

Wakefield Open Space and Recreation Plan

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[to be added]

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SECTION 1. PLAN SUMMARY

The Wakefield Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) serves as a guide to local decision makers that are involved in open space and recreational opportunities to understand the needs of the community and its vision for these resources. The plan encourages programs and policies that follow sustainable principles that support environmental, social, and economic health of the Town. Public input was a key component in developing the OSRP, which included public meetings, a community survey, and interviews with municipal departments. Taken together, they helped focus the OSRP on the needs of residents and the town operations necessary to deliver high quality services.

The OSRP is divided into sections. **Community Setting** provides a snapshot of Wakefield, describing the social and economic characteristics of residents and how that can impact current and future needs for open space and recreation amenities. From 2010 to 2021, Wakefield's population increased by 8.7%. Overall, residents in Wakefield are getting older and this trend is projected to continue through 2050. Approximately 10% of residents have a disability, with nearly half 65 years and older. Accounting for inflation, household incomes have remained stable over the last decade. Nearly 8% of children under the age of 18 and 2% of adults 65 years and older live below the poverty level.

Environmental Inventory and Analysis gives an overview of the Town's natural environment, discussing its geological makeup, unique landscape features, water resources, vegetation, fisheries, and wildlife habitat. This section also includes the historic and cultural features of Wakefield, such as its historic districts and structures, and the environmental challenges the town faces in the short and long term. Examples include flooding, maintaining and improving water quality, and building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest provides a complete listing of private and public open space and recreation lands in Wakefield, noting the level of protection from development, public access, and recreation potential. The level of protection imposed on these lands varies; some are protected in perpetuity from future development while others may only have limited or temporary protection. Those with limited or no protection may be of interest to the Town to acquire or impose stronger legal protection. Acquiring properties can build wildlife corridors or connect open space and recreational resources for public access.

Community Vision outlines high-level statements that guide decision makers around natural resource protection, open space needs, and recreational opportunities for the Town.

Analysis of Needs evaluates public input to determine natural resource protection needs, community needs (residents), and management needs (municipal administration and operations). Overarching themes for protecting natural resources included, but were not limited to, water quality of Lake Quannapowitt and Crystal Lake, habitat and wildlife corridor protection, increasing environmental stewardship, and building climate resiliency. Community needs focused on safe walking and biking connections, new neighborhood spaces and pocket parks, accessibility, and ensuring equitable access to open space and recreation opportunities. At the municipal level, management needs focused on staffing, maintenance, and improved communication with residents about resources, where they are, and their usage.

Goals and Objectives provide a framework around four major goals to meet the community vision and address needs.

Finally, the most significant section in the OSRP is the **Action Plan**, which details steps that local boards, commissions, and committees in Wakefield can take to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Cooperation and collaboration are key to successful implementation. For each action item, a lead department or committee is listed along with others that can offer support. Most actions fall within the existing charge of a committee or purview of a department. Those that require additional financial resources are given potential funding sources to pursue.

The community's open space and recreation vision is to protect and enhance Wakefield's natural landscapes, recreational opportunities, and open space assets to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all. The OSRP is a tool for the Town and residents to understand where they currently are in meeting this vision, where they need to be, and how to get there in a sustainable and financially responsible way.

SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

The purposes of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) are to set goals and objectives for the preservation and enhancement of Wakefield's natural resources and recreational facilities to meet community needs and outline an action plan over the next seven years for implementation. It is a tool used by local decision makers to understand the condition of Wakefield's resources, where improvements are needed, the direction the community wants to head in, and how they anticipate getting there. The OSRP should build on other municipal plans and initiatives focused on protecting, enhancing, and maintaining natural resources, open spaces, and recreation areas in Wakefield.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

Overall, the planning process for the OSRP required revisiting the 2010 plan to update inventories, assess environmental conditions, evaluate community and management needs, and revisit goals and objectives. To inform this process, a public participation plan outlined engagement of the community, town departments, local boards and commissions, and other stakeholders. Public engagement was done at critical milestones in plan development, as described below.

1. Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee

The planning process was led by the Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee with representation from the following municipal bodies:

- Conservation Commission
- Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Planning Board
- Recreation Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeal

Town staff from the Community and Economic Development, Conservation, Public Works, and Recreation Departments and the Council on Aging also participated, as did a member of the general public. The Subcommittee met regularly to monitor progress and assist with the update, including by providing direction on public engagement, locating data and other information, and reviewing and commenting on draft materials.

2. Public Engagement

Public Workshops

Two public workshops were held. The first was virtual on April 27, 2023. Attendance was small, with only 15 individuals participating, mostly members of the Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee. However, the meeting was recorded and posted online for public viewing by Wakefield Community Access Television (WCAT),¹ which also records all other Town board and commission meetings. A presentation was made that summarized the OSRP and why it is an important tool for the community. Within the last

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5x_2NfeuEw&list=PL_44b0NMpmY4B5SNLC_1dRBG-IcFAM291&index=7

year, the Town had workshops for its *Master Plan* and visioning process which included public meetings on natural resource protection, open spaces, and recreation. The presentation also included what was heard during those meetings relevant to the OSRP. Following the presentation, the meeting was opened to discussion around community and resource protection needs as well as policy direction and strategies for the OSRP.

A second public workshop was held on January 18, 2024.

Summaries of both workshops are in Appendix A.

Community Survey

A survey was distributed to supplement the virtual first public workshop. The community survey was available from March 27 – August 5, 2023. As the Town has had several public meetings and surveys as part of its ongoing *Master Plan* update that touch on open space and recreation planning topics, the purpose of this survey was to confirm the views expressed as part of the Comprehensive Plan’s public initiatives, solicit more information about specific resources, and identify new themes and ideas. The survey was promoted by the Town through its website and social media outlets. The OSRC members also took an active role in promoting the survey through their networks with community groups and organizations. A total of 147 individuals participated in the survey. A summary of the community survey in Appendix B.

3. Town Departments, Boards, and Other Municipal Bodies

Interviews were conducted with various Town department staff, boards, and committees to understand how these entities support the OSRP goals and objectives, and what additional support could be provided. The following were part of the interview process:

- Council on Aging
- Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Health and Human Services Department
- Department of Public Works
- Recreation Department
- Youth Council

Feedback from additional Town departments, boards, and committees was also collected through these entities’ participation on the Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee.

4. Recent Town Plans and Initiatives

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

- *Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report* (2020) for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program
- *Wakefield’s Age-Friendly Action Plan* (2021)
- *Wakefield Vision 2030* (2021)
- *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft) (2023)
- *Wakefield Master Plan* (in progress)

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

C. Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation for Environmental Justice Populations

The Environmental Justice Policy, established by the Commonwealth's Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs, aims to address inequities of environmental impacts on low-income populations and communities with a large minority population. Many times, these populations have limited access to open space and recreational facilities or "environmental assets." Using various indicators, these populations are known as Environmental Justice Populations (EJ Populations).

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

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

Wakefield has one EJ community based on a combination of minority population and annual median household income characteristics (**Error! Reference source not found.**). For more information, see **Section 3.C. Population Characteristics**.

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

- All Open Space and Recreation Subcommittee meetings were open to the public and were posted to the Town's public meeting calendar.
- Information the OSRP and engagement opportunities were included in the Council on Aging Senior monthly newsletter.
- Town staff distributed information about the OSRP and engagement opportunities at an August 2023 Farmers Market at Lake Quannapowitt.
- Various Town departments and committees advertised the OSRP and engagement opportunities on their social media pages and/or websites, including the Town of Wakefield, Recreation Department, Environmental Sustainability Committee, and Conservation Commission.

SECTION 3. COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

The Town of Wakefield is a suburban residential community located in the outskirts of the Metropolitan Boston area (Map 3-1). Wakefield is part of Middlesex County; its neighboring communities are Lynnfield, Saugus, Melrose, Stoneham, and Reading. The Town occupies 7.9 square miles, or 5,056 acres, and is densely settled. The heart of the town is the 247-acre Lake Quannapowitt, which is the headwaters of the Saugus River and an important all-seasons recreation resource for the community. The Common District, Wakefield's main civic center, is located immediately south of Lake Quannapowitt and includes the historical town common.

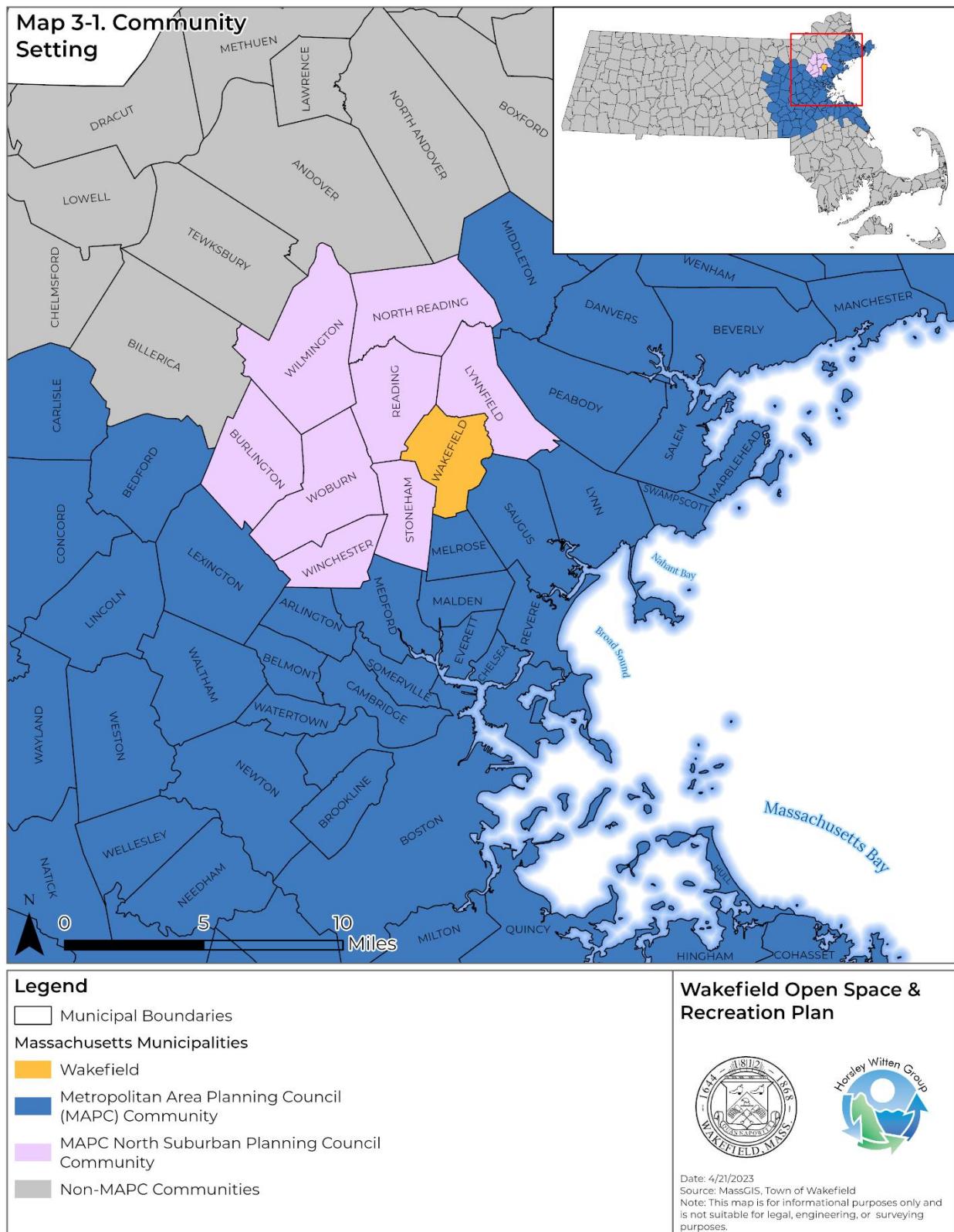
1. Regional Transportation Networks

Wakefield sits between two major highway intersections (Interstate 93/Interstate 95 and Interstate 95/U.S. Route 1). The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) operates two commuter rail stations in Wakefield along the Haverhill Line, which runs from the town of Haverhill to Boston's North Station, and one bus route. Wakefield residents also have access to a third MTBA commuter station (Melrose Highlands) immediately south in the town of Melrose. Proximity to regional interstate highways and commuter rail provide easy access to Boston and other regional destinations, making Wakefield a prime location for both business and residential development.

The Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail Extension is a shared-use path that will span approximately 4.4 miles (1.9 miles in Wakefield) and run from Galvin Middle School at the Main Street and Bennett Street intersection to the Lynnfield/Peabody town line along a former railroad corridor. The section from Main Street to Salem Street is complete, and the remaining section from Salem Street to Fosters Lane is scheduled to begin construction in 2026 with funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region. Future improvements for 2026 also include a shared use path on Water Street and Main Street that will start the southward connection of the Rail Trail to J.J. Round Park. Regionally, extensions through Lynnfield and Middleton could connect Wakefield to the Bay Circuit Trail, a 230-mile (and growing) multi-use trail surrounding the Metropolitan Boston area, and from the Bay Circuit Trail to the Border to Boston Trail, a 70-mile shared use trail that runs between the New Hampshire border and Boston.

The Mystic Highlands Greenway initiative developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), is the preferred corridor for walking and biking connections through Reading, Wakefield, Stoneham, Melrose, and Malden that would link the towns to the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The Greenway's preferred route runs along the public street right-of-way and would connect to other resources, including the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail Extension and paths along Lake Quannapowitt, as well as commercial and transit destinations. The five towns along the Greenway are in the early stages of planning, designing, and constructing their respective sections. The Mystic Highland Greenway is included as a key recommendation in the *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft, November 2023) and will connect to planned and completed improvements along Main Street.

Map 3-1. Community Setting



2. Regional Open Space and Recreational Resources

Wakefield enjoys access to several regional open space and recreation resources in the area. Joint initiatives like the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail project are working to formalize physical connections between open space and recreation assets across different communities.

There are three major regional parks to the east and southeast of Wakefield, all of which are along the Saugus River or its tributaries: Breakheart Reservation in Saugus, Lynn Woods Reservation in Lynn, and Mount Hood Memorial Park and Golf Course in Melrose. Breakheart Reservation is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and is principally located in Saugus. Approximately 38 acres of the reservation are located in eastern Wakefield and abutted by other undeveloped Town-owned land parcels, which have varying levels of protection from future development. Both Wakefield Memorial High School and the Northeast Metropolitan Vocational High School are located in this area, so it is expected that uses in this corner of town will continue to be educational and recreational in purpose.

The Middlesex Fells Reservation is located to the southwest of Wakefield across five communities and is a major regional resource for hikers, walkers, boaters, and bicyclists. The Mystic Highlands Greenway initiative, once complete, would provide walking and biking connections from Wakefield to the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

Reedy Meadow, also known as the Lynnfield Marsh, is primarily located north of Wakefield in Lynnfield. Approximately 30 acres are located in and owned by Wakefield. The Saugus River flows through Reedy Meadow. Reedy Meadow is part of the City of Lynn's drinking water supply; activities in surrounding and upstream areas (i.e., Wakefield) have the potential to affect water quality.²

3. Regional Planning Efforts

Wakefield is a member of the MAPC, a regional planning agency that serves 101 towns and cities in Metropolitan Boston. The Town actively participates in MAPC planning activities and frequently collaborates with MAPC to develop local plans, including its ongoing update to the Wakefield *Master Plan*. Wakefield is also a member of the North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC), one of eight subregions within the MAPC. NSPC is a group of nine communities (consisting also of Burlington, Lynnfield, North Reading, Wilmington, Reading, Stoneham, Woburn, and Winchester) that meet regularly to discuss issues of common interests. NSPC also serves as a forum to discuss regional open space issues and opportunities. Notable planning efforts initiated by the NSPC and between its members include the following:

- **Mobility Study (2017):** Transportation study focusing on the “first and last mile” connectivity problem³ in the region. The study explored alternatives to better meet the needs of commuters and promote transportation modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. Wakefield is exploring the possibility of implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM)⁴ best practices in

² “Site Summary: Lynnfield Marsh,” Mass Audubon, accessed December 10, 2022.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/bird-conservation-monitoring/massachusetts-important-bird-areas-iba/iba-sites/lynnfield-marsh>.

³ The “first and last mile” refers to the distance commuters must travel between their origin and destination to transportation connections. In other words, it is the distance that commuters travel.

⁴ Transportation demand management focuses on providing strategies that maximize people’s travel choices (in terms of mode, route, time, and other variables). Providing a range of efficient travel options can help incentivize

Town. The Town's Community and Economic Development Department gave a presentation in February 2023 to several Town boards and committees to solicit feedback on how to create goals to add TDM measures to new residential and commercial developments. The Town is committed to continued conversations with other NSPC members about regional transportation management strategies.

- **Priority Mapping Project (2014):** Collaborative mapping project to identify local and regional priority areas for development, preservation, and infrastructure investment. Wakefield and other adjacent towns continue to advance identified priorities through their work on the Mystic Highlands Greenway and the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail Extension.
- **Wakefield, Melrose, and Reading Transportation Corridor Plan (2012):** Transportation study focusing on improvements to the communities' shared Main Street corridor that reduce vehicular traffic and promote public and active modes of transportation. The Mystic Highlands Greenway initiative will connect the three communities and help advance the goals of the Transportation Corridor Plan. In 2019, Wakefield kicked off Envision Wakefield: Downtown Revitalization, an ongoing project to improve multimodal transportation and the overall character of downtown. The project area includes part of Main Street and will connect to regional trail and greenway resources. The Envision Wakefield improvements are currently programmed on the Fiscal Year 2028 TIP.

Wakefield also participates in planning efforts around regional resources. The Town is partially located in the Mystic River watershed and participates in the Resilient Mystic Collaborative, a partnership between 20 watershed communities facilitated by the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). MyRWA works to protect the Mystic River area and sponsors a variety of water quality monitoring programs and offers educational and outreach opportunities throughout the year.

B. History of the Community

Wakefield was originally inhabited by the native Massachusetts, Naumkeag, and Pawtucket tribes.^{5,6} Wakefield's forest, lake, marsh, and upland environments would have provided ample resources, and evidence suggests that the area around Lake Quannapowitt was used as a traditional planting field.⁷

Wakefield was established as "Linn Village" in 1639 by European colonists as a parish of the Town of Lynn and later incorporated into the Town of Reading (then "Redding") in 1644. At that time, "Old Redding" included the present-day Towns of Reading and Wakefield. A later land grant and annexation expanded Redding in 1651 and 1729, respectively. In 1812, political differences among the three parishes that made up Redding resulted in the First Parish separating from the other two and incorporating as South Reading. In 1868, following a gift of land and a new brick Town Hall from local businessperson Cyrus Wakefield, South Reading renamed itself in his honor, becoming the Town of Wakefield. Additional land acquisitions in 1856, 1889, and 1933 eventually resulted in Wakefield's present-day boundaries.

travel choices that are more environmentally friendly, reduce single-occupancy vehicles, and encourage active lifestyles.

⁵ Jim Bradley, "The First Settlers," Wakefield Historical Society, last modified September 22, 2020, <https://wakefieldhistory.org/2020/09/22/the-first-settlers/#>.

⁶ Native Land Digital, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://native-land.ca/>.

⁷ Ibid.

Wakefield has a long history as a manufacturing community. In 1677, Jonas Eaton was given a land grant on the condition that he would remain and become a shoemaker. By the mid-18th century, shoemaking was a thriving industry. The Town's first shoe manufacturing company, Thomas Emerson & Sons, was established. Another prominent family of shoemakers, the Evans, established a company in 1841. The Evans patriarch, Thomas Evans, Jr., made hand-turned footwear in the early 1800s, with his son, Lucius Bolles Evans. Their company introduced shoemaking as a collective system, distributing leather linings, thread, lasts, tacks, and other materials to the townspeople for assembly. The company was renamed as L.B. Evans Son in 1881 and incorporated in 1905 as L.B. Evans Son Company. L.B. Evans Son Company was Wakefield's leading industry for many years and was the country's oldest shoe manufacturing company before terminating its manufacturing business in the early 1980s. Since then, the factory building has been renovated for multiple commercial uses.

Wakefield's other early industries included shoe tools such as awls, razor straps, and tinware. Dr. Richardson's Sherry Wine Bitters was also a well-known product throughout New England, first manufactured in 1808 by Dr. Nathan Richardson and later marketed to great success by his son, Solon Osmond Richardson.⁸

The completion of the Boston and Maine Railroad line through Wakefield in 1845 transformed the community into a residential suburb of Boston and home to commuters. The railroad brought new citizens and industries to town, including heavy industry. Two important industries were founded by Wakefield's leading entrepreneur, Cyrus Wakefield: the Boston and Maine Foundry company, which became the first in the country to produce enameled bathtubs; and, in 1855, the Wakefield Rattan Company, which produced wicker furniture, seat covers for street cars and trains, and floor matting and carpeting. In the 1870s, Cyrus Wakefield organized the Quannapowitt Water Company, supplying the Town with water from the two local lakes. The Wakefield Rattan Company later consolidated with Heywood Brothers & Company to become the Heywood-Wakefield Company and moved to Gardner, Massachusetts in 1930. The matting portion of the business remained in Wakefield and incorporated as the National Mat and Matting Company, Inc.

In addition to these industries, for many years ice companies cut and stored ice from Lake Quannapowitt to be shipped to Boston and the South. In addition, the Winship-Boit Company, later known as Harvard Mills, came to Wakefield in 1889. The company, established by Elizabeth Eaton Boit and Charles Winship, employed 20% of New England's mill workers at its peak, and was known for its generous wages, free medical services for employers, and an employee profit sharing plan.⁹ Its factory building, located on Albion Street, has been renovated for multiple commercial and residential uses.

C. Population Characteristics

Understanding local population characteristics and trends is essential for the Town to maximize the appropriate use of its open space and recreation resources and plan for long-term community needs. The

⁸ Nancy Bertrand, "Good for What Ailed you! Dr. Richardson's Bitters," Wakefield Historical Society, last modified January 4, 2017, <https://wakefieldhistory.org/2017/01/04/good-for-what-ailed-you-dr-richardsons-bitters/>.

⁹ "Harvard Knitting Mills," Wakefield Historical Society, last modified January 18, 2017, <https://wakefieldhistory.org/2017/01/18/harvard-knitting-mills/>.

following discussion provides a summary of current population demographics and evaluates how Wakefield's open space planning can respond to these data.

1. Population Characteristics

Current and Projected Population

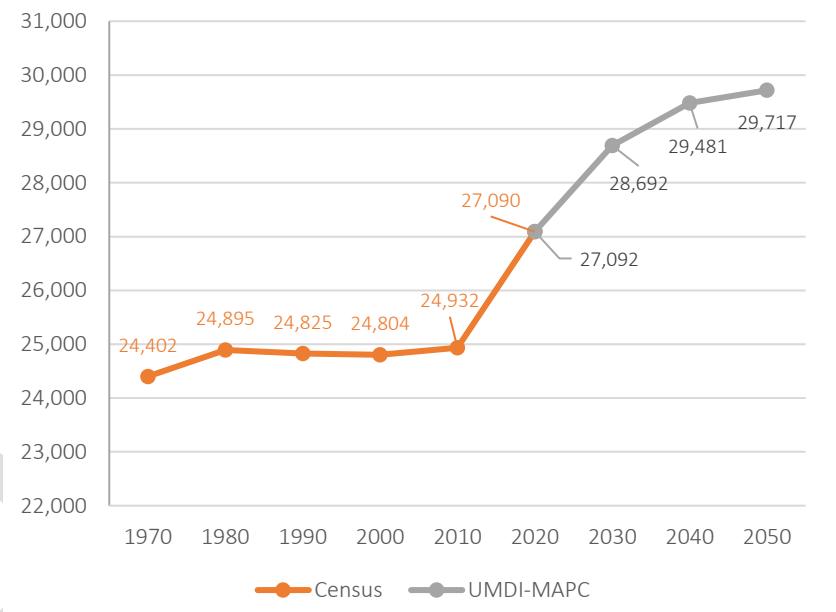
According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Wakefield's population is 27,090.¹⁰ The Town underwent a period of minor population decline between the 1980 and 2000 Decennial Censuses before noting minor population growth in 2010 (all less than one percent of positive or negative change). Between 2010 and 2020, however, Wakefield's population saw substantial growth and grew by 8.7%, adding approximately 2,200 new residents. Population projections developed by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) and the MAPC in 2021 for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) estimate positive population change from 2020 to 2050, with the rate of growth beginning to flatten after 2040.

The growth in Wakefield's population in recent years places additional pressure on the Town's open space and recreation resources, as well as on its Recreation Department to provide sufficient programming.

Population Density

Wakefield covers 7.39 square miles of land area. With a total population of 27,090, Wakefield's population density is approximately 3,665 people per square mile. Compared to its neighbors and fellow NSPC members, only Stoneham and Winchester have greater population densities (Table 3-1). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average population density within cities is about 1,600 people per square mile.¹¹

Figure 3-1. Population Projections for Wakefield through 2050



Source: 2020 U.S. Census; UMDI 2022 population projections

¹⁰ At the time of writing, the most current data for Wakefield's demographic profile is the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 Five-Year Estimates and preliminary Census 2020 data. ACS are the basis of analysis for the purpose of Section 3 unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ Darryl Cohen, "Understanding Population Density," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified March 4, 2015, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2015/03/understanding-population-density.html>.

As a suburban community, many of Wakefield's residents have access to private green spaces at their residence. The West Side, East Side/Woodville, and Greenwood neighborhoods are the Town's denser areas but still have access to Spring Street Park, J.J. Round Park, Mapleway Playground, and Wakefield School Department properties. The Town also has two large, citywide recreation areas that attract users from across the community: Lake Quannapowitt and the Town Forest.

Table 3-1. Population Density of Wakefield and Surrounding Communities, 2020

Town	Population	Population Density	Relationship to Wakefield
Burlington	26,677	2,244.9	NSPC Member
Lynnfield	13,000	1,318.9	Neighbor, NSPC Member
North Reading	15,554	1,182.2	NSPC Member
Melrose	29,817	2,656.0	Neighbor
Reading	25,518	2,557.9	Neighbor, NSPC Member
Saugus	28,619	2,656.0	Neighbor
Stoneham	23,244	3,864.4	Neighbor, NSPC Member
Wakefield	27,090	3,664.6	
Wilmington	23,349	1,375.6	NSPC Member
Winchester	22,970	3,808.2	NSPC Member
Woburn	40,876	3,231.4	NSPC Member

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Current and Projected Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community is significant for open space and recreation planning because the types of sites, amenities, and programs desired often vary by age categories. For example, playgrounds are often important for young children and their families, while there may be a greater demand for athletic fields from young teens. Different adult age groups may want distinct types of recreation programming (e.g., sports leagues versus walking groups versus yoga classes), which come with their own site and amenity needs.

The overall trend in Wakefield is that the community has gotten older. The Town's median age was 41.9 in 2010 and 43.8 in 2021; the Commonwealth's median age was 39.6 in 2021. As shown in Table 3-2, as Wakefield grew by 8.7% overall between 2010 and 2021, several shifts in the makeup of its population occurred. Children under 10 years old and adults aged 25-34, 60-74, and 75 years and older now account for larger proportions of the population than they did in 2010. The adults aged 60-75 year age group has seen significant growth, increasing from 13.9% of the population in 2010 to 18.1% of the population in 2021. While Wakefield's older population is increasing, middle-aged adults (35-44) decreased, as did adults aged 20-24 years old.

Table 3-2. Change in Age Groups, 2010 to 2021

Age Group	% of Total Population, 2010		% of Total Population, 2021		% Change 2010-2021
	2010	Population, 2010	2021	Population, 2021	
Under 10	2,709	11.0%	3,077	11.4%	13.6%
10-19	2,931	11.9%	2,766	10.2%	-5.6%
20-24	1,403	5.7%	927	3.4%	-34.1%
25-34	2,536	10.3%	3,487	12.9%	37.5%
35-44	3,979	16.2%	3,698	13.7%	-7.1%
45-59	5,910	24.0%	5,957	22.0%	0.8%

Age Group	2010	% of Total Population, 2010	2021	% of Total Population, 2021	% Change 2010-2021
60-74	3,411	13.9%	4,905	18.1%	43.8%
75 and older	1,742	7.1%	2,227	8.2%	27.8%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021

Available projection data over the next 20 years, as shown in Table 3-3, estimate several shifts in the proportion of each age group relative to the overall population from 2010 to 2050. Projections estimate a slight decline in the share of school aged children (19 years old and younger). By 2050, children under 10 years old and aged 10-19 are expected to make up 10.6% and 10.4% of the population compared to 11.0% and 11.9% of the population in 2010, respectively. Notably, projections estimate a decline in the total count and share of adults aged 20-24 and adults aged 35- 44. The total count and share of adults aged 25-34 is projected to see a large increase. Older adults are also projected to experience significant growth in Wakefield: by 2050, adults aged 60-74 and 75 years and older are expected to make up 18.1% and 11.9% of the population compared to 13.9% and 7.1% of the population in 2010, respectively.

Table 3-3. Population Projections by Age Group, 2010 to 2050

Age Group	ACS 2010	ACS 2021	Projection 2030	Projection 2040	Projection 2050	% Change 2010-2050
Under 10	2,709	3,077	3,348	3,239	3,154	16.4%
10-19	2,931	2,766	2,640	3,145	3,088	5.4%
20-24	1,403	927	1,112	1,083	1,243	-11.4%
25-34	2,536	3,487	3,596	3,208	3,316	30.8%
35-44	3,979	3,698	4,135	4,087	3,920	-1.5%
45-59	5,910	5,957	5,548	6,122	6,089	3.0%
60-74	3,411	4,905	5,474	4,999	5,366	57.3%
75 and older	1,742	2,227	2,839	3,598	3,541	103.3%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021; UMDI 2022 population projections

Based on the projections, Wakefield may experience a simultaneous slight decline in school age children and large increase in older adults; both are populations that typically make frequent use of a community's recreation programming and facilities. The projected growth in adults aged 25-34, who are often forming families of their own, may lead to future increases in Wakefield population of school age children. As with all population estimates, these projections should always be reviewed and compared with the best available data as needed. For the purposes of open space and recreation planning, Wakefield could also review school enrollment levels and participation in recreation programs as additional indicators of broader population trends.

Residents with Disabilities

The American Community Survey (ACS) asks questions about hearing and vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory (e.g., movement) difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty to

generate an overall estimate of disability status for communities.¹² In 2021, about 2,764 Wakefield residents (10.3% of the population) reported having a disability. Of the 2,264 individuals with a disability, approximately 49.6% are residents aged 65 years and older. While disability exists on a continuum and can be difficult to measure in binary-style surveys, this information can provide a helpful reference for Wakefield's open space and recreation planning. The Wakefield Commission on Disabilities is also an important resource and advocates for the needs and concerns of residents with disabilities.

Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity

Racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity is significant to open space and recreation planning, and it is important to provide opportunities for culturally appropriate and diverse recreation activities to all community members. Households with linguistic isolation (i.e., limited English speaking) may also be more difficult to engage with for planning purposes, requiring more tailored communication strategies and possible interpretation and translation services.

Nearly all of Wakefield's population identifies as one race, with 91.9% of individuals identifying as white and 8.1% as another race or more than one race. Approximately 2.7% of individuals identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino. Table 3-4 shows the breakdown of Wakefield's population by racial and ethnic identity. While no non-white population group makes up more than 4% of the population, they generally experienced large growth between 2010 and 2020 (with the exception of those identifying as some other race). As of 2020, Wakefield's residents of color identify primarily as Asian (3.8% of the total population, primarily with Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese), Black or African American (1.2%), or two or more races (2.7%).

Table 3-4. Racial and Ethnic Identity, 2010 to 2021

	2010	2021	% Change 2010-2020
One Race	24,318	26,303	8.2%
White	23,551	24,846	5.5%
Black or African American	66	316	378.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	5	-
Asian	584	1,035	77.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	-
Some other race	117	101	-13.7%
Two or more races	302	738	144.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	277	728	162.8%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021

Approximately 9.5% of Wakefield's residents have immigrated to the U.S. from another country, with a third each immigrating from Europe and Asia. Data show that 85.6% of Wakefield's households speak English only at home. For households that are not English only households, 7.1% speaking other Indo-European languages, 3.1% speaking Asian and Pacific Island languages, 2.3% report speaking Spanish, and

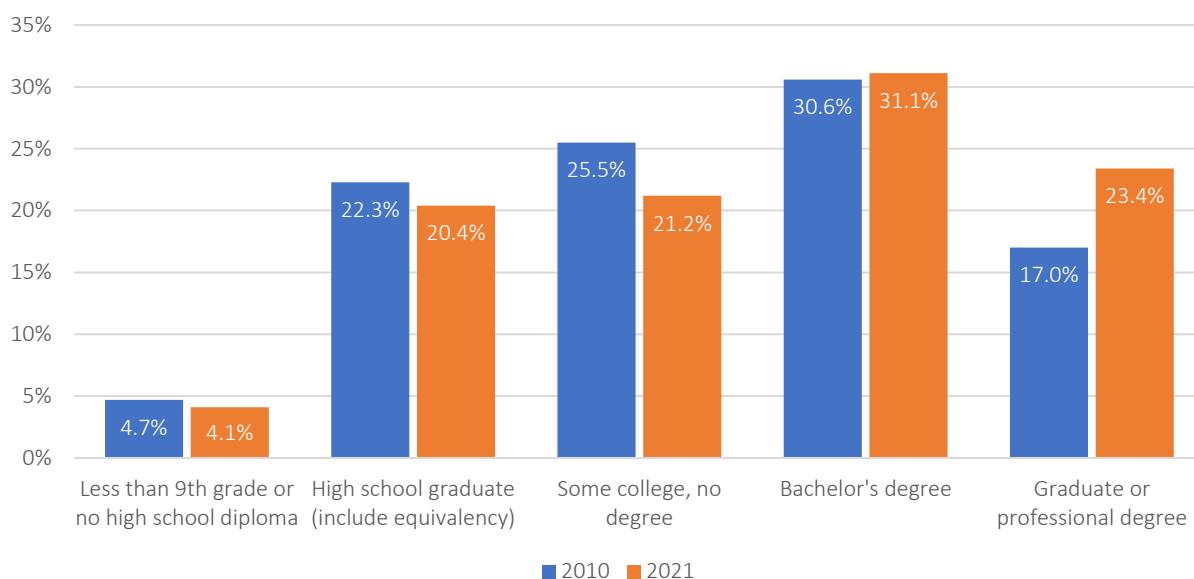
¹² "Documentation: ACS 2021 (5-Year Estimates)," Social Explorer, accessed December 12, 2022, [https://www.socialexplorer.com/data/ACS2021_5yr/documentation/fe42f9fd-49a2-4c22-8fe5-ddc2ed72e9dd](https://www.socialexplorer.com/data/ACS2021_5yr/documentation/fe42f9fd-49a2-4c22-8fe5-ddc2ed72e9dd#fe42f9fd-49a2-4c22-8fe5-ddc2ed72e9dd).

1.9% speaking other languages. Of the non-English only households, 152 (or 1.4% of all households in Wakefield) identified as a limited English-speaking household.

2. Educational Attainment

Wakefield is a well-educated community. In 2021, 54.5% of residents aged 25 years and older had a bachelor's degree or higher, an increase from 47.6% in 2010 (Figure 3-2).

Figure 3-2. Educational Attainment for Residents Aged 25 Years and Older



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021

3. Household Characteristics

Similar to age characteristics, household characteristics, including who is included in a household, can impact the recreation needs of a community. Table 3-5 presents select household characteristics for Wakefield. The total number of households grew slightly faster (9.5%) than the total population (8.7%) between 2010 and 2021. The number of households with one or more people under 18 years old and households with one or more people 65 years and over increased, but the overall proportion of these households stayed stable between 2010 and 2021 (approximately 30% and 26%, respectively).

Table 3-5. Select Household Characteristics, 2010 and 2021

	2010	2021	% Change, 2010-2021
Total households	9,910	10,849	9.5%
Average household size	2.5	2.5	-
Households with one or more people under 18 years	2,926	3,263	11.5%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	2,637	3,354	27.2%
Householder living alone	2,887	2,890	0.1%
65 years and over	1,066	1,102	3.4%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021

The UMDI-MAPC projections anticipate 11,774 household units by 2030 and 12,254 household units by 2040. This projection suggests a lower rate of growth (approximately 8.5% between 2021 and 2030 and 4.1% between 2030 and 2040) than currently observed. As noted previously, additional sources of population data can be used to supplement the UMDI-MAPC data, especially given the projected slowdown in growth between 2030 and 2040.

4. Income Characteristics

While many free and/or low-cost recreation activities exist, costs related to program fees, sports equipment, and travel can be common barriers for participation in recreation activities for individuals, households, and families with lower incomes. In 2021, the median household income and median family income in Wakefield was \$110,372 and \$169,309, respectively. When adjusted for inflation, there was little change in median household income from 2010, whereas family median income increased significantly (Table 3-6). Notably, there are significant disparities in household median income depending on the race of the householder, with minority householders generally earning a lower median household income than white householders. The exception is median household income for Asian householders; however, the 2021 ACS data do not include estimates for this population group.

In 2021, 5.4% of Wakefield households lived below the poverty level. Approximately 5.7% of households received cash public assistance income or SNAP assistance for food purchases, and 3.2% of households received Supplemental Security Income. Nearly 8% of individuals under 18 and 2.0% of individuals 65 years and older live below the poverty level.

Table 3-6. Change in Median Income, 2010 and 2021

	2010 (2010 dollars)	2010 (2021 dollars*)	2021	% Change 2010-2020 (2021 dollars*)
Household Median Income	\$89,246	\$111,140	\$110,372	-0.7%
White Householder	\$89,603	\$111,584	\$115,377	3.4%
Black or African American Householder	-	-	\$43,750	-
Asian Householder	\$104,559	\$130,209	-	-
Some Other Race Householder	\$63,281	\$78,805	\$58,750	-25.6%
Two or More Races Householder	\$40,725	\$50,716	\$89,310	76.1%
Hispanic or Latino Householder	\$86,023	\$107,126	\$100,779	-5.9%
White Alone Householder, Not Hispanic or Latino	\$89,633	\$111,622	\$115,860	3.8%
Family Median Income	\$111,638	\$139,025	\$169,309	21.8%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021. *Based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation calculator.

5. Employment Characteristics

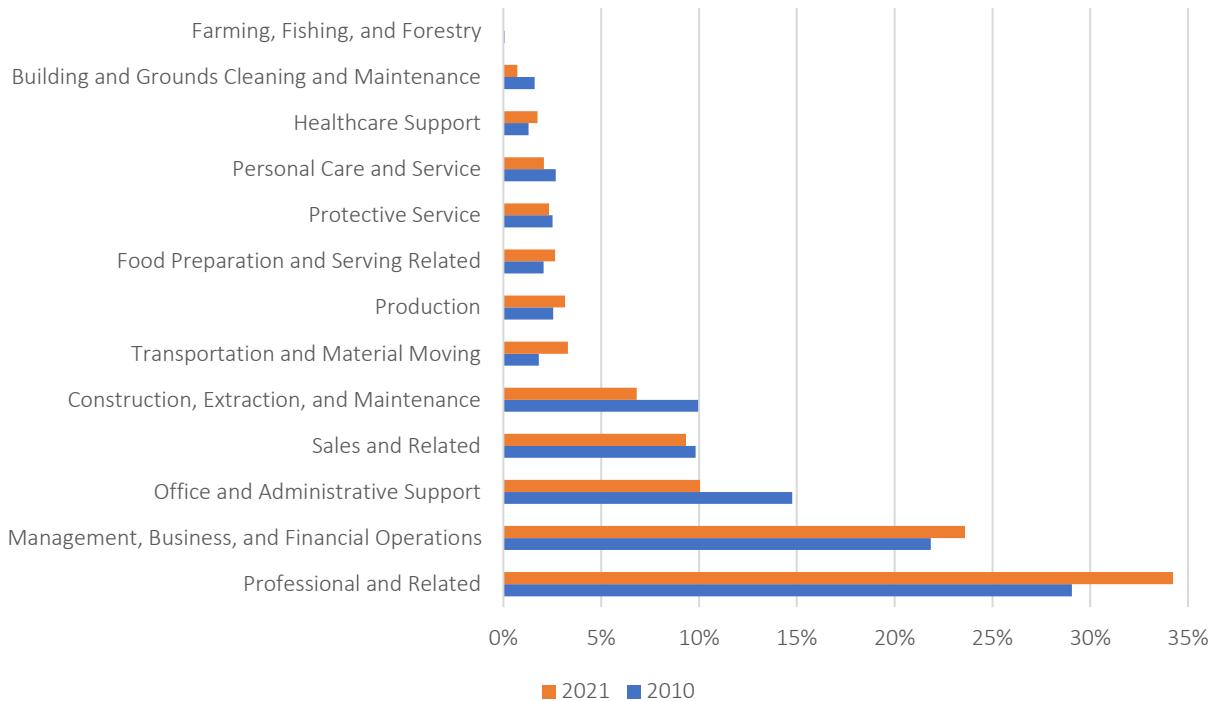
Employers in the City

Wakefield's employers primarily employ fewer than 250 employees.¹³ Epsilon Data Management and Produce Connection are Wakefield's two largest employers (employing between 250 and 499 employees) and are both located in the Edgewater Park commercial/industrial area.

Employment of Residents

The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research Department reports that the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) of Wakefield residents for November 2022 was 2.3% compared to 2.9% in the Commonwealth.¹⁴ Just over half of all jobs held by residents were in the professional and related and management, business, and financial operations industries (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3. Employment of Wakefield Residents 16 Years and Older, 2010 and 2021



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 and 2021

¹³ "Largest 100 Employers in Wakefield," Department of Economic Research, accessed January 22, 2023, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LargestEmployersArea/LEAResult?A=05&GA=000074>.

¹⁴ "Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Massachusetts and Cities and Towns," Department of Economic Research, accessed January 10, 2022, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/LaborForceAndUnemployment/TownComparison>.

6. Environmental Justice Populations

Also discussed in **Section 2 Enhanced Outreach and Public Participation**, the Commonwealth identifies EJ communities using ACS data, where U.S. Census Block Groups meet one or more of the following criteria:¹⁵

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

Wakefield has one EJ community based on Criterion 4. The EJ community's minority population is 25.1% of the total population and its annual median household income is 111.7% of the statewide annual median household income ([Map 3-2](#)). The EJ community is located in northeastern Wakefield and bisected by Interstate 95, with the area north of Interstate 95 occupied by the Edgewater Park commercial/industrial area. Reedy Meadow Conservation Area and Forest Glade Cemetery are located within the EJ community.

D. Development Patterns and Trends

1. Patterns and Trends

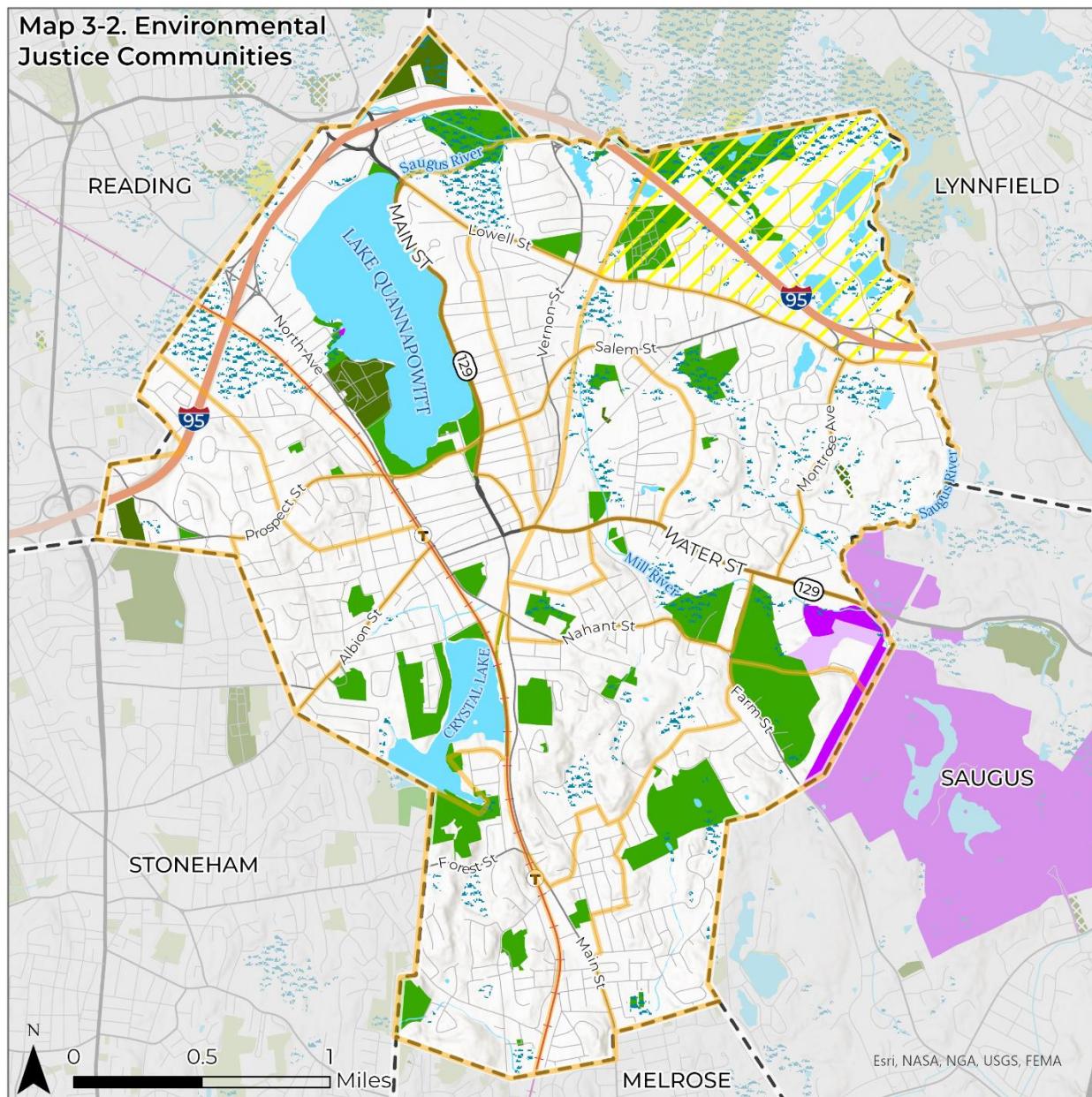
Wakefield has evolved over time from a manufacturing-based community to a mature residential suburb of Boston. As defined by MAPC, mature suburban towns typically began their transition to suburban development in the 1950s and are now of moderate density and nearly built out. Mature suburban towns like Wakefield are generally characterized by the following:

- Residential areas are mostly owner-occupied, single-family dwellings on 0.25- to 0.5-acre lots.
- Vacant developable parcels are scattered sites, with most new development occurring as infill development or redevelopment of underutilized sites.
- The population is relatively stable.

Developed impervious surfaces (i.e., roads, buildings, and other constructed surfaces) cover nearly one third (31.1%) of Wakefield, concentrated in its commercial areas (downtown Wakefield, around the two MBTA commuter rail stations, Lakeside Park, and the Edgewater Park commercial/industrial area). Other significant land cover categories are deciduous forest (28.2%) and developed open space (14.3%) ([Table 3-7](#)).

¹⁵ EJ populations are defined at the Block Group level, which is a geographical unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau. Block groups typically consist of 600 to 3,000 people. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts> for more information.

Map 3-2. Environmental Justice Communities



Legend

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Municipal Boundaries | Conservation Restriction |
| Surface Water | Census Block Groups |
| Open Space and Recreation Properties by Owner | Environmental Justice Communities |
| Transportation | Minority |
| Interstate Highway | |
| State Route | |
| Major Road | |
| Local Road | |
| MBTA Station | |
| MBTA Commuter Rail | |
- * There are no land trust owned properties within Wakefield. However, there are two immediately adjacent to Wakefield, including one in Lynnfield that is contiguous with the Reedy Meadow Conservation Area.

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 1/9/2024
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Table 3-7. Existing Land Cover

Land Cover	Acres*	% of Total
Developed, Impervious	1,589.2	31.1%
Developed, Open Space	728.1	14.3%
Grassland	48.1	0.9%
Deciduous Forest	1,440.9	28.2%
Evergreen Forest	229.9	4.5%
Scrub/Shrub	17.4	0.3%
Bare Land	39.3	0.8%
Palustrine Forested Wetland	404.6	7.9%
Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetland	51.7	1.0%
Palustrine Emergent Wetland	198.4	3.9%
Unconsolidated Shore	0.08	0.0%
Water	358.0	7.0%
Total Area	5,105.8**	

Source: MassGIS 2016 Land Cover/Land Use data. *Acreage values are rounded to the nearest tenth. **Total area value is derived from MassGIS data.

2. Infrastructure

Transportation

Roads and Walking and Biking Infrastructure

Business and commercial/industrial districts and activities are well-served by major regional routes and local thoroughfares. Main Street and North Avenue are the primary north-south thoroughfares. Nearly 85% of Wakefield's roadways (88 of 105 miles) are classified as local and maintained by the Town, and there are 67 miles of sidewalks. There are no dedicated bicycle lanes; however, several recently completed and in-progress projects can accommodate bicycle lanes or will create off-road paths in the future. Shared-road signage is installed around Lake Quannapowitt.

The Town has undertaken numerous plans and projects to improve multimodality and safety across its road network. Wakefield adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2017, establishing a framework for transportation planning that meets the unique needs of all roadway users, and developed an accompanying *Complete Streets Prioritization Plan* in 2018 to guide the implementation of Complete Streets improvements.

The Wakefield Vision 2030 community visioning process, which is the basis for the Town's ongoing development of its *Master Plan*, included a Downtown Revitalization initiative focused on improving the streetscape and multimodal transportation in the downtown area along North Main Street, Main Street, and several side streets. Town residents approved an initial design study and subsequent phase of the designs at the November 2018 and April 2019 Town Meetings, respectively. In January 2020, Wakefield received approximately \$378,570 from MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program for improvements to Albion Street, which is included in the Downtown Revitalization project area and is positioned to be a model for future improvements in the project area. Albion Street improvements have since been completed and include new curb extensions, pedestrian crossing signs, and space for future installation of a bicycle lane.

Wakefield participated in the Safe Routes to School Program in 2021, and its ongoing Master Plan process includes a transportation element. Several sidewalk extension projects identified through the Safe Routes to School Program are in design. The *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft, November 2023) focuses specifically on “improving cycling, walking, and rolling in the town of Wakefield,” with the term “rolling” referring to users of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.¹⁶ A lack of multiuse trails was cited as a major barrier to all three modes of transportation.¹⁷ Other identified barriers include poor sidewalk connectivity, inaccessible streets and sidewalks, sidewalk and crosswalk maintenance, excessive motor vehicle traffic, and aggressive motorists.¹⁸

MBTA Service

Public transportation routes run north-south and are generally located in western Wakefield. As noted earlier, the Wakefield and Greenwood MBTA commuter rail stations provide service along the Haverhill line in Wakefield, with direct access to Boston. Both stations are in within densely populated areas of town and near commercial centers. The Melrose Highlands commuter rail station is also easily accessible to Wakefield residents. The Route 137 MBTA bus route is the only bus route operating in town. It provides service between Reading Depot, with a connection to the MBTA Haverhill Line commuter rail, and Malden Center, with a connection to the MBTA Orange Line subway service. Route 137 runs primarily along Main Street in Wakefield.

Public Water Supply

Wakefield receives over 90% of its public drinking water supply from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Annual average water use as tracked by MWRA varies according to how much water the Town receives from MWRA overall. In 2022, Wakefield used an average of 2.02 million gallons per day from MWRA.¹⁹ Wakefield’s remaining drinking water needs are met locally via the Town’s Broadway Treatment Facility, which uses Crystal Lake as its source. In the event of a disruption to MWRA’s supply, the Town can supply 100% of its emergency drinking water needs locally although withdrawals from Crystal Lake are capped under normal conditions.

Public Sewer

Wakefield is also a MWRA sewer system customer, with all sewerage collected and treated at MWRA facilities. Wakefield’s Department of Public Works (DPW) Sewer Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the town’s wastewater collection system, which includes approximately 95 miles of sewer mains and 8,500 sewer service lateral pipes. The Sewer Division also operates 11 pumping/lift stations within town.

A small percentage (estimated as fewer than 5%) of houses are not connected to the public sewer system. As inspections or issues arise with their leach fields or septic tanks, these houses’ sewer systems are rebuilt according to current standards or are connected to MWRA’s sewer lines.

¹⁶ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft) (November 2023). 5.

¹⁷ Ibid, 16-18.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, *MWRA Water Supplied* (December 2022), 1.

Stormwater

Wakefield has a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which collects stormwater through storm drains, pipes, and other features then discharges the untreated stormwater directly into local waterways. These discharges eventually flow to the Mill River, Saugus River, Mystic River, Reedy Meadow, Lake Quannapowitt, Crystal Lake, and other streams and wetlands in the area.

As part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II stormwater regulations, the Town is required to take steps to reduce the environmental impacts of stormwater pollution. To do this, DPW developed standard operating procedures to guide maintenance and operation for parks and open space resources, buildings and facilities, vehicles and equipment, and infrastructure. It also has individualized maintenance standard operating procedures for certain infrastructure, including catch basins, bioretention areas, and detention basis. The Town also maintains stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) for Town-owned facilities where pollutants may be exposed to stormwater. SWPPPs for the Nahant Yard Waste Site, North Avenue DPW Yard, and Broadway Water Treatment Facility were finalized in June 2020.

Wakefield's Stormwater Management and Land Disturbance bylaw²⁰ regulates activities that disturb land of a certain size and drain to the MS4, reduce permeability of a site, increase stormwater runoff rate or volume, and/or occur on steep slopes. The bylaw is intended to protect water resources by implementing soil erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff control measures and requiring projects develop a stormwater management plan. Revised stormwater regulations are under review, and it is anticipated they will be finalized in March 2024. The new regulations will ensure compliance with the current Massachusetts Small MS4 General Permit (modifications effective January 2021).

Additionally, the Town's DPW Engineering Division and Conservation Commission conduct a joint-review process to identify opportunities for stormwater infrastructure improvements and impervious cover reduction during the planning and design stages of all its projects in Wakefield. Recent and planned stormwater-related projects at and near open space and recreation resources include the following:²¹

- **Gertrude Spaulding Park Rehabilitation (2019):** retrofit to add a bioretention area.
- **Veterans Field Tennis Court/Path Enhancements (2021):** retrofit to add a bioretention area and grass swale.
- **Quannapowitt Parkway (in-design, construction planned 2024):** retrofit to add bioretention area.
- **Veterans Field Parking Reconstruction (in-design, funding secured through the American Rescue Plan Act):** retrofit to add bioretention area and tree box filters in parking area.

The Town also provides public education programming and outreach directly to residents, businesses, and industrial organizations about best practices for stormwater management and improving water quality. The Town is currently working to develop a handbook on sustainable landscaping practices for homeowners. The Conservation Commission has also hosted stormwater-focused seminars through its speaker series. DPW's annual rain barrel program is extremely popular and provides residents the

²⁰ <https://ecode360.com/12359830>.

²¹ Town of Wakefield Department of Public Works, Engineering Division, [Street and Parking Lot Impervious Cover Report: NPDES MS4 Year 4 Report](#) (September 2022), 3.

opportunity to purchase a rain barrel at a discounted price. DPW is also working to develop a residential rain garden program.

3. Long-term Development Patterns

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

Wakefield Zoning and Local Regulations Governing Land Uses

Land use in Wakefield is regulated by the Town's Zoning Bylaw. There are currently nine zoning districts and eight overlay districts (Map 3-3):

Zoning Districts

Special Single Residence (SSR)
Single Residence (SR)
General Residence (GR)
Multiple Residence (MR-1 and MR-2)
Business (B)

Neighborhood Business (NB)
Limited Business (LB)
Industrial (I)
Limited Industrial (LI)

Overlay Districts

Floodplain District (FP)
Municipal District (MD)
Attached Dwelling Overlay (ADOD)
Mixed Use Overlay (MUOD)

Creative Development Overlay (CDOD)
Municipal Building Reuse Overlay (MBROD)
Signage Overlay
Assisted Living Facility Overlay

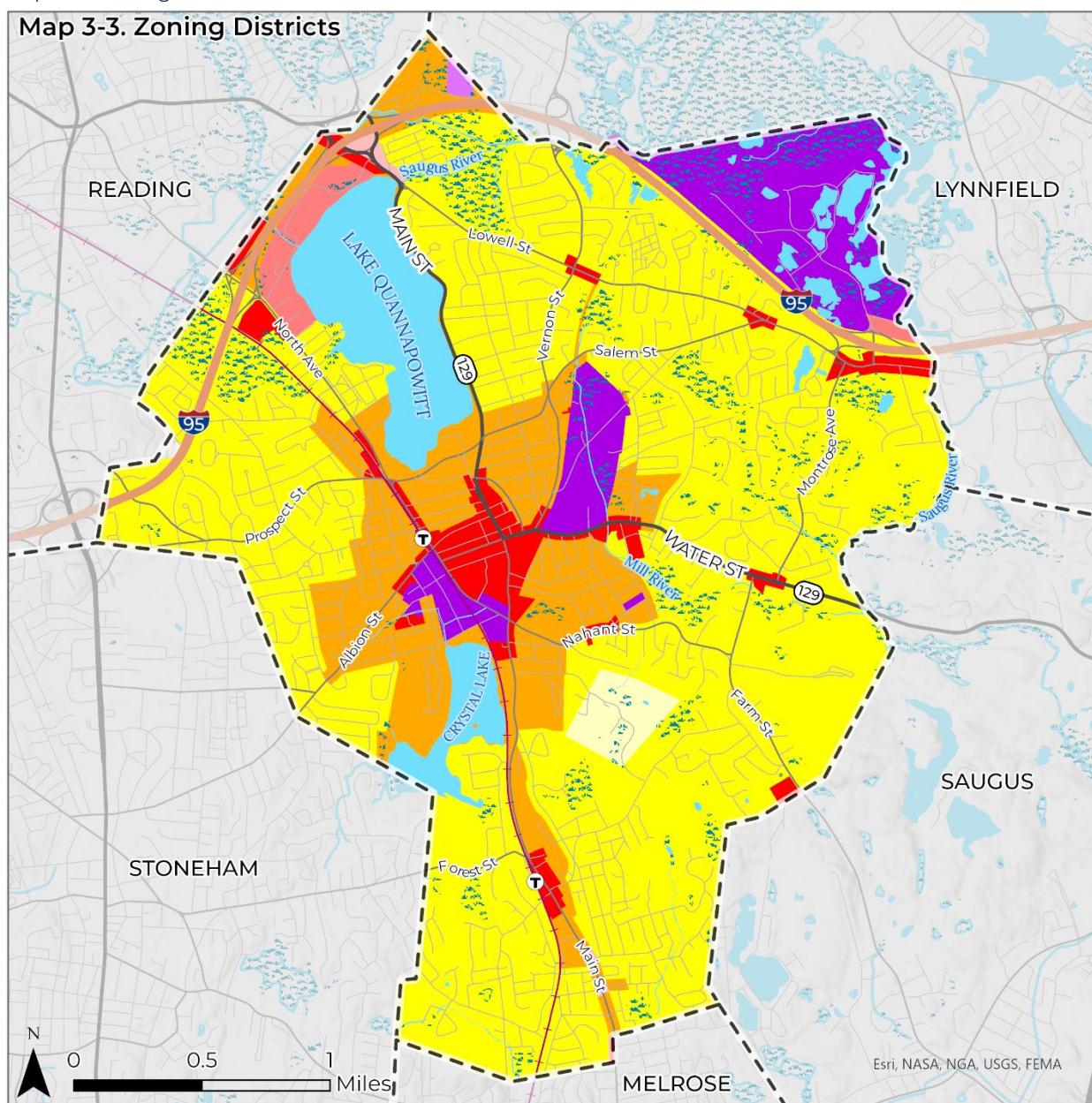
Residential Zoning Districts

The majority of Town is zoned for residential (primarily single-family) uses in Wakefield. The SR and SSR districts are intended for single-family residences and have minimum lot sizes of 12,000 square feet and 20,000 square feet respectively. The GR district is denser and primarily located adjacent to Wakefield Center and Greenwood. Single-family and two-family residences are permitted in the GR district, and the minimum lot size is 8,000 square feet. The MR-1 and MR-2 districts allow for multifamily and attached dwellings (e.g., townhouses). MR-1 allows garden apartments and attached dwellings by special permit at a maximum density of 14 units per acre, with heights not to exceed three stories. MR-2 allows garden apartments, attached dwellings, and mid-rise apartments by special permit at a maximum density of 36 units per acre, with heights not to exceed six stories.

Business Zoning Districts

The B, NB, and LB districts are primarily located adjacent to transportation corridors and in Wakefield Center. The B district includes the downtown area of Wakefield Center as well as Greenwood. Uses in the B district serve community-wide needs and encourage the growth of healthy Town or village business centers. Different residential uses are allowed in the B district by special permit. The NB district consists of business areas that primarily serve the day-to-day needs of local residential neighborhoods and are located in Greenwood and north of Lake Quannapowitt. The LB district allows office and non-retail business uses, as well as residential uses by special permit. LB districts are located near Route 128 and other major roadways.

Map 3-3. Zoning Districts



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
 - Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
 - Freshwater Wetlands
- Transportation
 - Interstate Highway
 - State Route
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - MBTA Station
 - MBTA Commuter Rail

Zoning Districts

- Special Single Residence (SSR)
- Single Residence (SR)
- General Residence (CR)
- Neighborhood Business (NB)
- Limited Business (LB)
- Business (B)
- Limited Industrial (LI)
- Industrial (I)

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 5/8/2023
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Industrial Zoning Districts

The I and LI districts are largely adjacent to Wakefield Center along the railroad corridors and on the northerly side of Route 128. Permitted uses are predominantly light industrial activities that should not result in negative environmental impacts in the surrounding residential area.

Other Relevant Districts

The FP overlay district regulates uses within the special flood hazard area as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the purpose of reducing flood risk and damage. Any encroachments into the regulatory floodway that would result in any increase in flood levels during the base 1% annual chance flood (also known as the 100-year flood) are prohibited.

Wakefield must comply with Section 3A of the Massachusetts Zoning Act (MGL c. 40A), which requires all MBTA communities (essentially, those communities that have MBTA transit stations within their boundaries or those that benefit from their proximity to MBTA transit stations in adjacent communities) to create at least one zoning district where multi-family housing is permitted by-right. Section 3A does not mandate the production of multi-family housing. Wakefield, which has two MBTA commuter rail stations, must locate this zoning district within a half-mile of a transit station. The deadline for Wakefield to comply is December 31, 2024. Wakefield's current proposed district is located around Wakefield Station, close to downtown. Should there be increased multi-family development in this area in the future, Wakefield can reasonably expect that demand for open space and recreation resources and recreation programming may increase in response to new residents. Scheduled and Proposed Development Projects

There are three major ongoing initiatives and capital improvements at public facilities in Wakefield: the Wakefield Public Safety Building expansion, Wakefield Memorial High School building project, and Northeast Metropolitan Technical School building project (note that this is not a Town-owned facility). As of late 2023, there are also three Chapter 40B housing development projects in some stage of the proposal and public review process.²² These proposals currently represent approximately 165 new housing units, including affordable housing.

Build-out Analysis

A build-out analysis for Wakefield has not been conducted in several years. However, the Town has emphasized in recent planning initiatives, including its ongoing *Master Plan* process, that opportunities for new growth are primarily centered on infill development.

²² Chapter 40B is a Massachusetts state statute enacted in 1969 with the intent to increase production of affordable housing. Under Chapter 40B, municipalities may approve affordable housing developments under flexible standards if certain affordable housing eligibility requirements are met. See <https://www.mass.gov/chapter-40-b-planning-and-information> for more information.

SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Glacial movement left Wakefield's landscape scattered with small pockets of variegated soil types. However, two main soil groups predominate. The first soil group consists of sand and gravel soils, principally Merrimac and Hinckley, which vary from fertile soil to almost pure sand or gravel, sometimes with boulders. The second soil group includes upland soils of medium texture, primarily the Gloucester series, which are often shallow and may have bedrock outcrops.

The soils are generally porous sandy loams, but the varied topography allows for areas containing organic soils often associated with lowlands and wetlands. There are small pockets of wetlands as well as numerous rock outcrops reflecting areas with shallow soils. There are few soils of great value for agriculture; areas with agricultural value are largely incorporated into Wakefield's network of public and private open space and recreation resources (e.g., around Lake Quannapowitt's western shoreline, near Crystal Lake, and at the Forest Glade Cemetery) (Map 4-1). Where agricultural uses exist in Wakefield, these tend to be greenhouse horticulture, as the sandy soils are excellent media for seedbeds and nurseries.

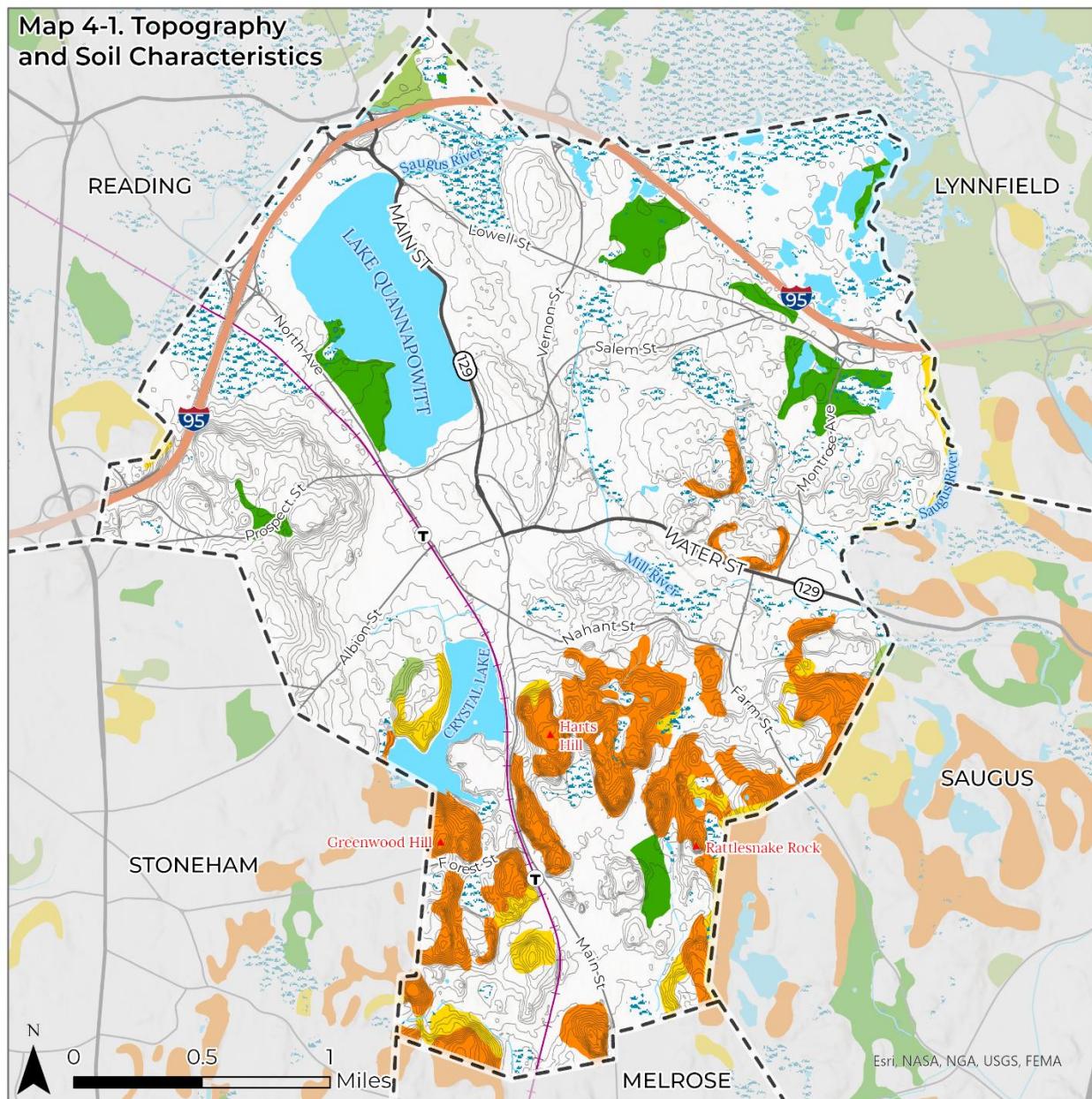
Wakefield's topography is comprised of several hills with rock outcrops, low hummocks of gravelly deposits, green fields, and swamp and marshlands. Hilly terrain is more predominant in the eastern and southern parts of town. The highest points in Wakefield are Rattlesnake Rock (220 feet above mean sea level (AMSL)), Harts Hill (230 feet AMSL), and Greenwood Hill (250 feet AMSL). Naturally, Wakefield's two lakes, Lake Quannapowitt and Crystal Lake, are also significant features of the landscape.

Lower elevation topographical features are found at Lake Quannapowitt, Crystal Lake, the Saugus River, the Mill River, and Reedy Meadow. There are numerous pockets of small wetlands dispersed throughout Wakefield. Wetlands along the Wakefield-Lynnfield border are part of the larger Reedy Meadow wetland complex.

B. Landscape Character

Wakefield is characterized by its suburban setting and focused around Lake Quannapowitt and Crystal Lake (although the latter is not used for recreation and has no public access). The two lakes are defining attributes of the town and feature prominently in Wakefield's commercial and industrial history. Today, Lake Quannapowitt is a center for recreation and Crystal Lake is used as a drinking water supply. While the Saugus and Mill River corridors feature prominently on the landscape, there is little direct access to either though recreational boating is possible.

Map 4-1. Topography and Soil Characteristics



Legend

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Municipal Boundaries | — Elevation Contours (3m) |
| Surface Water | Prime Farmland Soils |
| Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers | Farmland of Statewide Importance |
| Freshwater Wetlands | |
| Transportation | Steep Slopes |
| Interstate Highway | $\geq 15\%$ and $<25\%$ |
| State Route | $\geq 25\%$ |
| Major Road | |
| MBTA Station | |
| MBTA Commuter Rail | |

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 4/21/2023
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

C. Water Resources

Wakefield is primarily located within the Boston Bay Tributaries and Islands watershed, with some areas along its western and southern boundaries falling within the Mystic River watershed (Map 4-2**Error!** **Reference source not found.**). It has two significant lakes. The 247-acre Lake Quannapowitt is Wakefield's most significant water resource from a recreational standpoint and continues to be a center of activity in town. It was cited by a majority of Wakefield Vision 2030 community engagement participants as their favorite recreational open space amenity. Lake Quannapowitt has two public beaches, and a public boat ramp provides access for sailboats and other small craft. The beaches are primarily used for fishing, picnicking, and passive recreation. The beach adjacent to Gertrude Spaulding Park is popular with families due to its proximity to the playground. Wakefield Community Boating, a program run by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Stoneham and Wakefield, offers kayak rentals from its location at the Lower Common during the summer and fall seasons.²³ The lake is also actively used during the winter months for ice-dependent activities, and the lake's surrounding paths are popular year round. However, Lake Quannapowitt typically experiences seasonal algal blooms, which can affect its use and environmental and aesthetic quality. The Friends of Lake Quannapowitt (FOLQ) is a non-profit organization founded in 1991 to advocate for the lake's protection. The group has established and/or participates in a number of initiatives to protect the lake's water quality, including water quality testing, lake cleanup events, and a goose control program. FOLQ has also advocated for expanded recreational access and opportunities centered around the lake and was instrumental in the creation of Gertrude Spaulding Park.²⁴ Wakefield's Clean Lake Committee was established in early 2020 with the goal of ensuring Lake Quannapowitt is fishable and swimmable, in part by helping coordinate the Town's compliance with federal and state regulatory programs, including the Clean Water Act's NPDES program. The Committee has not formally convened since May 2020, but the Wakefield's DPW has continued to advance water quality improvement projects identified by the Committee.

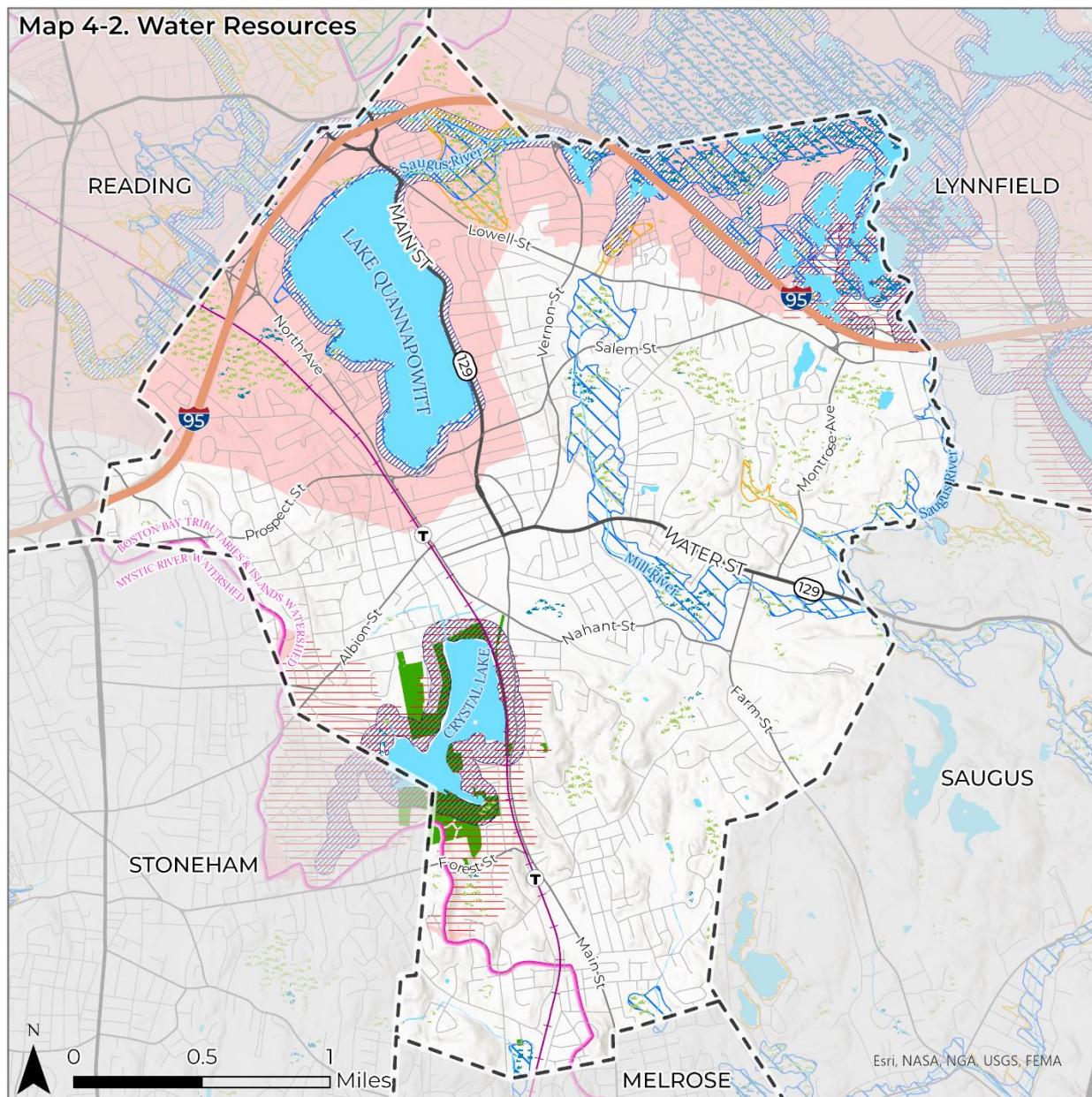
The 78-acre Crystal Lake was Wakefield's original and principal supply of water for drinking and industrial uses and continues to be used as a drinking water supply for the Town. Wakefield has acquired a significant amount of land around Crystal Lake for the purposes of watershed protection. Crystal Lake outlets to the Mill River, which flows eastward before joining the Saugus River at the Wakefield-Lynnfield-Saugus boundaries.

Wetlands in Wakefield consist of freshwater emergent and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands found mostly along the Saugus and Mill Rivers and at Reedy Meadow (Map 4-2). The Wakefield Conservation Commission oversees activities covered by the Wetlands Protection Act regulations (310 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 10.00). The Commission reviews all projects within 100-feet of a wetland or 200 feet of a perennial stream or river that may result in disturbances within wetlands.

²³ "Home," Wakefield Community Boating, accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.wakefieldboating.com/>.

²⁴ "History," Friends of Lake Quannapowitt, accessed January 26, 2022, <https://folq.org/history/>.

Map 4-2. Water Resources



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
 - Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
 - Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands
 - Freshwater Emergent Wetlands
- Surface Water Protection Areas
 - ZONE A
 - ZONE B
 - ZONE C
- Water Supply Protection Lands
- Watershed Boundaries
- FEMA National Flood Hazard Areas
 - 1% Annual Chance Floodplain
 - 0.2% Annual Chance Floodplain
 - Possible but Undetermined Hazard

- Transportation
 - Interstate Highway
 - State Route
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - MBTA Station
 - MBTA Commuter Rail

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 4/18/2023
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

The area immediately surrounding Crystal Lake is designated as a Zone A Surface Water Supply Protection Area. Zones B and C Surface Water Protection Areas extend further out in the watershed and are also subject to the Commonwealth's drinking water protection regulations. Since the City of Lynn drinking water supply system includes Reedy Meadow, both that resource and upstream resources (the Saugus River and Lake Quannapowitt and its tributaries) are designated as Zone A Surface Water Supply Protection Areas. A Zone C Surface Water Protection Area covers the surrounding watershed.

Flood hazard areas in Wakefield were most recently mapped by FEMA in 2010 (Map 4-2[Error! Reference source not found.](#)). The majority of the town's documented 1% annual chance floodplain is located along the Saugus and Mill Rivers and around Lake Quannapowitt and Reedy Meadow. Several areas within the Edgewater Park commercial/industrial area are within or bounded by the floodplain.

D. Vegetation

Wakefield's residential development is predominantly suburban in character with substantial tree cover and maintained lawns or gardens. Wakefield also has several large, intact natural areas that support the area's diverse wildlife.

1. Wetland Vegetation

Wetlands provide important beneficial functions to Wakefield's residents and local fish and wildlife and help bolster the Town's overall climate resiliency. In addition to providing valuable habitat space, wetlands are important for water quality, floodwater storage, and carbon sequestration. Wetland areas are also part of several of Wakefield's wildlife corridors, including along the Mill River and the area from Sullivan Park southeast into the Town of Saugus. Wakefield has recently acquired several conservation areas with wetlands present, including conservation areas on Findlay Street, Paon Boulevard, and Perham Street.

Wetlands are often home to a diverse array of vegetation. Reedy Meadow, for example, is home to a variety of plants, wildflowers, and shrubs. These include cattails, Queen Anne's lace, several varieties of ferns, water lilies, skunk cabbage, and swamp azalea. Purple loosestrife, a non-native invasive species, is also present. Reedy Meadow also has pockets of forested wetlands. A red maple swamp can be found off Audubon Road, consisting of mostly deciduous trees including maple, oak, and birch species.

2. Forests

Notable forested areas in Wakefield include the Town Forest and Crystal Lake watershed protection lands and the Emerald Necklace Conservation Area. Pockets of forested land are also scattered across western and southern Wakefield, including 30 acres of forested land at the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School and adjacent to J.J. Round Park and Spring Street Park. The Bear Hill Golf Club and the land holding off Forest Road are both enrolled in the Commonwealth's Chapter 61B program, which allows for property tax reductions on land that provides public benefits to the community as open space and recreational land. As part of the Chapter 61B program, the Town has the right of first refusal to purchase the land should the properties come up for sale. There are no lands enrolled in the Chapter 61 program, which is specifically intended for forest land.

3. Public Shade Trees

DPW's Forestry Division is responsible for maintaining Wakefield's public shade trees. Currently, the Town focuses on increasing tree plantings to reverse a tree deficit, in which more street trees were being removed than planting. Many of Wakefield's trees were planted in the 1970s and are reaching the end of their lifecycles. However, acid rain, road salt, invasive pests, disease, and extreme weather have also affected the health of Wakefield's urban tree canopy, necessitating removal and replacement.

In 2021, Wakefield's Tree Warden, Dennis Fazio, was named the 2021 Tree Warden of the Year by the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association (MTWFA). MTWFA recognized Mr. Fazio's leadership in the Town's public tree planting and management initiatives as well as his frequent collaborations with community organizations and programs.²⁵

4. Agricultural Lands

Wakefield has no farms or active agricultural lands beyond limited greenhouse horticulture. Agriculture is not a significant land use in Wakefield, and there are no open spaces or recreation resources used for agricultural purposes. There are no lands enrolled in the Commonwealth's Chapter 61A program, which is intended for agricultural or horticultural lands, or designated agricultural protection restrictions (APRs).

5. Rare Species

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) maintains inventories of Species of Conservation Concern (e.g., those species considered endangered, threatened, or likely to become threatened) across the Commonwealth. Plant Species of Conservation Concern found in Wakefield are listed in Table 4-1 and identify their status according to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

Table 4-1. Plant Species of Conservation Concern in Wakefield

Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status
Long-leaved Bluet	<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Vascular Plant	Endangered
Slender Cottongrass	<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>	Vascular Plant	Threatened

Source: Rare Species Viewer, MassWildlife NHESP, acquired 12/7/2022.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Despite its suburban development and proximity to an urban center, Wakefield still boasts a wide variety of wildlife and is home to typical New England mammal populations, including rabbits, raccoons, muskrats, skunks, squirrels, opossums, deer, foxes, coyotes, and bats. Commonly occurring birds include Canada geese, pheasants, and various species of ducks. Wakefield's large water bodies also host fish and amphibians. Fish species documented in Lake Quannapowitt, for example, include largemouth bass, pickerel, brown bullhead, yellow and white perch, pumpkinseed, bluegill, common carp, golden shiner, and various species of minnow. Several species of frogs and toads, as well as the painted turtle, snapping turtle, and box turtle, are thought to be present. The stretch of the Saugus River south of the Lynn Waterways and Saugus River Dams is designated diadromous fish migratory habitat and is important to

²⁵ "Tree Warden of the Year," Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association, accessed March 8, 2023, <https://masstreewardens.org/tree-warden-of-the-year/>.

the life cycles of alewife, blueback herring, rainbow smelt, American eel, white perch, and Atlantic tomcod.²⁶

1. Wildlife Corridors

Large resources like Lake Quannapowitt, Crystal Lake and its surrounding water supply protection lands, and the Town Forest provide corridors and expansive habitat area for fish and wildlife. Several open space resources in town are contiguous with large natural areas in the Towns of Saugus and Lynnfield—Breakheart Reservation and Reedy Meadow, respectively—that provide additional diverse and protected habitat. The Emerald Necklace Conservation area provides a connection between the Town Forest and Golden Hills Area of Critical Concern (ACEC) west to Crystal Lake and, while not completely connected, north toward the Mill River. Another wildlife corridor follows areas of wetland habitat from Sullivan Park southeast to the Saugus River and Breakheart Reservation. With the exception of the Gumwood/Butler Conservation Area and Montrose Avenue Conservation Restriction, there is little protected land along this wildlife corridor. The Saugus River, which travels eastward from its headwaters at Lake Quannapowitt to Reedy Meadow and then exits Reedy Meadow to form Wakefield's eastern boundary, and the Mill River, which flows eastward from central Wakefield until it meets the Saugus River immediately north of Breakheart Reservation, provide natural corridors for fish (including diadromous fish) and wildlife movement.

The NHESP identifies Lake Quannapowitt, the Saugus River, and areas abutting Breakheart Reservation and Reedy Meadow as Core Habitat, which supports the long-term persistence of rare species and other state Species of Conservation Concern, biodiversity, and intact ecosystems. These Core Habitat areas represent least disturbed habitat areas that, given relatively low fragmentation and minimal impacts from development, support the critical physical and ecological functioning of forest, wetland, and aquatic habitat. Breakheart Reservation is also identified as a Critical Natural Landscape, which is an intact landscape that can “provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience” if protected.²⁷ Both Reedy Meadow and Breakheart Reservation are identified as Priority Habitat of Rare Species.

Reedy Meadow was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1972. The National Natural Landmark program is administered by the National Park Service and recognizes sites with outstanding biological or geological resources. The National Natural Landmark designation does not impose any land use restrictions. Reedy Meadow is also identified as an Important Bird Area by Mass Audubon due to its importance as essential habitat for migrating birds. Although surrounding suburban development is thought to have contributed to recent declines bird populations in Reedy Meadow, Mass Audubon notes that the observed ecological damage is not irreversible.²⁸

2. Vernal Pools

There are six certified vernal pools in Wakefield, though only one is within protected open space (Breakheart Reservation). Three certified vernal pools are located adjacent to the Montrose Avenue

²⁶ MassGIS, “Diadromous Fish,” last modified January 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-diadromous-fish>.

²⁷ NHESP of the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, MA Program of The Nature Conservancy, *BioMap2: Conserving the Biodiversity of Massachusetts in a Changing World* (2010), 4.

²⁸ “Site Summary: Lynnfield Marsh,” Mass Audubon.

Conservation Restriction, owned by the New England Power Company, and another is located south of Forest Street. The last certified vernal pool is located adjacent to the Breakheart Reservation in the forested area owned by the Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School. There are several potential vernal pools identified in Wakefield, though few are located at existing open space lands. The Wakefield Conservation Commission reviews all projects within 100-feet of a wetland or 200-feet of a perennial stream or river, as well as projects within the FEMA 1% Annual Chance Floodplain or endangered species habitat. As such, activities around many of Wakefield's certified and potential vernal pools would be subject to review by the Conservation Commission.

3. Rare Species

In addition to species listed in the federal Endangered Species Act, the Commonwealth maintains a list of species protected under MESA. MESA-listed species observed in Wakefield are identified in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Wildlife Species of Conservation Concern in Wakefield

Common Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status
Blue-spotted Salamander	Amphibian	Special Concern
Common Gallinule	Bird	Special Concern
Hentz's Red-bellied Tiger Beetle	Beetle	Threatened
Least Bittern	Bird	Endangered
Marbled Salamander	Amphibian	Threatened

Source: Rare Species Viewer, MassWildlife NHESP, acquired 12/7/2022.

The Eastern Whip-poor-will, a Species of Special Concern, has been observed by birdwatchers in the forest at Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School, with recordings of its bird calls captured as recently as 2022.²⁹ While not officially documented by NHESP as observed in Wakefield, the Eastern Whip-poor-will has been sighted in the neighboring towns of Melrose and Saugus.³⁰

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Wakefield's scenic resource and unique environments include open space, recreation, historic, and cultural resources, which are depicted on Map 4-3.

1. Unique Open Space and Recreation Resources

As a community, Wakefield is characterized by its recreation assets, including the centerpiece, Lake Quannapowitt. It is Wakefield's most important natural feature, the southern end of which touches the Town Common and Veteran's Field. The lake is a glacial kettle, a depression formed by glacial movement and retreat common in Massachusetts and was historically known as the Great Pond or Reading Pond. In 1847, the lake was renamed "Quannapowitt" in honor of James Quonopohit, one of the signers of the 1686 Indian Deed that covered the sale of the Towns of Reading (which included present-day Wakefield) and Lynn to colonial settlers. For years, ice was harvested on the shores of the lake and shipped to Boston. A devastating fire in 1929 destroyed the last of the ice warehouses. After the fire, Wakefield

²⁹ eBird, "Northeast Metro Tech Forest," accessed April 2023, <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L18308054>.

³⁰ MassWildlife Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, "Rare Species Viewer," accessed April 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>.

purchased the property at Church Street and North Avenue, including the historic Colonel James Hartshorne House, and it would later become Veteran's Field.

Lake Quannapowitt is a “Great Pond,” a designation applied to all ponds over 10 acres in size. Under [Massachusetts General Law Chapter 131 Section 45](#), Great Ponds—with a few exceptions—must be available for public use, such as fishing and boating. Lake Quannapowitt is widely used for recreation by Wakefield residents. Colonell Connolly Park on Lowell Street has a public beach, though swimming is not currently permitted in the lake. Additional public access points to the lake are Spaulding Playground on Lake Avenue (boating) and Veteran’s Field at Church Street and North Avenue (boating). Motorboats are limited to those with a maximum outboard motor size of 10-horsepower to help maintain the quiet and serene character of the lake. The Quannapowitt Yacht Club, the oldest inland yacht club in the country, is located on the western shore and moors approximately 100 boats. Ice skating, ice fishing, and ice sledding are popular activities during the winter months, and the lake’s surrounding paths are popular with walkers, joggers, cyclists, and inline skaters. Park and picnic facilities around the lake also provide passive recreation opportunities.

The 78-acre Crystal Lake is the Town’s drinking water reservoir and, while a Great Pond, is exempt from public use requirements because of this purpose. The lake is not used for public recreation (e.g., boating, swimming, or fishing) to protect water quality. The Town owns approximately 92 acres of land abutting the lake for water supply protection purposes. Crystal Lake outlets to Mill River and is another key piece in Wakefield’s network of high-quality fish and wildlife habitat.

The previously discussed Reedy Meadow and Breakheart Reservation are additional resources of scenic, recreation, and environmental importance in Wakefield.

2. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The Golden Hills ACEC was established in 1987 and occupies 500 acres in the Towns of Melrose, Saugus, and Wakefield. The Wakefield Town Forest and Mapleway Playground are included within the Golden Hills ACEC, comprising approximately 50 acres. At the time of its nomination, Golden Hills was recognized as an important “island in a sea of urbanization” that supported diverse wildlife, including predatory mammals like the fox and fisher.³¹ Although there is some residential development within the Golden Hills ACEC, much of the area’s steep slopes, wetlands, vernal pools, and ponds are undisturbed and provide critical habitat for year-round and migratory birds and wildlife. Located only feet away from DCR’s Breakheart Reservation, the area also facilitates regional wildlife movement. The Wakefield Town Forest features two primary trails that visitors can use for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and birdwatching.

The Massachusetts Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) program was established in 1975 to designate high-quality, unique, and significant natural and cultural resources with the intent to protect, enhance, and support the stewardship of ACEC resource areas in perpetuity. ACEC nominations should reflect extensive public outreach and community engagement. While projects within an ACEC are subject to a higher level of scrutiny during relevant state agency review processes, ACEC designations do not supersede local land use regulations. There are only 30 ACECs recognized across the Commonwealth.

³¹ Geoffrey A. Rogers, M.R.P., [Golden Hills Study: A Management Plan](#) (August 1986), 3, 19-20.

3. Historic and Cultural Resources

Wakefield has four districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which is the nation's list of places, buildings, structures, and objects with historical significance worthy of preservation.

Wakefield does not have any local historic districts. The NRHP-listed historic districts are as follows:

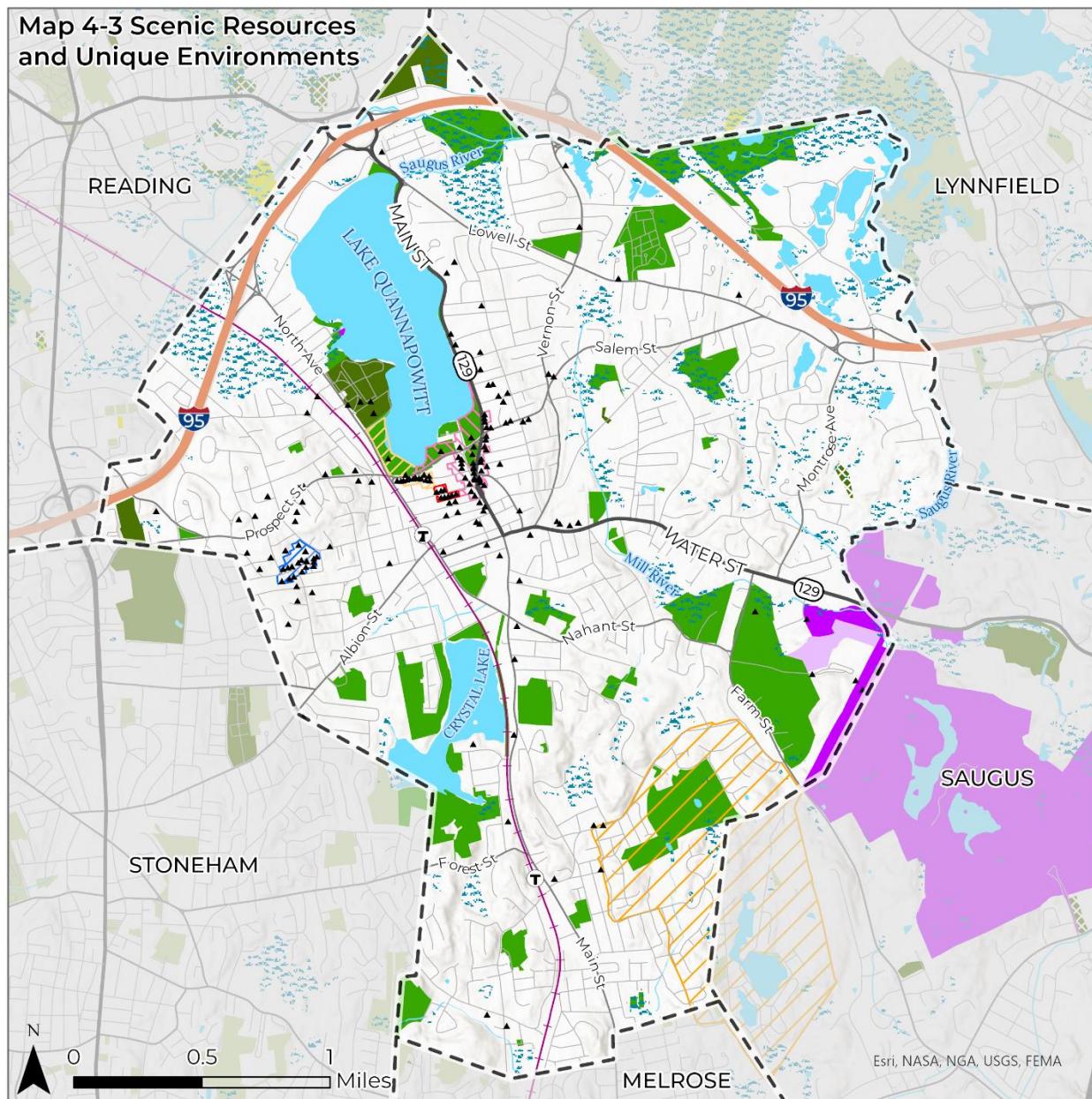
- *Church-Lafayette Streets Historic District*, recognized for its community planning and development and architectural significance, includes 25 contributing resources. The Colonel James Hartshorne House, which is also listed on the NRHP in its own right, is located in this historic district. The Hartshorne House, built in 1681, is Wakefield's oldest structure and was historically used as part of the ice harvesting industry at Lake Quannapowitt.
- *Common Historic District*, recognized for its architectural significance, includes 48 contributing resources. The Common Historic District includes the Town Common, which hosts many community events today.
- *Wakefield Park Historic District*, recognized for its community planning and development and architectural significance, includes 27 contributing resources.
- *Yale Avenue National Historic District*, recognized for its community planning and development and architectural significance, includes 13 contributing resources.

The Town Center neighborhood encompasses the area around Lake Quannapowitt and includes the Church-Lafayette Streets and Common National Historic Districts. This neighborhood is the historical center of Wakefield and continues to be an important commercial hub for the community.

Historic churches in Wakefield include the First Parish Congregational Church, which had title to all common land until the early 19th century. Four cemeteries are located on the west side of Lake Quannapowitt: Lakeside Cemetery, established in 1846, and three Jewish cemeteries. Temple Israel Cemetery, established in 1859, was the first Jewish cemetery in the Boston area. Wakefield's first burying ground was located in Town Common where the bandstand now stands. When the first Town House was erected in 1834, the early graves were moved to a site on the north side of the present First Parish Congregational Church. A second burying ground had been laid out in 1688 along Church Street to the shore of the lake.

The Wakefield Historical Commission is tasked with enforcing the Town's Demolition Delay Bylaw, which seeks to preserve and protect historically significant structures by requiring advanced notice be given for demolition proposals. The advanced notice period provides for additional time for efforts to preserve, rehabilitate, and/or restore the structure in question, including through the sale of the structure to a new owner.

Map 4-3. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
 - Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
 - Freshwater Wetlands
- Transportation
 - Interstate Highway
 - State Route
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - MBTA Station
 - MBTA Commuter Rail

- Conservation Restriction
- Open Space and Recreation Properties by Owner
 - Town of Wakefield
 - Other Municipality
 - State
 - Other Public
 - Land Trust
 - Private

* There are no land trust owned properties within Wakefield. However, there are two immediately adjacent to Wakefield, including one in Lynnfield that is contiguous with the Reedy Meadow Conservation Area.

- Golden Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- National Register of Historic Places
- Church-Lafayette Streets Historic District
- Common Historic District
- Wakefield Park Historic District
- Yale Avenue Historic District
- Buildings, Sites, Structures, and Objects

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 1/9/2024
Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

G. Environmental Challenges

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

1. Flooding

Residents recently identified flooding along the Saugus and Mill Rivers as a pressing concern during the Wakefield 2030 process for drafting the Town's master plan. Wakefield's regulatory floodplains are largely confined to the areas along the Saugus and Mill Rivers and around Lake Quannapowitt and Reedy Meadow. Historical development in and near wetlands and in the floodplains of the Saugus and Mill Rivers has resulted in the degradation of these water resources as well as flooding of adjacent properties during intense precipitation events. Approximately 90% of the Town drains to the Saugus River, but downstream restrictions in other municipalities are known to cause backwater flooding in Wakefield.³² Many flooding "hot spots" occur at the Town's drainage ditches. These ditches are designed for 20-50% annual chance storm (i.e., the 2-5 year storm) and can become quickly overwhelmed during larger storm events, causing localized flooding.³³ Locally identified priority flooding areas are listed below:

- Broadway and North Avenue
- Grafton Street and Maple Avenue area
- Greenwood Street at Wakefield-Melrose town line
- June Circle, Stone Way, and Rivers Lane along Farm Street
- New Salem Street
- Paon Boulevard
- Salem Street at Saugus River by the Wakefield-Lynnfield town line
- Water Street
- West Park Drive
- Wiley Street

2. Sedimentation and Erosion

Construction activities and urban stormwater runoff are primary causes of sedimentation and erosion. Implications of soil erosion include water quality degradation, pollutant transport, reduction in nutrient availability, and the alteration of topography and stream channels. Similarly, sedimentation can also impact aquatic habitats by degrading water quality, increasing erosion, and reducing flood storage capacity. Historical industrial and residential development along the Mill River has raised concerns about contamination and sedimentation, while urban stormwater runoff is a frequently cited concern related to water quality impacts in Lake Quannapowitt and Crystal Lake.

To mitigate the potential for sedimentation and erosion at active construction sites, Wakefield's [Stormwater Management and Land Disturbance bylaw](#) requires projects implement soil erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff control measures.

³² BETA Group, Inc., 2019 *Hazard Mitigation Plan Update* (April 2021), 9.

³³ Kim Lundgren Associates, Inc., [Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report](#) (February 2020), 10-11.

3. Water Quality and Impaired Water Bodies

The Commonwealth's Surface Water Quality Standards at 314 CMR 4.00 identify several Class A waters in Wakefield. Class A waters include public water supplies and their tributaries and are designated for public water supply; habitat for fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife; and primary and secondary contact recreation (even if recreation is not permitted). Both Crystal Lake and the stretch of the Saugus River from its source (Lake Quannapowitt) to the Saugus River Dam in Saugus are Class A waters and are public water supplies (as noted previously, the Saugus River flows through Reedy Meadow, which is part of the City of Lynn's drinking water supply). Protections for Class A waters extend to the Saugus River's tributaries, Lake Quannapowitt and its unnamed feeder streams. As public water supplies, the Commonwealth also classifies Crystal Lake and the Saugus River and its tributaries as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW). Wetlands connected to either Class A water also qualify for protection.

All other waters in Wakefield—Mill River and the Edgewater Office Park Pond—are designated as Class B waters, which are designated as habitat for fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife, as well as for primary and secondary contact recreation such as swimming and boating. There are several water quality concerns associated with Wakefield's Class B waters, all of which are classified as "impaired" or "threatened" in the state's draft Integrated List of Waters (2022) because they fail to meet the standards for one or more of their designated uses.³⁴ Lake Quannapowitt and the Saugus River are also classified as "impaired."³⁵ In several cases, the state has calculated a total maximum daily load (TMDL), a tool used to determine pollution reduction targets and improve water quality over time. TMDLs are not required for non-pollutants, such as invasive plant species. Impairments requiring a TMDL include but are not limited to high fecal coliform bacteria counts, total phosphorus, dissolved oxygen levels, and nutrient/eutrophication biological indicators.

As Wakefield's most highly used water body and its central recreation asset, water quality impairments in Lake Quannapowitt are a concern because of the historical alterations to the landscape around the lake. The land on the north and northwest side of Lake Quannapowitt was originally a wetland area that was filled and partially diverted with the construction of a drainage canal in the 1930s, increasing the lake's flushing time and reducing its filtering capacity. The construction of Route 128 and other development also led to further diversions of this portion of the lake's watershed. Additionally, Veteran's Field and the public parking area are filled wetlands. While discharges and incompatible uses are more strictly controlled today, there is a history of discharging coal, tar, and other wastes into Lake Quannapowitt and an open dump operating near its shores. The FOLQ works actively to improve Lake Quannapowitt's water quality, and the Clean Lake Committee's prior work also helps lay the groundwork for future interventions. As calculated by the Clean Lake Committee in 2016, the Lake Quannapowitt watershed has a greater amount of impervious area on average as compared to Wakefield overall, with 150 acres of direct stormwater runoff area. Earlier studies identified other issues that impede recreational use of the lake, including heavy weed growth, harmful algal blooms, and lack of water clarity. Fertilizer and pesticide application within the watershed also contribute to nutrient pollution and can result in water quality degradation. The Clean Lake Committee identified a number of projects to address these issues,

³⁴ MA Division of Watershed Management, Watershed Planning Program, [*Draft Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters for the Clean Water Act 2022 Reporting Cycle*](#) (November 2022), 116, 196-198.

³⁵ Ibid.

particularly stormwater management best practices.³⁶ Planned and implemented projects have focused on improving stormwater treatment and retention, decreasing impervious surfaces, and tree plantings.

4. Landfills, Hazardous Waste, and Brownfield Sites

Wakefield has one active landfill, referred to as both the Nahant Street Pit and Nahant Yard Waste Site, which is used for the disposal of yard waste (e.g., leaves, grass, clippings, shrubs, and brush). Access to the site is limited to Wakefield residents with a DPW-issued permit only.

Sullivan Park and the Sullivan Park Extension are located atop Wakefield's closed municipal solid waste landfill. A BMX (bicycle motocross) track is now located at the former landfill site. Additionally, there is a closed landfill in Stoneham within Crystal Lake's watershed (and located within watershed protection land owned by the Town of Stoneham). The landfill is unlined.

The Town has several brownfield sites. Currently, the Town is in the process of planning for future uses at the Gumwood/Butler Conservation Area (94 Butler Avenue), a Town-owned parcel that will be capped due to asbestos contamination. The capped portion will be a new open space with a meadow and small walking path and sitting area. As of April 2023, the Town has not yet reached the site design phase for the property.

As of January 26, 2023, MassDEP has recorded 217 incidents or sites of reportable oil and hazardous materials releases in Wakefield.³⁷ Of these, 21 sites have Activity or Use Limitations (AUL), which are determined pursuant to 310 CMR 40.1012 and restrict or prohibit some land uses in order to limit exposures to certain contaminants and hazardous materials that may be detrimental to human health.³⁸ AUL sites are largely located along Albion Street, Broadway, Main Street, North Avenue, and Salem Street.

5. Development

Wakefield is approaching build out, with potential development likely to occur as infill development and targeted redevelopment of existing sites. Thus, the primary challenge of new development is ensuring that it is complementary to the Town's existing character and creates multiple benefits. As stated in Wakefield Vision 2030, new development presents opportunities to add pocket parks and other public spaces, increase multi-modal transportation options, and expand public health and social benefits.

Development is closely tied to soil health and water quality. The *Massachusetts Healthy Soils Action Plan* (2023) notes that "Impervious surfaces and poorly functioning soils further impacted by development significantly reduce these ecosystem functions where they are needed to help mitigate floods and reduce non-point source pollution to our rivers and streams."³⁹ Approximately 45.4% of Wakefield's land area is either developed impervious or developed open space areas. Conventional development practices, which tend to remove vegetation and upper soil layers and compact soils, diminish soil function, particularly stormwater infiltration capacity. Even though developed open space areas have recreational and

³⁶ "Town of Wakefield's Clean Lake Committee ~ Project List," Clean Lake Committee, accessed January 27, 2023, <https://wakefieldma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Shortlist/index.html?appid=5a413c76bc8543ba822a107d07977773>.

³⁷ "Search for Waste Site & Reportable Releases," Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/portal#/search/wastesite>.

³⁸ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, [310 CMR 40.00](#).

³⁹ Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts Healthy Soils Action Plan* (2022), 85.

ornamental vegetation and landscaping, soil function is often limited by the long-lasting effects of development practices and poor management.

Wakefield already pursues several strategies that can improve soil health, which in turn mitigates stormwater runoff and flooding and improves carbon sequestration. The Town has several green stormwater infrastructure sites and is working to expand its tree canopy coverage. The *Massachusetts Healthy Soils Action Plan* identifies a number of other strategies that communities can pursue to improve soil health, including regreening empty parking lots and implementing turf best management practices (e.g., raising mower heights, aerating turf, and developing ornamental landscapes that reflect the natural environment).⁴⁰ The Conservation Commission also has a draft Native Planting Policy to encourage the use of native vegetation, which can support the stabilization of soils.

6. Environmental Justice and Open Space and Recreation Inequities

Wakefield's one EJ community is located in northeastern Wakefield, with Interstate 95 cutting through the community (Map 3.2). The Edgewater Park commercial/industrial area and some multi-family residential development comprise the area north of Interstate 95, while the majority of residential development is south of Interstate 95. Due to the presence of a major highway, immediate concerns about environmental justice include air and noise pollution and mobility/access to other areas of Town. While Wakefield does enjoy tree cover that provides cooling benefits, roadways and vehicles generate heat that may contribute to pockets of elevated temperatures (i.e., heat islands). The EJ community is also partially located within the mapped floodplain. Open space and recreation resources within the EJ community are limited to the Reedy Meadow Conservation Area and Forest Glade Cemetery which, while providing passive recreation opportunities, do not include active recreation components.

7. Impacts of Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Like other Massachusetts communities, Wakefield is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, which can increase the severity and frequency of natural hazards and create chronic stressors for the community. The environmental challenges listed in this section above are or will be exacerbated by natural hazards and climate change. As identified in its Community Resilience Building Workshop in 2020 (a key component of the Town's participation in the MVP Program), Wakefield's top hazards are intense storms, heat waves, drought, and flooding. These hazards were identified based on their historical occurrence and projected future impacts as influenced by climate change. Enhancing natural systems, adding more sustainably designed open space and green space, and minimizing the impacts of development on the natural environment can increase the resiliency of Wakefield's open space and recreation resources to natural hazards and climate change. Table 4-3 summarizes the projected local impacts of Wakefield's top hazards and climate adaptation benefits of open space and recreation resources.

As part of the MVP Program, Wakefield created a resilience framework to assess how well proposed programs and initiatives will advance climate resiliency and advance its core values of equity, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, regional collaboration, and resilience. Additionally, the Wakefield Vision 2030 highlights the importance of Wakefield's natural resources and envisions their continued protection and enhancement.

⁴⁰ *Massachusetts Healthy Soils Action Plan* (2023), 84, 91-92.

Table 4-3. Wakefield's Top Hazards and Local Impacts and Benefits of Open Space and Recreation Resources

Hazard	Climate Change Trend	Selected Local Impacts	Connection to Open Space and Recreation Resources
Intense Storms	Changes in rainfall patterns will lead to heavier and more frequent storm events and stronger winds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to utility and public works infrastructure Downed trees Habitat degradation due to changing precipitation patterns Increased stormwater runoff 	Open space and recreation resources can be designed to act as temporary flood storage during severe storms and other significant rain events.
Heat Waves	Increases in the number of days with elevated temperatures, particularly days over 90° F.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased heat island effect in urbanized areas Increased heat-related illnesses and reduced air quality Greater energy demand for cooling Increase in vector-borne disease Increased wildfire risk 	Conserving open spaces and investing in green infrastructure and increased tree canopy can mitigate the urban heat island effect and cool temperatures.
Drought	Prolonged periods of low or no rainfall, leading to water shortages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower water levels and decreased surface water quality Reduced drinking water supply Increased wildfire risk 	Drought-tolerant, native species can be used in open space and recreation resources to maintain green space and reduce water usage during periods of drought.
Flooding	Water submerging land quickly and over prolonged periods due to increased precipitation and intense storms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstructed and/or damaged roads and critical facilities Increased mosquito populations from standing water Increased stormwater runoff 	Open space and recreation resources can be designed to act as temporary flood storage during severe storms and other significant rain events.

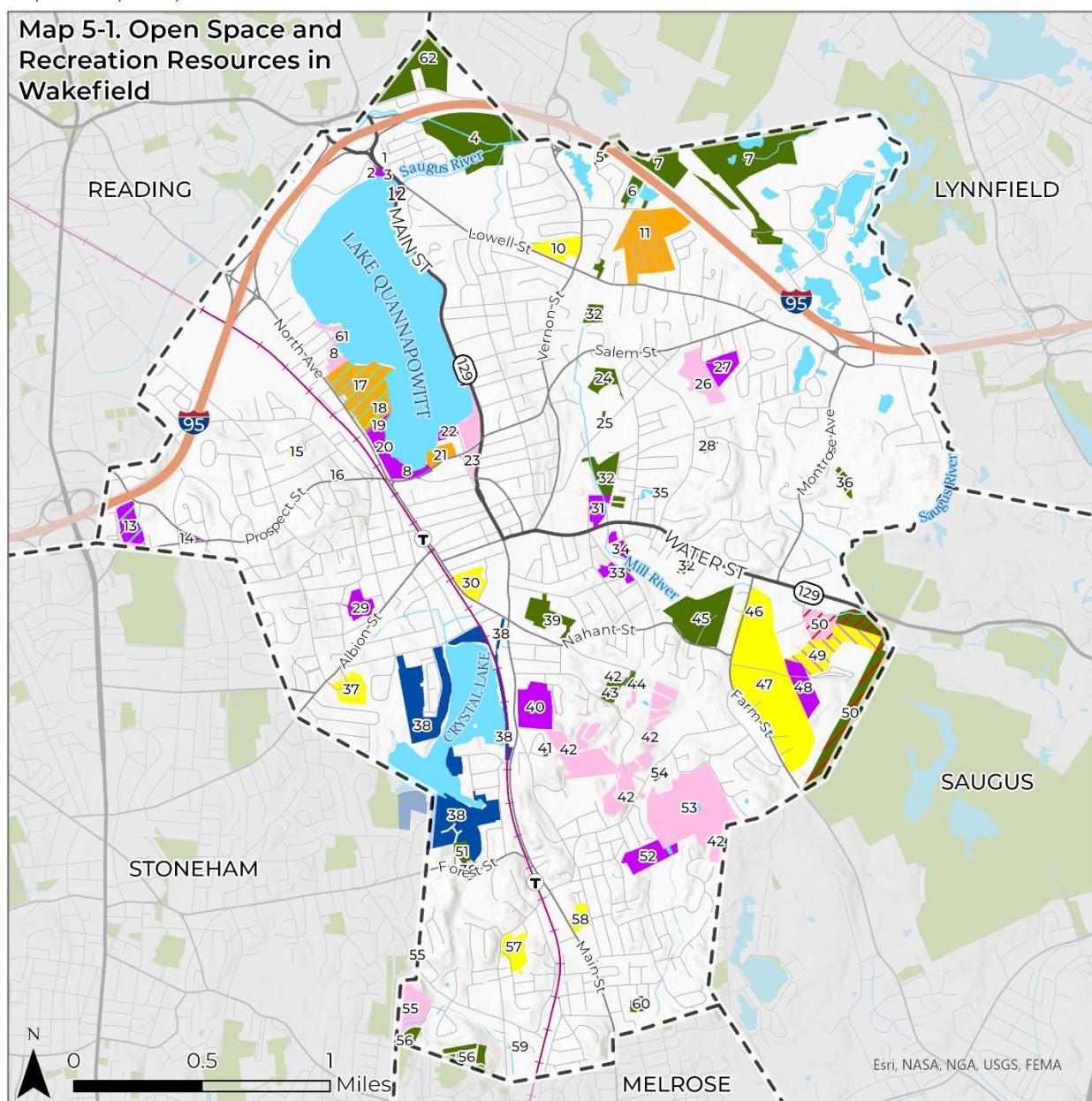
Source: Adapted from [Town of Wakefield Climate Change Summary](#), Kim Lundgren Associates, Inc., acquired 1/26/2022 and [2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment, Volume I – Executive Summary](#) (2022), acquired 1/26/2022.

SECTION 5. INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

The inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest identifies, as the OSRP's name suggests, the diverse open space and recreational resources in Wakefield. While it can have different meanings in different contexts, the term "open space" as used in this OSRP refers to undeveloped conservation, forested, recreation, or agricultural land, regardless of ownership. Open space land includes areas protected for ecological importance, corridor parks and greenways, amenities such as parks and green buffers along roadways, and any open areas owned by an agency or organization dedicated to recreation and conservation. The inventory also includes lands that are not protected but have critical environmental resources or undeveloped land with conservation or recreation interests. Activities in open spaces are described as passive recreation, or activities require little to no on-site facilities, such as walking, hiking, kayaking, or canoeing. The term "recreation" is also used in this OSRP to highlight specific facilities used for active recreation (e.g., activities that require special equipment, courts, and fields), such as athletic courts and fields and playgrounds. See Appendix C for full inventory attributes. Map 5-1 shows these resources.

Map Key	
1.	Col. Connolly Park
2.	Lowell Street Conservation Area
3.	Gertrude Spaulding Park
4.	Old Town Wells/Pumping Station
5.	Paon Boulevard Conservation Area
6.	Fosters Lane Conservation Area
7.	Reedy Meadow Conservation Area
8.	Quannapowitt Lakeshore
9.	Lower Common
10.	Dolbeare School
11.	Forest Glade Cemetery
12.	Belanger Park
13.	Bear Hill Country Club
14.	The Triangle at Prospect and Hopkins Streets
15.	Walton School
16.	West Ward School
17.	Lakeside Cemetery
18.	Jewish Cemeteries
19.	Hall Park
20.	Veteran's Field
21.	Old Cemetery
22.	Spaulding Playground
23.	Upper Common
24.	Mill River Floodplain (Wakefield School Dept.)
25.	Mill River Floodplain (CRESTA property)
26.	Sullivan Playground Ext.
27.	Sullivan Playground
28.	Gumwood/Butler Conservation Area
29.	Moulton Playground
30.	Galvin Middle School
31.	Nasella Playground
32.	Mill River Conservation Area
33.	Paddy Heights Vet Park
34.	Fernald Field (aka Little League Field)
35.	Perham Street Conservation Area
36.	Montrose Avenue Conservation Restriction
37.	Doyle School
38.	Crystal Lake Watershed
39.	Strong's Meadow (former Franklin School)
40.	J.J. Round Park
41.	Water Tower
42.	Emerald Necklace Conservation Area
43.	Holland Road Conservation Area
44.	Stark Avenue Conservation Area
45.	Nahant Street Pit
46.	Woodville School
47.	Wakefield Memorial High School
48.	Landrigan Field
49.	Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School
50.	Breakheart Reservation
51.	Forest Street Conservation Area
52.	Mapleway Playground
53.	Town Forest
54.	Melrose Avenue Conservation Area
55.	Spring Street Park
56.	Grandview Conservation Area
57.	Yeuell School
58.	Greenwood School
59.	Linden Street Pumping Station
60.	Findlay Street Conservation Area
61.	Quannapowitt Yacht Club
62.	Camp Curtis Guild, Bay State Road

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



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Transportation
- Interstate Highway
- State Route
- Major Road
- Local Road
- MBTA Commuter Rail
- MBTA Station

Open Space and Recreation Properties

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Primary Purpose | Conservation Restriction |
| Conservation | Ownership other than Town of Wakefield |
| Recreation | State |
| Recreation & Conservation | Other Public |
| Water Supply Protection | Private |
| Historical/Cultural (Cemetery) | |
| School | |

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 1/9/2024
Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

A. Town Properties

Open space and recreational resources owned and managed by the Town include conservation areas, parks, playgrounds, historic and cultural areas, and water supply lands.

1. Cemeteries

There are two Town-owned cemeteries in Wakefield, both of which are maintained by DPW's Cemetery Division. Aside from their historical and social values as burial places, both offer space for passive recreation, such as walking. Forest Glade Cemetery, 33.8 acres, is open for new burials and has an internal network of paved paths. Dating back to 1689, Old Cemetery, 3.85 acres, is located along the southern shore of Lake Quannapowitt and is the resting place for some of Wakefield's earliest settlers.⁴¹ While long closed to new burials, more recent alterations to Old Cemetery include the Floral Way path, which was dedicated in 1948 in honor of Wakefield's military servicepeople, and several interpretative signs installed by the Wakefield Historical Commission.⁴²

2. Conservation Lands

There are approximately 198 acres of Town-owned conservation land in Wakefield, all of which are managed by the Conservation Commission. These lands have conservation restrictions on them. Reedy Meadow is the largest conservation land by far and has significant recreation possibilities. When complete, the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail will run through Reedy Meadow (primarily on the Lynnfield portion of the trail), offering expanded recreation opportunities for walking, bicycling, birdwatching, and other activities.

Table 5-1. Town-Owned Conservation Lands

Resource	Acres
Emerald Necklace Conservation Area	100.68 (30 parcels)
Findlay Street Conservation Area	1.58 (3 parcels)
Forest Street Conservation Area	3.0
Fosters Lane Conservation Area	4.74 (2 parcels)
Grandview Conservation Area	9.21 (19 parcels)
Gumwood/Butler Conservation Area	2.74 (7 parcels)
Holland Road Conservation Area	2.58
Melrose Avenue Conservation Area	0.64
Mill River Conservation Area	16.43 (21 parcels)
Lowell Street Conservation Area	0.94
Paon Boulevard Conservation Area	1.21
Perham Street Conservation Area	0.22
Reedy Meadow Conservation Area	52.6 (4 parcels)
Stark Avenue Conservation Area	1.53

⁴¹ Nancy Bertrand, "History of Wakefield's Old Burying Ground," Wakefield Historical Society, last modified December 13, 2016, <https://wakefieldhistory.org/2016/12/13/history-of-wakefields-old-burying-ground/>.

⁴² Ibid.

3. Parks and Playgrounds

Wakefield has approximately 148 acres of parks and playgrounds, all of which are managed by DPW's Department of Parks and Forestry. The Town's recreation facilities serve a variety of active and passive recreation activities and include amenities such as athletic fields, playgrounds, small parks, walking areas, and a beach, among others. Many of the parks and playgrounds located along Lake Quannapowitt's shores are adjacent to one another and offer a concentrated amount of recreation space. This includes Colonel Connolly Park and Gertrude Spaulding Park at the north shore of Lake Quannapowitt and Spaulding Playground, Lower Common, Upper Common, Veteran's Field, and Hall Park at the south shore of Lake Quannapowitt. Town-owned land designated as Quannapowitt Lakeshore also helps connect resources, although not all parcels support full public access.

Table 5-2. Town-Owned Parks and Playgrounds

Resource	Acres
Belanger Park	0.47
Colonel Connolly Park	1.08
Fernald Field (aka Little League Field)	2.38 (3 parcels)
Gertrude Spaulding Park	0.94
Hall Park	1.28
J.J. Round Park	15.74
Landrigan Field	9.57
Lower Common	8.3 (3 parcels)
Mapleway Playground	16.78
Moulton Playground	5.53
Nasella Playground	4.69
Paddy Heights Vets Park	3.33 (4 parcels)
Quannapowitt Lakeshore	7.88 (3 parcels)
Spaulding Playground	1.39 (7 parcels)
Spring Street Park	10.64
Sullivan Park	6.5
Sullivan Park Extension	13.3 (3 parcels)
Town Forest	45.23
Triangle at Prospect & Hopkins Streets	1.15
Upper Common	2.6 (2 parcels)
Veteran's Field	3.15

4. Water Protection Lands

Wakefield's DPW manages approximately 123 acres of land for water protection purposes within the Crystal Lake watershed and around the Town's pumping stations and decommissioned wells. This includes 14.2 acres of water protection lands owned by the Town and located in Stoneham. Additionally, the Town of Stoneham has protected an additional 13 acres in the Crystal Lake watershed adjacent to Wakefield's holdings. As these lands are specifically for water protection purposes, recreational use is not permitted and public access is limited.

Table 5-3. Town-Owned Water Protection Lands

Resource	Acres
Crystal Lake Watershed/Pumping Station	42.34 (4 parcels)
Crystal Lake Watershed (in Wakefield)	38.24 (18 parcels)
Crystal Lake Watershed (in Stoneham)	14.2 (3 parcels)
Linden Street Pumping Station	0.38
Old Town Wells/Pumping Station	27.74 (2 parcels)

5. Other Lands

Wakefield has one active landfill, referred to as both the Nahant Street Pit and Nahant Yard Waste Site, which is used for the disposal of yard waste (e.g., leaves, grass, clippings, shrubs, and brush). The landfill is 24 acres and is protected via Article 97. DPW manages the site.

B. State and Other Public Properties

DCR owns and manages the Breakheart Reservation, including approximately 38 acres of the reservation within Wakefield. Visitors can use the Hemlock Road Entrance within Wakefield to access Breakheart Reservation's trail system. An approximately 7-acre portion of Breakheart Reservation located along the Mill River at Wiley Street was slated to have a trail system, but it is unclear what the status of DCR's plans are for this property. The Commonwealth also owns additional land in north Wakefield. A portion of Camp Curtis Guild, one of the largest training sites for the Massachusetts National Guard, is located in Wakefield.

Table 5-4. State and Other Public Properties

Resource	Acres	Owner	Public Access
Breakheart Reservation	38.3 (3 parcels) in Wakefield; 652 total	State (DCR)	Yes
Camp Curtis Guild, Bay State Road	22.83	State	No
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School	60	Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School District	Limited during school hours

C. Wakefield School Department Properties

The Wakefield School Department owns approximately 110 acres of land in Wakefield. School property is not protected for open space or recreation purposes and the School Department has discretion in how the land will be used, including whether it will be used for school expansions or other development. Public access to outdoor recreation facilities is limited during school hours. Several School Department properties are no longer used as active schools, presenting potential opportunities to pursue expanded recreational uses at these sites.

Table 5-5. Wakefield School Department Properties

Resource	Acres	Use
Dolbeare School	7.97 (2 parcels)	Grades K-4
Doyle School	8.01	Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Resource	Acres	Use
Galvin Middle School	15.16	Grades 5-8
Greenwood School	4.54 (3 parcels)	Grades K-4
Mill River Floodplain	5.6	N/A
Strong's Meadow (former Franklin School)	3.25	Closed
Wakefield Memorial High School	45.26 (4 parcels)	Grades 9-12
Walton School	2.46	Grades K-4
West Ward School	0.82	History Museum
Woodville School	3.11 (2 parcels)	Grades K-4
Yeuell School	7.29	Rented to outside organization

D. Private and Non-Profit Properties

There are a number of lands of conservation and recreation interest owned by private or non-profit entities. In general, these lands are not protected from development in perpetuity and could change use, including in the event of an ownership change. For some lands, such as cemeteries, their established use makes it unlikely that future use changes will occur.

The Bear Hill Golf Club and the land holding off Forest Road are both enrolled in the Commonwealth's Chapter 61B program; the Town has the right of first refusal to purchase the land should the properties come up for sale. The land holding off Forest Road is held by private individuals and included in the Chapter 61B program for hiking. The Montrose Avenue Conservation Restriction is the only private or non-profit-owned land that has a conservation restriction; it is protected from development in perpetuity.

Four private cemeteries are located along Lake Quannapowitt's western shore: Lakeside Cemetery, established in 1846, and three Jewish cemeteries. Temple Israel Cemetery, established in 1859, was the first Jewish cemetery in the Boston area and is representative of the garden cemetery movement.⁴³ Like the Town-owned cemeteries, the private cemeteries offer space for passive recreation and quiet contemplation.

Table 5-6. Private and Non-Profit Properties

Resource	Acres	Owner	Public Access
Bear Hill Golf Club	8.79	Bear Hill Association	Fee-based
Jewish Cemeteries (3 total)	5.89 (5 parcels)	Multiple (Lynn Hebrew Benevolent, Temple Adath Israel, Temple Emmanuel of Wakefield)	Yes
Lakeside Cemetery	22.6 (4 parcels)	Lakeside Cemetery Corporation	Yes
Mill River Floodplain	0.61	CRESTA	No
Montrose Avenue Conservation Restriction	2.54	New England Power Company	No
Quannapowitt Yacht Club	0.31 (2 parcels)	Yacht Club	Fee-based

⁴³ "Temple Israel Cemetery," Temple Israel of Boston, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.tisrael.org/who-we-are/our-story/temple-israel-cemetery/>.

SECTION 6. COMMUNITY VISION

A. Description of Process

The community vision and goals for the OSRP bring together what was heard during public engagement for this update, which includes a community survey, public workshops, and interviews with key stakeholders and town staff (see Section 2 Introduction). It also recognizes the goals of other projects and initiatives that support the maintenance and enhancement of these resources in Wakefield. These efforts include the following, among others (see Section 11 References):

- *Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings Report* (2020) for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program
- *Wakefield's Age-Friendly Action Plan* (2021)
- *Wakefield Vision 2030* (2021)
- *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Draft)* (November 2023)
- *Wakefield Master Plan* (in progress)

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The community's open space and recreation **vision** is to protect and enhance Wakefield's natural landscapes, recreational opportunities, and open space assets to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all. To accomplish this vision, the **goal** of the OSRP is to:

- Maintain and improve the current open space and recreation parcels;
- Acquire new parcels to expand both passive and recreational opportunities, as well as to protect natural resources;
- Identify new opportunities to create connections between open space lands, recreational facilities, and destination areas in Wakefield;
- Foster social cohesion through promotion of public spaces;
- Evaluate and pursue actions that support climate resiliency goals; and
- Promote environmental equity and justice.

This plan can serve as a resource and tool for planning, maintaining, and improving conservation lands, trails, wildlife habitat, lakes and streams, green infrastructure, parks, playing fields and other recreation areas. It is an essential guide to preserving the quality of life in Wakefield.

SECTION 7. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The analysis of needs is a summary of input from public engagement, finding of recent reports and studies related to the Town's open space and recreation resources, and interviews with stakeholders and town staff. It also is informed by the environmental inventories and challenges discussed in Section 4.

Needs are organized into three sections: resource protection needs, community needs, and management needs and potential change of use. The Town has several plans in place and ongoing projects that are already tackling some of these needs and are referenced for more information. The further work to be done lays the groundwork for the action plan in Section 9.

A. Resource Protection Needs

Wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, forests, and other natural areas all contribute to the environmental, economic, and social wellbeing of our community. They perform important functions that give us clean air and water, reduce the impacts of climate change, and improve our mental health when we are exposed to them, among others.⁴⁴

1. Surface Water Quality

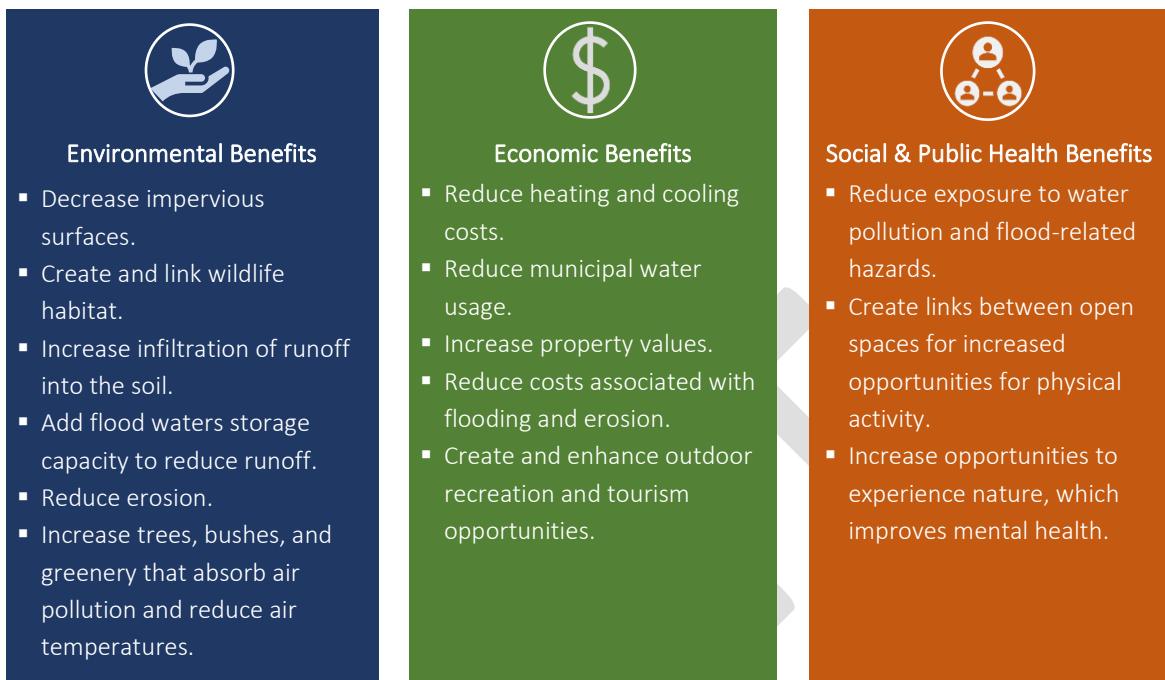
Maintaining and/or improving water quality of the Town's two major lakes, Lake Quannapowitt and Crystal Lake, is high priority. Lake Quannapowitt is a year-round recreational asset. It has two public beaches and a public boat ramp for small crafts. The lake experiences seasonal algal blooms that affect its use and environmental and aesthetic quality. Blooms are the result of too many nutrients in the water, which enter the lake in rain runoff traveling over surrounding impervious surfaces and landscaped areas and lawns treated with fertilizers. Historic development and alterations around the lake have eliminated wetlands that naturally function as water filters that trap pollutants.

By increasing the use of nature-based solutions (NBS) or green infrastructure to filter and manage runoff, the Town can begin to mimic the functions that wetlands and other natural features once served around Lake Quannapowitt. NBS and green infrastructure offer more benefits than just trapping pollutants before they enter the lake, they also increase aesthetics through landscaping, and if native and drought-tolerant plantings are used, they create habitat for pollinators and save on watering needs.

Examples of nature-based solutions and green infrastructure for stormwater management:

- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels/cisterns
- Bioswales
- Trees, shrubs, and other plantings
- Conservation land and park land that holds floodwaters
- Protected stream and wetland buffers
- Pervious pavement or pavers

⁴⁴ Weir, Kirsten. Nurtured by nature, *Monitor in Psychology*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (April 1, 2020). Available at <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>.



Benefits of nature-based solutions and green infrastructure (Source: USEPA⁴⁵ and Resilient MA)

The Town has installed several NBS and green infrastructure projects in the vicinity of Lake Quannapowitt as well as in other areas, with more planned in the near future. DPW continues to make progress on implementing a shortlist of projects identified by the Clean Lake Committee to improve water quality, such as drainage improvements at the MacKenna Courts at Veterans Field and the installation of stormwater best management practices and drainage improvements at the Veterans Field parking lot. The Town is also pursuing work along Main Street to consolidate stormwater outfalls and greatly reduce phosphate loading into Lake Quannapowitt. Friends of Lake Quannapowitt (FOLQ) is also an important partner that supports water quality testing, environmental cleanups, and other stewardship activities in and around the lake. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Workshop Summary (2020) also recognizes the importance of protecting the lake and recommends moving the Clean Lake Committee's recommendation to develop a Lake Quannapowitt Protection Overlay Zone that would limit the use of fertilizers and promote the use of green infrastructure within its watershed. These efforts to improve local water quality will also benefit downstream communities and are important to protect regional drinking water sources. The Saugus River and Lake Quannapowitt and its tributaries are designated as Zone A Surface Water Supply Protection Areas due to their connection to the City of Lynn's drinking water source. A Zone C Surface Water Protection Area covers the surrounding watershed.

Crystal Lake is a supplemental drinking water source for Wakefield, and protecting its water quality is important for public health. Compliance with state regulations is required with the designation of a Zone A Surface Water Supply Protection Area immediately surrounding the lake, and Zones B and C extending further into the watershed. The Town has also acquired land around the lake for drinking water

⁴⁵ Benefits of Green Infrastructure, <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/benefits-green-infrastructure#:~:text=Green%20infrastructure%20reduces%20and%20treats,Water%20Quality%20and%20Quantify>.

protection, and it will continue to support permanent protection of land using a variety of strategies within the Crystal Lake watershed.

Overall, the Town must meet federal and state regulatory requirements to maintain water quality. Through its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program permit, Wakefield is required to address pollutants in direct discharges into certain waterbodies. This includes using best management practices, like NBS and green infrastructure, to address pollutants in runoff from storms. The Town also does public education to homeowners on ways to minimize the impacts of runoff on their own properties, such as using rain barrels, creating rain gardens, and using more environment-friendly products and practices for yard and garden maintenance. This will continue.

Constructed floating wetlands (CFWs) are capable of producing similar ecosystem services to their natural counterparts, such as wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and nutrient uptake. CFWs have been tested in waterbodies across the U.S., including the Charles River. The Charles River Conservancy, in partnership with MassDCR, concluded the pilot phase of its CFW research in the spring of 2023, which focused on reducing harmful algal blooms and engaging the public about water quality. Initial research from the Charles River Conservancy effort suggests that the CFWs have comparable nutrient uptake benefits to more common stormwater best practices (e.g., rain gardens).

Wakefield has moved forward with a grant application for its own CFW in Lake Quannapowitt, with the dual intent of improving water quality and increasing public engagement and education about the lake's health.

- Charles River Conservancy, *Lessons Learned from the Charles River's First Floating Wetland* (2023)
<https://thecharles.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CRC-Lessons-Learned-from-the-Rivers-First-Floating-Wetland.pdf>

2. Habitat and Wildlife Corridors

Intact natural systems, such as wetlands and forested areas, are in constant need of protection and enhancement to perform their ecological functions. Pressures from development can encroach on these resources and limit their capacity.

In Wakefield, the loss and degradation of wetlands is of most concern. The Conservation Commission has a policy that strongly encourages a 25-foot buffer for development adjacent to wetlands, and developers have been amenable to this. There is a desire to formalize this policy into a bylaw under the Commission, making it a mandatory requirement.

Wildlife corridors are also important to maintain and enhance. These corridors serve as transportation routes for wildlife across urban landscapes, but urbanization and habitat degradation can impact their integrity. While Wakefield does have several large habitat areas either partially or fully located in town, including Breakheart Reservation, Reedy Meadow, and the Town Forest, current wildlife corridors between these and other important resources are not all entirely protected. The Emerald Necklace Conservation Area provides a somewhat fragmented connection between the Town Forest and Golden Hills ACEC to Crystal Lake and toward the Mill River. Another wildlife corridor along wetland habitat from Sullivan Playground to the Saugus River and Breakheart Reservation is largely unprotected. The Saugus

and Mill Rivers are also important corridors for wildlife movement and experience seasonal diadromous fish migration. Reedy Meadow is an essential flyover spot for migrating birds.

The Town continues to review opportunities for land acquisition and protection, particularly where it creates connections or expands on existing wildlife corridors. These activities will also support efforts to maintain and enhance habitat quality. Several resources that comprise Wakefield's wildlife corridors have been identified by the Massachusetts National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) as Core Habitat, Priority Habitat of Rare Species, Critical Natural Landscapes, and National Natural Landmarks. These areas support the long-term persistence of rare wildlife and vegetation species, enhance ecological resilience, and other functions and should be priority for protection.

Trees add beauty to the landscape, but they also have other functions. Tree root systems soak in flood waters, and their canopy absorbs carbon, filters the air, and provides shade during hot summer months. They are also habitat for diverse species, including birds, small wildlife, and insects. The Town continues to build its capacity to enhance and maintain its tree canopy and forested areas. Many of its public trees are reaching the end of their lifecycle. At one point, as these older trees were removed, they were not being replaced. The Conservation Commission adopted a tree removal policy in 2017, which prevents tree removal in the Commission's jurisdictional areas without its approval and requires that any tree removal is mitigated with replacement plantings. In recent years, the Town has increased the planting of new public trees. The next step is to develop a more comprehensive inventory of the Town's public trees and an approach for long-term management. Additionally, there should be a prioritization of tree planting in areas of town that are at a tree deficit.

3. Resiliency

When it comes to climate change impacts, Wakefield is most vulnerable to intense storms, flooding, heat waves, and drought. Storms are projected to be more intense and more frequent. This causes areas to be flooded for longer periods of time because of so much rain or snow, and perhaps flooding in areas that have not experienced these types of conditions in the past. The number of days over 90 degrees is also expected to increase, resulting in more frequent and longer heat waves. At the other extreme, prolonged periods of low or no rainfall can also be expected, which can lead to drought conditions and lower available water supply. All of these outcomes will put stress on public health, infrastructure, and the natural environment.

As an outcome of the MVP workshop and drafting its Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Town has begun to prepare for these extreme conditions through investments in infrastructure and emergency planning. In addition to this, supporting a healthy natural environment also helps lessen the impacts of climate change and extremes in weather patterns on the community. Addressing water quality with NBS and green infrastructure, protecting wildlife habitat and corridors, and maintaining the tree canopy discussed above also support building resilience to climate change.

B. Community Needs

Ensuring Wakefield residents have opportunities to experience nature and have access to active recreational options in their daily lives is important to their quality of life. Overall, feedback from public engagement events and surveys—including feedback collected as part of recent planning initiatives—

indicated that residents want to make it easier and more comfortable for all users to access and use Wakefield's conservation and recreation areas.

1. New Resources, Amenities, and Opportunities

Wakefield residents requested a variety of new resources and amenities to update and expand existing opportunities in Town. Ideas included adding fields and courts to support diverse recreation interests and providing amenities that increase user comfort. This feedback reinforces ideas collected during the development of the *Master Plan* in its April 2022 survey.

Recreational Facilities and Programming

Much of the community feedback focused on upgrades to improve existing playgrounds, athletic fields and courts, and conservation areas. For recreation sites, many residents focused on upgrades and new amenities that would increase user comfort and aesthetic appeal, such as bathroom facilities, landscaping, signage, lighting, shaded areas, and sitting areas. Residents were also concerned about litter and requested more trash cans and increased public awareness. Some residents commented on redesigning spaces, particularly playgrounds, to make facilities appealing to a range of age groups and increase accessibility and inclusivity. One commenter also noted the Wakefield BMX track at Sullivan Park as a unique resource the Town could consider updating. Ideas for new recreation facilities included athletic fields, a splash pad, picnic pavilions, pickleball courts, and an outdoor volleyball court.

In conservation areas, better trail maintenance was also highlighted. Overall upkeep and maintenance of all the Town's facilities is discussed in more detail under Section C. Summary of Management Needs and Potential Change of Use.

Feedback was generally complementary about the Wakefield Recreation Department's programming, with residents noting that programs have improved over the years. The Recreation Department has added non-traditional programming, such as theater and mental health programming, and is experienced in collaborating with different Town departments and local organizations. However, the Wakefield Recreation Department is entirely self-funded through its building rentals and program fees, which can limit its operations. Despite this potential limitation, residents see additional potential for growth. Residents also see opportunities to use programming and activities to connect residents to recreation and conservation areas they may not be aware of and increase stewardship. Ideas included guided hikes, youth nature camps, adult fitness and exercise classes, and adult sports. In addition to increasing program diversity, offering schedules that are convenient to working families and better publicizing programs could increase participation. Town staff noted that adding an assistant director position to the Recreation Department would help with operations and management.

New Public Spaces

Residents recognize that Wakefield is generally built-out with few opportunities for large-scale land acquisition. The Town will have to be strategic about meeting community needs for new recreation facilities described earlier and other public spaces. It should prioritize areas of Wakefield that have limited access to open space or recreation opportunities. As a result of the Envision Wakefield process, the Town has incorporated pocket parks into roadway across from Galvin Middle School, into the Wakefield Trail Head project, and as part of the planned Oak Street/Green Street/Greenwood Avenue roadway

realignment project. Through the *Master Plan* process, residents expressed support for the development of additional new public spaces and pocket parks at the following locations:

- Outdoor recreation and/or public spaces at the head of Lake Quannapowitt (Quannapowitt Parkway/North Ave/Route 128), downtown Wakefield Square, and Audubon Road near Edgewater Park.
- Pocket parks at Foundry Street between Albion Street and Crystal Lake, Main Street in Greenwood (near Greenwood Commuter Rail station), and head of Lake Quannapowitt (Quannapowitt Parkway/North Ave/Route 128).

These spaces might include seating, play equipment, or walking paths. Public engagement with the surrounding neighborhood will help understand what types of activities people envision. Town-wide, residents are looking for a second location for a community garden. The JJ Round Community Garden, which opened in 2020, has 46 plots and many more people apply than there are plots.

2. Establishing Safe Connections

As part of the development of the *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft), the Town solicited public feedback about concerns and barriers to walking, biking, and rolling in the community through a survey in Fall 2021. Common concerns relate to open space and outdoor recreation are as follows:

- Respondents cited the lack of connected sidewalks and multiuse trails and poorly maintained sidewalks and/or crosswalks as major barriers to walking in the community.
- Respondents cited concerns about poor or missing bicycle lanes (note that Wakefield had no bike lanes at the time of the report), lack of connected multiuse trails, and aggressive motorists as major barriers to biking in the community.
- Respondents cited the lack of connected sidewalks and multiuse trails and streets and/or sidewalks that are not accessible as major barriers to the use of wheeled mobility devices in the community.

The recommendations of the *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* emphasize creating safe and accessible connected greenways, accommodating bicycles on major streets, and increasing pedestrian safety at key street intersections. The Town's Complete Streets Policy and *Complete Streets Prioritization Plan* are other tools used to address walking and biking safety town wide.

Feedback collected as part of the OSRP engagement process reiterates the points expressed above. Residents want to be able to walk, bike, and roll to recreation sites safely via continuous sidewalks, multiuse trail connections, and bicycle lanes. For all connections (e.g., to and between recreation sites), residents are interested in strategies to ensure users feel comfortable, and the Town could consider crosswalk signaling and degree of separation from vehicular traffic as it evaluates user safety. Many comments also focused on the need for maintenance, particularly around sidewalks and crosswalks. Residents enjoy using the Wakefield-Lynnfield Rail Trail and are interested in opportunities to extend the trail. Several comments noted opportunities to make bicycling easier by providing bicycle parking at recreation sites.

3. Public Communication and Education

Though Wakefield has many diverse resources, not all resources are well-known to the general public. This is particularly true for Wakefield's conservation areas. In the OSRP community survey, more than 50% of respondents indicated that they were unaware of nearly all of the Town's conservation areas. Increasing the public's understanding of what resources are available in the community, as well as the diverse benefits they provide, can encourage use. For example, many respondents expressed interest in trail maps and information about a site's accessibility and allowable uses online. Trail maps, allowable uses, site features, and other information could also be posted on-site at kiosks or information boards.

Similarly, residents also expressed that the Town could better promote its recreation areas. Providing information online about a site's amenities and accessibility features could help residents better find recreation sites that accommodate their unique needs.

Community feedback also expressed an interest in increasing public education around conservation and recreation areas to cultivate stewardship of Wakefield's resources by both the community and the Town. The Town can use some of the already noted approaches above (signage and online resources) to create educational campaigns that build support for regulatory and policy changes that protect natural resources and increase climate resilience. Strategies like installing educational signage about the environmental benefits or historical significance of a resource, including informational leaflets in Town mailers (e.g., water bill inserts), or showcasing resources on Town media could be implemented relatively quickly.

The Environmental Sustainability Commission and Town staff noted opportunities to increase volunteerism at conservation and recreation areas. Whether through a long-term program like the Town's recently created Trail Stewards program (see C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use), or events like tree plantings and litter clean-ups, volunteers can supplement the Town's capacity for maintenance and implementing improvements. A citizen science program for water quality monitoring could help inform Town efforts to reduce stormwater pollution and improve recreational usage of its many water features. Where appropriate, the Town could also explore partnering with local schools to provide experiential learning opportunities for students around topics such as water or air quality monitoring and tree inventories.

4. Accessibility & Inclusivity

Ensuring all community members, regardless of ability, can access and enjoy Town-owned open space and recreation sites and participate in available programming is a core part of this OSRP. An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self Evaluation was conducted to identify barriers at resources owned and managed by the Wakefield Recreation Department and Conservation Commission and associated programming (see Appendix D). The Wakefield Commission on Disabilities was consulted to confirm barriers and help prioritize improvements. Overall, the Commission works to create a barrier-free town. It does this through technical assistance and guidance in all matters related to disability in Wakefield, including advising the Town to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws; reviewing Town policies and activities to ensure they are accessible; and advocating for the disabled community.

Increasingly, communities around the country are turning to Universal Design (UD) principles to provide flexible and more inclusive parks and public spaces that go beyond ADA requirements. A key point of UD is that amenities are usable to all without the need for adaptive measures and maximize accessibility for those with different cognitive, sensory, physical, or developmental abilities. Elements might include accessible playground equipment, comfortable and accessible seating, multi-sensory wayfinding, and safe connections to nearby streets.

Applying UD to park and playground design aligns with community feedback calling for spaces that incorporate accessible design elements, appeal to a range of age groups, and “refresh” Wakefield’s current playgrounds. There are several recently completed UD playgrounds and parks in the region that can serve as references, including Martin’s Park in Boston, Louis A. DePasquale Universal Design Playground in Cambridge, and Watertown Riverfront Park and Braille Trail in Watertown. Wakefield’s own outdoor fitness court at Moulton Playground is another example of an (adult-centered) playground that incorporates accessibility, multiple types of exercise, and intergenerational play.

The Wakefield Council on Aging (COA) was consulted to understand concerns and priorities for improvements for Wakefield’s senior population. In addition to echoing many of the sentiments already expressed in this section, the COA Board identified dementia friendly planning as another way to increase inclusivity across the community.

Dementia is more prevalent at older ages, and dementia friendly planning can respond to Wakefield’s current population trends, which anticipate adults aged 60 and older will make up approximately 30% of the community by 2030. Being a dementia friendly community means providing programs and public spaces that support and fulfill the needs of people with dementia and their care partners, as well as advocating for memory loss awareness. Related to recreation planning and programming, Wakefield could make sites easier to navigate and increase user comforts (e.g., installing clear wayfinding signage, having adequate lighting, installing seating) and offer specific programming opportunities to allow people with dementia and their care partners to continue to interact meaningfully within the community (e.g., memory cafes). The COA Board also noted that many physical improvements that are dementia friendly are also beneficial to other recreation site users, regardless of ability and needs.

5. Equity and Environmental Justice

Achieving equity in open space and recreation planning means all Wakefield residents have access to a healthy environment, open space, and recreational amenities and opportunities, especially for

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

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

populations that have been historically underserved and/or burdened with the impacts of land use decisions that produce adverse environmental impacts. [Map 3-2](#) shows Wakefield's EJ communities as defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (areas where there are concentrated populations of individuals with lower median household incomes, language isolation, and/or who are racial minorities). Reedy Meadow Conservation Area (and Forest Glade Cemetery) are located within the EJ community. Reedy Meadow Conservation Area has been recognized as an important wildlife habitat and corridor area, including by the NHESP, Mass Audubon, and the National Park Service. The Town is interested in increasing public awareness and usage of the conservation area, and is reviewing opportunities to connect residents to recreation opportunities (such as birding) through the Conservation Commission's speaker series.

Wakefield pursued funding through the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program to support planning efforts to increase resiliency to climate hazards in Wakefield. Wakefield's concept of resiliency encompasses infrastructural, socioeconomic, and environmental capacities to withstand, recover, and adapt to the impacts of climate hazards. The outcome of this project is the Wakefield Resilience Framework, which establishes criteria to assess the contribution of a project, program, or initiative to build Wakefield's resilience, including contributions that increase equity and access, physically or financially, to the Town's environmental resources like parks, open spaces, and other natural areas.

The Town will continue to use its Resilience Framework to evaluate its recreation planning and programming. Specific to equity, projects, programs, and initiatives are considered to have a positive contribution to the overall resilience of the community if:

- Communications about the project, program, or initiative are clear and accessible to all.
- The project, program, or initiative provides a fair process to engage nontraditional stakeholders in decision-making and/or engages the beneficiaries of the project in the measurement of its success.
- The project, program, or initiative enhances economic opportunities or improves the living conditions of vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, elderly, or children).
- The project, program, or initiative reduces physical and financial barriers to accessing community assets (lake, parks, open space, and other natural resources) and services (i.e., improving ADA compliance).

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

Management needs and potential change of use of land focuses on municipal needs for the operations and maintenance of the Town's resources. Many policy and regulatory needs for decision making to reach community goals and objectives are also discussed earlier under **Natural Resource Protection Needs** as they relate to specific resources, such as water bodies, trees, and wildlife habitat.

1. Conservation Areas

Maintenance and upkeep of conservation areas owned by the Town that have public access is an ongoing need. The Town recently established a Trail Steward Program through the Conservation Commission. Trail Stewards help the Conservation Commission and Town with minor maintenance and cleanups and identify areas where improvements (e.g., signage) could be made. Wakefield's Trail Steward Program has

already collaborated with the Melrose Trail Stewards program to help maintain and improve regional trail systems, such as the system located in Spring Street Park that traverses Wakefield, Melrose, and Stoneham.

Invasive plant species are an ongoing challenge in Wakefield's conservation areas. Invasive plant species often outcompete native species due to a lack of natural controls; in some cases, their proliferation can degrade the ecosystem benefits (e.g., habitat, floodwater retention) that natural areas provide. Many invasive plant species are easily dispersed and difficult to remove, meaning removal efforts may be labor intensive or require sustained intervention. For example, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), an invasive perennial species that is found in Wakefield's conservation areas, spreads via seeds and rhizomes, and improper manual efforts to cut or pull up the plant can actually encourage additional growth and further distribute the plant. Developing site-specific plans for invasive species management (and, as needed, other unique site challenges) can aid the long-term management of Wakefield's different conservation areas.

2. Recreation Areas

The Wakefield Recreation Department has done well in recent years meeting community needs. The current Recreation Department Director, hired in 2014, was the Town's first. In nearly 10 years, the department has evolved to meet changing preferences for activities, including rock climbing, pickleball for all ages, fencing, and theater program to name a few. The department also offers important mental health programming and oversees the community garden at JJ Rounds Playground.

The department's programming is self-funded through rentals of Town facilities and program fees for participation. Based at the American Civic Center, the department shares its building with the Boys and Girls Club of Stoneham and Wakefield, which leases the space from the Town and provides a source of revenue to help cover programming. It also makes for easy collaboration between the two organizations on community events and programming. Even with this, maintaining staffing and funding is always a challenge. It relies on volunteers for youth programs, particularly parents. Recently, the Recreation Department has assumed control of the Albion Recreation Building, which the department has used for some of its arts programming.

Partnerships will help the department continue to expand its programming. For example, the Recreation Department partners with the COA. It runs a regular program day at the senior center. Recently, the two were able to secure a grant through the Blue Cross/Blue Shield National Fitness Campaign to construct a new fitness court. The two organizations will work together to train a COA fitness instructor on using the new equipment. The department and COA also collaborated on a Power Over Parkinson's workshop which brought in a physical therapist.

Maintenance of recreation facilities (grounds, fields, and equipment) is managed by the Recreation Department and executed through the Department of Public Works (DPW). Both departments have a clear line of communication to ensure that needs are met.

Finding locations for new recreation facilities and activities is a challenge. Repurposing courts, fields, and spaces to be multi-purpose and flexible is one way to meet demands. For example, tennis courts Molten Park will be redeveloped into a street hockey court as well as basketball and bocce courts. Other opportunities like this should be explored.

3. Resiliency and Resource Protection

Being resilient means the Town bounces back and recovers quickly from challenges, such as climate change, major storm events, or other crises. Natural resources, such as wetlands, forests, and floodplains, are the first line of defense from these challenges. To be able to withstand the adverse impacts and recover, natural areas need to be of high quality. Local regulations and policies are tools the Town uses to ensure these resources are protected to the greatest extent practicable and performing their functions.

The Town of Wakefield recognizes that climate change is an urgent and enduring issue for the community. Climate hazards affect all aspects of life in Wakefield, requiring that the Town plan for resiliency across and in coordination with all municipal departments, boards, and commissions. The OSRP supports the Town's resiliency planning efforts and identifies intersections between these efforts and goals to maintain and enhance open space and recreation amenities in Wakefield. Other planning initiatives relevant to resiliency planning in Wakefield include:

- *Stormwater Management Plan* (2019)
- *Envision Wakefield Resilient* (2019)
- Community Resilience Building Workshop supported by the MVP Program (2020)
- *Hazard Mitigation Plan Update* (2021)
- *Master Plan* (in draft)

Through its MVP Community Resiliency Building Workshop, the Town identified heat waves, drought, intense storms, and flooding as primary climate hazards of concern. Wakefield's natural resources—its wetlands, streams, woods, native vegetation, etc.—help to sequester carbon, store floodwaters, reduce erosion, filter water, mitigate extreme heat, slow stormwater runoff, and more. By mitigating the severity of climate hazards, these ecosystem services are essential to making Wakefield more resilient. However, the impacts of climate change can also negatively affect natural resources, dimenioning their ability to provide beneficial services. It is critical for the Town to strengthen and protect its natural resources wherever possible and reduce harmful impacts caused by development, pollution, and other anthropogenic causes.

There are several ways to do this. The Town can protect resources on undeveloped land that are performing these important functions through different methods, including acquisition and conservation restrictions. Properties with wetlands are prone to chronic flooding but may make good candidates as floodwater retention and buffer areas to mitigate damage to adjacent developed properties. Properties that have significant tree cover and other natural vegetation or expand and connect wildlife corridors should also be a priority for acquisition and conservation restrictions. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Town to explore restoration opportunities, such as restoration of a filled or degraded wetland, to enhance a resource's beneficial ecosystem functions. The Town can continue to identify opportunities to incorporate NBS and green infrastructure into its stormwater management program to reduce urban flooding (and also benefit water quality). Some communities are also evaluating opportunities to de-pave, which means removing the impervious surfaces that greatly reduce water infiltration and recharge, funnel stormwater pollutants into local waterways, and raise urban temperatures. The use of more native vegetation and climate resilient species for its urban forest and landscaping at public spaces, including recreation sites, is highly supported by the community.

Climate change affects all aspects of life in Wakefield. Likewise, pursuing climate hazard mitigation strategies has the potential to increase resiliency while also benefiting Wakefield's overall environmental, socioeconomic, and infrastructural management goals. Many of the actions highlighted throughout this section have the potential to mitigate climate hazard while also providing important recreational opportunities and amenities to the community.

4. Education and Awareness

It is worth repeating the need for education and awareness, particularly under the management of the Town's open spaces and natural areas. The Conservation Commission's speaker series, which resumed in December 2023, connects residents with a range of speakers that engage in environmental work. Recent speakers have included representatives from DEP, MassWildlife, and engineering and landscape architecture firms. Out of the Master Plan visioning process, there is a goal to improve resident awareness of town environmental resiliency goals. This can also be applied to town boards and committees, ensuring that all decisions are made with an understanding of a common purpose to improve resilience. Strategies might include a quarterly "all boards" meeting on a particular topic that allows for dialogue.

Another educational piece is the adoption of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA). CPA is a tool used by communities to conduct a referendum to add a small surcharge on local property taxes of no more than 3% to create a local Community Preservation Fund.⁴⁶ When combined with matching funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, this dedicated fund is used to build and rehabilitate parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields, protect open space, support local affordable housing development, and preserve historic buildings and resources.⁴⁷ 195 Massachusetts communities have adopted CPA. It can offer Wakefield a reliable funding source to acquire properties with important wildlife habitat areas or build needed recreational facilities in neighborhoods that lack these resources. It will be important that the Town ensures all residents, as well as local decision makers, understand the purpose and objectives of CPA and the benefits it can bring to the community.

D. Regional Needs

The Town of Wakefield recognizes that actions to maintain and enhance its open space and recreation resources will benefit the local and regional community. As such, this OSRP supports open space and recreation planning efforts to meet broader goals and needs in the Greater Boston region, with many regional resources, plans, and related projects highlighted in earlier sections of this OSRP.

1. DCR Parkways Master Plan

The DCR *Parkways Master Plan* (2020) identifies potential parkways within the Boston metropolitan region that would form an interconnected network of walkways and bikeways.⁴⁸ The *Parkways Master Plan* identifies 1 mile of parkway at Wakefield's Hemlock Road that would benefit from safety and accessibility improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. This focus area forms a continuous connection

⁴⁶ "CPA: An Overview," Community Preservation Coalition, accessed November 3, 2023, <https://www.communitypreservation.org/about>.

⁴⁷ "Community Preservation Act," Massachusetts Division of Local Services, accessed November 3, 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/lists/community-preservation-act#community-preservation-act-reports->.

⁴⁸ Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, [DCR Parkways Master Plan](#) (August 2020), 121-129.

with parkways in the communities of Stoneham, Melrose, and Saugus to provide access to DCR's Middlesex Fells Reservation and Breakheart Reservation. Wakefield will continue to coordinate with neighboring communities and the Commonwealth as it expands its walking and biking network and implements the goals of its Complete Streets Program.

2. MAPC's MetroCommon 2050

Wakefield's OSRP supports MAPC's *MetroCommon 2050*, the Greater Boston Region's 30-year plan to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston between now and 2050.⁴⁹ It includes 10 specific goals for the year 2050, as well as objectives that will be used to measure progress toward achieving those goals. Wakefield's OSRP goals, objectives, and action plan are consistent with the goals from *MetroCommon 2050*, including the following:

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

This OSRP recognizes the Town's ongoing commitment to plan for and expand Wakefield's walking, biking, and rolling network. Since first adopting a Complete Streets Policy in 2017, the Town has successfully received funding for streetscape and multimodal transportation design and implementation in Downtown Wakefield. The Town is currently finalizing its *Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Draft), which will serve as the Town's guide for multimodal transportation planning and decisions.

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

The Town recognizes the dual role its natural resources play, as they provide both recreational and hazard mitigation ecosystem services. Protecting and strengthening these resources, as well as integrating amenities such as green infrastructure across its recreation sites, will help the Town adapt to and mitigate the effects of natural hazards and climate change. The Town recognizes that natural hazards and climate change may affect some populations disproportionately, and it acknowledges its responsibility to provide high quality resources to all members of the community.

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

The purpose of this OSRP is to maintain and enhance the environmental, economic, and social benefits of the Town's natural environment and recreational resources for all. The Town is committed to fostering community awareness and appreciation for the value and benefits of Wakefield's natural and recreational resources.

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

Wakefield will continue to increase its capacity to support the planning, protection, management, and sustainable use of its open space and recreation resources. Wakefield recognizes that diverse

⁴⁹ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, [MetroCommon 2050](#) (2021).

opportunities for recreation are a core component of healthy and safe neighborhoods, which in turn make up a thriving community.

3. Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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

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

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

The following provides an overview of statewide needs and how they compare to those in Wakefield.

Recreation Users

Through the surveys, most recreation users said outdoor recreation was very important to them for physical fitness, mental well-being, and being close to nature. When asked why they visited a specific outdoor recreation facility, most responded that it was closest to their home. About three-quarters of survey respondents had a park or conservation area within walking or biking distance to their homes, but more than half drove. Lack of time was the number one reason why respondents did not visit outdoor recreation sites more frequently. Most respondents to the survey felt that programming at a facility was somewhat or very important, particularly for seniors, young children (4 to 12 years old), and teens. The most popular recreational activities respondents engaged in over the past 12 months were water-based recreation (boating, swimming, etc.) and trail-based recreation (hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, etc.). Desired amenities or activities were more trails, inclusive playgrounds for all young children with all abilities, and more water-based recreation.

In Wakefield, connecting community members to recreation resources is a priority. The Town is also advancing planning to support expansions of its pedestrian and cyclist network, including to and between recreation resources. The Town is also committed to integrating accessibility, inclusivity, and equity into its open space and recreation planning, so all users have safe and appropriate recreation opportunities.

Municipal Employees

Municipal land and conservation staff were asked about the types and quality of resources available to their residents. Out of 351 communities, 58 municipalities (17%) responded to the SCORP survey. Most

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

In Wakefield, providing for the regular maintenance and upkeep of conservation areas and recreation facilities is also a priority. The Town continues to explore new opportunities for recreation programming at both conservation areas and recreation facilities. The Town also continues to form partnerships across its different departments, boards, and commissions to provide new recreation opportunities and engage all community members.

Land Trusts

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

Wakefield does not have a local land trust, but the Town and its boards, commissions, and local organizations support the stewardship of the Town's natural resources and open spaces. Raising awareness and providing for the maintenance and upkeep of its conservation resources are priorities.

SECTION 8. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following are the goals and objectives of the Wakefield OSRP.

GOAL 1. Promote awareness and stewardship of Wakefield's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities.

Objective 1.A. Support volunteer organizations that have an interest in the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreation areas.

Objective 1.B. Promote environmental stewardship to protect the Town's natural environment on public land and private properties.

Objective 1.C. Increase public awareness and sustainable usage of the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities.

GOAL 2. Improve accessibility, inclusiveness, and equity of recreation and open space resources to residents of all ages and abilities.

Objective 2.A. Provide safe, welcoming, and accessible open spaces and recreational areas, including programs, for all ages and abilities.

Objective 2.B. Ensure that all residents have access to high quality parks, recreation areas, and open spaces in proximity to where they live.

GOAL 3. Improve coordination among municipal departments, committees, and local organizations as well as with regional partners to work towards common goals for open space, recreation, sustainability, and resilience.

Objective 3.A. Provide opportunities that bring the Town's committees and staff together to discuss issues around open space, recreation, sustainability, and resilience.

Objective 3.B. Work collaboratively with regional partners on the management and protection of shared resources.

GOAL 4. Protect, enhance, and maintain Wakefield's natural resources, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

Objective 4.A. Support Town departments in the management and maintenance of its open spaces and recreation areas to meet the needs of residents.

Objective 4.B. Protect and enhance the Town's natural environment to maintain its ecological functions and build resilience.

SECTION 9. 7-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The 7-Year Action Plan (2024-2031) is intended to guide future planning efforts to protect natural resources, acquire open space, and improve recreational opportunities for the Town. The following plan is designed to implement the goals and objectives outlined in Section 8 and to address the needs identified in Section 7. The Action Plan is also intended to be consistent with other local plans, specifically those highlighted throughout the OSRP. Map 9-1 geographically depicts the desired outcome of the proposed Action Plan.

The accomplishment of the action items requires the support of numerous town departments, boards, and committees, as well as private and non-profit stakeholders and regional and state agencies. The Conservation Commission will be responsible for overseeing the management and implementation of the Action Plan.

The action items are organized by the goals and objectives listed in Section 8 and include implementation year, defined as follow for completion:

Year 1: 2024-2025	Year 5: 2028-2029
Year 2: 2025-2026	Year 6: 2029-2030
Year 3: 2026-2027	Year 7: 2030-2031
Year 4: 2027-2028	

Ongoing actions are those that are implemented on a regular schedule or are part of local decision making. All goals are equally important to meet the overall community vision, however, actions are prioritized under each goal, targeting higher priority needs in Years 1 and 2.

The lead entity that will be the champion for the completion of that action is also listed. Other departments, boards, committees, or commissions may also help shepherd an item to the finish line in a supporting capacity.

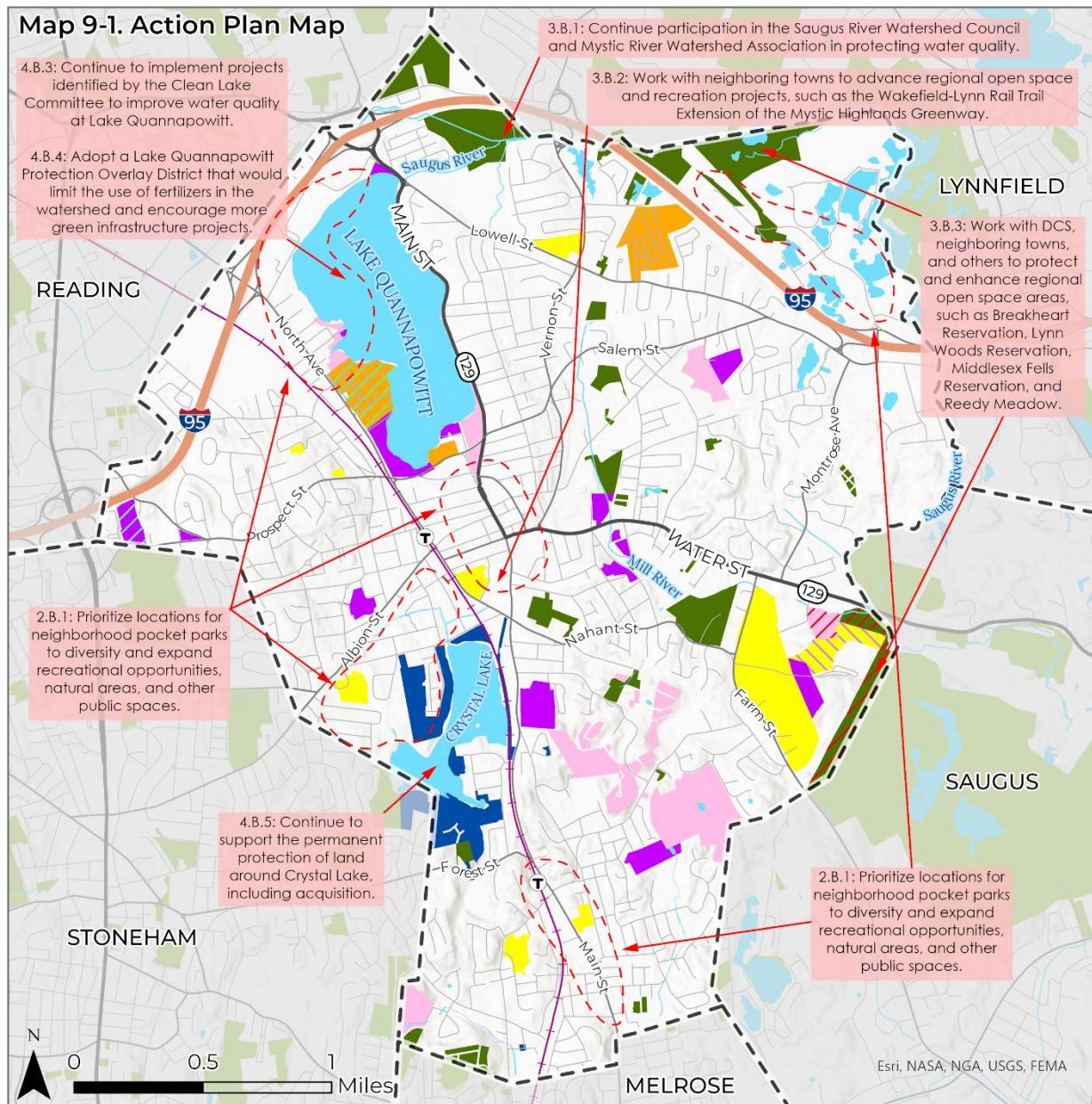
A funding source has also been identified for each action item. Funding sources are further defined as follows:

- Town: the action item will be funded as part of a budgeted work program for one or more town departments, committees, or commissions.
- Grant: grant funding will be sought to complete the action item. Where known, specific grant resources are provided.
- N/A: Additional funding is not needed because action item can be accomplished under existing capacity of town departments or committee, or with volunteers.

Key of Lead/Support Entities

CA – Conservation Agent	ESC – Environmental Sustainability Committee
CC – Conservation Commission	PB – Planning Board
CLC – Clean Lake Committee	PLG – Town Planner
CoA – Council on Aging	RC – Recreation Commission
CoD – Commission on Disabilities	RD – Recreation Department
DPW – Department of Public Works	SB – Select Board
ENG – Engineering	TM – Town Manager

Map 9-1. Action Plan Map



Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Surface Water
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Transportation
- Interstate Highway
- State Route
- Major Road
- Local Road
- MBTA Commuter Rail
- MBTA Station

- Open Space and Recreation Properties**
- | Primary Purpose | Symbol |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Conservation | Green Box |
| Recreation | Purple Box |
| Recreation & Conservation | Pink Box |
| Water Supply Protection | Blue Box |
| Historical/Cultural (Cemetery) | Yellow Box |
| School | Yellow Box |

Wakefield Open Space & Recreation Plan



Date: 1/9/2024
Source: MassGIS, Town of Wakefield
Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Goal 1. Promote awareness and stewardship of Wakefield's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities.

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
Objective 1.A. Support volunteer organizations that have an interest in the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreation areas.			
1. Organize the volunteers of the Trail Stewards Program in the upkeep of the Town's open spaces, including trail maintenance, litter clean up, and sign installation, among other tasks. Set a schedule for regular maintenance and site visits.	CC	Year 1, then Ongoing	N/A
2. Coordinate with community organizations that serve all age group users of the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreations to support site maintenance as well as project construction. These might include youth and adult sports leagues, Scouts, etc.	RD, RC	Ongoing	N/A
3. Identify and pursue grant opportunities to support projects led by volunteers and local organizations.	CA, RD	Ongoing	N/A
Objective 1.B. Promote environmental stewardship to protect the Town's natural environment on public land and private properties.			
1. Develop a strategy to increase the community's awareness of the Town's resilience and climate goals and their relation to open spaces and recreation areas. This can include print and online materials, project spotlights, and media outlines (op eds, articles, etc.).	CC, ESC	Year 1, then ongoing	N/A
2. Collaborate with the School Department, Youth Action Committee, and Health Departments, among others, in the development of environmental education activities and programming at school properties (e.g. installing rain gardens, planting community gardens, etc.) and the Town's conservation areas (e.g. understanding natural systems at a site, site clean ups, etc.).	CC, ESC	Year 2, then ongoing	N/A
3. Continue to develop online and printed resources for residents on different environmental topics, such as, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment-friendly gardening and lawn care practices (use of fertilizers and pesticides, planting drought tolerant and native and pollinator-friendly plants, and using rain barrels, among others). • Plant and animal identification, including invasive species. • Functions and values of wetlands, floodplains, and other natural areas. 	CC, ESC	Ongoing	Town

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
<p>4. Coordinate and participate in local events and activities that promote and educate about the natural environment, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green infrastructure demonstration projects • Conservation Commission Speaker Series • Farmers' market • Guided walks and discussions at conservation areas, and others. <p>Develop an annual schedule of events and identify volunteers and local partners to support.</p>	CC, ESC	Year 1, then Ongoing	N/A
Objective 1.C. Increase public awareness and sustainable usage of the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities.			
1. Develop a signage plan for the Town's conservation areas, parks, and recreation facilities that builds on the Town's wayfinding design. Include information and educational boards that highlight areas of interest, allowable uses, site maps, and other information to promote the unique features of a site.	CA, RD, CC, RC	Year 3	\$
2. Continue to develop and update online and printed resources to promote the Town's open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities. Use the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department websites and include information about site amenities, unique features, trail maps, information about accessibility, and other opportunities (e.g. great for kids, views, etc.). Consider the need for language translations.	CA, RD, CC, RC	Ongoing	Town

Goal 2. Improve accessibility, inclusiveness, and equity of recreation and open space resources to residents of all ages and abilities.

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
Objective 2.A. Provide safe, welcoming, and accessible open spaces and recreational areas, including programs, for all ages and abilities.			
1. Hire an Assistant Recreation Director (part time or full time) to support expanded programming.	TM	Year 1	Program fees
2. Incorporate universal design principles in projects within open spaces, parks, and recreational areas to the greatest extent practicable to expand opportunities and activities for all users regardless of ability.	RD	Year 1, then Ongoing	N/A
3. Use the ADA Transition Plan of the OSRP to address structural barriers at the Town's conservation and recreation areas.	RD, CA, RC, CC, TM	Year 1, then Ongoing	MA Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program
4. Continue to offer non-traditional recreational programming that appeals to a more diverse audience, such as its theater program.	RD	Ongoing	\$

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
5. Continue to coordinate between the Recreation Department, Council on Aging, Health and Human Service, and other social service agencies to incorporate their programs and services into open space and recreation areas to increase awareness and access, such as mental health programming and dementia awareness.	RD, COA, HHS	Year 2, then Ongoing	N/A
Objective 2.B. Ensure that all residents have access to high quality parks, recreation areas, and open spaces in proximity to where they live.			
1. Prioritize locations for neighborhood pocket parks to diversify and expand recreational opportunities, natural areas, and other public spaces. Evaluate the feasibility of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor recreation and/or public spaces at the head of Lake Quannapowitt (Quannapowitt Parkway/North Ave/Route 128), downtown Wakefield Square, and Audubon Road near Edgewater Park. Pocket parks at Foundry Street between Albion Street and Crystal Lake, Main Street in Greenwood (near Greenwood Commuter Rail station), and head of Lake Quannapowitt (Quannapowitt Parkway/North Ave/Route 128). 	PLG, CC, CA, RD, RC	Year 2	Town
2. Evaluate the geographic distribution of parks, particularly in relation to the Town's EJ areas and its more vulnerable residents, and find gaps to prioritize new resources. Conduct this analysis in parallel with Action 2.B.1.	PLG	Year 2	Town
3. Identify a second location for community garden plots. Consider existing town properties and those identified as future pocket parks.	RD, PLG	Year 2	Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Grant Program
4. Use the <i>Wakefield Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan</i> (Draft, November 2023) to identify and prioritize projects that build safe connections to open space and recreation areas, particularly to the Town's EJ areas that lack resources. Incorporate the use of proposed micro-transit (e.g. scooters) to broaden access between open space and recreation areas.	PLG, DPW, RD, CC	Year 2	MassDOT Complete Streets Program, MA Safe Routes To School, MassDOT Shared Streets Program, Mass Trails Grant
5. Based on prioritization for pocket parks, add a new pocket park annually, starting in Year 4. As pocket parks are identified and planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find opportunities to incorporate pollinator plants, seasonal herbs, and other elements in site design. Develop a strategy for regular upkeep and maintenance, such as the need for volunteers, developing an Adopt a Spot program, etc. 	PLG, CC, CA, RD, RC	Year 4-7	N/A

Goal 3. Improve coordination among municipal departments, committees, and local organizations as well as with regional partners to work towards common goals for open space, recreation, sustainability, and resilience..

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
Objective 3.A. Provide opportunities that bring the Town's committees and staff together to discuss issues around open space, recreation, sustainability, and resilience.			
1. Hold regular "all committees" meetings at least once a year with representatives of all Town boards and committees that have an interest in open space, recreation, sustainability, and resilience issues in Wakefield. Meetings would discuss common goals and objectives and build an understanding of roles and responsibilities among each board related to open space and recreation resources. Meetings are open to the public and should allow feedback	TM	Annually	N/A
2. Hold a regular "all committees" meeting at least once a year for permitting boards (Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals) to specifically discuss open space issues and challenges in the permitting process. The goal of this meeting can be to build a better understanding among the boards about the roles and responsibilities of each and the governing rules and regulations. Meetings are open to the public and can help educate citizens about the overall permitting process.	TM	Annually	N/A
3. Develop an "onboarding" process for newly appointed committee members to learn what their new board and other boards do.	TM	Year 2	N/A
4. Use the OSRP, through its update process, as one tool to establish priorities and measure success.	CC	Year 7	N/A
5. Offer education and training for committee members (new and existing) on topical and current issues related to natural resources, open space, and recreation planning.	TM	Ongoing	N/A
6. Identify opportunities for collaboration between committees, such as co-sponsoring grants, project development, and public outreach on common interests.	TM	Ongoing	N/A
7. Use collaboration activities as an opportunity to increase public awareness of what committees do, increase interest in sitting on a committee, and encourage attendance in meetings to be involved in process.	TM	Ongoing	N/A
Objective 3.B. Work collaboratively with regional partners on the management and protection of shared resources.			
1. Continue participation in the Saugus River Watershed Council and Mystic River Watershed Association in protecting water quality.	CA	Ongoing	N/A
2. Work with neighboring towns to advance regional open space and recreation projects, such as the Wakefield-Lynn Rail Trail Extension of the Mystic Highlands Greenway.	PLG	Ongoing	N/A

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
3. Work with DCR, neighboring towns, and others to protect and enhance regional open space areas, such as Breakheart Reservation, Lynn Woods Reservation, Middlesex Fells Reservation, and Reedy Meadow.	CA	Ongoing	N/A

Goal 4. Protect, enhance, and maintain Wakefield's natural resources, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
Objective 4.A. Support Town departments in the management and maintenance of its open spaces and recreation areas to meet the needs of residents.			
1. Evaluate recreation facilities and the feasibility of being more multi-purpose and flexible, particularly courts and fields.	RD, RC	Year 2	N/A
2. Prioritize Town conservation areas in need of management plans to address long-term needs such as invasive species, trail maintenance, etc. Establish a schedule to complete plans.	CA, CC	Year 3	N/A
3. Develop site-specific management plans based on schedule. As plans are completed, establish a schedule for maintenance as a way to organize town staff and/or volunteers, understand and acquire needed equipment and supplies, etc.	CA, CC	Year 4-7	Town
4. Develop public/private partnerships to support maintenance and upkeep of open spaces and recreation areas. Link with prior actions.	RD, CA, RC, CC	Ongoing	N/A
Objective 4.B. Protect and enhance the Town's natural environment to maintain its ecological functions and build resilience.			
1. Revive the Adopt a Stream program to help monitor and maintain waterways.	CC	Year 1	
2. Develop an inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest and prioritize for long-term protection. Identify appropriate conservation strategies and monitor properties for opportunities.	CA, CC, TM	Year 1	N/A
3. Adopt a Lake Quannapowitt Protection Overlay District that would limit the use of fertilizers in the watershed and encourage more green infrastructure projects.	PLG	Year 2	
4. Formalize the wetland bylaw administered by and permitted through the Conservation Commission.	CC	Year 2	
5. Prioritize improvements to areas that experience chronic flooding. Develop a schedule based on current and planned resources.	DPW	Year 2	Town/Capital Improvements
6. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of the Town's public trees and develop a long-range management plan for the health of the Town's canopy, including protocols for new plantings and tree removal and replacement.	DPW	Year 5	DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant
7. Regularly update inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest.	CA, CC, TM	Ongoing	N/A

Action	Lead, Support	Timing	Potential Funding Source
8. Continue to implement projects identified by the Clean Lake Committee to improve water quality at Lake Quannapowitt.	CLC, ENG	Ongoing	
9. Continue to support the permanent protection of land around Crystal Lake, including acquisition.	CC	Ongoing	

SECTION 10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

See Appendix A for summaries of virtual public meetings and Appendix B for a summary of the community survey. Letters of Support are provided in Appendix E.

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