and air. Many sites have been restored or deemed close to their original state.

(<https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/portal#!/search/wastesite/results?TownName=STONEHAM>)

### **Development Impacts**

Impacts of proposed development are mitigated through state and local regulations. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission review proposed development projects and ensure that the development proposals meet local requirements such as zoning, stormwater mitigation, and preservation of wetlands and buffers. Control of stormwater is an important element, and one in which redevelopment of commercial or industrial properties under current regulations may actually improve circumstances that resulted from previous development (where there were fewer requirements for mitigation). As noted elsewhere in this document, portions of the industrially zoned areas to the south of Montvale Avenue are subject to flooding. As lands upstream of this area are redeveloped, the increased emphasis on stormwater management on site at each development may assist in mitigating the existing downstream flooding.

### **Landfills, and Ground and Surface Water pollution**

The Stoneham DPW Operations Engineer indicates that there are no existing or closed municipal or private landfills within the town. As noted elsewhere in this report, there are, however, a number of 21E Pollution Sites within Stoneham. While many of these have been cleaned up, some have use limitations.

The DEP Online 2014 Integrated List of Waters Map illustrates the surface water quality, and use limitations, for Spot Pond and for Crystal Lake, the two largest bodies of surface water in Stoneham (see <http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/images/dep/omv/il2014viewer.htm>). Crystal Lake is shown as a Class A, with the additional qualifiers of outstanding resource waters and public water supply. Spot Pond is listed as Class B waters.

**Erosion and Sedimentation**

The staff of the Stoneham Department of Public Works indicate that there are no significant sites in town where erosion or sedimentation is an issue.

**Chronic Flooding**

As noted elsewhere in this OSRP, there is an area of Montvale Avenue to the west of the town center which is in the 1% flood hazard area, due to flooding of Sweetwater Brook.

**Tree removals versus planting**

As noted elsewhere in this OSRP, the DPW has removed significantly more trees in the recent past than have been planted. A goal of the OSRP is to adequately fund tree planting and maintenance programs of the DPW, including through privately-raised funds.

**Environmental Equity Issues**

As is noted elsewhere in this OSRP, the town has more playgrounds to the east of Main Street than there are to the west. West of Main Street, the only playground is at the Robin Hood School; this playground is not available for general public use during school hours.

# 5

## Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

### Introduction

A current inventory of a community's open space and recreation assets is a requirement for updating the open space and recreation plan. As defined in Chapter 2, Introduction, open space is land that is undeveloped, usually without buildings or structures, and that is accessible to the public. Open space is typically divided into two categories: conservation lands, and recreation resources. The Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services, the agency responsible for Open Space and Recreation Plan review and approval expands that definition to also include "agricultural land, corridor parks and small parks and green buffers along roadways owned by an agency or organization dedicated to conservation."

The starting point of Stoneham's inventory of open space is the data maintained by the Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS). The MassGIS data and resulting maps were reviewed by the Open Space Committee and the public (at the public forum, Town Day and Open House events) to revise and update the information.

Open space protection is very important to the Town of Stoneham because, as a nearly-built-out community, there are limited opportunities to create any new open spaces.

Stoneham's inventory of open space includes both public and private lands. Open space resources are owned by the Town of Stoneham, Town of Wakefield, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and private non-profit recreational organizations and religious organizations that maintain a few parcels in the town.

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### Levels of Open Space and Recreation Land Protection

For planning purposes, it is important to be aware of the level of legal protection for each open space. Knowing the level of protection (or lack thereof) will establish what could be vulnerable for future development, should ownership or other circumstances change. Information on ownership

coupled with the type of protection can help identify open space and/or recreation areas that could require additional efforts to ensure long-term preservation and protection. The following terms are used by MassGIS and the Division of Conservation Services to describe types of land protection.

**Permanently Protected** (*also termed “protected in perpetuity”*)

These parcels have a deed or other legal document that guarantees an open space or conservation use. Common examples include land that is deeded to and managed by the city or town’s Conservation Commission or Recreation Department; land that is subject to a conservation restriction or easement in perpetuity; open spaces that received federal or state grant assistance for the purchase or improvement of the property; or land that is owned by one of the state’s conservation agencies.

In all of these examples, the land is subject to Article 97 of the Articles of Amendment to the State Constitution. Article 97 protects publicly-owned or restricted lands dedicated to conservation or recreation purposes. If the land is proposed to be removed from recreation or conservation purposes, a 2/3 affirmative vote of a city council or town meeting followed by a 2/3 vote of the Massachusetts Legislature must occur. Lands purchased for general municipal purposes (such as a fire station or school) are not protected by Article 97. Thus, it is important to note which community entity actually owns (as opposed to manages) each open space.

**Limited Protection**

This term is used for parcels that may have a conservation restriction for a set amount of time, or for Town-owned properties that have been used for open space/recreation without being legally restricted or deeded to the conservation commission. In Stoneham’s case, many of the parcels owned by the town are further restricted by their inclusion in zoning districts that do not allow for residential, commercial or industrial development. This zoning therefore limits the potential for re-use of these lands. Any changes to zoning would require a 2/3 vote of town meeting.

**No Protection**

Typically these are privately owned open spaces, often recreational facilities. In Stoneham’s case, this includes the small parcel owned by the YMCA, and playground and recreation field associated with the Greater Boston Academy, a private school located on Pond Street. This category is included for planning purposes. Should current ownership/use change, the town may want to evaluate its options as the land is unbuilt and used for recreation.

**What about privately-owned lands? Are they protected?**

Private lands may be permanently protected through the following types of deed restrictions: Conservation, Agricultural Preservation, Historic or Wetlands. Deed restrictions running in perpetuity on private lands are also protected under Article 97, described above. Also, land acquired by local land trusts and other non-profits may also be permanently protected and subject to Article 97. However, some of these holdings may have limited protections. Lands that are under the Forest, Farm or Recreational Lands Assessment program (chapter 61, 61A or 61B programs),

have temporary protections and would therefore be classified as limited protection. There are no lands in Stoneham under the Chapter 61, 61A or 61B assessment programs.

<b>Owner of Open Space</b>	<b>Entity that Owns</b>	<b>Level of Legal Protection</b>	<b>Subject to Article 97</b>
Town lands deeded for conservation or recreation	Town Conservation Commission or Parks/Recreation Commission	Permanently protected open space	Yes
Other town-owned lands (cemeteries, schools)	Any other entity: School Department; Water Commission.	Limited or No Protection	No
State	EOEAA agencies	Permanent	Yes
State	Non-EOEAA, such as Corrections, Mental Health	Limited or No	No
Federal	National Park Service; USDA Forest Lands	Yes	Not applicable
Federal	Transportation, Defense Department	No	Not applicable
Private owner	Private	Permanently protected	Yes, if deed restriction in perpetuity for: conservation, agriculture, historic, wetlands
Private Nonprofit with open space mission	Local land trust; Conservation organizations such as Mass Audubon	Varies, depending on how land was acquired/restricted/deeded	Varies
Private non-profit	Religious organizations; Private schools	Limited example: cemeteries; No, unless there is a deed restriction	No

## Inventory of Open Space and Recreation Resources

The Stoneham *Inventory of Public and Private Open Space* includes public land used for parks and recreational facilities, lands used primarily for other purposes (e.g., schools, Town Hall) but which also include recreation spaces, open lands used primarily for conservation purposes, and privately-owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes. The inventory shows a total of 33 parcels covering 1,690 acres of conservation and recreation land owned and managed either by the town (either by the Conservation Commission, Selectmen or the Schools), an abutting municipality, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), or the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The inventory, with details about each location, and the map, are below.

All properties identified in the inventory are depicted in *Map 7, Open Space Inventory*.

The Open Space Matrix column headings are defined below

- **Name** – Names the open space site
- **Location** – The street where the open space is located.
- **Assessing Parcel # Map/Block/Lot** – Town assessing information
- **Owner** – Indicates the owner of the property
- **Managing Agent** – The agency, department or entity responsible for managing and maintaining the parcel. Usually the same as the Owner.
- **Grant Fund Used (State/Federal)** – SH = Self Help (state); LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund
- **Protection Status** – Legal level of open space protection: Permanently Protected (P), Limited Protection (L), or No Protection (N)
- **Date Acquired** – (if known)
- **Size (Acres)** – The size of the site, expressed in acres (1 acre=43,560 sq. ft).
- **Public Access** – Are these open spaces available to the public
- **Zoning** – Identifies the zoning district in which the open space is located.
- **Current Use** – Describes the development of the site and what uses the kind and level of development allows.
- **Recreation Potential** – For land not used for recreational purposes, potential for recreational activities is identified. Cemeteries have very limited recreational potential.
- **Condition (2017)** – Identifies the site condition (excellent, good, fair or poor), as assessed by town staff.

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Primary Purpose	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
<i>Town Owned Conservation Land</i>													
Pomeworth Field	Caltha, Washington, Capen, and Pomeworth Streets, adjacent to Central Middle School	12-230-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW - with assistance from Stoneham Little League on Lower Pomeworth		P	1911	8.23	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Active Recreation	Little League field, basketball courts, children's playground, large area for field sports that can be reconfigured for seasonal uses	Poor
Recreation Park	Pleasant & Gould Streets	13-55-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW - With assistance from Stoneham Lacrosse, Stoneham High School, Stoneham Little League		P	1927	7.62	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Active Recreation	2 baseball fields, large open field used for soccer/ football/ lacrosse, children's playground, bleachers and field house	Fair
Cerrone Memorial	Broadway	6-678-0	Town of Stoneham	Stoneham Youth Soccer with assistance from DPW		P		4.43	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Active Recreation	3 regulation and 3 youth soccer fields	Good/Fair grade makes field use difficult
Rounds Playground	MacArthur Road and Broadway	6-191-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW with assistance from Youth Organizations		P		1.04	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Active Recreation	Children's playground and T-ball field	Playground good / excellent ballfield poor

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Primary Purpose	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
Whip Hill Park	Perkins Street	3-188,1-0	Town of Stoneham	Conservation Commission		P	1968	25.75	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Woodlands with trails; House used for meetings and events	PASSIVE Uses and Meeting space in house	Fair/Good
Dike's Pond	Summit Road	19-55,56-0	Town of Stoneham	Conservation Commission	SH	P	1971	0.36	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped shoreline and woods	PASSIVE – Fishing and wildlife viewing	Not Maintained
Barton Estate	Land off North & Erickson Street	21-92-0	Town of Stoneham	Conservation Commission	SH	P	1973 AND 1975	5.25	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
	Land off Meadow Road & Fiske Avenue	18-351,1-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW	SH	P		2.65	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
	Land off Corey Ave., Ferdinand, Marion & Spring Streets	2-85-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW		P	1956 AND 1966	9.24	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
	Land off Lake Avenue	2-254-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW	SH	P	1967	5.13	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
Crystal Lake Watershed	On Wakefield Border	1/27/2000	Town of Stoneham	DPW		P		11.8	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
	Land off Whipple Ave. & Brookbridge Road	1-183-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW	SH	P		8.76	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Primary Purpose	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
Old Burial Ground	Oriental Ct and Pleasant Street, downtown	12-356-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW mgmt; Historical Society tours		P	1726	1.09	YES	Residential	Cemetery	NO	Good
Unicorn Recreation	Montvale Ave and William Street	22-79-0	Town of Stoneham	Unicorn Recreation Area Committee	LWCF	P	1971	75.8	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Active Recreation	Golf Course and Indoor Skating Rink	Fair
Tri-Community Greenway	Recreation Park to Middle School then west	17-249-0 12-342-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW		P	1980's	9.13	YES	Recreation and Open Space, Industrial	Active Recreation	Rail ROW being converted to multi-use trail	Good where built. Poor other locations
Total Permanently Protected Open Space owned by the Town of Stoneham (Acres)								176.3					

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
<i>Town Facilities (Not Permanently Protected)</i>													
Senior High	Franklin Street	8-134,1-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	School Dept.		L		49.46	YES	Education and Medical	Football field, running track, multi-use (soccer/field hockey, etc.) fields, 3 baseball fields, 8 tennis courts	YES	Football and Track Good; All other facilities Fair
Central/ Middle School	William Street	12-308-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	School Dept.		L		7.93	YES	Education and Medical	Small area of green space on Central Street. Playground near south exit on Pomeworth	YES	Excellent
South School	Summer Street	18-263-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	School Department		L		2.75	YES	Education and Medical	Playground playfield, basketball court, paved play area	YES	Basketball Good; all else poor
Colonial Park School	Avalon Road	9-116,1-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	School Dept. Assisted by DPW		L		17.71	YES	Education and Medical, AND Recreation & Open Space	2 baseball fields and paved basketball courts. Playground has HC access paths	YES	Fair

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
Robin Hood School	Magnolia Terrace	16-337-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	School Dept., Assisted by DPWE		L		7.83	YES	Education and Medical	Baseball field, multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground has HC accessible surface path	YES	Poor
East School	Beacon Street	2-165-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	Stoneham Little League with limited assistance from DPW		L		3.74	YES	Recreation & Open Space	2 little league ball fields, basketball court, playground	YES	Good
Duff Memorial Playground	At SEEM Collab. -on same parcel as old school.	12-342-0	Town of Stoneham - School Dept.	DPW		L		3.59	YES	Education and Medical	Basketball court, very limited and very old playground equipment	YES	Fair/poor
Senior Center	Elm Street	6-80A-0	Town of Stoneham - Council on Aging	Council on Aging		L		6.13	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Shuffleboard court, game room, meeting rooms, classroom	NO	Fair
Steele Playground aka Munchkin Playgrou nd	Pine Street - ON TOWN HALL PARCEL	13-6-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW		L		0.78	YES	Residential	Playground, picnic shelter with picnic tables, play field, swings, and benches	YES	Good

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Grant Fund Used (state/federal)	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
Lindenwood Cemetery	Montvale Ave	22-88-0	Town of Stoneham - Cemetery Department	DPW		L		32.33	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Cemetery	NO	Good
Stoneham Town Common	Downtown. Bounded by Church, Main, Central, and Winter Streets.	18-206-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW; Town Manager gives permits		L	2001	1.35	YES	Central Business	Paved pathways through grassed and garden areas. Gazebo with ramp access. Winter outdoor ice rink	PASSIVE	Good
Old Town Quarry	Pond Street	14-32-0	Town of Stoneham - Department of Public Works	DPW		L		2.4	YES	Residential A	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
Sweetwater Brook Flood Hazard Area	Adjacent to rail trail north of Montvale and east of Cemetery	17-253B-0	Town of Stoneham	DPW		L		1.6	YES	Commercial, Residential, Highway Business, and Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods	PASSIVE	Not Maintained
Total Town Facilities Not Permanently Protected (Acres)								137.6					

Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
<i>Private Facilities</i>												
Boys and Girls Club	Adjacent to Recreation Park on Dale Court	13-56-0 13-62-0	Town of Stoneham and Boys Club of Stoneham	Private non-profit -open to public	L		1.34	NO	Recreation and Open Space	Outdoor basketball court and interior multi-purpose space and basketball	DNA	
YMCA Child Care and Program Center	Across from Duff Park on Pleasant Street	12-350-0	VAL Realty, LLC	Private non-profit	N		0.46	NO	Commercial	Building with Childcare facility and small multi-purpose space	DNA	
Bear Hill Golf Club	North Street	10/12/2000	Bear Hill Association	Private	L		53.17	NO	Recreation & Open Space	Golf Course and Clubhouse	DNA	
St Patrick's Cemetery and possible expansion area	Existing cemetery south of Broadway and west of Cerrone Park. Expansion area to north of Broadway	6-63-0 6-79-0	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston	Catholic Archdiocese of Boston - Cemetery expansion area	L		21.31	NO	Recreation and Open Space, and Residential	Cemetery and undeveloped expansion area	NO	
Total Private Facilities (Acres)							76.28					

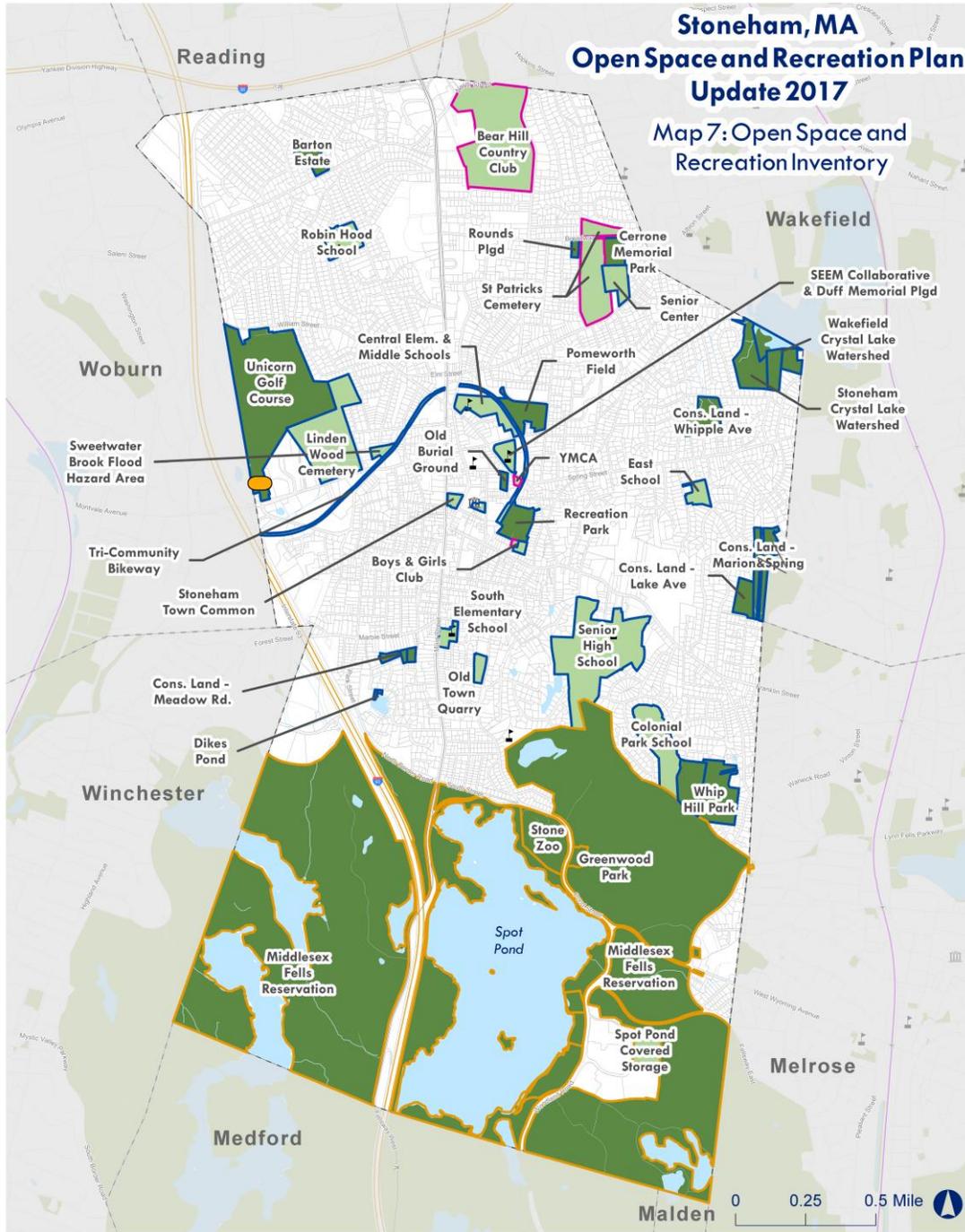
Name	Location	Assessing Parcel	Owner	Managing Agent	Protection Status	Date Acquired	Size (Acres)	Public Access	Zoning	Current Use	Recreation Potential	Condition (2017)
<i>Private Facilities</i>												
Middlesex Fells Reservation	South, Pond Streets, Woodland Road	27-5B-0 27-SOL-0 4-112-0	DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation & DCR - Division of Water Supply Protection	Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	P		951.62 (Land) 405.60 (Water)	YES	Recreation & Open Space	Woodlands, trails, fields, swimming pool	PASSIVE	
MWRA Watershed Lands	At Spot Pond and Fells Reservoir	27-3E-0	MWRA	MWRA	L		7.18	NO	Education and Medical	Undeveloped woods - Watershed lands	NO	
Winchester Reservoir Lands	In Middlesex Fells Reservation	27-5B-0	DCR	Town of Winchester	P		(Included in Middle-Sex Fells)	NO		Undeveloped woods - Watershed lands	NO	
Crystal Lake	Wakefield Border	1/27/2000	Town of Wakefield	Town of Wakefield	P		13.4	NO	Recreation & Open Space	Undeveloped woods - Watershed lands	NO	
Lynn Fells Parkway	Lynn Fells Parkway	Road ROW	DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation	DCR	P			YES	Not zoned - ROW	Roadway and associated trees	YES	
Total Conservation Areas Not Owned by Town of Stoneham (Acres)							1376.6					

## Total Open Space and Recreation Resources

### Town of Stoneham

Open Space Type	Size (Acres)
Town Owned Conservation Land or Parks (Permanently Protected)	176.28
Town Facilities (Not Permanently Protected)	137.6
Private Facilities	76.28
Existing Conservation Areas Not Owned by Town of Stoneham	1376.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1766.76</b>

MAP 7 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY



- Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites**
- Permanently Protected
  - Limited Protection
- Ownership Type**
- Municipal
  - Private
  - State
- Other Symbols**
- - - Municipal Boundary
  - Schools
  - Town Hall
  - Commuter Rail Stations
  - Commuter Rail Lines
  - Rivers and Streams
  - Water Bodies
  - Surrounding Open Space
  - Stoneham Arena (Ice Rink)

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.

Produced by:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 | (617) 933-0700

Data Sources:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

November 2017



Document Path: K:\DataServices\Projects\Current\_Projects\OpenSpace\_Plans\Stoneham\Project Files\Stoneham\_OSRP\_7\_Inventory.mxd

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## Summary of Stoneham's Open Spaces

### Public Lands: Permanent, Limited and Unprotected

#### Permanently Protected areas

The open space inventory indicates a total of 1,545 acres permanently protected within the Town of Stoneham. This includes 176 acres owned by the town and 1,356 acres owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation at the Middlesex Fells Reservation. These sites are protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, described above. The Town-owned permanently protected open spaces are used for either recreation or for conservation purposes. The Middlesex Fells is characterized as passive recreation, but because of the large acreage it also serves a conservation role. The largest Town-owned properties are Unicorn Recreation at 76 acres and Whip Hill Park at 26 acres. The smallest are Dikes Pond conservation area at .4 acres and Rounds Playground and the Old Burial ground at 1 acre each.

#### Limited Protection

The Town of Stoneham owns approximately 138 acres in public lands that are not considered permanently protected. These lands include the town's schools and Town Hall (many of which provide critical playground space in otherwise underserved neighborhoods), as well as other parcels owned by the town and generally used for conservation purposes but not formally designated as permanently protected (e.g., Sweetwater Brook Flood Hazard area).

Although in many communities, parcels such as schools are not considered to have any level of protection, in Stoneham these parcels are considered to have some limited protection both because they are owned by the town (and it would take a vote of town meeting to sell the properties), and also because most of these parcels are in zoning districts (either Conservation and Recreation, or Education, zoning districts) which do not allow for residential, commercial or industrial development, and a town vote would be needed to allow any development of the properties for these purposes.

#### Unprotected

The Town of Stoneham does own a series of small lots which are not protected from future development; these small lots are not illustrated on the Open Space inventory, as the town reserves the right to sell these parcels (some of which were acquired for back taxes). One of the recommendations in the 7-Year Action Plan is for the Town to consider if any of these parcels should be reserved for future use for playgrounds, especially in areas (e.g., west of Main Street) where there are few playground facilities.

## **Private Lands: Permanent, Limited and Unprotected**

There are no Permanently Protected privately owned conservation lands in the town of Stoneham. In other communities, examples of such properties would include lands owned by a conservation trust (such as Massachusetts Audubon Society or The Trustees of Reservations) or lands that are under a Conservation restriction.

Private lands with Limited Protection include the Bear Hill Golf Club and the Stoneham and Wakefield Boys and Girls Club parcels. A portion of the Catholic Cemetery in the north part of town would also fall into this category. All of these lands are in the Limited Protection category as they are in the Conservation and Recreation zoning district, which would preclude their use for residential, commercial or industrial uses. Removing the properties from this zoning classification would require a town meeting vote.

There are only a few large parcels of land in Stoneham that are privately-owned, undeveloped, and unprotected as conservation lands. The largest of these parcels is Weiss Farm on Franklin Street in the eastern part of town. This parcel is proposed as a comprehensive permit under Chapter 40B. Note that a parcel owned by the Catholic Church as an extension of the St. Patrick's cemetery is not zoned as Conservation-Recreation and therefore is not in the Limited Protection category of the main portion of the cemetery.

A future source of open space for the residents of the town is land that could be freed up by redevelopment of previously-developed areas. Open space elements of such redevelopments may be key in providing small passive recreation sites or small playgrounds in currently-underserved areas of town. Such properties could be donated to the town or could be maintained by the development and open to the general public.

## **Park and Open Space Equity**

Map 2 depicts the Environmental Justice (EJ) populations found in Stoneham based upon Mass GIS data. As noted elsewhere in this Plan, the EJ population is a lower income population in the southeastern section of the town. One possible reason for this lower average income may be the presence of a large assisted living/nursing home facility within this census area. This section of town also has a cluster of condominiums along the Lynn Fells Parkway and West Wyoming Avenue. Residents from the part of town have immediate access to the Middlesex Fells Reservation. Greenwood Park, including play fields and a youth playground, is located within the Middlesex Fells Reservation, and is approximately a ¾ mile walk for the densest residential areas within this area. In addition, Conant Playground and sports field in Melrose is within ½ mile to the east of this area.

Beyond ensuring that the Environmental Justice community has adequate access to parks, playgrounds and conservation sites, there is the overall question of adequacy of distribution of such facilities throughout all of the neighborhoods of Stoneham. The issues of adequate geographic distribution of youth playgrounds, in particular, arose in the survey, the public

forum, and the Town Day information gathering. It was noted that although there were a number of playgrounds east of Route 28 (Steele, Duff, Arsenault at Recreation Park, Rounds Playground, playground at Pomeworth Field, East School site, as well as the playgrounds at the South and Colonial Park schools), the only playground west of Route 28 was at the Robin Hood School. It was noted that since all of the school playgrounds are not accessible during school hours, this significantly limited the playground accessibility of parents, grandparents and caregivers who had younger-than-school-age children needing play spaces during the school day.

Given the fact that most of the town is already developed, the town should look for opportunities to acquire small places for additional playgrounds in neighborhoods to the west of Route 28, and should examine the potential of using town-owned parcels (e.g., tax title properties) in that area for playgrounds.

### **Stoneham's Recent Open Space Initiatives**

One of the key open space actions taken since the 1997 plan was the acquisition and development of the Town Common. This project established an approximately 1.5 acre public open space in the downtown adjacent to Town Hall. The Common has become the site of numerous public programs.



**STONEHAM TOWN COMMON**

A number of other improvements, both large and small, have been made to the parks in the recent years. In 2012, the town completed a site survey of the Old Burial Ground, located on a Town-

owned parcel near the intersection of Pleasant Street and Oriental Court. The property survey was completed by use of a global positioning system (GPS) unit. The physical features of the site were located and plotted on the plan. The survey was used by a preservation expert to plan future maintenance of the site as part of a grant run by the Historical Society. Moneys were saved by completing the survey “in house”.

In 2013, one of the major projects completed involved the expansion of the Recreation Park playing fields. The former outdoor hockey rink which had been converted to basketball courts were filled with 3,000 cubic yards of gravel and 500 yards of loam. This added nearly one (1) acre to the existing play fields. This renovation also included the movement of the light poles and seeding of the area.

Also in 2013, a volunteer group, with the help of the DPW, bought and installed new equipment at A. P. Rounds Park. Work on this project was completed on this park 2014, and it is now one of the most heavily used playgrounds in town.



**A.P. Rounds Playground**

Extensive work was also performed at Steele playground. Old and outdated equipment was replaced. New roofs were installed on the equipment and the shelter. This work was performed by Stoneham Ford (in memory of Alan Melkonian) and DPW forces.



**Steele Playground, showing shelter and play structures**

The Stone East School was sold for redevelopment as condominiums. The School Department retained the ownership of the fields and playground. The DPW worked closely with the developer of the East School in replacing the playground equipment, improving the basketball court and increasing parking.



**New Playground equipment at the East School site**

Additional improvements over the past several years have included other small maintenance projects at playgrounds, as well as improvements to the town's golf courses at Unicorn and Stoneham Oaks.

Another major action in progress is the completion of the Tri Community Greenway/Stoneham Greenway Trail. The Right-of-Way of the Stoneham Branch railroad was acquired by the town in the early 1980's. Construction of the Winchester and Woburn sections of the Greenway Trail have begun, and is slated for completion in Stoneham by fall 2018. This project will connect neighborhoods, schools, downtown, parks, and commercial areas across the three communities. Much of the Stoneham section has already been cleared of brush, and a portion of the right-of-way near the Middle School has been paved using Safe Routes to School funds.



**View of section of the Stoneham Greenway Trail leading to the Middle School**

The final improvement of note since the last OSRP was one of the major goals of that plan: the establishment of additional public access to Spot Pond by the Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) (previously known as the Metropolitan District Commission or MDC) once Spot Pond was taken off-line as a primary drinking water reservoir. Since the designation of Spot Pond as a back-up reservoir, the DCR has established additional access in the form of a boat rental facility, as well as allowing shore-fishing.

## Stoneham's Recreation Opportunities

The residents of the town of Stoneham have a great many recreational opportunities available to them.

The location of the DCR-owned Middlesex Fells within Stoneham provides immediate access to miles of hiking and off-road bicycle trails, scenic views, wildlife encounters, off-leash dog-walking at the Sheep Fold, and opportunities for environmental study. The Spot Pond area provides boating opportunities, picnicking, fishing, wildlife viewing, and exploration of the historical ruins in the area of Haywardville. The Hall Pool, owned by DCR but now managed by the Stoneham Boys and Girls Club, offers swimming. The DCR facilities at Greenwood Park include open play fields and a children's playground. The Stone Zoo, on land owned by DCR but managed by Zoo New England, offers a unique opportunity to learn about wildlife, both local and from around the world.

Town-owned lands designated for conservation uses are managed by the Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the DPW. Whip Hill Park is the largest of these sites, and includes a structure (a prior residence) that is now used for meetings and programs. The conservation areas are generally used only for passive recreation such as walking and wildlife viewing, and many of the smaller sites do not have officially designated parking areas or trails.

The Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Committee, (formerly known as the Unicorn Recreation Area Committee and Stoneham Youth Commission) is responsible for the maintenance and operations of the two golf courses (Unicorn and Stoneham Oaks) as well as the Stoneham Arena (indoor ice skating facility). The two municipally-owned golf courses are leased to a golf course operator, open for public use, and although in past times were not profitable, have recently both been returning profits for course maintenance and other town use. The Ice Arena offers a variety of programs including open public skating, adult stick practice, open freestyle figure skating, pre-school skating classes in addition to private rentals and events. The ice arena also hosts a variety of schools (Stoneham High School, Austin Prep High School, and Matignon High School), leagues (Stoneham Youth Hockey, MIAA State Hockey Tournament, Middlesex Yankee Girls Hockey League, Hockey North High School League, North Shore Girls Summer Hockey league, and others), as well as hockey schools and camps.

<http://www.stoneham-ma.gov/open-space-and-recreation-advisory-committee>

<http://www.stoneham-ma.gov/stoneham-arena>

The Stoneham recreation sites and playgrounds are managed by the Department of Public Works, but the organization of activities on the town's (non-school) recreation sites is managed by the Stoneham Recreation Department, which was re-established in 2016. The Stoneham Recreation Department is responsible for establishing and promoting recreation programming, as well as scheduling of field use, and coordination with private organizations for use of, and maintenance of, various recreation sites. A large number of sports groups utilize the recreation fields operated by

the town; some of these also contribute significantly to the maintenance of the facilities. These groups, which provide recreational opportunities to youth and adults, include the Stoneham Little League and Softball League, Stoneham Babe Ruth, Stoneham Pony league Stoneham Soccer Club, Stoneham Baseball, Stoneham Flag Football, and Men's Soccer group.

The Stoneham Recreation Department runs year-round programs for adults and children, including such diverse activities such as pickleball, tap dance, yoga, photography (for adults), and soccer, boxing, dodgeball, computer coding, tap dance, kids' test kitchen, field sports, and golf (for kids). Significant additional programs are added during the summer.

<http://www.stonehamrec.com/>

Sports activities undertaken by the Stoneham High School are run predominantly at the facilities at the high school. However, Recreation Park is used for some lacrosse, football, field hockey and soccer activities.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Stoneham and Wakefield is a private organization (\$25 per year youth membership) that provides extensive recreational opportunities in town. The Club operates the Hall Pool during the summer months to provide recreational swimming and swimming lessons, and has a year-round facility adjacent to Recreation Park used for basketball, education and recreation programs.

<https://bgcstoneham.org/hall-memorial-pool/>

<https://bgcstoneham.org/>

In addition to all of the above, Stoneham is host to the Stoneham Sabers, an adult amateur team in the Yawkey Baseball League, which utilizes Recreation Park as its home field.

<http://yawkeybaseball.com/about/>

<http://stonehamsabers.400hitter.com/default.asp?TmID=856>

Bear Hill Golf Club, in the northern end of town, was established in 1900, is a membership club consisting of 53 acres that has an 18-hole golf course, clubhouse, tennis and swimming pool. The facility is a private golf club, but is available for rental for events such as weddings.

<https://www.bearhillgolfclub.com/Home.aspx>

## **Potential New Open Space**

Based on the fact that a large percentage of Stoneham is in Open Space, and the remainder of the community is largely developed for commercial and residential purposes, there is little land left for potential acquisition by the town for future open spaces. In addition, many of the respondents felt that Stoneham should emphasize better management of the lands already in conservation rather than in acquisition of new areas.

However, there were several areas where there did appear to be significant support for additional acquisition.

The first is the 26-acre Weiss Farm, which produces honey, hay and landscaping products. Since 2013, Weiss Farm has been the subject of a proposal for development of residential under Chapter 40B. The town has denied the permit due to the density of the proposal, and the case is in various appeals. The farm remains in operation during the appeals. One potential option being discussed is the preservation of the farm by outright purchase by the town, or the potential trade of another parcel of town-owned land in exchange for the farm.

Another concept for acquisition is the acquisition of additional areas, or the re-use of existing parcels owned by the town, to the west of Route 28 for use as youth playgrounds. As noted elsewhere in the OSRP, the area west of Route 28 is lacking in youth playgrounds. The OSRP survey also included a number of responses indicating small parcels of land that should be protected from future development within neighborhoods. The list should be examined to determine if any of these are west of Route 28 and have the potential to serve as locations for future youth playgrounds.

Participants in the OSRP programs also suggested that additional lands along the Stoneham Greenway should be protected to provide a diversity of user experience, since much of this greenway runs through residential or commercial areas.

Land in front of Middle School, which is owned by the town but which is subject to discussions for alternative uses, was also an area that participants wanted to stay as greenspace.

The Bear Hill Golf Club was not mentioned as a site for future acquisition, likely because the town already owns two golf courses and Bear Hill is perceived as a stable club that is not in danger of being developed. However, the town should monitor the Club and be sure that the situation does not change in the future, or should work to place the area under a conservation restriction to ensure that it will not be developed.

# 6

## Community Vision

### Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan Vision Statement

Stoneham's Open Space and Recreation Plan, developed through an inclusive public process, will guide citizens, board members, and elected officials in being purposeful in managing the playgrounds, recreation areas, and conservation sites in town, with the intent of promoting health and well-being within the community.



PLAYGROUND AT A. P. ROUNDS PARK

## Description of the Process

The goals and the actions for this 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan were developed through an extensive public process and internal discussions by the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee. See chapter 2 of this report for more details on the outreach activities.

An initial set of goals from the 1997 OSRP Action Plan were reviewed by the Committee to determine which were already completed, which were still relevant, and which ones needed to be updated for current circumstances. These initial goals were also updated based upon the initial results of the 2017 OSRP survey. The combined and re-written initial draft of the 2017 goals were discussed and prioritized as part of the first public forum held in March 2017. Small table exercises at this first forum also allowed collection of discussion notes regarding issues and opportunities on the minds of forum participants. A more formal Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities discussion was also part of the forum program. The results of that forum, combined with the final results of the completed 2017 survey process (with 749 participants), were once again discussed by the Committee. The full results of the survey, as well as the information gathered at the March forum, are found in Appendix C.

The Committee felt that they had developed a good set of goals and actions that addressed the concerns expressed by the residents of Stoneham, but they wanted to test these drafts to be sure that there was nothing missing, and to attempt to obtain priorities for the ideas that would ultimately compete for limited implementation funding. The goals and actions were summarized in 8 major categories, and were presented to the community at Town Day, September 16th. Town Day is a community event, attended by hundreds, and the OSRP Update Committee used the opportunity to gather information from residents and business owners regarding the draft goals and actions. Participants were asked to review the goals and to place dots on their 5 highest priorities. To be sure to reach out to as many residents as possible, an open house/drop-in program was held later in September, and the exercise was again available to enable participation by those who were not available on town Day. In total, more than 130 people participated in this prioritization exercise.

Each of the public events were advertised in the local newspaper, were discussed at the selectmen's meeting, and were placed on the project web page at <http://stonehamosrp.org/>.

## Open Space and Recreation Goals

The following are the Town of Stoneham's broad, long-term goals for the next seven years regarding open space and recreation. Additional details regarding the actions to implement these goals is found in Chapter 8: Goals and Objectives, and Chapter 9: Seven Year Action Plan:

**Goal: Implement the Tri-Community Greenway and Stoneham Complete Streets programs to facilitate walking, hiking and bicycling.** After years of planning, the Greenway is under construction and should be paved by fall 2018. The residents are now focused on planning for the amenities (benches, access points, trash receptacles, etc.) as well as how to connect neighborhoods and parks and schools to this resource.

**Goal: Improve Annual Maintenance of Parks and Recreation and Conservation sites.** Residents were very concerned about the lack of ongoing maintenance of the parks and playgrounds

**Goal: Improve all neighborhood playgrounds, and all town recreation facilities, within the town over the next 10 years.** After years of lack of maintenance, and few significant upgrades, residents wanted a plan put in place to attend to the capital improvement needs of the parks, and established a goal of a ten-year horizon for these improvements.

**Goal: Assign Conservation Commission or other committee to work with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on expanded use of Spot Pond and Middlesex Fells Reservation.** Residents wanted continued discussions with the DCR regarding additional uses, in particular a circumferential trail around Spot Pond.

**Goal: Acquire additional areas for recreational facilities or conservation area.** Residents were concerned about the potential loss of the last farm in town, and also had ideas for small sites that could add to the open spaces in neighborhoods.

**Goal: Develop a plan for the continuation and expansion of the breadth and frequency of events at the Common, as well as other locations such as Whip Hill Park.** Public events are very popular in town, and residents wanted an increase in these programs, including additional events at the Whip Hill Park, which some consider under-utilized.

**Goal: Expand funding for open space and recreation facilities and programs and improvements.** Residents were interested in diversifying the funding sources, and tapping into donations of funds and volunteer time, to better manage Stoneham's open spaces.

**Goal: Increase public awareness of open space and recreation opportunities.** Residents wanted more information, and better dissemination of information, related to the existing properties that were available for use, as well as the programs that were available to the town.

**Goal: Increase management, including by DPW staff as well as volunteers, at some of the smaller, less known, conservation areas.** Acknowledging the difficulty of managing the larger more actively used parks, playgrounds and conservation areas by an understaffed DPW, residents set a future goal of better management of some of the smaller conservation sites throughout town.

**Goal: Coordinate with other Plans and Boards.** The OSRP Update Committee is comprised of members of various town boards and recreation groups. The Committee would like to continue collaboration and communication with these boards and groups to implement the Plan and to be prepared to begin the next update in 6 years.

# 7

## Needs Analysis

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### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine what is needed to achieve Stoneham’s open space and recreation goals. There are three general categories of needs the plan is required to address: Resource Protection, with a focus on environmental issues, trail networks, riverways, etc.; Community Needs addresses issues raised by the demographic analysis, and through the survey and public forums; and lastly, Management Needs, such as staffing and the desire for facility management plans.

### Summary of Resource Protection Needs

A 2009 study of land uses in the Town of Stoneham indicated that approximately 1441 acres (33% of the town) was included in the Recreation and Open Space zoning district. The majority of lands within this District are permanently protected (either by the town or in the Middlesex Fells Reservation owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation), with only a few examples (e.g. Bear Hill Country Club) that have limited protection. An additional 132 acres (3% of the town) was in government ownership outside of this zoning district. When combined with the land area of roads within the town, this leaves about 51% of the land area of the town that is zoned and available for development. There are many communities in Massachusetts that would be envious of such a high percentage of parkland and conservation lands.<sup>1</sup>

As will be seen in the review of public input received as part of this planning process, the majority of participants indicated that their main focus was on the management and maintenance of their existing open space and recreation facilities, although there was also some support for acquisition of the remaining parcels available. In particular, the Weiss Farm, which is the subject of a 40B housing proposal, has been suggested as a key parcel to acquire. The location of the Weiss Farm,



<sup>1</sup> REFERENCE: October 28, 2009, letter to town of Stoneham from MAPC regarding General Land Area Minimum Analysis for the Town of Stoneham conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council

immediately adjacent to the High School property, has made this parcel a priority for preservation, with the potential for use of portions of the site for expanded active recreational facilities

The vacant parcels owned by the Town of Stoneham, but not under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission or used for active recreation, also represent another type of resource protection. Prior to the disposal of any of these parcels, the town should consider if they have resource protection value, or if they may be suitable for future sites to bring additional geographic equity to users of parks and playgrounds.

## **Summary of the Community's Need**

As part of this planning process, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee released a survey, hosted one community forum, solicited input at Stoneham Town Day, and obtained additional feedback at an Open House style event. The diversity of events was designed to provide maximum opportunity for feedback from residents regarding their goals and concerns regarding open space in town. This section will summarize key survey findings, as well as the highlights from input received at the various public events.

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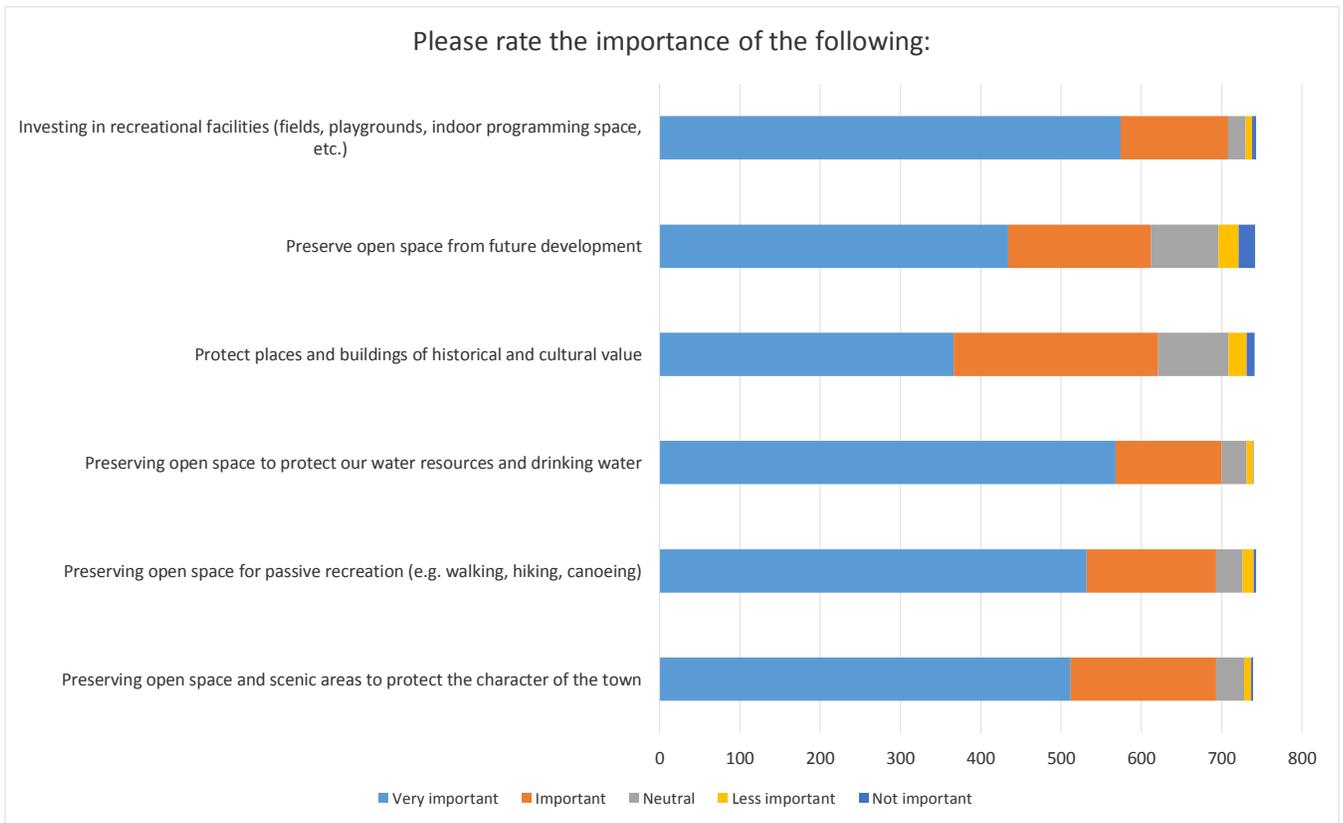
### **Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Survey Results**

The OSRP Survey was designed to gather feedback on community values relating to the open space resources, the awareness of these resources within the community, the opinions related to specific resources, and the goals of survey participants for the future of open space and recreation within the town. Highlights of the survey results are below; the full analysis of the results of the survey are included in Appendix C to this report. A total of 749 individuals participated in the survey.

Several questions were asked to determine the importance of existing open spaces and the attitudes about potential future protections goals. Investing in existing open space and recreation amenities, and preserving what open spaces remain, were both important to residents. These themes were supported in future public event input from residents.

Investing in existing amenities and preserving what open is left are most important to residents. This theme resonates throughout the survey results.

# Community Values

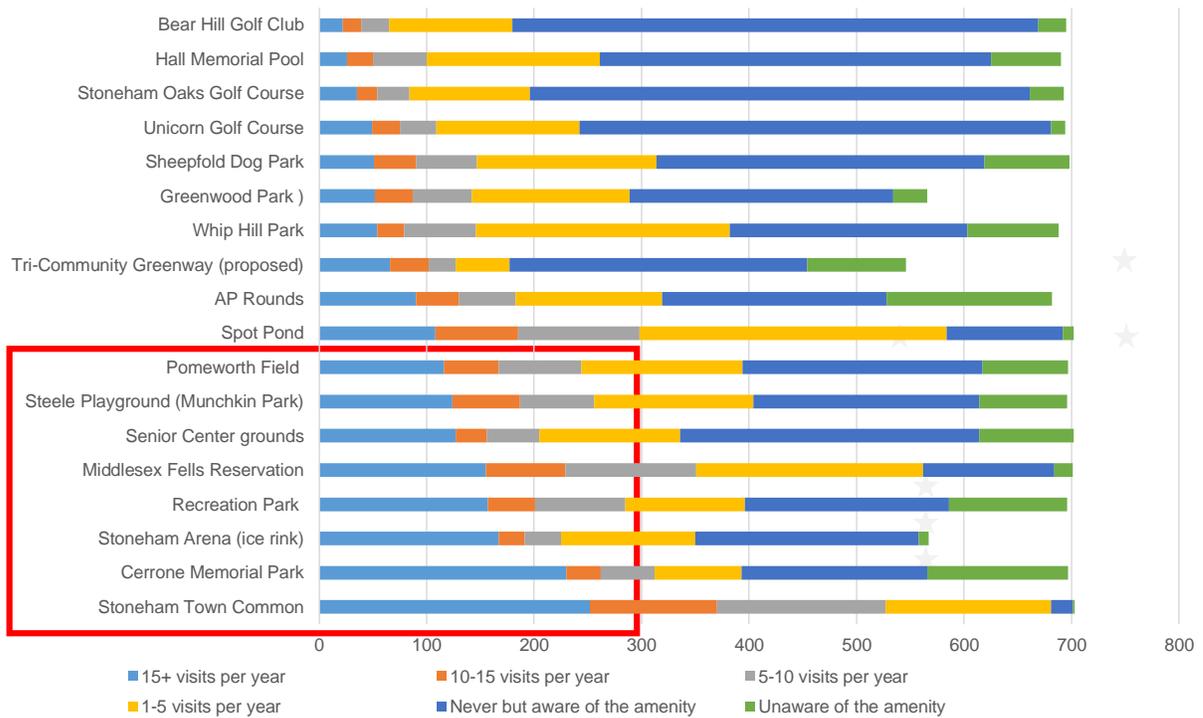


The survey also asked questions related to the number of times that residents visited parks and playgrounds, and also if the respondent was aware of the facility. The most visited sites (in order of visitation) were the Town Common, Cerrone Memorial Park (soccer fields), Stoneham Arena (indoor ice skating), Recreation Park (field sports), the Middlesex Fells Reservation (woodland trails, dog park), the Steele a.k.a. Munchkin Playground (adjacent to Town Hall and Common) and Pomeworth Field (little league, baseball, basketball, playground, field sports). The Greenway, although not yet built, and not visited often in its current condition, nevertheless was well known in the community. The golf courses were similarly well-known, but with less visitation. Other sites, such as the A. P. Rounds Playground, which are neighborhood playgrounds without parking, were less well known by the majority of respondents.

The Common, Fields and playgrounds get the most usage. AP Rounds recently renovated but many residents unaware of the amenity. Greenway not yet built but well known in the community. Golf courses well known but rarely used.

# Awareness and Usage

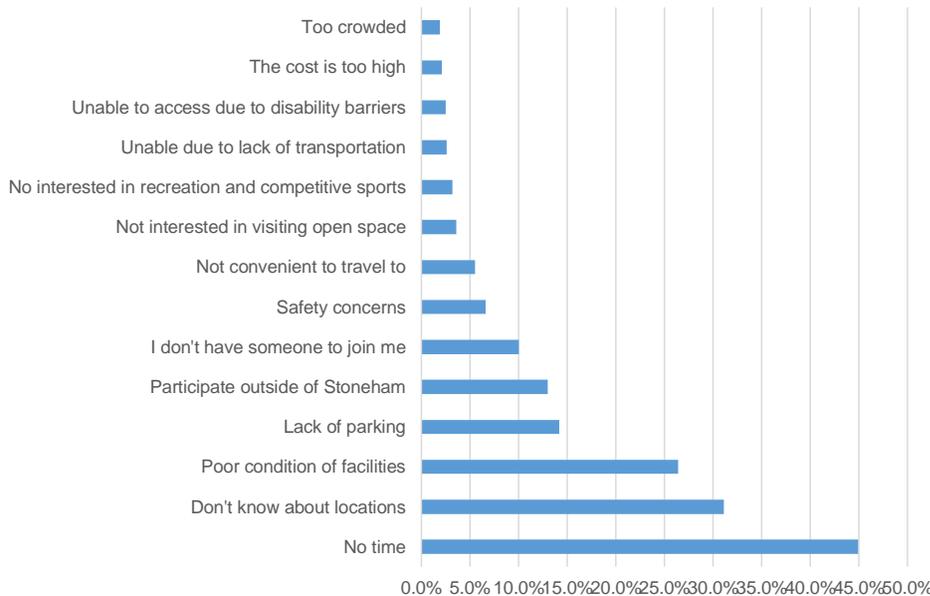
How often do you visit or use the following for passive/active recreation?



A question relating to what keeps residents from utilizing the open space and recreation resources in the town confirmed some of the issues that were raised at the public forum. Many residents were not aware of the locations of the facilities (which leads to the overall goal of providing better information about these resources to the public). Also expressed by a large number of respondents was the poor condition of the facilities.

# Awareness and Usage

What prevents you from utilizing Stoneham’s open space and recreation amenities?



Recurring comments under “other”:

- Kids have grown up
- Need for programs for all ages
- Do not golf
- Dogs not welcome/ too many dogs
- Lack of maintenance
- Lack of awareness of facilities
- Need for ADA compliant facilities

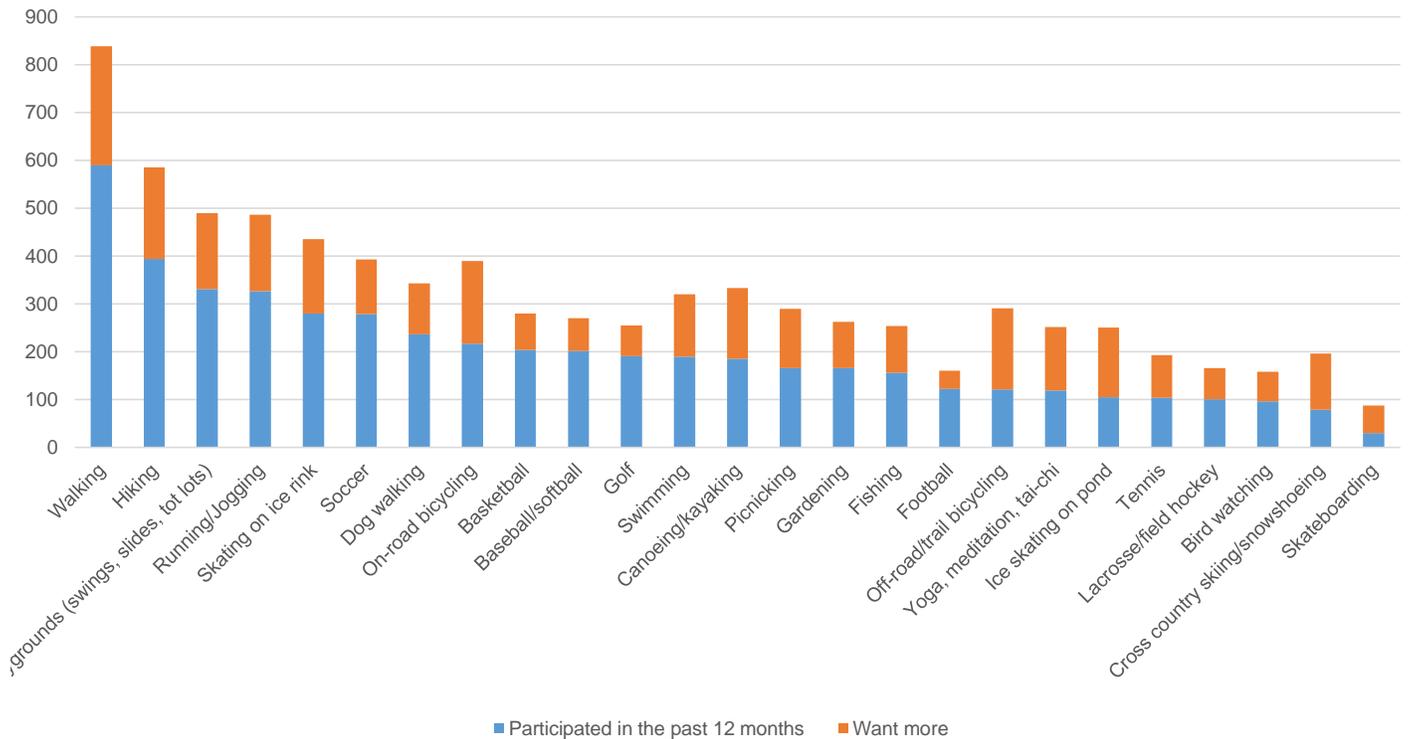
Consider diversification of program offerings to broaden participation of residents of all life stages and abilities.

In order to determine if the currently available facilities were meeting the needs of the residents, another survey question related to activities that the respondents participated in over the past year, and what they would like to see more of. By far, the most popular current activity, and the one that the most individuals indicated they would like to see more of, was facilities for walking, followed by hiking. Facilities for running, playgrounds, skating and soccer rounded out the top 6 of existing uses. These same activities (except soccer) were in the top tier of desired uses as well, and were joined in the desired category by on-road and off-road bicycling.

# Needs and Demand: Activities

Does current availability and accessibility of facilities and programs meet current demand?

What activities have you and/or members of your family participated in Stoneham over the past 12 months, and what would you like to see more of?



The following chart provides the same information as appears in the above graph regarding current and desired activities, but in tabular form so the actual numbers are easier to discern.

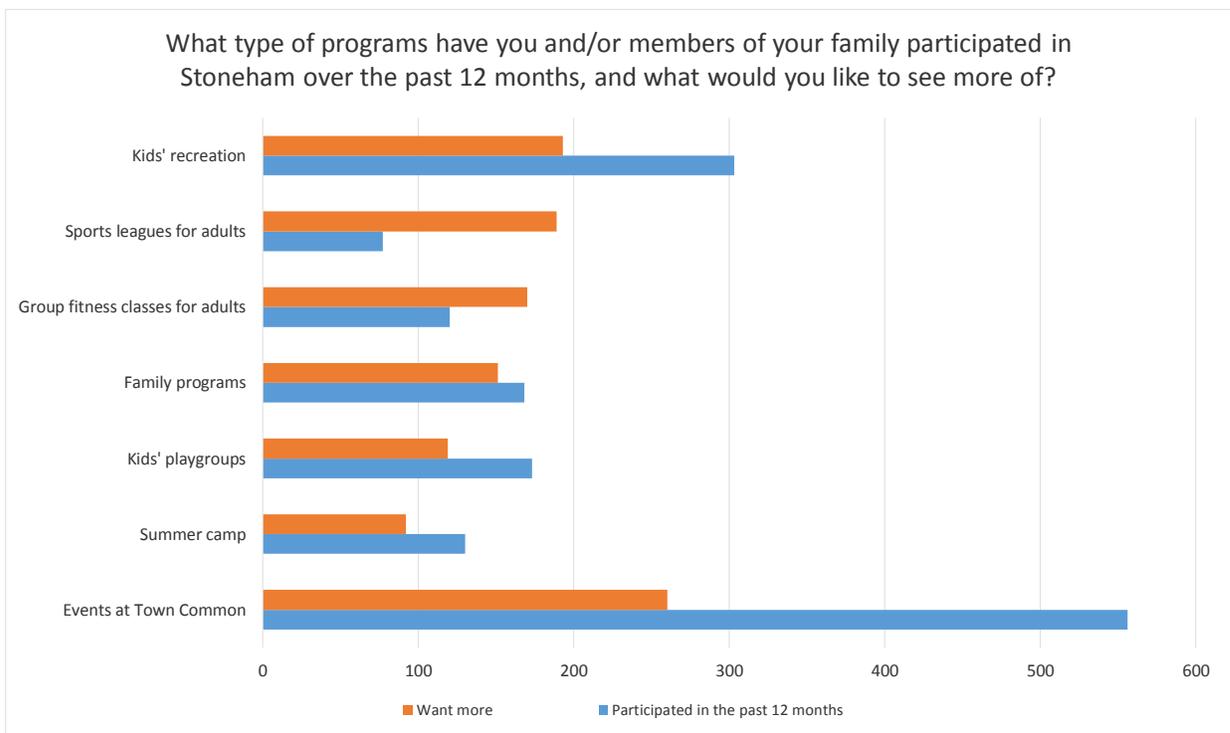
# Needs and Demand: Activities

Does current availability and accessibility of facilities and programs meet current demand?

Activity	Participated in the past 12 months	Want more
Walking	590	248
Hiking	394	191
Playgrounds (swings, slides, tot lots)	331	158
Running/Jogging	326	160
Skating on ice rink	280	155
Soccer	279	114
Dog walking	236	107
On-road bicycling	217	173
Basketball	204	76
Baseball/softball	201	69
Golf	191	64
Swimming	189	131
Canoeing/kayaking	185	148
Picnicking	166	124
Gardening	166	96
Fishing	156	98
Football	122	38
Off-road/trail bicycling	121	170
Yoga, meditation, tai-chi	119	132
Ice skating on pond	105	145
Tennis	104	89
Lacrosse/field hockey	100	66
Bird watching	96	62
Cross country skiing/snowshoeing	79	117
Skateboarding	30	57

In response to questions relating to types of programs that they attended over the past 12 months, by far the majority indicated that they had attended events on the Town Common. This highlights the tremendous success of the decision to establish the Town Common as a public meeting and program location. Children’s recreation programs were the next most participated in currently. The two cases where there was significantly more future demand than current activity were for group fitness classes for adults, and for adult sports leagues. Given the future demographics of the town, which shows a steady number of children but an increasing number of adults in the community, these may become even more of a need in the future.

# Needs and Demand: Programs



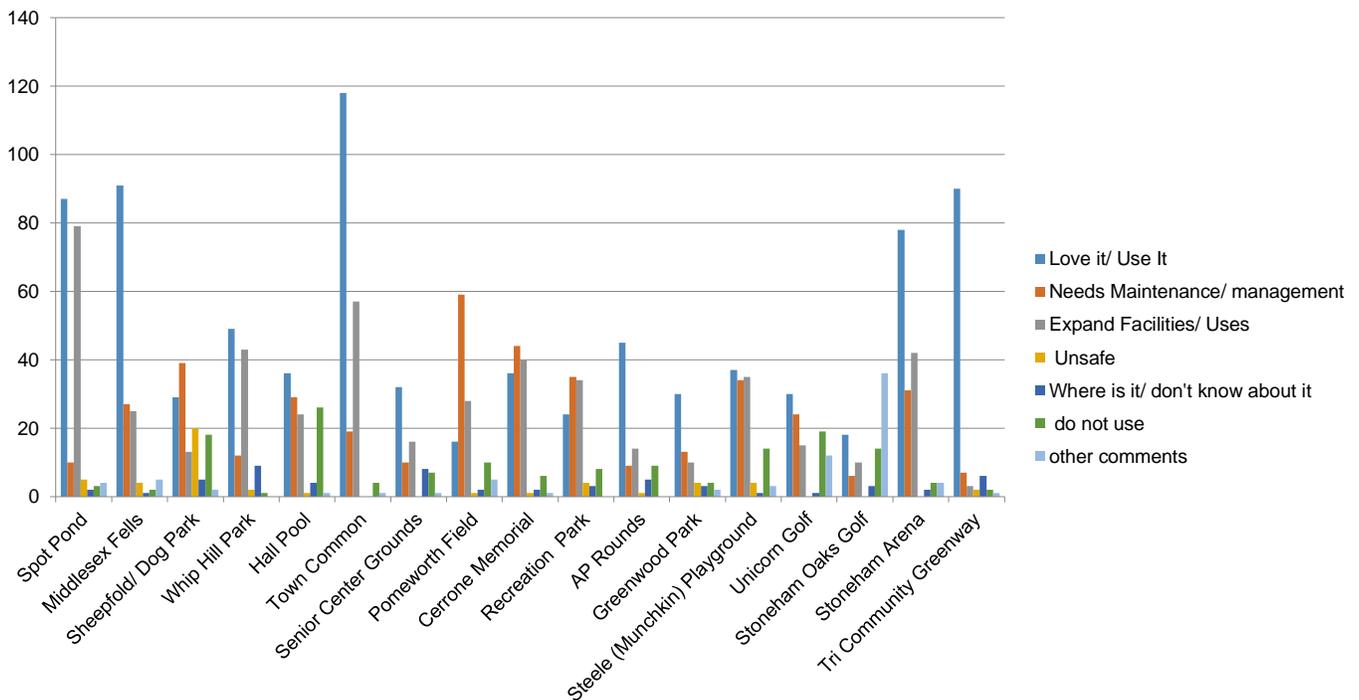
The Survey also asked a series of open ended questions to gather input about many of the town’s parks and playgrounds and recreation facilities. The responses were categorized into 5 major groups, plus an “other” category. The groups were:

- Love it; use it
- Needs maintenance/management
- Expand facilities/uses
- Unsafe
- Where is it/don’t know about it
- Do not use

Note that an individual response may include several of the categories, for instance, a park that they use often, but for which they would like to see additional uses included, and where they have concerns about current maintenance.

When looked at overall, the facilities with the highest “love it; use it” ratings were the Town Common, Middlesex Fells, the greenway, Spot Pond, and the Ice Arena. The following graph series illustrate the results.

# Facility conditions

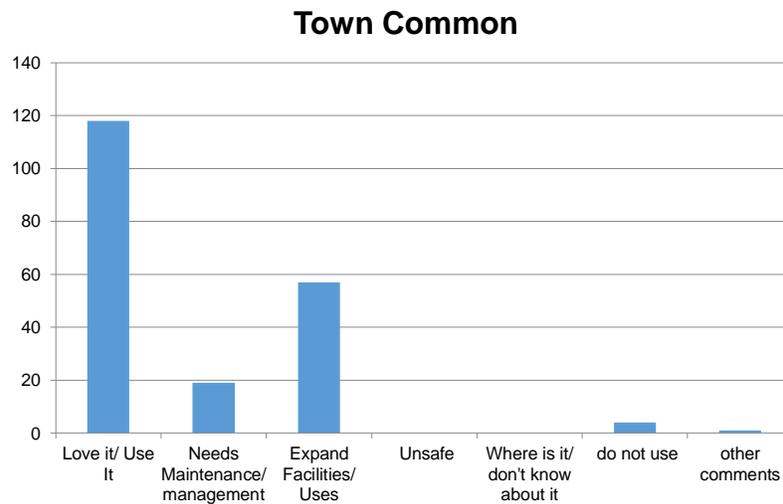


- A Total of 749 Surveys were completed; not all respondents completed the open response questions.
- The greatest number of total responses was for Town Common (187), Spot Pond (176), Middlesex Fells (147), and Stoneham Arena (142).
- The parks that received the highest "Love it; Use It" category included the Town Common, Middlesex Fells, Spot Pond, Tri-Community Greenway (largely aspirational), and Stoneham Arena.

The results were also analyzed on an individual facility basis, in order to provide more detail, and to guide future management of the facilities.

An example of a well-liked playground, but where respondents would like additional uses, is the Town Common, as is shown in the graph below. These responses also indicate that this is one of the better maintained facilities in town.

# Facility conditions

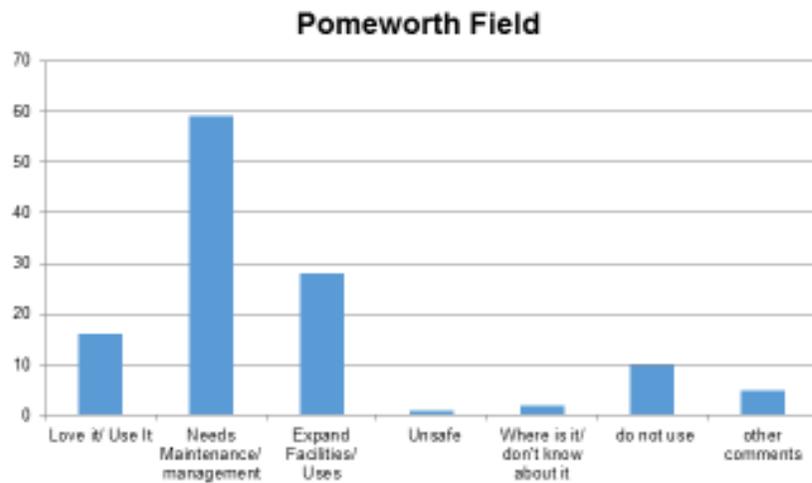


Received highest number of "Love it; Use it" responses

Most were positive towards past events and uses, and wanted more

By contrast, respondents indicated they used Pomeworth Field less often (primarily for little league sports) but that the facility was in need of additional maintenance. There was also a number of comments about the need for bathroom facilities, improved playground equipment, and overall improvement to existing facilities.

## Facility conditions



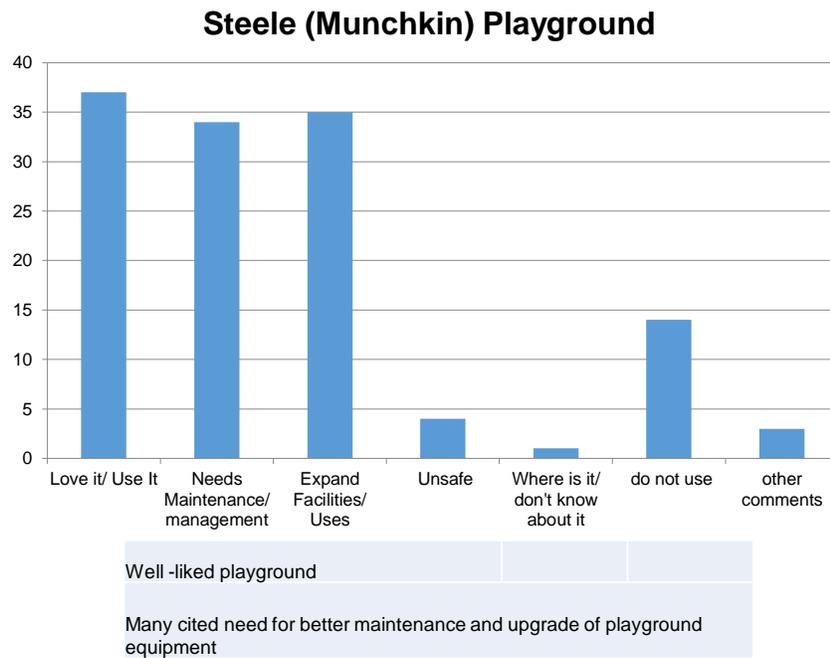
Most common use cited was for little league play

Many commented on poor conditions of the fields and lack of maintenance

Need for bathroom facilities, improved playground equipment, and overall rehab of facilities

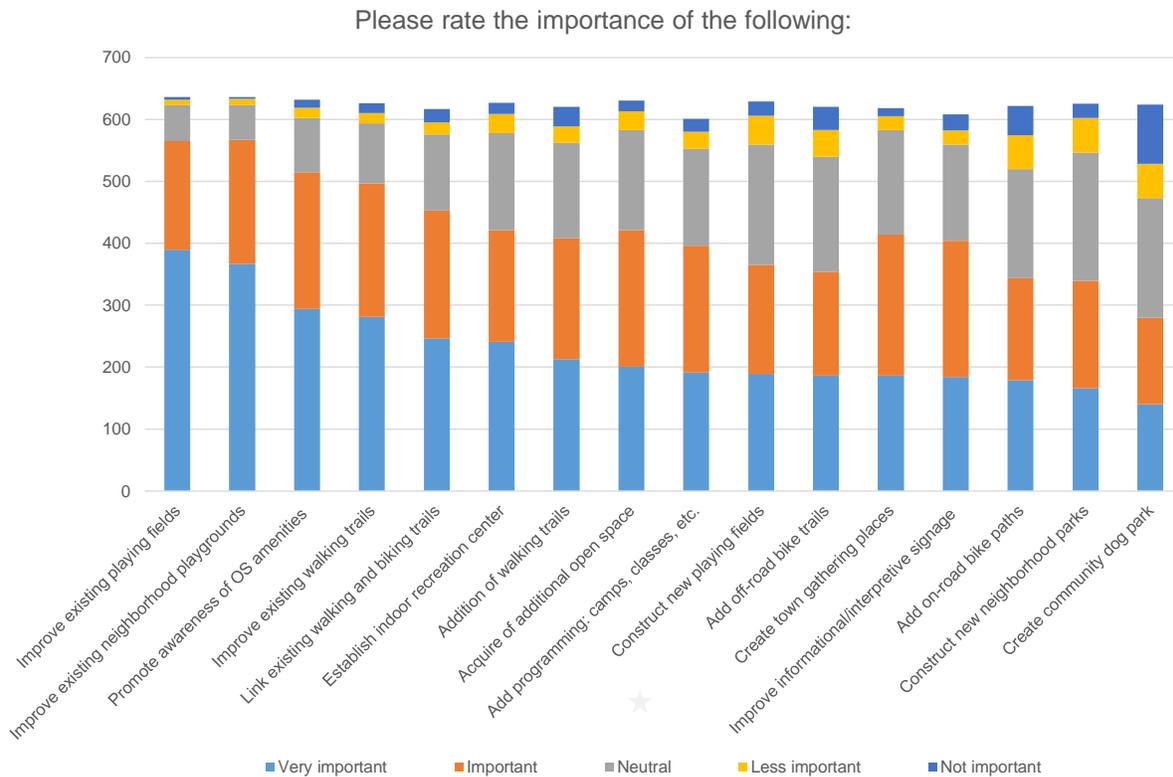
Steele Playground, a.k.a. Munchkin Playground, represents another group of facilities where the number of respondents indicating “love it; use it” was equal to those that wanted to expand the uses/equipment and to improve the maintenance of the facilities

# Facility conditions



The Survey asked respondents to rate the importance of a number of open space activities from improvements to facilities to acquisition of additional open space to adding facilities for specific uses. The results of this question are shown in the graph below. Consistent with other responses in the survey, as well as through the public forum feedback and the prioritization at Town Day and the final Open House event, there was a strong preference for making improvements to the existing parks, playgrounds and walking trails, and the goal of providing additional awareness of existing open space amenities available to town residents.

# Priorities



The Survey also had an open-ended question about what additional open spaces should be acquired in town. The locations suggested (including the “none” category) are listed below in order of number of respondents.

## Priorities

Are there any parcels of land you think the town should investigate purchasing or permanently protecting for new conservation or recreation land?

- Weiss Farm (57)
- None (19)
- New Rink/Expand Arena (12)
- Land north of Cerrone (9)
- Near Greenway/Bike Path (4)
- For Sports Facilities (4)
- At Medical Center/Spot Pond (4)
- In front of Middle School (4)
- And 29 other locations proposed once or twice

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## The Initial Public Forum

The initial public forum was held on March 28, 2017 in the Town Hall. More than 50 residents participated in this event. As part of the initial public forum, there were a number of ways for participants to provide input to the Open Space and Recreation process.

The program began with a brief PowerPoint presentation providing background for the OSRP, demographic information for the town, and basic information pertaining to land use and open space in Stoneham.

The event then proceeded to small group exercises in which participants discussed their likes, dislikes and goals for open space in town, and also used maps to highlight what they considered to be special or unique places in Stoneham.

The next element of the evening was a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing Stoneham's open spaces.

This was followed by a discussion of an initial list of priorities for open space goals that were derived from the goals of the previous plan and the initial results of the 2017 OSRP survey.

After this discussion, participants were provided with a limited number of dots with which they were to indicate their priorities for their top Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities, and their top goals and objectives.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities as discussed by Forum Participants

An initial brainstorming session was held during which participants were asked for their ideas for Strengths, Weakness and Opportunities in relation to Open Space and Recreation resources; this was followed by an opportunity to rank their most important Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities. The HIGHEST ranked issues are listed below, see Appendix C for the complete list and priorities.

Number of priority dots placed on each item is shown in *blue italic font*. Each participant was given 4 dots.

### Strengths

- Whip Hill *6*
- Lots of open space – a real asset *5*
- Greenway *5*
- Three Golf Courses (Noted Unicorn and also Par 3) *5*
- Town Common *5*

### Weaknesses

- Lack of comprehensive Maintenance Plan for All parks and playgrounds *12*
- Lack of coordination between Stoneham & DCR & State *4*
- People not being aware of our spaces *3*
- Parks and playgrounds that we do have need a lot of work *2*
- Signage *2*
- Current state of Par 3 golf course (layout makes it difficult to improve) *2*

### Opportunities

- Spot Pond Walkway *13*
- Fields need more maintenance in order to be more usable *7*
- Re- Establish Earth Day programs to bring volunteers to assist in management *6*
- Dog Parks - small \$\$ investment yield big reward *4*
- Pocket Parks – passive recreation *4*
- Regional Groups/ Organizations that the town can work with *3*
- Putting money into existing playgrounds *3*
- Take more advantage of the Fells *3*
- Take advantage of Fells – get school children out into the parks *2*
- Undertake inventory of town-owned property *2*



THESE PHOTOS SHOW PARTICIPANTS AT THE MARCH 28, 2017 OSRP FORUM



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## Initial Discussion of 2017 Goals and Actions by

### Forum Participants

Another portion of the Public Forum focused on the Goals and Actions as outlined in the 1997 OSRP, as amended by the results (to date) of the 2017 OSRP Survey. The Goals and Actions were discussed, and ideas were solicited for additions to these Actions. After this discussion, participants were provided with the opportunity to rank their Goals (each participant was given 1 dot to indicate the goals they felt was most important) and the Actions (each participant was provided with 7 dots to indicate their top 7 actions). The full results of this exercise can be found in Appendix C.

The ranking of the 4 broad goals was as follows:

Goal #4: Encourage Public Involvement in Conservation Land 13

Goal #3: Provide a Wide Range of Recreational Opportunities 9

Goal #2: Preservation of Open Space and Scenic Areas 8

Goal #1: Protection of Water resources 3

The full list of 30 objectives, and their ranking, can be found in Appendix C. All of these comments were used in preparing subsequent editions of goals and objectives.

The top 15 objectives as prioritized at the initial public forum were:

Establish town fund for purchase of open space or recreation areas, including possible adoption of Community Preservation Act or designation of other town funds. 18

Provide more events at high profile open spaces, such as events at the Town Common. 17

Upgrade and improve maintenance on existing recreational areas. Improvement of existing playing fields. 16

Improve public awareness of the Town's lesser known open space and recreation facilities, such as the Whip Hill area. 13

Encourage the DCR/MWRA to expand recreational/educational uses, and the maintenance and safety thereof, in Middlesex Fells/Spot Pond area. 12

Encourage private developers to integrate open space within proposed developments. 12

Locate recreational facilities to create a geographic balance of recreational opportunities. Improvement of neighborhood parks/playgrounds. 12

Provide signage and trail markers to access these areas. 12

Provide opportunities for residents and businesses to volunteer time or funding to support conservation or recreation programs (e.g. establish “Friends of Parks” groups). 11

Identify undeveloped lands having high value as open space or scenic areas. 11

Publicize the availability of conservation land for hiking, picnicking, and other appropriate uses. 11

Offer recreational programs for all age groups. 10

Protect watersheds used for municipal or regional water supply, including Crystal Lake and Spot Pond, while allowing appropriate recreational uses of watershed lands. 9

Develop trails to provide public access to public conservation areas. Improvement/maintenance of existing walking trails. 9

Identify and protect wetlands that have value in preserving water quality or in providing wildlife habitat. 9

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### Additional input received at Initial Public Forum

An additional opportunity for public input at the initial forum was from the initial small group exercises around two of the draft maps. Participants were asked to provide updates to the open space maps, to express their ideas/concerns related to the parcels, and to provide ideas for what



constituted Areas of Scenic Importance or Unique Landscapes. The results of the table exercises are included in Appendix C, and were used, along with all other public input, to re-draft the Goals and Action statements for the 2017 OSRP, and to identify areas that constitute Scenic Areas/Unique Landscapes in town.

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## Recent and Current Open Space Projects

A detailed discussion of Stoneham’s recent and ongoing open space projects is found in Chapter 5 above. It is worth noting here that some of these projects are the most “liked” facilities in town (e.g. the newly established Common and the soon-to-be-paved Greenway), while others (e.g. improvements to Recreation Park) address some of the longer-term capital improvements shown as desired in the survey and public forum.



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## Analysis of Needs of Special Groups – Teens and seniors

Specific needs of Teenagers that were discussed as part of the OSRP update were active recreational programming (Sports with specific facility needs such as hockey; field sports such as lacrosse, football, softball; and indoor sports such as basketball). Some of the recreational programming needs are met through the new Stoneham Recreation Department, and others are met through private non-profit leagues such as Stoneham Soccer or the Boys and Girls Club.

Specific Actions included in the OSRP that address the needs of youth are to undertake capital improvements to the existing recreational facilities to provide better facilities for organized sports. This has begun to be addressed by the town meeting vote to undertake major capital improvements to the Stoneham Ice Arena.

An additional specific request raised by a teen was for a location in town to be set aside for a future skate park. Although this suggestion was raised near the end of the final public event of the OSRP process, and there was therefore no opportunity to solicit significant additional public input on the concept, it was nevertheless included as one of the Action Items in this plan.

Although there was not specific notes kept regarding the ages of participants in the survey or the public feedback sessions, the senior population was very well represented in the latter, and feedback reflected not only their desires for recreation and open space needs for themselves, but for others in the town.

While active recreational activities may be more related to young adults, the senior population is likely to participate more in some of the other types of activities such as walking, which was the highest desired activity of all. Several of the 7-Year Action Plan items relate to improving walking

in town, including not only the Stoneham Greenway but also improving overall walkability through the Complete Streets program.

The Stoneham Senior Center also provides programming for seniors, including activities such as horseshoes, exercise classes, dance programs, yoga, aerobics, as well as less physical activities such as games, movies and discussion groups.

But seniors were also concerned about issues such as playgrounds; it was the seniors who bring their grandchildren to playgrounds that noted that there were no playgrounds (except at the Robin Hood School – which is not available during school hours) to the west of Route 28 in town. Seniors were also active participants in the supporters of capital improvements for all playground facilities in town, to benefit the younger generation, and to provide safe locations for the seniors to bring their young relatives and friends.

## **Summary of the Management Needs**

Increased maintenance of the playgrounds, recreation fields, and conservation areas was a top priority mentioned in the survey, the initial OSRP forum, and subsequent prioritization at Town Day and the Open house event.

There is a need for, and a desire to undertake, a capital improvement plan to determine the physical improvements that should be made to each of the parks that are owned by the Town of Stoneham to:

- improve the overall quality of the parks
- improve safety by replacing older, worn out and broken equipment, and
- improve compliance with ADA accessibility standards.

The parks and conservation areas are managed by the Stoneham Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW currently has only 2 employees dedicated to parks and conservation area maintenance, and their time is spent largely maintaining fields and emptying trash containers; the DPW does not have any staff that are dedicated completely to maintaining street trees or trees in parks. DPW leadership indicates that increased staffing levels (ideally 3 additional employees) would enable significantly improved maintenance of playgrounds, recreation sites, conservation areas, the new greenway trail, and public shade trees.

In addition, the largest areas of conservation lands within the Town are owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. While Stoneham residents are pleased that, since the 1997 OSRP, the Spot Pond Reservoir has been opened up for limited uses, there is still concern that the Middlesex Fells Reservation and Spot Pond are underutilized resources that could provide additional recreation opportunities. A circumferential trail around Spot Pond and better management of the Sheep Fold area were issues that arose during the preparation of this OSRP. To secure adequate funding for maintenance and repairs, residents noted the importance of participating in friends groups and coordinating with that agency.

## SCORP

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the state’s equivalent of a municipal open space plan. SCORP plans are developed by individual states in order to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. In 2012, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs completed the Massachusetts SCORP to help guide the distribution of federal funding to state agencies and municipalities for the acquisition of open space, renovation of parks, and development of new parks. The SCORP is a planning document that discusses the available recreational resources in a state, as well as its needs, and identifies the gaps between the two.

The goals identified by the Massachusetts SCORP and the ways that this OSRP aims to address them are shown in the document at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/dcs/scorp-2012-final.pdf>.

SCORP Goal	Relation to Stoneham OSRP
1. Increase the availability of all types of trails for recreation	Support the construction of the Tri-Community/Stoneham Greenway, including connections to adjacent communities, and improvements along the route to enhance the recreational experience.
2. Increase the availability of water-based recreation	Advocate for continuing improved maintenance and operations of Hall Pool; continue to advocate for circumferential trail around Spot Pond.
3. Invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home for short visits	Institute a Capital Improvement Plan and increased maintenance budget for improvements to playgrounds and recreation facilities, and expand programming at key facilities such as Whip Hill Park.
4. Invest in racially, economically, and age diverse neighborhoods given their projected increase in participation in outdoor recreation	Ensure geographic equity in improvements to playgrounds and recreation facilities; continue to promote free events at town facilities to maximize the demographic diversity of participants.

# 8

## Goals and Objectives

The overall goals for open space in Stoneham were generated by the extensive public process of the OSRP Update, as described above. For Stoneham's Open Space and Recreation Plan update, the goals prioritize 6 major focus areas for the next seven years. These 6 broad goals are further broken down into 11 more detailed goals, with specific actions to be undertaken by the town, in the 7 Year Action Plan in Chapter 9 of this OSRP.

**Goal 1: Implement the Stoneham Greenway and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities in town:**

A major focus during the public process of this OSRP update was the completion of the Tri-Community/Stoneham Greenway. The Greenway is currently under construction in Woburn and Winchester, and the Stoneham portion is scheduled to be constructed by fall 2018. However, the paving of the pathway is only the beginning. The town residents are interested in how this Greenway will connect, via sidewalks and bicycle routes, to neighborhoods and parks throughout the town. There is also great interest in providing other amenities such as parking, sitting/resting areas, water sources, etc., along the path. Lastly, there will be a need for coordinating ongoing maintenance and programming of public activities on the Greenway with other programs and maintenance responsibilities of the town.

**Goal 2: Make significant upgrades in playgrounds and parks in town through a capital**

**improvement program:** Another major emphasis of feedback from town residents was that the conditions of the parks and playgrounds in town, and the maintenance of the conservation areas, was not in keeping with the goals of the community. Equipment was old, sometimes broken, and in serious need of replacement. Fields were worn, and conditions of playing fields was generally cited as poor. Many residents participating in the forums, and via the survey, felt that a capital improvement plan should be undertaken for active recreational parks and for playgrounds to determine a plan for upgrading these facilities.

**Goal 3: Adequately fund parks maintenance to ensure that the above improvements are maintained:** Town employees cited the need for additional funds for maintenance of parks, playgrounds and conservation areas. The need for additional maintenance was echoed at the forums and via the survey, but there was less support for specific actions designed to increase funding for the parks.

**Goal 4: Acquire key parcels if and when they become available:** Although maintenance and capital improvements to the Parks were cited as the most important, there was some significant support for acquisitions of key types of properties. Acquisition of the Weiss Farm was cited by a number of residents. There was also support for acquisition of key locations along the Greenway for facilities such as parking, sitting areas, etc. In addition, it was noted that the only current children's playground to the west of Main Street was at the Robin Hood School, and is not available for use during school hours, and therefore there was a need for additional playground(s) in these neighborhoods west of Main Street.

**Goal 5: Provide greater visibility for park and conservation sites in town:** One of the frequently cited issues during the OSRP update process was that residents were not aware of all of the parks, playgrounds and conservation areas in town. In addition, there was significant support for the existing programmed events, especially those at the Common, and a desire for more such events. Providing a greater visibility for the various parks, playgrounds and conservation sites, through the various media (e.g., maps, web presence, social media) was recommended. In addition, expanding upon the number and types of events held, and the locations where these events were hosted, would further highlight the full array of open spaces in the town.

**Goal 6: Better Coordinate all activities within town government, and between town and state government, to maintain and operate parks, recreation and conservation areas:** Continuing and expanding the collaboration between town departments on activities such as maintenance and programming of recreation sites, expanding of sidewalk networks to provide access to town parks and the Greenway, collaborating on funding and implementation of street tree planting programs, etc., is a goal that arose through the forums and also through the collaboration of members of the various groups on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee. In addition, the OSRP Update Committee noted the need for continuing coordination with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, as they are the largest landowner of conservation lands in the town, and management of these lands has impacts on the open space goals of the town residents.

# 9

## Seven Year Action Plan

### Introduction

The Seven Year Action Plan is designed to implement Stoneham’s Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Action Plan directly addresses the goals and aspirations of the residents expressed through this OSRP process, as well as the insufficiencies identified in the Needs analysis. The plan elements are based on information gathered from the town-wide survey and forums, and the collective knowledge and experiences of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee.

The Action Plan addresses the intersection of the existing open space resources identified in the Inventory, Chapter 5; the needs and desires of the residents, as outlined in Chapter 7, and the goals and objectives developed in Chapter 8. The highest priority Goals are numbers 1 – 4, as determined by public input at the Town Day and Open House events. The highest priority action items under each of the Goals were determined by the OSRP Update Committee based upon all public input, and are highlighted in the table below. The Committee notes, however, that there are no “low priorities” and that they intend to pursue all opportunities to implement the 2018 OSRP as they arise.

Seven Year Action Plan - Stoneham OSRP					
Goal/Objective/Action Item (Goals in order of priority)	Potential Funding Source	Responsible Party	Implementation Schedule		
			Short term	Mid-term	Longer term
<b>Goal #1. Implement the Tri-Community Greenway and Stoneham Complete Streets programs to facilitate walking, hiking and bicycling</b>					
Proceed with construction of Greenway paved facilities using MassDOT funding	MassDOT	MassDOT	★	★	★

Plan for additional associated facilities along Greenway (access, parking etc.)	Town funds, MA PARC Grants	Selectmen, DPW, Greenway Committee		★	★
Begin discussions and planning with DCR and other adjacent communities to plan for additional greenway extensions/connections to other open space areas and trail systems. Included in this should be connections to bicycle trails on parkways and hiking trails within the Middlesex Fells Reservation	DCR, MassDOT, Town funds	Conservation Commission, Greenway Committee		★	★
Plan and implement access to adjacent open spaces/conservation areas (e.g., Sweetwater Brook flood control area) or recreational sites (e.g., Recreation Field) to augment greenway user experience and to provide additional starting points for trail use.	Town funds	Conservation Commission, Greenway Committee, DPW		★	★
In conjunction with Complete Streets efforts being undertaken by the Town, maintain existing, and establish new, sidewalk connections to improve mobility in town and provide access to key public sites such as schools, parks, conservation areas, etc.	Town funds	Selectmen, DPW		★	★
Work with DPW to undertake a street tree inventory	Town funds	DPW	★	★	
Plan for plantings of street trees, using municipal funds, memorial donation funds, grant funds, etc.	Town funds, private donations	DPW	★	★	★
Expand the annual tree planting program through the DPW, both along streets and also to provide shade	Town funds, private donations	DPW	★	★	★
<b>Goal #2. Improve Annual Maintenance of Parks and Recreation and Conservation sites</b>					
In order to undertake proper maintenance of all park and recreation sites, provide additional town funds to the DPW, which has primary responsibility for parks maintenance	Town funds	Selectmen, DPW, Town Meeting		★	★

Continue to seek partnerships with non-profit groups for park maintenance, but also ensure that the public also has sufficient use of facilities	Town funds, non-profit funds	DPW, Recreation Dept	★	★	★
Investigate fee structure for use of town parks and recreation sites, to determine if these should be raised. Use all funds received from parks and recreation permits fees for parks maintenance activities	NA	Selectmen, Recreation Dept	★		
<b>Goal #3. Improve all neighborhood playgrounds within the town over the next 10 years</b>					
Undertake a 10-year capital improvement plan for all playgrounds to determine unsafe or outdated equipment to be replaced, as well as critical improvements to bring playgrounds into ADA compliance. In order to achieve geographic equity of improved facilities, school playgrounds should also be included in this plan	Town funds	Selectmen, DPW, School Dept, Recreation Dept.	★	★	★
Set a schedule for making these improvements, ensuring geographic equity of improvements throughout the town.	Town funds	Selectmen, DPW, School Dept, Recreation Dept.		★	★
Establish opportunities for private/commercial donations to assist in upgrades to recreational facilities, perhaps in exchange for time-limited naming rights or advertising	Private donations	Selectmen	★	★	★
<b>Goal #4. Assign Conservation Commission or other committees to work with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on expanded use of Spot Pond, Stone Zoo, and Middlesex Fells Reservation</b>					
Promote circumferential trail around Spot Pond and connections through other DCR properties to other regional trail systems	DCR	Conservation Commission	★	★	
Promote use of DCR property at South and Main Streets for public events, with the possibility of improvements to the site (gazebo or amphitheater) to enable expanded uses	DCR	Conservation Commission			★
Advertise use of the Sheep Fold area dog park to partially meet the needs of Stoneham dog owners.	DCR, Town	Conservation Commission	★	★	★

Collaborate with abutting communities on the maintenance and joint programming/trail design of properties that abut community borders, such as Crystal Lake Watershed, Conservation Lands near Marion, Lake and Spring	Town funds	Conservation Commission, DPW			★
Work with Wakefield, Winchester and Department of Conservation and Recreation and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority on appropriate levels of recreational use that is consistent with preservation of water quality in drinking water reservoirs or back-up reservoirs.	Town funds	Conservation Commission			★
<b>Goal #5. Acquire additional areas for recreational facilities or conservation area</b>					
Preserve Weiss Farm through purchase or trade	MA LAND Grant, Town funds, trade for other town land	Selectmen, Conservation Commission	★		
Acquire appropriate additional lands along Greenway to provide Greenway-associated facilities such as parking, sitting/resting areas, etc.	MA LAND Grant, Town funds, trade for other town land	Selectmen, Conservation Commission	★	★	★
Acquire, or use existing town-owned non-conservation-land parcels, for playgrounds to be established west of Main Street	MA LAND Grant, Town funds, trade for other town land	Selectmen, Conservation Commission	★	★	★
Encourage private developers to incorporate open space into private developments, through zoning requirements or incentives	NA	Planning Board	★	★	★
Establish dedicated funds for park acquisitions through Community Preservation Act (CPA) (after adoption by town), or other source	CPA	Selectmen, Conservation Commission		★	
<b>Goal #6. Improve all town recreation facilities within the town over the next 10 years</b>					

Undertake a Capital Improvement Plan for all recreation sites, including all outdoor facilities such as sports fields (Recreation Park, Pomeworth Field, Cerrone/Broadway Field) and golf courses as well as buildings such as Recreation Park field house, Ice Arena and Golf Course club houses	Town funds, MA PARC grants, donations	DPW, Recreation Dept	★		
Investigate the financial feasibility of significant upgrades/maintenance to existing Stoneham Arena, and determine if this could be enhanced (and also allow for providing more services) if it included a second ice sheet.	Town funds, user fees	Open Space and Recreation Committee	★		
Evaluate options for financial payback; determine how user fees (e.g., golf greens fees, ice arena rental fees) may be used to pay for improvements to these facilities	User fees	Open Space and Recreation Committee	★	★	★
As part of this plan, determine appropriate levels of staff and funding needed to maintain these capital investments and determine funding source for these efforts	Town funds	DPW, Rec Dept, Open Space and Rec Committee		★	★
Evaluate best options for continuing to work with non-profit organizations/sports clubs to maintain appropriate sports fields while also allowing use of the facilities by the general public	Town funds, user fees, non-profit funds	Recreation Dept	★	★	
To provide open space opportunities to the greatest number of residents, the Town should continue to look for opportunities to establish a dog park and/or skate park.	Town funds	Open Space and Recreation Committee		★	★
<b>Goal #7. Develop a plan for the continuation and expansion of the breadth and frequency of events at the Common, as well as other locations such as Whip Hill Park</b>					
Program additional events, including, but not limited to, Arts & Culture, Music, Town Day, winter skating rink	Town funds	Conservation Commission, DPW, Recreation Dept	★	★	★
Make improvements to key conservation facilities, such as Whip Hill Park, to make them more accessible and usable	Town funds, PARC grant	Conservation Commission, DPW,		★	★

		Recreation Dept			
Improve access to Whip Hill Park from Colonial Park School (CPS) in order to enable CPS to become a base of operations for education programs to be run at Whip Hill Park, as well as to provide additional parking areas for events to be held at WHP	Town funds, PARC grant	Conservation Commission, School Department			★
Expand music events at various venues across the town, including Town Common, Whip Hill Park, Potential future Spot Pond gazebo	Town funds	Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Rec Dept			★
<b>Goal #8. Expand funding for open space and recreation facilities and programs and improvements</b>					
Propose Community Preservation Act (CPA) for adoption by Town Meeting	Town funds	Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Affordable Housing Committee		★	
Establish a memorial fund which can receive donations to be used for park improvements	Donated funds	Selectmen, Conservation Commission	★	★	
Establish trust fund for improvement of playgrounds, parks, and conservation areas from the sale of surplus municipal lands or tax-title properties	Sale of town property	Selectmen		★	★
Plan ahead for specific park improvements (walkways, benches, planting, etc.) that could be paid for by memorial donations; establish a process by which individuals or corporations can provide donations and the improvements can be installed by DPW	Donated funds	Conservation Commission, DPW		★	★

Establish a list of projects (e.g., trail clearing or maintenance, vegetation management, etc.) that could be accomplished by volunteer labor, and work to establish “friends of parks” groups or work with existing groups such as Boy Scouts to accomplish these tasks. Could also establish an Earth Day or Arbor Day committee to organize volunteers.	Donated funds, volunteers	Conservation Commission, DPW	★	★	★

**Goal #9. Increase public awareness of open space and recreation opportunities**

Update Stoneham OSRP web site to include information about all parks and recreation and conservation areas	Town funds	Recreation Dept, Conservation Commission	★		
Publish a paper map of the conservation and recreation sites available to residents of the Town	Town funds	Conservation Commission		★	
Post appropriate signage at all conservation and park areas	Town funds	Recreation Dept, Conservation Commission, DPW		★	★
Include parks and conservation areas in Town-wide wayfinding signage project	Town funds	DPW		★	★
Conservation Commission should formulate a schedule of activities to be published on a seasonal basis for Whip Hill and other conservation areas	Town funds	Conservation Commission		★	
Conservation Commission should work with schools to establish outdoor programs to be held at Whip Hill Park, including in particular the use of Whip Hill Park for the elementary school science curriculum	Town funds	Conservation Commission, School Dept		★	★

**Goal #10. Increase management, including by DPW staff as well as volunteers, at some of the smaller, less known, conservation areas**

Develop, and add, uniform signage to all conservation sites, identifying the area as town conservation lands	Town funds	Conservation Commission, DPW,			★
Work with DPW and volunteers to remove trash and debris	Town funds, volunteers	Conservation Commission, DPW,		★	★
Where appropriate, clear small areas to improve vistas, or establish trails to improve and formalize access.	Town funds, volunteers	Conservation Commission, DPW,			★
Include properties such as lands near Meadow and Fiske, near Corey, Ferdinand and Spring, at Dikes Pond, near Whipple Ave, and at North and Erickson	Town funds, volunteers	Conservation Commission, DPW,			★
<b>Goal #11. Coordinate with other Plans and Boards</b>					
Coordinate the OSRP, and the use of future CPA funds, with the Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing components of the Community Preservation Act, to lessen conflict between the Housing Production Plan and the OSRP	Town CPA fund	Conservation Commission	★	★	
Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Selectmen, Greenway Committee, Open Space and Recreation Committee, and other appropriate town boards should meet quarterly to coordinate activities, to work on joint priorities, and to minimize conflicts.	NA	Town boards, coordinated by Conservation Commission	★	★	★
At least 2 years prior to the expiration of this 7 year action plan, establish OSRP Update Committee and request funds at town meeting for the Update to the Plan	Town Funds, MAPC Planning Grants	Selectmen, Conservation Commission			★

# MAP 8 OSRP ACTION PLAN

## Stoneham, MA Open Space and Recreation Plan Update 2017

### Map 8: Open Space and Recreation Action Plan

Note: See 7-Year Action Plan in Stoneham OSRP document for specific implementation details under each of the Implementation Actions shown on this Map #8.



#### Actions:

- 1 Implement the Tri-Community Greenway and Stoneham Complete Streets programs to facilitate walking, hiking and bicycling
- 2 Improve Annual Maintenance of Parks and Recreation and Conservation sites (not mapped)
- 3 Improve all neighborhood playgrounds within the town over the next 10 years
- 4 Assign Conservation Commission or other committee to work with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on expanded use of Spot Pond and Middlesex Fells Reservation
- 5 Acquire additional areas for recreational facilities or conservation area
  - 5A - along Greenway
  - 5B - remaining large open areas for conservation or recreation
  - 5C - small parcels west of Route 28 for development for playgrounds
- 6 Improve all town recreation facilities within the town over the next 10 years
- 7 Develop a plan for the continuation and expansion of the breadth and frequency of events at the Common, as well as other locations such as Whip Hill Park
- 8 Expand funding for open space and recreation facilities and programs and improvements (not mapped)
- 9 Increase public awareness of open space and recreation opportunities (not mapped)
- 10 Increase management - including DPW staff as well as volunteers - at some of the smaller, less known, conservation areas (not mapped)
- 11 Coordinate with other Plans and Boards (not mapped)

#### Stoneham Open Space/Recreation Sites

- Permanently Protected
  - Limited Protection
- #### Open Space Ownership Type
- Municipal
  - Private
  - State
- Municipal Boundary
  - Schools
  - Town Hall
  - Commuter Rail Stations
  - Commuter Rail Lines
  - Rivers and Streams
  - Water Bodies
  - Surrounding Open Space
  - Stoneham Arena (Ice Rink)



The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.

Produced by:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 | (617) 933-0700

Data Sources:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

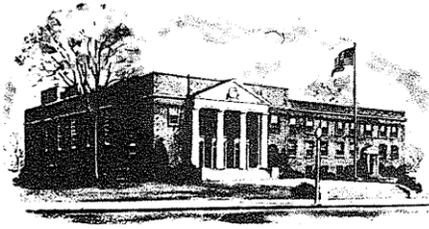
November 2017



# 10

## Letters of Approval

1. Board of Selectmen
2. Town of Stoneham Conservation Commission
3. Town of Stoneham Greenway Committee
4. Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
5. Stoneham Planning Board



TOWN OF  
STONEHAM

35 CENTRAL STREET  
STONEHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02180  
TEL: (781) 279-2680 • FAX: (781) 279-2681

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

March 6, 2018

Erin Wortman  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
Town of Stoneham  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham, MA 02180

RE: 2018 Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Wortman:

The Board of Selectmen ("the Board") reviewed the 2018 Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan ("OSRP") and hereby issues this letter of support for its final approval. The 2018 OSRP revises the 1997 OSRP and creates a road map for the utilization of open space and recreation for the next seven years.

The Board recognizes the importance of the 2018 OSRP as it will serve as a vital tool for thoughtful planning in the future. The Board voted unanimously to support the 2018 OSRP at its January 23, 2018 meeting, and looks forward to working toward and realizing the goals that have been laid out in the plan.

Sincerely,

George Seibold, Chairman



TOWN OF  
STONEHAM  
MASSACHUSETTS  
Town Hall  
35 Central Street

Stoneham Conservation Commission  
781-279-2696

February 27, 2018

Chairman Seibold and Members of the Board of Selectmen,

The Conservation Commission has carefully reviewed and considered the work and recommended strategies in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. We find the document thoughtful and an excellent effort by Director of Planning and Community Development, Erin Wortman, Metropolitan Area Planning Council Director, Mark Racicot and the Open Space and Recreation Steering Committee, for the long term strategic planning for our community's resources.

The Stoneham Conservation Commission fully endorses the Open Space and Recreation Plan and look forward to the implementation of the Plan for maintaining and improving Stoneham's wonderful parks, facilities, and conservation land.

We are looking forward to working with our fellow town officials and departments on the next steps of the strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Ellen McBride, Co-Chair  
Bob Parsons, Co-Chair

Stoneham Bikeway Greenway Committee  
Town of Stoneham  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham MA 02180

March 5, 2018

Erin Wortman  
Director of Planning and Community Development  
Town of Stoneham  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham MA 02180

Dear Ms. Wortman,

I am writing on behalf of the Bikeway/Greenway Committee to express our support for the Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

As you are aware, along with having a representative on the OSRP committee, (our vice-chair, Bill Murphy) we had an intensive session with the consultant. During the meeting, we put forth a number of ideas and proposals, many of which were echoed from other public participation and made it into the plan, including items such as adding connections from the Tri-Community Greenway to wider parts of Stoneham and other improvements to facilitate walking, hiking and bicycling.

We were pleased to participate in the process and with the amount of outreach done by the OSRP committee. Mr. Murphy kept us updated on the results of the public outreach and surveys and other news from the OSRP committee. After reviewing the plan draft at our January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Greenway Committee voted unanimously to endorse the plan. We look forward to the town implementing as many of the recommendations and goals as possible to improve the recreation facilities and opportunities in the Town of Stoneham.

Sincerely,

*Dolly Wilson*

Dolly Wilson  
Chair, Stoneham Bikeway/Greenway Committee



SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

April 19, 2018

Erin Wortman, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Stoneham Town Hall  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham MA 02180

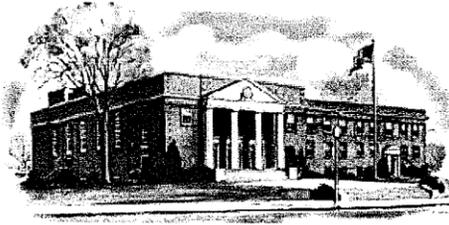
Dear Ms. Wortman:

This letter will serve as MAPC's review of the Town of Stoneham Open Space and Recreation Plan 2018 Update. MAPC enjoyed working with the Town of Stoneham to develop this plan. It was written to comply with the Division of Conservation Services (DCS) guidelines and to integrate a regional perspective on the issues addressed during the planning process. We have also worked to make the plan consistent with the goals and objectives of *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area. We believe that the participation of Town staff, the enhanced outreach conducted during the preparation of the plan, and MAPC's regional perspective have generated a plan that will help to guide the Town in its continued efforts to improve open space and recreation opportunities and facilities in Stoneham.

MAPC wishes you the best of luck as you move forward with implementation of the plan.

Sincerely,

Marc Draisen  
Executive Director



TOWN OF  
STONEHAM  
MASSACHUSETTS  
Town Hall  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
781-279-2695

June 19, 2018

Erin Wortman  
Director of Planning and Community Development  
Town of Stoneham  
35 Central Street  
Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180

RE: 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Wortman,

The members of the Planning Board have reviewed the proposed Open Space and Recreation Plan and endorses the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the implementation strategies contained therein for maintaining and improving Stoneham's parks, recreation facilities and conservation land

We commend the effort coordinated by you with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Open Space and Recreation Steering Committee, updating and improving upon the long term strategic planning for these important community resources, last reviewed in 1997.

We are looking forward to working with you, town officials and departments on the next steps of this effort.

Very truly yours,

August S. Niewenhaus, Chairman

## References

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### References

A number of reports, documents and web sites, including the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan, were consulted for information for this plan. The list includes (in addition to those listed elsewhere in the body of the Plan):

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection [Online]  
<http://www.mass.gov/dep/>

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program [Online] [www.state.ma.us/dfwele](http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele)

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, March 2008 Open Space Planner's Workbook, Boston, MA

Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EEA) [Online]  
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-energy-and-environmental-affairs>

Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program [Online]  
<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhsp/nhsp.htm>

Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS) [Online]  
<http://www.state.ma.us/mgis>

Massachusetts Outdoors, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Division of Conservation Services, 2006.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, MetroFuture, June 2009

United States Census [Online] <http://www.census.gov>

# 12

## Appendixes